

# A TRIBUTE TO COURAGE

*On July 1, 2016 Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain, Abinta Kabir and Tarishi Jain lost their lives along with 19 other hostages and two police officers in the worst terrorist attack of our history. They were bright young individuals, brilliant students and most of all, the best of friends. Faraaz, who displayed incredible courage by refusing to leave his two friends during the attack, has become a symbol of friendship, hope and bravery. Here we publish excerpts of tributes to these three individuals by close friends who knew them as remarkable human beings who will forever be remembered for their compassion, generosity and ability to inspire others.*

## A life worth remembering

CHERUB SHARMA

My first recollection of Faraaz goes back to kindergarten. I don't recall having too many conversations with him, and within a year or so, he transferred to another school.

Seven years later, I happened to transfer to the same school where Faraaz was studying. I clearly recall sitting across from him in class on the first day of school. We awkwardly stared at each other for at least ten minutes, taken aback to have met again so unexpectedly. However, as soon as class ended, Faraaz very graciously introduced me to the rest of his friends and showed me around. He made me feel very comfortable in an environment that I was completely new to. This opened the doors to a friendship that I will cherish for the remainder of my life.

I always knew Faraaz was a visionary. From being the class president to the captain of the volleyball team, Faraaz was a born leader. However, what I admire about him the most is his humility despite his achievements. Faraaz always had his feet on the ground and never allowed his position of authority corrupt his morals. It just goes to show that great leaders don't need to act tough; their confidence and humility serve to underscore their strength.

Faraaz was a wonderful friend. He was the

only one who could bring a smile to my face and make me forget about all my problems. Faraaz was undoubtedly one of the greatest motivators I've come across in my life thus far. He taught me the true meaning of perseverance. Most importantly, he taught me how to be a man of my words.

My last interaction with Faraaz was on the night before the attack. As usual, he somehow managed to convince me to make a few prank calls, only for him to get a good laugh out of me bothering strangers late at night.

While I was devastated by what happened to my best friend, I was not at all surprised by the course of action he took. I knew that Faraaz wasn't the one who would walk away from his friends and leave them to die. There was absolutely no way Faraaz would let that happen, even if it came at the cost of his life.

Faraaz, you are an inspiration to mankind. You are that beacon of hope us youngsters look for. You are a paragon of excellence, a quintessence of brilliance. The key to immortality is first living a life worth remembering. You have achieved precisely that my friend. Your tale of friendship will remain for eternity.

Cherub Sharma is a student of UC Davis, California, USA.



Faraaz and Cherub.



A close group of ten friends: Abinta (second from right), Tarishi (fourth from right) and Siena (third from left).

## TWO COMPASSIONATE SOULS

SIENA BASHIR KABIR

Abinta Kabir and Tarishi Jain met in school in 2008. I met them both in elementary school and over the course of middle and high school we became a close group of ten friends.

Tarishi was one of the funniest girls in our group. She had a very distinctive laugh. She was incredibly kindhearted, and always went out of her way to get to know people. She was proud to be Indian, and dance was one of the ways she stayed connected to her roots. Tarishi was a very compassionate person, and another person's pain could deeply affect her. Her actions have always been a lesson in empathy, and her capacity to radiate love and joy makes her an inspiration for us all.

Abinta never backed down and on the court nothing scared her. Her determination in basketball was equally present in her academic life. She was insanely hard-working, and would do whatever it took to achieve her end goal. She would be the first to start preparing for a test, and her dedication paid off when she made it to her dream school. Abinta loved Bangladesh, and always considered it home. She was excited to move back and work with her mom. She always had her priorities straight, and that was one of the most inspiring things about her.

I would like to share an extremely special memory. The night of our graduation ceremony, my nine best friends and I were standing at a table just before we walked into the ceremony hall. We held hands through our feelings of anxiety, excitement and happiness. In that moment, we said that even though everything after graduation would be new, we were excited to start the next part of our lives together, and that we loved each other no matter what. It is still painful to think that the start of their lives lasted only a year, but I am eternally grateful for the love we felt in that moment.

Siena Bashir Kabir is a student of Cornell University, USA.

## An exemplary human being

LAMISA HAQUE

Sometimes words are simply not enough to describe a person. When it comes to Faraaz, words fail to do justice to the all-rounded, kindhearted, courageous soul that he is. Nevertheless, I will try my best to explain how fortunate I am to call him my best friend.

Being a part of Faraaz's world was a blessing. If he cared for you, your problems became his own. He would go to the ends of the world to make his loved ones happy. Not only was he a constant source of strength but there was so much to learn from him and there still is. He was and continues to be my moral compass. Faraaz was simply innately good, always knowing the difference between right from wrong and never afraid to assert his views. Faraaz stood out as a leader because of his strength of character.



Faraaz with Lamisa.

It's hard to find a person who is so dedicated and motivated in the best way and for the best reasons. He wanted to make his family and friends proud. He wanted to bring his country, which he loved with so much passion and pride, forward. Faraaz did all of the above and more.

Everything Faraaz did, he did with immense passion and love. He managed to balance his life with priorities that made him into such an incredible human.

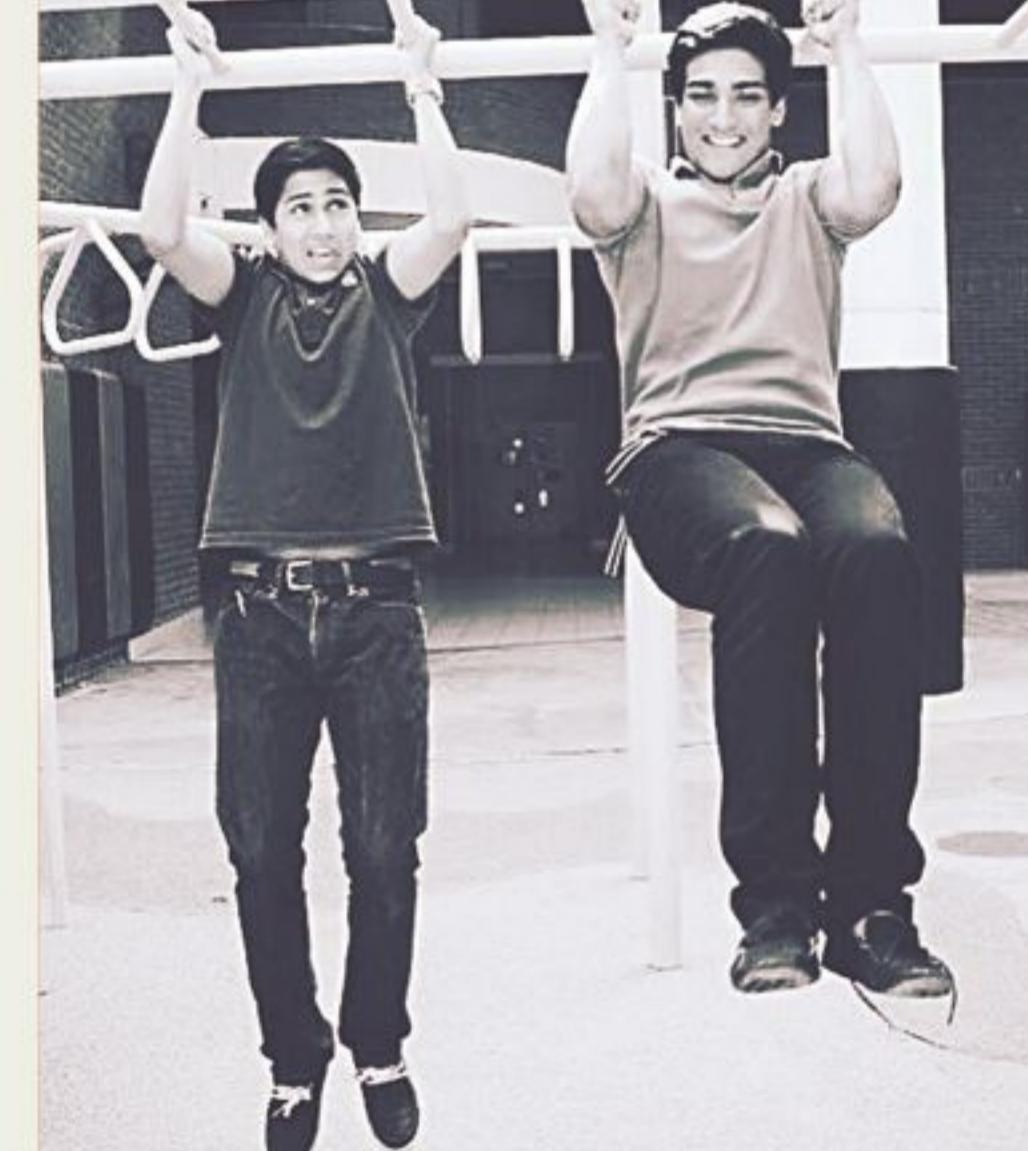
Faraaz is a hero to the world now, but for those who knew him, he has always been a hero. We all knew he was destined for greatness. I have always admired Faraaz and now I feel such honour in being a part of his life. I will always miss him but holding my memories of Faraaz close to my heart, I will live aspiring to be someone like him.

Lamisa Haque is a student of Pratt Institute, USA.

## A COMEDIAN AND A HERO

RYAN SHAMS

I know Faraaz from the core of my heart; he is one of a kind and that makes him so hard to describe. Faraaz was a comedian around his friends but serious in any professional workplace. Faraaz was compassionate to everyone that crossed paths with him but he was full of mischief when interacting with his friends and family. However, there was something that stood out the most about Faraaz: his sense of modesty. Faraaz had everything but he never felt entitled to anything. Faraaz wanted to earn his own credibility, his own respect, and his own success. Needless to say, Faraaz has done more than earn just credibility, respect, and success; Faraaz has taught countless lives how to live.



Faraaz with Ryan.

Faraaz was one of my closest friends, and sometimes I feel like I have become his pupil. I aspire to have his courage and have the ability to be as loving and compassionate as him one day.

I still laugh at his little jokes and joyful memories we have had together. I hope everyone can learn this from Faraaz: to practise kindness always and have faith, live with courage, aspire to earn our credibility and respect, and love endlessly because love goes the longest way. Faraaz will live within us and with us for an eternity to come.



Miraaj with Abinta (left) and Tarishi (right).

## Unforgettable memories

MIRAAJ AL HAQUE

Faraaz was always an older brother to me. I remember when I was a freshman and new to high school. I tried out for volleyball. Before the first practice had started he came up to me and told me, "Hope your first day as a high schooler went well. I'm expecting big things from you this season." That season went on and I soon became the setter for the B team and Faraaz had become the setter and captain of the SAISA team. I learned valuable lessons such as determination, leadership, and communication from Faraaz. It was an honour knowing him. He has made me into a better person and has had an impact on all of us through his actions.

As a freshman I went on a class trip to Nepal with Abinta and Tarishi. Abinta was one of the most caring and kindest people you would have ever met. That entire trip we would have many conversations that were both serious and funny. She made you feel very safe and she always reassured you when you were having doubts about something. Abinta was that friend that you could always go to when you were having a bad day and she would always find a way to cheer you up. She was a person that left a lasting impression on people and she will always be remembered.

I first met Tarishi during this trip to Nepal. I remember sneaking out at night during that trip and talking to Tarishi at 2am about so many different things. After the trip ended we kept in contact. We would message each other every day and whenever we would see each other in the hallways she would run up to me and give me a big hug. She was always such a helpful person. She would always put her work aside to help me with my homework or give me suggestions about what to do. If you've known Tarishi, you can never forget her and she will always be in your heart. She was a very special person.

Miraaj Al Haque is a student of Elon University, USA.

Ryan Shams is a university student.