

the world you could not pay for it." When I asked what this was, he said, "I want to tell you that Jesus loves you very much and that he came into the world to die for your sins." In fact, he said, "if you were the only man alive on earth, Jesus would have left the throne of Grace: He would have come down to die for you."

I had never heard such a thing and I invited him to my home to talk about it. The next evening we talked for over two hours and, to my great surprise, I found myself doing a great deal of listening – and no arguing. At one point he told me that he attended a local Bible College – another mystery to me – and one day he introduced me to his friends and some of the lecturers. When he told me that one of the students was a Muslim convert, I said, "Impossible! No Muslim can ever become a Christian!" Moments later I was introduced to him. Over the next year, our many talks together made a deep impression on me, but two particular things were bothering me. How could God have a son? And how could there be a Trinity, with three persons in one Godhead? Much that Christians were telling me made a great deal of sense, but whenever I thought of Jesus as the Son of God, or of the Trinity, I found myself rejecting the entire Christian faith.

Some months later, my brother came to visit us from the USA. He too had changed. Because of our family's persecution, he had become an atheist and was

bitterly opposed to religion. We often talked together about these things and, as I thought about our family's problems, I found that I too was becoming angry about our situation.

Things were soon to change dramatically. Resting in my room one evening before going to work, and feeling very bitter about life in general, I said to myself, "There is no God and all these religions are just theories made up by men", then I started thinking about Jesus, because for many years now everybody seemed to have been talking about Him. He was the problem! In desperation, I shouted, "I do not believe you are there, but if you are, and you are the Son of God and say you are the truth, then show me the truth." (I believe God deals with people according to their nature and in His way. I am not saying that everyone should challenge God the way I did. I believe what followed was the way that God dealt with me.)

My eyes were closed, and my mind bursting with thoughts. Suddenly I felt as if there was someone in the room breathing on me, I thought that I must be hearing things, so I tried to open my eyes, but they would not open. Thinking I must have been overly conscious of my own breathing, I stopped breathing for a moment, but the sensation of someone else in the room remained. I was really frightened and thought that I must have gone out of my mind. Then suddenly

I found myself praising the name of Jesus, thanking Him for all He had done and repeating that He was my Lord and Saviour. I actually said something that I didn't understand, saying, "Thank you for being accepted in the beloved." After a while, I jumped up, looked around, and even under the bed, thinking that I had had a dream or a nightmare! Suddenly I realised that I had had neither. God had met with me in that room! I looked at my watch, thinking the experience had lasted just a few minutes, but over an hour had passed.

Now I understand many people from different religions may experience things they can't explain. For me, I knew this experience was true because when I thought about the Lord Jesus, I somehow knew that He was the Son of the Living God. It was easy for me to say that, but a Muslim can never say that – it is the greatest blasphemy. Now suddenly I did not have a problem with the Lord Jesus being the Son of God or the Trinity. How could this be possible except, as the Bible puts it, "No one can say Jesus is God except by the Holy Spirit." I went downstairs and said to my family "Jesus is the Son of God." Their expression told me that they thought I had gone crazy. They have long since changed their mind.

When I told friends at the Bible College what had happened, they told me that my experience had been the work of God the Holy Spirit. All I knew was that my thinking had been totally transformed. My testimony

was that of the blind man healed by Jesus 2,000 years ago: "One thing I know. Once I was blind but now I see." In all the years I have been a Christian, I have never had any more experiences like that. Not only do I thank God for showing me the truth in such a dramatic and unforgettable way but I also thank God for the truth of His word: that I have the promise of belonging to God and one day I will be with Him for the whole of eternity.

Some weeks later, I went into a Christian church for the first time, and on that same day, I shared my story with those present. Later I was baptised as a Christian believer. The pastor of the church faithfully taught the Bible and helped me to grow in my faith. I thank God for my pastor who later introduced my family and others to Christ. After a few months of attending the church, the pastor was preaching on John 20, when Jesus breathed on the disciples, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit." It was then that I understood this had been my experience as well.

I now know that when I die I will go to be with God in heaven. This is not because I am good enough for God, but because He has loved me, and forgiven the sin which would condemn me. Heaven is a gift from God to all who receive Jesus as their Lord and Saviour.


Since then many more Muslims have come to trust Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. Looking back on my life, I believe that I am a privileged person to know

the Lord Jesus and to be able to serve Him. I know that I can never look back and that I can only look to Him. I have gone through some severe tests and trials in my Christian life, perhaps not as great as some Christians have to go through, but it is only through focusing on the Lord Jesus that I have been brought through them. God has been with me and has never forsaken me. I thank Him for all that He means to me and has done for me and pray that I will be a channel of His love and truth as long as I live. My only prayer is to be useful to introduce others, especially Muslims, to this glorious truth that the Lord Jesus is alive and He is the only Saviour.

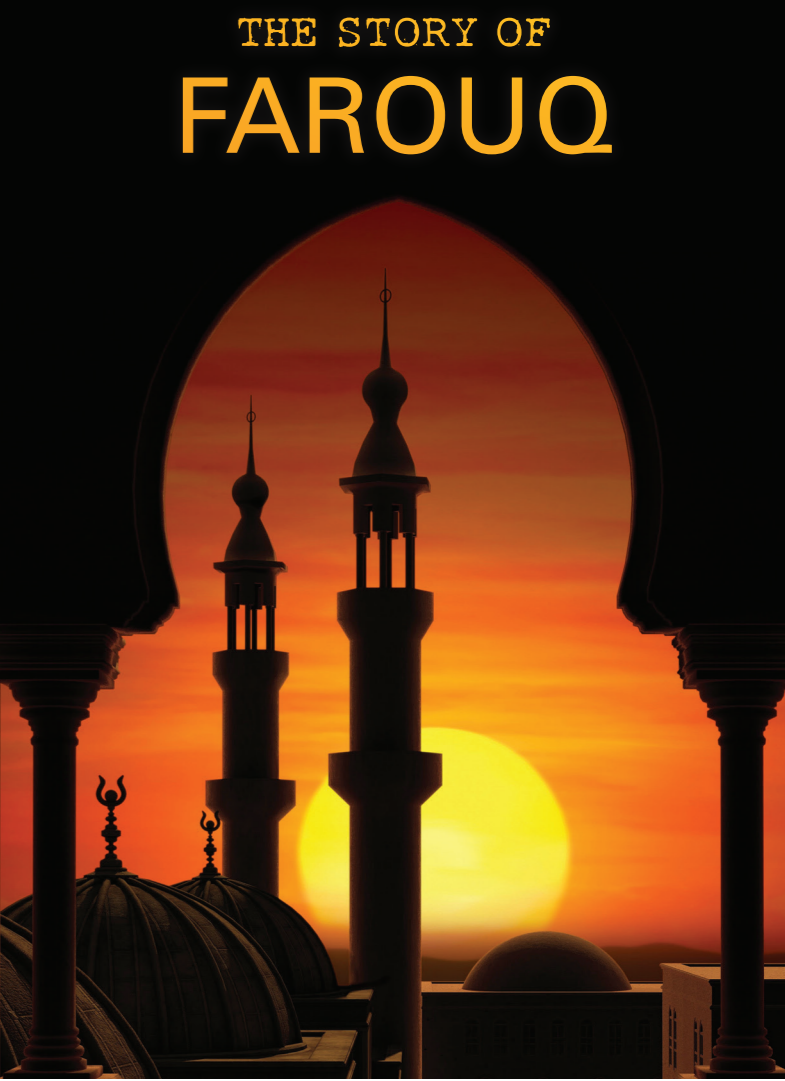
My contacts with the Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons, along with my Catholic and Protestant friends, as well as my own experience of being a Muslim for over 30 years, has proved to me that all religions, except Christianity, teach that the only way to secure a place in heaven is to try and be good. They all say if you love God and follow him then God will love you in return. The love of the God of the Bible is different. God doesn't want anyone to perish and end up in hell, that is why He sent the Lord Jesus to come and die for the sin of the world so that we could be forgiven and have eternal life with Him. He only wants us to humbly repent of our sin and trust in the finished work of the Lord Jesus who died on the Cross trusting that He, the now living, risen Jesus alone paid the penalty for our sin, and so can bring us to God.

If you would like a free copy of The New Testament, write to me and ask, sending me your postal address:

**Roger Carswell,**  
c/o Unit C, Tomlinson Road,  
Leyland, PR25 2DY, UK.



**10 Publishing**  
a division of 10 of those.com  
www.10ofthose.com

## THE STORY OF FAROUQ<sup>1</sup>

I was born in a small town in a middle-eastern country and raised in a loving, middle-class family. Like most children in my country, I was encouraged to work hard at school so that one day I could achieve something in life – and also be a good Muslim.

Islam pervaded every part of life, and many public religious activities made it impossible to escape its influence. Because I was from a Shiite background, the twelve Imams who came after Mohammed had their birthdays or deaths celebrated or mourned with great fervour. In other ceremonies such as weddings, funerals, and fasting Islam was powerfully present. Even if one did not want to be a serious Muslim, it was impossible to escape from all these rituals that took place almost every day.

I vividly remember the first time I was told to take part in a whole day's fasting, without anything to eat or drink. It was a long, hot summer day, and I woke about 3 a.m. to make sure that I had enough food and drink to keep me going until the sun went down about 8 p.m. I was about twelve years old at the time, and it was one of the hardest things I had ever done. Before long, my lips were dry and chapped and I longed for something to drink, but I was determined to go through with the fast. I wanted to make all my family proud of me, to show that I was a good

<sup>1</sup>The name has been changed, but every other detail is accurate

Muslim, and, above all, to have assurance that because I had suffered and fulfilled this duty that God had laid upon me, I would have the right to go to heaven when I died.

Keeping up with other duties, such as praying five times a day, added to my conviction that God was happy with me and would favour me when I came to the day of judgement. If I missed one or more of my prayer times I would make up the deficit as soon as possible.

A Muslim is brought up to believe that he or she has the ultimate truth, even without practising the Muslim faith or knowing much about the Quran. This is absolutely universal, even for those who live blatantly sinful lives or would be prepared to mock the Islamic faith. Even those Muslims become very serious when it comes to comparing Islam with other religions and they would do anything to support and defend it despite their lack of knowledge or interest in Islam.

It was with this as my background that I came to the United Kingdom in the 1970s for an operation and to study. It is strange that, in spite of what goes on in the mind of a Muslim regarding the West, many would love to be able to come to the West to experience the benefits and opportunities of higher education and healthcare as well as to be able to live in a free country. After my operation, I enrolled to study English and applied to a college to do my O-levels and A-levels. Looking further ahead, I always knew that if one day

I wanted to marry, I would marry a girl from my own Islamic background.

However, during my second year in Britain, I fell in love with a British girl who had no connection with Islam. I did not think much about the implications but, when the question of marriage arose, I knew I had enormous problems because Mary came from a nominal Christian (Church of England) background. We knew that we could never marry as we were; either I had to change my religion, which was unthinkable to me, or she had to become a Muslim. After many long discussions, Mary said that, as it could hardly make such a difference when we both believe in one God and loved each other, she would change her religion.

Getting married (and making Mary a Muslim) was very simple. We went to a mosque in London; the Imam told us to sit on the floor, read from the Quran and asked Mary to repeat one particular verse after him. A fee of £5, our signatures on a marriage document, and it was all over. He then told Mary, "You are now a Muslim, and your new name is Maryam." In a very short time, we were on our way back home, united in marriage and religion, but one thought kept nagging at me: "How can one become a Muslim without knowing anything about Islam?" As I was thinking about this I realised that this is true for all of us back home. We are born Muslims, we are called Muslims, we have no knowledge or choice, just the label from birth and then we are Muslim for life.

A few days later we received a book with various Muslim instructions for my wife – praying, fasting, covering up and the like. She refused point-blank. All those who have any knowledge of Islam know that it is a culture in which a wife does not disobey her husband, and that was hard for me to accept. Suddenly, the beginning of our married life became a war zone, a conflict of words about religion which came to a head when she said, "I do not know why I ever became a Muslim. My old religion was better than yours." This really was war! Not only was my wife disobeying my religion and me, she was blaspheming against it. All Muslims are told that Christianity is false and the Bible is corrupt, and I was confident that I could prove it.

Partly to bridge the painful division between us, I began to read the Bible so that I could prove to her that the Bible is corrupt. Muslims are repeatedly told that Christianity is false and the Bible has been changed. Reading it made no sense to me. Soon afterwards, two people came to my door and began to speak to me about God and the Bible. I was quite impressed with them, invited them in, and from then on met with them to study the Bible on a fairly regular basis. After two years of this, another two people came to my door and spoke about their faith. Again, I was very struck by what they said, invited them in, and began a series of "Bible studies" with them.

As time went on, I discovered that the first two visitors

were Jehovah's Witnesses and the second couple were Mormons. I am an argumentative person by nature and, as I discussed religious issues with them over the next couple of years or so, I felt that I was emerging as the clear winner. Not only did neither of their religious frameworks satisfy me (underlining my conviction that the Islamic faith was right) but their open condemnation of each other reinforced my suspicion that all other faiths were in conflict. I made a point of explaining this to my wife but, even as I did so, another thought was growing in my mind. At this time I was studying to become a computer programmer. I had friends from many different backgrounds, people who were Catholic, Anglican, Buddhist, agnostics, and atheists. I used to argue with all of them to prove that I had the truth. But they all sincerely believed that they had the truth. Yet the differences were so great that we could not all be right. From then on, my focus shifted. My aim was no longer to prove who was right or wrong. More than anything else I wanted to know the answer to one question above all: What is the truth?

Back in my native country, my father used to work for an oil company with many people working under him. We lived in a big house and had access to the oil company aeroplane when we wanted to travel. If we wanted to go shopping or to nearby towns then we just called my father's office and the oil company car with a driver would be there. They provided us with free hospital

care, golf club, swimming pool, cinema, bowling, tennis and all sort of entertainments and sports.

However, things changed and our country came under rule by an Islamic government. My whole family was under threat and because of their opposition to the strictly Islamic government they were forced to escape, leaving all their possessions behind. My father left his position in the oil company, lost his pension, and the home for which he had worked for so many years. My brother was later able to leave, though he had to hide in the day and travel at night across the border to another country. He stayed there for nearly a year without a passport, always in hiding and in fear of his life; he managed ultimately to buy a fake passport and take refuge in the USA. The rest of my family members joined my wife, daughter and me. For eight years we lived together in our two-bedroom house. You can imagine the shock they had.

I finished studying to become a computer programmer but I could not get a job. Most of my classmates had work except me. In many ways, this made me bitter and angry. Sometimes I would shout at my wife that I was not offered a job because I was a foreigner or because I could not speak perfect English – effectively calling the employers racist. One day a friend called me saying he was opening a restaurant and he asked if I would go to work for him. My first reaction was

absolutely not, after all, I was a computer programmer, I would not work in restaurants. He pointed out that I didn't have a job and needed money. I thought he had a point, so reluctantly I accepted to go and work for him. The only pay packet coming in was mine – from my part-time restaurant job. It was very hard going.

One day I was working my shift, from 6 p.m. until 5 a.m. My friend who was working with me used to smoke, so he went outside for a cigarette. A man who was passing by stopped and said something to him. It

**MY FRIEND SAID, "NO, THIS MAN IS CRAZY. HE IS SAYING THAT JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD."**

took no more than a minute and my friend came back in laughing. I asked him what happened, wondering if the man had been hungry or wanted something. My friend said, "No, this man is crazy. He is saying that Jesus is the Son of God." My friend passed this off as a joke, and the average Muslim would have done the same – or treated it as blasphemy. Instead, I wanted to pursue the matter, so I called after the man and I asked him, "what are you selling?" I was really being sarcastic to him. He replied, "Nothing. What I told your friend is not for sale, and if you had all the money in