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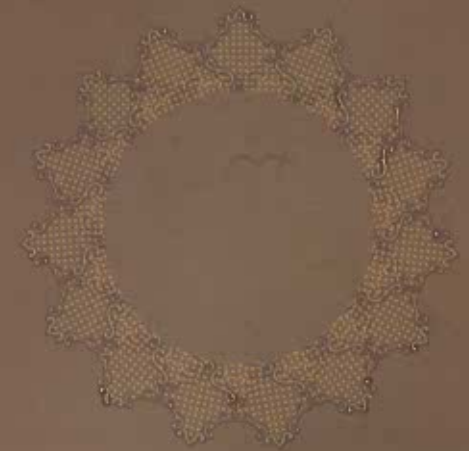
THE COFFEE HOUSE OF LAHORE



THE COFFEE HOUSE OF LAHORE

A MEMOIR 1942-57

K. K. AZIZ



ایضاً
لاہور کی یادیں
یادوں - نواں لاہور پرانا لاہور
ملاہ لاہوری
سویٹا شہر لاہور
لطیف ملک
اولیائے لاہور
کیمیاء
تاریخ لاہور
تاریخ پنجاب
سیرت لطیف
تاریخ پنجاب از حالات شہر لاہور
سیرت نواں ملی
تذکرہ رؤسائے پنجاب از حالات شہر لاہور
تاریخ آسٹین و بھنگار
پنجاب تحقیق کی روشنی میں
جلیا نوالہ باغ کا نقش عام اور مظالم پنجاب
ابو الحسن نعیمی
یہ لاہور ہے
سویٹا شہر
لاہور کا جوڈ کر کیا
نمبرین ڈوق
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To the memory of
my dear cousin
ZUBAIR HAMEED
a lovable man whom fate
dealt a weak hand, and
this is why I miss him so much

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PREFACE

For over a generation (c. 1935-c.1970) the Coffee House of Lahore was the greatest intellectual and literary powerhouse in north India and later in Pakistan. I have read scores of memoirs, reminiscences, biographies, autobiographies and literary and social histories which talk about Delhi, Aligarh and Lucknow. There is no mention of the role of the coffee house in the lives of these cities. I have no information about Bengal, Bombay and South India. Therefore, it is no exaggeration in the claim that the Lahore Coffee House was in its day a unique centre of intellectual interaction and activity which produced or influenced a long and distinguished line of writers, poets, artists, lawyers, political activists (especially of the Leftist variety), journalists and widely read generalists. If you take out of our history all the people mentioned in this book there is not much left behind to celebrate or recall.

I am aware that my book will not interest many people of the present

THE COFFEE HOUSE OF LAHORE

generation. As our bond with history loosens our past becomes a stranger to us. This affliction has overwhelmed both the intellectual elite and the commonalty. In 1985 when I returned to Lahore after nearly 30 years and found that the Coffee House had disappeared something broke within me. I received a greater shock on finding that my old Coffee House friends like Nasim Zakria, Rauf Malik and Intizar Husain could not remember when the House was closed down. Is it possible to be so cruelly indifferent to the major landmarks of one's life? In modern Pakistan, yes. That is a measure of our cultural transformation; or isn't nihility a more appropriate term for a change of such cataclysmic dimensions?

This book is a fortuitous but fortunate by-product of my *Autobiography*. After completing its first volume I began to write the second, and wanting to open the book with the chapter on my Coffee House years, indulged in recalling and remembering this happy time with a will. The story spun itself out at speed because at my age there is hardly anything to live on except nostalgia, and recreating the past the only happiness within reach. When I put the pen down the chapter had become a book. With my health turning

PREFACE

more infirm by the day and my sojourn in this valley of woes nearing its end, I decided to publish what I had written without waiting for the completion of the second volume. In this context it should be considered as a continuation of my *Autobiography*.

The exercise has been a mixed experience. I have enjoyed summoning my dear friends to sessions of sweet memory. As almost all of them now sleep their last sleep I have wept at the separation. Before long time will cease for me and I will be with them. That is the only attraction of death.

My thanks are due to Mr. Muhammad Sarwar Khan for typing and formatting a badly written manuscript and to my wife for reading the proofs.

1 October 2007
Lahore.

K. K. Aziz

CHAPTER 1

THE SETTING

In European cultural and intellectual history, the coffee house enjoys a nobility of ancestry denied to the tea house or the pub. It can claim not only a longer life but also a more aristocratic origin: it was the gift of a storied empire. The Ottomans were the first to drink coffee and the British, the French and the Germans hastened to conform. It may or may not be an accident of history that the movement of Ottoman armies in Central Europe led to the opening of the first coffee house in Vienna, and for nearly four hundred years this city led the continent in the quality and prestige of its coffee houses.

Thus the institution of the coffee house entered European culture through Islamic imperialism. The first coffee house opened its doors in Istanbul in 1555. From here the new fashion spread within a few decades to Egypt and Iran in the east and Europe in the west.

In 1627, Francis Bacon wrote: "They have in Turkey a Drinke called Coffa, made of a Berry of the same Name, as Black as Soot, and of a Strong Sent, but not Aromaticall; which they take, beaten into Powder, in Water, as hot as they can drink: And they take it; and sit at it, in their Coffa Houses, which are like our Tavernes. This Drinke comforteth the Braine,

and Heart, and helpeth Digestion." It is said that Bacon had not tasted the exotic drink, but firmly believed in its medicinal properties.

In the seventeenth century most countries in Europe opened their cafés, worthy successors of the earlier salons where royal and aristocratic ladies presided over receptions and gatherings of eminent writers, poets, artists and philosophers. Because of the advance of the Ottoman armies in Austria and its cultural impact the first European coffee house was opened in Vienna. Soon the Viennese made a signal contribution of their own to the alien brew. The Turks drank their coffee neat, without any milk or sugar. The European palate found the bitterness distasteful and, in order to mellow the harshness, Vienna started the fashion of mixing coffee with milk and sugar. Later those who could afford it replaced milk with cream.

I don't know how coffee tasted on the European tongue but it must have been pleasing because indulgence in it spread fast and wide. Coffee houses proliferated in Germany, France, Italy and England. Drinking coffee spread quickly from a novelty to a fashion to a habit and finally to an addiction. Its popularity received a fillip from more sedate quarters. It was soon discovered that it helped the pious and the studious to stay awake and concentrate better and longer on prayer and study. There was another more nebulous dimension to this hot beverage. The habit of coffee drinking coincided with a popular interest in national and international news. As coming to a coffee house was a habit rather than a necessity, the habitués spent a lot of time on their cups and talked and gossiped with their friends. In

this way the coffee house emerged as an urban, public, radical and egalitarian club where middle and upper middle classes congregated and discussed the affairs of the world. As their brains were unfuddled by alcohol, these alert coffee drinkers read the newspapers and pamphlets and discussed what they read. These discourses blurred the distinctions of rank and wealth.

This trend was not welcome to the establishment of those (and all) days. In England, the spies of Charles II reported that "common people talk anything, for every carman and porter is now a statesman; and indeed the coffee houses are good for nothing else. It was not thus when we drank nothing but sack and claret, or English beere and ale." In 1675, the King issued a proclamation banning coffee houses for they were centres of sedition. The royal command failed against the rising tide of English liberty, modernity, civility and social improvement.

By this time the coffee house clientele had spread its wings and gathered in its precincts many social and economic dealings. In the City merchants did business at Jonathan's or Garraway's, auctions were held, scientists did public experiments, clergymen debated controversial points of theology at Child's, new writers patronized Will's, books and paintings were shown at the Chapter-House in Paternoster Row, and eager listeners crowded other places. There were Jonathan's Coffee House, or Change Alley, which later became the London Stock Exchange.

Larger business establishments and institutions went further and opened coffee houses for their employees. Thus there appeared the Lloyd's coffee

house, Baltic coffee house, the East Indian Company's Jerusalem coffee house, and others. The first coffee house to be established in London had been the Oxford Coffee House in 1652. By 1700 there were two thousand coffee houses in the metropolis, with scores more in the provinces. Addison and Steele, in the *Tatler* and *Spectator*, presented the coffee house in their writings as a desirable, necessary and privileged masculine space in the contemporary social panorama. Later the Coffee Public House Movement sprang up in which temperance campaigners converted gin palaces into coffee palaces and provided newspapers and journals for working men. Thus the rituals of the coffee house came to the aide of the political and literary culture of England.

Parallel developments can be traced on the Continent. Europe has always been more radical and less class conscious than England and continental coffee houses have been centres of non-conformity, dissent and even revolutions. A lot of radical activity in the Parisian cafés heralded the French Revolution. The tradition has continued. In 1916, Emil Leaderer met with Rudi Hilferding in a Viennese café and discussed the problem of a Russian revolution. Leaderer was convinced of the impending revolution while Hilferding, the skeptical theoretician, answered, "Who will make the Revolution? Mr Trotsky, perhaps, of the Central Café?" But Mr. Trotsky stepped out of the café and made the Revolution. In France, Diderot's Parisian life was lived among the actors of the Café Procope in front of the Comédie Française and

among the chess players of the Café Regence. In the late 1930s, literary Paris was a village. This was the period when Sartre's best work was composed, and when Simone Beauvoir, writing *L'Invitée*, held court in cafés where people like Charles Dullin, André Breton, Sylvia Beach, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Brice Parrain were her frequent table companions.

A VIBRANT CULTURE

From the 1920s onwards, perhaps since even earlier, Lahore was the most highly cultured city of north India. From here appeared the largest number of Urdu literary journals, newspapers and books and two of the best English-language dailies. The Mayo School of Arts was flourishing. The Young Men Christian Association was active and its premises and hall were used by all communities for literary and social activities. The Government College was a distinguished intellectual centre whose teachers were respected and students considered to be the best representatives of modern Western education. The Oriental College was engaged in first class research. The annual plays staged at Government College and Dyal Singh College were awaited by the city's elite with high expectations. Eminent journalists and columnists wrote for newspapers and graced literary gatherings. The city rang with the echoes of the poetry of Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Noon Meem Rashed, Hafeez Jullunderi and Akhtar Shirani. The Niázmandán-i-Lahore, the magic circle of A.S.

Bokhari, Abdul Majeed Salik, M.D. Taseer, Hafeez Jullundheri, Sufi Tabassum, Syed Imtiaz Ali Taj and Hari Chand Akhtar, created enormous waves in the world of Urdu literature.

The well-to-do Westernized elite drank and danced and talked in the Gymkhana and Cosmopolitan clubs. The home-grown dazzling lights set off their fireworks at the Arab Hotel, Nagina Bakery, Muhkam Din's teashop, Halqa-i-Arbab-i-Zauq, India Tea House and India Coffee House. The greatest in the land, like Tagore, came and spoke at the SPSK Hall. Political debates were held at Bradlaugh Hall. Amrita Sher Gill painted and B.C. Sanyal sculpted. The best British and American films were screened at Regal and Plaza. There was even a school of ballroom dancing on the upper storey of Regal. The *baithaks* in the walled city trained young musicians and singers and invited the connoisseurs to come and listen to classical music. The radio came a little later and the literati wallowed in a new channel which immediately enlarged the circulation of what they wrote, said or composed. With Bokhari's genius presiding over the radio network, the first generation of literary broadcasters was in the making.

A glorious physical setting for this pulsating intellectual activity was provided by the Lahore that the British had built between 1860 and 1935. Impressive edifices adorned the landscape: Lawrence Hall, Chiefs' College, Government House, High Court, Masonic Lodge, Legislative Assembly, General Post Office, Museum, Mayo School of Art, the University, Government College,

and Central Training College. The queen of all roads, the Mall, was bordered by tall trees and wide footpaths, and boasted a glittering array of expensive shops. The race course and the Lawrence Gardens were the lungs of the city. No high-rise buildings existed. With no encroachments the roads looked wider. The bungalows of Davis, Empress, Egerton, Queens and Jail Roads were elegantly built and located in the middle of green lawns. The skyline was soothing. Nature's green was the dominating colour of the city. Breathing was easy, and so was enjoying life.

Like all civilized cities, Lahore provided a wide range of restaurants where people gathered for pleasure, social interaction and intellectual gossip. The Nedous Hotel stood where Hilton was later built and still later the Avari; in it lived Abdullah Yusuf Ali who completed his translation and commentary of the Quran in one of its first-floor rooms. The serene Faletti's was centrally located on Egerton Road, behind the assembly chamber and facing Rai Bahadur Ram Saran Das's mansion. Jinnah, Abul Kamal Azad and Ava Gardner stayed here. Later Sir Firoz Khan Noon made it his home.

At the corner of the present-day WAPDA House, and facing the assembly chamber, was the Metro, where in summer tea was served alfresco and Miss Angela did her cabaret show. In the two hall-size rooms of the Shah Din Building was the Lorangs, the finest restaurant in town, patronized by the elite. Near it stood the Stiffles where the guests dined in dinner jackets, danced in the evening and lunched with their friends in as English an ambience as could

be conceived. The Standard had its large premises next to the driveway leading to Regal Cinema and facing the Mall. Several steps lower than Stiffles and Lorangs in glory, status and prices, it catered for the middle class and was always crowded; in summer it used the large space between its building and the footpath as an open-air tea house.

At the other end of this "West End" of Lahore was a cluster of humble eating-places where the modest and poor intellectuals got together and stayed together for long hours, sipping coffee or tea, drinking glasses of water, and settling the problems of the world. The best of them was the India Coffee House, established by the Indian Coffee Board in the mid-1930s to popularize the drink. Next to it was the Cheney's Lunch Home, and a hundred yards away the India Tea House. Almost next to it was the YMCA where the Halqa-i-Arbab-i-Zauq met every week. The "oriental" places drew a mixed crowd of journalists, poets and men of letters: the Arab Hotel on Railway Road opposite the Islamia College gate, the Delhi Muslim Hotel in Anarkali where Bokhari lived in the 1920s, and the Nagina Bakery at the corner of Anarkali and Nila Gumbad. To these was later added the Cecil, which was a small private business run by a Parsi family in its residence. Called "Pathrân wáli Kothi" (bungalow built of stone and with tiled roofs) it was situated at the junction of Cooper and Dil Muhammad Roads, opposite today's duty free shop. Among other places worth mentioning were the Indus Hotel, Volga and Orient on the Mall, the Milk Bar in the Tollinton Market, and the Elphinstone, West End and Bristol on McLeod Road.

The very names of these restaurants are enough proof of the Englishness of the city. This was confirmed further by the commercial establishments on both sides of the Mall, some of which survived British withdrawal.

Whiteway Laidlaw, the haberdashers, did business where Firozsons now sells books. Smith and Campbell is still there, though of course under changed ownership. Rankin, at the corner of the Mall and Beadon Road, was a fashionable outfitter having the custom of the elite; it lived on for a few years after 1947. Goldsmith and Bal Moodie in the Shah Din Building, Jenn and Ellerton and Gillanders Arbuthnot are some of the shops I remember. All have disappeared.

Among the Indian shops almost all were under Hindu ownership and some of them had been opened in 1945-46, soon to be engulfed by disaster. In the Bank Square were the Sunlight Insurance, the brand new departmental store of Janki Das, and Devi Chand; on the Mall, Kirpa Ram in front of Regal; in Anarkali Narain Das Bhagwan Das ran the biggest pharmacy in town. Facing the high court building was the interesting haircutting establishment carrying the name of A.N. John. Many of the well-to-do went there under the impression that it was run by the British. Actually the owner was one Amar Nath who had added John to his initials and thus made a lot of money.

This culture was the joint handiwork of non-Muslims and Muslims. The trouble is that Muslim memorialists and historians suppress the names and contributions of the non-Muslims participants

in order to pretend that this culture was a purely Muslim phenomenon. I was too young then and all the non-Muslims went away in 1947, but I remember that several Hindus and Sikhs were helping in issuing Urdu journals. Most of the Urdu books were published by the Mufid-i-Ám Press of Mohan Lal Road (now Urdu Bazar) owned by Mohal Lal and later by our family friend Rai Bahadur Sohan Lal, and by Attar Chand Kapur of McLeod Road. Raja Narendra Nath and Pandit Shiv Narain Shamim (former judge of the Lahore High Court) patronized the Persian language and Urdu poets. Lala Dwarkadas Shu'la, who looked after his father's chemists' shop in Anarkali, was an Urdu poet. Pandit Hari Chand Akhtar was an important member of the Niázmandán-i-Lahore group. He wrote several *na'ts*; one of them, which he had first recited at the Habibia Hall of Islamia College, became so popular that he was asked to recite it at the beginning of every *musháira* held in the town. Rai Bahadur Mela Ram, whose cotton mills stood on Ravi Road, initiated and paid for the electrification of Data Durbar. His son, Ram Saran Das, provided financial help to a number of Urdu literary journals owned by Muslims.

Rama Krishna's bookshop was an intellectual mart, visited by the entire elite of the town and some from all over India, like the Aga Khan. It was one of the women of his family, Lajwanti, who wrote the first English study of Punjabi Sufi poets. Bakhshi Tek Chand and Sir Shadi Lal attended history meetings and their primary interest was in Mughal history. Several Sikh scholars at the

Oriental College worked on Punjabi Islamic poetry. It was the YMCA which, for several years, provided a home to the Halqa-i-Arbab-i-Zauq and the Mehfil of Aqa Bedar Bakht. It also held most of the major *musháiras* in its hall before and after 1947. Its tea-place was a minor intellectual club open to all religious groups. On 14 February 1948 the Anjuman-i-Taraqqi-Pasand Musannifin observed a Ghalib Day in the YMCA Hall, where Sir Abdul Qadir presided and papers were read out by Sajjad Zaheer, Abdullah Anwar Beg and Sajjad Hyder. After the papers a brief *musháira* was held where Bokhari recited his Urdu poem "Tu mujhé á ké mili waqt ké doráhé péh". It was my first and last time to hear him reciting his poetry. The man who ran the YMCA was B.L. Rallia Ram. Kashmiri descent had given him his good looks and missionary work a soft heart. He and the Secretary, Nasir, were very helpful to everyone regardless of his religion.

Professor Madan Gopal Singh, a distinguished teacher of English at Government College and Central Training College, a mild-tempered and lovable man, announced in July 1947 that he was not thinking of leaving Lahore. It was his home and he would stay and teach. Next week he was stabbed to death by a Muslim in the veranda of the Senate House of the University.

Professor Brij Narain was an economist and teacher of Indian fame. He was the only Hindu academic to argue that, contrary to what the Congress claimed, Pakistan would be an economically viable state. He repeated this in his classes and seminars and in public gatherings. When a crowd of

Muslims arrived at his house with the intention of setting it on fire, Brij Narain met it in the street at his gate and said that in a few days all these houses would be the property of Pakistan and harming them was really harming Pakistan. He was able to persuade them and the crowd melted away. A little later another crowd gathered and this time the professor failed to convince them. He was murdered and his library reduced to ashes.

Gopal Mittal, my friend though much senior to me, sat with his Muslim friends all day gossiping and telling them that he was not going away and no Muslim had the right to send him off. When almost every non-Muslim man, woman and child had been killed, burnt to death or driven out, Mittal still insisted on staying on. Seeing him in acute danger and fearing for his life at any moment, his Muslim friends, including Bari Alig, caught hold of him at Nagina Bakery and forcibly bundled him into an army truck which was collecting stragglers. He was literally pushed out of the country at the border and barred from sneaking back to Lahore.

Hindus and Hindu political groups had built public places where people of all communities and opinions could foregather. After 1947 all these places were allowed to decay and disappear because Pakistani Muslims had no need of them.

A group of enlightened Hindu citizens had built a hall on Circular Road, at the periphery of the now extinct city boundary wall, for the promotion of scientific, cultural, social and musical activities. They formed a Society for the Promotion of Scientific Knowledge (SPSK). Soon the performance of classical

music was included in its agenda. All-India musical conferences were held in the hall. Nearly every master of the art belonging to the renowned *gharānas* (schools) of music displayed his skill. Those who came included Fayyaz Khan (Agra), Abdul Karim Khan and Abdul Waheed Khan (Kirana), Pandit Narayan Rao Vyas, Tawwakul Husain Khan and Bhai Lal Muhammad (Gawalior), and Ashiq Ali Khan and Bare Ghulam Ali Khan (Patiala). After 1947 the government's Evacuee Property Trust took charge of the hall. The Trust neglected it. The land grabbers of the area converted it into a stable. Encouraged by official apathy, the squatters began to undo the fabric brick by brick. It was ultimately obliterated from the cityscape, notwithstanding the government's department of culture, the arts council and so many other "cultural" bodies of Lahore. Thus where once India's finest voices sang, Tagore lectured, and *mushāiras* were held, now Pakistani horses neighed, and then nothing.

In 1900 on Rattigan Road, between the district courts and the Lower Mall, was built the Bradlaugh Hall, named after the well-known British liberal member of parliament who often spoke in favour of Indian independence. The foundation stone was laid by Sir Surendranath Bannerji. For nearly half a century it was used as a forum of political and intellectual activities. The Evacuee Trust took it over in 1947 and allowed it to be used as a sugar refinery. I am told that it is now a police office.

Another important place devoted to Lahore's cultural enrichment also owed its inspiration to a Hindu. It was Principal G.D. Sondhi of Government

College, a keen director and producer of stage plays, who first thought of a large open-air theatre for the city. Built in 1940-43 in the Lawrence Gardens, it is a magnificent imitation of a Greek amphitheatre. Theatrical companies of those days, all non-Muslim, staged plays here and young college students or fresh graduates acted in them, like Kamini Kaushal, Gita Bali and Om Prakash. For about three years after 1947 the theatre lay unused. Not really knowing what to do with it, the government transferred its management to the department of education, then of agriculture, then to the Government College, and finally in 1980 to the Punjab Council of the Arts. Fortunately it escaped the fate of the SPSK hall and is still with us.

Another platform which provided an opportunity to the different communities of interaction and intellectual debate was the Communist Party of India's Punjab branch. It was, of course, an ideological political body, but it encouraged inquiry and engendered debate. It had a discussion group which met in its McLeod Road office and was open to outsiders. I attended some meetings, and though untutored in the Marxist dogma I learnt something. In the Coffee House there was a distinct and powerful group of the Communist Party and the Progressive Writers Association. It consisted of Karam Singh Mann, Sat Pal Dáng, Firozuddin Mansur, Eric Cyprian, Abdullah Malik, and Safdar Mir. Danyal Latifi then lived in Lahore and was often in the Coffee House. Dada Ameer Hyder of Rawalpindi and Sajjad Zaheer from Lucknow were frequent visitors. Rauf Malik and a few others joined this group a little

later. They also held a few meetings in the YMCA board rooms. I met Hindu and Sikh girls for the first time at these gatherings. Later I learnt more about the party from my class fellow and friend and Abdullah Malik's younger brother, Rauf Malik.

No description of the cultural life of Lahore can be complete without mentioning the Arab Hotel. Once the old-fashioned *baithaks* (sitting rooms of the orient) had gone out of use, the literati wanted a place where they could meet, eat and talk. For these "orientalists" of the 1920s the Mall was too Westernized, distant and costly. By chance they started patronizing a small, unclean restaurant on Railway Road, opposite the gate of the Islamia College. A clean-shaven but dirty Arab from Kuwait, known as Bhai Aboud, ran the shop and was happy to serve kebabs and tea to his intelligentsia even on doubtful credit.

Soon the "club" grew in numbers and in the quality of its customers. Chiragh Hasan Hasrat is said to have been the pioneer, and he brought in his friends and colleagues. Gradually it had a glittering membership: Abdul Majeed Salik, Ghulam Rasul Mihr, Akhtar Shirani, Syed Imtiaz Ali Taj, Professor Bokhari, Maulana Salahuddin, Husain Mir Kashmiri, Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Khizr Tamimi, Ashiq Batalvi, Hafeez Jullundheri. Abdul Majeed Bhatti, Madan Gopal Mittal, Sahir Ludhianavi, Abdullah Butt, Hameed Nasim, Zaheer Kashmiri, Shad, Amritsari, Davinder Sathiarthi, Bari Alig, and others. On the upper floor was the workshop of the famous calligrapher, Pir Abdul Hameed, who inscribed the Quran for the Taj Company.

Slowly as Lahore became more modern, comfortable and moderate-priced places opened on the Mall, the Arab Hotel group shifted to the West End. The diaspora began in the late 1940s, and was complete in the 1960s with Bhai Aboud's growing interest in women and speculation. In 1965 or 1966 he died and the "club" vanished. For a quarter of a century the Arab Hotel was a sparkling intellectual tavern, the equal of the best in the 18th-century London. When and if a proper chronicle of the cultural history of Lahore is written the finest chapter will be on this "hotel".

In about 1946 most of the Arab Hotel group shifted to the Nagina Bakery in Nila Gumbad and stayed there for a decade. But its coherence and strength was sapped by the proximity of the Coffee House, the Tea House and the Cheney's Lunch Home. Today both the men and the places have completely disappeared. The Arab Hotel is an unidentifiable spot, the Coffee House was closed down and nobody seems to know when, and the Tea House has vanished and its traditional clientele has moved to other places. Thus, not only has Lahore's culture disappeared from view but its original landmarks have been obliterated. Progress is a terrible thing.

Into this vibrating and rich culture in 1929 stepped in B.C. Sanyal from Calcutta with a degree from the Calcutta School of painting. He began teaching at the Mayo School of Arts. He made friends with the art circle in the city: Roop Krishna (of the family of Rama Krishna, the bookseller) and his wife Mary, and Charles Fabre, the Hungarian curator of the Lahore Museum. He became well-

known to Sir Abdul Qadir, Norah Richards who staged plays in Dyal Singh College, Razia Sirajuddin, Zubaida Agha, Abdur Rahman Chughtai, Bevan Petman and Amrita Sher Gill.

After trying several places he finally shifted to the upper floor of Regal cinema and opened his studio in what used to be the school of ballroom dancing. The studio soon became a club of the highest intellectual quality. The Punjab Literary League, which was presided over by Sir Abdul Qadir, opened its office here. The Progressive Writers' Association began to hold its meetings in the studio. The Indo-Soviet Friendship Society joined the crowd. Uday Shankar and Ram Gopal performed here during their visits to Lahore. Among those who looked in regularly were Professor Bokhari, Faiz, Krishan Chandar, Ghulam Abbas, Sahir Ludhianawi and Rajinder Sindh Bedi.

Before coming to Regal, Sanyal had done a lot of work and running about. He worked for a plaster casting firm on Nisbet Road. Then for six years he taught at the Mayo School of Arts. He became the secretary of the Punjab Fine Arts Society, which was formed at the Rama Krishna bookshop. He resigned from the School in 1936. The F.C. College offered him room for his studio in its building in Nila Gumbad. He accepted another offer, one from Shalimar Paints who let to him for Rs.40 a month the basement of their premises in Dyal Singh Mansion. He moved in and christened his school "Lahore School of Fine Arts". He held a large exhibition there which was opened by Sir Fazl-i-Husain. Then he moved to some place in the Commercial Building opposite the Coffee House, and then again to the big hall in the Shah Din

Building offered by the Punjab Literary League. Then in 1938 he came to the Regal and stayed there till 1947, flourished and did excellent work as a painter and sculptor.

He was away from Lahore when Partition took place. He came back in October to find that the Regal cinema had been sealed by the Government as an evacuee property. Through the "courtesy" of a junior official he was "allowed" in after signing a pre-dated legal agreement transferring the studio to a certain person. Anwar, the *Pakistan Times* cartoonist, and his peons helped him to remove some of his paintings and sculptures when the new "owner", conceding the request of Fabre and calling the art work "these useless objects", permitted Sanyal to take away his precious work. As all of them could not be carried across the border, Fabre retained some 14 sculpture pieces and some paintings in trust.

Then Fabre fell victim to a conspiracy, hatched because his wife was a Hindu, and lost his job. He tried to see the Chief Minister but failed. His wife, Ratna, left her huge bungalow and took Fabre to India where her parents lived. Sanyal's sculptures in his possession were left unattended in the basement of the Museum. After 39 years Sanyal came to Lahore in October 1986, and he was allowed to make slides of them but not to take them away. The forearm of the "Fasting Buddha", a most celebrated sculpture in the world, had been damaged while lying in the Museum. Since then I have not heard of a reunion of the works with their creator. What cruelties can nationalism inflict!

On one occasion Shaikh Manzur Qadir, the eldest son of Sir Abdul Qadir, invited Abbaji to a Sunday lunch and I accompanied him. The other guests were Sajjad Zaheer and Khushwant Singh. I don't remember the general conversation, though it must have been fascinating because Khushwant was an incorrigible and irreverent storyteller and Sajjad Zaheer was one of the best-read young Leftists. But I can recall one long and assertive comment made by Sajjad on the extreme length to which the Punjabis of Lahore had gone in owning British culture. He said, "I am impressed and amazed. Your women are elegantly dressed and groomed. Your men wear Western clothes with distinction. You dress for dinner, you lunch at the Stiffles and have afternoon tea at Lorangs. The clubs here are good copies of what I saw in London. You speak English on every occasion with much confidence. Can someone explain why the Punjab has hugged the rulers' way of life so close to its chest"? Khushwant Singh dismissed the remarks with a few light-hearted, vulgar phrases. But Manzur Qadir, who had a keen intelligence and was better educated, launched into a long historical and sociological explanation and Abbaji supported him.

My first entry into the intellectual circles came about when Altaf Gauhar took me to Khushwant Singh's flat in the Ganga Ram Building on the Mall, where a few people met once a month to read out their essays or discuss some topic. It was a highbrow group consisting of Agha Abdul Hameed, G.D. Khosla, Prem Kirpal, S.A. Rahman, Mahmud Ali and his wife Satnam, and a few others. It seems that what kept the circle going was as much its intellectual

interest as the presence of two women: Khushwant Singh's wife Kaval was intelligent and lively; Champa, my senior at Government College by 4 or 5 years, Altaf Gauhar's classmate and E. Mangat Rai's wife, was lovely. Mangat Rai was good looking and in the Indian Civil Service. Champa was a woman of great beauty. Tall, slim and fair she had a face as dazzling as it was soft. She generally wore a white sari. I still remember one evening at the Regal cinema when a long film was being shown. My friends and I had bought our tickets and were in a large crowd waiting in the foyer for the matinee show to come to an end. When the show ended the audience began to come down the stairs to go home. At the corner of the top step appeared Champa in her white sari. The chattering crowd in the foyer fell silent. There was a hush until she reached the end of the staircase, turned right and walked out of our sight. The elite was paying its tribute to beauty. There was not a single wink, ogle, leer or even an audible breath. Those were civilized days.

As far as I remember Champa was a daughter of one of the Rallia Ram brothers who ran the YMCA. E. Mangat Rai was the younger brother of Miss Mangat Rai who taught history at Kinnaird College. Later Edward Mangat Rai proved a faithless and cruel husband and ruined Champa's life. In the early and mid-forties Champa was the reigning belle of Lahore.

THE INDIA COFFEE HOUSE

In terms of geneology, for Europe the coffee house was a gift of the Ottoman Constantinople, an

imperial legacy. If the legatees chose to turn it into a radical centre, well! it was their decision. A fascinating parallel is the origin and use of the India Coffee House in the British Indian empire. The British rulers were tea drinkers but they did not ask or encourage the Indians to share their preference. However, in the 1930's, the Government of India created a Coffee Board to promote the sale and consumption of coffee beans which were grown in south India. The Board opened an "India Coffee House" in every big city. By a coincidence this was the period of the resurgence of Communism in the country and of the rise of the Progressive Writers Movement. As the coffee house was a lively talking shop, the percolated beverage was tasty, the cashew nuts delectable and the prices reasonable, all sorts of intellectuals forgathered here, and from the late 1930s the largest group came from the Left and other radicals. Hence an interesting situation arose in which British rule was challenged by its best-read, most sincere and most argumentative critics from the comfortable seats of a centre opened and financed by the Government of India.

Judged by the restaurants they patronized, the Leftist always preferred the coffee house to all other bars and eateries. Some Marxian sociologist is required to explain why the Leftist dogmatists preferred coffee to tea. The British were tea drinkers, so were the Russians and the Chinese. But the Leftists chose to issue their exhortations over a cup of coffee. Even the otherwise cataclysmic partition of India in 1947 could not break this radicalism-coffee bond.

The India Coffee House of Lahore, where I sat with my friends for 4-5 hours every day for 13 years (1942-57), entertained more Leftists than I found at the Communist Party office on McLeod Road. The two most popular meeting places of the intellectual and literary coteries were the India Coffee House and the India Tea House, situated 150 yards apart. But it was the Coffee House where the Leftists congregated. An odd radical or Communist sometimes strayed into the Tea House to look up a friend, but this was uncommon. The political line was drawn sharply and firmly.

Before 1947 the regular Leftist customers at the Coffee House were Sajjad Zaheer, Syed Sibti Hasan, Abdullah Malik, Rauf Malik, Safdar Mir, Mahmud Ali and Satnam, Mazhar Ali (Tariq Ali's father), Habib Jalib, Zaheer Kashmiri, Bari Alig, F.D. (Dada) Mansur, and several non-Muslims. After 1947 two or three men went away to Karachi, but a lot more joined the group. Thus there was a solid Leftist phalanx in the House all the time.

The Coffee House first opened its doors at the site of the later Pak Tea House. Then it shifted to the Mall near Delhi House and Alfred Building and stayed there till the end. (The old site was then taken over by a Sikh gentleman who opened the India Tea House; after 1947 this was taken over by a refugee, Siraj, and renamed Pak Tea House). After 1947 the India Coffee House was given the name of Zelin Coffee House.

The Coffee House was for over 30 years the single most important and influential mental powerhouse which moulded the lives and minds of

a whole generation, and its legacy affected the careers of the succeeding generation. Whenever an intellectual, cultural and literary history of Lahore (or the Punjab and Pakistan) is written the diverse circles (literary, political, artistic, scholarly, legal, journalistic, etc.) which met and discoursed in the Coffee House will have to be described in detail and the ever-widening waves of their influence recorded. As nothing has been written so far on the subject and I don't see anything in the offing, I give below a list of the important persons whom I can recall. If our indifference to contemporary and recent history continues to march ahead without a check I doubt if, 50 years hence, more than a handful of the following names will ring a bell in the ears of that generation. I think this list has four uses: it proves what a rich fund of talent that age commanded; it paints a realistic and faithful picture of the Lahore of those days; on a personal note, it indicates the milieu in which I experienced my intellectual growth; and it provides the future cultural historian with an authentic and eyewitness directory of the people who contributed so much to contemporary and later civil society.

LIST OF THE HABITUÉS OF THE COFFEE HOUSE

1. Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Khan (politics)
2. Abdul Hameed (science, Rhodes Scholar)
3. Abdul Hameed, Agha (ICS)
4. Abdul Majeed (journalism)
5. Abdul Qayyum *alias* Jojo (teaching)
6. Abdul Qayyum, Mir (law, politics)

7. Abdullah Butt (literature, conversation)
8. Abdullah Malik (journalism, politics)
9. Abdullah, Dr Syed (literature, teaching)
10. Abdus Salam (Science)
11. Abdus Salam Khurshid (journalism, teaching)
12. Abid, Syed Abid Ali (teaching)
13. Abu Saeed Anwar (politics)
14. Aftab Ahmad Khan (CSP)
15. Ahmad Parvez (art)
16. Ahmad Saeed (teaching)
17. Akbar, Salahuddin (writing)
18. Akhtar Ali, Agha (private sector service)
19. Akhtar Mahmood (CSP)
20. Akhtar Razi (bookselling, psychology)
21. Alauddin (CSP)
22. Altaf Gauhar (literature, civil service)
23. Altaf, Nudrat (law)
24. Ameer Hyder Khan (politics)
25. Amin, Shaikh Muhammad (publishing)
26. Aminullah Khan (journalism)
27. Amjad Husain (journalism)
28. Anjum Rumani (teaching, poetry)
29. Anwar Aziz (sports, politics)
30. Ashiq Hussain Batalavi (literature)
31. Asho *alias* Khalid Zaman (boxing)
32. Ashraf, Shaikh Muhammad (publishing)
33. Asif Jan (law)
34. Azhar, Ahmaduddin (civil service)
35. Aziz Beg (journalism)
36. Badiuzzaman (law)
37. Balraj Kanwal
38. Bari Alig (journalism, history)
39. Barkat Ali, Chaudhri (publishing)
40. Bedi, B.P.L. (journalism, politics)
41. Beg, Abdullah Anwar (law, writing)
42. Beg, Naseem Anwar (international civil service)

43. Bhatti, Abdul Majeed (poetry)
44. Bokhari, Ahmad Shah Patras (teaching, literature)
45. Brij Narain (teaching)
46. Burki, Hamidullah (sports, journalism)
47. Butt, Gul Muhammad (law, politics)
48. Chaudhri, F.E. (photography)
49. Chughtai, Abdur Rahman (art)
50. Cyprian Eric (teaching)
51. Dáng, Sat Pal (politics)
52. Daud Rahbar (teaching)
53. Davinder Satyarthi (literature)
54. Dickinson, E.C. (teaching)
55. Dilawar Husain (law)
56. Din Muhammad, Justice (law, politics)
57. Durrani Amanullah (banking)
58. Ehsan Danish (poetry, bookselling)
59. Ejaz Batalavi (law)
60. Fabre, Charles (museum curatorship)
61. Faiz, Faiz Ahmad (poetry, journalism)
62. Fazlur Rahman (CSP)
63. Fazlur Rahman (Islam, teaching)
64. Ghulam Abbas (literature)
65. Ghulam Jilani, Malik (law, politics)
66. Ghulam Nabi, Malik (politics)
67. Gopal Mittal (literature, journalism)
68. Gyan Chand (poetry)
69. Habib Jalib (poetry)
70. Hafeez Hoshiarpuri (poetry, broadcasting)
71. Hafeez Jullundheri (poetry)
72. Hameed Akhtar (journalism)
73. Hameed Makki
74. Hameed Nizami (journalism)
75. Hameed, A. (literature)
76. Hamid Jalal (journalism)
77. Hanif, A.Z. (teaching)
78. Haqqi, Shanul Haq (literature)

79. Hasrat, Chiragh Hasan (journalism, literature)
80. Idrees, Muhammad (journalism)
81. Iftikhar Ahmad, Syed (journalism, law)
82. Iftikharuddin, Mian (journalism, politics)
83. Intizar Husain (literature)
84. Iqbal Riza, Syed (foreign service)
85. Izharul Haq (CSP)
86. Izzuddin Pal (teaching)
87. Jafri, A.B.S. (journalism)
88. Jalil Karir (civil service)
89. Jama'ai, Muhammad Sarwar (journalism, religion)
90. Jama'ai, Naseer (librarianship)
91. Jamiluddin Hasan (Foreign Service)
92. Jamiluzzaman (journalism)
93. Kamran Singh Mann (politics)
94. Kanhayya Lal Kapur (literature)
95. Kazmi, Midhat (social work)
96. Khalid, Dr Tasadduq Hussain (law, poetry)
97. Khalilur Rahman (poetry, journalism)
98. Khokhar, Ahmad Hasan (tennis)
99. Khurshid Ahmad (law)
100. Khurshid, Khwaja Hasan (journalism, law, politics)
101. Kirmani, Ahmad Saeed (law, politics)
102. Kirpal Singh (politics)
103. Krishan Chandar (literature)
104. Krishna, Rup (bookselling, art)
105. Latifi, Danyal (politics)
106. Latifi, Muhammad Hasan (literature, journalism)
107. Majeed Lahori (poetry)
108. Majeed Makki
109. Majeed Nizami (journalism)
110. Mangat Rai, Edward (ICS)
111. Mansur Ahmad, Qazi (foreign service)
112. Mansur, F.D.
113. Manto, Saadat Hasan (literature)
114. Manzar Bashir

115. Manzur Qadir (law)
116. Masud Nabi Nur (CSP)
117. Masud Zaman (CSP)
118. Mazhar Ali Khan (journalism)
119. Mazharul Haq (law)
120. Mehdi Qizilbash (leisure)
121. Mirza Adeeb (literature)
122. Mubarak Saghir (politics)
123. Muhammad Anwar (law)
124. Muhammad Hasan (teaching, Hailey College)
125. Muhammad Shafi *alias* Meem-Sheen) (journalism)
126. Muhammad Tufail (literature)
127. Muin Najmi (art)
128. Mukhtar Siddiqui (poetry, music)
129. Mumtaz Ahmad Khan (journalism)
130. Munir Ahmad Khan (nuclear science)
131. Munir Husain, Syed (CSP)
132. Munir Niazi (poetry)
133. Murtaza, Syed Azeem (poetry)
134. Muzaffar Ali Syed (literature, teaching)
135. Muznib, Rahman (literature)
136. Naik, Niaz (foreign service)
137. Naimuddin Hasan (foreign service)
138. Nasim Hasan Shah (law)
139. Nasim Zakria (teaching)
140. Nasir Kazmi (poetry)
141. Naumani, Abdul Qadeer (journalism)
142. Niaz, Sufi A.Q. (poetry, religion)
143. Osman Malik, Saeed (teaching)
144. Petman, Bevan (art)
145. Qasim Shah (keeping of the shrine)
146. Qasmi, Ahmad Nadeem (literature, poetry)
147. Qateel Shifai (poetry)
148. Qayyum Nazar (poetry, teaching)
149. Qurban, Fazl-i-Elahi (politics)
150. Qureshi, Dr Barkat Ali (teaching)

151. Qureshi, Dr Waheed (teaching)
152. Rafi Pir (dramatics, broadcasting)
153. Rafique Khawar (teaching)
154. Rallia Ram, M.M. (teaching)
155. Ram, K.L. Rallia (YMCA)
156. Rasheed Aziz (leisure)
157. Rauf Malik, A. (politics, publishing)
158. Razi Tirmizi (literature)
159. Razi Wasti (teaching)
160. Riaz Qadir (poetry, art)
161. Roedad Khan (CSP)
162. Rustam Sidhva (law)
163. Saeed, Maulavi Muhammad (journalism)
164. Safdar Mir (film-making, literature, teaching)
165. Safdar, S. (art)
166. Sahir Ludhianavi (poetry)
167. Saifuddin Saif (poetry)
168. Sakhi Sarwar Sultan
169. Salahuddin Ahmad, Maulana (literature)
170. Saleem Ashraf (teaching)
171. Salik, Abdul Majeed (journalism)
172. Sanyal, B.C. (art)
173. Saqib Ziravi (poetry)
174. Sardar Anwar Khan (foreign service, literature)
175. Satnam Mahmud, Mrs.
176. Sayeed Khan, M. *alias* Saeed Jinnah
177. Shahzad Ahmad (poetry)
178. Shaikh Ahmad (art)
179. Shakir Ali (art, teaching)
180. Shams, Agha (museum curatorship)
181. Sharma, Diwan Chang (teaching)
182. Shaukat Ali (teaching)
183. Shemza, Anwar Jalal (art)
184. Sher Ali, General (soldering, politics)
185. Sher Muhammad Akhtar (literature, psychology)
186. Shohrat Bukhari (poetry)

187. Shorish Kashmiri (politics, journalism)
188. Sibti Hasan, Syed (journalism)
189. Siddiqui, Abdul Hameed (law, teaching)
190. Sirajuddin Zafar (poetry)
191. Syed, Anwar Husain (teaching)
192. Tabish Dehlavi (poetry)
193. Taj, Syed Imtiaz Ali (literature)
194. Tajjamul Husain, Raja (civil service)
195. Taqiuddin Pal (civil service)
196. Taseer, Dr Muhammad Din (literature, teaching)
197. Waheeduzzaman (teaching)
198. Wattoo, Aslam Hayat (police service)
199. Yunus Saeed (journalism)
200. Yusuf Zafar (poetry)
201. Zafar Iqbal (poetry)
202. Zafarul Islam (teaching)
203. Zafarullah, Sardar (law, politics)
204. Zahur Azar (broadcasting, civil service)
205. Zia Jullundheri (poetry)
206. Zia Muhayyuddin

CHAPTER 2

THE ROLL OF HONOUR: I

Up to the age of 15 Abbaji had been my sole intellectual mentor; for the next 4 years he was assisted by Professors Sirajuddin and Bokhari; and for the remaining 11 (till I left for England) I made myself in the image of some of my friends and acquaintances in the Coffee House.

Had it not been outside the terms of reference which I have set down in writing about my life I should have inserted here short biographies of all the names listed in the Appendix; in any case, that would make a book by itself. But I must give the reader some information about those who were close to me or taught me something significant and lasting. All in all, my enrolment at the Coffee House university equipped me better than any college I attended to benefit from my British studies and later to participate in European academic life without any feeling of inferiority or inadequacy.

SAFDAR MIR

He was a multi-faceted man. He was a film actor, producer of stage plays, a poet in Urdu and

Punjabi, a teacher, a journalist and a confirmed Marxist. A tall man with weak eyes and robust physique, he stood and walked erect which was a legacy of his early acting career in Bombay. He was probably the only Communist in Pakistan who had read the entire text of Marx's *Das Capital* more than once and could therefore argue convincingly from a firm base. He taught English at the Zamindara College, Gujrerat, MAO College, Lahore, the Government College, Lahore, where he was my colleague for 4 years, and the Government College, Montgomery (Sahiwal). Then he joined WAPDA as a public relations officer, and after that joined *The Pakistan Times* as an assistant editor. After retirement he wrote in *Dawn* for several years a long weekly article entitled "Cultural Notes" under the pseudonym of "Zeno". He died in 1998 when I was living in Cambridge. He married late in life but found in marriage a mirage.

Professor Sirajuddin took him on the staff of the Government College in 1951 and he proved a very good teacher. In 1959 the new Principal, Khwaja Manzur Husain, was responsible for his departure apparently, because he was a Communist and President Ayub Khan wanted to cleanse all government institutions of the Leftists, but really, as Safdar insisted, because Manzur was an "Urdu chauvinist" and looked askance at Safdar's activities in the College in favour of promoting the Punjabi language.

Unafraid of authority and uneducated public opinion he spoke his mind freely and persuasively. While a lecture at the Government College he had

his head shaved and, smiling down the frowns and boos of his 2nd year students, continued to lecture calmly and suavely. He was the best-read journalist of his age, and I know no other man whose reach and understanding encompassed so many fields: English, Urdu and Punjabi literature, Marxism, politics, the way a society works, and modern history. His hallmark was a resounding laugh which could be heard three rooms away. His eyes glittered with merriment behind his thick lenses while narrating a funny story or making a point in his argument, as if throwing a challenge to his audience to produce a better one. He was warm of heart and generous of his time. His company was at the same time exhilarating and beneficial. He was very much a gregarious animal, as most people without a family are. He lived for and amid his friends, and this made his later years lonely and painful. He spent his last 15 years living with an aged Parsi lady on the canal bank, surrounded by his books, playing games of chess with his old associate Ahmad Bashir, suffering from asthma, brooding and feeling forsaken. When I heard of his death for several days his raucous laughter reverberated in my Cambridge study.

He was a very private person and never talked about his personal life even amid close friends. I knew him for fifty years but knew nothing about his background, family life, ambitions and frustrations, triumphs and failures, hopes and despair. At times his patent laughter sounded more as an ironical comment on life or a bitter sarcasm on the passing of time than as a mark of merriment

or humour. There seemed to be a hollowness in its echo which only his closest friends could notice, and they felt sorry for him.

Safdar had one defect which is characteristic of most Communists. He expected everyone to be "scientific" in his approach or analysis. He used the adjective to its death, and always meant by it "Marxist". On this one point he was self-righteous; on all others he was pleasantly accommodating. I learnt much from him. I miss him much. In any other country he would have emerged as a minor thinker.

ZAHEER KASHMIRI

His real name was Ghulam Dastgir and he was born in 1919 in a lower middle class family of Amritsar. When I met him in 1944, he was a flamboyant personality, consciously outrageous, bent upon having his say on the subject of his choice, and colourful in his deportment and dress. But all this served as an outer cover (perhaps a disguise) for a heart palpitating on the plight of the oppressed and a soul full of fellowship in sorrow. He was a Communist by conviction as well as by instinct, and his knowledge of the dogma was deep and wide. His subject of study for the M.A. degree (which he did not complete) was English literature, but he had studied Western philosophy to understand Marx. His favourite thinker was Hegel whom he often summoned to his support in his serious conversation. He was also well-read in Urdu literature, especially poetry.

As an Urdu poet his reputation stands high. Unlike other "progressive" and leftist poets he did

not allow his political commitment to make a preacher out of him. The romantic element in his poetry shrugs off the pedantic and the didactic. Some of his ghazals are classical in technique and sentiment. They were a fascinating combination of personal love and social commitment. His strong point was his vocabulary. The words were not only well chosen but they carried an authority and pomp which was rare among the "progressive" poets. He mixed his vision of the world with a deeply felt romantic feeling to produce a seamless poetic fabric.

He was also a literary critic of no mean talent as is evident from his introductions to his poetical collections, his articles in literary journals, and his insightful remarks in the discussions in the Halqa-e-Arbab-e-Zauq.

He was active in the trade union movement in Amritsar and Lahore. As a Communist Party member he was fated to suffer incarceration under the pro-USA governments and suffered much on that account. In Pakistan it is not uncommon to find some prominent Leftists who come from affluent families and wear the badge of Socialism or Communism as a mark of fashion or a status symbol. I also know a few fiery socialists who, though not refugees in any sense, got large bungalows allotted to them in 1947. Zaheer was a genuine and honest Leftist. His lower middle class family lost everything it had in Amritsar and fled to Lahore. Zaheer's father got a very modest house allotted to him (No.13, Street 9, Beadon Road) in which Zaheer was given one small room where he spent all his life, even after his late marriage. The

theory and practice of his political commitment marched in step.

It is remarkable that his life of pain, suffering and oppression did not leave any dark mark on his personality. He retained his humanity, sense of humour and tranquillity of mind. I felt that compassion and tolerance were the dominant elements of his character. I saw him discussing his literary and political views with his opponents and detractors in the Coffee House. At times the debate took an ugly turn and a quarrel was in the offing. But he retained his equanimity and even temper and never used an insulting phrase or taunted his collocutors. When he was very serious he indulged in one mannerism: he raised the index finger of his right hand, pointed it towards the other party and began speaking in English. At the end of the argument he would say "so *that* is the point. Now, let's have another coffee".

He had started drinking in his youth and with years his consumption increased. I never saw him drunk, only light-headed. But when the indulgence began to encroach on his health he, in 1972, abandoned it. He told me when we met in 1974 that he had suffered the pangs of withdrawal for a mere one week.

He was an unshakable atheist for almost all his life. This is attested by an interesting episode. During the anti-Ahmadiyya movement of early 1953, one of his neighbours, with a view to turning him out of his house and occupying it himself, reported to the police that he was an Ahmadi and therefore an unbeliever in the final prophethood of

the Prophet of Islam (PBUH). Zaheer's short chin beard was enough to damn him in the opaque eyes of the authorities. He was arrested and thrown in a cell at the large civil lines police station on the Queen's Road, opposite the Plaza cinema.

Martial Law had been declared a few days earlier and judicial powers were given to junior army officers who held court in police stations and dispensed rough and ready justice. Zaheer had been in his cups when he was arrested. But he was alert with all his wits about him when the next morning he was brought before the army tribunal. The inspector of police explained to the Major the reason for the arrest. The following brief conversation ensued:

Major: "Do you believe that Muhammad (PBUH) was the last and final prophet sent by Allah?"

Zaheer: "How can I say whether he was the last prophet sent by Allah when I don't believe in the Allah who, you say, sent him?"

Major (addressing the police inspector): "What loony is this whom you have brought before me to check if he is a true Muslim? Take him away and let him go."

For days Zaheer used to regale us with this story with his mock-serious description of the court scene and the popping eyes and changes of expression on the Major's face. When another friend joined the crowd around the Coffee House table and asked, "How did the Pakistan Army react to your declaration?", he stubbed the cigarette end in the ash tray, lifted his index finger and began to recount the story with a dramatic zeal in chaste Punjabi.

One day in 1946 he met me in the Coffee House and asked me casually, "Have you ever watched a film from the 4-anna stalls?" Let me first describe the hierarchy of seating arrangement in Lahore's cinemas of those days. The screen end of the hall had pits with hard uncomfortable chairs and each seat cost 4 annas (25 paise of today). After that was the second class, the largest in the hall, with reasonable chairs with arms, the seats costing one rupee and two annas each. Above it at the back was the first class, with soft cushioned chairs, and here the fare was two rupees and four annas. The hall ended here. But above the first class was the balcony where the seats were luxurious and the price three rupees and six annas. College students with identity cards enjoyed the concession, applicable to all classes except the pits, of paying half the ordinary price of a seat. In other words, they paid 9 annas for the second class, one rupee and two annas for the first, and two rupees and four annas for the balcony. As a student of Government College with a generous pocket allowance and with the half-price concession, I had never contemplated watching a film in the pits.

I replied to Zaheer's inquiry in the negative, and when he proposed that I should accompany him to a Bhati Gate cinema to watch a film along with the "sweating humanity" (his words) I did not protest. We met at 5.45 P.M. outside the Gate, he bought two 4-anna tickets, and we entered the hall. Everything inside disgusted me. The benches were of hard wood without a back so that I could not lean back. There were few fans and the place was

airless. The audience around me consisted of labourers, street vendors, tonga drivers and the louts of the locality, who talked loudly, often lacing their sentences with obscene but biologically accurate Punjabi abuses, which were so explicit that nothing was left to imagination. Most of them smelt and I felt nauseated. Had Zaheer not been chaperoning me I would have left.

I can't recall which film it was, but it was an English movie. Whenever a woman appeared on the screen the 4-anna audience squirmed in their seats and passed lewd remarks. When the hero kissed the heroine in a close-up shot there was bedlam around me with catcalls, whistlings and saucy comments like "Oé", "Haé" and "Mauj Kargyá". The crowd was exclusively male. Even if I could ignore these problems and concentrate on the film I found that I could not see the figures moving on the screen. Sitting so close to the screen my eyes failed to adjust to the short distance between the viewer and the viewed. What was visible to me was huge men, women, horses and wagons (it was probably a Western film) whose abnormal size distorted the picture. Every close-up shot filled the whole screen. There was a disturbing contrast between visual distortion and audio clarity. The picture was enormous and blurred, the dialogue was clear and distinct. I sat through the performance not as a pleasure but as a painful novelty.

When we came out Zaheer insisted that we visit a nearby tea stall, which we did. But it added to my loathing. The shop was filthy, the tables and chairs

dirty and rough, and the few customers were brethren of the cinema crowd. After a boy in soiled clothes had slammed two ready-made cups of tea before us with a bang and we had lit our cigarettes, Zaheer immediately embarked upon a lecture on our experience of watching a film in the pits. He talked in English for about ten minutes. I can't recall at this interval of time his words or the order in which he piled one argument upon another. But I remember the gist of what he said because it affected me deeply.

"I know how uncomfortable you felt there. New surroundings. Strange people. Yes, strange, because they were not the people you meet or talk to. How surprising that you have till today not met these people. They are the unwashed whom you have never met. They are the people for whose freedom the Congress, your Muslim League and my Party are struggling. And you have never before met these people whom the whole problem is about. You talk about the independence and the future of the country, but you don't know the people who live in the country. They smell, but they are the salt of the earth. I am not asking you to mix with them, but at least to be aware of them. I am not asking you to join the Communist Party. I am not a preacher. I demand your sympathy and compassion for these people. They deserve that and as a human being this is the least you can do for them. And I brought you to this apology for a tea house with that purpose in view. I know you don't like the ambience, the milieu, the quality of the tea, the demeanour of the waiter, the condition of the

furniture, the noise and bustle of the bazaar. But that is where and how people live. Don't share this condition with them, but be cognizant of it."

I have had an instinctive tenderness for the downtrodden and my inferiors since my earliest years of consciousness. I think I inherited it from Amman whose humility and compassion was endless. My childhood in Ballamabad had provided a salubrious climate for it to grow. Therefore Zaheer's words did not open my eyes; that was not necessary. They reminded me of feelings that I had once possessed but was gradually losing sight of in Lahore's comfortable living and the aristocratic milieu of the Government College. I often heard my Leftist friends in the Coffee House talking about the poor but their emphasis was political rather than economic and social. Their vocabulary was full of "Marx says", "the proletariat", "the economic theory of history", "exploitation by the rich", "trade unionism" and such words, but they hardly mentioned the poor, the individual who suffered, the amelioration which was needed, the practical steps which were required. The "socialist revolution" monopolized their debates, not the realities and practical details of raising the level of the poor. They sold Soviet tracts and pamphlets and regurgitated Marx and Lenin. They did not expound the creed of human sympathy and the dogma of natural compassion.

That is why Zaheer's words stuck to my mind and I can reproduce them today, after 61 years. It was a welcome reminder of what I had felt when my consciousness was still an infant.

In his looks, dress and bearings Zaheer was an individualist. He always wore Western dress, usually of dark shades. For some years after migrating to Lahore from Amritsar he sported a bright red bow tie, as if to underline his Communist loyalty and challenge those who differed from him. Ever since we met he wore his natural golden-brown hair shoulder length, had long sideburns, and a thin moustache and a French-cut beard. The last became his distinguishing mark. His complexion was very fair, fairer than his siblings. He was tall, walked erect and moved briskly. He could be reticent when he was thinking or was uninterested in the subject under discussion. But when he was moved or wanted to make a point his passion rose like a glittering sun emerging out of a grey cloud. Then nothing could stop him. Quoting poets and philosophers he would build his case brick by brick, mortaring every joint, strengthening his argument, and not letting his critics interrupt his foaming flood of words. He spoke often in Punjabi and sometimes in Urdu, but when he wanted to overawe the company he switched to English in which he was unexpectedly fluent and accurate. For a boy who emerged from a lower-middle class background and grew in the lanes of Amritsar in vernacular company and attended a local Muslim college his command of spoken English surprised his friends. He found no difficulty in understanding and digesting obtuse and difficult texts like Hegel and Spengler. I once asked him how he had managed to tackle the *Decline of the West*. "By

reading the entire text five times with concentrated attention", he replied.

He married very late in life and chose as his wife the daughter of his *manma*, Surayya, a homely, modestly educated girl, and they lived a happy life. Being issueless they adopted a foundling boy. Zaheer died in 1994 at the Mayo Hospital, Lahore, after spending 5 or 6 days in the infirmary, and was buried in the Mianisahib graveyard, next to his father's grave. Surraya died in 2002 or 2003.

He remained throughout his life a man of remarkable compassion and tolerance, bearing a hard life with an airy and attractive smile.

YUSUF ZAFAR

He was a prolific poet and writer, whom I met by a family connection: his wife was a classmate of Irshad (*manma* Hameed's eldest daughter). At that time, in 1945, Yusuf lived on Multan Road and I visited his house with Irshad. The acquaintance matured into a lifelong friendship.

Yusuf's early life was sad and it left an ineradicable impress on all his years to come. Born in Murree in 1914 (though his home town was Gujranwala) in the family of a successful businessman, misfortune came visiting him soon. He was 15 when his father died and his elder sister fell down dead at seeing her father dying. Under the impact of this double tragedy the 7th. class student composed his first poem. The family business collapsed and money was hard to come by. With much difficulty Yusuf graduated in 1936 from

Rawalpindi, and then went to Delhi in search of a living, where he eked out a miserable existence by pasting advertising posters on the walls of the city and briefly managing Josh Malihabadi's monthly journal *Kalim*. Returning to Lahore he got a clerical job in the provincial irrigation department, where he served for 5 years. In 1943 Mian Bashir Ahmad took him on as assistant editor of *Humayun* (that was when I met him). Later he joined the All India Radio and then Radio Pakistan where he rose to be a regional director of the so-called Azad Kashmir Radio which was actually a Pakistan government propaganda instrument located in Rawalpindi. He died there in 1972.

Yusuf was a sensitive person, a pessimist due to his economic circumstances, humble and courteous. He was short in stature and wore thick-lensed spectacles.

He first came under the non-religious influence of Josh Malihabadi, Ehsan Danish and Miraji, abandoned Islam, wrote *nazms*, but remained emotionally disturbed. In his last years he returned to ghazal and was inspired by Faiz Ahmad Faiz and Akhtar Shirani. In Rawalpindi he met a man of religion who acted as his spiritual guide. Yusuf came back to Islam with a vengeance, grew a beard, performed *hajj*, embraced Sufism, and started writing *na'ts* (poems in praise of the Holy Prophet (PBUH)). In all his chosen genres he wrote fast and much.

His poetry is the result of modern sensibility. It took him long to emerge from his dark despair and entertain hope, but he remained a worrier, always

thinking of the wretched, suffering humanity of which he was himself a part. He was a poet of doubt and despair in spite of his later mystic leanings. There is a clear dichotomy in his poetry between his ghazals which follow the classical pattern and vocabulary and his poems which voice modern sensibility.

He was a regular habitu  of Halqa-i-Arbab-i-Zauq and the Coffee House as long as he lived in Lahore, and it was in the Coffee House that we sat and talked for hundreds of hours between 1944 and 1948, and often he was accompanied by Mukhtar Siddiqui. Yusuf was not in the forefront of the poets of his age but he was on the top of the second-rate group. Yet he stands out in the depth of his feeling, though the sentiment he echoed was grey and at times cynical.

Once when I was spending a long vacation from Khartoum in Rawalpindi in the mid-1960s I called upon him at his Peshawar Road official residence. I was pleased to observe his improved circumstances. But the euphoria did not last long. He invited Zarina and me to dine with him the next evening. I can't eat hot oriental curries and soon after we started eating I discovered that all the dishes were too spicy for me. I asked Yusuf's wife to fry two eggs for me. I don't know whether the request riled her or that was her way of dealing with difficult guests, but her response flabbergasted me. "*Bhai Sahib, hun t   hoi kh n  paig *" (Brother, you will have to eat what is placed before you). Yusuf intervened and persuaded her to go and fry the eggs. What struck me was Yusuf's cringing before

the woman. He spoke only two sentences, but they summarized the attitude of a medieval slave begging a crumb from his tyrannical master. The eggs arrived and I ate them, but without the joy of good fare with an old friend.

I don't know why but Yusuf was my only literary friend in whose presence a wave of deep pity mounted my heart.

In its formative years the Halqa-i-Arbab-i-Zauq was nursed by four poets: Miraji, Mukhtar Siddiqui, Yusuf Zafar and Qayyum Nazar. I did not meet Miraji, though I saw him a number of times on the Mall pacing the footpath before the General Post Office and at the Halqa. I have already mentioned Yusuf Zafar. Let me recall the two others.

QAYYUM NAZAR

He comes to my mind as a human and literary paradox. He laughed more often than Safdar Mir, but in the high pitch of the sound they produced they were a match. But inside him there was a deep-laid melancholy and a consuming sadness, which could have been a natural trait but also reflected the sufferings he had to undergo in his life. Orphaned at an early age, he had to bring up a large group of dependants with his less than modest means. For several years he was a clerk in the Punjab Accountant General's office, and then by great personal effort he improved his plight and ended up as a lecturer in Urdu at the Government College, Lahore, where he and I were colleagues for 4 years. A platonic relationship with a Hindu girl, which

stayed Platonic for ever, made him a poet. For a long time he wore knickers and played cricket, wrote Urdu and Punjabi poetry, and Urdu prose, brightened the lives of his friends, related funny stories, invented puns, and apparently enjoyed life. On the other side, he experienced poverty, suffered humiliation (the lot of every teacher in Pakistan), lost two grown-up sons in quick succession, and towards the end became blind. He was also the secretary of the Halqa for a long time.

In poetry he was a pupil of Syed Abid Ali Abid who was a strict disciplinarian and placed great value on the worth of the word. Abid inspired him to instill musicality in his verses and to choose words carefully. His ghazals, poems and songs are mellifluous and maintain the traditional style, but there is in all that he composed an undertone of diffidence and reserve which was an inevitable reflection of the life he was living. Even when he writes lyrically there is no ostentation in the expression. There is a silent, unobtrusive suffering which serves as a background. It is like his loud laughter which had no mirth in it. The lamp of his soul burned soundlessly but coloured his personality as much as it imbued his poetry. His verse is the work of a broken heart, whose wounds remained green.

MUKHTAR SIDDIQUI

Mukhtarul Haq Siddiqui was born in Sialkot, received his early education in Gujranwala, and graduated from Islamia College, Lahore. After

some minor employments he joined the Delhi All India Radio station. After 1947 he took his M.A. degree in Urdu, topping the list, and spent the rest of his life working for the Pakistan radio and later television.

He also nursed a broken heart all his life. He was not only poor from the beginning but a helpless victim of a brutal bureaucracy in his career. He was a pupil of Simab Akbarabadi, and as such loyal to the linguistic pattern of classical Urdu poetry. In his *nazms*, which were his forte, he did something unusual in following the technique of the *qasida*. Both his lines and stanzas were arranged in a pattern which followed the model of Indian classical music whose nature and texture he knew like the back of his hand. It is not widely known that without knowing any European language except English he was well-read in French literature and German and French psychology. It was from him that I learnt for the first time the difference between Jung and Adler. He also tried to teach me the elements of Indian music but we did not proceed beyond the difference between *sur* and *tál*.

He had been a close friend of Miraji and the two had lived together in Delhi for some time while serving in the All India Radio. But he did not allow Miraji to influence his poetry. His *nazms* are a remarkable combination of abstract image-making, diligently sought diction and the melody of a song which came from his deep knowledge of music. He occasionally used Hindi words, as Qayyum Nazar and some other modern poets did, but what I found unique in Mukhtar was the bringing together of

Hindi phrases next to Persian constructions to create a line or scene of lacquered smoothness.

Those who have seen gruelling poverty of the life he lived still marvel how he could produce such fine work. In 1968 I went to call at him in Rawalpindi. It was not easy to find his house. He lived in a lower-middle class *mohalla* in Banni, off Murree Road. The entrance of the house opened directly into the lane and it was covered by a hanging made of used sacks. Inside was a small narrow courtyard with two rooms on one side and a tiny kitchen on the other. His wife Zakia was ill and disabled and lay on a bed in one of the rooms. Mukhtar was in the kitchen baking breads and blowing at the fuel fire. Near him sat his son with a pad resting on his knees. Mukhtar was dictating to him a feature programme for the television. I was stunned.

Twenty years earlier, sitting in the Coffee House I complimented him on the razor-edge creeze of his trousers. "I must look after them. This is the only pair in the family." I laughed disbelievingly, at which he said, "I am not joking. Three persons share them, my brother, my brother-in-law and I. They occasionally wear a *shalwar* and use these trousers only when I am at home."

When Altaf Gauhar had introduced me to Mukhtar in 1946 as we were walking from the Coffee House to the YMCA hall to attend a Halqa meeting he had whispered to me, "He is very poor, very frank but also very self-respecting. Don't forget that." He was right. Far from feeling ashamed of his poverty, he bugled it among his friends. For that we held him in high esteem. But

he did not acquiesce in his plight in silence and helplessness. He spoke out against the world, his superiors at the radio station and later at the television network, all bureaucrats who took upon themselves the self-imposed duty of guiding him. He used to laugh at the way the world was treating him. But there is a limit to human endurance, and during his last years he lost his sang-froid. Now a corroding bitterness entered his heart; this should have happened to an ordinary man much earlier.

Looking at his life and work together, he emerges as a heroic figure who left behind him a relatively small corpus of poetry and yet made for himself a fairly high place in the roll of modern Urdu poets. He created beauty from the pit of an existence which was his fate.

Mukhtar knew by heart hundreds of classical Urdu ghazals and could recite them with impeccable and correct stress and emphasis. One day I was sitting in Zia Jullundheri's office at the Council for National Integration in Rawalpindi when Mukhtar walked in. He consulted Zia on the selection of 2 or 3 ghazals by Mir to be sung on the television. Zia said he didn't have Mir's *diwan* in the office. Mukhtar said that did not matter, and read out from memory ten of Mir's ghazals, commenting on the virtues and suitability of each. At the end they agreed on 3 ghazals. Obviously Mukhtar had studied Mir like a student or literary critic. That day I wished he had been a college teacher and passed on a part of his genius to his students. My regret mirrored the tragedy of Pakistan, where the "well educated" become

lawyers, civil servants, media artists and business executives, while the knowledgeable and the learned spend their lives as clerks and low-paid journalists and editors.

NASIR KAZMI

Nasir Kazmi was quite a different kettle of fish, both as a man and as a poet. There were two Nasir Kazmis and I knew both. One was a young man of modest education who laughed and gossiped, chain-smoked and drank innumerable cups of coffee and tea, spent his night crawling from one tea house to another, talking incessantly and volubly, boasting of his partly-imagined affluent childhood, editing big journals for big men for a pittance, dressed impeccably in Western clothes, was vehement in his conversation, proud, self-respecting, apolitical, his right hand with a cigarette between two fingers held close to his mouth so that he could puff at the reed without the unnecessary labour of bringing the hand up to the face. He loved raw nature – mountains, waterfalls, lakes, rivers (symbols of eternal motion), birds (especially sparrows), flowers, pigeons, his friends. He was fond of controversies and leapt into aggressive conversations with glee. At times he seemed to be in love with his own voice and bored his friends. He was punctual in his appointments if he made any. He was afraid of commitments.

The other Nasir Kazmi was a poet of transcendent pain clad in unfading beauty. His dolour sprang from three main causes: the sufferings he bore and the atrocities he witnessed during the Partition of 1947,

his own poverty, and the social and political chaos of his age. Nasir was more sensitive than most poets and had witnessed more unforgettable happenings. He had to abandon his home in Ambala and this was a blow from which he could not recover. He might have exaggerated the affluence of his pre-1947 life (his father was a mere subedar-major in the British Indian army), but I was an eyewitness of his post-1947 poverty. His habits, though not really expensive, demanded money which was not there. Later he had to support a family and educate his two sons. God alone knows how he managed things. I never saw him asking anyone for help or borrowing from his friends. It doesn't matter how he made do, but he spent all his life under the overhang of starvation. Yet he never complained or moaned about his personal affliction. But he was bitter about the inequalities and oppression of the times, and he had every right to do it. He and his friends were fellow-victims of the contemporary social order. They had no permanent jobs or steady incomes. Publishers paid them puny royalties in installments after many reminders. Newspaper proprietors made late or no payments. Journals employed them at shameful salaries. Nasir himself received Rs.50 as assistant editor of *Humayun*, roughly the equivalent of the wages of the cook of the millionaire owner, Mian Bashir Ahmad. There was a great deal of injustice stalking the country: cruelty of the police, negligence of the physicians, arrogance of the tin gods who ruled the state, hubris of the rich.

There might have been another source of Nasir's melancholy, but nobody is in a position to tell the

facts and Nasir himself never spoke about it. I believe that he had loved a girl in Ambala and failed to win her or lost her in some other way. I base my nebulous conviction on textual evidence. In several of his ghazals there is, apart from general poignancy, an unmistakable note of piercing agony which speaks of a personal tragedy. I am aware that I am raising an issue which involves all poets of all languages: is the love in their poetry a personal experience or merely a hallowed tradition? But after knowing Nasir for 12 years and sat with him for few hours every day. I have an intuitive feeling that he had once loved and lost. That gives an authenticity and genuineness to his ghazals which rings true.

Nasir was not only under Mir Taqi Mir's influence but made him his obsession. He talked of Mir among his friends and in literary circles with a passion reserved for one's hero. Mir's poetry is pre-eminently one of love, much more than that of any of the classical masters. Ghalib is a poet of philosophy, knowledge, pessimism and at times mysticism; love serves as a general shading, as in most poets. Nasir's unique contribution is that he merged the sublimity and diction of Mir with his own inner turmoil and restlessness. The result is a miracle. In Mir's six *diwans* there is so much pedestrian padding that a severe selection produces a mere few hundred couplets, while most of Nasir's ghazals are as good as, if not better than, Mir's best work. They are a throe of the heart.

Nasir's second major contribution is that, perhaps as a response to the Progressive poets' taunt that the ghazal had had its day, he transformed the

traditional ghazal into modern poetry by retaining the classical mode, mood and style but making it voice modern sensibility. In doing this he stands on the summit of modern Urdu verse. He founded a new school which several of his younger contemporaries and later admirers have enriched.

There is another characteristic of his poetry which sets him apart from all modern poets, and that is his choice of words. In this again he established a new fashion which most modern poets find difficult to follow. He chooses his vocabulary with gentle care and then polishes it in the light of his reading and knowledge. In this simple, innocent diction he stands alone. He performs another miracle when he uses this vocabulary to create a spark. The only other poet to do this is Faiz. But Faiz achieves this end by using Persianised constructions which already have a beauty of their own and have been borrowed by Faiz. Nasir makes magic from simple Urdu words which are his own. He explores the range of words with an innovative eye and a fresh taste. He also wrote a few critical articles which demonstrate his wide reading and deep understanding.

I met Nasir for the first time in 1945 or early 1946 when he was studying at Islamia College, Lahore, and living in the college hostel. He was composing poetry at this time and reciting his ghazals in *musháiras* in a melodious tone. His teacher, Rafique Khawar, was impressed and arranged a meeting with Sufi Ghulam Mustafa Tabassum. Nasir won the Sufi's appreciation and thus embarked upon his historic but brief journey Parnassus. He started coming to the Coffee House after the family's

migration from Ambala. He acquired a very modest house in Old Anarkali from which both the Coffee House and Tea House were within five minutes' walk, which suited him very well. Later he shifted to a bigger house in Krishan Nagar.

It was mainly in the years 1948-54 that I cultivated him, because of my interest in literature (to begin with, chiefly English). I found that he had an intelligent interest in the subject, asked many questions and listened attentively to what I told him. My knowledge was fresh and my enthusiasm irrepressible, and we talked for hours on Shakespearean tragedy, Keats's poetry, Milton's Satan and many other topics. Soon he broadened his inquisitiveness to cover European thought and sociology. I was surprised at the range of his inquiries. He also wanted to read English translations of major modern French poets. One day he asked me to get him Toynbee's *A Study of History*. The college library did not lend this multi-volume set and with some difficulty I persuaded the librarian to let me borrow one volume at a time during the 1953 summer vacation months. I don't know if Nasir read or even completely understood all the volumes, but he read parts of the book and discussed some points, particularly about ancient oriental civilizations. He also read several books on Western psychology and the problems of modern society. He was specially interested in the crisis caused by the impact of modern industrialization on Europe and the Americas. I noticed one major omission in his demand for books. As far as I know he never showed any interest in Islam as a religion or civilization.

Salahuddin, in his study of Nasir's mind, refers to many books which he supplied to Nasir and claims that he read through many long and difficult books during the night and returned the book to Salahuddin the following morning. This I find hard to believe. Nasir's formal education was only up to the intermediate level (that is, school leaving certificate and 2 years of college instruction) and that at an inferior college (Islamia College, Lahore). His ability to understand and digest a scholarly or erudite book written in English was limited. He was also at this time catching up with his reading of classical Urdu poetry and prose and keeping abreast of what was being published currently. He spent his daylight hours in earning a precarious living and spending a lot of time in the Coffee House and Tea House. His close friends bear witness that he spent his nights in restaurants and tea stalls. When did he find the time to read and ponder over all the books he borrowed from his friends? I know that he was better read than most of the poets of his time, but his claims to have read and understood hundreds of English books (some on arcane and difficult subjects) fall in the category of pretension.

In Nasir lived many personalities. One of these which confounded his friends was a tendency to create fantasies and live with them. He was not a liar in the generally accepted meaning of the term. He respected himself too much to indulge in this habit. What he did was to conjure up pictures of his past. Thus he told us about his large house in Ambala surrounded by orchards, his childhood spent in luxury, his career as a pigeon fancier, his big hunting, and so on. He could

not be found out because he related these gilded dreams consistently and with apparent sincerity. He lived with them till the end. He did not lie; he enlivened dull reality with rhapsody. The nimble shuttle of his fancy wove an imaginative pattern of events. We loved and respected him too much to question his claims or make fun of him.

I have no explanation of this behaviour. He had no need to feed us on imaginary tales and present himself as what he was not. I know many refugees of 1947 who, on arrival in Pakistan, bragged of the huge properties they had left behind and of their lifestyle in India. Nasir had no excuse to offer an exaggerated view of his early life. He was 22 years of age when he migrated, and within a very short time after that he made his reputation as a poet of extraordinary promise with some beautiful ghazals which created waves in Lahore and haunted our imagination. In everyday life and social activities he did not praise himself or flaunt his poetic genius. He was not a humble man, but nor was he vain. He was a gentle soul, excellent company, and in some ways an original thinker. Both he and Faiz Ahmad Faiz in Urdu poetry set fire to our imagination. But Faiz's passion lies in his romanticism. There is no depth in him. Even his romantic impulse loses its impact and beauty when suddenly, in the same poem, it is overthrown by crude didacticism. His admirers call it the call of his social conscience which he could not resist. Others call it a plain message of political Communism which ill consorts with any higher manifestation of the human soul like art and

poetry. Faiz has no profundity or subtlety; Nasir has. Many lines of Nasir's ghazals, which speak of the passion of love, make one sit up and think. This depth is strengthened by the poignant note of nostalgia which runs throughout his poetry. This is another characteristic which is absent in Faiz. Faiz was not a refugee. He lost nothing in 1947. But he saw the tragedy of the massacre and the unprecedented anguish of the people. There is no echo of it in his poetry. Was he insensitive? But then how could he write such moving verse without sensibility? This is as much of a mystery as is Nasir's fantasy-making talk.

Nasir was careless of his health. From the beginning he was unkind to his body. He was a chain smoker, chewed betel leaves with strong and harmful ingredients all day, drank dozens of cups of coffee and tea every day, never had enough sleep, and frivelled away his energy in pacing the streets and roads of Lahore all night. He ruined his digestive system in spite of his doctors' and friends' warnings and died of cancer of the stomach at the age of 47.

Nasir was a major poet of the twentieth century and a good human being. Notwithstanding his dark complexion and plain looks he was an attractive figure. Everyone was fond of him and he hated no one except those who laid the early foundations of an unjust and tyrannical society.

BARI ALIG

Ghulam Bari was born in Amritsar in 1909, graduated from Aligarh, and started his

journalistic career on the staff of *Shér*. Later he worked for *Ehsan*, *Shahbaz*, *National Congress*, the weekly *Panchayat*, *Ajit* and *Hamara Punjab*. A poor man with ugly looks and humble origins, he made his place in Lahore's intellectual circles by the dint of his wide reading, free thinking, modern ideas, a sense of humour and personal integrity.

While still quite young he edited *Musáwát* in Amritsar and, more important, picked up Saadat Hasan Manto and licked him into shape. He asked Manto to translate journalistic pieces for *Musáwát* and then a few Russian novels, trained him how to write, and made a short story writer out of a lazy and careless man. Manto has confessed in his essay on Bari that he owed him everything in his literary career, but in the same article has highlighted all of Bari's weaknesses. Manto was a mean character.

Bari came to Lahore in 1947 and became an habitué of the Arab Hotel, Nagina Bakery, Mohkam Din's Bakery and the Coffee House. I often saw him bringing his eldest daughter (who was then 7 or 8) to Nagina where she relished the pastries. He lived in Old Anarkali and served as editor at the British Information Service which then functioned on Race Course Road (now Aiwan-i-Tijarat Road).

Bari was a Communist and an atheist, and wrote several books. The best known are *Kampani ki Hakumat* (The Rule of the East India Company), *Karl Marx*, *Lenin*, and *Tarikh, Tahzib, Tamaddun* (History, Culture, Civilization). In my opinion his best work is *Tarikh Ka Mutála* (Study of History), which he planned in 3 volumes and, surprisingly, started writing all the three simultaneously but at different

speeds. He finished and published the first volume in his lifetime. In the 1960s the second appeared but in an incomplete form. The third was never published because he had written only a small part of it.

This is a remarkable book. Bari was not a trained scholar. Nor was he an objective observer. But he had his own view of the passage of time, which was not a faithful copy of Marxism. For writing the book he read a considerable amount of sociology, and this study brought me close to him. I think it was in 1946 that Abdullah Malik introduced me to Bari. I had then just graduated and joined the M.A. (English) class at the Government College. Soon after this he asked me if I could borrow a few books from the college library, the Punjab Public Library and the University Library for him. The list of his requirements mainly contained books on sociology. People like him, who were neither students nor teachers, had no access to academic and serious books. The British Council Library had not yet been established. I did his bidding, and over the next 2 years enabled him to read about 30 books. I can now recall only one book, by Bogardus, but I noticed that most of what I brought to him was on the philosophy of history and on sociological theory. His own book concentrates on historical theory, not on historiography, and is well worth reading. As far as I know, his was the first work on the subject in Urdu. I have not seen any reprint.

What is important is to remember the conditions under which he wrote his books. Time and money were scarce. He had to support a family on a very meager income. He had no academic

background. He was addicted to spending a lot of time with his friends at various tea houses and the Coffee House. Because of heavy drinking his health was failing. His body was heavy and eyesight weak. With these handicaps what he wrote was a minor achievement. In his early years he also published a few short stories, but then journalism and the struggle for subsistence left him no time for literature, which was a pity because a man who could train Manto to become a writer was capable of adding much to contemporary letters.

Bari joined the Progressive Writer's Movement soon after it was established, then left it, and again enlisted for a short while after 1947. He said he could not tolerate its autocratic behaviour and doctrinaire opinions.

I also noticed (as had Gopal Mittal before me) how chauvinistic Bari could be in his brand of Punjabi nationalism. He himself wrote in Urdu but hated the language because it was corrupting the culture of the Punjab. I never heard him speaking in Urdu and I remember a long and sharp exchange of words between him and Syed Abdullah (who taught Urdu at the Oriental College, and who was from the Punjabi-speaking tract of Hazara) on this topic. Abdullah was as chauvinistic in favour of Urdu as Bari was of Punjabi. Of this debate I remember one sentence spoken by Bari, "Syed Sahib, when I hear a Punjabi speaking Urdu it seems that he is speaking a lie". This discussion was bilingual: Abdullah spoke in Urdu and Bari in Punjabi.

For some years Bari was a Congressman and edited Dr Satypal's paper *National Congress*. Later

he abandoned the party and still later declared that he was an enemy of both the Congress and the Muslim League because they wanted to change the history and culture of the Punjab. If he were to rise from the dead today he would be shocked back into his grave on seeing the zeal and speed with which the Pakistani Punjabis are abandoning their language in favour of Urdu.

Bari died on my birthday, 11 December, in the year 1949; that is why I remember the date. I attended his funeral. Though he was nearly 20 years senior to me in age he always address me as "tusi" (the plural you). He was a gentleman of a bygone age.

A.B.S. JAFRI

He was a journalist through and through. From the age of 20, when he migrated from Badayun to Larkana, till his retirement in 1993 he plied his trade with enthusiasm, integrity, patience and frustration, running the entire professional range from reporter to editor. When I met him in 1950 he was on the staff of *The Pakistan Times* and we had our tête-à-tête both at the Coffee House and at his first floor flat in Dyal Singh Mansions. His residence was a cosy, hospitable bachelor establishment where he entertained Aminullah Khan, Lal Muhammad and me once or twice a week, and sometimes we went to the Metro restaurant after a short talk.

He talked quietly, rarely raising his voice, but his bright eyes conveyed his vehemence at the required moments. He was enamoured of Ghalib, and in later years knew the poet's Urdu *diwan* by

heart. At this time he was learning to play the violin from the leader of the musical band of the Lorang's restaurant, a Christian gentleman whom I had known since 1945. I don't know how proficient Jafri became as a violin player but his general interest in music, both western and eastern, was genuine and lasted all his life.

Jafri was the only journalist I know who, in our get-togethers, liked to talk more about literature, art, music and poetry than about politics. When the talk turned to politics his theme was mostly the fundamentals and principles, not the personalities or the small beer of intrigues and bargains, though as a reporter his fund of knowledge about petty politics was rich. He was good intellectual company and had read Aristotle, Lenin and Harold Laski.

After 1957 (when I left Lahore for good) he moved to Rawalpindi as Assistant Editor and then Resident Editor of *The Pakistan Times* and we met infrequently in Vogt's tea house. In 1965 when I went to Dacca to give a few lectures he was there, now married to Ruqayya, a prominent political activist of the Awami League. Our last meetings took place in Islamabad in 1973-78 at his house and the diplomatic social circuit. When Ziaul Haq usurped power both of us were made to leave the country. He went to Kuwait and I back to Khartoum. He died in Karachi in November 2003 of a long and painful disease.

CHAPTER 3

THE ROLL OF HONOUR: II

HABIB JALIB

He was the only truly radical poet of my times. He was more genuine and true than the Progressive Movement poets, like Ali Sardar Jafri. His life was a crusade against all varieties of repression, injustice, political deceit, oppression and exploitation. He was the only Leftist writer who saw through Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's liberalism and socialism and shouted his disillusionment from the rooftops. His beliefs and convictions were unshakeable and his courage unflinching. In the realms of politics and literature he stood alone, like a living statue carved from granite, who took on President Ayub Khan, the Nawab of Kalabagh, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Ziaul Haq and later constitutional dictators, and humiliated and exposed them when the reins of untrammelled power lay squarely in their hands. He had, like all of us, only one life to live, but, like none of us, he lived it like a man. In his wife he had a partner of equal power and pride who, after his death and in dire poverty, spurned a large gift from the sullied hands of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. In any other country biographers would have chronicled the story

of his life and sacrifices and patriots would have raised his statues on the crossroads of all major cities. But Pakistan is not "any other country". He was the keeper of the conscience of the people in a country ruled by men without a conscience.

For the first time in Pakistan one line of a couplet by Jalib rang the knell of a constitution made by a judge (Shahabuddin) and a lawyer (Manzur Qadir) and promulgated by a General (Ayub Khan): "*Aisé dastur ko, subhi bé nur ko, main nahin mántá, main nahin jántá*" (I neither accept nor know this constitution, this morn without light). He suffered for his principles. He spent days and nights in jail. He lived under the shadow of fear. But he neither relented nor cast down his gaze. He lived and died as a proud man because he was the voice of truth. Perhaps it will never be heard again in Urdu poetry.

Jalib rose from the dregs of society and remained there. Son of a shoemaker, he was born in Miani Afghanan, a village in Hoshiarpur district, and helped the family earn its living when he was not yet in his teens by roaming the neighbouring hamlets selling cotton drawstrings woven by his blind grandmother who accompanied him. He worked as a proofreader in a Karachi newspaper, then in a Lahore daily, and was for some time a labourer in the Koh-i-Nur Textile Mills in Lyallpur (Faisalabad). The Saigols could not tolerate the presence of a revolutionary firebrand in their labour force and he had to leave. There is no record of any regular or steady source of income after that. I don't know who supported him, but he was a frequent visitor to the

Coffee House where his friends offered him coffee and occasionally bought him a packet of cigarettes.

His place in Urdu poetry is yet undetermined. The fashionable and snooty literary critics dismiss him because he was unconventional, disregarded traditions and did not conform to the principles which they themselves have thought up. The absence of rationality in these reviewers is evident in their praise of Faiz for saying purely political things, like "*Ham dékhéngé, ham bhi dékhéngé*", in no better language than Jalib's. Jalib also wrote ghazals and some of them are good. But above everything else he was a revolutionary poet, perhaps the only thrown up by Urdu, and that is what really holds back the bourgeois, city-centred and in their hearts reactionary and subservient critics from giving Jalib his due.

As far as I know Jalib had only one bad habit. He was addicted to alcohol and, being poor, had to sponge on his friends for a drink or two. But, unlike Manto, he never borrowed money from strangers which he did not return.

SHER MUHAMMAD AKHTAR

He introduced the common educated Punjabi to psychology. His background is interesting. He belonged to Gujerat but was born in Lahore in 1907. After his matriculation from Zamindara School in Gujerat he entered the police department, but left it after a few years, and after some time came to Lahore. He belonged to the Lahori group of the Ahmadiyya community and began his journalistic career on the

staff of the group's two weeklies, *Paigham-i-Sulh* (Urdu) and *Light* (English). After this he was associated with several well-known journals like *Tahzeeb-i-Niswan*, *Humayun*, *Shahkar* and *Qandeel*.

In the late 1940s he founded two monthly magazines on psychology: *Nafsiat* and *Nafsiati Jaézi* in co-operation with Fahmida Malik and Akhtar Razi. Earlier he had established a school to teach elementary psychology to young men and women, and as no textbooks or any books were available in Urdu he started writing booklets and short studies on general, children's and abnormal psychology. With Akhtar Razi he opened a psychology bookshop on Beadon Road, called "Akhtar aur [and] Akhtar". He wrote about a dozen solid books and a few booklets on the subject, several plays and short stories (in both Urdu and Punjabi) and one or two histories of Islam. He was a nephew of Professor Muhammad Sarwar Jamái and a founder member of the Halqa-i-Arbab-i-Zauq.

Akhtar was a man of extraordinary courtesy and polite manners. In spite of a stutter in his tongue he participated in full measure in friendly circles and literary discussions. It was Bari Alig who took me to Akhtar's shop in 1948, and for the following 9 years we met sometimes at the shop and more often in the Coffee House. Akhtar was fond of talking about his pet subject of psychology to his friends, and when he came to know that I had studied in the field as an undergraduate he was encouraged to speak at length and I did not feel bored. What surprised me was that a mere school-leaver of the *mofassil* (countryside) could, through personal training and

self-teaching, develop his power of comprehension to a point where he could transfer what he had read in English to Urdu and lecture and write on it. As far as I know he had had no teacher in the field nor any other advantage in life. For 3 decades he had no successors in the field of popularizing psychology in the Punjab.

FIROZUDDIN MANSUR

He was called "Dada" by all his friends and colleagues, was an inspiring example of self-sacrifice and hard work without any expectation of reward or recognition. For nearly half a century he devoted his life to the service of political humanitarianism and the welfare of the poor and the unenlightened. I came to know him in 1947, but his earlier career must be set down to show him in the whirlpool of his age and the hazards of his convictions.

Born in a labourer's household in Shaikhupura (near Lahore) he used his native enterprise and the habit of hard work to get college education. He joined politics in 1919 under the impact of the Jallianwala Bagh incident. In 1921 he migrated to Afghanistan in the train of the disastrous *hijrat* movement set afoot by Muslim leaders of the Khilafat period who could not see beyond their nose. From Kabul he walked on foot to the Soviet Union, but a gang of dacoits captured him in Russian Turkestan. He was sentenced to death by the gang leader but was saved by a kind-hearted qazi and had to serve as a domestic or slave. After a while Lenin's army attacked the dacoit's hiding place and rescued him.

He chose to go to Tashkent where he received training at the army academy. This was followed by his studies at the University of the East in Moscow. He returned to India in 1923 and was arrested in Chitral and sent to the torture cells of the Lahore fort where he spent one year. It was during his detention in the Fort that his mother died. On his release he joined journalism as a profession and served on the staff of B.G. Horniman's *International Herald*, *The Congress*, *Kisan*, *Jang-i-Azadi*, *Kirti*, *Nyá Zamana*, and some other radical and leftist papers. During this period he became a political activist, joining the Communist Party of India and at the same time associating himself with the Mazdur Kisan Party, Bhagat Singh's Naujawan Bharat Sabha, Samraj Dushman League and the Punjab Kisan Sabha. He spent two years (1941-43) in the war detention camp, from where he was released when Germany invaded the Soviet Union.

After 1947 he joined Mian Iftikharuddin's Azad Pakistan Party and that was when I made his acquaintance in a chance meeting at Iftikharuddin's house where Abdullah Malik had taken me to see Mian Sahib. Something in Mansur's deportment, probably his humility and soft-spokenness, attracted me and we began to meet regularly in the Coffee House. The Communist Party had its office in a building next to the graveyard near the Rattan Cinema on McLeod Road. I think it belonged to Sir Fazli Husain's family. He lived in the Party office. Later he shifted to a room above Sufi Turk Hotel on Nisbet Road. He was at this time secretary of the

Punjab branch of the Communist Party and president of the Punjab Kisan Committee. In 1954, when Pakistan entered into a defence pact with the United States, he was thrown into prison without the formality of any charges read out to him. Freedom was still out of sight though independence had come in 1947.

Mansur was very well-read in Leftist literature, had a varied experience of political life, and wrote a few booklets on the rural and agricultural problems of the Punjab. He was much respected by his contemporaries on the Left and also by the rising generation of young intellectuals. Short in size and unfashionably dressed, he wore a perennial smile on his face, and smoked in all his waking hours. He made no waves, coined no slogans, wrote no memorable book; but left an example of unpurchasable integrity, of selflessness, and of ready sacrifice for his own conviction and others' good. He was a quiet man who lived a life of adventure.

MUHAMMAD HASAN LATIFI

He was one of those remarkable men who arrived in Lahore in 1947 as a part of the flotsam and jetsam of the partition of the Punjab. His acute sufferings began with the ravages of the great migration and ended with his death 12 years later. The story of his life needs to be told in some detail.

He was born in 1905 in a rich family of Ludhiana. His father was a wealthy military contractor who had established his business in 1866 and then expanded it to several cantonments in northern India.

Latifi graduated from the University of the Punjab, took his M.A. degree in English from Aligarh and received a diploma in journalism from Oxford or London (sources differ on this point). In England an English girl, Norah, fell in love with him and wanted to marry him, but he refused because of his dislike of British imperialism. On the same ground he declined the offer of a well-paid job in the department of information of the Government of India. This was in 1931. He settled down in Ludhiana and embarked on a most unusual literary career.

He moved from his ancestral mansion in Kucha Mian Shah Muhammad and built his own bungalow on Kamran Road, and gave it the French name of "Chateâu". At the back of his house he established a small printing press. He had been an ardent book buyer since his Aligarh days, and had bought 2,000 books while in England. He went on adding to it and thus had a well-equipped collection at his disposal.

On 15 April 1932 he started what he termed his "solo journalism" by issuing a bilingual weekly in Urdu and English called *Mutala'a*, which was entirely written by himself and contained both prose and poetry. It lasted till 1947. He had a good command of English, Urdu, Persian, Arabic, French, German and Italian, but his native tongue was Punjabi. He wrote in Urdu, English and French, translated essays and stories from French, German and Italian. He knew and corresponded with a large number of his contemporary men of letters including Iqbal whom he had first met in London in 1931. He was a prolific poet in Urdu and left a corpus of several thousand verses. In poetry he was specially

close to N.M. Rashed and Akhtar Shirani. His influence on Rashed contributed a strong element of classicism to the work of the father of modern Urdu verse. He translated some French lyrics for Akhtar Shirani which added to the thought and vocabulary of the founder of Urdu romantic poetry. According to some critics, Latifi is the only major poet of the period between Iqbal and the modern poetry of the 1940s.

The Punjabi classic *Hir Ranjha* was a major interest of his life. He spent 5 years in preparing a book called *Hir Ranjha*, for which he visited Jhang several times and did a lot of research. It was planned in several volumes. The first volume, entitled *Glimpses of Jhang History*, ran to 500 pages and contained several diagrams, maps and illustrations. It was scheduled for publication from Jhang in June 1951, but for some unknown reason nothing happened. A few passages from it had appeared in a Lahore daily *The Civil and Military Gazette*.

He migrated to Lahore in September 1947, and the agony of his life started. Economically he was now a penniless wretch. He did not put in any claim for compensation or allotment of evacuee property for what he had left behind: his ancestral mansion, his own bungalow, his printing press, and some more houses and shops of which he had been the sole inheritor, being the only son of his father. He had four sisters, and before 1947 he had, in the teeth of opposition from his relatives and friends, given them their due share from his property in accordance with Islamic law. He now believed that getting compensation for his losses vitiated the spirit of *hijrat* (migration in the cause of Islam). A

man from Ludhiana who had benefitted from Latifi's generous philanthropy in his good days, arranged a modest house in Krishan Nagar where he lived for a few years before leaving for Rawalpindi.

Intellectually, after his rewarding and rich literary career in Ludhiana and his other accomplishments, he felt deserted. His real life, he realized, had come to an end and only a corroding disillusionment lay ahead. Lahore's cultural life had been ripped apart by the Partition. People were living in a limbo. In this vacuum what could he do but brood and think dark thoughts? Emotionally he was a husk of a man.

Latifi's life was completely destroyed in the catastrophe of 1947, but something survived the ravage. That was his compassion for the needy and the animals. Since his early youth in Ludhiana he had been a philanthropist and a lover of animals. He paid the fees of several poor students of the Islamia School where he had been educated. Many families in need of help received regular grants from him. He patronized and gave financial assistance to a large number of Urdu magazines and journals, especially those issued by Akhtar Shirani and Hafeez Jullundheri and their friends in Lahore in the 1930s and early 1940s.

After 1947 his personal circumstances put a stop to these demonstrations of public service and human sympathy. There were periods when he went hungry for days. I was too young to inquire into his sources of income and my friends had no idea how he supported his wife and a little daughter. It is possible that some of his friends helped discreetly. But there is no doubt that his lifestyle was wretched.

Even in these conditions, however, his compassion for God's creation did not wilt. Whenever he had a little money he came to the rescue of those whose misfortune exceeded his own. He would stand outside a *tandur* (kind of a food stall for the dregs of society) and pay for the bread and dal consumed by the beggars. Once I saw him buying 30 or 40 breads which he carried in a makeshift bag. He roamed the streets around Anarkali, distributing these breads among the beggars and the needy.

His sympathy knew no limits when it came to animals. Eyewitness accounts have been recorded by Ashiq Batalavi, Bari Alig and Intizar Husain of how Latifi fed the house sparrows and suppressed his hunger to satisfy the needs of stray dogs. Intizar Husain says he once saw from the top of a bus on Ferozepur Road a tall man covered in a green overall surrounded by a flock of sparrows whom he was feeding. The birds were so intimate with him that they were perched on his head, shoulders and stretched out arms.

One evening Latifi and I were sitting in the Coffee House at the table on the left of the entrance and next to the window. We were in the middle of a discussion on the literary journals of the 1930s when suddenly, as if a telepathic message had reached him, he fell silent in mid-sentence and his gaze shifted from my face to the piece of lawn outside between the service road and the Mall. I too looked outside, but noticed nothing extraordinary. Then he turned to me and said, "Can you order two slices of bread? No butter on them." I summoned a waiter and placed the order. When the slices

arrived he picked them up, said "I will be back in a minute", and walked out of the Coffee House. Nonplussed and intrigued, I let my eyes follow him. He went to the centre of the grassy plot, stopped under a small tree, and began to break the slices into small crumbs. Immediately a dozen sparrows flew down from the tree and alighted on the grass near his feet. For five or ten minutes he fed them the crumbs, smiling and talking to them.

When he rejoined me I asked him smilingly, "What was that? Did the birds send you a call which I didn't hear?" In a serious tone he replied: "The shades of evening are falling. The sun is about to set. Birds never linger when the light begins to fail. This is the time when they have the last morsel of the day before flying to their nests. When I came here I had noticed a few sparrows flying around that tree. While talking to you it suddenly occurred to me that perhaps they had not had a fill of their food and soon they would leave for home. There are no crumbs or feed for the asking on the Mall. I thought I must not let them retire hungry. Hence the slices I requested you to order. I am sure they were happy to be fed. You couldn't hear through the thick glass, but they were chirping cheerfully." I could see how happy he was, but I didn't say anything. There was nothing to say. I felt so small in his presence.

Ashiq Batalavi tells a more moving story. He was then living in a house on Temple Road a little short of the Safanwala Chowk, next to Hameed Nizami's house. He had known Latifi since before 1947 and Latifi called at him frequently. The two had so much in common to talk about. One day

Latifi arrived a little after breakfast time. "Have you had your breakfast?" asked Ashiq. "No", replied Latifi. Ashiq doubted if Latifi had had his dinner the previous night. Therefore he asked the cook to make three *parathas* and an omelette for Latifi. The food was served and Latifi began to eat. After five minutes Ashiq went to his bedroom to fetch a book which he wanted to show to Latifi. It took him a few minutes to find the book, and when he returned he saw that the three *parathas* had disappeared. He wondered how Latifi could have polished off the entire breakfast with such speed. Poor fellow, he told himself, perhaps he had had nothing to eat for some days and had now gobbled down everything before him. While drinking tea he noticed a bulge in Latifi's jacket pocket. Oh! I see, he thought, his family must be starving and he is taking a part of the breakfast home to feed them.

Soon after that Latifi left. A few minutes later Ashiq came out and started walking towards Malik Barkat Ali's house who also lived on Temple Road on the opposite side. He was near Sir Abdul Qadir's house on the right side of the road when he saw a strange sight. Near the gate of Sir Abdul Qadir's bungalow Latifi was crouching on the footpath. Before him on the ground was spread his handkerchief on which lay the two *parathas* he had quietly removed from the table into his pocket. Next to him was squatting on his hunkers a stray dog with his ribs outlined on his body, and Latifi was feeding him with pieces of *paratha*, actually putting morsels in the animal's mouth. Ashiq stopped just long enough to be sure that his eyes were not

deceiving him. Then with tears in his eyes he crossed over to the opposite footpath and went his way.

Several days later Ashiq inquired gently from Latifi about this incident, and without any embarrassment Latifi blurted out the truth. What he said shook Ashiq to his core. Latifi's explanation was simple enough, given his supreme compassion for animals. When he was coming to Ashiq's house he had noticed two emaciated dogs lying on the pavement. He bent down to pat them and found how weak and thin they looked. But he had no money to buy food for them. He himself had not had a square meal for two days and the dogs' plight pained him. At Ashiq's house he ate one *paratha* to appease his own pangs of hunger but the thought of the starving dogs stopped him from eating more. He rolled the other two *parathas* in his handkerchief and put the packet in his pocket. On his way back he hurried to where he had seen the dogs. Unfortunately one of them had gone away but the other was still there. He said, without any emphasis on the statement, that when he was feeding the dog with the *parathas* he actually felt as if the morsels were entering his own stomach and felt cheerful.

This soul, full to brim with mercy and compassion for all living beings, died of chest cancer in the Ganga Ram Hospital on 23 May 1959. Few remember him today and those like me who met him on the crossroads of life are dying. In a few years his name will not even be a memory. That is how we treat the aristocracy of our intellect, and that is why we have stopped producing the only true elite which is an index of a country's honour and prestige.

ABDULLAH BUTT

He was a Coffee House man *par excellence*. In him were expressed all the characteristic features of the café: humour, hard work, general ability, cultivated taste, capacity to enjoy life, love of books. For some years when he had no job he was a fixture of the House, arriving in mid-morning, leaving at 1.00 P.M., back at 4.00 P.M. and not going home till dinner time. He preferred to sit at the first table in the central aisle and often the waiters kept it vacant for him even when there was a crowd waiting to be seated. By an unspoken tradition others around this table were Chiragh Hasan Hasrat, Hafeez Hoshiarpuri, Abdul Majeed (editor, *The Pakistan Times*), Shaikh Khurshid Ahmad and Ghulam Muhammad Butt (the mayor of Lahore).

Abdullah was a handsome Kashmiri with bright eyes, a head of thick black hair, slightly heavy of build and fashionably dressed in well-cut Western clothes and a soft felt cap. He was as heavy a smoker of cigarettes as was Nasir Kazmi. He was an immoderate drinker of alcohol, and that led to his relatively early death.

His bewitching smile, his guffaws of laughter, his repertoire of jokes and his general bonhomie made him an attractive figure. He conversed well, no matter what company he was keeping. Everyone liked him, including the waiters. Above all, he was a master jokes retailer. Some of them were vulgar or the manner of telling them was a bit risqué, but there was no obscenity in them. This was good, healthy, English club humour which gave rise to

heartly laughter, not dirty smirks, but it was no company for women.

Like several other habitués of the place, Abdullah had an uncommon ability to switch from light talk to profound comment. After regaling the circle with a slightly indecent tale he would suddenly turn to Chiragh Hasan Hasrat and say, "Maulana, last night I listened to Mukhtar Begum on the radio. She was singing a ghazal by Atash." And then he launched into a 5-minute learned dissertation on the beauty of that ghazal and the magic of Mukhtar's voice. Or, immediately after cutting a biting joke at the expense of one of the company present, he would start discussing with Shaikh Khurshid the weaknesses of Jinnah's demand for Pakistan (he was himself a "Nationalist", i.e., a Muslim who did not believe in a separate Muslim nationalism but in a composite Indian culture and political entity), or start questioning Hafeez Hoshiarpuri why Iqbal's Urdu poetry was so inferior and without depth in comparison to his Persian verse.

Abdullah's great forte was jokes, witticisms, jests, ribticklers and hilarious stories. Since his early youth he had had a passion for such *jeux d'esprit*. In the late 1930s he founded a Bazm-i-Lata'if in Lahore, a society for the regaling, promotion and enjoyment of jokes. Abdul Majeed Salik was made its permanent president. The society held meetings at irregular intervals and among those who participated in the proceedings used to be Chiragh Hasan Hasrat, Ahmad Nadeem Qasimi, Waqar Ambalavi, Sufi Ghulam Mustafa Tabassum and Muhammad Fazil. No set precedence

or programme was followed. One man related a joke, he was followed by another, one joke emerged from another, and there was an occasional short discussion on the merits of a particular joke. The meeting lasted for two hours and everybody had a glorious time. Abdullah had the largest fund of jokes and a most amusing and pleasing way of telling them. Not content with this passing show, after some time he put together and published a selection of the jokes related at these meetings and made the name of the Society its title: *Bazm-i-Lata'if*. After 1947 its revised edition with additions and changes was issued, entitled *Mayé Shabána*.

In the 1930s there existed in Lahore a Punjab Literary League, an intellectual circle of considerable prestige with a large number of non-Muslim members. Sir Abdul Qadir was its president, and its regular membership boasted names like Sir Manohar Lal, Bakhshi Sir Tek Chand, A.S. Bokhari, Abdur Rahman Chughtai, Syed Imtiaz Ali Taj, B.C. Sanyal the artist, Sir Shadi Lal, Sir Douglas Young and Amrita Shergill. It met at the Shah Din Building and later at Sanyal's studio on the upper floor of the Regal Cinema. Some meetings were held in the hall of the Plaza Cinema. It died a natural death in the months following the Partition. Abdullah Butt revived the League in 1948 or 1949, but times had changed and culture of a high order was not the need of the day. In spite of his strenuous efforts the League did not last long.

Abdullah must be credited with a useful and profitable innovation. He started the practice of observing the death anniversaries of some great men on a large scale. The elite and the literati gathered to

pay tributes to the dead hero and several papers and speeches were read out. Abdullah had the good sense to notice that such symposiums and meetings leave no permanent impact. Therefore he began the tradition of publishing all the important tributes in book form. In this way he paid his homage to Shah Ismail Shaheed, Sultan Tipu and others.

He also wrote or edited a few books. He collected a selection of Abul Kalam Azad's articles which had appeared in *Al Hilál* and *Al Balágh* in 2 volumes; he wrote a book on the Suez Canal, one on Syed Jamaluddin Afghani, one on the art of propaganda, and a collection of sketches of some prominent personalities entitled *Yádgár-i-Zamána hain Yé Log*.

The family of Butt had an interesting religious background. His mother's father, Maulavi Sultan Ahmad, was the imam and khateeb at the Masjid-i-Mubarak. His paternal grandfather, Qadir Bakhsh, belonged to a place called Shipián in Kashmir, but had moved to Kalianá in district Gujerat. He had two sons: Abdullah and Haji Muhammad. Of these Abdullah had three sons, Fazluddin, Nuruddin and Ahmaduddin. Abdullah moved to Lahore and became a contractor in the business of road building and canal digging in the Punjab and for sometime in the Deccan. Of his three sons, it was Fazluddin who sired Abdullah Butt. In the light of Abdullah's non-religious lifestyle it is surprising to know that Fazluddin was a scholar of Islam and an active and practising member of the Ahl-i-Hadith sect. He died in 1957.

Abdullah Butt was the third of eight brothers: Professor Abdul Hayee, principal of the Islamia College, Lahore; Professor Abdul Qayyum, professor of

Arabic at the Government College, Lahore (where he was my colleague); Abdus Salam, a wing commander in the Pakistan Air Force; Muhammad Yahya, a squadron leader; Muhammad Zakria, an air-commodore; Muhammad Yunus, a group captain; and Muhammad Sulaiman, a police officer.

Thus, of all his brothers Abdullah was economically the weakest, but he never betrayed any feeling of inferiority. His geneology shows that his literary and scholarly bent of mind was no accident of nature.

After graduating with honours from Islamia College, Lahore, in 1939, he had served as a literary assistant of Abul Kalam Azad, and this association turned him into a "nationalist" and created in him a love of books and writing. After 1947 he discovered that his talent had no market in the country, and he turned to journalism. He served for 4 years as editor of a magazine issued by the British Information Service. After that he became a regular contributor to the daily *Imroz* with his column entitled "Harf-o-Hakáyet". After some time he began to publish and edit his own monthly also called *Harf-o-Hakáyet*, in which his own humorous column written under the pseudonym of "Mulla Jamáli" received wide praise and he was ranked with Chiragh Hasan Hasrat and Abdul Majeed Salik. Soon the monthly was turned into a weekly, but Abdullah's resources were limited and it had to close down in spite of its quality and popularity. For some time he also edited the weekly *Hamayat-i-Islam*, the official organ of the Anjuman-i-Hamayati-Islam. In 1950 he collaborated with Mian Muhammad Shafi (Meem Sheen) and Mumtaz Ahmad Khan in bringing out a political weekly called *Aqdám*.

His personal qualities and the pleasure of his company endeared Butt to a large circle. Among front rank politicians he had intimate relations with H.S. Suhrawardy, Ali Ahmad Talpur and Ghulam Muhammad Lundkhawar. But he never joined any political party.

Butt and I lived in the same mohalla, Islamia Park, on Poonch Road, and this broadened my connection with him beyond the Coffee House. His daughters often came to visit my sisters, the most frequent caller being the eldest, Shahida. His household was very modest with his low income and a large family to bring up. But, at least in appearance, they lived like a middle class family with no serious economic problems.

With his fast life, unsteady jobs, chain smoking, heavy drinking and a body tending to be corpulent, his early death was no surprise to his friends. He died at the Mayo Hospital of a stroke at the age of 51, leaving a wide circle of friends and admirers to mourn the loss.

HAMIDULLAH KHAN BURKI

He was a Pathan from the *bastis* of Jullundher, was the quietest of my friends in the Coffee House. He would share our table and would utter only a few words during long sittings. A light but genuine smile played on his lips both when he was talking and keeping silent.

He entered the Coffee House group as a member of the journalist junta but was introduced to me by Mehdi Qizilbash. Burki had recently returned from England after spending a few years there on his retirement from the Royal Indian Navy in which he

had been a flotilla commander and had seen action in the Burma sector. He stayed for many years in Lahore as a reporter on the staff of *The Pakistan Times* and *The Civil and Military Gazette* before migrating to Rawalpindi and still later to Islamabad. He told us many stories of his naval life, his time in England and his exploits on the hockey field. He was also a remarkably good photographer and an associate member of the Royal Photographic Society. On my request he accompanied me to the Government College to photograph the Oval with the Tower as the background. The result was graphic, and I still have a copy of it.

In journalism Burki made a name as a diplomatic reporter and analyst. He was a gifted diplomatic correspondent of *The Pakistan Times* in the United States. A characteristic feature of his domestic reporting was to see national developments through the prism of international politics. This trained him in the art of imaginative writing, and later he used this faculty to write his short stories.

In later years Burki came very close to Z.A. Bhutto. He was not only an admirer of the politician but as much of a friend as Bhutto allowed any one to enjoy this privilege. He paid a price for it during General Ziaul Haq's dark years.

In summer months Burki often came to the Coffee House in knickers which were nicely pressed. In the cold weather he usually wore a bow tie. He was tall and broad chested with an athlete's body. He was a fine hockey player and captained the Pakistan team which won at the Barcelona Olympics.

RIAZ QADIR

There were several dimensions to my relationship with *Riaz Qadir*. He was the son of Abbaji's dearest friend, Shaikh Sir Abdul Qadir, and Amman's friend, Anwar Begum. In this position, once we had met, I was a frequent caller at his father's house on Temple Road, especially in 1946-50 when I was living on the same road. Besides, he usually visited Government College to read in the library or see Prof. Sirajuddin, and on all such occasions he took me to the college tuck shop where we ate thickly buttered buns and drank tea. And, of course, we met at the Coffee House almost every day in long sessions.

Riaz was a bitterly disillusioned and frustrated man from his early youth. There may have been some family or private causes of his pessimism about which I know nothing. One covert reason for his dissatisfaction was his unfulfilled ambition to achieve something substantial in life to prove that he was worthy of being his father's son. Another to which he alluded only in the company of his closest friends was his failure at Cambridge. That gave him an inferiority complex against which he was fighting all his life. In Pakistan he could not get a decent job and this added to his woes in a double sense: it confirmed his earlier misgiving that he was a failure in life, and it gave his family and friends an opportunity to call him in idler.

The final straw which broke the proverbial camel's back was his galloping baldness. As he shed more hair he grew more touchy. Nobody called him a baldy or even looked at his pate, but he convinced

himself that anyone looking at him or even in his direction was staring at the top of his head. He became so irrationally sensitive that in the middle of a serious conversation on art or literature in the Coffee House he would get up, walk to another table, and looking with anger at the person sitting there accuse him of making fun of him by staring at his head. Several unsavoury encounters were averted by friends' intervention. Finally he began wearing a cap and at least some of the crises were averted.

Another of his weak points was long-windedness. He was a good listener when he chose to be one, but that was a rare exception. Generally he talked long enough to bore his audience to despair, and when a listener wished to leave his presence he wouldn't let him escape the cataract of words with the admonition "You can't leave like this; let me complete the sentence." But the sentence never reached its end.

I have enumerated Riaz's weaknesses not to laugh at him; he was too dear a friend for that. On the contrary, I want to emphasize that in the face of these handicaps his achievements were notable.

There is something wrong with Riaz's official academic chronology. According to the archives of the Gonville and Caius College he was born on 26 April 1920, educated at the Cathedral School, Lahore, and at St. Paul's School, London, and graduated from the Punjab University in 1937. Did he take his B.A. degree at the age of 17? He entered the Gonville and Caius in October 1937 to read English but proved a poor student. In the Preliminary in 1938 he got a third. He completed the lectures for Part II but was not allowed to sit the examination. His tutor's

remark on his file was that he was incapable of benefiting from university instruction. In May or June 1939 he was sent down (asked to leave the University) without a degree.

This was unfortunate but not a disaster by any means. Several Indian students at Cambridge and Oxford had to leave without a degree. Even some Indian Civil Service probationers, with a very good record behind them, were denied a degree. Obviously Riaz was inattentive or lazy or a poor examinee. But his sensitivity made this failure a lifelong hobgoblin for him. He branded himself as a quitter and lived with blighted hopes.

There is no doubt about Riaz's ability, poetic sensibility, sharp mind, lyricism and command over both English and Urdu. A good accent and correct pronunciation in spoken English were a gift of his London schooling. Though he had failed in Cambridge he had read widely. Prof. Sirajuddin once told Riaz that he wanted him to teach the Government College M.A. English class but university regulations stood in the way. Partly under his father's influence and partly by his own effort he had mastered the Urdu language and produced good poetry and prose in it.

Unfortunately, he did not save what he wrote in any language and in any form. I saw only a few poems published in the *Ravi* magazine, he read out a few more to me, and later some more were quoted by Jilani Kamran and others in their columns on Riaz. The same happened to his Urdu *nazms* and *ghazals*. I heard him when he presented two critical pieces at the Halqa-i-Arbab-i-Zauq. In the 1950s he published

privately a few long pieces of critical appreciation in English in the format of the Oxbridge inaugural lectures with grey soft covers. He gave me some copies which I have lost. But I specially remember one on romanticism in poetry, about 50 pages long, which I enjoyed reading and Abbaji thought well of it.

The contours of his poetic sensibility were drawn, as was inevitable, by his life experiences and his own character. He lived through the Second World War in London and saw its human and material destruction at close quarters. On his return to Lahore he was an eye witness of the rapine, arson and butchery of 1947. Both left a deep mark on his mind. The pessimism which had reared its head in his Cambridge days deepened and festered into a gloom. The world around him became a dark tunnel which had an entry but no exit. Everything that came his way and every feeling that emerged out of his self confirmed his loneliness. But he was not a loner or an abnormal person. He knew his social responsibilities and lived a normal life. He was generous, loving and gregarious. He had a wide circle of friends in which he chirped and chattered like a song bird.

His loneliness was an inner experience. In his mind he always heard a litany of fears. He was an unfulfilled soul. He was in search of a calm of the mind which would lead to a solace of the soul and let him express his genuine emotions. He could not find it and became a rebel. In this intellectual revolt and his natural lyricism he was like the English romantic poet P.B. Shelley. Riaz had talent and a background of high academic culture. In his Urdu and English poetry he bared his ravished soul

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in accents of agony. He became enamoured of death. A patent pessimism coloured his verses.

In this context of time and feeling he discovered a twin soul in Nasir Kazmi. They became intimate friends. Nasir's nostalgia and the realization of having been forsaken by a "lost love" matched Riaz's disillusionment and despondency. Both were extremely sensitive, both were immersed in the trough of deep depression, both were restless, feverish and ill-content, both lived a rich social life but were Bohemians at heart. Both brought a new and novel sensibility to their poetry; Nasir in Urdu and Riaz in Urdu and English. It is not possible to draw a proper parallel between the two because nearly all of Riaz's work has perished.

Theirs was a voice yet unheard in Lahore. There were many poets in this period who were producing a large corpus of verse. But Nasir and Riaz stood alone in summarizing the *weltanschauung*, the anguish and the discontent of their age. I have heard the two talk for hours every day on art and literature. The discussions were serious, passionate, well-grounded in classical sources, well informed and eager. The two friends' common outlook led to their collaboration in launching an Urdu journal called *Auraq-i-Nau* which Riaz financed. It was a brilliant effort but lasted only two issues. Nasir and Riaz had a depth and a personal sensibility denied to most of their contemporaries.

As *Auraq-i-Nau* is a rare item and few of the present generation have even heard of it, it is useful if I give some details about it. I have before me the second issue which carries no date, month or year.

Internal evidence indicates that it was published at some time in 1957. It is illustrated with a full-page photograph of Sir Abdul Qadir as frontispiece. The editors were Nasir Kazmi and Riaz Qadir in that order. It was issued from 3-Temple Road (Sir Abdul Qadir's residence). The price was one and a half rupees. Riaz Qadir was named as printer and publisher. The cover was designed by Zubi and Shemza. It was printed at the Insha Press, Lahore.

Among the contents the following are noteworthy: three quatrains by Riaz Qadir; an 8-page editorial by Riaz Qadir; "Musalman aur Tariqqipasandi" by Muhammad Hasan Askari (pp.13-18); "Insani Tahzeeb mén Kutabkhanon Ki Ahmiat" by Abdullah Butt (pp.19-25); "Science aur Azadi" by Dr. Nazir Ahmad, adapted from Aldous Huxley (pp.26-32); two poems by Meeraji, and one each by Yusuf Zafar, Qayyum Nazar, Muhammad Safdar and Riaz Qadir; a short story by Saadat Hasan Manto (pp.41-48); one by Salahuddin Akbar (pp.49-56); ghazals by Saifuddin Saif, Razi Tirmizi, Abdul Mateen Arif, Asghar Saleem and Nasir Kazmi; "Abdur Rehman Chughtai" by Nasir Kazmi (pp.62-64); "Vincent Van Gog" by Sufi Abdul Jabbar (pp.65-70); a song by Abdul Majeed Bhatti; 6 *dohé* by Jamiluddin Aali; "Chandni aur Sáé" by Shaikh Ahmad (pp.73-75); "Korea Ki Jung Ka Ma'áshi Pasmanzar" by Jalil Kareer (pp.76-81); a quatrain in Punjabi by Ustad Daman; "Mashriqi Pakistan Ki San'ati Taraqqi" by Ikram Qamar (pp.82-84); and "Pakistan Ki Filmi San'at" by Filmi Naqaad (pp.85-89). Oddly, some pages are written by a professional scribe, and other printed in type.

Riaz Qadir in the Coffee House was in some ways very different from Riaz Qadir in his house. Because of our family connection and our neighbourhood for some years I came to observe his domestic life which was unknown to most of his friends. Till her death my mother was a frequent visitor to Lady Abdul Qadir's and often took me with her. The two women talked in the drawing room or if it was not available in the rear veranda. I went up to the first floor where Riaz had his suite of rooms and spent a lot of time with him.

His sitting room was full of books which made up his personal library as distinct from his father's large and excellent collection on the ground floor. He would take out a particular book about which we were talking or to which he wanted to refer, and tell me where he bought it and when. This collection was small, about 500 volumes, but bought with discrimination and good taste. He had read and marked every volume, in some he had written long notes on the blank pages at the end of the book.

He must have received some training in music and singing because I have heard him many times singing classical ghazals to the accompaniment of a harmonium which he played himself. As far as I can remember his voice was well-primed and melodious.

Riaz was a cultured man with impeccable manners. Notwithstanding our intimacy and old friendship, and his seniority in age, he treated me with formal courtesy, always asking me to leave the room first with him following me and never picking up his cup of tea until I had begun to sip the beverage. He addressed me as *tum*, never as *tun*. To

his parents and their friends he was very respectful. Whenever he met Amman and she placed her hand on his shoulder to show her affection he bowed from the waist and said in his excellent and well-modulated voice "*Khala, ap kaisi hain?*" I remember with pleasure one encounter between them at our house on an Eid day. When Amman half embraced him he bent down, took my mother's hand, raised it a little and kissed it. I never saw anyone else, friend or relative, doing this to my mother. For some reason it pleased me enormously.

The same Riaz who would quarrel with total strangers in the Coffee House because of his fancy that they were staring at his bald head, was an obedient and submissive son in his parents' presence. Once or twice I happened to be present when his father reprimanded him for doing something silly. Riaz stood with downcast eyes with an expression of extreme contrition on his face, deferential and mute, and saying at the end, "*Ap theek kehté hain*" (you are right). As long as he was talking to Abbaji he kept standing and sat down only when told to do so.

Riaz had received much from nature: distinguished parents, background of high culture, opportunities of excellent education, good looks, a fluent tongue, an acute mind and human sympathy. But the same nature had saddled him with a sensitivity so tender and responsive that it had become a curse, a tumult in the soul which refused to be stilled, a chance to witness the ravages of war and the 1947 Partition which bruised his heart, and a tendency to shirk hard work which made him a

wastrel. The good and the bad in his composition enabled him to impart a new voice to Urdu and English poetry. What he did with his talent is worthy of remembrance. What he did to his life with his follies and foibles is a misfortune to be mourned.

The quality of Riaz's spoken English made the Lahore radio station employ him as a newsreader. He was good at the job but difficult to handle. He left the Coffee House for the station with a tight margin of time, just enough to cycle up to the broadcasting house at great speed. Often he had no time to read the bulletin before reading it out on the air. His superiors were not pleased. After several warnings he resigned rather than arrive on time. Then he worked for some time for *The Pakistan Times* but his heart was not in it and he did what he was told to do without a will. He could not keep a job and this created problems in his later career.

At this stage of his life I left Lahore. Our next and last meeting was in 1965 in Rawalpindi. I had come from Khartoum during the long vacation and I ran into him at the Vogt's restaurant. He welcomed me with his customary warmth, held me in a tight embrace, and we sat down to drink tea and talk. When we parted after 3 hours I did not know that I would not see him again.

The rest of his story is based on what my friends told me after his death. He moved to Rawalpindi where he was off and on a newsreader and a journalist, and married late in life. Given his temperament and habits the conjugal relationship was bound to be stormy and finally ended in a divorce. He moved back to Lahore and lived for a

while at the Sarwar Road residence of his elder brother, Lt.-General Altaf Qadir. There he had a heart attack and died on 11 March 1979, and was buried in the Mianisahib graveyard.

Riaz's last years were miserable. He was disillusioned, almost desperate, and lonely. For nearly 40 years he had lived with a broken heart. As a man he is unforgettable for those who knew him well. As a creative poet and writer he lies somewhere between genius and talent.

DR. MUHAMMAD DIN TASEER

Dr. Taseer was a leading light of modern Urdu literature in the 1930s and 1940s. After taking an M.A. degree in English from Forman Christian College, Lahore, he taught the subject at Islamia College, Lahore, and was recruited into the famous literary circle called Niázmandán-i-Lahore, which consisted of such luminaries as A.S. Bokhari, Abdul Majeed Salik, Syed Imtiaz Ali Taj, Hari Chand Akhtar, Sufi Ghulam Mustafa Tabassum, Chiragh Hasan Hasrat, Hafeez Jullundheri, Majeed Malik and Abdul Rahman Chughtai. This group, in roughly 1928-36, created a revolution in Urdu letters and art criticism and took on and humbled the might of the Urdu men of letters of Delhi and the United Provinces for looking with contempt at the Urdu writers and poets of the Punjab.

In 1933 Taseer went to Cambridge and in 1936 took his doctorate from Pembroke College with a thesis on "The East as reflected in English Imaginative Literature". He was principal of the

MAO College Amritsar till 1940 and for the next 6 years served as Director of Counter Propaganda in the Defence Department of the Government of India in Delhi. His last appointment was as principal of Islamia College, Lahore, and he died in harness on 30 November 1950.

While in England Taseer was one of the small group of Indian students who established the Progressive Writers' Movement in 1935 which exerted considerable and far-reaching influence on Indian Urdu letters. As editor of *Nairang-i-Khayal* he introduced the notable innovation in Urdu literary journalism of publishing illustrations in magazines.

He was a man of many dimensions. He wrote very little like most of his contemporaries, but he was well-read and had a deep understanding of English and Urdu literature. The pieces of literary critique he wrote for some journals (which Faiz Ahmad Faiz collected and edited under the title of *Nasr-i-Taseer*) won the respect of professional critics. He was a poet in Urdu of moderate talent. He was an interesting conversationalist, but at times his jokes and stories crossed the borders of decency. He was given to making fun of people, of shooting his mouth off, huffing and puffing and blustering. He also indulged in exaggeration and hyperbole in his talk.

My contacts with him were limited to the years 1948-50, but close enough to convince me that in serious things he had much to offer to the benefit of his listeners. He was one of those rare people who had read the whole of *Das Kapital* with care and attention. I remember two talks he gave at the Halqa-i-Arbab-i-Zauq on Marxism and literature.

He had worked hard on preparing the discourses and knew exactly what Marx had said and at which place in the book. The clarity of his exposition and his careful elocution were impressive.

He began or resumed the pleasing tradition of holding fortnightly poetic recitations by poets (*musha'iras*) at the Islamia College. I attended most of these gatherings. We met in the library reading room on the first floor and everyone sat on the floor forming a circle. A tall metal candlestick with a large and sturdy candle fixed in it was passed around so that it was placed before the poet when he was reciting his verses. This was a classical practice. Most poets of the city, old and young, were present. The audience consisted of invited guests. After the sitting there was a general talk, mainly among the seniors, on poetry and poets. This was rewarding for us as the speakers were authorities in the subject. We learnt much.

In 1948 Taseer wrote a long series of columns in *The Pakistan Times* entitled "Pakistan Mubarak" which created a small stir among the city's intelligentsia.

CHIRAGH HASAN HASRAT

He was the best known literary figure among the habitués of the Coffee House. He was there on most days at his favourite table next to the entrance in the central aisle. There around him sat his regular circle of friends: Abdullah Butt, Abdullah Malik, Hafeez Hoshiarpuri, Shaikh Khurshid and some others.

He changed more jobs and newspapers than anyone I know. After teaching Persian at a school in

Simla briefly he devoted the rest of his life (30 years) to journalism and broadcasting. He worked on the staff of nearly a dozen newspapers and magazines in Calcutta, Singapore and Lahore, including his own *Shiraza*; the last appointment being as editor of *Imroz*, where he introduced a revolutionary and modern technique in make-up, arrangement of news and presentation of matter, which was widely copied by other Urdu newspapers. This was the golden age of *Imroz*.

He was a supreme humorous writer in his column which he contributed to several papers and journals and also in some of his books, especially *Punjab ka Jughrafiya*. In the Coffee House he was a legendary figure for his wit, repartee and jokes. What enhanced the effect of his jokes and amusing stories was his serious demeanour while entertaining his friends. There was no hint of a smile on his face during or after the narration. It was the audience which laughed, not the speaker. As he had a thick and large moustache Abdullah Butt used to say that his jokes were pronounced by the thick hair not the tongue.

Hasrat's command of classical poetry was unrivalled and he knew by heart several thousand couplets. He had also a vast knowledge of Urdu literature, both poetry and prose. Those who were trained by him at *Imroz* told me how demanding he was in the accuracy and expressive power of Urdu prose, and how speedily and miraculously he converted what they had written into an elegant and memorable piece. I have seen the best Urdu writers approaching him for help and guidance. He had an uncanny sense of the value of the word and its proper place in the sentence.

It was because of this quality that A.S. Bokhari called him to Delhi and entrusted him with the sensitive and difficult task of formulating a new vocabulary for the news bulletins of All India Radio which was neither too much Arabicized or Persianized nor over-Sanskritized, and was acceptable and intelligible to all listeners.

Hasrat was an ornament in the society of the learned and his wide study and sharp intelligence added something to the experience and knowledge of the best. Unfortunately, he was equally active and popular among those who were hard drinkers and addicted to visits to the quarters of the demi-monde. In this company he made a fool of himself and accelerated his march to a dusty death at the relatively young age of 54.

Almost everything that he wrote, including his columns, are worth reprinting and re-reading. Few men have written such throbbing prose. He was a master of grammatical sequence and of the arrangement of clauses in a long sentence; the latter always a problem in Urdu prose writing. In early 1948 during my M.A. translation class Prof. Bokhari mentioned in passing that in the 1930s while writing articles on behalf and in the name of Niázmandán-i-Lahore whenever he encountered a difficulty in forming a Persianized Urdu construction (*tarkeeb*) he consulted Abdul Majeed Salik and when he was not available Chiragh Hasan Hasrat. This testimonial from a giant is enough to attest Hasrat's command of the intricacies of the Urdu language.

CHAPTER 4

THE ROLL OF HONOUR: III

SIRAJUDDIN ZAFAR

Zafar's literary taste was not an acquisition but a legacy. He was the son of Mrs Abdul Qadir, a well-known short story writer of an early age. He lost his father when he was a child and the mother brought him up. He studied at the Forman Christian College, Lahore, where Hafeez Hoshiarpuri was his class fellow. After graduation he learnt flying as a hobby and became a qualified pilot. Later he joined the Air Force but had to leave it because of his hard drinking.

At one time he purchased the well-known publishing house and bookshop called the Urdu Book Stall outside Lohari Gate from Yasubul Hasan, the brother of Hakim Yusuf Hasan of *Nairang-i-Khayal* and ran it for some time. Then he moved to Karachi and started legal practice. He had married the daughter of Mawlavi Firozuddin of Firozsons, and when he was appointed manager of the Firozsons Bookshop on Bunder Road the family moved to the flat above the shop.

He started composing Urdu poetry in the genre of *ruba'i* but later concentrated on the ghazal. At one time his political poems used to appear on the

front page of *Siyasat*. His ghazals followed the romantic strain of Hafiz Shirazi.

In later life he decreased his drinking and finally gave it up completely, and became a domesticated family man. Now he developed an interest in mysticism, wrote *na'ts* (poems in praise of the Prophet (PBUH)) and cried while reciting them. He also wrote some poems in English. The family was monied and he led a life of luxury and happiness till his old age. When his daughter and her young husband were killed in an air crash he had a heart attack which proved fatal.

In looks Zafar was a handsome man, tall, fair of complexion, and with big eyes. He parted his hair in the middle. He wore both western suits and *sherwani*. He was a man of moods. One day he would talk to me fluently and on a variety of topics. The next day he came to my table, drank two cups of coffee, ordered my favourite cashew nuts, paid the bill, but spoke only half a dozen sentences. When I asked what was the matter he would just nod and say "I am thinking. I don't feel like talking". Soon after I got used to his temperament, and his silence did not trouble me.

JAMILUZZAMAN

He was a good journalist and information officer. When I met him in 1945 he had just graduated and was looking for a job. He got one two years later in the Associated Press of Pakistan. He shifted to *The Civil and Military Gazette* as a junior reporter, but when the future of the newspaper

looked doubtful he joined the Punjab Information Department as an Information Officer. He did well in the service and reached high office in the provincial government, then was a joint secretary at the centre, then chairman of the Press Trust, and finally information minister in the Pakistan High Commission in London. It was in London that he had a severe heart attack and died in May 1980.

I knew him in his early years as a young information officer, companionable, alert and eager to learn. But he had bad company and soon took to drinking and even worse habits. Then in about 1953 or 1954 he went for hajj and returned a transformed man. He gave up all bad habits and became a puritan. I did not meet him after 1957.

I remember two things about him which are unforgettable. Two of his upper front teeth obtruded out of his mouth and it appeared as if he was talking with his teeth, not his tongue. Since his joining the service he made it a habit to narrate to us stories of ministers' and high officials' follies and inefficiencies with an unholy glee. We enjoyed the scandals and asked for more.

SARDAR ANWAR KHAN

Khan had the distinction of being the first Baloch to enter the foreign service through open competition. He was a classmate of Altaf Gauhar in school and the Government College, and it was Altaf who introduced him to me in 1943. We met frequently in the Coffee House and the Halqa-i-Arbab-i-Zauq. He had a discriminating literary taste

and wrote poetry and prose in Urdu; much later he also published a collection of his English poems.

I can't forget one of his achievements. I am unable to recall the year but it was 1947 or 1948, when in a series of talks at the Halqa he exposed the outrageous plagiarism of some prominent and highly respected Urdu poets and writers. The series was entitled "Chéh Diláwar ast Duzdé". It is the first half of a well-known Persian line *Chéh diláwar ast duzdé kéh bakaf chirágh dárád*: look how brave (shameless) is the thief that he comes into a house in the night to steal and yet carries a lighted lamp in his hand; meaning that he has no fear of being caught and no dread of embarrassment when caught red-handed.

Every Sunday afternoon Anwar Khan arrived at the Halqa meeting with his bombshell, a sheaf of papers. He read out an Urdu poem by a certain leading poet and then the text of the poem of an English poet, and lo and behold! the Urdu verses were close copies of the English original. The audience was stunned and waited breathlessly for the next instalment promised for the following week. I remember only two exposés which shook the literati of Lahore. These dealt with Dr Tasaddaq Husain Khalid and Dr Muhammad Din Taseer.

Few people remember Khalid today. But he was a well-known man of letters in the 1930s and 1940s. He had returned from England with a doctorate in history, a call to the bar, and membership of the Royal Historical Society. He lived on Fane Road and practised law. His wife, Salma, was an important member of the women's

wing of the Punjab Muslim League. I had two connections with the couple. Salma was a classmate at the McLagan School for Girls of my eldest sister Akhtar in the 1920s, and in 1946-48 I was a class fellow of the Khalids' adopted son or nephew, Muhammad Husain Shamim. I visited the Fane Road house several times, sometimes with my sister when she wanted to see Salma and later more frequently to visit Shamim. Later Shamim entered the police service of Pakistan. What is important to remember is that Dr Khalid was a pioneer of modern Urdu poetry, perhaps its first practitioner. Anwar Khan showed much courage in taking him on. Dr Taseer was a more notable figure and had a bigger reputation to protect, but he was a different kind of man. Anwar told me that Taseer showed no embarrassment, shrugged his shoulders and let loose a raucous laughter in response to the charge of literary theft. Altaf Gauhar told me in 1994 that he had tried hard to retrieve these essays but nobody, including Anwar's family, knew what had happened to them.

In 1951 I was visiting Quetta in the summer and staying with my eldest sister. Mukhtar Siddiqui wrote to me asking me to go and see Anwar and gave me his address. We met every week and talked about his Lahore days and friends. I recall one incident which provoked him and surprised me. We were sitting in his house and a servant brought the tea things. I poured tea in my cup and was on the point of adding milk to it when I noticed that blobs of thick cream were floating on its surface. I stopped and blew hard at the jug to

avert the cream from falling into my cup. Anwar catapulted from his seat as if shot, shouted "What are you doing?", called the servant and asked him to take away the jug of milk, throw away its contents and bring a fresh supply in another jug.

Then he turned to me and asked why I had blown at the milk. He was 5 years senior to me and I liked him immensely. So I suppressed my anger and gently explained that I was allergic to most dairy products except milk and could not drink tea with even a suspicion of cream floating atop the liquid. He understood and ordered a close-mesh sieve to strain the milk.

I met him next in March 1963 in Jeddah when my wife and I performed *Umrah* on our way back from Europe. He was posted at our embassy in Saudi Arabia and came veryday to play a hand of bridge at Dr Parvez Hasan's house where we were staying. Parvez was my nephew and was then working with the Saudi Monetary Agency. Anwar took us out for a drive one evening, stopped his car at a roadside food stall and said to me, "Get out of the vehicle. Today I will feed you with something which cannot have cream in it." He had not forgotten my encounter with his jug of milk 12 years earlier. We ate a lot of Turkish Kebabs wrapped in náns and talked of the Coffee House and the Halqa. We never met again.

Anwar was a tall, handsome fellow with lips which were made for smiling. Though Urdu was not his mother tongue (it was Persian) he had mastered it for his literary expression in both prose and poetry. He had read a great deal of Urdu and

Persian literature and published some of his poems in the Halqa's annual selection of the best poems of the year. He had all the social graces and must have been a good ambassador. He died in Quetta at some time in the mid-1980s. He gave utterance to his opinions and feelings without hesitation or regard for the status of the interlocutor. Therefore Miraji had given him the title of "Marshal".

PROFESSOR MUHAMMAD SARWAR JÁMA'Í

He was a specialist in Islam, an Arabic scholar, a journalist and almost a professional editor of journals. He was educated at Jamia Millia, Aligarh and Al-Azhar Universities. In January 1942 when Zahiruddin, proprietor of the Urdu Bookstall, founded his monthly journal *Kitab* he selected Sarwar as its editor. Earlier he had established a small publishing house, Bait-ul-Hikmat, in Delhi. From *Kitab* he came to *Ehsan* as its editor, but stayed only a year.

After this he did a lot of things, some commercial, some journalistic, some semi-academic (hence his title of Professor). He worked on the staff of *Imroz*, then issued his own *Afaq*, then established the Sind Sagar Academy, which was mainly devoted to the circulation and popularization of the writings and ideas of Obaidullah Sindhi, but also published books on Islam, and functioned in Karachi and Lahore. Then he edited successively *Bang-i-Haram* of Peshawar, *Al-Rahim* of Hyderabad Sindh, *Fikr-o-Nazar*, *Al-Máarif* and *Az-Zakat*. For several years he was associated with the Institute of Islamic

Culture in Lahore. He died in Abu Dhabi on 20 September 1983 at the age of 77.

He left behind him several scholarly studies: 4 on Muhammad Ali Jauhar, 2 on Obaidullah Sindhi, 3 on Shah Wali Ullah, and others on Abul Ala Maududi, Jamáat-i-Islami, Punjabi literature, Muslims and non-Muslim rule, and 5 on Islamic religion. His deep knowledge of Arabic and his exposure to the learning available in Jamia Millia and Al-Azhar raised the quality of his scholarship. At the same time his experience as a journalist gave him a good understanding of national and international political developments.

As a human being Sarwar was understanding, amiable, soft-spoken and affectionate. Though he was 21 years senior to me he always treated me with courtesy and consideration, never addressing me as *tun*. He spoke gently with an attractive lilt in his voice. Unlike most journalists he did not make fun of politicians or laugh at their ineptitudes. On the history of Indian Muslims he was very well informed. As a Muslim he was tolerant and compassionate but firm in his faith; naturally because his role models were Shah Waliullah and Obaidullah Sindhi, not Abul Ala Maududi. In the Coffee House discussions he was among those rare few who tried to persuade others by gentle words but strong arguments. For these qualities, I noticed, everybody held him in considerable respect. I learnt a lot from him in the fields of classical Islamic political thought, Obaidullah Sindhi's remarkable conversion and movement, and the weaknesses of what is known today as fundamentalism.

AZIZ BEG

Beg's whose unique characteristic habit was to write and talk in alliteration, was a journalist. After graduating from Government College, Lahore, he did some odd jobs and then served as assistant editor of *Dawn* in Delhi. In late 1946 Jinnah took him to Bombay where he edited the *Star* weekly, a Muslim League paper. It was planned that it would soon be converted into a daily, but the announcement of partition on 3 June 1947 made that impracticable. Beg came to Lahore and started a weekly of the same name. Later its title was changed to *Guardian*. For some years he and K.H. Khurshid managed and ran the weekly.

I met Khurshid in 1948 in the Coffee House when he had just been released by the Jammu and Kashmir government and had crossed over to Pakistan. He introduced me to Aziz Beg, who was at this time on the prowl for young men who could write for his paper. I joined the team along with Munir Ahmad Khan (later Chairman, Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission) and Ahmad Saeed (who was soon to teach history at Dyal Singh College).

I contributed a weekly column and occasional articles to *Star* and *Guardian* for several years. Aziz Beg paid me nothing, saying he was providing me an opportunity to train myself as a writer. I did not insist on remuneration, partly because I had a couple of part-time lecturing jobs and partly because I wanted to see my name in print.

Aziz Beg and Khurshid, both bachelors, lived together in a flat in Ganga Ram Mansions behind

the building in which Fazl Din had his pharmacy. It was the second or third flat on the left, with the newly-established Orient Press in the opposite row. It was a 2-storeyed flat built on ample proportions, with high ceilinged large rooms and a broad staircase leading to the upper floor. I became friends with both Beg and Khurshid and visited them often. Among those whom I met there briefly were Ahmad Saeed Kirmani, Mumtaz Ahmad Khan, Khurshid Anwar (music producer), Faiz Ahmad Faiz and a few provincial ministers and members of assembly whose number proliferated every year.

I had one complaint against Beg. He did not edit with any vigour what I submitted for publication. I am sure that at that age I could not have written a "clean copy", though in 1948-51 I published several long articles in *Ravi*, the Government College students' magazine, which I was told by Prof. Sirajuddin were decently written. Still, I feel I would have gained from Beg's closer attention. The harvest I reaped was the habit and ability to write regularly with a deadline. I became a fluent writer, but not of any quality.

As a person Beg was a good friend with an even temper and a genuine affection for young people. Our warm relationship survived my departure from Lahore, and later on my visits to Pakistan I often looked him up either in Lahore or in Islamabad to where he had moved in the 1960s. He married late and had children. He died at some time in the 1980s when I was in Heidelberg.

KHWAJA HASAN KHURSHID

He was arguably the greatest gentleman among my Coffee House friends and certainly the most honest politician I have met in my life. As very little has been written about him it is worth everybody's while to provide a sketch of his life.

The family belonged to the Kashmir valley, from where it migrated in early nineteenth century to a village called Sabzpir, and later to Jammu. Its ancestors had been Brahmins with the caste name of Dhar. His father, Mawlavi Muhammad Hasan, was the first Muslim science graduate from the State. After taking a diploma in teaching from the Central Training College, Lahore, he became a school teacher in Kashmir and later Gilgit. He retired in 1946 and died in 1981.

Mawlavi Muhammad Hasan married twice. In 1905 he married a woman from whom he had several children, but only 2 survived: Abdul Aziz (born 1908, later Chief Conservator of forests, died in 1966) and Sakina Begum who died about 1980. In 1917 he married Wazir Begum, daughter of Abdul Qadir Qureshi (whose ancestors were Brahmins of the Raina caste) who was an overseer in the public works department in Gilgit. This wife produced 11 children: (1) Abdul Rasheed in 1918, who retired in 1976 as a colonel of the Pakistan Army Medical Corps, (2) Rasheeda, 1919, died 1986, (3) Muhammad Amcen, 1922, died in 1941 as a student, (4) Khurshid, 1924, (5) Mahmud, 1925, in the Pakistan air force, died 1982, (6) Abdur Rahman Zafar, 1926, in the Punjab Education Service, taught Botany, died of cancer in

1979, (7) Shaukat Hasan, 1928, did odd jobs, died 1976, (8) Akhtar Hasan, 1932, served in the health department of Azad Kashmir, (9) Nilofar Begum, 1935, (10) Javed Hasan, 1936, and (11) Naheed, 1941. Wazir Begum died in 1946.

Of this large group I knew only Col Rasheed, Khurshid, and A. R. Zafar who was my colleague for a few months in 1960-61 at Government College, Rawalpindi.

Khurshid was born in Srinagar on 3 January 1924, and educated at the Gilgit primary school, Sri Pratap High School, Srinagar, and Government High School, Islamabad (Kashmir), from where he matriculated in 1939. He spent 5 years at Sri Pratap College, Srinagar, and graduated in 1944. While in the college he was a founder member of the Muslim Students Federation and a great admirer of Jinnah.

Khurshid's family belonged to the lower middle class and it is a matter of surprise that his father managed to bring up and educate so many children. As far as Khurshid is concerned, he might well have languished in some low-grade government clerkship but for a fortunate turn of events. Very soon after his (Khurshid's) graduation, Jinnah came to Srinagar on a brief holiday and met this extremely handsome, well-built, soft-spoken enthusiast for the Pakistan movement. He liked him immensely and offered him the appointment of his private secretary. The surprised young man, who had fallen in love with Jinnah in their first meeting, could not have hoped for a better opening. He accompanied Jinnah to Bombay and served him with devotion and loyalty for 3 years, though he

had to suffer the humiliation of living in a servant's quarter along with Jinnah's domestic staff. Thus he saw from the closest quarters the unfolding and flowering of the Pakistan ideal and witnessed Jinnah's actions, feelings and emotions as his day and night companion. As he told me later, in 1949, Jinnah was a sad and frustrated man even in the flush of his great triumph at the creation of Pakistan, and the cause of this bitterness was his realization that among his lieutenants and deputies there was not even one whom he could trust or consider competent enough to run the country after he himself had gone. It is a great pity that Khurshid did not write his memoirs or at least an account of the 3 years he lived with Jinnah. His diary, arranged, edited and published by his wife, Surayya, 40 years later, is silent on all the most important events and incidents, some of which Khurshid related to me in 1949-53.

In October 1947 Khurshid took leave and went to Kashmir to see his family, where the State government arrested him and threw him into prison. He was released in June 1949 and came to Karachi to rejoin his appointment as private secretary to the Governor General. He was told that no such post existed and in any case there was no place for him in the Establishment. He was saddened but not surprised. His proximity to Jinnah was a black mark against him in the book of the new rulers whom Khurshid had heard Jinnah calling "base coins". The government did not even want him to live in Karachi.

He came to Lahore and joined hands with Aziz Beg in issuing their weekly *Guardian*, which now

replaced the *Star*. He and Beg lived in a flat in Ganga Ram Mansions as long as he was in Lahore. As an editorial associate of the *Guardian* and later as a friend of both Beg and Khurshid I was a frequent visitor at the flat. They did most of the editorial work of the paper at home and this gave me an opportunity to spend a few hours every week with them.

In temperament, conversation and bearing Khurshid was very different from Aziz Beg. Beg was impetuous, outspoken, lively, pushing and excitable. Khurshid was quiet, reticent, self-controlled and sensitive. The self-discipline and gravitas came partly from inside him and was a family trait and partly from the self-confidence he had developed during his association with Jinnah. In Bombay and Delhi he had often seen prominent politicians and leaders waiting endlessly in the verandas and ante-rooms of Jinnah's house for a meeting with the great leader and cringing before himself (Khurshid) for arranging an interview. Now in Lahore in 1949 they rode high, enjoyed the fruits of power and could not believe in the reality of what they had achieved in terms of prestige, wealth, influence and status. Like badly brought up children who are given expensive toys they really did not know what to do with what had come their way. Every ruler became a petty and mean dictator who believed not only in the eternity of his authority but also in the fancy that he had earned it.

The greatest of all these tin gods was the Prime Minister himself, Liaquat Ali Khan. The split between him and Jinnah, caused by the Desai-Liaquat pact of 1945, had not been healed, and Liaquat had become prime minister by default not

by merit or seniority; Jinnah had offered the job to others but they had refused. For some months the relations between the president of the Muslim League and its general secretary were so bad that Jinnah had ordered his domestic staff not to let Liaquat enter the house and asked Khurshid not to give him any appointment to see him. Some of Jinnah's anger stuck on to Khurshid.

One evening in the winter of 1949 Liaquat was in Lahore and the Governor of the Punjab arranged a meeting (not a press conference) between the prime minister and the editors and selected journalists of Lahore. At the end of the conversation dinner was served which was also attended by a few guests of the Governor who were staying in the House. By an unhappy chance the general talk turned to the rise and course of the Pakistan Movement and Liaquat made an unwise comment, echoing the patent opinion of all Urdu-speaking Muslim Leaguers, to the effect that the Movement had its origins in the United Provinces and owed its success to the leaders of that area. "We made Pakistan while the Punjabis were licking the boots of the British", he is reported to have said. All talk and murmuring around the table ceased. For some moments there was a complete hush. Then Hameed Nizami muttered something but his words were not audible. Liaquat made matters worse by growling at Nizami, "What are you mumbling? You lack the courage to speak up?"

Before Nizami or any other Punjabi editor could answer the Prime Minister, Khurshid stood up and for 10 minutes reminded Liaquat Ali of his past

career in the U.P. Agricultural Party which was an enemy of the Muslim League, his inefficiency in running the All India Muslim League secretariat, and particularly and in detail of his treachery against Jinnah and the Muslim League when he had conspired with Bhulabhai Desai and signed a pact with him behind Jinnah's back, saying that Jinnah was a dying man and if the Congress wanted a solution of the communal problem it should talk to him (Liaquat) and not to Jinnah. He told the guests of Jinnah's anger and his rift with Liaquat, of which he was an eyewitness. He ended with the declaration that his loyalty lay with the Quaid and his Pakistan, not with the people who had come to occupy high places by chance and circumstance. When he sat down there was silence in the dining hall. Liaquat Ali was red in the face but said nothing.

One of the guests was Mian Aminuddin, at this time the Agent to the Governor General in Baluchistan, an officer of the Indian Civil Service, and later to become the Governor of the Punjab. He was a close friend of my family and a few months later his daughter, Farrukh, married my Uncle Rahim Jan. The incident at the dinner was not reported in the press under the prime minister's order. By chance on the next day Abbaji and I went to visit Uncle Hakim Jan and while we were there Mian Aminuddin arrived to see Hakim Jan. As soon as he sat down he started relating what had happened at the Government House last night. He was full of admiration for Khurshid and wondered who he was. I told him about Khurshid and his antecedents. Mian Aminuddin's comment after

hearing me was memorable: "Jinnah was the citadel of truth. It seems that whoever came into close contact with him also learnt to speak the truth with courage. Khurshid appears to have gained much from his association with Jinnah. The prime minister is a bully and a coward."

Next day I went to Ganga Ram Mansions and asked Khurshid to tell me in full detail how he took on the prime minister. Khurshid, without raising his voice, told me everything, filling in the gaps in the Liaquat-Desai pact scandal, and finished by saying that he could not allow anyone, be he the prime minister of the country, to speak an untruth about Jinnah. When I repeated to him the remark Mian Aminuddin had made Aziz Beg, who was present during our conversation, shouted in his usual impetuous way that he was going to publish the remark in the next issue of the *Guardian*. Khurshid stopped him from doing any such thing.

Khurshid wrote in the paper as fearlessly as he spoke his mind among friends and enemies. In conversation he was mild in tone but firm in opinion. I did not hear him even once raising his voice or losing his temper. A thoroughly civilized man he tried to convince by argument and his transparent sincerity. I did not meet anyone who exceeded him in his devotion to Jinnah.

As far as I can recall he left for England to study for the bar in 1952 or 1953. Miss Fatima Jinnah had almost adopted him as her son and she bore the expenses of his higher education. A few days before his departure he came to my house on Poonch Road and said he wanted to take with him

a copy of Moore's *Lala Rookh* but couldn't find it in any Lahore bookshop. I have always hated to part with my books and twice have lost a friend who refused to return what he had borrowed from me. But seeing Khurshid's eagerness bordering on anxiety to have this long poem I gave him the copy which I had bought in the summer of 1948 from a secondhand bookshop in Quetta. His pleasure was almost palpable. He was in a hurry and I could not even ask him why he wanted the book if he was leaving for England in a few days.

With his departure our direct relationship ceased. Our later meetings were accidental, casual and brief: two in Lahore, one in Karachi and two in Islamabad; all confined to greetings, exchange of "how do you do" and regrets at long separations. Though I knew him well for only three or four years he left an unforgettable impress on my mind of a gentleman of rare quality.

Khurshid's later life may be briefly told. He was called to the bar at the Lincoln's Inn in 1955, married Surraya (daughter of Dr. Nurul Hasan, younger brother of Khurshid's father) in Sialkot in December, and practised law in Karachi. In May 1959 he became the President of Azad Kashmir on the behest and blessings of Ayub Khan, the military dictator of Pakistan. For the first time the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs in Karachi and Islamabad desisted from treating Azad Kashmir as a district of Pakistan functioning at and for its pleasure. Khurshid acted as a constitutional head of state with a firm resolve to restore the dignity and independence of Azad Kashmir. But he did not realize that nobody with any

ability and enterprise could be tolerated by a General who had unaccountable power. In February 1964, while on an official visit to Rawalpindi, he was arrested by the Punjab Police and taken to Dulai Camp, the notorious political prison situated in Azad Kashmir but controlled by the Pakistan government. He was incarcerated without any given reason or cause and released after a few months without any explanation or apology.

As he told me long afterwards he could see no difference between Shaikh Abdullah's government of Indian-occupied Kashmir which had imprisoned him in October 1947 and Ayub Khan's government of Pakistan which had sent him to Dulai.

In the 1964 presidential election he vigorously supported and campaigned for Fatima Jinnah as against Ayub Khan, but her defeat was inevitable in the face of the might of the military establishment. He reverted to his legal practice but shifted it to Lahore. In March 1988 he went to Mirpur to address the local bar council and while travelling to Lahore in an ordinary bus died in a road accident just short of the city. He was an ordinary man in a bus full of ordinary people and nobody could identify him. But for a chance discovery of his identity card in his wallet his corpse would have been disposed of as an unclaimed body. So close is anonymity to distinction.

Khurshid and Surraya had 4 children: Iraj (born 1956 or 1957, died at the age of 9), Yasmeen (born about 1958, married Haroon of the Merchant Navy in 1985), Khurram (who teaches English at the Forman Christian College, Lahore), and Tipu (died in his childhood). Khurshid had lived in Lahore in a

rented house in the Cavalry Ground area and had not built any house of his own. He was buried in Muzaffarabad in the Supreme Court Building compound. (The dates and details of Khurshid's family are authentic because they were dictated to me in Abbotabad in the summer of 1988 by his eldest brother, Col. Dr. Rasheed).

When, on my return to Lahore I called at his house to pay my condolences to his wife I learnt something interesting and significant about Khurshid. The table in the dining room was of an unusual and irregular shape. It had no end and no beginning, but it was not round or oval or rectangular. On my inquiry Surraya told me that it was Khurshid's idea to order a table at which no one sat at its head and no one occupied the bottom. It was, he used to say, a table of democracy or equality where every guest and the host were equal peers. That sums up his political life and his private conviction. In public life there has been none like him. As a human being few could equal his integrity and humility.

SHAIKH KHURSHID AHMAD

Sheikh Khurshid Ahmad belonged to that brilliant group which was at the Government College between 1940 and 1946 and which included men like Altaf Gauhar, Saïdar Mir, Hafeez Hoshiarpuri, Ejaz Batalavi and others. He graduated in 1942, took his M.A. in philosophy in 1944 and graduated in law in 1946. A foremost activist and spokesman of the Punjab Muslim Students Federation, in the early and

mid-1940s he was the best speaker and defender of the Pakistan movement. He was a part-time lecturer at the Punjab University Law College in 1946-56. His legal practice at the Punjab High Court was very successful. In June 1962 he was appointed a law minister in the West Pakistan government, and in 1964 Ayub Khan took him into the federal cabinet as law member. But, for reasons unknown to me, when Ayub formed his cabinet after his re-election as president he dropped Khurshid, who then came back to Lahore and resumed legal practice. He died suddenly of a heart attack in Lahore on 19 June 1967, at the early age of 45.

Khurshid belonged to a Kakkezai family of village Islamabad near Amritsar, and his father, Shaikh Maqbul Ahmad, was a retired sub-judge. I had many links with Khurshid. His father was known to Abbaji. I was a close friend of Khurshid's. His younger brother, Munir, was my classmate at the Government College, and his youngest brother, Marghub, was my student. I knew slightly the eldest brother, Mahmud, who was in the army. Mahmud married Bilquis, a physician, and their son, Moeed, is a well-known gastroenteritis expert in Lahore. Khurshid married the sister of Aftab Ahmad Khan of the Civil Service of Pakistan who was my contemporary at the College. Munir, who later served for several years as Chairman of the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission and is the real father of the Pakistani nuclear bomb, married a Dutch woman.

Some aspects of Khurshid's character and life deserve notice. I am no judge of his legal career, but he enjoyed the general reputation of being one of the

finest lawyers of the country. He was a supreme conversationalist on several levels. He related pertinent jokes and intriguing stories with gusto, as much enjoying the telling of them as the laughter of the audience. He had a sweet temperament which showed in his welcome of friends to his table, his sympathy with everyone in trouble, his way of talking, and even in his dealing with the waiters of the Coffee House. He was perhaps the only person in the House whose company was cherished by everyone, who had no complexes, and who was at peace with himself.

He was generous in his friendships and gathered around him a large group amid which he sat as if holding a court. The way I have put it may mislead the reader. He was completely unselfconscious of his qualities and virtues. His circle included prominent men like Chiragh Hasan Hasrat, Zaheer Kashmiri, Abdullah Butt, Bari Alig, K.H. Khurshid, Shaikh Ahmad and Hafeez Hoshiarpuri, and also several juniors like me who had nothing to contribute to the conversation except their curiosity and eagerness to learn. At that time his inner circle consisted of Badiuzzaman, Mazharul Haq, Abdullah Anwar Beg, Hameed Nizami, Ataullah Sajjad and Abdullah Butt.

For me he was a patron in a double sense. In earlier years when I was a student with a limited pocket money and he was earning money at the bar, I was a guest at his table. At times I would arrive and say "You are going to order my coffee today", and he always said, "Why only today? You are always welcome." During my lean years and before I had a job, I would occasionally sponge upon him, either sending my bill to his table for payment, his response

being a raised arm in a gesture of acquiescence, or even "borrowing" a few rupees, 2 or 3, with a mutual understanding that the deal was not a debt but a gift. Not even once did he refuse or hesitate to oblige me.

The other side of his patronage was purely intellectual. I had studied philosophy as a subject in my undergraduate days without developing any interest in the discipline. Khurshid introduced me to the meaning and pleasure of philosophy in two ways. He made me read Will Durant's books and Bertrand Russell's essays, and these incursions urged me to explore further. At the same time he encouraged me to ask questions, and make inquiries and, depending on the time available, gave me short lectures on some abstract philosophical concepts like idealism, beauty, nature of knowledge, reason and time, which my teachers at the college had not even mentioned in passing. I absorbed as much as I could.

In these discourses, which were rarely an exchange of views, my mind was illumined, not only by the knowledge I was receiving but equally by his persuasive and expository acumen. He had the supreme talent of explaining arcane points and theories in simple logical steps which clarified complicated thought and made it comprehensible. I still remember the eloquence of his words and the way he waved his right index finger in the air to emphasize his words. His chiselled arguments and apposite phrases made his talk a thing of pleasure and wonder. It was easy for me to believe that he was an outstanding pleader at the bar. One legacy of these meetings was that when I began to lecture on political science at the Punjab University I chose

to teach the paper on ancient political thought. The other was my ability to cope with the difficulties of the paper on British political theory which I had to study as a part of my M.Sc. (Econ.) course at the University of Manchester in 1957-58.

Khurshid did not attend meetings of the Halqa-i-Arab-i-Zauq, nor did he patronize the India (later Pak) Tea House. He had only one intellectual home and that was the Coffee House. There he was a "morning man"; unlike many of us, he never came in the evenings. As soon as he had finished his lecturing at the law college and his work at the court he cycled down to the Coffee House in his black coat and tie and stayed till lunch time. When I visited him and Munir at their house on Queens Road I found that his evenings were reserved for studying and preparing his legal briefs.

SYED ABID ALI ABID

He was a 'sad mixture of much learning, considerable ability, acute poetic talent, unbelievable hard work and complete moral irresponsibility.

He had a respectable ancestry. His great grandfather, Khan Bahadur Urustu Jah Rajab Ali, was a recognized scholar and a notable in official estimation, and belonged to Jagraon, district Ludhiana in the Punjab. He was educated at Delhi College where he was a student of Mawlavi Muhammad Baqir, Muhammad Husain Azad's father. Rajab Ali's eldest son, Hasan Shah, was brought up in traditional Persian and Arabic studies, served in the police and retired as a superintendent.

Rajab Ali's second wife had left her husband and migrated to Lahore with her eldest son, Hasan, whose elder son was Ghulam Abbas who married one Iqbal Begum, the daughter of Syed Ahmad Shah, a *sarishtadar* or office superintendent. Abbas served in the British Indian army and retired as a risaldar major. After his retirement he settled in Lahore and opened a general merchandise shop in the Commercial Building which he ran till his death.

Abid Ali was born in Lahore on 17 September 1906. He was the eldest child followed by 3 brothers and 4 sisters. He had his early education in Dera Ismail Khan, where his father was posted, then he came to Lahore and joined the Rang Mahal Mission School, but matriculated in English only as a private candidate in 1919. Then he went back to D.I. Khan and taught in a school for 4 years, and simultaneously passed the Munshi Fazil examination in 1922 and graduated privately in 1923. He returned to Lahore and took his law degree in 1925, and then went to Gujerat to practice law in 1925-30, at the same time preparing for the M.A. degree in Persian which was awarded to him in 1930. He then joined Dyal Singh College as a lecturer and stayed there for a long spell; at the same time lecturing on Persian and Urdu at the Punjab University Oriental College.

In 1947 he was appointed principal of Dyal Singh College, but was dismissed in 1954 because of a quarrel with Abdul Haq, the Secretary of the Evacuee Property Trust Board. Reinstated in 1958, he was again asked to leave within a year. After a period of unemployment he joined Majlis-i-Taraqqi-

i-Adab, first as the editor of its journal *Sahifa* and then as a compiler, editor and author of books as a "pen labourer", getting paid for what he produced. His health was failing rapidly and he died in harness on 20 January 1970.

I have given these details of his career in the hope that they might serve as an aid in finding what went wrong. But first let me describe what did go wrong.

To start with, nature had not cast Abid Ali in an appealing mould, and, as if playing a trick, had given him an appealing exterior as a cover for his many personal defects. He was a well-built, fair complexioned, handsome man with a presence. His voice was clear, rich and impressive, which added to his talent as a lecturer and made him a popular reciter of poetry at the *murha'iras*. He was an interesting conversationalist with a sense of humour and, in the earlier years, a readiness to make friends.

He deformed this façade by some defects of temperament and some bad habits. He was abrasive, irritable, itching to lose his temper, over self-conscious of his ability, stubborn, arrogant and willful. He was a heavy smoker and addicted to alcohol. After 1950, when his domestic and professional affairs led to frustration and worry and especially after 1954 when he had no job or income, he took to narcotics in search of a temporary and induced peace of mind, which smoothed his path to a dusty grave.

He had a roving eye when he was still in his youth and, as it often happens, gradually ended up as a womanizer. That destroyed his reputation and his family life.

In 1927 he married Bilquis, the daughter of Syed Nurullah Shah, then the district and session judge of Gujerat. She was a good-looking woman, genial of temperament and caring. She soon developed a literary taste and in time flowered into a short story writer and published two collections of her work. Between 1927 and 1941 the couple had 7 daughters and one son. Bilquis's equanimity and suavity must have been sorely tried by her husband's character and habits. But she tolerated and forgave much for the sake of the future of the children. There was much tension in the home and frequent arguments, but she persisted as long as she could.

It was Abid Ali who brought the matter to the boil in 1950 or 1951 by contracting a second marriage with a woman called Mahmuda. Bilquis left her home with the children and went to live in Gujerat. Mahmuda soon discovered the real Abid Ali and the relationship soured. After two years, while still living with her husband, she took him to the court. In the course of this litigation, in 1954, Abid Ali divorced her. Bilquis returned with the children and it seemed that the reconciliation had ended the bad days.

But Abid Ali was incorrigible and apparently bent upon ruining his own life as well as of the family. Soon after marrying Mahmuda, he had entered into a liaison with one of his students, Mahbub Siddiqui, and the illicit relationship continued even after the divorce and the return of Bilquis. So when Bilquis came back as the mistress of the house in 1954 and thought all was well her husband continued to be unfaithful. When she came to know of the scandal she was deeply hurt. When she confronted Abid Ali

with the reports and evidence of his colleagues and friends he first denied everything, then challenged her to do her worst, and finally declared that if she did not stop badgering him he would retaliate by marrying Mahbub. And that is what he did in 1958, thus forcing Bilquis to go back to Gujerat once again. For the rest of his life he lived with his third wife who is reported to have been of a submissive nature, thus fitting well into Abid Ali's ego-driven existence. Mahbub led a peaceful life because by now Abid Ali's failing health and vigour was a barrier to his search for further feminine company. Bilquis lived with her children in Gujerat till her death in 1982. Abid Ali had died in 1970 in Lahore and Mahbub in 1972. There were no children from Mahmuda and Mahbub. Thus ended the sad story of Abid Ali's household, full of turmoil, social obloquy, Bilquis's heart aches and the children's stormy adolescence.

I am an eyewitness of most of these unfortunate developments. Up to September 1947, when Abid Ali took over as principal of Dyal Singh College and shifted to his official residence in Majithia Hall, the hostel of the college on Empress-Nicholson roads, he lived in Shibli Street in Islamia Park on Poonch Road, very close to my sister Razia's house in Firdausi Street. We ourselves lived with Baji Razia or in the neighbourhood till 1945. During these years I visited Abid Ali's house frequently while Bilquis and her daughters often called at our house. More than once I heard Bilquis complaining to Amman, whom she called Apa, about her husband's misdeamonours and hard drinking and saying her hands were forced by the children's future. Abid Ali never called at our house.

The house in which they lived was a very modest 3-room residence with a small courtyard in the front which had the entry door opening directly on to the street. The doorway was draped by a curtain made of soiled tarpaulin. The rooms were barely furnished and it was evident that the residents slept two to a bed. At this time Abid Ali had 7 daughters – Tal'at, Nakhat, Nuzhat (all three about my age), Yasmeen, Shireen, Shabnam and Shama' (ranging between 12 and 6) – and one son, Meenuchehar (who was about 3 or 4). All the girls were good-looking; Nuzhat was beautiful. Once or twice a day the three older ones went to the shops a hundred yards away to buy domestic necessities – not at all uncommon in middle class localities in those days – wearing burqas but with the veils thrown back.

What I saw and heard of the older girls' upbringing within the house was unique in my experience. Abid himself trained them in dancing and singing. The girls sang to the accompaniment of the harmonium which Abid Ali played. Some of the dances were performed with *ghungarus* worn around the girls' ankles. The sound and voice of the performances reached the neighbouring houses and eyebrows were raised. But it was an age of tolerance and forbearance, the Abid Alis were Sayyids, and no men visited the house. Everyone knew that Abid Ali was a poet and a teacher, and Bilquis was liked by everyone living around. The girls were well behaved and good. Therefore there was not a breath of scandal; but people talked and wondered.

Abid Ali was then a lecturer and his salary modest. Even allowing for some income from his

work for the radio service, I wonder how he managed to rear a family of 8 children and one wife, buy his tobacco and alcohol, entertain friends, visit the Coffee House and indulge his "extra-curricular" activities. Bilquis must have been a very hard pressed woman with a miraculous touch of husbandry.

The most wonderful phenomenon in Abid Ali's character was the yoking together of an immoral personal life and a formidable mental power. Till the end, even during the years of his failing health, his creative scholarship, poetic gift and capacity for hard work were unabated. On his poorest physical days he enlisted the help of morphia and other narcotics to appear in poetical recitals and write impressive books as if his life was normal.

He was a major Urdu poet of the twentieth century in the genre of ghazal. He had three advantages on his side. He was extremely well-read in Persian and Urdu classical literature. He was familiar with the nicer points of Indian classical music. And he had a rare understanding of the value and nuance of the Urdu word. This last quality comes out with a thunderous limpidity in the amendments he made in his verses when he was preparing his two poetry collections for publication. Many of the ghazals were long and had appeared in journals years earlier. He showed an acute judgement, rare courage and unheard of self-discipline in revising what he had once composed. Most authors of prose find it hard to prune what they have written and published; it is like killing one's offspring. The poets find it even more difficult to cancel their verses. But Abid Ali was merciless in this massacre. He

performed two surgical operations. He shortened a 13-couplet ghazal into a 7-couplet one, shedding seemingly good verses like autumn leaves. Then he revised the couplets which he decided to retain, and in this his characteristic technique was to change one single word. In most cases this simple transformation turned a good verse into poetry of great beauty and verve. He achieved this because he had an extraordinary command of Urdu vocabulary and an imagination of rare sensitiveness.

These very qualities, combined with his knowledge of classical music, make his poetry into an elegant exercise in melody. We find this musicality both in his rhythm and end-rhymes. The words run in beautifully balanced lines to produce unearthly assonance. The end-rhymes are not only melodious but unusual.

Classical Urdu poetry lacks a vital dimension of which there is no satisfactory explanation. It lacks the mystical touch. Barring some couplets of Ghalib and some of lesser poets like Mir Dard, Asghar Gondawi and Amir Miná'i, Urdu poetry is completely non-mystical. The Urdu poets borrowed so much from Persian poetry but remained unaffected by its mystical core. This failure is even more egregious in the case of Urdu poets from the Punjab of every age. They were born and reared in a land whose poetical and spiritual landscape was soaked in mysticism, a land which for 500 years had produced one great mystical poet after another from Baba Farid to Shah Muhammad. This desideration in all Urdu poets from the Punjab becomes a shocking defect in poets like Iqbal and Abid Ali who were nurtured on Persian poetry. The reason lay in

their affiliation with Urdu classical poetry whose non-spiritual tentacles they were unable to escape. This makes Abid Ali a purely romantic poet with no loyalty to the Indo-Persian poetical tradition,

But in his own chosen field Abid Ali is supreme. His romance is rooted in earthly, physical feelings, sensations and experiences. He loves a woman for his womanliness, her body and the sensual pleasure she can give. He is not interested in her purity of spirit. She is not an idol to be venerated, thus leading to the creator of beauty, but an instrument of sensual satisfaction. In delineating this kind of love Abid Ali has few equals. But he remains a one-dimensional poet.

But, then, he was much more than a poet. He was a short-story writer, a novelist, a dramatist, a translator, a feature writer, a literary critic, an art historian, and a scholar. I can't recall any other name whose intellectual endeavour spanned such a large field, whose writings cover so many subjects, and whose interests are so varied and catholic.

Two facts about these prose works enhance Abid Ali's stature as a writer. This corpus is not an exploration of a foreign territory, or an adventure in variety or an indulgence in a hobby. It is a serious, professional undertaking entailing much labour and research.

Secondly, most of this work was done under the most discouraging conditions. He was sick in health, frustrated with his family life, estranged from Bilquis, alienated from his children, and worried about his uncertain income. His years at the Majlis-i-Taraqqi-i-Adab were a trial for him. He

was inadequately paid and in later years ordered to produce scholarly books of prescribed length whose emoluments were calculated on the pattern of the wages of a labourer. You write so many pages within a given time frame and your payment will be determined by your speed and volume. He was, as he called himself, a "pen labourer". The wonder is that the labourer did not let the galling restrictions affect the quality of what he wrote.

The entire output of Abid Ali makes a formidable total. He wrote 9 volumes of literary criticism, 15 introductions and short studies, 3 full-length novels, 3 collections of short stories, 7 texts and grammars, 18 translations of books, 145 uncollected articles, 16 uncollected short stories, 7 uncollected dramas, 2 TV dramas, 63 radio features, several speeches, lectures, reviews and columns, and 2 volumes of poetry.

Along with all this he was editor of *Hazar Dastan* (1923-26), *Dilkash* (1927), *Adabi Dunya* (1929), *Dyal Singh College Magazine* (1933-39), *Afsana* (1934), *Daur-i-Jadeed*, *Zar'i Dunya*, *Sadiq*, (1956), *Gul-i-Khandán* (1956-59), and *Sahifa* (1956-66). He also wrote a regular column in the *Millat* in 1954.

To sum up, Abid Ali Abid was a poet and prose writer of distinction, with a great deal of valuable work to his credit. I have given details of his personal difficulties and unhappy married life not to demonize him but to place his intellectual achievements in their context. In the trying circumstances in which he spent most of his life few people would have written anything and fewer still anything of permanent value. Therein lies his triumph.

CHAPTER 5

THE ROLL OF HONOUR: IV

HAFEEZ HOSHIARPURI

Hafeez is one of the most underrated poets of the twentieth century. He belonged to Hoshiarpur but was born in Diwánpur in district Jhang in 1912 where his father, Shaikh Fazl-i-Muhammad, was then living. Hafeez was the eldest of 3 brothers. Abdul Majeed was poorly educated and remained a problem for the family. Abdul Rasheed Ráhil was also a poet, with a special command of chronograms. He was a loner and even within the house lived in seclusion in his room.

Hafeez was educated at the Islamia High School, Hoshiarpur, from where he matriculated, the Government Intermediate College, Hoshiarpur, and Government College, Lahore, from where he graduated in 1933 and took his M.A. degree in philosophy in 1935 or 1936. As a student he lived with Sufi Ghulam Mustafa Tabassum, and supplemented whatever his father could send him with tuitions and writing for journals and newspapers. He was taught in the B.A. class by Ahmad Shah Bokhari who made him read a great deal of English literature and also arranged his

appointment as editor of the children's magazine *Phool* issued by the Darul Isha'at of Sayyid Imtiaz Ali, where he also wrote for *Tahzib-i-Niswán*.

On leaving the college he became the deputy secretary of the Anjuman-i-Urdu Punjab which had been founded in the same year (1936) by Mian Bashir Ahmad of *Humayun*. Later he joined the staff of *Adabi Dunya* and Chiragh Hasan Hasrat's *Namakdán*. For some time he was also on the editorial staff of *Riyasat* in Delhi. In 1940 Ahmad Shah Bokhari brought him to the All India Radio as a programme assistant and he spent the next 7 years in Delhi with a brief stint in Bombay. In 1947 he moved to the Lahore radio station, where he stayed till June 1953, when he moved to Karachi, the headquarters of Radio Pakistan, and ended up as Deputy Director General; retiring in 1967. He settled in Karachi and died there on 10 January 1973 of a respiratory disorder.

He received his training in the art of poetic composition from his maternal grandfather, Ghulam Muhammad (who died in 1930), and after his death from his brother Abdul Rasheed Ráhil. He also learnt much from Ahmad Shah Bokhari and Sufi Tabassum. Under Bokhari's guidance and inspiration he even wrote some poems in English (a hobby he soon gave up) while a college student, and translated snatches of English poetry into Urdu verse for children which were published by Darul Isha'at under the title of *Do Rangi* as a book with the original English text and the Urdu translation set side-by-side.

In the 1940s the poems appearing in the daily *Inqilab* under the name of "Inqilab ké khás Sha'ir

ké Qalam sé" were by Hafeez and Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi.

In his earlier years Hafeez used Saleem as his *takhallus* and was known as Shaikh Abdul Hafeez Saleem. Later he gave up this pseudonym in favour of his real name Hafeez.

He was not a prolific poet and left only one collection, *Maqām-i-Ghazal*, which was published a little before his death. In 1957 he had brought out a valuable edition of four Persian *mathnavis* written in Sind on the theme of the Hir-Ranjha story. He also wrote a book on the Urdu men of letters of East Pakistan.

He left behind him 2 sons, Suhaib and 'Amer, and 3 daughters, Sabiha, Samina and Ismat.

It is not widely known that Nasir Kazmi was Hafeez's pupil in poetry. I heard Kazmi several times telling his friends that he had had only one teacher and that was Hafeez. He made this statement with pride. A close study of the works of Hafeez and Nasir reveals the tutor's influence on the taught in the simplicity and hidden strength of the short metre ghazal. There is the same spontaneity and force and the same depth in meaning. The brevity and simplicity is a symbol of the two poets' view of how poetry should convey its message without using long and complicated Persian constructions. The reader will notice the relative absence of the *izáfat* in both.

A remarkable gift in Hafeez, which he had learnt or inherited from his brother, Ráhil, was the art of composing chronograms, often spontaneously, inspirationally and on the spur of the moment. In his

ghazals Hafeez stands very high in the estimation of the best literary critics. What distinguishes him is his acute perception of the real nature of love, and in this insight and its expression he is superior to Faiz Ahmad Faiz. His choice of words is not as sparkling as Faiz's, but the depth of feeling he paints is absent in Faiz. Hafeez rises above mere romance.

I met Hafeez in 1947 and for the next 6 years he was generous enough to give me his friendship, disregarding our age difference. We met often in the Coffee House and at the Halqa. I saw even more of him in his office at the Radio Station when he was the Director, and some of my friends were on his staff. He invited me to all the *musha'iras* broadcast from Lahore where I listened to nearly all the poets of the country.

Physically Hafeez was unimpressive with his slight frame, short stature and dark complexion. Yet there was an aura of authority about him. Seeing him sitting in a corner in the Coffee House or walking on the roadside one was apt to ignore him and let his glance pass by him. But when he sat in his official chair in his office, or recited a ghazal in a *musha'ira* or in a circle of friends, or opened his lips to say something, he was transformed into an impressive figure. He was soft spoken and never raised his voice. What made us give our full attention to his utterances was the hint of power accompanying his words. He imparted emphasis to his words by puckering his lips and slightly restructuring his pronunciation. The more serious the topic of conversation the greater the play of a shadowy smile on his face. His

eyes bored into those he was talking to and it was impossible to let your attention or gaze wander.

In everything that he did he was a thorough gentleman. His manners were impeccable. He rarely spoke ill of others. He did not laugh aloud. He had a sense of humour and when he related an amusing story there was a spark in his eyes, which meant that his own enjoyment at the joke was as genuine as the appreciation of the audience. He smoked a lot, but always his own cigarettes.

His command of the Persian language was enviable. I heard him reciting long passages from Rumi, which surprised me because it is easier to have a ghazal at the command of your memory than a *mathnavi*, which showed how closely he had read the Persian classics.

ABDUL QADEER NAUMANI

Naumani was an odd character of the Coffee House. He was a thin man of medium stature with a short grizzly beard. I can't recall when he joined the House crowd but he was a daily visitor and spent the whole morning gossiping with his friends. He was Shaikh Khurshid's protégé and whenever Khurshid was present he paid Qadeer's bills. He moved in the circle of Urdu journalists or of those whose main interest lay in provincial politics. I never saw him among the poets or men of letters.

To some of us he was a figure of fun. We knew nothing of his background, of where he lived and of his source of living. Apparently he did no work. He was in some ways a simpleton, but a likeable

innocent who did not enter into serious discussion or any controversial dispute. Mild of temperament, he was a harmless fellow, and looked so. But some of us, I must confess, refused to see in him an artless adult, an ingénue, an innocuous eccentric, and treated him as if he was a crank or a dimwit or a dolt or a softhead. Some ridiculed him and scoffed at him. Never, even once, did he react with anger or a harsh word. When people made sport of him he smiled in all innocence and shook his head. His good natured, childlike response shamed us. Among those who never poked fun at him and treated him gently were Abdullah Butt, Chiragh Hasan Hasrat and Shaikh Khurshid. In a strange, difficult to understand, sense he became a mascot or talisman of the Coffee House. When he did not turn up everyone asked everyone else what had happened to him. The inquiry was rooted in a concern about his welfare. He commanded an unspoken and half-concealed affection which came out in the open when he was absent.

ANWAR JALAL SHEMZA

Shemza was a delightful Kashmiri and one of the pioneering spirits of modern art in Lahore. His ancestors had been carpet makers and shawl weavers for a long time, and his father had specialized in creating ingenious patterns for carpets. The genes had their way and Anwar inherited his love of beauty and interest in evolving patterns from the family. His father, Khwaja Muhammad Sadiq, is said to have been employed in Simla and Lahore by a carpet manufacturer as a designer of patterns.

I met Anwar in 1947. He had matriculated the same year from the Rang Mahal Mission High School and joined Dyal Singh College. He was so keen on becoming a professional artist that he left the College after a few months and joined the Mayo School of Arts. He took the 4-year diploma in 3 years and won a medal for his exceptional work.

Our friendship flowered in these years of his study. The School was a mere 5 minutes' walk from the Coffee House, and he spent his vacant periods in the House. He reappeared in the evening and stayed on till quite late. I had not much interest in modern art. I did not understand its aesthetics and found no pleasure in viewing a painting or drawing which appeared to me to be a confusing collation of colours and shades. There was nothing there to see or view as there was in classical and non-modern European art. Sometimes he insisted that I go with him to his flat in Laxmi Mansions to watch him paint or see the finished item. I accompanied him only to please him but told him frankly that I was not qualified to understand or appreciate what he was doing.

At this time his own concern was not solely focused on art. Strangely, on leaving the Mayo School he developed a deep interest in literature, though he did not stop painting or etching. He spent some time on mastering the art of lettering and practising calligraphy. That left an imprint on his artistic work: he was a man of the line, not the solids. His lettering improved and he did considerable commercial work in the field, making some sort of a living, and deriving a certain satisfaction from it.

His skill in lettering was indeed good. One day when he and I left his home to go to the Coffee House, he stopped where Beadon Road merges into the Mall and said "Come, I will show you something". Holding me by the arm he pulled me towards the front façade of the Laxmi Mansions, and standing in front of the Shezan restaurant said, "You see the signboard of the restaurant. You know how I wrote out my name and signed my paintings, and how much all of you appreciated the way I formed the letters of 'Shemza'. Well, the restaurant owner liked my 'Shemza' so much that he wanted me to sketch the signboard on the same pattern. The wages were good and I succumbed to the temptation. I have sold my signature. Look at the result."

I looked closely at the name of the restaurant and realized that it was a twin of Anwar's signature. Seen from a distance or through the shades of evening the "Shezan" and "Shemza" looked alike. I looked at Anwar and saw on his face a mixture of emotions. He was proud that his art and name were now on display to the public on the finest road of Lahore and on the fascia of the best restaurant in the city. He was also sad that he had sold a part of his personality to make money. During the following 6 or 7 years that I was in Lahore whenever Anwar and I went to Shezan or made an appointment to meet there I would always use the phrase "Let's go to Shemza" or "I will see you tomorrow at Shemza". He was pleased.

This Shezan is now gone, like most landmarks of the Lahore of my youth. But in its place there exist over a dozen Shezan bakeries whose signboards and shopping bags carry the name of the shop as

Shemza wrote it. Whenever I visit the bakery or some friend brings a cake for me in that shopping bag I stare at the name "Shezan" and for a few minutes I am lost in a reverie in which I relive the early 1950s and Anwar's company and good cheer.

Anwar's interest in Urdu literature grew in this period. He wrote several plays and about half a dozen novels. His *Qissa Kaháni* was published in 1954 and received good reviews. In 1948 he had collaborated with a friend in publishing a fortnightly magazine called *Ihsás*, which gave equal space to literature and art. It lasted for a few years. In 1952, when I was teaching at Emerson College, Multan, Anwar insisted that I contribute to the journal. I had not published anything in Urdu by then and had no confidence in my ability to write in that language. In the previous 2 or 3 years I had read widely in Urdu literature and must have been deeply affected by Qazi Abdul Ghaffar and Mirza Adeeb. I had fallen in love with the girl I was destined to marry, my emotions were on the boil and an urge stirred within me to put what I felt into words. Anwar's persistence served as an incentive. I wrote essays on romantic love for *Ihsás* which Anwar published. Whatever the quality of this effort I will always remember Anwar as the man who was responsible for making me break into literary print in Urdu. That puts him on a pedestal in my gallery of long-lost friends.

In 1956 Anwar got a British Council scholarship to study art at the Slade School of Art. After a successful academic career he settled in England, married an Englishwoman, had two daughters, taught art at a school, never came back to live in

Pakistan, and died in Stafford in early 1985 at the age of 57. My last meeting with him was in 1956 after which, as far as I am concerned, he was dead.

Anwar was tall, with a sturdy frame and a fair complexion. In his clothes, shoes and general bearing he was smart. He dressed dapperly and created some novel fashions, like wearing corduroy jackets (coats) and using bright monochrome neckties. For most of the time he wore a smile, and when he laughed he created a stir in the Coffee House with the resonance of the rollick. But he could be serious and stern when working on a canvas or planning the next issue of *Ihsás*. He had a presence and most people would look up and at him when he entered the Coffee House. Sweet of temperament and mild in his talk I never saw him shouting or knitting his brows. A lovable man, he brought much pleasure to his friends and commanded their loyalty and devotion.

I have nothing to say about his career or quality as an artist. Art experts have pointed out one contradiction in his approach to his work. As long as he was in Lahore he made a deliberate and vigorous effort to imitate Western modern art. But for the next 30 years of his life when he was working in England he reverted to his aboriginal Eastern roots, and even the most West-looking items that he produced harked back to his ancient and well-vested values. He was trained in England, had an English wife, taught at an English school and lived in a Western milieu, and yet the core of the work he did there betrayed an incorrigible oriental. Whether it was nostalgia or the genes at work or a primeval instinct reasserting itself I don't know. Perhaps nobody knows.

MUIN NAJMI

Muin was an innovative artist who did not look an artist for a minute. Tall, slim, handsome, ramrod straight, immaculately dressed, he stood in stark contrast to the traditional, scruffy, untidy and long-haired image of an artist. And yet he was quiet and unflamboyant. He did not flaunt his skill or his dress. He dressed in white shirt and trousers in summer and 3-piece suits or a fashionably cut jacket and waistcoat in winter. He was one of the finest painters of his generation; some say he was *the* finest of the abstract school.

He was the same age as Shemza but came from a different social background. He had inherited much money from his grandfather and that made him independent of pursuing a profession. Instead, he practised the vocation of art. He was born in Lahore and educated at the Sacred Heart Convent, Bishop Cottam School in Simla, and Islamia College, Lahore. Then he became a teacher of art at the Aitchison College where he stayed for several years, producing such prominent practitioners of painting and architecture as Kamil Khan Mumtaz, Mian Ijazul Hasan and Habib Fida Ali. He founded the Lahore Art Circle where Shemza, Ahmad Pervaiz, Ali Imam and M. Safdar foregathered to exchange notes and enjoy each other's company. I joined them often, not because I was interested in their work but to hear them discuss a subject which was new to me.

My acquaintance with Muin stopped here as I left Lahore. Later he joined Hanif Ramay's Punjab Arts Council installed at the graceful colonial

Masonic Lodge. When General Zia descended with his dark clouds on the country Muin left the Council and established or revived his own private gallery.

Muin was a regular Coffee House patron and Safdar, Shemza and I enjoyed his generosity. Knowing that his pockets were well-lined we would invite ourselves to his table and he made us welcome. As he kept his appointments punctually, sometimes we ordered omelette on toast, a plate of cashew nuts and coffee in anticipation of his arrival, and he paid the bill quietly with a smile. As he was a chain smoker and offered cigarettes around I took advantage of his habit to satisfy my addiction.

Muin was a quiet man, even his talk was more of a whisper than a clear pronouncement. I wonder how he lectured to his students at the college or addressed functions at the Arts Council. He was fond of music, relished Malika Pukhraj's singing, and was knowledgeable about classical music. His character was composed of undertones of melancholy; though he was by no means a kill joy or a bore. It was an aristocratic contour of his temperament and in some ways made him more likeable.

His non-stop consumption of tobacco caused his death. His doctors warned him against emphysema but he did not listen to them. He smoked till the end, until his lungs collapsed on 13 June 1997. A graceful man devoted to art, he made a major contribution to his field. He was a perfectionist and painted when it pleased him. His works are not many but they are good.

A.D. AZHAR (AHMADUDDIN AZHAR)

He became known to me by a chance through Ashiq Husain Batalavi. One morning Ashiq and I were drinking coffee at the Coffee House when he said, "I am seeing somebody interesting in half an hour. Would you like to come with me?" I was always on the look out to meet people from different walks of life. And when a man like Ashiq described him as "interesting" I was game. We walked to the State Bank Building on the Mall, and went up to the first floor where two apartments served as a rest house for the visiting senior officers or directors of the Bank.

The door was opened by a tall, sturdily built man who looked like a farmer. Ashiq introduced me as his "cousin" and told him of my background. About our host he merely said that he was a civil servant and his name was A.D. Azhar. We sat down and Ashiq came directly to the purpose of his visit. He was planning to leave Pakistan for London and wanted Azhar to facilitate his departure by getting permission to travel abroad and some foreign exchange from the Bank. Azhar promised to help, and then the conversation turned to literature and poetry. I was surprised to hear Azhar reciting Persian, Urdu and Punjabi pieces of poetry interspersed with short diversions and allusions to the lives and works of the poets he was quoting. I left the Bank with a determination to further my acquaintance with Azhar. A few days later I met him again at the house of Hafiz Abdul Majeed, a family friend, who was then Chief Secretary of the Punjab.

Azhar and I met off and on either in the Coffee House or at his house until he left for London in 1954 as economic minister at the Pakistan High Commission. Azhar's life story, as he told it with some pride, was a remarkable example of a rustic child born in an illiterate farming family in an obscure village making his way to the top echelons of bureaucracy, unpropelled by any advantage, lucky breaks or social influence.

There was a small village about 6 or 7 miles from Sialkot called Dagra Khurd or Kotli Loharán because several families of ironsmiths had lived there since the Mughal times. Azhar was born here in a poor farmer's house in 1902 or thereabout. He was sent to the village mosque when he was 4 or 5 where he learnt to read Urdu and Punjabi. He moved to the District Board Primary School in a neighbouring village, the first boy from his family to attend any kind of a school. He completed the primary stage and then, as he put it, "my natural instinct of vagabondage took over". He spent some time roaming the villages in the vicinity, earning a night's bed and his food by reciting *Hir*, telling traditional stories and making friends with boys of his age. This period of vagrancy lasted two years, and then, as if a switch had been turned on, he returned to his studies with a new determination and interest. Two subjects appealed to him: mathematics and Arabic. He worked hard and finally graduated from Murray College, Sialkot.

In his high school and college days, apart from his studies, his main interest lay in quarreling with other students, indulging in physical skirmishes

and defending his friends through fisticuffs. He was ebullient, aggressive and unafraid. Soon he earned the sobriquet of "general", which stuck to him all his life; his contemporaries and service colleagues called him "General Azhar" till his end.

After some time spent as a teacher he sat in the competition for the recruitment to the Indian Audit and Accounts Service and was selected. He served in the military accounts department in Rawalpindi and then in the supplies and railways departments in New Delhi. At the time of the partition of 1947 he was Indian Trade Commissioner in Australia, and continued as Pakistan's Trade Commissioner till 1949. After a spell in East Pakistan he came briefly to Lahore in 1952 as provincial finance secretary, then went to Karachi as joint secretary to the federal government, and finally was posted to London as Economic Minister at the Pakistan High Commission, from where he retired in 1958, returned to Karachi and got a job in the private sector. He had his first heart attack in 1959, and finally died in 1974.

Azhar was one of the very few administrator-scholars in the country. He wrote several critical essays which appeared in respectable literary journals. He was also a romantic poet, and published his collection in 1961 under the apt and autobiographical title of *Lazzat-i-Áwáragi*. He had made a serious study of religion, especially of Islam-Christianity relationship in imperial India. On this he began to write a full-length treatment in English and gave it the provisional title of *Christianity in History*. As far as I know it was never published and nothing is known about the fate of its manuscript.

My last meeting with Azhar was in the summer of 1958 when I came to London from Manchester to attend an academic conference. He was physically weaker than I had known him in 1954, but with little effect on his vocal vigour and his ability to recall long passages of Urdu and Punjabi poetry. Incidentally, another connection between us was established when his son, Aslam, became my student at Government College, Lahore, in 1954-56. He was a brilliant debator and had inherited his father's gift of persuasive communication.

What impressed me in Azhar was his interest in life, his candid references to his romantic adventures, his friendliness, his command of Arabic grammar, and his infatuation with Punjabi poetry. He could recite dozens of *Sih-harfis* in one sitting. He was, in the complete sense of the term, a man come fully alive.

SHAKIR ALI

Shakir was the doyen of modern painters in Pakistan. Born in 1916 in a wealthy family of Rampur he had the finest education in art that India and Europe could provide. He started at the J.J. School of Arts in Bombay and then went on to the Slade School in London. His next stop was Paris where he learnt and practised Cubism under the master of that genre, André L'hote. From Paris he went to Prague where he discovered the beauty and appeal of design and the poetry of Rilke whom he used to call the "presiding spirit of my art". Here he also found a wife, Maria. Earlier in Bombay he had familiarized himself with Impressionism.

He had a sharp intelligence and a keenness to learn everything about modern art. With his long years of apprenticeship in Europe and his up-to-date knowledge of what European artists were thinking and doing he had expected a satisfying and decent job when he returned to Karachi in 1951. (After 1947 his family had migrated from Rampur to Karachi). Like all others who came to Pakistan in those and later years he was disappointed. The best opening to come his way was the drawing mastership at the Mama Parsi School at a salary of Rs.120 a month. He accepted it. Within a year his life was jolted once again when his wife left him and returned to Europe. Either in desperation or in pursuit of hope he came to Lahore. Fortune smiled and he was appointed head of the department of fine arts at the Mayo School of Arts (later renamed the National College of Arts). He worked here in utter peace but the inner turmoil did not leave him. He became the principal of the college in 1961 but was forced to retire in 1973. He died in loneliness and disappointment in early 1975.

I met Shakir in 1952 when one of his colleagues, Shaikh Ahmad, brought him to the Coffee House and introduced him. For the next 5 years we met almost every day over a succession of coffee cups. A few times I visited him at his house on Sanda Road. It was a strange relationship. Once I had declared ignorance of and lack of interest in modern art, he never talked to me about his work. He accepted me as a friend, not a fellow artist or an admirer.

What sustained our friendship was my avidity to know what Europe was like and his interest in ancient Greek thought. My thirst for knowledge

about the West was caused by my study of English literature and my plans to go to England for higher studies. His curiosity in Greek thought, especially in Plato, was a child of Rilke's influence on him. In a convoluted set of arguments, which was beyond my understanding, he related Rilke's poetry to Plato's theory of reality being the image of an image, and Cubism to a purely philosophical and abstract view of space. He would lecture to me on the nature and implications of these two connections, stressing the essential nexus which linked art and philosophy. I would explain to him, within my very limited knowledge, the finer points of Plato's theory of poetry and its several contradictions.

Put like this it may sound as if our relationship was purely intellectual. In fact it was not so. There was a strong common dimension to our friendship, and this was the play of emotion in our lives. After Nasir Kazmi he was my only friend to whom I talked of my love for Zarina and my earlier love of a vastly different nature for Rabia. He was a keen and sympathetic listener and quick to gauge the depth of my feelings in the two loves. Apart from his interest in me as a person he also showed some concern for understanding the truth or falsity of what we call Platonic love. He was obsessed with Plato. I had approached Plato from two sides. In my study of literature I had encountered his theory of poetry and its links with society and an unseen power. When I took to political science I was confronted by his idealistic state and the place of the intellectual or philosophical elite in its making and running. When I had come from my studies of literature to my political

syllabus I had found in the latter only one thing that appealed to my mind as worth investigating. That was Plato's idealism. I have retained this interest and an "intellectual affection" for Plato, notwithstanding his undesirable views about slavery and human inequality. I have always looked at him as the greatest pure philosopher because he was a student of Socrates, the first man to ask questions and to die for persisting in it. He was the Hallaj of the West, but prior to the Muslim in time.

Shakir was an unhappy man. It may have been his initial disillusionment when he had to work as a school teacher in Karachi at a manual labourer's wages. It may have been the shock of his wife leaving him so soon after the marriage. It may have been the discouraging circumstances in which he worked in Lahore. Pakistan's educational system, the arrogant attitude of the bureaucracy and the general suffocating air of its colleges and universities must have been a deep cause of depression for a man who had lived for years in the free, rich and rewarding milieu of European seats of arts and learning.

He did not speak about his state of mind, but his long spells of silence and his reticence said all. Sometimes, while taking part in a conversation, alert and communicative, he would abruptly fall silent, look into space and get lost. This happened so often that his friends had got used to it. I don't know if they realized what caused this withdrawal.

I did not meet Shakir for a very long time after leaving Lahore in 1957. I spent my holidays from Khartoum in Rawalpindi, Islamabad and the northern hill stations. It was in 1974 that I thought

of calling at him in Lahore in the house he had built in Garden Town. It was an ugly, badly-proportioned building, and Shakir was poor in health and even more disillusioned. His departure from the National College of arts after he had given it his best 21 years had put a seal of confirmation on his pessimism. When I told him what I was doing in Islamabad (I was then Chairman of the National Commission on Historical and Cultural Research), he smiled a bitter smile and said, "How long would you last?" The question emerged out of his past, but it also embraced my future. My heart was full of pity when I left him. His lifelong solitude had festered into loneliness, and in this country loneliness in declining years equals death.

SHAIKH AHMAD

He belonged to Amritsar but was born in Hissar in 1901, where he went to a mosque school and passed his fifth class. The next 3 years were spent in Jehlum, and then he came to Amritsar where he matriculated from the MAO High School. His 2 years' stay at the Calcutta School of Art brought him a long illness instead of any diploma. He moved first to the Engineering College in Dadar, Bombay, and then to Kala Bhavan. Finally he came back to Amritsar.

Soon he was in the United States where he studied automobile engineering at the Michigan State Aviation and Automobile School and got a diploma. He had been suffering from lung trouble for some time and was on his way to Amritsar when for no reason at all he stopped over in London. There he happened to

meet a vivacious Polish girl called Anna Molka, fell in love with her, and, inspired by his passion, competed for a senior scholarship in fine arts, became the first Asian to win it, and joined the Central School of Art. This was in 1936. He did so well that he was appointed as Assistant to the head of the department of etching, lithography and design. On his insistence Anna too decided to study design, instead of painting, because, as Ahmad told her, if she were to decide to come to Amritsar as his wife her skill in painting would not be very useful, but a good training in design could be fruitful as a profession.

In lithography Ahmad concentrated on painting, and made such a name for himself that he was elected a member of the exclusive Senefelder Club of Lithographers where he became a colleague of Augustus John and Matisse. He excelled in book illustration, and illustrated one book for the Oxford University Press and two volumes for the Country Life Publications. He might have blossomed into a distinguished book illustrator and designer and stayed on in England, but the outbreak of the war decided his future. On 9 September 1939 he married Anna and the couple sailed for India on the 16th.

They came to Amritsar and stayed there for some time and the young European bride lived in a typical Indian household and locality, working as a daughter of the house and wearing a *burqa*. Then both of them got jobs in Lahore; Anna a permanent appointment at the newly-established department of fine arts at the Punjab University, and Ahmad one of the many he accepted and abandoned in quick succession.

Ahmad first taught Islamic art at the Punjab University, then served as Art Executive in the Information Department of the Government of India in New Delhi, then as Director of Art and Publicity in the Punjab Government; after 1947 he was Director of publicity in the Azad Kashmir Government, then back to the Punjab Government as Director of Publicity and finally a lecturer at the Mayo School of Arts. In 1951 he quarreled with the Principal of the School and later his marriage broke up. He bid goodbye to Lahore and went to live in Karachi.

At last he began to do what was after his own heart. An American publishing house, Silver Burdett and Co., was publishing a series of school history books on Pakistan in Urdu and he was commissioned to illustrate them. This was not only studio work but a lot of academic research to find suitable and relevant facial types, contemporary dresses and physical settings. With superb draughtsmanship he made 500 large-scale pictures for the books. I don't know if they were preserved by any Karachi museum or gallery. Then for some time he worked at the United States embassy where he tried unsuccessfully to get help for establishing handicrafts and small-scale industries. What he got out of the embassy was a small grant which enabled him to go to the United States briefly and hold exhibitions of his works in Washington D.C. and New York.

On his return to Karachi he opened his own Pakistan School of Arts and Design. He had brought from the United States a small press, and he devoted a part of his time to writing and printing a series of

booklets. He also produced a number of innovative and beautiful drawing books for children.

Now he turned, most unexpectedly and abruptly, to certain Islamic subjects. In Lahore he had written a full-length study of Islamic architecture. Now he produced, at a remarkable speed, several small books on Muslim administration, constitution and law, state and sovereignty, politics, army administration, democracy and socialism, mosque and madrassah education, *zakat*, and ideology. He also wrote some English poetry.

Ahmad was a man in a hurry all his life: hopping from place to place, changing jobs, showing impatience, laughing at everything, criticizing sharply whatever did not please him, giving vent to new and unusual ideas, demanding very hard work from his students, driving himself to long hours of labour with discipline, doing a number of things at one time, making fun and laughing, moving fast, shaking his head vigorously, and alienating some people. Along with all this, and perhaps because of it, he was an attractive person, innovative, interesting, talking a lot of good sense, producing new concepts, making beautiful books, painting with a supreme touch, enjoying the use of colours, and reading the minds and tastes of young school children.

I am not sure when and where I met him for the first time. It was probably in 1948 at Sir Abdul Qadir's house on Temple Road. There he met Abbaji and became his friend. But I met him almost every day at the Coffee House where he brought his students and paid for their coffee. At that time he wore his hair long, and when he bent down to look

at a book or a sketch or spoke vigorously in a conversation he always jerked his head back to ensure that his hair did not block his eyes.

For three years he was a friend of mine and my father's. Occasionally both of us visited him and his wife at their house. They lived in a lane which branched off from Queen's Road a little before the road came to its end and merged into what is now Qurtaba crossing. It was a nice, small brick-built bungalow on the right near the end of the lane. When Ahmad's book on Islamic architecture appeared he gave me a copy with the inscription in his hand "To my young friend Khursheed, who is beginning to develop an interest in art, with my best wishes". This was the first autographed presentation volume in my personal library and I treasured it for 36 years until I was forced to sell my collection.

F.E. CHAUDHRY

He was the oldest press photographer of Lahore, who has been known to me since my undergraduate days. He was born in Saharanpur in 1909 where his Indian Christian father taught theology at a seminary. At some time unknown to me the family or Chacha (as F.E. is universally known) came to the Punjab, matriculated from a small place in district Jehlum, and graduated from F.C. College, Lahore. For some time he taught science and Urdu at St. Anthony's School, the best school in the province.

But his heart was elsewhere. In his teenage years he had fallen in love with the camera and what it

produced. For about 10 years photography was his hobby; in 1935 it became his profession. Soon the best newspapers and magazines, like *The Civil and Military Gazette* and *The Illustrated Weekly of India* of Bombay, began to accept his photographs. Other newspapers followed soon. He covered most of the political and social events in the subcontinent from about 1937 onwards. In 1949 he joined *The Pakistan Times* where he worked till his retirement in 1973.

Chacha and the Coffee House came together into my life. I saw him on my first visit to the "den" in 1943 and after that he was a fixture, as permanent and familiar as the green upholstery of the chairs and baize covers of the tables. No matter how crowded the table at which he sat his camera rested on another chair next to his seat. Sometimes he left to cover some public event, but back he came as soon as his job was over. One day I counted his 4 departures and 5 entries.

He looks a mild man but he is not. He is active, vocal, holding you with his piercing eyes and affectionate smile. He used to know as much about politics as about the functioning of his camera. Some reporters came to him for information on his return from a photographic session at the house of Mian Bashir Ahmad on Lawrence Road or the Nawab of Mamdot's residence on Habibullah Road (off Davis Road). On provincial political intrigues and clandestine underhand bargains his knowledge was as great as his contempt.

Nearly 50 years after I had left Lahore I came to know that he was still among the alive, traced him to his old Jail Road bungalow, and we talked about

the days long gone away. He was bitter on the disappearance and destruction of his collection of unique photographs and negatives because of the carelessness of the last managers and editors of *The Pakistan Times*. Had they been preserved today we would have a unique visual history of Lahore. He had saved, more by chance than design, a few dozen rare photographs. Out of this treasure he was good enough to present me three copies: a photo of the condemned cell in which Bhagat Singh and his 2 comrades spent their last days; another of the gallows from which they were hanged; and still another of the gate of the central jail on Jail Road taken the day before the building was pulled down. A month ago (from writing these words in September 2006) when I was planning the disposal of my personal and private papers I gave these three photographs to my friend Fakir Syed Aijazuddin on one of his visits to my house, a better curator than whom I don't know.

Chacha is alive when I write this, and for his 97 years still an alert and walking history of Lahore. We must find a way to preserve him for posterity.

THE BEDIS

Bedis of Model Town, Lahore, go a long way and represent a past which was wonderfully exciting and pulsating, an historical episode summing up Lahore's pre-1947 compact and rich culture, when the mullah was not even on the horizon and the tentacles of an undefined ideology still unknown to the Punjabi Muslim.

Baba Piaré Lal Bedi was related to the rich and famous Bedi family which produced Kunwar Mahinder Singh Bedi, the fine Urdu writer, and several public men and philanthropists. Piaré Lal graduated from Government College, Lahore, and then read Modern Greats (Philosophy, Economics and Politics) at Hertford College, Oxford, in 1931-34. From there he went to the Berlin University as an Alexander von Humboldt Scholar to work for his doctorate. This ambition remained unfulfilled because of the rise of Hitler and the decline of academic freedom in Germany. He had been converted to Marxism in Oxford, and in June 1933 married an English fellow-student Freda Houlston.

In 1934 or 1935 the Bedis returned to Lahore and settled in Model Town. Bedi joined the Indian National Congress and in 1938 was elected a member of the National Executive Committee of the Congress Socialist Party. In 1937 the Ganga Ram Trust commissioned him to write Sir Ganga Ram's biography, and he did it with competence. He worked in the Punjab among students and peasants, was arrested in 1940 and detained under the Defence of India Rules till 1942. He also helped Shaikh Abdullah in the drafting of the manifesto of the National Conference entitled "New Kashmir". He was the founder-editor-publisher of *Contemporary India* which lasted from 1935 to 1938, and was a non-communal progressive journal; Abdullah Yusuf Ali wrote some articles for it. For one year, 1938-39, he published his weekly *Monday Morning*, which was quite popular among the intelligentsia of Lahore. Bedi also wrote some books,

the best known being the *Harvest from the Desert*. In collaboration with his wife he edited *India and India Analysed* (3 volumes) which viewed Indian social and political problems from the Marxist angle.

The Partition and its aftermath disrupted the Bedi household. The couple spent a few months in Kashmir on Shaikh Abdullah's invitation but could not settle there. A change of venue to Delhi did not help. Bedi had lost interest in life with the passing away of his Lahore. He felt uprooted and restless. He searched for a new home and failed. In desperation both man and wife turned to a spiritualism which separated them. Freda embraced Buddhism and worked in a monastery. Piaré Lal tried his best to combine Marxism with the spiritualism of his forefathers. This *mélange* did not work. He migrated to Italy, married a woman of his new homeland, and died there in 2001.

Bedi has stuck in my memory for three reasons. First, his way of life in Lahore. We lived at 2-A Model Town in the winter of 1943-44. I used to roam about this beautiful garden town on my bicycle after college hours. Soon I discovered that in one corner of a green in Block B were 3 or 4 small tents and a memsahib and her Indian husband lived there. Intrigued by the presence of an Englishwoman and her refusal to live in a house I approached their "caravanserai" and introduced myself as a second year student of F.C. College and a neighbour of theirs. I was made welcome as if I was one of their normal callers.

I have never seen a family, Indian or British or mixed, make its permanent home in this fashion. Later I saw some people living in tents in Kashmir,

but they were on a holiday, not in their homes. As far as I remember there were 3 small-size tents, one was the Bedis' bedroom, the other a Kitchen-cum-store, and the third their "drawing-room". In this drawing-room, which boasted only 4 or 5 old uncomfortable chairs and one rickety table, during my subsequent visits, I met Hafeez Jullundheri, Shaikh Abdullah, Abdullah Malik, Dr M.D. Taseer and several other important people. In the afternoon the grassy plot around the tents served as a sitting-room and most of the visitors sat on the ground. The Bedis slept on the floor of their tent. Freda fetched pails of water from a nearby public water tap and cooked the food. The couple lived by and according to their beliefs.

And this was the second thing which makes their memory ineradicable. At that time I was a 16-year callow young man who knew little of the ways of the world. But since then I have known and met many people who pretend to believe in a Socialist system but whose lives are a stark contrast to their faith and self-confessed or flaunted values and principles. I have met Marxists who hesitate to drink anything inferior to Black Horse whiskey. I have known some Socialists who live several levels above the senior bourgeoisie, and some Communists who have swimming pools in their vast fashionable houses. The Bedis remain fixed in my mind because they not only spoke on behalf and of the welfare of the proletariat but lived like them by deliberate choice.

Abbaji and I called at the Bedis on the Christmas eve of 1943. During the conversation Abbaji asked Freda how she was going to spend her

Christmas Day and, before she could answer, added that he would be pleased to have her and her husband at our house for lunch. Without a moment's hesitation, she said, "Christmas Day? Lunch? Shaikh sahib, are you serious? In this country where half the population goes hungry every day." Her husband expressed the same sentiment in longer sentences and thanked Abbaji for being so considerate. That was, I would say today, living up to one's principles and values.

The third thing to impress me was the character and personality of both the man and the wife. Freda belonged to the ruling race and had gone to Oxford. Her sacrifices for her beliefs rang true, and in my eyes made her a heroine. Those of our historians, and they are great in number and vehement in their views and deficient in common sense, who take pleasure in heaping on their former colonial masters every pejorative and damaging adjective they know, have an incomplete comprehension of their own history. Their pleasure is perverse and their motive impure. Freda was a good human being, kind, humane, sensitive, feeling the deprivation of others, tender hearted, easily touched. Bedi was of the same mould and, besides, had a good command of history and philosophy. I say this because I was present when he discussed these subjects with Abbaji and quoted European authors and thinkers as if he was still in his Hertford junior common room.

Let me pause here to try to recall any Muslim who had been to a European university and then on his return to India preferred to live in poverty all his

life for the sake of his nation. Apart from 2 or 3 people who took their degrees in England and Germany and chose to teach at the Jamia Millia for Rs.80 a month no name comes to my mind. And this difference moulded history. The few Muslims who preferred poverty to ease were all supporters of the Indian National Congress and believers in a united Indian nationalism. There was no ranking intellectual in the upper or lower reaches of the Muslim League. This antithesis in our past has moulded our recent past, and the political history of Pakistan is a proof of the saying that history never forgives. The intellectual leadership of a movement determines its end result and then moulds its future.

FAZLUR RAHMAN

He and I became friends in a mosque, not in the Coffee House, though later I introduced him to the House and took him there occasionally. But even then he was so totally devoted to his study and research that he had no time for the intellectual revelries of any kind and spent all his waking hours on his books.

When I came to Lahore from Batala in 1942 to join the F.C. College we rented a bungalow at the far end of Poonch Road (No.79). Manma Hameed lived nearby, and he, his sons, Abbaji and I went for the Friday congregational prayers to a small mosque nearby. The gathering was small and everyone came to know everyone else. Soon we became a family, held by faith not blood. There was a slim, dark, tall young man who always sat in the

front row behind the imam, and once or twice when the imam was ill he led the prayers and delivered the *khutba*. We were a little surprised by his young age and one day introduced ourselves to him. Thus began a relationship which, in spite of long separations, lasted till his death in 1988.

It turned out that this youth, who shaved his faced and head, wore glasses and suffered from an involuntary and permanent shaking of the head (an ailment due to the aftermath of some serious illness which disappeared gradually) was Fazlur Rahman, the son of the imam. The family belonged to Jehlum but the imam, Shihabuddin, had spent most of his life in Hazara. There he had collaborated with Malik Ameer Alam Khan in founding and publishing the weekly *Tarjuman-i-Sarhad*, a politico-religious magazine. He had had his training at Deoband, where he was a student of Mahmudul Hasan and Rasheed Ahmad Gangohi, and a contemporary of Ubaidullah Sindhi and Husain Ahmad Madani. At some time in the 1930s he came to Lahore and took up the duties of the imam of our mosque. His family lived in a very modest house near the mosque.

Luckily Shihabuddin, not content with the prospects of his son as the imam of a mosque, decided to give him good education. Fazlur Rahman had been born in Hazara and his father gave him a thorough training in religion along with his school education. The boy had a brilliant academic career, smoothed his way to higher studies by winning scholarships at school, college and university, and finally in 1942 took his M.A. in Arabic from the Punjab University with a first division and a gold

medal for topping the list. He was at once awarded a research assistantship for 3 years by the university, and he worked under Maulana Muhammad Shafi and Dr Inayatullah. Both these teachers were Abbaji's close friends and this added another thread to the web of our relationship. Later when Fazlur Rahman visited me at our house he would also spend some time with Abbaji talking about his own research work and his teachers.

In 1946 Fazlur Rahman decided to go to Oxford and work for a doctorate. I don't know who financed him and why he chose Oxford. The story of his difficulties and final success was told to me by my cousin A.H. Kardar who had entered University College, Oxford, in October 1946, to study for the shortened "war degree" and read Modern Greats.

The innocent that he was, Fazlur Rahman arrived in Oxford in early 1947 without arranging anything about his admission. He saw the vice-chancellor but was told that it was impossible to admit him in any college not only because he had missed the first term but also because the university was mobbed by the large number of ex-servicemen whose educational career had been disrupted by the war and who had the priority in resuming their undergraduate and graduate courses. Moreover, only rarely and in exceptional cases was a student with a foreign degree admitted directly to do his doctoral research without first spending a year or two on his post-graduate work.

Under these discouraging circumstances Kardar agreed to use his special relationship with Giles Alington, the Dean of the University College, to see

if a way could be found to help Fazlur Rahman. Alington was not only a respected historian but had strong social contacts. His father had been the headmaster of Eton, the family had political connections with the Gladstone clan, and Alington's sister Elizabeth was married to Lord Douglas-Home, the future prime minister. In those days aristocratic contacts were useful even at Oxbridge. Alington told Fazlur Rahman that if he could bring a favourable chit from H.A.R. Gibb, the leading British orientalist, his college would admit him. Fazlur Rahman met Gibb and impressed him with his knowledge of Islamic theology and command of the Arabic language. The recommendation from such august quarters could not be ignored and Fazlur Rahman was admitted as a D. Phil. student. He chose to write his thesis on the psychology of Ibn Sina (Avicenna).

A few months later Alington again came to the rescue of Fazlur Rahman. One of Fazlur Rahman's financial guarantors was a person from Delhi, and after the Partition he expressed his inability to send any money to him. Alington, who had powerful connections in the United States because of his eminent work on the American constitution, got Fazlur Rahman grant from the Carnegie Foundation. Fazlur Rahman was a brilliant student and a very hard worker and got his D. Phil degree in time. In the process he learnt Greek and Latin by studying the "Teach Yourself" series of languages (because he could not afford to pay for tuition in the subjects) in order to enrich his thesis by using classical Western sources to illustrate the

transfer of Greek philosophy to the medieval Christian universities through Islamic translations and scholarship. After taking his degree Fazlur Rahman went to teach at the Durham University and later to the McGill University in Canada.

In Lahore I was in constant touch with Fazlur Rahman from 1942 to the end of 1946. I was then too young and immature to learn anything from him, also ignorant about his field. But I remember one instance of his wide knowledge and skill in explaining and elaborating an abstract theory. Under the influence of my Coffee House friends I had developed a keen interest in Urdu poetry. At home Abbaji had drilled into me an appreciation and understanding of classical Persian poetry. In my English honours class I was reading poetical theory with special reference to Plato's view of poetry and its creation by the poet as an image of a reality, not as the reality itself. This arcane philosophy was beyond my comprehension. I read what was written in the books and learnt it by rote for passing the examination. But I was not satisfied.

One day in 1946 when Fazlur Rahman was explaining to me the beauties of Arabic poetry he mentioned Iflaton (Plato) once or twice. I wondered what the Greek thinker had to do with Arabic, then remembered my failure to grasp the relationship between his theory of poetry and his philosophy of the created being an image of the creator, an image emerging from reality. Fazlur Rahman explained within the parameters of my capacity to follow him. I understood some points he made, and missed the meaning of others.

Of what I grasped I clearly remember his emphasis on revelation as a source or channel of poetry. The Quran was a revelation, which meant that it represented Reality or was an aspect of Reality. When I objected that revelation descended only on prophets not other men, he said that that was not so, and quoted the Quran where God says that He sent revelation to the bee. Poetry is revelation and it represents the reality. It is the image of a reality, as Plato put it. The seeds of Fazlur Rahman's future books were sown in his mind at this time. Ten years later he wrote his seminal book on prophecy in Islam. What he was telling me now was that poetry and prophecy were twin-sisters because both were special representations of a Reality which we cannot see or understand directly. Besides his knowledge what impressed me was his way of explaining knotty points. He must have been a very good teacher in later years.

CHAPTER 6

THE ROLL OF HONOUR: V

RAUF MALIK

He was Abdullah Malik's younger brother, and was my contemporary. We graduated together in 1946, he from Islamia College and I from Government College. He had embraced the Communist dogma as an undergraduate, perhaps even earlier. We had been meeting at the Coffee House since 1943, but I saw more of him from 1946 onwards when the People's Publishing House opened its bookshop in the YMCA building in 1946. It was centrally located, just round the corner from the India Tea House. It sold only Marxist literature and a few Soviet books and magazines. There was not much custom, but some friends called in the evening and stayed for a gossip. Rauf was a part-time worker at the shop, but after August 1947, with the departure of Ahmad Husain and Kalimullah, he had to take full charge of the publishing house. In 1947-48 he received some help from Naseem Zakria, who, however, left in 1948 to join the M.A. class at the University. I was neither a Marxist nor even a leftist, but I dropped in to see Rauf every second or third day after the session in the Coffee House. If

nothing else, I became more familiar with the writings of Marx, Lenin, Stalin and other prominent Soviet ideologues. I was also intrigued by the clandestine ways of some of the customers, as if they were afraid of what they were doing. The Islamic republic had been born, though it was not yet given that title, and the fear of the state apparatus had begun to make itself felt. I wouldn't be surprised if my name appeared in the secret police lists of those days because of my frequent and long visits to the shop. But I was young and still a student and couldn't care less. The complacency was shattered a few years later, but of that I will talk when I narrate the story of my college teaching.

Rauf had come early in his life to his crossroads. Being a Communist as a college freshman was then uncommon but not rare. In 1942-47 I saw several Hindu and Sikh boys and girls selling Marxist literature on the streets of Lahore. There was an atmosphere of political freedom and intellectual curiosity under British rule, and since the 1941 German invasion of the Soviet Union the official embargo on the Communists in India had been lifted. Rauf was only 20, but he was in good company. Then abruptly a heavy responsibility landed on his untried shoulders when in 1947 everyone left and he had to look after all the activities of the People's Publishing House from importing foreign reading material to publishing local literature to selling the wares at the shop – all under the shadow of the uplifted arm of a suspicious government. So great was his devotion and courage that he not only survived but expanded the scope of the House.

In 1948 when Sajjad Zaheer came to Pakistan from India to officially organize the Communist Party of Pakistan he formally appointed Rauf as the man in charge of the PPH. When Zaheer's warrants of arrest were issued Rauf met him secretly and arranged his visits to different places and his meetings with certain people. Till the official outlawing of the Party in 1954 in the wake of the first Pakistan-USA defence pact Rauf alone did the work and took the risks of running the local organization under the hardest of conditions. In the first Punjab provincial elections of March 1951 he managed the campaign for the railways workers' union candidate, Mirza Muhammad Ibrahim, but he lost to Ahmad Saeed Kirmani because of the government's rigging the contest.

A little later he had the distinction of publishing Faiz Ahmad Faiz's second poetical collection *Dast-i-Sabá* and holding a well-attended launching ceremony in a restaurant on the Mall. He followed it up by bringing out Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi's *Shu'la-i-Gul*, Ahmad Rahi's Punjabi poetry *Taranjan*, and some political books. These publications earned the House much esteem.

At last the dreaded axe fell on 24 July 1954 when the Party was banned, the PPH sealed and most of the leaders and workers arrested. Rauf was housed in the "bomb case ward" of the central jail, so called because Bhagat Singh and his companions had been lodged here before their hanging (today it is the Shadman Colony on Jail Road). After two months he was transferred to the notorious torture cells in the basement of the Mughal Fort (which

were used for this nefarious purpose for 30 years by every successive government since independence). He was kept in solitary confinement and interrogated intensely for several hours every day. Towards the end his family was allowed to see him. Rauf and his fellow prisoners had petitioned the court against their arrest but no redress was in sight. Finally, before a judicial decision, the government ordered his release in December. He was never served with a charge-sheet.

On his release he was in a sad plight. He could not re-establish the publishing house because it was still an unlawful institution. He was unable to start a new publishing venture for lack of resources. For his living he tried a number of things: tuitioning students, teaching at a school, supervising the publications of Messrs. Ferozsons, serving in a social welfare society, and writing columns in some newspapers and magazines.

His circumstances took a favourable turn in 1957 when he received some money from the Lahore Improvement Trust in compensation for some of his ancestral property taken over by the Government, and the government permitted him to reopen his publishing business under the name of PPH. He opened the shop outside Lahori Gate and launched into a new venture, but in 1965 moved to the Plomer Building on Cathedral Road. He was again in prison from January to April 1977. In 1980 he shifted the shop to Begum Road. Another term of incarceration came his way in March-August 1981, and still another in 1984. A few years later he was forced by circumstances to close down PPH,

and worked at the Vanguard Books for some time. At present he is running his book distribution agency on Mozang Road.

Rauf and I have known each other for 65 years and never quarreled or had a difference of opinion. I am beholden to him for having given his friendship to a non-Marxist. Politics or ideology has never come between us. We still enjoy each other's company and talk for hours and recall with pleasure the days which were once our own. He is my senior by one year but enjoys enviable health and ability to live an active life. I salute him for his personal integrity and the courage with which he has fought the battles of his life without losing his equanimity of mind and the smile on his face. A brave and honest man indeed.

WAHEEDUZZAMAN

He was Manma Hameed's second son and one of my closest friends, especially during 1942-57, the years of adolescence when relationships take birth and develop strong foundations.

Waheed's elder brother, Khurshiduzzaman, was my class fellow as an undergraduate at Government College, and then went to F.C. College to study psychology for his M.A. degree; and later joined the army in the signal corps. Waheed was 3 years behind me in studies though one year senior in age. Like me he was a bad examinee. Zaman's life interest was the game of hockey, in which he excelled and ended up as an Olympic player. Outside the college, it was Waheed who was my constant companion. For many years my family lived either with Baji Razia whose

house was next to Manma Hameed's or in houses within the radius of a 5-minute walk. For a year we actually lived in the same house.

These ties of blood and contiguity were strengthened by shared tastes and the daily round of the Coffee House. Both of us grew fond of Urdu poetry, attended all the *musha'iras* held at Radio Pakistan, the YMCA hall and at various colleges, came to know the first generation of modern poets like Mukhtar Siddiqui, Yusuf Zafar and Nasir Kazmi, and learnt the charming art of quoting apposite couplets in conversation. Waheed had a sharp memory for verses and could recall not only hundreds of couplets but also several ghazals and *nazms*. His taste in poetry was good and its range wide. In this he was the true grandson of Ghulam Qadir, but he shone in solitary grandeur. Nobody else in his family even remotely shared his enthusiasm, not even his father who had graduated from Aligarh.

There were other walks of life which Waheed and I trod in double harness. We spent several hours every day in the Coffee House, meeting people, gossiping to no end, reciting poetry, enjoying every minute of the day that was passing. There was hardly any road or street in central Lahore which escaped our exploration. We liked and disliked the same poets and writers. Most of our friends were common. For two years Nasir Kazmi thought we were brothers. If on some rare day I entered the Coffee House, the waiter was sure to ask me "why has Waheed sahib not come with you today?" Waheed was asked the same question if he appeared alone. We were the inseparables.

Of course, we were human, and sometimes we quarreled and called each other names. We stopped talking to each other. This gesture of anger satisfied some base instinct. But a restlessness disturbed the calm of life. And within a day or two, without any self-consciousness or contrived plan, we would come together again. The period of separation was swept aside and forgotten, and like the two banks of a stream we began to run parallel to each other again, following the natural flow of the water of life. We threw these obstacles into oblivion as if they had never obstructed our smooth highway of equanimity and tranquillity. In perspective our relationship reminds me of the one that bound my grandfather, Ghulam Nabi, and his brother, Ghulam Muhammad, or more appropriately my father and Chacha Hakim Jan (for they were cousins, like us).

There was hardly anything that we did not tell each other. Our romances, financial difficulties, innermost feelings, grumblings against some friends, family affairs, fugitive thoughts which were trivial but whom our youth magnified into major currents of irritation — there were no concealments, no reserves, no hesitation, no holding back. We talked to each other as one man communes with his own soul. We had the same habits: drinking tea and coffee, smoking cigarettes, spending long hours in restaurants, cycling fast, reading till late in the night, talking to cousins and uncles and aunts, preferring the company of people to solitude. We were social, gregarious animals, looking for amiability in others, and, finding it, to be much pleased.

A typical visit to the Coffee House is like a picture, sharp, enlarged, colourful, unforgettable, which one preserves in a frame and puts on the desk and looks at as often as one turns the page of the book one is reading, and occasionally at the end of every paragraph. But even when one is not looking at the picture at all it stays stuck inside the eyelids as if painted by a supernatural power. And as I try to capture it with the tentacles of my memory it transforms itself from a still to a film.

Waheed moves and talks and gestures and shakes his head, flicks the ash off his cigarette end, takes a long sip of coffee, and looks into my eyes. He is alive, vibrant, vivacious, impulsive, spontaneous. His lean and tall frame, his long neck, his quick gait, his swinging arm – everything relives in my mind and my eyes are moist because the reality has become a dream which I love to see again and again, because there is nothing left to see. Death is a terrible avalanche which sweeps away everything. But death be damned, for its fell swoop cannot reach our vision and our memory. We can bring the dead to life by remembering them. And thus I remember my lost friend and cousin and live once again in the ecstasy of his presence.

Back to the picture etched on my brain. Waheed enters the Coffee House, the lean length of his body giving his movements a hint of a jerk. He looks around, his neck moving like a sparrow's, locates me and strides to my table. We say "hullo" to each other, he pulls back the chair, lowers himself into it, pulls it forward, settles down and smiles at me. He puts his hand in his coat pocket and brings out

a packet of Capstan cigarettes and a box of matches and puts them on the table with the words "My cards on the table". He extends his hand, picks my packet of cigarettes, opens it to count its contents. I do the same with his packet. We smile. There is enough poison to last a long session.

He beckons a waiter by raising his arm, and when he approaches orders a coffee. The coffee arrives in the shape of a pot, a jug of milk, a pot of sugar and a cup-and-saucer-and-spoon. He pours the coffee into his cup, and adds milk and sugar in that order. He mixes the sugar and coffee, not by stirring the spoon in the cup in a gentle, measured movement, but by moving the spoon as if whipping an egg. It is a cold day and he has come from outside, his fingers numb from holding the bicycle's handlebar. He puts his right hand round the steaming cup of coffee, his long, thin, well-shaped fingers (our family hallmark) holding the cup in their tight, loving grasp. Sometimes he puts his left hand around the coffee pot. When his fingers are able to move freely, he takes a sip of the coffee, then lights a cigarette, takes a long draw at it, exudes the smoke in a long plume, settles well back in the chair, and takes a sigh of contentment.

We begin to talk and words bubble over in exuberance as if the weight on the lid of a pressure cooker has been loosened. Our tongues have their day. Imagination takes wing. Gossiping has a field day. We talk as if we have met after a month. We recite poetry, we discuss books, we tear big reputations to tiny tatters, we sing a paean to one poet, we damn another, we remember the absent friends, we narrate small,

harmless scandals, we make gentle fun of some of our teachers. There is no limit to the range and variety of our topics. This is light or small talk at its best. We are just out of our teens and we wallow in what we say and tell and narrate.

More cups of coffee are ordered. If we are in pocket we indulge in the treat of a plateful of cashew nuts. Friends arrive and the circle around the table widens. Our favourite perch is the table at the left-hand window which offers a vantage point from where we can see through the plate glass the people arriving and handing over their bicycles to Babu who looks after them and beyond that the traffic on the Mall and across the Mall the row of shops of the Commercial Building. The House is full of cigarette smoke, the air is rancid, the hall crowded, the noise irritating. But we don't care. Our table is our world, and it is a place of undiluted pleasure. We are young, and youth has always a tinge of madness. No alcohol is served or drunk. We are alert but inebriated. Drinking in the atmosphere of the place and enjoying the company of our friends and our talk is enough to give us the intoxication of wine.

It's time to go home. The bill is called for. Sometimes Waheed is short by an anna and I make my contribution to a good cause. Sometimes my pocket is shallow and I have had one cup too many and he makes up the deficit. There are also days of such dire poverty that we are forced to borrow a few annas from one of the waiters. The waiters don't hesitate to do the good deed, for next day we discharge our debt with a generous gratuity.

On some days we don't feel like going home. Leaving our bicycles behind in Babu's care we decide to have a walk. The beaten but beautiful path is the length of the Mall between the Coffee House and the Charing Cross. It is the Mall of the late 1940s and early 1950s, not the madhouse of today. The shades of evening fell an hour ago. The city is calm. A benign peacefulness envelops the surroundings. After the fumes inside the Coffee House the cold air feels fresh and salubrious. It is good to exercise our legs after sitting so long in a chair.

The footpath is almost untenanted. The shops have put up their shutters. There is hardly any traffic on the road. The street lights are weak and dim and some of them are hidden in the branches of the leafy trees which march in a row on both sides of the Mall. The lights look like punctuation marks in the darkness of the night, indicating the footpath not spotlighting it. The quiet of the velvety somberness is poetic in its stillness. The trees are the sentinels protecting the two walkers from the uncertainties of the night.

We walk on, talking and laughing, past the YMCA, the general post office, the high court, the Dyal Singh Mansions, the Regal crossing, the office of *The Civil and Military Gazette*, the Shah Din Building, Queen Victoria's statue. It is even darker beyond that and we retrace our steps. We return to the Coffee House, reclaim our bicycles and ride home through the freezing night, with our coat collars turned up to give some cover to our necks and throats, and steer the bicycle with one hand, the other resting in the snug coat pocket. We arrive

home, shivering with cold, but joyous in spirit. The visit to the Coffee House is over.

For most of these years the friends around us varied with the time of the day. In the morning hours we mixed with all and sundry, lawyers, traders, students, journalists, artists, poets and writers. In the evening session only the last category came, but generally our close circle consisted of Anwár Husain, Shaukat Ali, Nasim Zakria, Saeed Osman Malik, Waheed and myself. This group broke up in 1952 when Anwár went away to the United States on a Fullbright scholarship, Waheed went to Multan to teach and Osman to Rawalpindi. Soon I replaced Waheed in Multan and he came back to Lahore; a year later I returned to Lahore; and for another two years most of us were again together.

During these 15 years our group made it a routine to spend a good part of the day in restaurants. In Pakistani English it was called "hotelling". The Coffee House was of course the principal "watering-place". But for variety's sake we explored most of the eating places in the "West End" of the city. Some of these places are worth recalling because all of them have vanished.

Next door to the Coffee House was the Cheney's Lunch Home. The name was a misnomer because it was open all day, serving hot and cold drinks and meals. (The Coffee House maintained its individuality by serving nothing but coffee, sandwiches and eggs on toast.). The Cheney's had been a Hindu establishment before 1947. In 1948 it was allotted to one Syed Anwár Husain, a refugee

from Delhi and Simla, along with the large flat above the Home. It did flourishing business because it was the only respectable eating place in this area where local food was available. The middle class patrons of the Coffee House and Tea House came here for their lunch. Among the regular visitors was Bari Alig who, I remember, insisted on a double portion of sliced onions as a free supplement of the meal. We went there when we were in the mood to drink tea rather than coffee for a change, or to sit with some friends who were to be found only there. The tone of the place was local and "vernacular" and slightly inferior to that of the Coffee House. Many owners and managers of the nearby shops lunched there.

The India Tea House (later Pak Tea House) was on one side of the YMCA complex, off the Mall, and two minutes' walk from the Coffee House. It came to be an almost exclusive club for the writers and poets and the place where the members and audience of the Halqa-i-Arabab-i-Zauq came after its weekly meeting on Sunday to continue the discussion begun in the Halqa. As the Halqa met in a board room of the YMCA on the upper floor the Tea House was the nearest restaurant to attract its crowd. Thus the House came to be associated with the creative literary coterie of Lahore and the connection lasted for nearly half a century.

Some people patronized both the Tea House and the Coffee House, including poets and writers, like Munir Niazi, Nasir Kazmi, Mukhtar Siddiqui and Yusuf Zafar. But the Coffee House had three clear advantages over the Tea House: it attracted certain categories of intellectuals like lawyers, artists and

university and college teachers who did not go to the Tea House; the physical state of the Tea House was discouraging, with its inferior furniture, dim lights and poor crockery. In very general terms it may be said that the people educated in the West or having Western intellectual tastes and values went to the Coffee House while the local, oriental and traditional literati preferred the Tea House. Waheed and I and our group only went there when we wanted to see a friend who was its habitu .

A Milk Bar set up its business briefly in the Commercial Building end of the Tollinton Market veranda. It was a small place and specialized in tea, milkshake, ice cream and coffee. It was quiet and had limited accommodation. It lasted only a short while.

In 1953 or 1954 a restaurant (whose name I can't recall) opened in the Commercial Building next to Ruby Jewellers. It gave a feeling of expansiveness and the tables were placed at a decent distance from each other. Not many people came here; the Coffee and Tea House habitu s were too used to their haunts to move. I saw only Nasir Kazmi coming in every day, and in the relative calm of the place heard him recite several of his ghazals. I remember having a long talk with him one day about Mir Taqi Mir, telling him that he was not as great a poet as he (Nasir) rated him. I failed to convince him; my knowledge of classical Urdu poetry was not even a quarter of Nasir's. Fifty years later when I was living in Cambridge I had an opportunity to read all the six *divans* of Mir, and I was confirmed in my opinion. His work is padded by one mediocre ghazal after another. If a

selection is made the result will be a collection of perhaps one hundred ghazals, which is not really much considering his reputation and stature. I still wonder why a poet of Nasir's discrimination gave Mir such a high place in his gallery of masters.

One day, in the summer of 1948, Phailbus, a Coffee House friend who was then studying at the MacLagan Engineering College, suggested that Waheed and I should consider joining the YMCA social club which had its premises behind the hall on the ground floor. Next day we went there and were pleased by the look of it. Most of the members were Christians with a sprinkling of Anglo-Indians. The most popular game was badminton, but a large room on one side also provided facilities for playing chess, draughts and table tennis. There was a general air of bonhomie and friendliness. There were only 2 or 3 Muslim boys, but nobody paid any attention to one another's religion.

Perhaps what attracted us most was the presence of several young girls, all Christian. We had never mixed with any girls outside the circle of our sisters and cousins. The novelty had excitement and we joined the club. We played badminton and chess and talked over a cup of tea in a small restaurant next to the billiards room. For about a year we spent three evenings a week there. I had made some Christian friends while at the F.C. College, but the new experience of mixing socially with Christian boys and girls for an extended period with the gender factor thrown in was exhilarating. I was struck by the freedom enjoyed by these Christian girls. Some of them were studying at the

YMCA secretarial school, some were teaching at the Convent of Jesus and Mary and the Cathedral school, and some were students. For five years I had moved among Hindu and Sikh fellow students and friends, but never among girls; except Principal Chatterjee's daughter who was my classmate in the B.A. philosophy class and the two daughters of Principal Sondhi, Urmila and Sohnu, but the contact was limited and occasional. The uppermost thought that came to my mind was in the form of a question: why can't Muslim girls come out and mix with Muslim boys without compromising their religion and threatening family conventions? The inquiry still abides for an answer.

In territorial terms, going up the Mall, our next stop was at the Regal crossing where the Standard Restaurant stood one shop short of the narrow lane leading to the Regal Cinema. It had been, since its opening in the 1930s, the only Western restaurant within the reach of the middle class Indians. It was very popular for other reasons too. It was commodious with two large halls separated by four pillars. In the evening it spread out to the wide space between its doors and the Mall footpath. The vacant place was sprinkled with water, tables and chairs were arranged in symmetry, lights were hung from tall poles, and almost a new alfresco tea house was in business. The shops then closed at 5 P.M. and wheeled traffic on the Mall was thin to the point of being non-existent. The crowd enjoyed itself, sitting in the open air, drinking hot tea, eating cakes, pastries and patties, talking, laughing, wallowing in the company of friends and family, and

feeling that it was good to be alive. The casual passers by and those who were out for their regular evening constitutional slowed down while passing this crowd. They did not stare at the customers, though there were some women among them: the times were civilized. They looked at the tea drinkers with admiration, interest and unspoken empathy, sharing vicariously their pleasure.

Some Hindus and Sikhs came to the place with women of their families. The ladies were of all ages, ranging from portly matrons to slim girls on the threshold of youth. Beauty and grace were not uncommon among them. Two things struck me about them. When they arrived there was no commotion in the crowd of patrons. Sometimes a youthful head would turn to see a lovely face and a whispered remark of admiration went round the table. No sudden and abrupt silence punctuated their arrival to embarrass the women, as did happen in the Shezan later, and which was as devilish in its impact as catcalls. The Partition had drawn a line, not only on the blood-soaked ground, but in the way men reacted on finding women among them. Different times, different manners.

I also noticed that these girls and women behaved perfectly normally while in the restaurant and outside. There was nothing unusual or out of the ordinary in the way they arrived, drank and ate, talked to their companions and waved to their friends or relatives occupying other tables.

I want to emphasize that all these people belonged to the non-Muslim middle class. The aristocracy and the rich went to Stiffles and Lorangs. No Muslim

brought his wife or family to the place. Only men came, leaving their women behind. The hard, stiff hand of a conservative tradition pressed heavily on them and made gender mixing an abomination. In this respect and to this extent the Muslims segregated themselves from a free society and lived in a state of inward-looking isolation. It was several years after Partition that they broke out of this shell, but by that time the world was a different place, with the old Lahore only a hazy memory for those few who had lived in it and relished its freedom.

The Standard Restaurant disappeared a year or so after Partition. The major portion of its clientèle had gone away and there was not enough patronage to run the business. A like fate overtook all other Hindu and European restaurants. The new Lahori wanted a different kind of a meeting place, and after a long interregnum Shezan opened its doors to a new generation which was solidly Muslim.

About a hundred yards away from the Standard, opposite the Hopson Boot House, there used to be the finest and most expensive fabric shop of Lilaram. When we were living behind it on Lawrence Road in 1934-37 I visited it a few times with Amman. It closed down in 1947 and in its large premises a new restaurant was opened with the pompous name of Lords. In spite of its ideal situation and large accommodation it failed to emerge as either a popular tea house with a loyal clientèle or an exclusive eating place for the fashionable set. It lingered on for several years as a slightly superior version of the Pak Tea House. The prices were modest and Maulana Salahuddin, Ashiq

Batalavi and Bari Alig lunched their regularly when they were writing for *Adabi Dunya*. Some journalists got together to gossip and gather the news of the day from a few second-level provincial politicians like Ahmad Saeed Kirmani, Sardar Zafrullah, Malik Ghulam Nabi and "Nawab" Malli. Waheed and I lunched here when we were in pocket, but the atmosphere was so different from the Coffee House in intellectual terms and from the Lorangs in social terms that its attraction soon palled.

A few yards away from the Lords stood the exclusive and stately Stiffles, owned and managed by the British. Like the traditional clubs of London it had an unassuming front, and its magnificence and luxury dawned on the visitor when he had crossed the foyer. Up to about 1943 it only served lunches and dinners and rarely were any Indians found ordering a meal. In the later years of the War and with the arrival of more British and American troops Stiffles amended its rules and started serving tea and coffee in the afternoon. Like the Standard it occupied the service road outside in the evening hours.

On the new year eve it staged a gala night when after a luxurious meal the customers danced out the dying year and danced in the new. I attended the last Indian evening of 31 December 1946 in a group of college students (Pervaiz, Lal Din, Shafqaat and Muzaffar). None of us dared to ask one of the European or Anglo-Indian girls present to dance with us (anyway, I didn't even know how to dance), and we had to be content with eating what we could afford and watching the dancers go by. It was shivering cold but exciting.

Then in October 1948, on his return from Oxford, Hafeez Kardar invited us (some of his cricketing friends, Waheed and I) to lunch with him at the Stiffles, and after the meal he made the group walk with him in and around the Lawrence Gardens and regaled us with many stories of his Oxford days which were so fresh in his memory and so dear to him that he didn't talk about anything else. I think soon afterwards the restaurant ceased to be.

Two minutes' walk away towards the Charing Cross was the uncontested bride of Lahore's restaurants, The Lorangs. Owned and run by a Swiss family, it occupied two vast contiguous halls in the Shah Din Building. One hall contained the reception, the cashier's counter and a display of the bakery products of the establishment on sale. The other served as the restaurant. In its dazzling cleanliness, the quality of furniture and crockery, the sombre drapery and the atmosphere of calm dignity, it was unique and streets ahead of its rivals. It looked with contempt and rejected all frills like dance and cabaret. The quality of its confectionery was high, and it served English tea, not Calcutta Lipton. In the front of the hall an orchestra played soft music which did not stop you from talking to your friends but provided a soothing unobtrusive background to civilized conversation. Some of the customers who had an ear for music asked the leader of the band, an Indian Christian, to play their favourite songs. My favourite was always the "Londonderry Song" which was sad, dulcet and moving.

My association with the Lorangs was long and eventful. I first visited it with Abbaji in 1934-37 as a

young boy, dressed up in knickers, jacket and tie. Then and again from 1942 onwards he took me there to meet his friends, and I saw and talked to Mian Abdul Aziz Falakpaima, Sir Abdul Qadir, Shaikh Ahmad, S.M. Sharif, Bakhshi Sir Tek Chand and a few British ICS officers. Soon I started going there on my own with my friends, mostly with Waheed.

For two years, 1945-47, I was there almost every evening. There were two reasons for this luxurious living. We had sold our ancestral bungalow on Qutb Road and some other property for Rs.86,000 (a very large amount in those days), and my pocket money had been trebled. We were then living at No.1 Davis Road, opposite the Simla Pahari and next to the corner petrol pump. Between my house and the Lorangs lay the total length of Egerton Road, a mere three minutes' cycling journey.

Waheed and I met there, drank tea, ate some pastries, talked a lot, and listened to music. Even in my prosperous state I found that I could not spend every evening here. My income was high, but not high enough to meet the Lorangs tariff. The going rate was one rupee and four annas per head; which meant that one person could sit there and drink 3 or 4 cups of tea within that limit. We had to pay extra for the pastries we ate; each pastry cost three annas. Thus even if we economized on our cakes the bill came to about three rupees; with the tip it was more. Then, as was inevitable, we smoked a lot while there. Our desire for a daily indulgence in this luxury outstripped our joint budget.

Then a kindly fate came to our help, but in a wicked way. One of the waiters who usually served

us (each waiter looked after 3 or 4 tables) told us that he had a large family and was finding it hard to look after it. He needed help. When we told him that we were students and not in a position to give him any money, he said he needed a coat for the cold weather, and if we could not give him money perhaps we had an old heavy coat to spare, and the money which he had saved for a new coat could then go into his family budget. I thought of my wardrobe and remembered that I had a grey tweed coat which was 3-year old but had not lost its weight or strength. I asked him to collect it from my house the next morning. He was happy and grinned his gratitude.

From that day till the restaurant closed permanently we had a free run of the pastries. Tea was served for two persons and a plate of 6 pastries arrived without ordering it. We were told that we had to empty the plate so that it could go straight to the pantry with the other used crockery. The plate of pastries was not registered at the confectionery counter. We received and paid the bill for two teas, thus saving one rupee and two annas on every visit.

I had my first and last personal meeting with Jinnah outside the Lorangs. It happened in my very early days in Lahore, probably in November 1942. I had read in the newspaper that Jinnah was meeting Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan at the Lorangs in the afternoon of the following day. In those days it was my hobby to collect autographs. So I took my autograph book and reached the restaurant about half an hour after the time of the meeting mentioned in the paper. I had to wait a long time. It was cold and a little overcast. As the shades of evening began

to descend a sadness crept into the departing day. It was murky, there were only a few people around and hardly any traffic. It is strange that I should remember all this so vividly. But I do. The sadness in the atmosphere perhaps portended the rebuff I was going to receive at the great man's hand.

At last Jinnah emerged from the door, put on his felt hat, descended the stairs and slowly walked to his car. The chauffeur was about to open the rear door when I hastened forward, book in hand, and said "Sir, please sign my autograph book". He did not even look at the book or perhaps even at me, said in a stern voice "Not here", got into the car and was driven away.

I was hurt. Hameed Nizami had told me that Jinnah had a soft corner for his young following, particularly the students. But the Jinnah I had just encountered had no smile on his lips and no sparkle in his eyes. He was a brooding figure, preoccupied, a little worried. Maybe his political talk with the Punjabi leadership had not gone well; perhaps he had important things to work out in his mind. I tried to console myself by thinking such thoughts and alleviate the pain of the curt refusal. My hero was slightly diminished in size in my estimation. The arrogance and sensitivity of raw years!

A great charm of the Lorangs was its gallery or veranda in the front (it's still there in the building). The frontage was separated from the steps by a wide space running the length of the building. It was at an elevation of about two yards from the service road and was wide enough to accommodate a row of one table and four chairs. These tables were arranged all

along the frontage of the two halls. Except for the hottest summer months this gallery was available to the customers. Some people preferred the quiet and ambience of the hall; some others preferred to be served outside, thus adding a view of the Mall to the pleasure of the company they had.

And then by chance a time came when a seat in the veranda was worth ten inside. At the end of January 1947 the Punjab Muslim League launched its civil disobedience movement to force Sir Khizr Hayat Tiwana, prime minister of a Unionist Party coalition government of the Punjab, to resign. For three weeks some Muslim leaders and their followers gathered at the Town Hall and marched to the Charing Cross. It was a perfectly peaceful and self-controlled demonstration of political power. It led to no communal disorder: not a single Hindu or Sikh tried to stage a countermovement, and no one was hurt. The police did not intervene or beat up any one; they only stopped the procession at Charing Cross, in front of the Lorangs, and detained those who were leading it and who voluntarily offered themselves for arrest. Police vans took them to the jail, the others dispersed. When the jail in Lahore was full the arrested men and women were driven ten miles outside the city and released. This continued until Khizr Hayat surrendered and sent in his resignation.

I did not participate in this daily procession though I was an enthusiastic Muslim Leaguer. After my school days I have never been a part of any kind of demonstration. I have never put my faith in street politics. It has nothing to do with my political views. I instinctively abhor being a part of a crowd.

But it was exciting to watch this disciplined but passionate movement from the veranda of the Lorangs. It was a grandstand view; we actually saw what others only read about in the next day's newspaper (there was no television then).

Now that I recall the amiability of the crowd and the forbearance of the Hindus and Sikhs who watched this unleashed but controlled power in favour of a partition of India, I wonder why the actual partition, when it came, could not have been as friendly and tranquil. The history of the subcontinent would have been very different and Indo-Pakistan enmity unthinkable if the division of the Punjab in August had been as peaceful as the civil disobedience movement we watched in January-February.

Diagonally across the Mall from the Lorangs was our last restaurant. The Metro stood at the corner of today's WAPDA House, overlooking the Assembly Chamber and the garden enclosing Queen Victoria's statue. In the front lay an open air space in which chairs and tables were arranged around a tiled floor where Miss Angela, an Anglo-Indian, danced thrice a week. Though no beauty, but young in body, she was a crowd-puller in the sex-starved post-1947 Lahore.

Waheed, I and other friends reached there at 5.30 P.M. in summer months, drank tea or lemon-water, and watched Angela's turns for an hour or so. As the place did not have the licence to sell alcoholic drinks a subterfuge filled the vacancy. A whisper in the ear of the waiter was enough. The usual teapot, jug and cup-and-saucer were put on the table. A brownish liquid was poured from the pot into the

cup. Milk and sugar were for the show and were not touched. The tipplers had their day with the blessings of the manager and the excise officials.

Behind this open space was a building with a hall and about a dozen rooms on two floors. The hotel business did not enjoy a good reputation and my friends and I never entered that part of the building, except when an unexpected shower forced the guests to move into the hall. A second entrance led straight to the hall bypassing the open air enclosure. Inside, on either side of the door was a tall glass case and in it stood a grey-black beautifully carved statue representing a nude woman. When we needed to visit the washroom we entered the hall by its rear door from the open air enclosure and walked past the statues, abiding by them for a few seconds to appreciate their chiselled features and contours.

One day, a few months after Partition, when Phailbus, a Christian friend of mine, and I were passing by the statues we were jolted by what had been done to them. Each statue had been decked out in a sari and blouse and the end of the sari covered its head. A sombre properly-covered woman had replaced the nude. Phailbus's irrepressible sense of humour was stung. He turned to me and remarked, "So Islam has at last come to Lahore". My reply was a good-natured smile. "Where do we fit in?" he asked. Now there was no humour in his voice. It was not a pointed remark, but a somber inquiry. Still light-heartedly I said, "Don't worry. Nothing will happen to you." He looked at me quizzically and said, "Are you sure? Who knows?"

We went on to the washroom and then back to our tea and Angela's dance. Being a member of a minority community Phailbus had fears of his future. Today I can see the reality of his ominous questions; then I did not. What I felt then was an unease at the contradiction between the dressing up of a nude lifeless statue inside the hall and the dance of a half-naked Anglo-Indian girl and the whisky being consumed clandestinely outside the hall. Hypocrisy had come to Lahore with political freedom, and in its own time it was destined to grow into a monstrous shadow under which all of us were to flourish and still call our country the citadel of Islam which was created to serve as a beacon of spiritual light to the entire Muslim world. Sanctimony and cant know no limits.

One day Nasim Zakria told us that he had heard of a new tea place, away from the beaten track, and we immediately decided to give it a try. At the corner of Montgomery Road and Cooper Road was a large bungalow with extensive lawns. Its gate opened on Montgomery Road, opposite the present-day Duty Free Shop. The house was built of stone walls with large windows and the roof was covered with grey tiles. It was more like a Mediterranean villa than a Lahore bungalow, and because of its novelty people called it "Pathran Wāli Kothi" or the bungalow of stones. The owner-occupier was a Parsi family and at some time it had converted it into a small hostelry and given it the name of Cecil Hotel. There were probably 5 or 6 rooms available for the guests. As I did not see any waiters or other staff I think the members of the household looked after the clients.

There was a wide and long veranda in front of the house with lawns on three sides, and in it four tables were set where afternoon tea was served. Whenever we went there the tea was brought by a middle-aged woman dressed in a neat sari, very polite and affectionate. We liked the place for several reasons. It was a striking contrast to the hubbub of the Coffee House and our other meeting places, thronged by people, noisy and smoky. It was very quiet, the Montgomery Road at this end being an area free of any traffic, vehicular or pedestrian. The surroundings were calm and green. Rarely did we see another customer. The quality of tea was good, and it was a new and pleasant experience to be served by a woman who was not a professional waitress.

We talked of literature and films and our personal love stories. One of us had been rebuffed by a girl whom he had loved dearly. He talked of his broken heart, quoting several sad couplets of which there is no dearth in Urdu poetry. Nasim Zakria and I related the latest developments in our respective relationships with the girls who were to become our wives. Waheed recited the ghazals which had appeared in the new issues of the journals. After Anwaar had left for the United States, Waheed for Multan and Osman for Rawalpindi, the circle shrank to just two of us, Nasim Zakria and myself. We missed our friends and talked about them and other things. In youth there is much to talk about because every day is a new experience which must be communicated to a close friend. The tongue moves faster than the mind. As years fly by and thoughts multiply, meditation and silent intervals punctuate the conversation, even between two old

friends, except when they meet after a long time and want to give each other the news of how time has treated them. We were young and the raw pains and penalties of life were yet to come.

The reader of today may be interested in how much we paid for our tea and coffee. In the Coffee House a cup of milk and coffee cost 2 annas, of cream and coffee 3 annas, and a glass of cold coffee 8 annas. When our pockets were full we ordered a cup with double cream which cost 4 annas, and the drinking of which gave us the joy of kings. The Tea House and all other restaurants at the modest end of the range had a uniform rate: two annas for a "half set" and 4 annas for a "full set". We inherited this odd terminology; nobody could tell us when it came into use. A "half-set" meant a small tea pot which made two cups, a "full-set" meant a larger pot which made four cups. That is how we ordered tea. Even if there were only the two of us but we planned to spend a couple of hours together we still asked for a half-set and then an hour or so later repeated the order. Ordering a full-set for two persons meant drinking stale tea. If a waiter was friendly or a familiar face and our money limited we requested a jug of boiling water which was poured on the used cup tea leaves. That gave us four cups instead of two within the same price. But we had to use our old cups and saucers. Generally the tea was so strong that the adulterated cups did not taste very different.

The Standard had a different tariff. The tea was served on the basis of a person, not a pot. In that price one could drink any number of cups. But it was

an age of good manners and self-respect. Nobody exploited the licence and drank six cups. Ordinary tea was not an expensive commodity, and the restaurant made its money through the accompaniments like cakes, pastries and patties. The Stiffles, Lorangs and Metro were more expensive.

The last place which we patronized was not a restaurant but a club, though we treated it mostly as a tea house. On Abbot Road, about midway between Davis Road and McLeod Road, on the left hand side while coming from Davis Road was a narrow lane which, descending between residential buildings, opened up into a large grassy plot which was converted into four tennis courts and a small charming pavilion made of wood which contained a lounge, a bathroom, a kitchen, and a tiny office. This was the 77 Club of British days, revived after a temporary demise by a refugee lawyer from Patiala, Jamil Husain Rizvi, who soon afterwards became a judge of the Punjab High Court. He had been allotted a house on Fane Road, and, being fond of playing tennis, collaborated with some of his lawyer friends to give a new life to the club. Professor Dr Hasan Askari Rizvi, the well-known political scientist and my friend, is his daughter's son.

For a club the 77 was a quiet place with a restricted membership. Waheed and I joined it in early 1948. We met a number of young and old lawyers and a few businessmen. Omelette has always been my favourite dish of eggs, but I never enjoyed it as much as at the club. After playing two sets of tennis we generally repaired to the pavilion and asked Abdul, the part-time marker who also

officiated as cook, to make two omelettes for us followed by tea. And there we talked and relaxed.

ABDUL HAMEED

His life was a study in tragedy and a vindication of the moral principle that one bad habit is enough to destroy a promising career. Hameed was a brilliant scholar, taking a first in all examinations from matriculation to M.Sc. in Chemistry. He also captained the university football team. So nobody was surprised when he was awarded a Rhodes Scholarship to go to Oxford. But between taking his master's degree and his departure for Oxford he fell in evil company, and apart from other bad habits, began to drink heavily. Within a year of his entering Oxford he was sent down in disgrace. Professor Salam used his influence to get him a place in the Chelsea Institute of Technology. But bad habits die hard and he who starts on the wrong foot never finishes the race of life. A little later he died in a London hospital of diseases induced by alcoholism. I saw him last in 1964 in London at the Harrod's summer sale.

Hameed was small in size but had the slimness and strength of a sportsman. He had a big head whose hairline was receding fast. He was a friendly person, quick to develop relationships with a variety of people. His interests were wide and included literature and art. He was curious by nature, the trait of a budding scientist, and I saw him asking questions of Shaikh Ahmad on modern art and Riaz Qadir on romantic poetry. He enjoyed life and his smile was infectious. It is indeed a pity

that he died young, disappointing his teachers and grieving his friends. I miss him much.

MEHDI QIZILBASH

Mehdi was a scion of Lahore's oldest extant aristocratic family of the Qizilbash clan. He was married to Nasim, the sister of Nawab Muzaffar Ali Qizilbash, who unfortunately was a permanent invalid and a source of constant worry for Mehdi. They had a daughter, Mahrukh, and a son, Ali, and Mehdi was the only Coffee House customer to bring his children occasionally with him and feed them with coffee ice cream.

Mehdi was the only Englishman in the Coffee House. What I mean is that several of his habits were more like those of an English gentleman than of a Pakistani young man. His clothes were quiet, unobtrusive and neatly pressed. His neckties were not loud. He never laughed aloud, but showed his pleasure by a gentle smile. More characteristically he never made gestures or waved arms to punctuate his talk or emphasize a point.

His most patent English habit was reading. He always carried a book in his hand with a bookmark indicating where he had left off reading. Unless he joined a group, he ordered his coffee, opened the book and started reading. This went on until he was joined by one of his friends of whom there were not many. He was particularly fond of Russian novels and short stories. Sometimes he read out to me some pages which had struck him as specially good or appealing.

In 2002 I was able to trace Mehdi's family, which was still living in one of the bungalows of the

Qizilbash estate on Empress Road facing the Nawab Palace. Mehdi and Nasim were dead, and I met their daughter. A year later I attended the wedding of Ali's daughter and met Ali who lives in the United States. Sitting among them my mind flitted back to the Coffee House days and the daily meeting with Mehdi. Old age has many penalties; it is a mixed experience to rehearse the past which is focused on one person. In the company of Mahrukh and Ali I remembered their father with a pain in the heart because of his absence and a gust of pleasure because I was amid his children. How time passes, leaving the shades and shadows of its passing.

CHAPTER 7

THE ROLL OF HONOUR: VI

ABDUS SALAM

Among my contemporaries and colleagues in the Government College, companions in the Coffee House and friends at these places and elsewhere there was only one genius, and that was Abdus Salam.

Salam was the son of Chaudhri Muhammad Husain, a schoolteacher of Jhang and Hajirah who belonged to Faizullah Chak near Batala. Muhammad Husain was a jat and Hajirah a Kakkezai. Now I know that Faizullah Chak was an almost exclusively Kakkezai village because my mother's mother belonged to it and the family had lived there since time unknown. The Kakkezais were a close-knit community, mixed well among themselves, and formed a close network of relationships within the tribe. The problem of working out or tracing a relationship in Muslim (and non-Muslim Indian) families is that the geneological trees concern themselves with males alone. Therefore I presume with some justification and optimism that Hajirah was a member, however distantly placed, of my grandmother's larger family. That makes Salam a cousin of mine, it doesn't matter at how many removes.

Born in 1926 and educated at the Government High School and Government Intermediate College, Jhang, Government College, Lahore, and St. John's College, Cambridge, he made it a habit to excel in every examination he took. He stood first in 1940 in the matriculation examination of the Punjab University and again in 1942 in the F.Sc. examination. He joined the Government College, Lahore, in 1942 to study mathematics A and B and honours in English. He graduated in 1944 winning every laurel within sight: 300 out of 300 marks in Mathematics, 121 out of 150 in English honours, standing first in the University and breaking all records in the B.A. examination. In 1946 he took his M.A. in Mathematics, scoring 573 marks out of 600, and topping the list.

In September 1946 he left for Cambridge on a Punjab Peasant Welfare Fund Scholarship to study Mathematics at St. John's College as an undergraduate. If in India his academic career had been brilliant, in Cambridge it was dazzling. He got a first both in his Preliminary in 1947 and Part II in 1948, and then gave up Mathematics for the time being because on the higher level it could not be fully mastered without a good knowledge of physics. In an unprecedented performance he read Physics for one year and took its Part I and II together in 1949; scoring a first and surprising even his teachers.

His scholarship was extended for two years (it should have been three years) to work for his Ph.D. He came to Pakistan in the summer, married Unmatul Hafeez, and returned to Cambridge in 1949, deciding to tackle theoretical physics for his doctoral thesis.

The year 1951 was the time for him to harvest the fruits of his labour. He completed his thesis (though he could not get his Ph.D. till the following year because the University statutes required that the candidate spent nine terms before being eligible to receive his doctorate), won the Smith Prize, was elected Fellow of his College, and named Fellow of the Institute of Advanced Studies at Princeton University. Pending the award of his degree he came to Lahore and was appointed Professor of Mathematics and Head of the Department of Mathematics at both the Government College and the Punjab University. In 1952 he went to Cambridge for his viva voce and to receive his doctorate.

His problems began almost as soon as he took up his job at the Government College. Instead of honouring him for his brilliant achievements, he was humiliated by the College and the Education Department. He was not given an official residence, as was his right. Temporarily he stayed with Qazi Muhammad Aslam, the professor of philosophy at the College, and continued his efforts to get a house allotted to himself. Disappointed with the indifferent attitude of the officials he asked for an interview with the Minister of Education, Sardar Abdul Hameed Dasti. Salam told him that he had a family to accommodate and was entitled to a residence. As Salam told me, the Minister brought the interview to an end by refusing any help and declaring: "*Pugdi é té kam haro warna jáo*" (if it suits you, you may continue with your job; if not, you may go). Salam was so frustrated that he was considering a resignation; but soon a house was found for him and he stayed on.

But that was just the beginning. A little later, the Principal, Professor Sirajuddin, asked him to do something to earn his keep besides his teaching. He was given three choices: to act as Superintendent of the Quadrangle Hostel or to supervise the college accounts or to take charge of the college football team. Salam chose to look after the footballers. Occasionally, at the end of his chore at the University Grounds, he would drop in at the Coffee House and tell me about his bitterness on being forced to waste his time. A man who had worked 14 hours a day at Cambridge as a student had now hardly any time to read new literature on his subject, and the facilities in the college laboratory were dust and ashes compared to the Cavendish Laboratories where he had worked as an undergraduate and a doctoral student. It was not difficult to take the gauge of Salam's frustration.

A more serious contretemps occurred in the Christmas holidays of the same years. Professor Wolfgang Pauli, the 1945 Nobel Laureate of physics and a friend of Salam, was visiting Bombay on the invitation of the Indian Science Association. He sent a telegram to Salam wishing to see him and asking him if he could come to Bombay. Salam, who had been craving to talk to a peer in his field, at once left for India and spent a week with Pauli. (Till that time travelling to India did not require long planning or a visa). On his return to Lahore he was chargesheeted for absenting himself from his station of duty without prior permission. Salam was shocked. He was used to European freedom of movement and had been part of Pakistani bureaucratic set-up for a mere three

months. The Principal made so much fuss about the incident that Salam feared that he might be dismissed from the education service. At this point S.M. Sharif, the Director of Public Instruction of the Punjab, intervened and the period of Salam's absence was treated as leave without pay.

In March 1953 I became a colleague of Salam when I was appointed head of the department of political science at the College. (This high office came my way by an unexpected turn of events. In March 1952 I had entered the education service as a junior lecturer and had been posted to Emerson College, Multan. In early 1953 Professor Abdul Hameed, head of the departments of history and political science, went away to the United States for one year as a visiting lecturer. As I had had a special relationship with professor Sirajuddin and Professor Abdul Hameed as their favourite student, I was transferred from Multan to Lahore, and as political science was a one-man department, I became the head of the department with a seat in the heads of departments committee.)

I think it was in October 1953 that the Punjab Education Minister, Chaudhri Ali Akbar, paid an official visit to the college. The Principal and all heads of departments met to discuss several problems relating to appointments, teaching and syllabus. When the question of pass percentages of the College came up for consideration the Minister, after announcing that he was not concerned with the teachers' formal qualifications and academic achievements but only with the percentage of students who passed the university examinations

every year, made the point that however highly qualified a teacher may be he would himself issue orders for his transfer to some God forsaken place if he failed to produce a satisfactory pass percentage. And then he turned to where Salam was seated, next to me, and staring at him said, "For example if Professor Salam's pass percentage record does not please me I will send him back to Jhang." Most of us were stunned by this crude remark. Salam was the only teacher who was named, and he was the most brilliant member of the teaching staff.

When we were walking back from the meeting to the staff room Salam put his hand on my shoulder and whispered. "I have made up my mind. I must get a job somewhere abroad." Who could blame him?

When Salam had been elected a Fellow of St. John's College in 1951 he had accepted the honour on the condition that he would be allowed to go to Lahore and teach there and live in St. John's only during the long vacations. St. John's was so anxious to have him that it made an exception and accepted his condition. This was a measure of Salam's love for the Government College; he was prepared to forego the considerable honour of a fellowship of St. John's for the sake of the prospect of teaching at the Government College. But he had been insulted and humiliated so often by the college he loved so much and for which he had sacrificed the full facilities of the St. John's fellowship, that he was now forced to look elsewhere for his professional future.

As luck would have it, in the middle of the same year (1953) the Stokes lectureship at St. John's fell vacant. The holder of the lectureship, Nicholas

Kemmer had been offered the Tait Professorship of Natural Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh. He had been Salam's teacher at St. John's and a Fellow of Trinity College. He was so keen on Salam's succeeding him at St. John's that he wrote to the Punjab University, pleading that Salam should be persuaded to accept the offer. The vice-chancellor, Mian Afzal Husain, had kept in touch with Salam since his departure for Cambridge in 1946 and had great admiration for his work. He himself had taken a first in natural sciences at Christ College long before Salam was born. Salam held Mian Sahib in great esteem, and now sought his guidance. The advice he received was unqualified and sincere: he must accept the lectureship and go to Cambridge. Salam's love for Pakistan and the Government College was boundless. Notwithstanding the treatment he had received from the authorities of the College, he was still reluctant to snap the umbilical cord that tied him to his Alma Mater. Finally S.M. Sharif solved the problem by suggesting and sanctioning an arrangement which satisfied Salam. He was to go to St. John's on deputation from the Government College for an unspecified period and would receive a deputation allowance of Rs.181 per month. He left at the end of 1953 and took charge of his lectureship on the New Year's Day of 1954.

This ended my daily and direct relationship with Salam, but there was no permanent break. He stayed at St. John's for exactly three years, and on 1st. January 1957 took up a professorship at the Imperial College of Science and Technology in

London; he was then 31 years of age, and thus won the distinction of being the youngest professor in the British Commonwealth. He retired from here in 1993 for health reason.

Between leaving the Government College and his death his march to the summit of his profession was phenomenal. At St. John's he taught some advanced courses and made his reputation on the international level by the research papers he published and by his work as Scientific Secretary of the first United Nations Atoms for Peace Conference in Geneva in 1955. His research and teaching at the Imperial College attracted favourable attention of the greatest scientists of the world. He acted as Chief Scientific Advisor to the President of Pakistan from 1961 to 1974. In 1964 he established the International Centre for Theoretical Physics and served as its Director from 1964 to 1994 and its President in 1994-96. He was also President of the Third World Academy of Sciences, 1983-96.

He won the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1979 (he had come very near to winning it in 1957). Immediately after the news of his Nobel Prize was published in October the Government of India and the Indian scientific bodies invited him to tour the country. There was no reaction from Pakistan until the Pakistan High Commissioner in London informed his government of India's invitation. Only then did the government of Pakistan ask him to visit his home country. Salam decided to visit Pakistan first and India a year later.

In December 1979, on his arrival in Lahore, Peshawar and Islamabad he was received by junior

army officers who were military secretaries to the provincial governors and the President. The convocation of the Quaid-i-Azam University in Islamabad summoned to bestow on him the honorary Doctorate of Science was cancelled because of the warning from the students belonging to the right-wing Jam'at-i-Islami to disrupt the function, and the venue was shifted to the hall of the National Assembly. In Lahore his lecture arranged to be held at the campus of the Punjab University had to be moved to the Senate Hall in the city because certain groups had demonstrated a day earlier and threatened to murder Salam. The University of the Punjab refused to honour him with a degree. The Government College did not invite him even to visit its precinct.

A year later when he was in India five universities gave him honorary degrees, including the Guru Dev Nanak University of Amritsar where he delivered the convocation address on 25 January 1981 in *theth* (rural) Punjabi, and the University had, on his request, brought to Amritsar four of his old teachers who had taught him in Jhang and Lahore. The Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, invited him to her residence, made coffee for him with her own hands, and sat on the carpet throughout the meeting near Salam's feet, saying that was her way of honouring a great guest. Later in his tour of several Latin American countries, including Brazil, he was received everywhere at the airport by the head of the State.

In 1986 the Director Generalship of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) fell vacant and nominations

were solicited. Salam wanted to be considered and everyone was sure that he would be elected. But the rule was that a candidate must be nominated by his own country. Pakistan nominated Lt.-General Yaqub Khan, a retired army officer. Both Britain and Italy offered to nominate Salam if he agreed to become their national. He refused. The Pakistani General received one vote. A French woman member of the electorate, when pressed by her government to vote for the Pakistani candidate, resisted, protested and then resigned, saying "An army general will run the UNESCO over my dead body."

Salam died, full of honours and laurels from across the world, on 21 November 1996 in Oxford. His brother who lived in Lahore asked the government if it would like to provide protocol on the occasion of the arrival of the coffin. There was no response. He was buried in Rabwah on 25 November at 11.00 A.M. at the foot of his mother's grave.

I have provided these details of Salam's life and career because his biography is not available and few of my readers would know how he lived and worked. Now for my reminiscences of him.

Dr Abdul Hameed Siddiqui was a lecturer at the Law College and I knew him through Shaikh Khurshid. At some date in October 1944 when I was in the third year and Salam in his fifth, Dr Siddiqui entered the Coffee House with one of his friends, Professor Ganguli, who taught mathematics at the university and whom I had met a little earlier. With them was a well-built young man in a double-breasted suit and sporting thick moustaches. Led by Siddiqui they came to my table and I was introduced

to the new arrival, who was Salam. He was well known to us because of his outstanding performance in the B.A. examination result, but I had not seen him before as he was reading mathematics at the university and rarely came to the College. He turned out to be very different from my imagined figure of a mathematician or scientist: a serious, unsmiling, even surly, creature who knew nothing about anything outside his special field of interest. All such misconceptions melted away in the first half an hour. Salam smiled, joked, talked enthusiastically about things in general, and his bespectacled eyes sparkled with enjoyment. I found him genial, warm-hearted, approachable, witty and easy to make friends with.

During the next two years we met every now and then in the college, the Coffee House, the university functions and other places. One day he inquired about my English honours syllabus, and when I asked him why he was interested in the subject he told me with a mischievous smile that he too had been through that mill. (I discovered later that as an undergraduate he had studied the books that I was now reading; he was too modest to inform me that he had broken the previous record in the English honours examination). This common interest served as a further link and advanced our yet unfledged friendship. On the subject of English poetry he ruffled my curiosity by his keen interest in the romantic poets because I knew that the honours syllabus covered only the metaphysical poets. He read my mind and with a smile said that he had read beyond the prescribed books, and advised me gently to do the same. Gradually I discovered other gifts in

him: interest in Urdu poetry, curiosity about why historical events take place, a genial temperament, and a sense of humour which traversed the entire gamut of civilized jokes and titillating stories. I never heard him talk ill of anyone.

He was not a regular visitor to the Coffee House, neither at this time nor later in 1951-53 when he was teaching at the College and the University. But whenever he came he was generous in amicability, affability and suavity. His preference in neckties lay in bright colours. In the cold weather he relished coffee with double cream. I noticed a peculiarity in his choice of seat. Whenever possible he wanted to occupy a chair set against the wall. Once I was sure of his predilection I vacated my chair if it was in the position he favoured and offered it to him. Such small things caused him much pleasure. His thanks were profuse and embarrassed me.

Fortunately he and I were together in London for over a year in 1959-60, when he was a professor at the Imperial College and I was a Research Fellow at the London University's Institute of Commonwealth Studies. Soon after arriving from Manchester in May 1959 I called at him in the College and spent more than an hour with him. He was pleased at my fellowship and was interested in my research project. One remark of his I remember clearly when I asked him why the standard of British university education was so high and how we could attain it if ever. After some general comments he said, "What is done here is this. The freshman is given so much work to do under strict supervision that he either swims or sinks. There are no compromises with mediocrity, no concessions, no

exemptions. It has been so for over a hundred years, and everyone takes it for granted. We throw out several students during their first year. What is left is a serious, studious, devoted, enthusiastic group which likes its work as you used to like your coffee in Lahore. There is no other way to buy quality education. I tried it in Lahore but the bureaucrats preferred supplementaries, recommendations, pass percentages and bounties. Here as long as I teach well I am free to handle my students as I like. Try to do that when you go back." He said this on 11 June in the Imperial College.

I have not forgotten these words of his, but I could not follow his advice for I was not given a chance to teach when I returned home. Three weeks later, on 4 July, my wife and I spent a whole day with him and his family at their house in Putney. On coming to London from Cambridge Salam had bought a house in Putney (8 Campion Road), which was easily accessible by bus and tube from Fulham where I was living. As purdah was observed in the household my wife was shown into the inner quarters to be with Salam's wife and mother, and I spent all the time in the sitting room with Salam, one of his brothers and their father.

I was curious about Salam's student days in Cambridge and asked him many questions about his life in St. John's. He reminded me that he had come to Cambridge soon after the end of the second World War and life in Britain was very hard: most things of necessary and daily use, like clothes, meat and eggs, were rationed. Hot water was scarce and taking a bath an ordeal. Heating in the college was intermittent because of the scarcity of coal and

electricity. What really bothered him was taking notes in the classroom with nearly freezing fingers. He tried to write with the gloves on but found it difficult. So he practised in his rooms to write fast with the gloves on. He had to attend classes in heavy clothes and overcoat, which did not help concentration. The first winter was really a trial, he said. His Pakistani contemporaries, like Javed Iqbal and Daud Rahbar in Cambridge and A.H. Kardar and Fazlur Rahman in Oxford, were equally uncomfortable. But with the summer came heavenly release and he then realized why the Englishman talked so much about weather and why the English poets sang so ecstatically of the sights and pleasure of spring and summer. He told me that my wife and I were lucky to have arrived in England just after the last war-time restrictions had been removed.

He in turn questioned me about what I had read for my M.Sc. (Econ.) at Manchester, and when I told him he took me by surprise with his close inquiries and knowledgeable comments on recent and contemporary British politics. He said he was interested in political philosophy, and from this point the conversation veered to religion and its connection with science. Now he was in his element and for half an hour he tried to convince me that far from being contrarities or rivals to each other the two fields not only complemented each other but were coequal and collaborative in understanding the nature and handiwork of God. His knowledge was so vast that I was unable to follow him all the way, but I was deeply impressed by the power of his arguments and the remarkable smoothness and

fluency with which he deployed them. He must have been a superb teacher and lecturer.

I noticed how respectful he was to his father. He literally shot out of his chair to do his bidding before his younger brother could move.

The London bus route no. 14 connected Putney and the British Museum, and my Institute was two minutes' walk further away in Russell Square. This bus also stopped on its way right before the Imperial College entrance. I also took this bus from Fulham Broadway, and on several occasions when I boarded it I found Salam inside on his way to the college. This happy coincidence enabled me to meet and talk to him for fifteen minutes. The time was just enough for small talk, but it was nice to see him. I felt happy in his company, however brief the encounter.

Our next long and intimate, and alas also the last, meeting was in Khartoum in January 1983. By this time he had won the Nobel Prize and was by common consent a great man. But I found him as humble as when he was a student and later a lecturer, friendly, smiling, tolerant, forgiving.

The scientific bodies of the Sudan had invited him to deliver lectures and requested him to accept an honorary degree from the University of Khartoum. He had agreed and had duly arrived on 8 January. Then came a near disaster in which he and the university emerged triumphant and my wife and I had a chance to talk to him for two hours in private.

The Sudan, the largest country in Africa by territory, is a relatively poor third-world state, but has two remarkable features. First, the Sudanese people are by nature mild, tolerant and peaceful. In

fifteen years that I was there I did not see any two persons quarrelling, abusing or cuffing each other. The blood runs in their veins gently. Secondly, they value higher education as much as do the Europeans, and, even when the country is under military rule, give the academia the honour and respect which other third-world countries reserve for army generals, ministers and top bureaucrats.

Being poor the Sudan was in a subordinate relationship with Saudi Arabia on which it depended for a modest financial grant, jobs for Sudanese labour and import of oil on a concessional rate. Now when Salam's visit to the Sudan was announced the Saudis intervened to try to stop it. They could not make the Sudan cancel the visit because the invitation to Salam had been delivered to him, his acceptance received and his programme of lectures finalized. Disappointed on this front they then put pressure on Field Marshal Ja'far Naméri, the all-powerful president of the country and chancellor of the University of Khartoum. On 7 January the Saudi ambassador met Naméri and asked him to cancel the university's special convocation where Salam was to be given an honorary degree. Naméri called the vice-chancellor on the same day and told him of the Saudi objection. The vice-chancellor decided to take a stand and said he would consult the academic staff to find out their reaction on the crisis. An emergency meeting was held the same evening and after a short debate the entire Sudanese staff decided to confront the Chancellor and declared that it would resign if the convocation was cancelled. Next morning the vice-chancellor and all the deans and heads of

departments and institutes met Naméri and conveyed to him the local staff's determination to flout the Saudi "orders", adding that the expatriate staff, though not involved in the crisis, had been informally consulted and they stood behind the decision to tender *en mass* resignations. It was an act of great courage in the face of the arrogant Saudi pressure and of a military ruler who enjoyed untrammelled authority. All credit goes to Naméri for his acceptance of the staff's decision, his respect for the autonomy of the university and his promise to attend the convocation and award the degree to Salam.

I know only the university's side of the story and have no knowledge about how Naméri tackled the Saudi ambassador and other higher Saudi authorities.

On 9 January Salam delivered his lecture in the university's science lecture hall. The man who presided over the function was one Nafees (either a Saudi or an Iraqi) who was Secretary General of the Arab Science Foundation. Twice he interrupted Salam to declare that all scientists were arrogant. On the first occasion Salam gently and mildly contradicted him. On the second interruption a senior Sudanese physicist stood up from among the audience and said in a ringing tone that people had come to hear Salam, not to listen to rude and irrelevant taunts of a foreigner. This received vociferous support from the audience and silenced Nafees.

The Special Convocation was held on 10 January in the university hall. It was a solemn function. Naméri embraced Salam on his arrival and again while awarding him the degree. There was no running away from the university campus

as had happened in 1979 at the Quaid-i-Azam and Punjab universities in Pakistan.

The Pakistani ambassador hosted a reception for Salam in the evening at the Hilton Hotel on the left bank of the Blue Nile. It was a male gathering and I left my wife in the foyer with her German grammar books (we were learning the language in anticipation of moving to Heidelberg in March) and joined the party. With so many people around it was not possible to be with Salam. Finding a moment to spare he approached me and whispered into my ear, "Don't go away after the party. We will talk when everybody is gone." I told him that Zarina was outside, wanting to meet him. He smiled and nodded and added, "Good. We will get together soon."

The party ended at 9.30 P.M. I went out to fetch Zarina, and then we sat down on a sofa while the hotel staff was still removing the crockery, cutlery and other remains of the feast and began to talk. We recalled our Government College days; Salam talked about what he had to endure at the hands of Sirajuddin and the officials of the education department. I asked him if all that was due to his being an Ahmadi. He doubted it and pointed out that Qazi Aslam too was an Ahmadi and later became the Principal of the College. He was puzzled why he was singled out for special treatment and was still seeking an explanation. He told me some more stories of how General Ziaul Haq had been rude to him in Islamabad. In a function in Salam's honour at the President's house when the time came for the *maghrib* prayers the General, in a very loud voice so that everyone could hear (though Salam was

standing next to him), asked him "Will you pray with us or separately?", thus making the unnecessary declarations that the chief guest was not a Muslim. Salam said he noticed some European ambassadors smiling and nodding in the General's direction. I told him how Zia had ruined my life and separated our adopted children from us. He was deeply touched and expressed his sympathy.

Salam and I quickly got over these unpleasant reminiscences and turned to friendly gossip about his touring itinerary and my going to Heidelberg. His mood changed abruptly and soon we were telling jokes, recalling some highly amusing incidents and enjoying the recall of a shared past. He was very much like his old self of the Government College and Coffee House years, full of interest in life's oddities, remembering his friends and teachers with pleasure, even recalling the numbers and locations of the lecture rooms where he sat as a student or taught as a young lecturer. Listening to him I could see how much he missed the college, even more than he did St. John's.

Salam had had a long day and he was flying out early next morning, so most reluctantly my wife and I left him at 11.30 P.M. He walked along the corridor, through the foyer, and down the main staircase up to our car to say farewell. This was my last meeting with the greatest of men who was also a dear friend.

When I was living in Cambridge in 1996-99 I happened to visit, on 14 September 1999, the Master of St. John's College, Professor Peter Goddard, on a personal matter. The talk turned to Salam and I asked him if any endowment in memory of Salam had

been or was being established in Salam's name. His reply was a no. He told me that he had been Salam's student and was currently teaching Salam's theory to the class which included Salam's son, Umar.

Professor Goddard's information about the absence of any Salam endowment saddened and surprised me. I had taken it for granted that the government of Pakistan or the Jam'at-i-Ahmadiyya (which has its headquarters in London) would have endowed at least a scholarship or prize, if not a lectureship or chair, to perpetuate his memory. This is an accepted and not rare practice at Oxbridge. This had not been done. I also found that no such suggestion had been made by the Pakistan High Commission to its government.

On my return to Lahore I broached the subject with a very prominent and influential Ahmadi friend and urged him to persuade the leaders of the community to endow a Salam Prize in mathematics or physics at St. John's College. He promised to speak to some of his friends. Nothing happened. I reminded him two or three times. Then I stopped pressing him because I felt that he resented my insistence.

He was right and I was wrong. There is no profit in remembering the dead. Let them lie in their graves, and let us attend to our lives. That is the Pakistani tradition and we are loyal to it. How apt was the comment of a well-known scientist to whom I took my tale of sad disappointment: "You say the Ahmadis have not done anything to salute Salam. Yes, they haven't. But aren't they Pakistanis too?"

ALTAF GAUHAR

When I joined the Government College in 1944 in the third year Raja Altaf Hussain (better known as Altaf Gauhar) had just passed out with an M.A. degree in English and started teaching English at the Islamia College, but he regularly visited our college to meet his younger brother Tajammul, and I think it was Ejaz Batalavi who introduced him to me. After that I saw a lot of him at the Halqa-i-Arab-i-Zauq and the Coffee House. We shared the friendship of Ejaz, Mukhtar Siddiqui, Yusuf Zafar, Daud Rahbar and others. As I was reading honours in English in my B.A. class English literature was a common interest.

Unfortunately our later careers did not march together, professionally or geographically. After one year he was selected for the Indian Audit and Accounts Service, scoring phenomenally high marks in the viva voce test. In 1950 he was informally inducted into the Civil Service of Pakistan, spent some time in East Pakistan, and was then in Karachi for a long stretch as Collector of Customs, District Magistrate, private secretary to the Prime Minister (Sir Firoz Khan Noon), Chief Controller of Imports and Exports and Information Secretary to the federal government. Still we met whenever he was in Lahore till 1957, and more often in Karachi in 1961-63 when I was posted there, and again in London when he was working for BCCI Foundation and editing the journal *South*, and finally in Lahore and Islamabad in 1993 and 1994.

Our last long and intimate meetings were in Lahore in 1993 when we discussed his book on

Ayub Khan at my house in Model Town and other things for three hours, and again on 11 January 1994 at his house in Islamabad when my wife and I dined with him and his wife (also named Zarina) and recalled the old Lahore days and our common friends most of whom were now gone for ever.

As a civil servant Altaf was not only arguably the most brilliant in the country's bumpy history but also a wise counsellor to Ayub Khan. It is easy but grossly unjust to condemn him to oblivion (as some have done) simply because he was so close to a military dictator. On merit, he was one hundred times more intelligent and five hundred times better read than the advisers of General Ayub Khan, General Ziaul Haq and General Pervez Musharraf. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, in his own opinion, needed no adviser. As for Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif it would have been in their better interest if they had had no advisers at all.

Altaf was intellectually superior to other public servants and put this advantage to good use. He was a competent administrator, an expert economist and a persuasive committee man. He had other qualities which endeared him to the literati. He was well grounded in literature, both English and Urdu. He had read widely and to his benefit. He wrote attractive Urdu prose and moderately good Urdu poetry. As chief editor of the *Dawn* chain of newspapers and editor of *South* in London he showed his perceptive grasp of international politics. Like some of his British predecessors in the Indian Civil Service he combined scholarship and administrative skill, a quality nowhere to be seen in our civil servants.

His personal qualities made him a good and dependable friend. He had a warm heart which acted as a magnet for those who wanted to get close to him. His wide reading and deep knowledge of the way the world moved made him an interesting man to talk to. I have seen him in the Halqa-i-Arbab-i-Zauq criticising or applauding a short story or a poem in a manner which combined deep insight with pleasing humour. He was a good translator from Urdu into English as his version of Maududi's *Tafhimul Quran* shows.

Altaf had also a lot of physical and moral courage. He bore the atrocities inflicted upon him on Z.A. Bhutto's orders in 1972 with patience and fortitude. Rarely has a senior civil servant experienced the ups and downs of such glaring contrast. For some years he enjoyed the confidence and trust of the highest in the land. And then he was dismissed from service by a drunken and womanizing General. More was to come. Z.A. Bhutto threw him into a dungeon where he was forced to eat rotten fish so that he would vomit after every meal besides suffering from a painful allergy. Bhutto told Tajammul Hussain that he had treated his brother in this way simply to convince him that he (Bhutto) was greater than any court of law in the country.

Now that I am remembering Altaf, let me put on record that he had nothing to do either with the government's taking over the *Pakistan Times* and its sister newspapers or with Ayub Khan's infamous decision to harness the literary fraternity to the chariot of the state through the creation of the Writers' Guild. The first was Ayub's own idea or one of his

myrmidon's; the second came from the perversely fertile mind of Qudratullah Shahab, perhaps with a nudge from Jamiluddin Aali. Shahab denies this in his overrated memoirs, but it is within my personal knowledge gained from M.M. Ahmad and some other high-ranking civil servants that Shahab himself sent the relevant summary on the Guild to the President. Shahab was a fluent liar and his *Shahabnamah* contains many untruths. He and I were colleagues in Islamabad in 1975-77 and I was surprised by the tales he invented and circulated about himself. It would not have been difficult to create false impressions about himself for a man who could fabricate around himself a fake aura of tinsel spiritualism and cajole men like Mumtaz Mufti and Ishfaq Ahmad Khan to act as his acolytes and propagandists.

I miss Altaf much as a friend. In spite of our long separations and mostly brief meetings our relationship was a gift for which I shall always bless him. To talk to him was to learn something. In our last meeting he spent half an hour on the difficulties of finding exact equivalents in English of Urdu words and the tender care demanded by the work of translation. He threw much light on the lives of Ayub Khan, the Nawab of Kalabagh, Manzur Qadir (to whom he owed much), Firoz Khan Noon and other men in power during his years spent in the bureaucracy. He was a wise counsellor because of his wide experience. He was an interesting and rewarding member of our circle because he had read much and led a variety of lives and, above all, weighed and balanced the ponderables of his variegated career. Most people pass by their life as

if it is something separate from their existence. Altaf had studied his chequered calling as if it were a book. The final counting up had its sad hours, but it also gave a ballast to his way of thinking. With all his humour and good cheer his outlook on life and his phrasing of it betrayed a sombreness which reflected the reality of human life. This is how we should see ourselves in the passing of time, but we don't. Altaf did; that was his distinction.

TAJAMMUL HUSAIN

Tajammul was Altaf Gauhar's younger brother and they were very close throughout the years they spent together. Tajammul was two years senior to me in the College. He passed out with a B.A. in 1944 when I joined the College, and entered the Law College. But he occasionally visited the College to see his friends and was a Coffee House habitué. He was one of those who make friends easily and swiftly. After his law degree, in 1948 he entered the Pakistan Audit and Accounts Service, where he was joined in 1949 by Sartaj Aziz and Aftab Ahmad.

He married in 1952, served in the military accounts department for some time, was appointed Director General of Tourism in 1958, and soon after that recruited to the federal economic pool. For several years he was commissioner of income tax, and then in 1969 was dismissed by General Yahya Khan. He practised law in the remaining years of his working life.

He was fond of reading and had a special interest in Urdu poetry. That explains his friendship with

Faiz Ahmad Faiz and all the well-known men and women singers and musicians. He was a *bon vivant*, enjoyed social life, had a large circle of friends, and arranged large private gatherings where poetry was recited or sung and everybody had a good time.

Unfortunately I did not see much of him in later years. As far as I can remember our last long meeting was at some time in the mid-1960s.

AMINULLAH KHAN

If I am asked to name the three best friends I had in my last 60 years I would unhesitatingly choose Waheeduzzaman, Aminullah Khan and Anwár Husain (A.H. Syed). Waheed was a cousin as well as a friend and our association began in 1942 on my arrival in Lahore from Batala and ended with his death in 1988. No, I am wrong. Our friendship did not end in 1988. He is still a friend though he is not alive. The dead don't really die as long as their friends are alive and remember them.

Anwár Husain and I go back nearly 70 years, for we met first in the M.B. High School, Batala, in 1938. Since then our friendship has matured and flavoured, and though he left for the United States in 1952 we have been meeting off and on in Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, London and Cambridge. But Anwár, in his own words, is incapable of small talk and gossip, and this inability has increased with his advancing years. So our conversation is limited to an exchange of intellectual ideas, mainly on political subjects. With the passing of time and with the mess the politicians and rulers of Pakistan have made of our lives I have

lost interest in all politics, national and international. And that makes our tête-à-tête a cribbed and confined conversation piece. Further, he has no interest in fine arts and literature (except Urdu). This has resulted in a paradox: the longer our friendship stretches in terms of time the less we share the topics to talk about.

I found Amin the closest to my heart, both emotionally and intellectually. He was senior to me by one year in the College and did not go beyond his B.A. degree. But two or three meetings in the Coffee House laid a firm and lasting foundation of a friendship which has survived his death. After his graduation in 1945 he worked for *The Civil and Military Gazette* and two years later joined *The Pakistan Times* as a sub-editor. At some time in 1956 he moved to Karachi, where all his three brothers worked, and soon got a job in the private sector. He married very late and had two daughters. He died in a tragic and freak road accident in Bangkok in 1986 where he and his family were on a holiday.

Amin came from a respectable family (his father was in the Punjab Civil Service) and the background showed in his impeccable manners and rich culture. He was fond of reading and his preferences overrode the narrow academic boundaries invented by the modern specialists who want to know more and more about less and less. He read widely in English and (translated) European literature, history in all its dimensions, politics and fine arts. In Lahore we were members of the newly-established British Council library situated on the first floor of a bank building opposite the YMCA headquarters on the Mall. Here we borrowed books and after reading them discussed

their contents. We also attended the Council evening gatherings where European musical compositions were played on audio cassettes or gramophone records. Amin had no special interest in Urdu poetry, and yet accompanied me to all the *musháiras* and enjoyed the couplets I recited in my conversation.

As a worker at a newspaper office, Amin's visits to the Coffee House were governed by his duty hours, but generally he managed to come twice a day, in the morning on his way to the office and in the evening before his night shift. He did not have a large number of friends in the House though there was a large number of journalists around. On most occasions he and I were alone at the table and preferred this because we could talk at length about our favourite topics. Both of us were frequent cinema-goers to Regal and Plaza where English-language films were shown.

Recalling these years I am struck by the immense variety and reach of things, sentiments, emotions, feelings, reactions and tastes which we shared with equal enthusiasm. Only rarely did we differ on the quality and appeal of a book or film or piece of music. We liked the same people, enjoyed the same kind of conversation, wore the same kind of shade of clothes, smoked the same brand of cigarettes and avoided the same kind of persons. After a sitting in the Coffee House we often went for a walk along the Mall. After my marriage, whether we were in Lahore or Karachi, he was my only friend who visited our home regularly.

When I was in Karachi in 1961-63 we reproduced the Lahore situation: he came to see me and my wife at the Government Officers' hostel on Lawrence Road once or twice a week and we went

to the Coffee House near Preedy Street more often. The configuration and clientele were different in the Karachi House but the ambience and atmosphere were the same as in Lahore.

In the summer of 1966, when I was in Pakistan on vacation from Khartoum, I invited Amin to spend a few weeks with me. He came to Rawalpindi and then we went to Murree, Nathiagali and Abbotabad, staying in government rest houses, going for long walks and talking till our heads ached. All of us meet our friends occasionally and that for an hour or two and mostly in the company of other people. The boundaries of mutual tolerance and enjoyment are tested by living together day and night for several days. My relationship with Amin emerged triumphant from this trip.

In Rawalpindi we spent our mornings either in the office of Maulavi Saeed, the editor of *The Pakistan Times*, or in the Vogt's restaurant which was in all but name a copy of the Lahore Coffee House. In Murree we went out for extended walks in the morning and spent the afternoons and evenings at the Lintott, a venerable restaurant on the Mall dating from the British days. In Nathiagali our rendezvous was the Pines Hotel and our longest adventure the climbing of the Mushkpuri Peak. In Abbotabad we took our custom to the only respectable eatery in the town, Mona Lisa, which stood serenely in a park in the cantonment. We found it a little, cosy meeting place but generally untenanted. There was then no "hotelling" crowd in this beautiful and tranquil hill station. Mona Lisa was owned by a Christian lady of uncertain age, Mrs. Ahmad, who lived in a fine stone-built cottage on the Kakul Road.

One of the brighter points of my life has been my friendships and in this fortune I have been well-provided. And of all my friends I miss Amin the most because both our minds and souls treaded the same path, bringing (certainly to me and I hope to him too) a balance and tranquillity to our lives, cementing our companionship, adding a welcome ballast to the ship of life on which a kind providence had provided us with neighbouring berths. Amin brought a great deal of pleasure to me and I thank God for that and bless his gentle soul.

ASHIQ HUSSAIN BATALAVI

Ashiq was not really a Coffee House companion but a family friend and our relationship was of Batala vintage and went back to the 1930's. But I must mention him here because he was one of the intellectual giants of the House and no gallery of its heroes dare omit him.

His origins go back to a distinguished Kakkézai family of Batala which produced, in a single generation, three prominent men: Ashiq, Agha Babur and Ejaz Batalavi. Their father was Shaikh Ghulam Akbar, a retired police inspector, who died in 1941. His wife, Ghulab Begum or Gulabo, was as short and delicate as her sons were tall and robust; she died in 1970. This extraordinary couple produced six sons and three daughters, all of whom had long lives. Ashiq died in 1989, Babur in 1998, and Ejaz in 2004. Of their sisters, Wazir died in 1982, Amir in 1992 and Zubaida in 2004.

The three literary brothers and their three sisters had a good taste for Urdu and Persian poetry with a

knack for carrying on sparkling conversation. They talked with piquancy and a charming abandon, quoting effortlessly Urdu and Persian classics.

Dr Ashiq Hussain Batalavi (to give him his full name) had drunk from many literary wells. He began writing short stories in 1929 or earlier. In 1935, in co-operation with Akhtar Shirani, he brought out the journal *Ruman*. In 1937 he became the co-editor of *Adabi Dunya* and also the joint secretary of the Punjab Provincial Muslim League. A little earlier he had published his collection of short stories under the title of *Soz-i-Nátamám*.

In the 1930s Ashiq married a very good-looking girl, Imtiaz, who was my eldest sister's close friend. He should not have married at all for he was incapable of performing his marital duties. After thus souring the life of a good woman he divorced her. Imtiaz was a sensitive woman with a refined taste in Urdu literature and the deception hurt her much, and it took her several years to recover and make another marriage and rear a family. Ashiq makes no mention of this episode in the two volumes of his memoirs, and his younger brother, Agha Babur, plays a dramatic note on Ashiq's love for Imtiaz but does not give the real reason for the breakup. This secretiveness is a hallmark of the family. Nobody knows Ashiq's date of birth, his college education (which college?), his legal practice, his marriage, his source of income, etc. Similarly, Babur, in his seintillating reminiscences, *Khad-o-Khal*, is silent on his age and education and the timing of all the episodes that he tells so lovingly and beautifully. After Ejaz Batalavi's death Sang-e-Meel Publications brought out a nicely got-up

collection of his Urdu writings with a brief foreword by his son Salman, but without any substantial information on his life and career.

Ashiq had been, since the early 1930s, a member of the literary group which met regularly at the Arab Hotel and later at the Mohkam Din Bakery. He knew everyone worth knowing from Tajwar Najibabadi and Syed Mumtaz Ali to the younger generation of poets and prose writers. His mastery of narration and sterling literary acumen opened all doors, however select and supreme the circle.

In 1950, on Chiragh Hasan Hasrat's urging, Ashiq wrote a long article for *Imroz*, telling his own version, probably the correct one, of Jinnah's dubious role in the re-organization of the Punjab Muslim League in 1938. These disclosures were not palatable to the powers that be and his persecution began. In early 1953 he left for London and never came back to live in Pakistan. After 1957 we continued to meet in London and twice in Lahore.

He was a contemporary historian, a man of letters, a short story writer, an essayist, editor of some of the best Urdu literary journals of his time, an intimate friend of the great men of his age, and was very knowledgable about Urdu literature and Persian poetry. He had a first-rate mind, and acute critical sense and a deep insight into the ground rules of literature and art. He wrote several books which combined literary research among original papers in the India Office Library, his own experience of active political life and his shrewd contemplation of the past. The result is pulsating history, but the work of a participation with strong views of his own.

Ashiq was an extraordinary man of great talent. He had two strong points: a phenomenal memory and an elegant pen. He could recall an incident or an individual in minute detail. His reservoir of remembered poetry was immense, and its recall at his instant command. No sooner had one mentioned a person or expressed a sentiment than an appropriate couplet burst forth from his lips. His Urdu prose was stimulating, vigorous, enchanting, light and fluent. It had ballast and was yet so weightless. There are not many in the history of Urdu letters who wrote with such assurance in such a pure and chaste language.

For 36 long years he lived in exile and poverty. For some time he was in uncertain health. He was far from his family. He must have suffered much. He died of a heart attack on 17 July 1989. Ejaz went to London to bring back his dead body and his papers. Nobody knows what happened to these papers.

EJAZ BATALAVI

The youngest of the family was Ejaz Husain, commonly known as Ejaz Batalavi. He was several years senior to me in the College, and was a contemporary of Altaf Gauhar, Zia Jallundheri, Daud Rahbar and Hameed Nasim. His years in the Coffee House were from 1940 to 1946 and then again from 1950 onwards. He was as much a Tea House man as a Coffee House man because most of his literary friends patronized the former.

Ejaz was a tall, handsome man with a film star's moustache which became him. He had a personality whether he was speaking at the Halqa-

i-Arbab-i-Zauq or talking in the Coffee House or pleading a case at the High Court. He was not as garrulous as Ashiq nor as good a conversationalist. But he spoke with an accent of authority, an assurance, which was the hallmark of the family.

He wrote short stories, essays, a couple of plays and some poetry. He could do no more in the time spared by a very busy legal career. He was called to the bar in London; in England, and specially in Cambridge, his contemporaries were Abdus Salam, Daud Rahbar and Javed Iqbal. On his return, he started his legal practice in Lahore. He had been an outstanding debater in the college and this stood him in good stead at the bar. He was one of the finest lawyers in the country during the last thirty years of his practice. Twice he declined the offer of a high court judgeship.

Ejaz made a bad mistake in 1977 when he chose to accept the government's brief in the murder trial of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Well aware of the political polarization in the country and the sovereign contempt of the people for General Ziaul Haq and his junta of army generals, he yet decided to be one of the prosecutors in a case which, as everybody feared, would end in a judicial murder. For ten years after the case was over his residence in Model Town was guarded by a contingent of police. He lost many friends and he was lonely when I met him after many years in 1985. We did not talk about the case but he was tense and moody. He was nearing the end of his working life and had made a lot of money and I begged him in all our meetings to write his autobiography. He did not commit himself.

Ejaz was well read in literature and law, wrote a fair Urdu prose, spoke well in the court and in private gatherings, composed poetry and had a sharp mind. But he was incapable of attempting a sustained narrative, or perhaps lacked the courage to record and defend his actions and decisions. He was an active and important part of the cultural life of Lahore for fifty years and a friend or classmate of several important figures of his period. It is a great loss to the future chronicler of Lahore's intellectual and cultural life that he has taken into his grave a good part of our history which needed recalling, and all of us are the poorer by his failure. I have the same complaint against Altaf Gauhar, Safdar Mir, Bari Alig, Mukhtar Siddiqui and others. Of this generation Hameed Nasim alone wrote an account of his life and it is a rewarding book to read.

SAHIR LUDHIANAVI

Sahir was most probably the first poet I met when I was not yet 15 years of age. My cousin, Khurshiduzzaman, had matriculated with me in 1942, and while I joined the Forman Christian College he entered Dyal Singh College. In one of my occasional visits to his college he introduced me to a tall, thin young man who, he said, wrote poems. This was Sahir Ludhianavi. I was attracted to him first because he was a poet and I had never met or talked to one before and also because he looked a little lost as if the most absorbing thing in his life was his own feelings. There was something in him which aroused in me a mixture of sympathy and curiosity.

He had heard of the Coffee House and knew that the literati of Lahore was to be found there. One day he asked me to take him there and the first person who met us at the entrance was Abdullah Malik. They knew each other and the three of us sat for a while at the same table, but soon several of Abdullah's friends joined us. I noticed that Sahir now felt at home and enjoyed the company, and yet there was a restlessness in him as if he was missing something. Sahir was in Lahore only for one year because the college asked him to leave because of his political activities and ideas.

My visits to the Coffee House were neither frequent nor regular in my early years in Lahore. Therefore I must have met Sahir only half a dozen times in all, including one call I made at the Majithia Hall on Empress Road which was Dyal Singh College's boys hostel.

Something in Sahir had intrigued me and after his departure from Lahore I asked Abdullah Malik and others about this young man whom youth seemed to have abandoned so early. The story of his life provided the answers to my questions and explained Sahir's sadness and introversion.

Sahir, whose real name was Abdul Hayee, was born in Ludhiana. His paternal and maternal grandfathers had been wealthy and his father had inherited a rich legacy from his father. But the father soon turned out to be a hard drinker and a womaniser, and this created an unsavoury domestic atmosphere in which Sahir was born and grew up. His mother finally got a divorce and after painful legal proceedings she was given the custody

of the child. After his matriculation in 1938 he joined Government College in Ludhiana and read philosophy and Persian. But his political activities in the All India Students Federation, interest in writing poetry, unhappy memories of his father, loneliness of his mother's life, and a passionate but unsuccessful love affair with Amrita Pritam, did not allow him to concentrate on his studies. I don't know whether he was asked to leave the college or he himself wanted to leave a town which had given him nothing but frustration and heart ache. In his fourth year he came to Lahore and joined Dyal Singh College, but once again before he could sit his finals he was turned out of the college because of his radical political activities.

Without a degree but with a good knowledge of Urdu literature, the best he could do was to work for *Adab-i-Latif*, and later briefly for *Sháhkár* and *Saverá*. Then he went away to Bombay to write songs for the film industry.

After the 1947 partition he migrated to Lahore and was here for a short while. I think his total stay did not exceed four months. This time we met more often and he recited his poetry for my benefit. His sense of having lost his way in life was still very clear. In fact, the partition had added to his troubles. As a Leftist he followed the Communist Party of India in favouring the creation of Pakistan, but what drove him back to India (this time to Delhi) was, in his words, political suffocation and the loss of the culture of old Lahore. He told me that he found Lahore a "civilizational wilderness" where he did not know who to make friends with. The rat

race for money and allotted property and lack of intellectual freedom bothered him. He never returned to Lahore, and we lost touch.

I found Sahir a soft spoken man with a bruised heart. His commitment to his radical views was genuine. His contempt for the rich was also a legacy of his personal experience of his father's misdeeds and his treatment of his mother. His empathy with the poor sprang from a feeling which was pure and genuine. He was a rebel against the conventional and established canon and values. His disappointed love for Amrita, which he hugged to his breast till the end, added to his litany of woes.

Recalling Sahir I have a strange feeling that he and Yusuf Zafar belonged to the same fraternity. Here I don't mean that they were fellow poets with an affluent past and a wretched present. No two persons could be more unlike each other in temperament, beliefs and outlook. Yet there was something similar in each man's expression, eyes and bearing. What welled up in my heart while looking at or talking to both of them was an irrepressible feeling of sadness and pity, as if they had suffered much and the pain of the *angst* refused to go away. Maybe it was only a fancy of mine, but it is an indelible impression and has lasted more than 65 years.

CHAPTER 8

THE ROLL OF HONOUR: VII

AMEER HYDER KHAN

There were several parallels in the personal lives of Sahir and Ameer Hyder, and that is why Ameer comes floating on my memory when I am thinking of Sahir.

Ameer came from a rich Rajput family of a village near Rawalpindi. His father was deprived of his inheritance by his brother-in-law who was the headman of the village and the guardian of the property left to Ameer's father. Poverty descended suddenly on the family, and on its heels came the misfortune of the father's death when Ameer was still a child. His mother married her husband's brother. Ameer rebelled and left home for a short while. On his return his step-father refused to send him to a government school, and the child was drilled in religion and Persian classics by *maulavis* who were half educated, cruel and did not know how to handle children. Thus he grew up detesting the mullah and all that he stood for.

Ameer tried unsuccessfully to join the army when World War One broke out, and then fled to Bombay to work as a dock hand and a seaman. An

unexpected opportunity took him to New York where he deserted the ship, procured a job in a locomotive plant in Buffalo, received military training and learnt aviation and marine engineering. He went to sea again, joined the Ghadar Party, and in 1920 became a member of the Friends of Freedom for India Association, was converted to Communism by a German exile, and in 1926 went to the Soviet Union where he was trained in Moscow till 1928. On his return to Bombay he worked for the Communist Party of India, was involved in the Meerut Conspiracy case, went underground, resurfaced in Madras, was arrested in 1932 and detained for six years. On his release he worked in the trade union movement in Bombay, and in 1947 came to live in Rawalpindi where he organized workers.

What a life of adventure for a poor orphan from a small village! He came quite frequently to Lahore and Abdullah Malik introduced me to him, and that is how I heard the story of his adventurous career from his lips. There was no bitterness in his words when he spoke of his childhood, the step-father, the mosque mullahs or his days in British Indian jails. His anger and contempt were reserved for the mullah who lived and flourished on ritual, intellectual hubris and ignorance and for the Pakistani rich who exploited the poor and brutalized society. He did not preach Communism even indirectly but stuck strongly to his belief which, he insisted, was a child of his experiences and feelings and not a dogma pushed down his throat in the United States or Soviet Union. He had no regrets about the way life had treated him.

Whenever I expressed my sympathy on his exile and separation from his family and friends, he interrupted my statement with the words "You pity me because you have led an easy life and I have not, but you must remember how much I have gained from my travels and difficulties. My life was hard but it showed me many faces of this world which you will never see, and thus enriched my existence." I was a little surprised to find out that he had a low opinion, bordering on contempt, of the educated and intellectual leaders of the Left like Sajjad Zaheer and Sibti-Hasan. That is how in the fighting forces the trooper looks at the general.

FAZL-I-ELAHI QURBAN

Another trade union activist, but hardly a mere trooper, was Fazl-i-Elahi Qurban, a Kakkezai from Lahore, who came to the Coffee House rather irregularly but had spent a varied and unsettled life and therefore had many stories to tell.

He had migrated to Afghanistan in 1920 in the Hijrat movement, and from there proceeded to Tashkent and then to Moscow. He graduated from the University of the Toilers of the East, married a Russian woman, went to Germany and studied engineering, and collaborated with M.N. Roy in sending Communist literature to India. He returned to India in 1926 and was promptly arrested. Released in 1929 he joined Bhagat Singh's Naujawan Bharat Sabha and worked at its training school in Amritsar. Then he devoted himself to trade union work in Amritsar, Lahore and Okara, and was

elected vice-president of the All India Trade Union Congress in 1939, and presided over its 1945 session. After 1947 he remained active in the Pakistan trade union movement and edited its journal *Mazdur Dunya*. But gradually he drew away from the Communist Party, and died sometime after I left Lahore in 1957.

He was a good friend of Dada Mansur, having shared the hardships of the Hijrat movement and life in the Soviet Union. But he was more vocal than Mansur and spoke with gusto.

MUBARAK SAGHIR

Saghir and I had two vital things in common, hence our readiness to get together though only for one year, 1947-48. He belonged to Batala, my home town, and had attended the same school as I did a quarter of a century later. Son of a carpenter and therefore short of money, he could not complete his schooling at Batala, but as long as he was at the M.L.B. High School the teachers paid the printing costs of his first collection of poems. Then he went to Jullundher where he matriculated, and came to Lahore to join Islamia College. I don't know if he graduated, but he served briefly as headmaster of a school in Karachi. He returned to Lahore and joined Bhagat Singh's Naujawan Bharat Sabha, and was its last president before it was outlawed. In 1936 he founded the Punjab Congress Socialist Party in Amritsar, and was elected its president. He was imprisoned during the second World War, and on his release continued to work for the Socialist Party. In 1947 he wished to remain in

India but was forced by the East Punjab government to leave for Pakistan. In Lahore he worked in the refugee camps, but soon moved to Karachi where he formed a Socialist party and edited a weekly *The Socialist*. I was told later by friends that he was arrested in 1957 and again in 1960. He died in 1967.

Though Mubarak and I were together in Lahore for only one year or even less we were drawn to each other because of our Batala connection. We compared notes on the life of our beloved town in his time and mine and on the teachers of our school. He was talkative and had an enviable capacity for recalling the days gone by. I was so happy to learn that the main reason for his craving to stay back in India in 1947 was his love for Batala.

JAMILUDDIN HASAN

Jamiluddin Hasan took his M.A. degree in political science from Lahore, taught for some time at F.C. College and then joined the foreign service. After obtaining considerable seniority in his professional career he resigned to go to Abu Dhabi as advisor to the ruler, and it was there on 20 October 1978 that I met him last. He had married Dr M.D. Taseer's daughter. His younger brother, Naimuddin, was my student at the Government College and later followed his brother into the diplomatic service; he was posted in Ankara in 1967 where I met him again through Qazi Mansur Ahmad.

Jamil belonged to a literary family of the United Provinces and was a nephew of the well-known woman novelist, A.R. Khatun. Jamil's maternal

uncle ran a general merchandise store in the Commercial Building.

In Lahore Jamil lived in the Oriental College hostel in his early years and later in one of the F.C. College halls of residence as its warden. He led a disciplined life, worked hard, had only a few friends, and went for a long brisk walk every evening on the Mall from the Coffee House to the canal bridge. He was neatly dressed, well coiffured, smart young man with a serious demeanour.

Jamil has a special place in my life because he bestowed upon me the sobriquet "K.K." which I have borne since 1948. The nickname was invented or contrived by him one day in the Coffee House when he said to me, "You know your first names are too long to encourage intimacy. It takes a sustained breath to pronounce 'Khursheed Kamal'. So right now, under the authority granted to me by our friendship, I hereby bestow upon you in perpetuity the much smaller and melodious name of K.K. to which I am sure you will get used soon." He spread the name around and within a month it was in use among most of my friends. When I got married my wife accepted it gladly; twenty years later to our adopted children (whom General Ziaul Haq separated from us through an edict) I was "Abbu K.K." This alone is enough never to let me forget Jamil.

HAMEED AKHTAR

Hameed Akhtar's ancestors came from Central Asia to Uch, and then moved on to Delhi. They claimed descent from Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki,

whose great-grandsons settled in Ludhiana. Hameed's grandfather was a *pir*, and his father an oriental scholar who died when Hameed was only three.

Hameed learnt the Quran by heart in a religious school and was then educated at the local Government High School and Government College, where he was a contemporary of Sahir Ludhianvi whom he followed into active politics, Socialist dogma and the Progressive Writers Association. As a staunch Communist all avenues to government employment were closed to him, and he went to Bombay to work in the film industry, and was for one year, 1946-47, secretary of the Bombay branch of the Progressive Writers Association, and later of the Lahore branch for seven years after his migration to Lahore. In Lahore he worked on the staff of the Urdu newspaper *Imroz*.

He was a well-built tall man, with his voice matching his body. Without any deliberate effort his talk carried an undercurrent of emphasis, which imparted an underlying strength to his words. I was not close to him, and mostly met him in the company of Abdullah Malik, Dada Mansur and other senior Leftists. He shared with Abdullah the rare distinction of mixing a religious mystic ancestry with Communist belief.

ABDULLAH MALIK

There were several intriguing contradictions in Abdullah Malik's life. He belonged to an old respectable Kakkezai family of inner Lahore. In Mughal time his ancestors were horse dealers and suppliers to the court and the aristocracy. Because

of his profession the family was known as *chabak sawaran* (those who ride with the whip), a beautiful Persian name for horse merchants. A portion of the town where the family had its residential quarters was named Mohallah Chabak Sawaran.

Another characteristic of the family was that it belonged to the Ahl-i-Hadith sect of Islam. Abdullah's grandfather was not only deeply attached to the tenets of this school of thought, but also the guardian of the principal mosque of the sect known as Cheenianwali Mosque. Abdullah's mother was a pious woman and so strictly devoted to her religious duties and practices that she said she had no time even to rear her sons. Thus Abdullah and Rauf were brought up by their paternal grandmother and knew their own mother but slightly. There could be no greater irony than that both sons of this devout family turned in their early youth to the dogma of Karl Marx and remained steadfast in their faith of Communism all their lives.

Abdullah started his educational career as a conformist to the family tradition, went to a religious school, learnt how to read the Quran and was drilled into saying his daily prayers with devout regularity. But this loyalty to his blood and faith did not last long. Soon he joined the ordinary secular schools and in 1935 matriculated and entered the Government College where he took to wearing fashionable Western clothes. In his third year he moved to the F.C. College briefly and finally graduated from Islamia College.

The years between 1937 and 1940 brought a revolution in his faith, convictions and way of life.

He fell in the company of Bari Alig, Shorish Kashmiri, Abdullah Butt and their concentric circles of political activists, Leftist believers and happy-go-lucky young men. This scion of the Ahl-i-Hadith family took to the bottle and spent hours every day playing cards and talking incessantly. At the same time he felt attracted to the Ahrar Party, but soon Bari and F.D. Mansur converted him to Marxism. He started wearing homespun coarse cloth bush shirts and cheap trousers or khaddar pyjamas and *kurtas* (but before long reverted to his Western dresses). Active politics took possession of his heart. He was well trained by his seniors in the dogma of Communism, without unsticking his Muslim label. He became secretary of the All Punjab Muslim Students Federation (which was the rival of the Muslim Students Federation, which supported the Muslim League). In November 1939 he wrote a short book in Urdu on capitalism which Chaudhri Barkat Ali published. A year later Bari inspired him to write another book on *jagirdari* (large scale landholding). He also wrote some short stories and a bit of poetry.

In 1942 when the official ban on the Communist Party of India was lifted he became a full time active worker of the party branch in the Punjab, and was appointed assistant editor of the party's paper *Jang-i-Azadi* which was edited by F.D. Mansur. In 1943 Sajjad Zaheer took him to Bombay and made him work for another party organ, *Qaumi Jang*. In the November of the same year he came to Lahore to get married to a 17-year old Aisha, a girl from his father's side of the family.

At the same time the Communist Party allowed some of its members to join the Muslim League and Abdullah and Danyal Latifi became very active in the Punjab Muslim League. Latifi helped Mian Mumtaz Daultana in drafting the Leagues' 1945 election manifesto. Abdullah toured the province in the company of senior Leaguers, establishing branches in district headquarters and spreading the message of the Pakistan movement.

In 1946, in collaboration with Rajinder Singh Bedi and some other non-Muslim friends, he established the Sangham Publishing House with its office on Nisbet Road, but it disappeared in 1947.

In Pakistan Abdullah worked as a journalist on the staff of *The Pakistan Times* and *Imroze*, wrote a column for the *Nawa-i-Waqt* for many years, authored a few books on Punjab politics, performed hajj and visited Europe. He died in Islamabad in 2003, where his two sons were working, but was buried in Lahore.

I don't remember who introduced me to Abdullah; probably it was his younger brother Rauf Malik who was my class fellow in 1944-46. It is quite possible that we met in the Coffee House where sometimes formal introductions were not required. One just said hello, joined a circle around the table and often entered into lifelong friendships.

From the time I came to know Abdullah till a few months before his death, whenever we met, I found him gratifying company. I made fun of him, calling him a "rich Communist" or a "rentier" and he agreed with me. I called him a renegade Ahl-i-Hadith, and he reminded me with a laugh that he was a hajji

also. During his later years he prayed regularly and studied the Quran closely. He was the best-dressed Communist I have known, wearing well-tailored 3-piece suits in winter with a matching soft felt hat. With his fair complexion, tall stature and sharp features he was good to look at. He stood erect and straight almost till his end. Whether in conversation or silence a smile lurked behind his eyes and lips, which did not disappear even when he was engaged in passionate discussion with a political adversary.

A unique feature of Abdullah's public life was its variegated character. There were many facets to his political and religious opinions and career. He was well-versed in the fundamentals of Islam because of his family's religious background. For a while he was active in the Ahrar party and shared the feelings of a religious-cum-political group which entertained some radical views and lived mostly on demagoguery. He met Abul Kalam Azad and was deeply impressed by him. He embraced Marxism before he was twenty and wrote books reflecting his new convictions. He was an activist of the Communist Party of India and worked on the staff of its papers in Lahore and Bombay. Then he entered the Muslim League ranks and for two vital and hectic years (1945-47) toured the Punjab with its senior leaders and propagated the idea of Pakistan. He was a columnist for the reactionary *Nawa-i-Waqt* for many years, and also for the Leftist *Pakistan Times*.

This diversified life brought him in intimate contact with a large variety of public figures of every political hue. In the Coffee House, and probably outside of it too, I did not know a man

whose circle of friends, acquaintances, co-workers, colleagues and companions contained people from so many political parties. In the Punjab he knew everyone of any standing or importance in public life. He was an attractive person and this added to his wide appeal and enlarged his circle of friends.

I had not seen him for many years since 1978 when General Ziaul Haq forced me to leave the country. We met briefly in 1991, and then one day at the end of 1999 when I had just returned from Cambridge he came to visit me, holding on to a walking stick and looking visibly old; much of his hair was gone. As soon as he sat down he declared, "You know, I have crossed the 80th. mark and am now in my eighty-first year." My wife and I showed our pleasure and congratulated him. We talked for a while and then he left, saying he was exhausted. I gave him a copy of my short biography of my father written in Urdu. He read the book through the night and the letter which he wrote to me on the next morning began with the words, "I spent the night reading your book. When I reached the last page I heard the call to prayer from the neighbouring mosque. I said my prayers and then sat down to write this letter." To my surprise and pleasure he likened the purity of my style to Maulana Muhammad Husain Azad's "ingenuity and pen."

I was living in Cambridge when this book was published and on my instructions the publisher had sent fifty copies to my relatives and friends. Not a single relative wrote back to thank me or to comment on the book. Abdullah stands alone in complimenting me on recalling and remembering

my father. I was deeply touched by the depth of his feeling and solicitude.

At the end of 2002, five months before his death, I had a long meeting with him at his house, in which we discussed the 1971 breakup of Pakistan and the role of the Punjab in the developments leading to the tragedy. From his well-kept archives of personal papers he gave me photocopies of half a dozen columns he had written in the *Nawa-i-Waqt* and other newspapers in 1970-71, taking the West Pakistani politicians to task for their unwillingness to stop the rot and save the country.

This led us to consider the destructive policies encouraged or hatched or followed by the Punjabis since 1947 which augured ill for the future of Pakistan. He was specially critical of the Punjabi-Urda alliance aimed at keeping the Bengalis out of power. Abdullah was neither a trained historian nor a scholar, but his emphatic and detailed analysis of the modern turn of events showed his insight into history and an intelligent understanding of the implications of the ways and means by which the Punjab had alienated the Pathans, the Sindhis and the Baloch by shaping the contours of a distorted federal structure and by encouraging the armed forces to suck the country's blood through playing the Kashmir card.

He was anti-Punjabi in the political context, but passionately pro-Punjabi on the cultural plane. I remember how vigorously he waved his right hand index finger, as if in dire warning, when he exclaimed, "Don't ever forget, K.K., that it is impossible to comprehend our modern history, in

particular north Indian, without knowing well the Punjabi mind, and to do that one must study deeply Punjabi culture and language. None of us realizes this, and this failing will one day make much mischief. Tell this to your intellectual friends. There may still be a little time and some chance of averting the disaster."

I did not meet him again. Perhaps this was his last will and testament. It is worth the while to give it serious thought.

* * *

The men sketched above were my friends whom I miss across the gulf of half a century and my mind and heart still carry the imprint of the friendship they gave me. But they were not the only people whose lives mingled with mine. There were others with whom I could not build a permanent or close relationship, or who passed me by, or whom chance or accident did not bring close to me. But they were not strangers and their lives and mine touched even if at a tangent, and their faces emerge on the screen of memory now and then and revivify my Coffee House years. It is fair to them and to my impressionable youth to summon them briefly to complete the Coffee House gallery.

Gyan Chand was an adopted son of Sir Manohar Lal, the Punjab finance minister, who had taken an M.A. degree in Sanskrit and now wrote Hindi songs of some merit. *Lalit Kumar* was a tall, handsome law student and a close friend of Shaikh Khurshid Ahmad and Badiuzzaman (who later became a judge of the high court). Lalit migrated to the United States from India at some time after the Partition.

Amjad Butt was my colleague at the Government College and a good friend. His family was in the carpet trade business and owned the Bokhara Carpet Palace on the Mall. Amjad taught history, and in 1957 we went together to England for higher studies, he to the school of Oriental and African Studies in London and I to the University of Manchester.

Saeed Osman Malik was my class fellow in the political science M.A. at the University. Then he taught at the Government College, Rawalpindi, and later left with me for England and entered the London School of Economics. He married an English girl and came back to teach at the Government College, Lahore.

Saleem Ashraf, the only son of Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf, the well-known Islamic literature publisher, was one year senior to me in M.A. English class. Then he became a lecturer at the Hailey College of Commerce, Lahore. He was briefly affianced to one of my cousins, but the marriage was called off because the girl changed her mind. Saleem later married and had a daughter, but died soon afterwards in a traffic accident on Queen's Road.

Jalil Karir was introduced to me by Saleem Ashraf. He was later in the Pakistan Postal Service, but gradually made his way to the federal economic pool. He had a literary taste and wrote some essays and short stories. He was a remarkably handsome man. *Yunus Saeed*, a refugee from Hoshiarpur, was studying for his M.A. in English at the Government College, and living in the students hostel of F.C. College in Ewing Hall. He was already partial to alcohol when we met;

later he surrendered to a worse addiction. He issued a magazine, *Vision*, from Karachi, and later became the head of National Book Foundation. He died relatively young.

Agha Akhtar Ali was my contemporary and was reading psychology. He was wafer thin, had a long face, and wore thick-lens glasses. He occasionally wrote columns for *The Pakistan Times* under the pen-name of A³, thus digitalizing his initials. He got a job in the private sector in Karachi, married a woman from Hyderabad Deccan, and spent all his later life in Karachi. He was the youngest brother of Agha Abdul Hameed of the Indian Civil Service. One of his brothers was Agha Bashir, director of the Lahore station of Radio Pakistan.

Nudrat Altaf was the only woman habitué of the Coffee House in my later days. She was studying law and was fond of Urdu literature. Plain in looks and petite in size, she struck up a close friendship with the elderly Sufi Abdul Qadeer Niaz, and I always found her sitting at his table and talking about Urdu poetry.

Zia Shafi Khan, a migrant of Delhi and an old boy of the Doon School, was junior to me in the College but Aminullah brought us together and we became good friends. He talked in an interesting way in his public school accent, told many jokes and held strong views on several subjects. In later life he lived in Karachi and rose to the top in the private multinational world of business. He still meets me when he visits Lahore, and reminds me of how few of us of that generation are left to remember our golden age which passed by us so swiftly and yet left an ineradicable impress on all of us.

Amanullah Durrani and I graduated together in 1946. He lived in the New Hostel but we also met often at the Coffee House. His fine looks and good humour made him popular and he responded generously to every friendly gesture and initiative. He too moved to Karachi to work for the Habib Bank. We met later a few times, mostly in Karachi, but it is now several years that I crossed his path. If he happens to read these lines he should recall that once upon a long time I served as his postman.

Shehzad Ahmad was specializing in psychology at the Government College and starting on his career as an important poet. *Intizar Husain*, a refugee from the U.P., was writing columns in the Urdu press, editing journals, carrying on long and serious conversations with Nasir Kazmi, and beginning to publish his short stories which were destined one day to bring him fame. *Rahman Muznib* was helping to run the Dyal Singh College office, taking a prominent part in the meetings of the Halqa-i-Arab-i-Zauq, and writing stories. *Tábish Dehlavi*, clad in an *achkan* and narrow pyjamas, worked at the Radio Station, wrote poetry and preferred smile to laughter.

Shaukat Ali was a clerk in the Punjab Public Library where he spent the entire day in reading up whatever he saw, and in the process taking a first class degree in political science and becoming a lecturer at the university. Later he taught in the United States and died there. *Ahmad Saeed*, small and dark, taught history at Dyal Singh College and also helped Aziz Beg in publishing his weekly *Guardian*. *A. Hameed* of Amritsar wrote romantic

novels and stories and pub-crawled the city till the late hours of the night. *Dr. Syed Abdullah* taught Urdu at Oriental College and his devotion to the Urdu language and rude efforts to make everyone accept it as the only national language often entered the realm of fanaticism.

Ahmad Ráhi was the first modern Punjabi poet and a respected journalist. His *Taranjan* was welcomed as a path-breaking collection of Punjabi poetry in the contemporary accent. *Syed Amjad Husain* was the chief reporter of *The Pakistan Times* and knew everything worth knowing about political intrigues and bargains. His colleague, *Iftikhar Ahmad*, was a competent journalist but later read and practised law and lived on Fane Road. *Sayeed Husain Khan*, a refugee from Bareli, resembled Jinnah in looks so much that he came to be known as Saeed Jinnah. I don't know what he did for his living; he spent a major portion of his life in the Coffee House as long as he lived in Lahore. He now lives in England; but visits Lahore every year. His range of acquaintances was astonishingly wide, especially among politicians.

Abu Saeed Anwar belonged to a respectable family of Amritsar. A lawyer by profession, he was also busy in the affairs of the provincial Muslim League. *Ahmad Saeed Kirmani* was also a lawyer and a Muslim League leader and vehement in conversation and stubborn in argument. *Malik Ghulam Nabi*, of Amritsar, a master of political demagoguery, foul of tongue, fast in friendship and young in his old age, adept in changing political parties, ended up as Punjab's minister of education.

Rafi Butt, probably the first prominent Muslim industrialist of the Punjab, was economic adviser to Jinnah. He died young in an air crash. His son, *Imtiaz*, a friend of mine, is a leading real estate developer of the country.

Sidhwa, probably a brother or cousin of the distinguished novelist, *Bipsi*, was a quiet, studious student of law, then a lawyer and then a judge of the Punjab High Court. He spent his afternoons in walking in the Lawrence Gardens with a book in his hand. *Mumtaz Ahmad Khan* crossed over from East Punjab and flourished in moneymaking through allotment of several evacuee properties. He also issued a magazine called *Iqdam* and, like most nouveaux-riches, dabbled in politics. A parallel case was that of *Mian Muhammad Shafi*, commonly known as Meem-Sheen, who was chief reporter of *The Civil and Military Gazette* at the time of partition, but the owner of three large and expensive bungalows within a year. He is reported to have been in possession of the originals of Jinnah's replies to Iqbal's letters; they have never been recovered. Pushing, unscrupulous and dead to shame, he was a good example of men hopping from poverty to riches in the wake of independence.

Nawab Iftikhar Husain Khan of Mamdot was the Muslim League chief of the province and later its chief minister, which was remarkable considering his lack of ability, tact and speaking talent. He was known as Jinnah's "dumb wrestler" in the Punjab. His brothers, *Zulfiqar* and *Aslam*, were of the same quality and even more adept at leaning on their background for the lack of any other prop. *Nasim*

Anwar Beg spent years beyond my reckoning as a college student in earning his B.A., M.A. (2), LL.B. and LL.M. degrees to prolong his debating career. He got a job in UNESCO in Paris and stayed there till retirement. Agile, full of energy, small in size, fond of talking, he was a friend for many years until he alienated me by doing something stupid.

Shakir Durrani was my contemporary at the Government College and the Coffee House, and later the father of *Tehmina Khar*, the author of *My Feudal Lord*. A good looking, tall man, he was for some time the governor of the State Bank of Pakistan. *Syed Naseer Jāma'i* was the librarian of Islamia College. A quiet, sincere, humble man, he was of much help to me in letting me borrow books which the university library refused to issue. He also facilitated *Waheed's* and my entry into the *mushā'iras* held at his college. He was the younger brother of *Syed Nazir Niazi*, who was for several years Iqbal's friend and amanuensis. Both brothers were educated at the *Jamia Millia Islamiya* of Delhi.

Anjum Roomani taught mathematics and astronomy at *Dyal Singh College* and wrote poetry. He had had a terrible family history. His parents, *Ata Muhammad* and *Daulat Bibi*, were both born in 1894 and murdered on 11 September 1947 in the Partition killings. *Rumani's* real name was *Fazluddin*. In his later years he lived at 56 *Jahangir Town* on *Kacha Sanda Road*, not far from the present-day *MAO College*. *Chaudhri Anwar Aziz* was reading law and was an Olympic swimmer. He was *Waheed's* friend and classmate, not mine. Later he entered politics and became a

federal minister. But his greatest achievement was that he made his American wife fluent in spoken Punjabi. I have never met a foreigner whose Punjabi conversation was so natural and effortless.

Then there were five members of the same family with some odd features. Ayub Khan of an Afghan royal line had been forced by the British to live in exile in India and receive several perks and a good pension from the Government of India. One branch was domiciled in Lahore, and five princelings of it were either my contemporaries or classmates or friends. *Alamgir* was in the Punjab Civil Service and a senior official in 1944 when his son, *Meslehuddin*, and I joined Government College in the third year. He lived on Multan Road. *Khurram* was a brilliant hockey player at my college, and was short, stocky, impetuous, irreverent, quarrelsome, short of temper and apt to come to blows. His younger brother, *Shahrukh*, was an Olympic cyclist, slim, tall and generally well-behaved until provoked. A cousin of theirs, *Nadir*, was at Dyal Singh College, and was quiet and modest. All of them spoke Persian, not Pashto.

The two most handsome men I have seen in my life visited the Coffee House occasionally. One was *Jalil*, who belonged to another branch of the Ayub family. He was very fair with golden-brown hair and moustaches, well-built, tall, amiable, but dressed like a dandy in strong colours. He was a peacock. The other was of a different kind. *Nasir Khan*, younger brother of Dilip Kumar, was an actor. He played a role in just one film in Lahore before going away to Bombay. He died during the shooting of a film in

Amritsar in 1978 or 1979. He ran a cream coloured Cord motor car, the only of its kind in Lahore. He came every week to the Coffee House to buy coffee beans, not to drink coffee. I remember how the entire house fell silent on his entry and stared at him as if he was a lovely young woman. I never saw him after 1948-49 but my lasting impression is that of unequalled manly beauty. Everything seemed to be perfect about him: complexion, size, bearing, carriage, hands, head of hair.

In this intellectual whirlpool entered, but rarely, two giants of the age. Twice Abdullah Malik brought *Faiz Ahmad Faiz*. Occasionally *Ahmad Nadeem Qasimi* came after the Halqa meeting. I didn't meet them properly, nor could talk to them man-to-man. I was learning to open my wings. They were birds of brilliant plumage scaling the heights of the firmament of letters. But I heard them talking and valued the privilege.

There were two groups which should be considered as collectivities. One was made up of my students, including those who were in my class of political science and those who were on the rolls of the College during my time but came close to me. As I did not return to Lahore for 30 years after I stopped lecturing my contacts with this group have inevitably been tenuous or non-existent. And at this long interval of time I cannot recall many of them. But I do remember some (I have treasured the annual group photographs and can therefore recognize all of them) and a few have been kind enough to trace me and get and keep in touch. I want to record here that I am very glad to see and meet them.

Of these students I should like to mention Dilawar Husain, Amer Raza Khan and Asif Jan, all of whom are now retired judges of the Punjab High Court. Amer keeps in touch, is still as slim and suave as he was as an undergraduate, and keeps himself occupied as chairman of the Board of Governors of the Layton-Rahmatullah Blind Trust. Sakhi Sarwar was a nephew of Aminullah Khan; he died in his youth. *Abdul Qayyum Jojo*, son of a former education minister of the Punjab, Mian Abdul Hayee, took his M.A. degree in English and then started teaching at the College. He spent his vacant hours at the tuck shop, sipping tea, smoking his pipe and talking to his students about literature and art. He produced English plays on the College stage and was therefore a favourite of Professor Sirajuddin and Safdar Mir. He was delightful company in cultural circles. His early death was a great loss to everyone who knew him.

Muhammad Idrees joined *The Pakistan Times* as a reporter and was later promoted to the editorial staff. His slim body contained an alert mind, and though a little garrulous at times, he was a popular figure. Of the *Nagi brothers*, known as the ducks of the College because of their swimming skill, two were my students. I have not met them since I left the College. *Zafar Iqbal*, now a prominent Urdu poet, was in my B.A. class and offered no indication of his future literary career.

Two of my students who have been in touch, albeit and inevitably punctuated with separations because of their professional careers, are *Syed Ikbal Raza* and *Qazi Mansur Ahmad*. Mansur is

the elder son of Qazi Muhammad Aslam who was professor of philosophy and later the principal at the College. Ikbal read politics and Mansur read philosophy. Both joined the diplomatic service.

As I lived abroad there were happy opportunities to meet them in London and other places, and Ikbal was twice posted to Khartoum when I was there. He resigned from the foreign service towards the end of Z.A. Bhutto's regime, joined the United Nations civil service and rose to the post of head of the Secretary General's (Kofi Annan) office. After his retirement he lives in New York (though he plans to return home at the end of the current year) but always calls at me when he visits Lahore.

Mansur spent a long time in Geneva as Pakistan's envoy to the European headquarters of the United Nations and finally retired from ambassadorship in Tokyo. He is the only old Ravian on my visiting list and we meet and reminisce regularly, though not as often as I desire. He is a voracious reader and I benefit from what he passes on to me. His wife, Safia, is fair-spoken and caring, and a befitting consort of a perfect gentleman.

I have mentioned my students here because they too expanded my knowledge by asking questions and thus also acted as my mentors.

The second group can be dealt with more briefly. Since about 1950 every annual batch which was selected for the Civil Service of Pakistan (and some of them were already Coffee House habitués) and was under training at the Civil Service Academy spent some time at the Coffee House. I cannot recall the names of many of them, but some come to

mind. There were Aftab Ahmad Khan, Roedad Khan, Alauddin, Fazlur Rahman, Masud Zaman, Masud Nabi Nur, Izharul Haq, and others.

Some of them had been my contemporaries in the College, some my juniors, and some were outsiders. What surprised and hurt me was the abrupt change in their attitude towards their former friends. One of them, to whom I mentioned this, replied calmly and as a matter of course, "You see, one should not be too intimate with everyone. Some aloofness will be more suitable when we are holding superior appointments. That is one of the things we learn at the Academy." The word "superior" was emphasized by the haughty curve of his lips. I was jolted into remembering that they now belonged to the Central *Superior* Services; *ergo*, they were superior human beings.

As far as I know in no other country is this kind of service officially called "superior". The descriptions in use are executive, senior level and administrative. The silly appellation was adopted by the government because soon after 1947 real power had moved from the politicians to the bureaucrats. The natural result was the hubris of the civil servants, and arrogance was made a part of the syllabus at the Civil Service Academy. My impression has been confirmed and reconfirmed in the last 57 years whenever. I have met my old class fellows and Coffee House friends in the Civil Service of Pakistan who have made it a point to make me feel inferior in their company or presence. Apart from its natural repugnance, it was against the social and intellectual tradition of the Coffee House.

CHAPTER 9

A MOVING FEAST

The Coffee House was a magnet for a large variety of intellectuals and men of letters. I have described the men who gave life to the House. But what gave life to these men? So now I turn to some aspects of their lives as I saw them lived.

If a stranger entered the House, before or after 1947, he would be justified in thinking that Lahore was still under British rule or that he had walked into an English restaurant; that is until he heard people talking. The misconception arose from the way the customers were dressed. Apart from a very odd Urda (my term for an Urdu-speaking refugee, migrant or economic fortune hunter; it is better than specifying each person as Bihari, U.P.-walla, Delhi-walla, C.P.-walla or Hyderabadadi) everyone wore Western dress; though in rare cases an *achkan* was worn over European trousers.

Not only was Western dress the standard apparel, but it was worn with panache. Abdullah Malik, a well-to-do Communist, generally wore a 3-piece well-cut suit with a soft felt hat. With his chiselled features and fair complexion he looked smart. Those who donned a combination of tweed coat (now called jacket) or blazer and trousers took

care that the coat was a nice fit and the trousers well pressed.

Another surprising feature of their wardrobe was its cleanliness despite very frequent or even daily use. Nasir Kazmi had only one coat and one suit, and Mehdi Qizilbash only one tweed coat. But the clothes were never dirty or soiled or looked as if they had been slept in. The necktie was an essential feature and was never omitted. Some of my friends missed a session when their coat was at the cleaners. The age of casual wear or careless dress was far away.

Today when I go to Lahore's best hotels and see the crowd swallowing cakes, gulping down tea with a sound of *shrup* or eating in the horridly expensive restaurants without recognizing what they consume, I realize how superior was the quality of culture in the Coffee House of my days.

This uniformity in garments and the care taken to be presentable made for civilized living and gave the crowd a rapport, an identity. Congressmen, Communists, Muslim Leaguers, Ahrars and other varieties of political animals all came dressed alike. It had a pleasing effect.

The habit of dressing neatly and in the Western fashion came to us naturally. (It is only now that a backward look causes surprise). One reason was that most of the clients belonged to colleges and the university. The colleges of Lahore were known for producing boys of good taste and a refined sense of dressing well. The habit spread to some other classes and set an example for still others.

Another reason was the tight hold of the British way of life on almost all classes, so tight that it lasted

till well into the 1960s when every other Western value had gone overboard. A majority of the lowest paid clerks and other inferior functionaries in government and private offices wore Western dress, as did the school teachers of even small towns who had probably never seen a European and who received a starving wage. Well, that was the way things were done and the way the Punjabis lived their public lives.

My great great grandfather started wearing a frock coat in the 18th. century and it did not make his friends look askance at him. When the British conquered India they ruled that the native gentleman should wear a frock coat and a necktie over his Indian or European trousers. This became the standard dress. When Ranjit Singh took over the Punjab he ordered a continuation of the practice. It lasted in some provinces till the 1930s; for example, Sir Abdul Qayyum of NWFP dressed like this all his life; so did Iqbal in the Punjab, and most of the gentry in the United Provinces.

The Punjab was the first region to turn to the full British way of life when it abandoned the frock coat in favour of the proper English lounge suit. Among public men probably Sir Muhammad Shafi was the first to do this. Soon it percolated to all classes and made the Punjabis into one sartorial nation. Of course, every Punjabi wore salwar qamiz or pyjamas or *tehmad* at home, but he did not leave his house without changing into a Western dress.

On the one hand this cultural spate overwhelmed the province without distinction of religion, education or class, and on the other it made the Punjabi look with favour on certain other Western traditions and

customs. There are identifiable historical reasons for the Punjab becoming the most deeply Westernized province of British India. To trace this historical development will take me far from my subject, so I will content myself with one other aspect of the transformation of the Punjab, and it is relevant to what went on in the Coffee House.

Everyone in the House spoke Punjabi, overruling the communal divide, but for the Urdas who pretended that they did not understand or speak the language. Everyone spoke Punjabi but wrote in Urdu. To take this irrationality one step further, he spoke Urdu at the Halqa, though he continued the discussion on the same subject in Punjabi in the Coffee House or Tea House.

Whatever the reasons for this (and there are many, including the Punjabi's severe inferiority complex), the Punjabi in which the House talked incessantly was a unique blend of the native tongue and the English language. The chatterbox could not express himself in pure Punjabi for more than two minutes (literally) without using English. This use of a foreign tongue ranged from a single word to a short phrase to a long sentence. I have lived for most of my life in Europe, Africa and the Middle East and nowhere have I heard a bilingual conversation or speech outside the subcontinent. The Urdas who are so proud of their language and have forced it on Pakistan as its national language are as bad or helpless as the Punjabis.

So the Coffee House talked for 14 hours a day in what we may call Punjlish, a unique mixture of two tongues which gave everyone the ability to express

his thoughts and feelings with enviable precision. Beyond that there were exasperating contradictions and fallacies. The Punjabi spoke Punjlish with his family and friends and teachers. But the arrival or presence of one single Urda made him and his circle switch immediately to Urdu. He also wrote his literature in Urdu, and discussed its finer points also in Urdu, but only in the Halqa or other formal causeries. The post-Halqa meetings in the Coffee House and Tea House were conducted in Punjlish.

How cowardly and calmly the Punjabi literati and intelligentsia submitted to the strictures of the Urdas against the Punjabi language is illustrated by the following incident.

In 1947 or 1948 Maulana Salahuddin made a long speech at a public meeting in Lahore (Sir Abdul Qadir presided over the gathering), which he then published in his journal *Adabi Dunya* and later included the entire text in the *Behtareen Adab* of 1948. In this harangue he said: "As far as teaching and education are concerned the contention [*qissal*] of the Punjabi language was solved with the departure of the Sikhs. The fact is that it was due to the inaction and shortsightedness of the Muslims themselves that Punjabi as written in the Persian script was causing so much harm to Urdu. The result was that a language whose entire literature fills one shelf had the temerity to compete with Urdu and achieved considerable success."

It is astonishing that Salahuddin, whose family had been living in Lahore for decades, was so ignorant of Punjabi literature and its classics and the devotion they commanded in the province. But

he was making a strong political statement in which his passion for his own language (Urdu) demanded the telling of untruths, suppression of facts, exaggerations and fabrications. I know that almost all the friends of Salahuddin and his colleagues in the *Adabi Dunya* were Punjabi, some of them strong supporters of the Punjabi language, like Bari Alig, Abdul Majeed Salik, Abdullah Malik, Ashiq Batalavi and Mukhtar Siddiqui. Had none of them ever mentioned to him the works of Baba Farid, Waris Shah, Bulleh Shah and Sultan Bahu? Salahuddin lived within the walled city where 99.9 percent of the residents spoke Punjabi and listened to Punjabi classical poetry and folk songs. Apparently, he had closed his ears to his surroundings or was feigning colossal ignorance.

Not content with distorting history and facts, he indulged in wild dreams. He went on to say that the migration of Urdas to Pakistan was a great blessing of God to the country because now Urdu would prosper and become acceptable to the Punjabis once the Urdas had spread in the province, and soon the tongue of the United Provinces would become the everyday speech in places like Dera Ghazi Khan. In other words, he hoped and wished that Punjabi should be completely eradicated from its native land. To their shame, many among the Punjabi literati applauded him for sounding their doom. In the euphoria of the joy of the today of independence they forgot the tomorrow of history.

But that was the time that was. The more the Punjabis advanced into the murky depths of political independence the more they abandoned Punjabi and

Punjlish, and gradually the vast majority in the urban areas became Urdu speakers. But that was not the end of the journey. In the early 1990s began a new age of speaking English (and simultaneously dressing up in European/American casual wear, and this included the women). Compared to today the Coffee House was a native talking shop, even after a century of British rule.

The climate of opinion in the House was predominantly intellectual. Of course, jokes were made, stories told and scandals rehearsed. There is a light side to every human verbal communication, all the more when the young gather to enjoy themselves. Perhaps a trader or two inquired about market rates. But these are the only exceptions I can think of.

By intellectual (adjective) I mean a serious, studious and close attention to the problems of knowledge and understanding. There was an interest in knowing things for the sake of knowing, not with a view to using it to make a living. Given the average age of clients who flocked to the House the talk was sophisticated. It was a mart of ideas where thoughts circulated, not rumours or snide remarks or guffaws of empty laughter.

One reason for this was specialization, without which no conversation can be serious. In general terms there were four groups, each inspired by its own interest: lawyers, men of letters, artists and journalists. Of these the first and the last talked of national politics, the making of Pakistan and the frustration of unfulfilled expectations. The lawyers never talked shop because that would have shrunk the circle around them. The literary coterie was

very large and devoted to its profession. The artists were obsessed with their chosen field and rarely strayed away from it. Shakir Ali, Shaikh Ahmad and others brought to the House their students, thus continuing over cups of coffee the discourse or debate begun at the Mayo School. But into this professional talk outsiders like me were welcome. Only Anwar Jalal Shemza was for some time interested in literature and even issued a journal. This group had two handicaps: it had no interest in traditional or classical European art and Islamic art of any age or genre. It focused its attention, academic as well as practical, on modern art, which meant modern European art.

An important but surprising feature of these dialogues was secularism. Though a brand new so-called "Islamic State" had arisen out of the horizon of a nationalist movement, the intellectuals of the Coffee House rarely talked of Islam and its place in life and politics. A lot of politics was talked about but its religious aspects elicited no comment. Whether this was a result of a general mental confusion or of Jinnah's non-religious views or of a secular educational system, I don't know. Another reason may have been the nature of Pakistani politics which, from the day one, had deteriorated into intrigues, false promises, conspiracies and unseemly rivalries.

One factor, which was both the cause and the consequence of this secularism, was the impact of the West on local ideas. It is a paradox that the Punjabi intellectual was more Westernized after 1947 than in the old days of British rule. This showed up the most in art and literature. Modern European art ruled the

imagination and technique of the teachers and students of the Mayo School. The founder and head of the department of fine arts at the Punjab University was a European trained in England and had no knowledge of or concern with Islamic or Indian art.

This Western wave mounted the beach of literature the farthest. The literati who had so far talked and judged according to the terms of reference provided by Altaf Husain Hali and Muhammad Husain Azad and the foundations laid by the Aligarh movement, now brought in Thomas Arnold and T.S. Eliot. Few had read or now read these critics in the original or even had the necessary competence to understand them. But once one or two essays by Eliot were translated into Urdu and people like Muzaffar Ali Syed began to swear by him, it became a fashionable thing to apply Western principles of literary criticism to Urdu letters. The major topic of discussion was the place of tradition in literature. Perhaps the new converts had read only one essay of Eliot. Nobody mentioned Eliot's thoughts on Christianity and conservatism. It is easier to translate than to ponder, and the easiest of all is to flaunt the little knowledge we have. There was no Muhammad Hasan Askari in Lahore. And no Coffee House fan could read French and German.

In the sketch on Sardar Anwar Khan I mentioned his discovery of some startling examples of plagiarism in Urdu poetry. But this practice is not new to the Indo-Persian literary tradition and Urdu letters. Very highly placed figures are not free from this foible. Some studious researchers have unearthed parallel texts and published them.

When Urdu poetry patterned itself on Persian classical verse its borrowings not only included prosody, metre, constructions, metaphors, nuances, allusions, vocabulary, end-rhymes and a whole reference system but also the tradition of plagiarism. In Persian poetry Salman Savji stole from Kamal Ismail, and Hafiz lifted a whole *ghazal* from Savji. Ghalib has widely plagiarised Muzaffar (who in turn had stolen from Khaqani), Jalal Yazdi, Faghan Dehlavi, Waq'i Tabrizi, Faizi, Urfi and Lala Khatun. Iqbal has borrowed from Persian classical poets, Ghalib and Mulla Tahir Ghani Kashmiri. (Out of a false respect for Iqbal the literary critics, while mentioning this, call it the *faizán* (gift) of Ghalib and other sources, e.g., Abid Ali Abid in his *Shi'r-i-Iqbal*, which incidentally contains scores of examples of Persian-Persian, Persian-Urdu and Urdu-Urdu thefts.

Among Urdu poets Nasikh has plagiarised Amir Khusro and Bedil; Aseer, Mir; Mir, Amir Khusro and Walihi Qummi; Hasrat Mohani, Ghalib, Hafiz, Mir and Zahuri; Asghar Gondavi, Malik Qummi, Ghalib and Umar Khayyam, Fani Badayuni, Ghalib; Jigar, Zauq, Ghanimat and Naziri; Sauda, Hazeen and Jami; Iqbal, Dag, Wordsworth, Shelley and Goethe.

Several famous Urdu fiction-writers, literary critics, essayists and ulema are open to the same charge. Abul Ala Maududi (in his translation of the Quran) has copied Abdul Jalal Nadvi; Muhammad Husain Azad (in his *Sukhandan-i-Faris*), Malcolm's *Iran*, and elsewhere Adison's essays; Niaz Fatehpuri, Havelock Ellis and W.H. Hudson; Ashraf Ali Thanavi, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian; Majnun Gorkhpuri, Schopenhauer; M. Aslam (the

prolific novelist) Abdul Halim Sharar; Sharar, Walter Scott; Mirza Muhammad Saeed (Prof. Bokhari's teacher), Charles Read; Ghulam Abbas, Washington Irving; Shafiqur Rahman, Stephen Leacock; Saadat Hasan Manto, Somerset Maugham; A. Hameed, Guy de Maupassant; Qazi Abdul Ghaffar, Khalil Jibran; Ismat Chughtai's novel *Ziddi* is a copy of *Hajira*, by a Turkish novelist, which had been translated into Urdu and published from Agra in 1899; Zafar Umar (in his well-known *Nili Chchatri*) copies Maurice Leblanc; Abul Kalam Azad (in his *Tarjuman-ul-Quran*), Rashid Rida's articles in *Al-Minar*; and Krishan Chandar's preface to N.M. Rashed's *Máwará*, C.D. Lewis's *A Hope for Poetry*.

In Maulavi Abdul Haq's *Chand Ham'asar* the essay on Professor Mirza Hairat is a carbon copy of Professor Hathoruth Waite's essay which was published as a supplement of the *Report of the Director of Public Instruction, Bombay, for 1898-99*. The *English-Urdu Dictionary* (issued by the Anjuman-i-Taraqqi-i-Urdu Hind) was published under the name of Abdul Haq alone, although the bulk of the work was done by Maulana Haqqi (Shanul Haq Haqqi's father), and Akhtar Husain Raipuri helped much. Neither's assistance was acknowledged, nor his name mentioned in the preface. Abdul Haq earned such a bad reputation for his dishonesty, errors, mistranslations and ignorance of Persian that Qazi Abdul Wadud had to write a book on the subject: *Abdul Haq Ba-Hasiat Muhaqqaq*.

Dr Abid Husain wrote an article an "Iqbal ka Tassawar-i-Khudi" which was published in *Urdu* (journal of the Anjuman-i-Taraqqi-i-Urdu) in its Iqbal

issue in October 1932; the journal was published as a book by the Anjuman in 1940. Aal Ahmad Sarur wrote an essay on "Iqbal aur un ka Falsafa" in his book *Tanqidi Isharé* published in 1942. Lo and behold! This essay is almost a copy of Abid Husain's article, without any acknowledgement.

Syed Imtiaz Ali Taj's popular stories of "Chacha Chchakkan" were taken from the British humourist writer Jerome K. Jerome. Qazi Abdul Ghaffar's *Laila Ké Khatut* was based on a Western author. Several passages in Intisar Husain's novel *Pather* were lifted from the work of Tasneem Saleem Chchatari.

Shameless pilferage on such a large scale by a whole generation of distinguished poets and men of letters could not be stomached by their admirers and followers. As I have mentioned before, some literary critics refused to call the theft by its real name and used such euphemisms as *faizan* and *asar*. Natiq Lakhnavi actually wrote a long defence of plagiarism. In my own days in the Coffee House some young writers who had "discovered" English and European literary critics copied from their writings to impress the reader, without giving a thought to the fact that literature is so deeply imbedded in a country's and its language's history, psychology, mythology and tradition that the theories and principles of literary criticism offered by Thomas Arnold, S.T. Coleridge, Shelley, Walter Pater, W.H. Hudson, or T.S. Eliot are irrelevant for studying Urdu Literature.

The principal weakness of this borrowing was an ignorance of the place of tradition in a people's literature, which led to the laughable attempts to apply Eliot's criteria and theories to the origins and

development of Urdu language and literature. In any case, none of the upholders of new criticism had read any Western literature at first hand. They treated the newly discovered principles of literary criticism in the same way as all Pakistanis have treated borrowed technologies, using them blindfold and unable to repair the minutest fault.

This literary circle, and some outside it, began to read Russian novelists of the 19th. century. Bari Alig and Saadat Hasan Manto had started the fashion in Amritsar in the 1930s; after 1947 it spread widely and left a mark on the Urdu short story, though not on the Urdu novel.

One remarkable achievement must be credited to the Coffee House, and that was the improvement of the cultural and intellectual quality of the contemporary students. In its physical location the House was ideally placed. Within five minutes' walk from it lay the university, the Mayo School of Arts, the Punjab Public Library, the Lahore Museum, YMCA Hall, Law College, Oriental College and the Government College. Islamia College, Dyal Singh College and MAO College were within a 10-minute cycle ride. The High Court on the one side and the district courts on the other could be reached within 10 minutes by foot. The House had been put right at the heart of the intellect of Lahore.

Naturally a good part of the crowd in the House came from the colleges, and they could not have joined a better finishing school. I spent ten years there as a student and four years as a lecturer (with one year's absence in Multan). So I speak for both groups when I say that we learnt much more there

than in the learning and teaching in the college. Learning is easy and painless when the teachers are friends and the taught are volunteers. We were thrown into a flurry of ideas and left to swim or sink. There were no compulsions, only guidelines. We had also a wide choice and some of us combined the options to know about more than one field. The exercise made us serious and envious. The discovery of finding that a young lecturer or lawyer or literary critic, not more than four or five years older than us, was far ahead of us in knowledge and information acted as an irresistible incentive to become like him.

The absence of tutorials and seminars in the college and university was redeemed by the Coffee House. We got used to examining ideas, concepts and hypotheses, to argue in the defence of our choice or alternative, to supplement or complement one piece of information with another, to make our own decisions rather than swim with the tide. It was there that I learnt that an Urdu or Persian couplet could be a multi-layered statement, and the reader or listener must know how to disentangle the thicket of meanings and study each layer separately. I also came to know the difference between mundane love and sacred love, and also that it is possible that the first may lead to the second, and also that the Persian poets had scaled the summit of genius in the art of composing couplets which had double meanings, and had expressed in the same words the love for a woman and the love for God.

With all my fondness for spending long hours in the Coffee House I had disciplined myself (Abbaji's legacy) to divide my time between it and reading in

the library or at home. Generally I spent two hours after my lectures and three hours in the evening in the House or other restaurants. The lawyers never came to the House in the evening; they had their cases to prepare. The journalists were busy gathering news and writing their reports. Some of the students were in the sports ground, and the lecturers at home with their families, as were the traders.

But there was one group which appeared to live in the Coffee House and Tea House almost round the clock. Some of them have reminisced in print that after the ordinary public places were closed they went to the railway station and then to a tea stall outside Lohari Gate and did not go home till a little before dawn. If they are to be believed they went home to sleep for four or five hours in twenty-four. A. Hameed, Intizar Husain, Nasir Kazmi and a few other wanderers in the night are named. About one of them at least, Nasir, I am an eyewitness to the fact that he was to be found either in the Coffee House or Tea House from the opening hour (9 A.M.) till quite late in the night. After that, according to his friends, he and his group tramped from place to place till the night was near its end.

I think there is much exaggeration in these claims. In the first place, human physique cannot stand this routine for more than a few months. There is no substitute for sleep. Secondly, all of them were living on a shoestring budget and could not have had the money to squander (of this more below). Finally, if they let themselves loose on the city so freely and generously, when did they do their thinking and writing and at what hours did they earn their living?

Take the three most prominent of these night watchers: Nasir Kazmi, Intizar Husain and A. Hameed. All of them were refugees with little money in their pockets to meet such extravagance. For some time they had jobs which demanded not only their physical presence for at least a part of the daylight hours but also a fresh and rested mind in the morning. Finally, if the claimed schedule is correct, how did Hameed find time to write his long novels, Intizar his short stories and Nasir his poetry?

Salahuddin, a close friend of Nasir, in his study of the poet reports that Nasir was a voracious reader, and that he (Salahuddin) used to borrow serious and scholarly books from the libraries and bring them to Nasir, and often Nasir would receive a long book in the evening and tell Salahuddin the next morning that he had read or skipped through the volume in one sitting (when?) and fully comprehended its argument. The books that Salahuddin mentions were not Urdu collections of poetry or histories of Urdu literature or popular biographies, but serious philosophical and scientific tomes of some length and written mainly for other professionals in the field. Above all, all of them were written in English.

This is a very tall claim and impossible to admit. Nasir's formal education was very modest and his knowledge of English superficial. It is true that he asked for such books. I myself gave him the works of Spengler and Toynbee and Bertrand Russell to read. But his statement that he had read and digested 400 pages of heavy reading in English was a flight of fancy, not a statement of fact. Nasir had a very good mind and he pondered on the meaning of life with

acute concentration and asked intelligent questions. But he was quite incapable of understanding a serious European work written in the English language.

So I would take these tales of night-long wanderings with a large pinch of salt. If they are true these people must have got their creative writings done by a ghost!

One thing about the literary-artistic group of the Coffee House which has always perplexed me was their source of income. The well-to-do among them were very few: Abdullah Malik, Riaz Qadir, Anwar Khan, A.D. Azhar, Ejaz Batalavi, Shaikh Khurshid, Muin Najmi, and another half a dozen or so. Then there were the teachers of the colleges and of the Mayo School, a few people employed by newspapers and the radio station, a few others with reasonable (but only just) salaries received from the government, and a few students from affluent families.

But the core of the literary circle was a stranger to money. Let me recall some of its leading lights, who had no inherited wealth, no allotted properties, no family background, no reasonably-paid permanent jobs; and most of them were refugees who had lost everything in the Partition.

Safdar Mir was an adventurer, a film-maker and much later a teacher. Zaheer Kashmiri was penniless when he arrived from Amritsar in 1947 and earned a little from his intermittent jobs at newspapers and journals. Yusuf Zafar and Mukhtar Siddique were scandalously poor in this period. Bari Alig's income was limited to a pittance and depended on the goodwill of newspaper owners. Habib Jalib mostly got his coffee bill paid by his

friends. Manto was a refugee who lived by selling his short stories for ten or fifteen rupees each. He borrowed a lot of money from his friends, including myself, without embarrassment or shame and with clockwork regularity. Abid Ali Abid was rearing a family of 10 on a paltry income which came and went. Qayyum Nazar was a clerk in the Accountant General's office at Rs.40 a month. Intizar Husain, again a refugee, worked at different places at starving wages. Nasir Kazmi, another refugee, had a transient income and almost no money until he joined the radio station.

I grant that living was cheap in those years, everyone rode a bicycle, nobody had a large wardrobe, and house rents were unbelievably low. But I am not talking about day labourers, domestic servants, sweepers and office messengers. I am talking about young men who wore English suits with tie and collar and English style shoes, shaved every morning, went to cinema regularly, smoked a lot, drank coffee or tea all day in restaurants, sometimes had their lunch in public places, tipped the waiters, and bought magazines and some books. About half of them indulged in alcohol, some moderately, some heavily, some others to death.

A good number of the men of letters were addicted to alcohol. Most of these bibulous poets and writers drank not only immoderately but beyond their capacity to hold their drink. With time the variety and extent of the indulgence included narcotics. The list of those who died of this unrestraint and excess is long: Shad Amritsari, Abdul Hameed Adam, Saghir Siddiqui, Iqbal Sajid, Miraji, Saadat Hasan Manto,

Alauddin Kalim, Syed Abid Ali Abid, Habib Jalib, Abdullah Butt, and others.

In these years government salaries were low and journalism was not a paying profession. Newspaper owners were Shylocks and publishers greedy and dishonest. These writers couldn't have earned much from their pen. Yet some had families to look after, others had old parents and siblings to take care of. How they could afford to live as they lived and cultivate indolence is a mystery.

The Coffee House was the world of our youth and we liked it. Later when I read some more and travelled in the Middle East and Europe I found that our Coffee House lacked one important dimension. In Iran, Iraq and Turkey I found something pleasing and culturally significant. In most cafés the evening was set apart for a recital of the classics. In Iran it is customary that a trained man with a good voice reads out passages of the *Shahnama*, *Sikandarnama* and other well-known poetical epics. Istanbul excels in Turkish classics or 18th.-19th. century poets. In some Arab capitals everything from pre-Islamic poetry to later classics is recited. In France I heard the *Roman de la Rose* and some snatches of troubadour poetry.

This practice was alien to our culture (but not to our tradition – look at the 19th. century *dástángos* of Delhi) and no café or public place recalled literature in this manner. I can account for this in reference to the Punjab and its people. Punjabi epic poetry is recited or sung in the rural areas where people understand and appreciate it. With some exceptions the common Punjabi urbanite cannot read Punjabi,

not to speak of understanding or enjoying it. He has no classics in the sense that he has no old literature which he can consider his own. Classics emerge from the soil of a region and become a part of the psyche of the people. With his decision to abandon Punjabi as his spoken tongue and to allow his schooling in Urdu, he has spurned his heritage and disowned his past.

The modern Punjabi mind eludes analysis. It welcomes all foreign languages if they are in the use of the rulers, and excels in them. It took to Persian in the eleventh century and contributed to its literature with distinction. It adopted Urdu in the 19th. century and ornamented its letters and poetry, sometimes surpassing the efforts of the Urdu-speaking writers. It turned to English in the 20th. century and the elite spoke and wrote it with confidence.

This changing scenario deprived the Punjabi of an opportunity to have his own classics. Even the Punjabi man of letters whose working language is Urdu will not accept *Dastan-i-Amir-Hamza* or *Fasana-i-Azad* or any old poetry as his own classic, because his ancestors had nothing to do with these writings. They are not rooted in his soil or history or tradition or mentality.

Let us go a step further. Granted that the Punjabis have no classics, but do the Urdu-speaking Urdu men of letters or readers have a classic? If they have, why is it not identified, read widely, reprinted and easily available at bookshops? To fact is that Urdu is a foreign tongue, born and bred abroad, imposed on the country by official edict, and now only embraced by the Urdas and those Punjabis who are self-deluded and self-appointed guardians

and spokesmen of a religious ideology which they have failed to define and of a national patriotism which they confine to one province and deny to Sind, Baluchistan and the NWFP. On this point the Coffee House population was completely confused.

Another thing that I noticed in the cafés of the Middle East, France and Germany was the playing of chess. The game has a wide following and is also played in the rural pubs and small tea and coffee places. As far as we are concerned, with the Persian language and the classics the chess too has been thrown out of the window. Centuries-old culture is being dismantled with swift abandon.

While writing this book one question has been exercising my mind. Why did so many Muslims join the Communist and other Leftist parties in politics and the Progressive Writers Movement in Urdu literature? I will first indicate the evidence for this assertion and then try to account for it. The survey and the inquiry cover the whole of India because the Punjab was a part of the subcontinent.

A cursorily-drawn list of the Muslims among the Leftists includes: Abdur Rab Peshawari, Maulavi Barkatullah, Ubaidullah Sindhi, Khairi brothers, Shaukat Usmani, Abdullah Safdar, Muhammad Shafiq, Mushir Husain Qidwai, Azad Subhani, Hasrat Mohani, Qazi Nazrul Islam, Muzaffar Ahmad, Fazl-i-Elahi Qurban, Mubarak Saghir, Dr. K.M. Ashraf, Abdullah Malik, Rauf Malik, Zaheer Kashmiri, Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Ameer Hyder, Hameed Akhtar, Mian Iftikharuddin, Mazhar Ali, and Danyal Latifi.

The Progressive Writers Movement embraced a wider and more imaginative segment of the Muslim

community! Majnun Gorakhpuri, Josh Malihabadi, Makhdum Muhayyuddin, Ali Sardar Jafri, Israrul Haq Majaz, Ali Jawwad Zaidi, Muhammad Din Taseer, Syed Sibte Hasan, Niaz Fatehpuri, Syed Sajjad Zaheer, Aziz Ahmad, Ibrahim Jalees, Ismat Chughtai, Meeraji, N.M. Rashed, Jan Nisar Akhtar, Syed Ehtasham Husain, Syed Mumtaz Husain, Syed Muttalibi Faridabadi, Ehsan Danish, Khwaja Ghulam Abbas, Hayatullah Ansari, Chaudhri Muhammad Ali Radaulavi, Ahmad Ali, Ahmad Nadeem Qasimi, Khadija Mastur, Saadat Hasan Manto, Mumtaz Mufti, Rasheed Jahan, Mahmuduz Zafar, Akhtar Husain Raipuri, Kaifi Azami, Saghir Nizami, Shahid Ahmad Dehlavi, Sahir Ludhianawi, Bari Alig, Chaudhri Barkat Ali, Habib Jalib, and Safdar Mir.

Why did Muslims, who were only a quarter of the Indian population, predominate in the politics and Urdu literature of the Left? Without going into a detailed analysis, a look at Muslim politics of the post-1857 period supplies a good part of the answer.

There was (to begin with) a small group which was unhappy with Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and his Aligarh Movement. Politically Sir Syed was reactionary in his opposition to democracy as a form of government and his unqualified message of loyalty to the British. His movement was also rooted in the principle of the power and prestige of the *ashrafiyya* (the elite). His policies had nothing to offer to the poor and the underdog, which means the overwhelming majority. He also opposed female education and wanted to restrict women's activities to the four walls of the home. But this group shared his vague and undefined Panislamism.

The Khilafat movement appealed to a part of this group because of its anti-European thrust and a general pro-Ottoman religious sentiment. Then came the hijrat movement of 1920 which drove youthful and zealous radicals to Afghanistan and from there to Russian Central Asia and to Moscow. There they came into touch with the Bolsheviks and were trained in Marxism and political activism. Later some of them were influenced by Maulavi Barkatullah, M.N. Roy and the remnants of the Ghadar Party.

The wanderers in search of a positive policy were by now disillusioned with Panislamism, talk of an Islamic revolution and the reactionary message emanating from Deoband. The space vacated in their mind by Panislamism was filled by Socialism. These are the early lineaments of the birth of the Communist Party of India. There were also new Western voices coming from the Leftist circles which inspired or later confirmed the Marxist element in both the Socialists and the Progressive Writers Movement.

Some other factors contributed to this evolution of the Leftist politics. India was a poor country and economically the most backward portion of it was made up of the Muslims who naturally desired a radical change in their precarious situation. From Sir Syed's reformist movement till Jinnah's campaign for Pakistan every Muslim organization had ignored the economic and social problems of its members. Even the parties which were recruited predominantly from the lower middle and working classes, like the Ahrars and the Khaksars, did not pay any attention to the poverty and privation of the Muslims. Nor did the Jama't-i-Islami have any

radical economic or social programme in its manifesto. Thus between, say 1920, when an educated class began to emerge, till 1940 a thinking Muslim who had a broad interest in the social future of his community had no party to support except the Socialists. The Muslim League, unlike the Indian National Congress, had no Socialist wing. These factors and circumstances explain the large number of Muslims in the Leftist circle in the Coffee House.

Considered as a whole the Coffee House habitués, in their habits and mores, could not have been and were not very different from the community or nation they belonged to. All of them were not paragons of virtue. I have called these chapters "The Roll of Honour" because these people were my friends and each one of them did something creditable and laudable. But that is not to deny that some among them carried a stigma which stained their character. It may mean a great deal or nothing at all; but a large number of the defaulters belonged to the writers' clan whether they were journalists, columnists or serious men of letters.

Some wrote for newspapers and journals at the behest of the government, which brought them valuable official contacts and much needed money. The *Munir Report* has documented this episode. In 1956 a Lahore newspaper leaked out a list of Pakistani journalists who were on the payroll of the United States Central Intelligence Agency. Four of them were our Coffee House friends, and though they denied the *New York Times* report as false nobody believed them. Later everyone knew that Kausar Niazi, Waqar Ambalavi and some other

columnists were paid servants of their editors or the Punjabi bureaucrats.

There were also other weaknesses which were widely known. For some years General Ziaul Haq summoned every year a Pakistan Writers Conference in Islamabad and gave a large bit of his medieval and reactionary mind to the literary cream of the country, and there was hardly any respectable writer who refused the invitation to the jamboree. Earlier, the same herd had lost no time in joining Ayub Khan's Writers Guild. Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi did not resign from the Pakistan Academy of Letters when General Ziaul came into power, notwithstanding his Leftist ideology. Ishfaq Ahmad Khan publicly supported and praised Zia.

Faiz Ahmad Faiz, the greatest Leftist poet in the country, issued a vague and meaningless statement in favour of General Yahya Khan's policy on the East Pakistan crisis, and did not sign the much more critical declaration issued by a large number of men of letters. Later, Faiz sought an interview with General Zia in which he begged the dictator to allow him to visit India; the permission was granted.

When the giants and icons bowed to naked and shameless authority there is no wonder that many others followed them into the nether regions.

Finally, I have to ask myself a question and look for an answer. Why were the restaurants and public eating places always crowded? Why did the students, teachers, lawyers and writers come to these places regularly and spend a lot of time there? Why did Nasir Kazmi and his companions roam the streets, drinking and smoking at every restaurant and stall

that happened to lie on their rout? I have not seen this phenomenon elsewhere; even in Lahore it lasted about 30 years and then these haunts closed one by one and nothing took their place.

Some explanations spring to mind without exercising it too much.

Lahore was a small place in the 1940s and 1950s. The total population was 300,000 compared to today's nearly 10 million. It also occupied much less space. The centre of the city extended from the district courts to the Lawrence Gardens, and most of the restaurant-goers lived nearby, on the roads leading off the Mall or a bit farther, in Gowalmandi, Abbot Road, Davis Road, and the Chowburjee area – all within 10-15 minutes of cycling. This access was a great facility.

The middle class lived in small traditional houses which barely sufficed for its large families and rarely boasted a proper sitting or drawing room. There was just no room for friends to get together at one another's house. Even if and when they visited in groups, there were no servants to bring them tea and the women of the house were in *pardah*. As friends wanted to meet friends it suited both parties to meet at a public eating place.

The students had no junior common room in their colleges, only a modest tuck shop which did not satisfy them. There was no senior common room for the teachers, not even a small place where they could drink a cup of tea. Probably that was also true of the high court bar room. The writing brotherhood needed company the most and found that the only place where they could gather and

talk endlessly, while lubricating their throats, was a restaurant.

Even closely related kinsfolk preferred to meet for gossip outside the house. Waheed and I lived in the same house for some time and next door to each other for a few years, yet we went to the Coffee House or the Lorangs to talk. There were very few bungalows with several bedrooms where the host could take his friends to his bedroom; there were no separate bedrooms then, the family lived collectively and there was no privacy. Nor was coffee drunk in these houses. Nobody knew how to make it. We had to stir outside our homes for this addiction.

Then there was the overpowering lure of friendly company. Even if I had an independent bedroom, even a suite of rooms, I could not have invited all my friends to my house. It was commonsense to go to the Coffee House and meet all my friends and also drink coffee. We could also smoke there, a pleasure which was forbidden at home.

Several of the Coffee House patrons had no proper place to go to, even after the House had been closed for the night. There were refugees and relatively poor men who lived in one room with loneliness as the only company. Some had small houses and large and noisy families and they liked to stay outside as much as possible. These factors explain why some people were reluctant to shorten their stay in the Coffee House. There was no attraction at home, and no company of their liking. This applied even to some senior and sober men, like Ashiq Batalavi, Maulana Salahuddin and Bari Alig, who divided their working day between their workplace and a restaurant.

For these reasons "hotelling" became a passion for a sizeable group which was educated and creative or hungry for the companionship of the educated and creative. The one needed an audience; the other needed guidance. The Coffee House filled the needs of both.

GIFTS AND FAVOURS

Imagine a mediumsized hall with 12 tables, each with two to four upholstered chairs, hosting at a given time say 40 guests. From time to time some people leave and are promptly replaced by others. On any one day two to three hundred people come and go, a good number of them staying for 3-4 hours, a few attending both the morning and evening sessions. This crowd is made up of the intellectual elite of the city and several aspirants to the seniors' status and position. The crowd is made up of all the writers, poets and editors of the city, along with some lawyers, teachers and students. There is a light sprinkling of musicians and artists. The talking is generally serious, well-informed, sophisticated, nimble-witted, subtle and discerning. Even the young and the students are respectful listeners, eager to learn and expand their knowledge.

Thrown into this pulsating community is an 16-year old undergraduate who has read more than his age group and has had the advantage of a learned father's and some good teachers' grooming. He is excited to be among people who write poems, novels, dramas and short stories, edit literary journals, write books, talk of art, and discuss new writings and old

masters and are eager to discuss and borrow the theories of literary criticism propounded in the West.

The young boy is excited. He has read books and poetry but never before mixed with those who write or compose them. He is awestruck by the learning of some, and even more so by the magic which turns an idea, a sensation or an emotion into a couplet. He wonders how a strong feeling can be encapsulated into two long or short lines which are pregnant with meaning and phrased in music. What moves the poet's pen? he asks himself. What is the source of this supernatural power? Does the inspiration come from God or a psychic force or a beautiful woman? What is this love which poetry celebrates and immortalizes? The young boy has also experienced a great love, but he has not become a poet. Why? He asks his friends and pesters the poets. They talk about it for hours and days. He is not satisfied. There are no answers, only questions. He is confused, but not disheartened.

He moves to the prose writers. What makes them write? Are they too inspired, like the poets? How do they translate what comes into their head into a beautiful and sensitive sentence? Why does Intizar Husain write short stories, but not ghazals? How and why does his inspiration differ from that of Mukhtar Siddiqui? If poetry and prose are representations of life, how do they differ from painting which too transforms the visible world into a paper with some colours on it? If it is a representation of what our eye sees and our mind observes, what is the reality which modern art claims to recreate? The boy cannot understand modern art. Shakir Ali and Shemza try to explain the arcana of their profession. He remains an ignoramus.

He spends a lot of time with the journalists and reporters and listens to their narratives of what the politicians are doing to the country. He hears of scandals, betrayals, bargains, quid pro quos and corruption. He is a student of political science but he can't reconcile what he hears or reads in newspapers with the principles of political thought he has studied. The gulf between theory and practice disturbs him. He questions his lawyer friends on how the country is being run. The only thing he learns is that the country has yet to make a constitution and in the meantime it is governed by the whims, fancies, prejudices and personal ambitions of a few dozen people some of whom are the creators of Pakistan. By now the young man is a qualified political scientist and is teaching politics at the country's best college. But he can neither understand nor describe the foundations of the country's constitutional edifice. He doesn't know how to tell his students the realities of national political life. Again he is surrounded by questions to which learned friends in the Coffee House have no answers. Am I going to spend my life in the murk of doubt and ignorance? he asks himself.

Besides these questions the boy is harassed by more fundamental problems which, as he grows up into manhood, gain more weight and oppress him more. Emerging from his reading of poetry and philosophy and religion and from his personal experience, these inquiries encompass the meaning of life itself, the will of God, the past, the present and the future of man. From where does man come? Who created him? Why was he created? Where is he

going? In this context, is a Pakistani man different from an Indian or a French or a Russian man? If they are all the same and the creation of the same God, why does the human condition vary from region to region? What is eternity? Is there a world to come? Why would we be punished one far-off day if our sins are rooted in our human condition or in our ignorance for which we are not responsible?

He takes these questions to his friends and has long discussions with them. Shaikh Khurshid is an acute and lucid interpreter of philosophical ideas and talks persuasively, but provides no ready-made solutions. Zaheer Kashmiri has a one-track mind and solves all problems through the authority and sanctity of Karl Marx's dogma and harps on the economic theory of history and material determinism. He does not know God and does not believe in eternity. The boy consults others but is rewarded with nothing but empty rhetoric and complex academic arguments.

The boy who entered the Coffee House in 1943 and left it in 1957 was the author of these lines. What I have sketched above is a bald summary of my intellectual predicament of those years. At the end I had solved no problems and answered no questions. Does it mean that the thousands of hours I spent in this market place of ideas were a waste?

The answer is a resounding no. Knowledge comes and expands through asking questions. Doubt is the mother of truth. Inquiry leads us from ignorance to enlightenment. We may not be satisfied by our discoveries or the answers we receive, discover or invent. But we have learnt to ask questions and strive for their answers. In the struggle of life that is all that

we can do, and leave the rest to whoever made us. We can't do more; we must not be content with less.

Philosophical generalities apart, if I am asked to count and recount the debts I owe to the Coffee House my submission will be as follows.

It was here that I made most of my friends in Lahore. To begin with everyone was a stranger and the crowd around me was alien. But introductions were made, friends' friends joined the table, daily meetings and long talks led to intimacy. At a young age it is easy to strike new friendships. And when I knew a lot of people, shared tastes and hobbies paved the way, and an indefinable but strong mutual attraction led to grades of association: acquaintance, sociability, concordance, companionship, familiarity, intimacy, and finally friendship.

When I recall those years and relive my life with men like Shaikh Khurshid, Abdullah Butt, Rauf Malik, Aminullah, Anwaar Husain, Mukhtar Siddiqui, Nasir Kazmi, Yusuf Zafar, Altaf Gauhar, and a dozen others, I realize how arid and poor my existence would have been if had I not become a Coffee House fan. Friends enrich one's life and all my friendships there were durable and enjoyable.

I met or saw some important persons in the House, like Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan whom Shorish Kashmiri had brought there one evening, Maulana Tajwar Najibabadi, Maulana Salahuddin, Miraji, Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Jigar Muradabadi, Ahmad Nadeem Qasimi and Chiragh Hasan Hasrat.

Then there were a few men who might not have been great by any conventional definition, but each of them made a distinguished contribution to his

own field. Among them I would count Sufi A.Q. Niaz, an Ahmadi preacher who had spent twenty years in Korea and was therefore the only Pakistani who was fluent in Korean; he was the first Lahori to have published an English translation of some classical Urdu poets. There was Dada Mansur, the Communist elder, who lived and died as a devoted humanist and sacrificed much for the cause he held so dear. There was Zaheer Kashmiri, the Marxist, a flamboyant personality, a committed leftist, a poet of some distinction, and a walking hand grenade eager to explode. There was Fazlur Rahman, the scholar, and the greatest modernist thinker in the Islamic field in Pakistan. There was M.H. Latifi, who not only edited but actually *wrote* the entire journal he issued for many years, who lost a great deal in the Partition but refused to supplicate for any compensation because others had made greater sacrifices and received nothing but kicks at the hands of bureaucrats and politicians.

It was good to know and talk to these people because they had ideals and lived by and for them in a society where even the intelligentsia practised dishonesty and hypocrisy and asked for rich rewards.

Mixing with editors, journalists and lawyers I became sharply aware of the currents of public affairs. For much of this period I was either studying politics or teaching it, and what I heard in the Coffee House from authoritative lips supplemented and corrected my bookish knowledge. What I listened to there could not have been spoken elsewhere. In as early as 1950 a few people were saying that the government's "addiction" to Kashmir would bleed the

country to death and usher in military dictatorship. And when news of discontent started coming from East Bengal, these commentators suggested that we should offer India an exchange of East Bengal for Kashmir. Such radical ideas floated in the House because those were days of relatively free thought and the national ideology had not yet been invented.

As I had never lived in a hostel, the Coffee House was my first opportunity to spend a long time among strangers of different ages, professions and backgrounds. The variegated group amid which I moved schooled me in many things and moulded my later life to my advantage.

I learnt how to behave with my age group, how to respect my seniors, how to make friends and keep the relationship in good repair. The frequent discussions in which I participated taught me the virtues of tolerance.

They also taught me how to debate a point without losing my temper, to sharpen my arguments rather than raise my voice, to understand the other person's point of view and give him the right to express it, and to gain clarity in speech and lucidity in thinking. If the mind is clear and precise, the tongue will correspond to it. A muddled speech or writing reflects a confused mind.

There could be no better training in human dealings, because the human beings with whom I was interfacing were among themselves so different in their outlooks. To move from one table to another or one group to another demanded immediate adaptation. Talking to a journalist was very different from conversing with a poet or one who

wrote features for radio. I learnt to be flexible in what I said and what I listened to. I also had to be patient in suffering fools, because in every society or group there are bores and people with stunted minds. I don't know the degree to which I learnt these virtues, and I can't be a judge of it. But I tried hard, and I think I became fit for human company.

As I was moving in a group of various professions and interests it became incumbent upon me to develop a taste for different things. I had friends among lawyers, journalists, poets, artists, prose writers and scientists. To make friends among them it was necessary to share their passions, interests and concerns. This exercise and their company widened my interests and gave me a rounded and regular view of life. It also developed in me the capacity to absorb vastly different kinds of information and knowledge. This capacity was facilitated by the fact that the knowledge coming my way supplemented what I had read or was reading in books.

Reflecting on the quality of these years I think there were two acquisitions which changed my later life. One was the realization that an intellectual approach to life's problems and interests helped a great deal to understand and to try to solve the mystery of life. The word "intellectual" is misused in Pakistan very widely as a protean epithet to mean educated, well-read, pretender to learning, serious writer and so many other things. Gradually it has become a taunt or sarcasm, used in the pejorative sense.

By intellectual I mean a person who uses his intellect, is not content with borrowed opinions, applies his mind to a problem, has the self-

confidence to ask questions and pose hypotheses, lets his thoughts run free in seeking answers, and does not believe in any *parti pris*, a given ideology or prescribed dogma. In short, he has an independent mind. The Coffee House discussions taught me that intellect is a gift which can be cultivated and sharpened and which earns rich dividends.

The most precious gift which was given to me by the Coffee House was the love of oriental literature, especially poetry. I was already familiar with Punjabi, English and Persian literature, or was in the process of deepening my acquaintance with it. The major contribution of my friends to my literary background was my introduction to Urdu prose and poetry. Given their achievements in these fields and their long discourses on the finer points of the genres, I had no difficulty in falling in love with Urdu literature.

I can recall with astounding clarity some of the episodes which created in me a passion for poetry. Nasir Kazmi, leaning forward in his chair and speaking without a pause, neglecting the half-smoked cigarette held tightly in the fingers of the left hand, and enlarging upon the meaning and diction of one of his ghazals in short metre, and profusely illustrating his argument with couplets from Mir and Ghalib. In his concentrated passion he speaks with the vehemence of a religious preacher. He ends with the admonitory phrase, "*Ab áyá samajh mén?*" (do you understand the point, now).

Mukhtar Siddiqui, talks like a man inspired, white teeth shining out of a dark face, regularly attending to his cup of coffee, explaining to me the connection between one of his poems and the *sur*

and *tál* of Indian classical music, defining the umbilical cord which joins his choice of words with the melody of the line, ending his discourse with sparkling eyes and pursed lips and declaring "*Yéh hotá hay sh'áiri mén*" (this is what happens in poetry). I know nothing of classical music and yet am convinced that he is right.

Maulana Salahuddin Ahmad, Ashiq Batalavi and Hafeez Hoshiarpuri are lunching at the Lords and discussing the poetry and impetuous life of Yagana Changezi. They analyse his use of certain words, his command of the quatrain, his ego and arrogance, the rare power of his ghazal, and the play of his flamboyant life on his genius as a poet. I sit dumb but attentive, marveling at their learning and perception. In one hour I add much to my knowledge.

I have some difficulties with Rumi's *Mathnavi*. I seek Abbaji's help. He is busy on a specially engaging stanza of *Hir* and puts me off. I am impatient. I am young. I go to Sufi Tabassum. We sit together. I read a set of couplets and he explains. Rumi lies before me like an open book. What had eluded me comes ringing through Sufi sahib's elaboration and explanation. He also quotes parallel verses from Ghani Kashmiri and Amir Khusrau. A mist is removed from my eyes and I begin to see why the sage of Konia shines so brilliantly in the firmament of poetry.

The Coffee House provided another conduit for the stream of knowledge flowing towards me. My literary friends introduced me to Urdu journals and magazines. Some of them were editing the best of these. Lahore has always been supreme in the subcontinent in the number and quality of its literary

journals. Once I had read a few issues of *Adabi Dunya*, *Humayun*, *Adab-i-Latif*, *Nairang-i-Khayal*, *Nya Savera* and some old files of *Ruman*, *Karvan*, *Hazár Dástán*, *Kahkashán* and *Nargis*, I found this reading irresistible. Here, within two covers, lay a whole world, with its poems, ghazals, short stories, critical essays and an occasional humours piece. What else did I want? Every month I went to the magazine stall in the veranda of the Tollinton Market to buy the new issues. Others I got free from Yusuf Zafar and others.

What I had heard in the Coffee House from my learned friends and mentors was confirmed and reconfirmed by the material published in the journals. The authors were either established, widely-recognized masters of literature or young men who were fast entering the hall of fame or knocking at its door loudly and confidently. When they were admitted they rubbed shoulders with the elders; a few, like Nasir Kazmi, were to leave a legacy which rivalled the work of the best among the young and the old. As long as I lived in Lahore I hardly missed an issue of any magazine, and when a new journal began publication, like *Naqoosh*, it had a bespoken subscriber in me. Every journal was a moving feast and I gorged myself on it with the ardour of a famished man.

I still look at the Coffee House as a university which taught a broader syllabus with a mastery of the art of teaching painlessly better than any college or university in the country. It charged no fees. The only prescribed requirement was enthusiasm. In return it provided a congenial atmosphere and teachers who were the best because they were our friends.

LIST OF THE HABITUÉS OF THE COFFEE HOUSE

1. Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Khan (politics)
2. Abdul Hameed (science, Rhodes Scholar)
3. Abdul Hameed, Agha (ICS)
4. Abdul Majeed (journalism)
5. Abdul Qayyum *alias* Jojo (teaching)
6. Abdul Qayyum, Mir (law, politics)
7. Abdullah, Dr Syed (literature, teaching)
8. Abdullah Butt (literature, conversation)
9. Abdullah Malik (journalism, politics)
10. Abdus Salam (Science)
11. Abdus Salam Khurshid (journalism, teaching)
12. Abid, Syed Abid Ali (teaching)
13. Abu Saeed Anwar (politics)
14. Aftab Ahmad Khan (CSP)
15. Ahmad Parvez (art)
16. Ahmad Saeed (teaching)
17. Akbar, Salahuddin (writing)
18. Akhtar Ali, Agha (private sector service)
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29. Amjad Husain (journalism)
30. Anjum Rumani (teaching, poetry)
31. Anwar Aziz (sports, politics)
32. Ashiq Hussain Batalavi (literature)

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38. Badiuzzaman (law)
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40. Bari Alig (journalism, history)
41. Barkat Ali, Chaudhri (publishing)
42. Bedi, B.P.L. (journalism, politics)
43. Beg, Abdullah Anwar (law, writing)
44. Beg, Naseem Anwar (international civil service)
45. Bhatti, Abdul Majeed (poetry)
46. Bokhari, Ahmad Shah Patras (teaching, literature)
47. Brij Narain (teaching)
48. Burki, Hamidullah (sports, journalism)
49. Butt, Gul Muhammad (law, politics)
50. Chaudhri, F.E. (photography)
51. Chughtai, Abdur Rahman (art)
52. Cyprian Eric (teaching)
53. Dáng, Sat Pal (politics)
54. Daud Rahbar (teaching)
55. Davinder Satyarthi (literature)
56. Dickinson, E.C. (teaching)
57. Dilawar Husain (law)
58. Din Muhammad, Justice (law, politics)
59. Durrani Amanullah (banking)
60. Ehsan Danish (poetry, bookselling)
61. Ejaz Batalavi (law)
62. Fabre, Charles (museum curatorship)
63. Faiz, Faiz Ahmad (poetry, journalism)
64. Fazlur Rahman (CSP)
65. Fazlur Rahman (Islam, teaching)
66. Ghulam Abbas (literature)
67. Ghulam Jilani, Malik (law, politics)
68. Ghulam Nabi, Malik (politics)

69. Gopal Mittal (literature, journalism)
70. Gyan Chand (poetry)
71. Habib Jalib (poetry)
72. Hafeez Hoshiarpuri (poetry, broadcasting)
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84. Iftikharuddin, Mian (journalism, politics)
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104. Kirmani, Ahmad Saeed (law, politics)

105. Kirpal Singh (politics)
106. Krishan Chandar (literature)
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108. Lalit Kumar (law)
109. Latifi, Danyal (politics)
110. Latifi, Muhammad Hasan (literature, journalism)
111. Majeed Lahori (poetry)
112. Majeed Makki
113. Majeed Nizami (journalism)
114. Mangat Rai, Edward (ICS)
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116. Mansur Ahmad, Qazi (foreign service)
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119. Manzur Qadir (law)
120. Masud Nabi Nur (CSP)
121. Masud Zaman (CSP)
122. Mazhar Ali Khan (journalism)
123. Mazharul Haq (law)
124. Mehdi Qizilbash (leisure)
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126. Mubarak Saghir (politics)
127. Muhammad Anwar (law)
128. Muhammad Hasan (teaching; Hailey College)
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130. Muhammad Tufail (literature)
131. Muin Najmi (art)
132. Mukhtar Siddiqui (poetry, music)
133. Mumtaz Ahmad Khan (journalism)
134. Munir Ahmad Khan (nuclear science)
135. Munir Husain, Syed (CSP)
136. Munir Niazi (poetry)
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140. Naik, Niaz (foreign service)

141. Naimuddin Hasan (foreign service)
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168. Saeed, Maulavi Muhammad (journalism)
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170. Safdar Mir (film-making, literature, teaching)
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172. Saifuddin Saif (poetry)
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180. Satnam Mahmud, Mrs.
181. Sayeed Khan, M. *alias* Saeed Jinnah
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