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From a financial giant to becoming a global social worker and philanthropist. How Saeed Rahman found inspiration in devastation. The story behind One Ummah Foundation.

The Power of Love: Mustafa Rahman Lives on

On a cold and fateful evening of 23rd March 1999 , eleven years old Mustafa Rahman was going to his friend's house when his car was hit by a drunk driver; he did not survive the accident. For his parents, Saeed Rahman and his wife Tasneem, his demise was like an explosion which could obliterate everything they had built and knew as their life in Oregon Portland, where they had settled, coming from Pakistan many years ago.

The loss of a child is undoubtedly the worst imaginable agony which crushes the heart and the pain never leaves it. For Mustafa's adoring father it was easy to slip into the darkest despair and refuse to allow any light there but Muhammad Saeed Rahman was not an ordinary man and had very strong faith and determination. He simply refused to give up on his son and let him become a faded memory.

Rahman decided that his innocent son would not only continue to be a living soul for him but also he would make sure that Mustafa's name becomes a beacon of light and hope for countless children around the world. Rahman had set his heart on establishing a foundation for the poor and needy children in the name of his son. It gave him much peace that Mustafa would live on and he would see him in the smile that comes to the sweet lips of a poor child when he finds hope in desperate times, he would twinkle as the sparkle in the eyes of a poor single mother when she finds unexpected help to feed her children, he would be there as the bliss on the face of a poor patient who gets medical help and he would remain alive in the hearts of all the people as a prayer and a blessing.

Saeed Rahman was resolute in making Mustafa Rahman's name become an inspirational force bringing hope and help into the lives of millions around the world. Saeed Rahman set up a fund in his son's name with the initial seed money of one million dollars and started his journey on the mission of hope and that is how One Ummah Foundation came into being.

The most inspiring thing about One Ummah Foundation is not only the unprecedented level of work that they are doing around the world today but the fact that it is based on the principles of pluralism and diversity. Its work is completely free of all kind of biases and its diverse work is not restricted to any race, culture or religion. In a truly global spirit of brotherhood and peace , the aim is to reach out to the most needy wherever they are and whatever race or religion they belong to.

The one ummah foundation is based on the principle belief that the entire population is 'one people'. In its initial years one ummah foundation did unmatched work of reaching out in all corners of the world . The top priority objective remained helping the poor children get education, shelter and food. One Ummah donated funds for construction of new schools as well as the refurbishment of the existing schools for the poorest of the poor children in the poor communities from Karachi Pakistan to Ratanakiri, Cambodia, to Tatum, Cameroon and other places. They started technical and vocational schools in Jakarta, Srilanka and set up disaster relief and education centers there. They reached out to thousands of needy children in India helping them with their school fees, uniforms and other expenses.

In the last fourteen years Mustafa Rahman's spirit of hope and the help in his name has reached over a hundred thousand children in more than a dozen countries of the world. His spirit has touched the lives of so many irrespective of race, religion and colour and it can be seen and felt as the positive force that it has become for a better future for countless people.

There are so many stories of hope and success to be told as each one of the men, women and children touched by One Ummah has his or her unique story to tell but sometimes a little story makes a big impact and hearing it we realize that as although we have divided ourselves into so many compartments but as human beings we are not much different at all. We feel many joys in the same way and we all hurt in the same way and we all have many similar needs and we all crave a better life for ourselves and our children but most importantly we all need love. Muhammad Saeed Rahman has indeed broken all the boundaries erected by all sorts of biases and prejudices and refused to discriminate between people.

The recent example of how One Ummah reaches out to people is the story of Nick Zadak, a sweet two year old boy who was suffering from Metastatic Hepatoblastoma Cancer in Portland Oregon and his parents requested financial help for his treatment. One Ummah immediately took up the cause and with a worldwide appeal for

contributions helped raise the requisite amount within a short time. Only a parent of a sick toddler can feel the anxiety and helplessness of seeing a small child suffer and the urgency the parent feels to do whatever is humanly possible to bring the child back to health. Saeed Rahman , the force behind One Ummah is no stranger to pain and this is the reason for all the personalized efforts,the visits to hospitals and the constant travel around the world to ensure that he can help all the people that reach out to him in need.

It is not an easy task for any person or organization but even more amazing than the work that the foundation is doing is the method they have adopted for its execution which is so simple yet effective that it puts all the highly bureaucratic international aid agencies to shame. Muhammad Saeed Rahman has a vast experience of Financial Services and currently runs the Rubicon Global Advisors, an investment banking firm and he has a personal network of friends from all walks of life from all over the world. The foundation and its charity work started with Saeed's own money and the contribution of his friends and now it has a huge participation of volunteers, philanthropists, social workers, journalists, scientists and political leaders. The unique feature of One Ummah that sets it apart from all the rest is that one hundred percent of all money raised is used on ground and there is nothing spent on operational costs of the running of the foundation.

The request for fundings are received from around the world and its board of directors approves them according to set standards and the funds are then spent directly by the partner organizations. In that way it is ensured that each and every dollar collected is spent on the deserving.

Whether it is Nick Zadak getting the best medical care , the little school girls receiving bright new school uniforms in Bangladesh or the poor children in Faisalabad getting new dresses and shoes for Eid day, One Ummah continues to be the source of hope and joy to countless children all over the world.

But for Saeed Rahman, his wife Tasneem and One Ummah this is just the beginning. Rahman envisions a world where no child is left without education, without support and without food. Saeed Rahman Says, "One ummah means 'one people' and we are all God's people, regardless of where we are born or what book we follow. We will help any child in need."

Saeed Rahman plans to use his financial service experience to provide opportunities of entrepreneurship and microfinance to many thousands of poor people around the world

to help them break the circle of poverty so that they are able to stand on their own feet and improve the lives of their children in future.

Muhammad Saeed Rahman is indeed an inspired man and it is amazing that his inspiration came from a catastrophe which had the potential to destroy him. The inspiration has now become an inspiration for millions. Today One Ummah Foundation has a presence in sixteen countries and Rahman has just started.

The story of One Ummah is the story of the power of one idea, one moment of truth, one right decision and the determination of one man to make a difference.

For Rahman, Mustafa is a living soul and a constant source of inspiration. The child is there with him in all his conversations, his mind and in his heart. Mustafa is the one inspiring his work here and the one waiting for him in the hereafter.“ I know he will greet me with a smile and say, thank you papa for sending all these beautiful gifts to me everyday. All the blessings and prayers of people are his gifts. I have no fear of death as I will embrace my beautiful son and meet him. I miss him every day.” says Rahman. That is the real power of love.

“Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a [listening](#) ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of [caring](#), all of which have the [potential](#) to turn a life around.” - Leo Buscaglia