

It is Thursday afternoon. Fahima adjusts her headscarf as she walks out of her small apartment building. The lane is already crowded with people selling evening goods. She checks her pink tote bag, filled with boxes of plain and chocolate milk. One neighborhood child looks up, sees Fahima with her familiar pink bag, and quickly calls out to her friends. As the girls crowd around Fahima, she passes out the milk and chats with the girls about their toys. Looking into the faces of the young girls, Fahima imagines the face of her own daughter. Her daughter would have been around the same age, had she made it past her 1st birthday. She smiles sadly.

Every week, Fahima makes merit for her daughter by passing out milk to the street children. Her daughter had not lived long enough to gain favor for herself before Allah. With deep longing and desperation, Fahima prays that this will make a difference for her daughter. Perhaps Allah will be pleased and grant mercy.

(story from a full-time worker in Thailand about their close friend)



Thursdays are a special day of the week for Fahima and for many of her Thai Muslim neighbors. Each Thursday, they can make merit for deceased family members and offer prayers to Allah that will not be rejected. This tradition, widely practiced in Southeast Asia, is rooted in Folk Islam, where belief in spiritualism and the supernatural mix with Islamic tenets of faith.

These beliefs, passed down through the generations, are grounded in fear and uncertainty. Thai Muslims are often compelled to believe in folk Islam when they see a witch doctor miraculously heal a sick child or send a spirit to protect their homes. To question or stop these rituals poses a high risk of punishment and retaliation from the spirits and Allah. For Thai Muslims, believing in Jesus is not a matter of correct information or religious identity, but of deeply embedded spiritual barriers.

However, God has made a way, once and for all, to transfer Fahima and her friends from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of his Beloved Son (Colossians 1:13). It is not through merit making or folk traditions, but in the power of Jesus for salvation. Jesus has given his church power and authority to break through the spiritual barriers of Folk Islam!



“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God...praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.”

Ephesians 6:12-13, 18

P R A Y

- Thai believers would be filled with compassion for Thai Muslims trapped in futile cycles of merit making
- For gospel witnesses to bring their message with power -- healings, signs, and wonders that would show Jesus' power over spiritual strongholds in Folk Islam
- For thousands of Thai Muslims to experience the power of Jesus through dreams and visions, overcome fear of spirits, and eagerly seek out the gospel
- For new Muslim background believers to surrender old idols of spirit worship and Islam, and follow Jesus only