

الإسلام لا ينافي الوطنية

NATIONALISM OR ISLAM

AKHTARUDDIN AHMAD



D.K.AGENCIES
International Booksellers &
Subscription Agents
H-12, BALI NAGAR,
NEW DELHI-110015

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(*Indo-Pakistan Episode*)

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Indian Edition 1984

First Published in India in arrangement with
Vantage Press, Inc., New York-10001.
by **D. K. Agencies**
H-12, Bali Nagar, New Delhi-110015.

ISBN 533-04737-4

Library of Congress Catalog Card No. : 80-52050

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Introduction

When the fateful episode of writing started, it was December 1971. When the most enduring episode ended with our release from Dacca central jail, it was December 1973. And when the quest for real peace began with my journey toward Holy Mecca, it was December 1974. The years seem so short once they pass away. But they seem unending when one toils through them.

In narrating the black days of two years in prison, I took the liberty of traveling back to my childhood. Thus, the history of about fifty years narrated herein is nothing but a combination of toils and gains, meta-physically speaking, of pain and pleasure. It is narrated more for others than for myself, though with my personal reference. The reference was meant not to show my importance; rather, it was a means to an end. The experience I gathered through the ups and downs of my life no longer belongs to me. That is of some use to someone, somewhere in this great world will be my only satisfaction and joy. My humble effort to catch the rambling thoughts and passing memories is aimed at that object only.

Events in Bengal may not be that important in global history, but the history of the blood bath of 750 million people of the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent cannot be written without them. These events are also the turning point in the global strategy of war and peace of today and tomorrow. Neither Russia, China, nor the United States can afford overall supremacy of another on that small overpopulated territory of 120 million with the Himalayas on the north and the Indian Ocean on the south. At the cost of Pakistan, India has gained an uneasy supremacy there, but for how long no one knows for certain.

Narration of the facts of my life and the sociopolitical history around me was made mainly to drive a point home, i.e., man is no arbiter of his own destiny. And man should seek the salvation of his own self through the welfare of his fellow beings and submission to the will of Allah. Pursuit for only material welfare can only lead us to conflicts of

interests ending up in mutual disaster. That is no way to peace. Strife, struggle, and war are selfish human exercises except when for the cause of your Creator. His cause is always for ultimate human good detached from self-desire. And His cause is the cause of peace in this world and hereafter. Let our actions be directed toward that end, not in words alone but in intent and practice.

It took me two years to complete the writings and took me no lesser time to bring the manuscript out of Bangladesh. There are difficulties, too, in publishing a book in the English language. So it is published late in a place to which I am attached through ideas and friendship. I also cannot thank those enough who inspired, helped, and assisted me in completing my reminiscences in the form of a book. When I finished writing in December 1974, I did not know that so many things had been left out and so many uninteresting things written. Yet I did not change what automatically came through my pen, though in language and thoughts they surely can be improved now. Writing was like photographic memory, not masterful art.

I have used too many personal references but meant malice to none—dead or alive. Criticism of any person was meant not to malign but was aimed only at a bonafide evaluation of his policy and action. Mostly, it is a recognition of his role in the events, good, bad, or indifferent. Even some descriptions of my personal life may seem to embarrass me or the reader, but they are just fair and frank comments.

I wanted to illustrate my impression of China and U.K. tour and some other important events of life in Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh. But as ill fate would have it, those facts and pictures lie buried in the ashes of the 1971 conflagration along with my other valuable properties. So I have offered only what I possess and not what I ought to.

Last but not the least is my very survival. I must record my gratitude to the great country of Saudi Arabia, the center of the Islamic world, which gave me shelter when I was homeless. The late illustrious King Faisal, His Majesty King Khaled, and their government, who showed great understanding of our cause, can never be thanked enough. May Allah bestow his choicest blessings on them, on the friends of Rabeta Alame Islami, Islamic Conference Countries, the United Nations, and on all others who are helping and guiding mankind to the true path of one world of peace and love.

The publication of my manuscript, being delayed, the facts and circumstances could have been well documented and updated, but I left them for another volume That will be of more international interest.
AUTHOR P.O. Box 1813, Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

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Conspiracy and War

We were in the midst of a cabinet meeting. Dr. Malik, the governor, was presiding. We were discussing the war and how to bring it to an end. All but our two colleagues were present, and the discussion was coming to a close. Maj. Gen. Farman Ali was also present. A terrific blast shook the hall and cracked the glass panes of Government House where we were sitting for the last two hours. I said: This time it is the city and not the airport.

With another bang, the green-and-white-turbaned bearer rushed to report that the eastern wing of the building was just hit by Indian bombs. It was on fire. It was then December 14, 1971. The time, thirteen hours. The thirteen-member cabinet looked at each other with no surprise. But one of us shouted, "Indians have not spared even the civilian Government House. Only a short while ago, the campus of Dacca University was bombed. The orphanage at Tejgaon was bombed at night a few days ago, killing many orphan children and teachers. What next?"

Besides Dacca, reports of bombing on civilians were coming from Mymensingh, Khulna, Sylhet, Chittagong, Barisal, and other places. Antiaircraft guns were being fired at random but none from the vicinity of Government House. The sirens were wailing up and down. When Darbar Hall was hit and was on fire, we did not feel safe to stay inside. We rushed out to see the game of Russian-built white MIG21 fighters diving in one after another without any challenge. Indians did not get time to get any camouflage color on the recent acquisition of Russian supply.

The Dacca airport was already put out of commission by incessant heavy bombing for the last five days. So the small but brave challenge that was put up by Pakistani Sabres earlier against these fast and more maneuverable fighting machines was no longer there. So the Indian

planes hovered over and over, coming from all directions, and rocketed and bombed their targets at will. It was like duck shooting. I was standing in open with Suleman, the Minister for Labour, when one of the army jawans shouted at us to take cover in one of the trenches. Gen. Farman Ali was already there in the trench. I ducked myself in with eyes toward the planes. I thought for a moment that life had come to an end; any one of the shells at any moment would be enough to finish us in this open area. The *white dragons* zoomed down, disgorging blazing fire from its nostrils all around us. Three in a row were nosediving one after another in seconds. Waves of them came and disappeared.

It was just a miracle that we were saved. As soon as the planes disappeared, we came out of the trench to see the lush green lawn of Government House strewn with holes, splinters, and injured persons. Finance Minister Quasem's guard was also injured. Plumes of smoke were rising high from the newly built domed building of Government House. We rushed out to find the other colleagues and governor, whose bedroom was also on fire, but his wife, daughter, and he were safe. The aide to the governor directed us to a covered emergency shelter. The Indian planes came again and started bombing. Eardrums were almost bursting. Any direct hit could have been the end of us all. I saw Chief Secretary Muzzaffer, I. G. P. Chowdhury, and some of our colleagues running helter-skelter for their lives.

John Kelly, UN relief team chief, called on the governor during our cabinet meeting. He called again with Paul Henry of the UN during this bombing with great risk. Continuing the deliberations of the meeting, Suleman and Quasem were now drafting the resignation of the cabinet sitting in the shelter. I objected: I was all for peace, but it was futile now to resign. Futile because it was too late to bring about a settlement, which we wanted, between the Awami League and the Central Government. And dishonorable because India was all the time calling for surrender and not cease-fire. It is better to die than surrender, and I would have decided for death had the decision been only mine. Yet I was the only one who resisted it till the end.

The telegram sent by the governor on December 7 to the UN for the cessation of war, handing over power to the elected representatives, was disowned by Pakistan President Yahya Khan as unauthorized. This was actually sent after the President had authorized the governor to do so. We were only a caretaker government looking after the civilian side of the province of East Pakistan till peaceful conditions were restored for a political settlement. But efforts are hardly the yardstick of success.

Just three months ago this day, I had a ring from Government House: the governor would be pleased to see me this evening.

He had just relieved Lt. Gen. Tikka Khan, who was both a governor and martial law administrator of East Pakistan a few days ago. Now Lieutenant General Niazi was the M. L. administrator and Dr. Malik, the civilian governor. Dr. Malik has been a parliamentarian, labour leader, minister of both provincial and central cabinets, ambassador in various countries, special assistant to the president, and a social worker of eminence during his forty years of political career. A softspoken fatherly man of great tradition and varied experience was taken in to steer clear through the stormy weather. After six months of tough and hard army rule, it was a step forward to restore the democracy by inducting a civil governor to look after the civil side of the administration of the province.

Out of five provinces of Pakistan, East Pakistan, flanked by 1,500 miles of hostile Indian territory, was more than half of the country. I say more than half not in territory but in population and wealth. Over the claim of full autonomy for this province election was fought and rigged by the Awami League in December 1970 under the leadership of Mujibur Rahman. Before the Assembly could sit, political dialogue ensued in sharp difference of opinion. Violence preceded and violence followed the dialogue. The army cracked down on the Awami League on March 25, 1971. The civil war started in favor of and against secession. This civil strife continued for six months without any solution. The people and the Government were both tired of writing the solution with letters of blood, so out of necessity and advice came the proposal of bifurcating the provincial administration so that the process could start for transfer of power to the elected representatives. The choice fell upon Dr. Malik to head the provincial administration. He was earlier in the political field as special assistant to the president for refugee and rehabilitation, so it was only a few days after he was sworn in as governor that I sat before him in his office room. After a preliminary conversation, he came straight to the point, and the relevant dialogue was to this effect.

Governor: I wish to take you in my cabinet if you would agree.

I: It would be an honor to serve one's own people. But there are lots of other people who are canvassing to become minister, so what prompted you to offer me the position?

I want a few men of integrity and good reputation with parliamentary background. Canvassing itself is no qualification.

I don't know much about my own quality, but I surely did not canvass for ministership. Have you selected others, sir?

I want you in. And, moreover, you know that it is a difficult time that we are in.

That brings me to ask you, sir, why have you taken up this assignment at such a critical juncture, and what do you expect the ministers to do at this time?

Thank you, for making that query. You see, I have been watching that the country is bleeding to death. I have been telling the President that there cannot be a military solution of the present crisis, and in every civil war there is bound to be excesses from both sides. So we must all put our shoulders together to find a political solution.

I also told the President when I met him last in Pindi that there is no alternative to political solution.

The President has already agreed in principle, and he has phased out a program for transfer of power to the elected representatives. So I am here. If you come in, we all shall be here for a short time to prepare the way for such transfer of power. I know that it is an uphill task, but let us try to save the disintegration of Pakistan by stopping this patricidal bloodshed.

The object is noble no doubt, but how effective can the civil Government be at this stage? Moreover, it will be a great financial loss for me personally.

Yes, I know that you are a reputed barrister and a minister's pay and allowance is no attraction for you. But if you think about serving the people at this great hour of need when they are helplessly in a mess . . . If you think of saving a country which we achieved after so much of struggle and sacrifice during our lifetime, would it be too much to expect of you to come and help?

I agreed with his objective, I felt that the governor had his point driven home and would sincerely try to do what he said. He further explained that ministers will be taken from all the major political parties, including the Awami League. I also got some idea about other likely choices—who were mostly new but honest souls. They would not be party nominees but selected from parties.

This was a momentous decision at a crucial time in a nation's history. So I took a day's time to convey my decision to the governor.

I drove straight to my house in Gulshan to find my wife and friends anxiously waiting for me. Throughout the night, I only pondered over the matter and prayed to Almighty Allah for guidance. I discussed the problem with a few close personal and political friends for their opinion. My wife comes from a family of reputed political background. I took her opinion, also. Some said it would bring a threat on my life. Some said it was very risky. Some said I must accept the post. But there was one common opinion; it was not the time to serve the people and a cause.

My searching mind made the following analysis: (1) The points at issue between the parties should be settled politically and not by guns. For a political settlement, normalcy and peace must be restored, for which civil government is the answer as against military rule. (2) The character of an all-party government would not only restore confidence in the minds of the people in East Pakistan but also in people who had crossed the borders into India. The Indian conspiracy to undo or weaken Pakistan from the very beginning of its birth must be unveiled. (3) Pakistan, which was created only twenty-four years ago at a tremendous sacrifice of life and property of the Muslim masses for their homeland on the Indian subcontinent, should not be bartered away to the ambitions of its enemies. Once peace was restored, burying the internal differences, people could solve their own problems without outside interference. (4) Kissinger-Farland's plan to separate East from West Pakistan for a viable Indian defense against China was strangely being backed by Russia. The six points of Awami League now had the blessings of both the CIA and the KGB, which could ruin this area and its people.

So I decided to take the risk of my life for the values I loved. The governor was pleased to hear this. On the following day, Friday, September 17, I, along with seven more ministers, were sworn in at Government House in a pageant ceremony attended by high court judges, top civil and military officials, foreign diplomats, and the elite of the city. Abul Quasem, Nawajesh Ahmed, and I from the Muslim League, Abbas Ali Khan and Moulana Yusuf from Jamaate Islami, Prof. Shamsul Haque and Obaedullah Majumder from the Awami League, Moulana Ishaque from Nizame Islam and A.S. M. Suleman from Krishok Sramik composed the cabinet. Jasim-uddin Ahmed and Mosharraf Hossain of the Pakistan Democratic Party and Aungsew Prue, representing minorities, and Mujibur Rahman, from the Muslim League, were sworn in later.

It was a big day for me—that is what others thought. Well-wishers, men of authority, men of means, common men, and politicians of far and wide called and congratulated me. This was a crucial and critical time to serve the people, as everything in the country was at a mess.

I was a lawyer, so I was also given the portfolio of law and parliamentary affairs, but the main task at that stage of national history lay elsewhere. The lifeline of a country is in its commerce and industry, which were all topsy-turvy. Business activity was meager because of the disturbed conditions in the country and disturbed communication. Industry was not running even to half of its capacity for lack of manpower, sense of insecurity, lack of raw materials, and endless sabotage activities. The province was in a state of war—a paradoxical civil war.

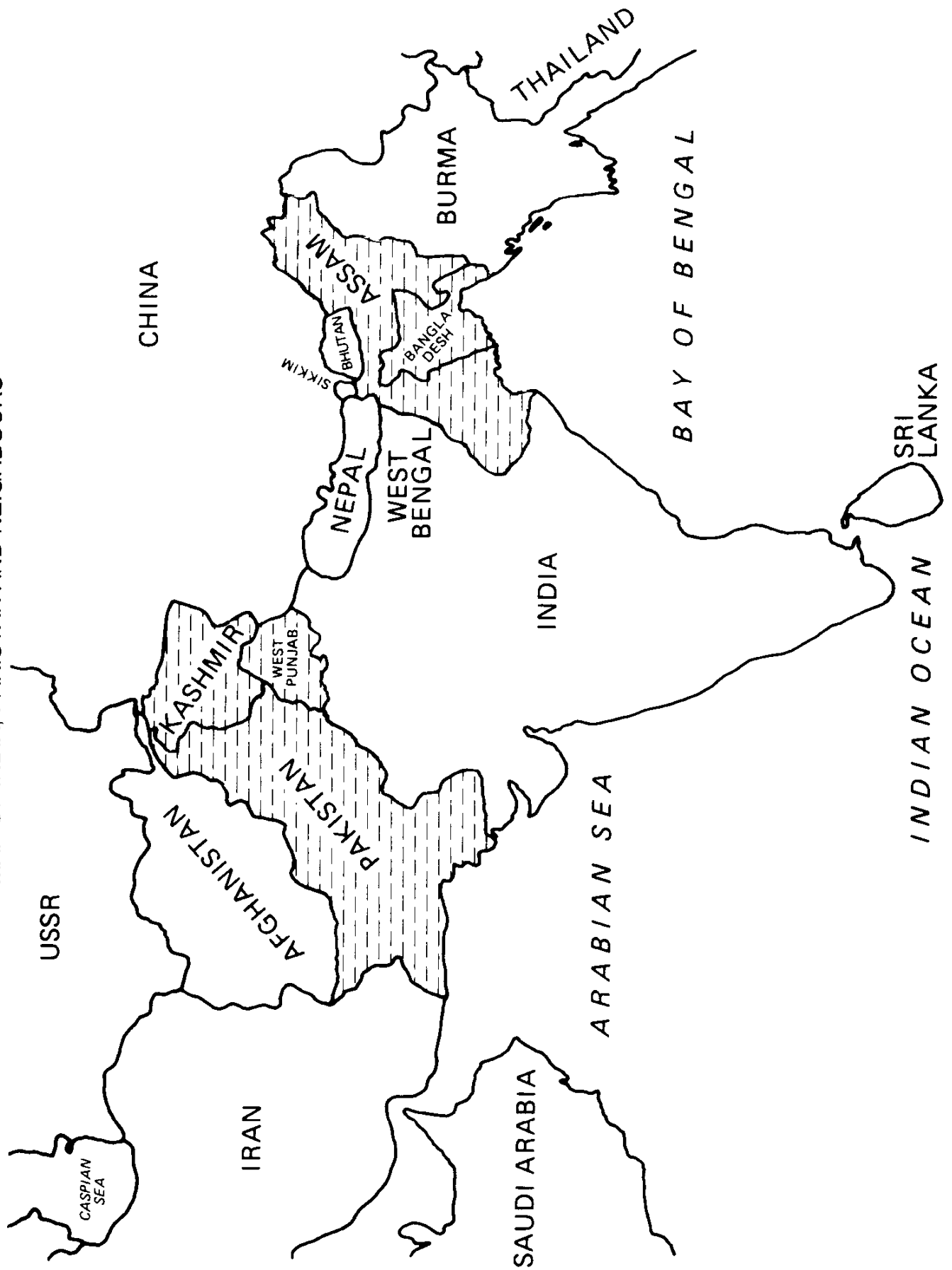
I took up the Department of Commerce and Industry earnestly and gave up the Law department in favor of another lawyer, Jasimuddin. The few weeks, during which law department was with me, I addressed the officers and met them and their employees in their respective offices to gear up their administration to keep pace with the emergency.

There was no Assembly to deal with at that time nor much law-making by ordinance, but the administration of this department is quite a matter, ranging from appointment, transfer, and promotion of high court judges, public prosecutors, Government Pleaders to a peon. I did away with the red tape of the cases, appointments, and transfers of files that came up to me. Such delay not only defeats justice, but it also invites corruption. I didn't get enough time to introduce Ombudsman to resolve administrative disputes.

I discussed the problems of industry and trade with the cross-section of their representatives in several meetings and sittings within and outside the premises of the Secretariat. The problems created by the negligence of the Central Government and by the new disturbed situation were not one but many. Within the scope of provincial powers, some of them could be solved with the right initiative and drive. These received my urgent consideration. Those that depended on the collaboration of the government at Islamabad were taken up through the governor for early redress. Our prompt attention to the acute problems created confidence in the minds of the local and nonlocal entrepreneurs, resulting in higher production in industries and greater business activities. All the industries, like jute, cotton, fertilizer, chemicals, steel, sugar, and engineering, were set up after the creation of Pakistan by the dozen, and so were the small-scale industries by the hundreds. Most of them grew up during this period, along with tremendous development of communication, building, and the education and health sectors. Within the next five years, East Pakistan would have certainly undergone a tremendous transformation in all fields of development in spite of the unjust favor of the Central Government in building up West Pakistan.

Signs of relief and improvement were visible within several months of our untiring efforts in both industrial and commercial sectors. Yet we got the impression from Chinese, Japanese, British, American, etc., delegations visiting the strife-torn province that time was running out. We were up against a gigantic conspiracy of global importance. And Bengal was a chessboard in that big game, whether one watched or played.

MAP OF INDIA, PAKISTAN AND NEIGHBOURS



Our Role of Peacemakers

I must not skip over the events between the swearing-in ceremony and cease-fire. They are all undoubtedly significant.

Soon after swearing in, my two main functions were to administer the office and to attend public receptions. Welcome receptions were given by political parties, peace committees, and other organizations. After the March crackdown of the army and formation of a government in exile in India by the secessionists, civil life never returned to normal. The atmosphere was tense, movement was restricted, public activity was meager, and life was insecure. There were killings and reprisals.

In these circumstances, we used to attend the reception meetings to revive hope, inspiration, and courage in the minds of the public at the risk of our own life. Because nobody would know for certain whether the venue of the meeting or the audience sitting in front of you or the public coming in and going out or even the Government transport you were using was free from any device of sabotage. Actually, the car carrying one of our colleagues, Moulana Ishaq, one day burst into pieces hospitalizing both the Minister and his driver. They narrowly escaped death from the time bomb planted in the car. When I visited them in Dacca Medical College Hospital, Ishaq had regained consciousness but not the driver.

These receptions used to be attended by our colleagues. The speeches coming from the hosts and the guests, representing all walks of life and all shades of political opinion, brought back hope, courage, and a sense of security in the minds of the people. So our receptions and other meetings again became the media of mass contact. Civil life started moving more at ease and with confidence. This was the aim of inducting civil government, and slowly it started having its beneficial effect on the strife-stricken society.

The day I first landed at Barisal, my home town, was a marathon day for all. The normal communication in the district of Barisal—known as Venice of Bengal—was steamer service and launches. While I was a member of the National Assembly, I got regular helicopter service into operation to connect Barisal and the offshore islands. But the need of connecting the district by railway line never crossed beyond the planning stage. So the granary of Bengal, Barisal and Patuakhali remained neglected industrially and otherwise primarily for slow-footed transport in this age of space travel.

I had to use a Government seaplane. The crowd at the jetty was big and representative; what in normal times would have been a mobbing reception was just a warm reception of officials and nonofficials. There were cheers, garlands, tears of hope, expectation, and love. The expectation and hope were echoed in their address of welcome in the public meeting in the town hall. They wanted industry, railway, air link, university, seaport, employment, and security. Only one speaker said: "Save the country from disintegration on the basis of the ideology on which it was established, and I want nothing more." They were all just and right in their demands, but they did not realize the situation the country was facing at that time.

Many other addresses were read and heard from this platform. The one that was read for me hardly differs in form from the ones before my time. It was all praise and eulogy for the minister and then demands. This was the order of our democracy; praises from the front and criticism from the back. One goes to a political leader for services and favors, and if they are given, they are soon forgotten, and if they are not, they are never forgiven.

In this Hall, I started my public life twenty-six years ago when I was only a school student. I delivered my first public speech in front of the public and students here, raising my voice against British rule and in favor of a Lahore Resolution for Pakistan. When I finished my emotion-choked speech, there was thunderous applause, but I was trembling inside. In this hall, I saw and heard Gandhiji, Subash Bose, Shere Bangla Fazlul Huq, Khawaja Nazimuddin, Profulla Ghosh, Mazibur Rahman, Moulana Bhasani, and many more leaders speaking. Many a political movement before and after the partition of India started from here, and equally was it a cultural rendezvous. On returning from Sylhet referendum here I addressed the victory meeting in 1947. On August 14, 1947, the independence celebration was rounded up here amidst limitless enthusiasm and joy.

On this platform, we read a welcome address for Khawaja Nazimuddin the first chief minister of East Pakistan in 1947. Here I addressed

many a meeting, including the one for demanding Bengali as one of the state languages in 1950. From here I led processions and movements for the cause of the students and people and courted arrest twice in 1950. From here I addressed many election meetings, including the first election victory meeting in 1962 and several thereafter. So the town hall carried history with it.

From Barisal, I went to Jhalakati, my home constituency. The same thing was repeated there with a little more warmth and intimacy. The renowned river port and trade center looked burned and deserted. It was a specimen of many other towns and bazaars in East Pakistan that testified as to what happened between March and December 1971 as a result of the civil war.

When Yahya Khan's army cracked down on the secessionists, a part of the local police, militia (EPR), and army also were in revolt. So the army practically had to reconquer the entire province by its physical presence. Wherever they found resistance, they had to fight their way through to establish the authority of the government. All the top Awami leaguers had crossed the border to India without notice. But some leaders, fugitives from armed forces and enthusiastic youths, grabbed the arms from police stations and lines. Without much planning or training, they had to give in to the well-trained army and their superior weapons. These rebels could hardly give any fight to the army, but wherever there was any resistance, lives and properties were lost—mostly of the civilians.

On the morning of April 24, an army gunboat was proceeding to Barisal town by the Jhalakati River. The town of Jhalakati was virtually under the control of the armed mob until the arrival of the army. By that time, the army had already established its authority throughout the province. The district of Barisal was not on the border, and a riverine district army arrived there as late as the last week of April. The people of Jhalakati knew by that time that rebel forces couldn't hold it. They found out that the army has already arrived and the rebels could not just fight them. In case of any clash or resistance, the commercial town might face devastation.

So the local people, under the leadership of one of my party workers, Adam Ali, decided to receive the army at the river port to convey that things there were normal and no interference was required. The armed mob was not very happy at this, but they neither had the courage to oppose them nor to fight them away. So the valiant Adam Ali, with people behind him, waved a Pakistan flag at the jetty with supporting slogans to the passing army. The gunboat with officers and men halted to acknowledge their welcome. They found everything in order and left for nearby Barisal with words of praise for the local people.

The people returned very happy, and the Pakistan flag was again flying everywhere with a sense of relief. But within an hour of the departure of the army, the armed mob was active again. They mobbed the house of Adam Ali. Adam Ali and others, happy for being able to save the place and its people from any bloody clash, were not expecting any such surprise attack. The mob, at the orders of their leaders, dragged him out of his house. His wife, children, and others rushed to save him. They argued, they begged, they cried but all in vain. Shots were fired at Adam Ali, who fell down; his wife intervened, but she was dragged away. Her brother Rustum came to save him, but he was also shot at. The brutes left the place rejoicing over the ghastly and cowardly murders. The people were enraged but struck dumb for fear of victimization. None of them could come forward to save their lives. Adam Ali and Rustum Ali had already joined the procession of death—the galaxy of martyrs.

The town was overwhelmed with gloom and contempt. On the following day, the army came and searched for the murderers. The armed mob fled away, leaving all civilians behind. The available civilians, in fear of victimization, were tight lipped and helpless. The army came to learn that one nonlocal poor man was also murdered a few days ago because he came from India twenty-four years ago to settle there and was a supporter of Pakistan. Another employee of a Muslim business house was also murdered by the same mob after they took away all cash and belongings of the business because he was also a nonlocal—Behari, they called him.

The army burned half of the town to ashes with the people evacuating in panic. They burned my dwelling and the Muslim League office, also not knowing what they were doing. Wherever there was news of destruction or burning or army excesses of any kind in East Pakistan, similar was the state of affairs with variations of ambush, sabotage, guerrilla hideout, or confrontation.

What a hatred of man against man. Between April and October, many more of my persons were killed either by army or Mukti Bahini. So it was more with tears than joy that I addressed the people of Jhalakati. They had their welcome fervor mixed with demands and sorrows. But I implored them to look to the future with courage and confidence. I could see from their eyes and tears that they still trusted me but they looked helpless in the crossfire of two fighting forces. I have tears even today when I think of places like Jhalakati. Such killing and hatred should have stopped at least when Bangladesh came into being on December 16. But even after the date, from that place alone I lost a few more friends like Razzaq Mia, Mati Talukdar, and more, besides many

Razakars. They were brutally and publicly murdered by Mukti Bahini and their supporters. The outside world would never know of this mass liquidation of the vanquished by the victors.

The one thing that pains me or any public man was the strict security measure adopted during my visit to any place. With the security wall between you and the public, you can hardly reach the people, nor can they reach you. Without free mixing with your people, one can never reach near the heart of another. In normal times, I would throw away any such barrier, but in a state of war I could be a good catch for any hostile bullet, yet it was free access for all to me. Our mission was not to rule but to stop the hatred, massacre, and destruction that had madly overcome the country. Our mission was not to kill but to live and let live, to restore peace. We wanted to contain the excesses committed by the army, goaded by revenge and the Mukti Bhani, instigated by India and her allies.

On an invitation from the Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industries, I made a tour program for the port and industrial town. October in Bengal is never a gentle month, rather, storms and cyclones visit occasionally during this month. Politically, also, the storm was growing in that area. Mukti Bahini, after being given guerilla training by India, were being sent inside our borders in thousands. They were blowing up bridges and culverts, launches and coasters, and industrial and power networks with the help of Indian armed forces. Movement was getting more risky every day, as they were also killing selected persons in every place by hit-and-run attacks. It was most difficult to identify those guerrillas or the sophisticated weapons they would carry secretly. Though many of them were dying in the process, they were making a fine job of their mission. Every one was scared and panicky again. They also raised hopes in the mind of their supporters that they were coming nearer to their goal of liberation.

I took off in an amphibian plane. The sky was cloudy, and the weather was rough. Besides my personal staff, my daughter Deeba was also with me. The pilot tried to get near Chittagong Airport, but since there was no landing possibility, he returned back to Dacca. The crowds that came to receive me at the airport and in the meeting and reception that they arranged at Chittagong were more disappointed. I made another attempt on the following morning so that the disappointment could be made up a little by keeping the rest of the program. But luck did not favor me, as the weather was more rough, and the chance of being hit by an enemy bullet was also present. So my plan to meet the party people and commercial and industrial people and to visit the steel mills and the oil refinery had to be postponed till next time, which never came.

I could, of course, pay another visit to Barisal by the same plane in the first week of December when the war between India and Pakistan was actually on. My program on the same trip to Patuakhali and Faridpur had to be canceled. In Barisal, I addressed the teachers of college, school, and Madrasha in Zilla School Hall. The students were also there in full strength to welcome one of their old boys. I began in class III and came out as a matriculate from this school, so a lot of old memories flashed in my mind while I was addressing them.

The Muslims who used to be the rulers of Bengal also were fore-runners in education, administration, business, and the judiciary. But by the "benevolent" British rule in this country, Muslims systematically were ousted from all phases of life. The rulers were reduced to hewers of wood and drawers of water within the first hundred years of British rule. Their language and system of education were changed, their system of administration, revenue and judiciary were also changed to uproot the Muslims and to plant their non-Muslim collaborators in the name of introducing civilized methods. Britishers and Hindus replaced the Muslims with their administration and culture slowly and gradually. Against this alien domination, Muslim protest never ceased; rather, such protest took the form of mutiny, rebellion, Jihad, the Khelafat and non-cooperation movement. It was only in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century that, through mutual cooperation and understanding, Muslims started regaining their lost field. William Hunter depicted a broad picture of gradual Muslim serfdom under British rule in his book *Indian Musalmans*. The Pakistan movement from 1940 is only a jolt toward the emancipation of Muslims from the dual clutches of British and Hindu in the whole of the Indian subcontinent. I found another interesting reading in Dr. A. R. Mullick's *British Policy and the Muslims in Bengal*. Though Dr. Mullick worked later against his own studies but history of the ouster of Muslims by British and Hindu remains the same.

The Muslim conquest, both physical and spiritual, started from the seventh century. The Muslim saints and pioneers of Arabia came in contact with Indonesia, Burma, Ceylon, and Indian coasts from the middle of the seventh century. During the caliphate of Walid bin Abdul Malek, the eastern region of Muslim countries was ruled from Basra where Hajjaj bin Yusuf was the governor. The first regular battle and conquest started in Sind with seventeen-year-old Muhammad bin Qasim, nephew of Hajjaj bin Yusuf defeating King Dahir in A.D. 712 at Debal. Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni came from the land route via Khaibar Pass as many as seventeen times between A.D. 1000 and 1026.

Ikhtiaruddin first conquered Bengal with only seventeen Muslims defeating the great Sen Dynasty of Bengal in A.D. 1203–1204. Wherever

Muslims went, their saints and divines preceded there, and when they and their followers were met with humiliation and torture, the conquest followed. This young general of Islam also participated in the Muslim conquest of present Russia and China under Kutaiba bin Muslim, earlier. He ventured a conquest of Tibet, also, but did not succeed. Once the Muslims conquered any area, they always identified themselves with the people and the soil of that area. This is the remarkable difference between the conquest of Muslims and conquests by British, French, Portuguese, and Dutch of the recent past. Even the earlier European conquests of Caesar or Alexander are no exceptions to this. But Muslim conquests were not only conquests of territory but conquest of ideas, followed by removal of the barrier between the victor and vanquished. Their conquest transcended the artificial barriers of colour, caste, language, and geography between man and man. So long as they followed this idea of man as one brotherhood (Ummat) under unity of God irrespective of these barriers, they thrived and prospered.

The great caliphs of Islam, like Hazrat Abu Bakr, Umar, Usman, and Ali, and the great heroes, like Khaled, Musa, Tariq, and Qasim, established this principle in Asia, Africa, and Europe—from Indonesia to Iberia. This sense of identification with the soil and its people with the idealism of oneness endeared the Muslims all over the world. Yet, in Spain, the benevolent Muslim civilization of Granada and Cordova was extinguished by Queen Isabella with the help of their Christian community. In recent history, the Muslims of Turkishtan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Sinkiang were meeting the same fate of ruthless liquidation by communism.

In Bengal, besides the physical conquest of Ikhtiaruddin, it is more the Muslim saints and mystics like Shah Jalal, Bayazid Bostami, Sheikh Farid, Khawaja Sharfuddin, Shah Ali Baghdadi, Khan Jahan Ali, and the rest who got the religion of peace rooted in this soil. Sixth-century Arab geographer Al Idrisi, mentioned the port of Ramu of Cox's Bazar in his writings. Hazrat Bayazid Bustami came around Chittagong in ninth century A.D. and Baba Adam Macchi in Bikrampur in Dacca around A.D. 1100 before Turkish cavalier Ikhtiaruddin conquered Nabadip in 1203–1204. Sultan Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah was the first independent King of Sonargaon near Dacca from A.D. 1322. Most prominent among this dynasty was Sultan Ghyasuddin Azam, 1390–1410, who had correspondence with the poet Hafiz of Shiraz. Ibne Batuta visited S. F. Mobarak Shah's capital at Sonargaon and Shah Jalaluddin Tabrezi at Sylhet. Chinese traveler Mahuan visited the Court of Azam in 1406. During Jahangir's time, Nawab Islam Khan Chisti became governor and renamed Dacca as Jahangirnagar in 1612 after ousting the Pathans.

Even after the defeat of Nawab Serajuddowla in the battle of Plassey in 1757 it was mainly the saints and valiants like Titumir of Barasat in 1831 and Shariatullah and Dudu Mia of Faridpur in 1830 to 1847 who kept the flag of Islam flying over Bengal. The age of cooperation, when Muslims actually competed with others to get into education, administration, and the judicial field under the English, was a development of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Naturally, Muslims were far behind in competition with non-Muslims here because of the past history of confrontation for about 200 years until Pakistan was established in two separate wings of Pakistan, separated by hostile Indian territory and sea and air of more than 1,500 miles. How the proposed Pakistan, per the Lahore resolution of 1940, was resisted and ultimately not allowed to come into existence by the British and Hindu jointly is a separate history altogether. Particularly, what Bengal and Assam got in the name of Pakistan is nothing but a "motheaten and truncated Pakistan," per Md. Ali Jinnah. Even the Pakistan Independence Act of 1947, passed by the British Parliament, was further reduced and cut to size by Lord Mountbatten and Radcliffe by the latter's most unjust Boundary Award. They created a weak Pakistan and a strong India so that the seeds of discord between Hindu and Muslim unity would long remain there. Today it appears more clear than ever before that they played the trick well.

British involvement in Indian history started in A.D. 1600 with the grant of right to the East India Company of England—the monopoly of trade in India by Queen Elizabeth. In 1608, William Hawkins got his first audience in the court of Mughul King Jehangir and set foot on the soil of India as a trader, to become its rulers in no time. In the bitter contest of foreign powers for the control over India between Portuguese, Dutch, French, and British, the British got the upper hand slowly and gradually by the might of trade, trickery, and Moghul patronage. They concentrated themselves around the three ports of Bombay, Madras and Calcutta. The charter of trade for Bengal was first granted by Emperor Shajahan, who later armed the British. The French also at one time proved themselves equal to British power in India and received patronage from different Muslim rulers, but in the ultimate power struggle they reduced themselves to a secondary position to the British after several defeats in actual wars.

With the weakening of Mughal control at Delhi after Aurangzeb, Bengal seized the opportunity to rule itself and Murshid Kuli Khan established independent Bengal rule as Nawab of Bengal in the first part of the eighteenth century. Serajuddowla succeeded to the throne of Bengal in 1756 from his grandfather Ali Bardi Khan. The British annexed

it the next year after a bloody battle of Plassey through Lord Clive. Southern India fell fully under British control in 1799 after the defeat of Tipu Sultan and the rest of India fell after Sepoy Mutiny in 1857 with total ouster of Mughal Emperor of Delhi.

Without the "two nation theory," there could be no East Pakistan. But once East Pakistan is taken out of Pakistan, the whole progress achieved for the people of this area, who are overwhelmingly Muslims, would be called to a halt. This gain of freedom for the Muslims will again be eclipsed by surrounding India with a majority of communal-minded people. The clock of the struggle for 200 years under British rule, interposed by twenty-four years of Pakistan, will be set back. Bangladesh, if established, will be nothing but a colony and market of its great neighbour. Indira Gandhi was working for this cherished goal of isolating or separating east from west to create a weaker Pakistan or to annex it. Besides this, another threat would be posed for the country forever, i.e., when the majority of people were stripped of their faith in religion, what would come next? The path will be made ready for either an extreme Fascist or Communist dictatorship.

These were the questions raised and history discussed in most of the speeches during the crisis. Because the majority of the people did not have deep-rooted moorings in their religion, they would run with hare and hunt with the hound. So the shield against any extreme, faith in holy religion, would gradually wear out in the face of any aggressive political or economic ideas. Any modern society that falls from the grace of moral and religious values becomes the first casualty of ambitious dictatorship—personal, material, or political. Fascists or atheists may not accept this, but the believers in the free world must rethink. I was not talking of religion as a means of exploitation or hatred but as a basis of human love toward his Creator and his fellow beings, whatever faith he may belong to—Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, etc.

The only visit I paid to West Pakistan as Minister was to Karachi to meet the people there and to attend the Muslim League Council meeting. Before the election of 1970, I was responsible for drafting and announcing the party manifesto from Lahore as its vice president. And as a minister in an all-party provincial cabinet, I was to see what we could do to implement the suggestions of the party. It was an eventful meeting, as we all were trying to keep the country together in spite of all the adversities we were facing. The big receptions and parties we attended during this visit were all echoing the same sound of correcting past mistakes and looking forward to improvement. But when I visited some areas of Bengali settlers in the city, it was apparent that they were not ready to listen to the voice of reason any more.

During this tour, I also addressed the Karachi chamber of Commerce and visited some of the important mills and factories. From these mills, I was given personal gifts of valuable products. But the mill owners were surprised when I refused to take them. It might influence some official decisions.

Since ours was a caretaker government, no long-term planning or policy implementation was called for us, yet we initiated some measures in various fields for the welfare of the people of East Pakistan. We resolved for the decentralization of the administration so that people's affairs can be well attended at district or divisional levels. And the bureaucracy should not keep them as an isolated class from the people in whose service they were. The ministers were to go to the lower levels. We also adopted an educational policy commensurate with the need and dictates of the state ideology. The influence of an alien culture and its bad trends were to be eliminated. In agriculture and finance sectors, liberal credit and capital investment were proposed for small traders, industrialists, and farmers. And, in the industrial sector, we decided to increase both the number and production capacity of jute and cotton mills. The petrochemical complex based on natural gas was also another field of top priority. The East Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation was to be divided into two or three corporations for better production and efficient management. But time did not permit us to implement the decisions for the welfare of our people. They looked for the unknown than to what they found or enjoyed. After all, man is not born with contentment. And, in adverse circumstances, they are not even patient, especially when they digress from the path of God.

History behind Conspiracy

There is a checkered history behind the war of liberation of Bengal. It is just not the story of a military crackdown by some army general over the dissident people where the people, in turn, took up arms with the help of others and achieved independence. To have a precise knowledge of this crisis, one would have to examine the facts of a few decades before.

On the fall of Muslim rule in Bengal, after the Battle of Plassey in 1757, with the complete ouster of the last Muslim ruler of Delhi, after the Sepoy mutiny, exactly one hundred years after Plassey, the Indian empire was taken over by the British Crown directly from the hands of the East India Company. But neither the Muslims nor the Hindus of India were ready to be dominated by foreigners from across the seven seas who had no likeness of religion, language, color, race, education, administration, or economic interests. From the very beginning there prevailed a resentment against colonial rule, urge for self-rule among all Indians, which became deeprooted with the consolidation of administration in all spheres of life. The Wahabi movement—noncooperation with English education, rise of independent Sikh rule in the western part, and various other expressions of disapproval of British rule—came to the fore all over India. Bengal was also expressive enough in its resentment and confrontation with British through its heroes, like Titu Mir and Shariatullah. While the Western World was undergoing a transformation in political thought in the form of democracy, freedom, and liberty, the Eastern World, locked in battles with foreigners, was gradually delinked from the mainspring of knowledge and progress. The once superior Muslim or Eastern civilization was being overshadowed by emerging European progress—native Indians fell victims to this cross-currents of civilization. To match the political trend of the West, to

awaken the people to the responsibility of the present, the first socio-political organization came into being in 1885 under the guidance of Alan Octavius Hume, an Englishman, in the name of the Indian Congress. This congress gradually became a political forum for discussion and suggestion by officials and nonofficials. People, the interested and enlightened section, clamored for more participation in the government of the country, as it was directly governed by the British Crown through its bureaucratic machinery in India and Westminster. The Muslim League, as a platform for Muslims, took its birth in Dacca in 1906, but it always worked jointly with Congress.

The major legal reform, after the Queen Victoria's Act of taking over in 1860, came in 1909 in the shape of Morley-Minto Reforms, to meet the growing awareness for local participation in the government. But this step was too far short of the expectation of the Indian population. The first world war of 1914-1918 and the Indian involvement through the support of the British forces hastened further reforms in the political field on the subcontinent. In response to rising popular demands for self-rule, the Montague Chelmsford Report was published in 1918 followed by the Government of India Act of 1919. This again failed to meet the approval of the political elements; thus, the reforms were implemented in part for the administration of the country. The Indians felt let down by the British after the war was won against Germany. The Khilafat movement, in support of the Turkish caliphate, directed against the British complicity in the breakup of the Ottoman empire, under the leadership of Ali Brothers (Shawkat Ali and Mohammad Ali) coupled with the non-cooperation movement of Congress under the leadership of M. K. Gandhi roused the whole population for freedom of India.

The Simon commission came to India to inquire and report as to the method of growing participation of the Indian population in the administration of the country. The Commission was boycotted both by Congress and Muslim League leaders for its limited terms of reference, so its report submitted in 1930 cut no ice. A series of round-table conference were held in England with all the Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh leaders of India between 1930 and 1932. The growing Hindu menace within Congress marred the unity of Hindus and Muslims; even the ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity, M. A. Jinnah, and many others had to leave the Congress in anguish. It grew apparent from the Nehru Report of 1929 that important Congress leaders wanted Muslims to play a subdued, secondary role under the Congress leadership. And there came the fourteen points of Muslim League in reply as the last hope for one India.

The Government of India Act, 1935, came into existence as a result

of the negotiations around the table, but it was not meant to transfer power to Indians—far from allowing the chance of self-rule. So this reform was also implemented in part in the province, as the proposed federation under the Act never came into being. The British intention of peaceful transfer of power appeared dubious, so the country was preparing for all-out confrontation with the British Crown. There came another war—World War II.

The sun does not set in the British Empire. This vast empire was also shaken by the axis of Hitler's Germany, Mussolini's Italy, and Tojo's Japan during the second great world war. Not only was the principal seat of the empire in London pounded by German bombs, but the whole edifice of the empire was also tumbling down. But for the American and Russian involvement in time and the existence of the English Channel between the continent and England, the whole of Britain would have fallen to Germany like the Maginot Line and Siegfried Line of France. And there would have been no empire left worth the name. During this devastating war, India was promised independence in return for the support to the war by Indian leaders. India was not one on this issue. Nor was it expected that 400 million people could be or would be one on an issue like this. The division of opinion was mainly on two lines; (1) Due to the war, the control of the empire was the weakest, so this was the opportunity to wrest freedom from the British, if necessary by force; and (2) the war was between democratic and fascist forces and cooperation should be extended to democratic forces so that Indian independence could be meaningful under democratic system, which should be achieved through constitutional, peaceful means.

To the first group belonged among others Subash Chandra Bose, and to the other group belonged the Congress and Muslim leaders like Gandhi and Jinnah. Both groups were very active during the war. Subash Bose fled to Japan and with the aid of Japan formed the Indian National Army and worked for the armed liberation of India. With the defeat of Japan on the east and Germany and Italy on the west, his plan also failed.

The other group, headed by Congress, predominantly a Hindu-dominated organisation, started the "Quit India" movement against the British. Also to this group—of peaceful transfer of power through lawful means—belonged the Muslim League, the organization founded in Bengal (Dacca) in 1906 as a successor of the Muhamadan Education Conference established in 1886 by Sir Syed Ahmed. It started the Pakistan Movement for the same goal of independence. Jinnah, a Barrister, born in Bombay, formally a congressite, was heading the Muslim League Group. And Gandhi, also a barrister, born in Madras, was leading the

congress. The Communist Party of India, after the involvement of Russia in the war against the fascist forces, also accepted the war as a "peoples war" and not a war of the imperialists. Other political parties of lesser consequences also fell into line with these groups.

After the Allied victory in 1945, both in the East and West, serious party conferences, missions, and other political maneuvers started for handing over power of India to Indian political forces under an acceptable formula to all. This was both a device to find out an amicable solution and to stick on with domination as long as possible to get the best out of such transfer of power for Britain. It took a full two years for Britain to grant independence to India after the war. Hiroshima was blasted by the United States on August 6, 1945 by an atomic bomb, followed by surrender of Japan. The surprise massive attack of Pearl Harbor by the Japanese air force in 1941 was nothing compared to the devastation caused in Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the first nuclear explosion in Japan. By August of the same year, all the forces of Hitler and Mussolini had suffered a colossal defeat in the West. The diabolical human tragedy was over killing millions, destroying billions, and changing various national frontiers and sovereignties in East and West. It was all over by August 1945. During these momentous two hundred years, history was created on the Indian subcontinent by the triangular political fight between British rulers and Hindu and Muslim ex-rulers.

The Indian National Congress was pressing for handing over power to them, as they claimed representation of 400 million people of multilingual and multinational India from Teknaf to Khyber, on the basis of one Indian nation. The Indian Muslim League, on the other hand, on the basis of its Pakistan resolution, adopted in 1940, in Lahore, claimed power in Muslim majority areas of Bengal and Assam provinces on the east and Sind, Punjab, Frontier and Baluchistan Provinces on the West, on the basis of the "Two Nation theory" of the Muslim League headed by Mohammad Ali Jinnah.

The British snatched power from the Muslim ruler of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, Nawab Sherajuddowla, on the one hand, in 1757 and from the last of the Mughal rulers of Delhi, hundred years after, from Bahadur Shah, on the other. The Nawab was killed after his defeat in the Battle of Plassey in 1757, and the last Moghul emperor died in exile in Rangoon in Burma after the defeat in the Sepoy Mutiny in 1857. The French, Dutch, and Portuguese could only keep their holds in small coastal pockets like Goa, Mahe, Daman, Dieu and Pondicheri. The Muslims, who were reduced from rulers to serfs during about 200 years of British rule, claimed only a portion of their lost territory under the reigning political doctrine of democracy, where they were only 1:3 in population

and vote. About three hundred million Hindus, by virtue of their collaboration with British Raj from the beginning, could legitimately claim a better reward than cutting "mother India" into pieces. But about one hundred million Muslims, scattered all over India but concentrated mostly in the areas covered by Pakistan proposal, would not like to be ruled and outvoted by the majority community.

The negotiations during the war, led by Sir Stafford Cripps, in 1942, produced no acceptable formula for all. The "Quit India" movement of Congress and the Pakistan movement of the Muslim League shook the empire to its bones. Soon after the war, the cabinet mission plan announced a formula in 1946 with three zonal federations under one India; the last chance to keep the country united was accepted by the Muslim League, in spite of its own demand for separate Pakistan, but the intransigence of the Hindu Congress blocked the way forever by an initial refusal to accept the plan. Those who blame the Muslim League for partition of India should not forget this last kick of one-eyed Congress hatred for Muslim welfare, which prompted them to first refuse the plan.

So when the conferences, missions, and plans failed, more violence and bloodshed took the field in the form of direct action and tragic communal riots all over India. And, ultimately, the vote and referendum of 1946 decided the issue in favor of partition of India. The three parties agreed to a formula, which was announced on June 3, followed by the Independence of India Act 1947 passed by the British Parliament at Westminster. It was a reluctant acceptance for all—for Britain because they had to quit India, for Congress because the country was no longer one but divided India, and for the Muslim League because of truncated Pakistan without any corridor between the two wings.

From the proposed Pakistan, the farsighted British to keep their interest alive by favoring Hindu Congress, half of the Punjab and half of Bengal was given to India. They also wanted the Northwest frontier province with pro-Congress Red Shirt leadership under frontier Gandhi Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan and Sylhet district of Assam to also go to India. But the people's referendum that took place in both those places, per the Act of Independence, overwhelmingly favored joining Pakistan. Yet to cripple Pakistan the most unfair award was given by the Boundary Commission of Sir Radcliffe under the guidance of Lord Mountbatten, the then governor general of India. The British lord had an additional axe to grind because India accepted him as her first governor general but Pakistan did not. This possibly was a tactical blunder of M. A. Jinnah, who became the first governor general of Pakistan. Lord Mountbatten deserved it for his patent partiality for Congress. So in spite of categorical

provisions in the Act of Independence no portion of Assam contiguous to the Sylhet district was awarded in favor of Pakistan; rather, a big chunk of the Sylhet district itself, whose people overwhelmingly voted in favor of joining Pakistan by referendum, was given to India. The Muslim majority districts of Malda, Nadia, and Murshidabad were also given to India in spite of a provision to the contrary in the Act of Independence. If the district of Kachar in Assam and Jalpaiguri in Bengal was given to Pakistan in exchange for those districts or otherwise, there could have been no corridor between West Bengal and Assam. This could have justly balanced the mutual need of corridor over another's territory, but the award looked to the reverse direction for obvious reasons to the benefit of India. Moreover, the Gurudaspur district of Punjab was marked for Pakistan in the Independence Act itself in the Second Schedule, but this was also to the great shock of Pakistan given to India. But for this cunning device of Sir Radcliffe and Lord Mountbatten, India could not get any contiguity to Kashmir, and thus there would have been no Kashmir problem. This was the last parting kick by the British to the Muslims of India.

With these odds, Pakistan had to begin from scratch with a new capital in Karachi in the west and Dacca in the east. With Lord Mountbatten as her governor general, India reaped the full harvest of the military hardware and equipment, railway stocks and engines or due share in any other assets, including a share in the India Library in London. They were all denied to Pakistan. Even Gandhi once observed a fast in protest but in vain.

The princely states were being annexed by India one after another. Kashmir entered into a standstill agreement with Pakistan until the wishes of its people were ascertained, but India illegally sent her troops in collusion with Hindu Dogra Maharaja in violation of the agreement, contrary to the wishes of its population, 90 percent of which were Muslims and contrary to the provision of the Act of Independence. The people of Kashmir and their supporters in Pakistan rose against Indian interference and almost captured the government. Nehru, the then prime minister of India, rushed to UN wherein a cease-fire was called for a resolution, with a mandate for holding a plebiscite. And UN observers were posted to carry out the resolution. The matter is still in the hands of the UN without any conclusion, and with two most devastating wars fought between India and Pakistan during these twenty-four years, and with many a popular uprising every now and then in Kashmir. But the Indian pledge still remains unfulfilled. One of Prime Minister Nehru's pledges was made on October 31, 1947. "Our assurance that we shall withdraw our troops from Kashmir as soon as peace and order

are restored and leave the decision regarding the future of this state to the people of that state is not merely a pledge to your Government but also to the people of Kashmir and the world."

Before the Pakistan proposal was accepted by Britain and Congress, communal riots between Hindus and Muslims broke out in practically every part of India, especially in the Punjab, Bihar, and Bengal, causing loss of innumerable lives of men, women, and children. Even after the creation of two states, this bloodshed did not stop, and millions of Muslim refugees came over to take shelter in Pakistan to avoid the genocide in India. These riots never stopped in India, though that is a secular state. The number of communal riots in India during the last twenty-five years would be about one thousand, every time on some plea or other. The recent ones are preplanned and well organized by extremist Hindu organizations with secret blessings from the government machinery aimed at eliminating the Muslims of some consequence in the society so that the remaining ones may survive as serfs or yesmen. Such is the fate of 80 million Muslims of today, scattered all over India. From commerce or industry, land or buildings, education or administration they were driven out, like the Muslims of Spain and treated, as second-class citizens. So Muslims psychologically are forced to look toward Pakistan as their safe refuge, which neither the Indian government nor its votaries relish very much.

The ticklish issues small as they may seem, led the two neighboring countries to perpetual confrontation both in bilateral and international issues. This resulted in a meetings of their armed forces in bloody battles in Kashmir and Runn of Kutch without any clear victory for any side. India, a bigger neighbor, could not stand this nuisance, and she attacked Pakistan in 1965 to teach her a lesson, but this also remained indecisive in spite of heavy losses on both sides.

People of both countries needed development and peace, instead, they went on building up their army, navy, and air force by a beg, borrow, or steal policy. International power blocks also found it a fertile ground for their arms sale and strategic maneuver. Aid, military and economic, poured in from both capitalist and socialist blocks. India, being in a better bargaining position, got the best from both the blocks. The military men and machines thrived well in both countries, but their people suffered in the process. More than 50 percent of their national income was being spent on defense, in addition to military aid. So the stage was set for a final bout of annihilation of the enemy!

But this time India was wiser not to plan a straight fight with Pakistan on an issue like Kashmir. She elected to act otherwise under the able and shrewd leadership of Indira Gandhi, the third prime minister of India and daughter of the late Jaharlal Nehru.

Tradition and Tragedy

Bengal with its past tradition and culture, language and literature, religion and geography, and, above all, its people have been always enjoying a distinctive position in the history of the Indian subcontinent. It was one of the prosperous areas even before the first Muslim conquest by Ikhtiaruddin Mohamed bin Bakhtiar Kheelji, after defeating Laksman Sen. But no conqueror from the outside could keep his reign for long because of its topography and other peculiarities. Even during the mighty Moghul rule, it hardly remained obedient to the rule of Delhi. Ayub Khan's assessment of East Bengal in his autobiography was that it would be no exaggeration to say that up to the creation of Pakistan they had not known any real freedom or sovereignty who had been, in turn, ruled either by the caste Hindus, Moghuls, Pathans, or the British. This remark is shallow and unrelated to the history of Bengal.

Whether as the agents of Delhi or local leaders Bengal always came out of the distant bondage and had their own rule here, however short a period it may be. Even the powerful British found this place most difficult to control after it got full dominion over it from the Battle of Plassey onward. Its Muslim population mostly, and some portion of the Hindu population also kept the British on the alert all the time. Even after the Battle of Plassey, 1757, Bengal kept up its efforts to free itself from the British rule. One hundred years of British rule could not keep them down. In 1857, the lead again came from the Sepoyees of Barrakpur, in Bengal, which sparked off the fire of the Indian liberation war, commonly known as the Sepoy Mutiny, engaging the British over the whole of India. Bengal and India lost this war, but it led to the taking over of the rule from the East India Company to the British Crown itself in Queen Victoria's time. The first localized Sepoy Mutiny at Barrakpur in 1824, the battle of resistance by Titu Mir in 1831, the Forajee Movement

of Dudu Mia in 1847, and, finally, the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 left no doubt about the independent spirit of the Bengalees as such. The indomitable spirit of the Bengalees, fired by the zeal of Islam, led them also to the soil of Punjab and the Frontier to fight against the Sikhs and the British as far as Balakot, along with Syed Ahmed Shaheed. Rebellion and freedom seems to be running in the veins of Bengalee blood. Bengal was divided by the British in 1905 with East Bengal and Assam as a separate province and Dacca as its capital. This gave the agrarian Muslim population of Bengal a lost advantage to rule themselves, but this was undone in 1911 to satisfy the Hindus of Bengal, who led a vigorous campaign against partition for five years. When Pakistan was accepted in principle by the British government, Bengal was proposed to be divided by Hindus in 1947.

Muslims were 55 percent of the population in undivided Bengal, with the Hindu minority less than 45 percent, as there were Buddhists and Christians, too. The British accepted the proposal of a Hindu congress. The Punjab, Assam, and Bengal were cut into pieces, and truncated Pakistan was given to the Muslim League—either take it or leave it. The major area of Bengal and a slice from the Sylhet district of Assam formed part of East Pakistan with a corridor between Assam and the rest of India over the head of East Pakistan but with no corridor between two wings of Pakistan. If the British wanted to be just or unbiased, as they claim, they could have given the whole of Assam to East Pakistan per the original Pakistan proposal or at least provide for no corridor in the East on the basis of mutuality. Moreover, the entire developed area of Bengal, including the capital port city of Calcutta, with all its industrial and communication complexes, was given to India by the said Radcliffe Award. East Bengal was producing all the jute of India, but all the jute mills were set up along the Huglee River near Calcutta!

Since the partition of India was agreed upon in principle by all three parties, it was not at all necessary to make the majority Muslim areas like Frontier Province and Sylhet to demonstrate once more their choice for Pakistan. And once that choice was amply demonstrated through referendum in those areas, it was unbecoming of the upholders of justice and democracy to frustrate the verdict of the people by a dubious award. It happened in India.

The whole might and machinery of the league and congress converged in Sylhet to obtain the opinion of the people of Sylhet either in favor of Pakistan or India. It was a clear issue thrown before the people; if they wanted to join Pakistan, they should vote in favor of the symbol of "axe" or in favor of "hut" if they wanted to join India. All the national leaders of the political parties projected their points of view before the

electorate. I, with a batch of Barisal college students, joined our colleague student leaguers and Muslim Leaguers in Sylhet within the heavy showers of July. Students from all over Bengal and other areas of India worked shoulder to shoulder with Leaguers, national guards, and local people against heavy odds. Supporters of Congress and Jamiat-e Ulama Hind created havoc at places—many of our volunteers received physical injuries, and some were found missing. I worked in the areas of Sylhet proper, Karimgang, and on the election day at Hakaluki. In the midst of rain and water, wherever we went, there were fine pockets of pro-Indians, but mostly it was all support for Pakistan. The people looked toward Pakistan as a holy place where there was to be no exploitation of the have-nots and no obstruction of the performance of their religion. They wanted to live in the true tradition of Hazrat Shah Jalal, a medieval saint warrior, who actually brought an end to the oppression of its non-Muslim ruler and established a religion of peace in the neighborhood.

Amidst most popular enthusiasm, Pakistan won the referendum with overwhelming majority. According to the Act of Independence, contiguous areas of Sylhet were to come to Pakistan if the referendum was in her favor, but the parting kick of the British hit the Muslims under the belt—a part of Sylhet was given to India in the infamous Radcliffe Award. This was meant to obstruct Tippera, Agartala, and Kuchbihar, the contiguous native states of Assam, from joining Pakistan in the eastern region. In the frontier province, the Red Shirts of Khan A. Gaffar Khan, the Congress supporters abstained from participation in the referendum, and the whole province went to Pakistan by vote.

Muslims at first came to this part of Assam soon after the conquest of Bengal by Ikhtiaruddin. Assam was the scene of various battles between the conquering Muslim rulers and the local kings. In the fourteenth century, Raja Gaur Govindo was one such king reigning over this area. Gazi Burhanuddin was one of the pious Muslim settlers where the said Raja was the ruler. Since the Hindus consider the cow as one of their mother goddesses, this Raja one day took exception to the slaughtering of a cow on the occasion of Aquika (baptizing) of a newborn baby Gazi. By the order of the king, one hand of Gazi Burhanuddin was chopped off, and the new baby was killed to satisfy the goddess cow. Muslims rose in a holy war against the king where thirteen valiant ones became martyrs in the hands of the king's army at a place still called thirteen jewels—"Tero Ratna" in Kalighat area of Sylhet town. Indomitable Burhanuddin crossed the Brahmaputra and sought the help of the Bengal ruler Shamsuddin Feroz Shah, who sent an expeditionary force to Sylhet with Burhanuddin Shah's forces, but they were badly defeated on the bank of Brahmaputra. Gazi Burhanuddin this time came across

Hazrat Shah Jalal Yameni and with his disciples was preaching Islam from Delhi to the east. Shah Jalal, hearing about the disgraceful plight of the Muslims, decided to proceed there with his disciples. Feroj Shah also sent another reinforcement, and the both met at Tribum. The soldiers of Feroj Shah, under the spiritual leadership of Shah Jalal, reached the bank of Surma river unopposed. The king was fully prepared to meet the once-defeated army of the Muslims and had removed all vehicles and means from the river. Shah Jalal was a divine saint who crossed the river on his prayer carpet, and others followed him to the other bank. Frightened at this sight, the army of the Raja went into disarray. The Raja fled away to his castle at Gaur Duar and created an invincible barricade of stones around it. The forces of Feroz Shah tried in vain to break through the barricades, but ultimately the great saint shouted "Silhet", i.e., "Be off, stones," and the barricade vanished. The Muslims conquered the fort and entire Sylhet but did not pursue the fleeing king. The town and the district has been known as Sylhet ever since. And the graveyard of Shah Jalal near the mosque on a hilltop and the grave of Gazi Burhanuddin at Kushighat are yet visited by thousands of devotees every year.

In 1947, East Pakistan had to start from scratch in a district headquarters at Dacca, with no office to sit in, no air, rail, water, or road communication worth the name, a secondary and unserviceable port at Chittagong, no industry worth mentioning, and no capital for investment. It was purely a backward agricultural riverine area left to the luck of about 45 million people to survive or perish, landlocked by India on three sides and the Bay of Bengal on south. Another part of Pakistan lay 1,500 miles away, flanked by India, the only link being sea or air communication also did not exist practically in 1947. The capital was in Karachi, another provincial port city of Sind, to be transformed into a national capital.

Unprecedented heat and enthusiasm were marked in the general election of 1946 to decide the issue of one India or a divided India. I was just then crossing the school bar to enter into college in the Mufussil district of Bakerganj. Leaving aside preparation for exams. I also got down to canvassing for the Muslim League for Pakistan. Students from Aligarh, Calcutta, and other places also poured into the Bengal to fight the mighty Congress and its Muslim collaborator, the Krishak Praja Party, headed by Shere Bangla A. K. Fazlul Huq, the tiger of Bengal, who moved Pakistan Resolution in Lahore in 1940 was duped by Congress to oppose it. But the downtrodden Hindus, as a result of extreme caste hatred, political subjugation, and economic exploitation by a superior caste of Brahamins, supported Pakistan to emancipate them from

the clutches of their coreligionists under the leadership of Jogendra Nath Mondal and D. N. Barori.

This was actually a referendum for Pakistan, which the Muslim League won with 90 percent support in Bengal. Pakistan was created by ballot—the challenge that Jinnah threw to Gandhi at Simla in 1945 was won. But the British and the Congress started manipulation to bypass the verdict of the referendum. Jinnah called for direct action on the August 16, 1946, to implement the verdict of the election. But this peaceful movement was also thwarted by Congress by starting a communal riot on that day in Patna, Calcutta and other places of India. Blood of men, women, and children again smeared the roads of cities and villages of Bengal to the horror of the human conscience. But the indomitable spirit of freedom of the Muslims won the battle. Pakistan was again promised to be created. The British again sided with the Congress, failing to avoid the inevitable, and cunningly damaged the concept of Pakistan by proposing the partition of Bengal and Punjab along with partition of India.

The matter was to be decided by the wishes of the respective assemblies, which was agreed by all parties. The newly elected Bengal Assembly voted twice, once in favor of partition of India and once against the partition of Bengal. But the wishes of the minority for partition of Bengal, consisting of Hindu Mahasaba and Congress members, who accepted, flouting the wishes of the vast majority of Assembly members in favor of keeping Bengal united and one. The scale of justice was in favor of Pakistan, but it was a fight between 300 million Hindus versus 100 million Muslims of the subcontinent. And the then ruling government of Britain was in favour of Hindu Congress, thus Bengal was partitioned against its democratic will.

I gather from Dr. A. M. Malik that Jinnah and others secretly agreed to keep Bengal united if it was an independent state with a political link with Pakistan, but the congress leadership denounced it in fear of losing their control to the Muslim League majority, so this matter was not publicly raised by anyone. H. S. Suhrawardy, Dr. A. M. Malik, Fazlur Rahman, Abul Hasheem, and two more deputized by the Bengal Muslim League to negotiate the matter with Sarat Chandra Bose and Kiran Sanker Roy, the latter being the Congress president of Bengal Congress, who accepted the proposal, took up the matter with their high command, but the Indian Congress refused to agree to a united independent Bengal. Why?

Both India and Pakistan are developing nations with a high birth-rate, and a low standard of living and low per capita income. Yet Pakistan, with the completion of its third five-year-plan in 1969, within

twenty-two years of its existence, increased her per capita income in spite of her initial difficulties and growth of population. The number and type of industries, schools, colleges, universities, hospitals, rural health centers, buildings, ports, airports, vessels for inland and sea waters, roads, railway line, and airways, and the entire infrastructure for a developed economy mounted from near nil to over hundred percent. The material progress was so much visible that the transformation of these spheres went beyond recognition in spite of its limited resources and lack of skilled manpower. It was no work of Aladdin's lamp or miracle but undoubtedly the bounty of God obtained through human effort, zeal, and determination.

But certain things were lacking in this development. (1) The development in agricultural sector lagged behind, especially in the east with a permanent food deficit due to drought, flood, and cyclone. It was a country with an 80 percent agricultural population and 85 percent living in villages. (2) The gap between the rich and poor could not be narrowed appreciably because of the capitalist structure of industrial progress with a vast majority of agricultural and industrial workers remaining neglected though almost all the industries were based on agricultural produce like jute, cotton, tobacco, tea, sugarcane, etc. (3) Last but not least was the unequal development of East Pakistan, which contains the majority population and earned the maximum foreign exchange and national revenue in juxtaposition to West Pakistan.

In any progressive country, there is always a wide gap between the aspirations of the people and the achievement of its government, economic or otherwise. This may arise because people aspire, or they are promised, much more than can practically be achieved. Absence of aspiration would bring about only a stagnant or retrograde society. In the modern world, the economic gap between the developed and developing countries, between rich and poor, between have and have-nots, between regions, is so gaping that its removal hardly brooks any delay. But conflicting national, local and class interest, coupled with lack of wisdom and human feelings, always bar any effort to remove this gap. Pakistan is no exception to this.

The three drawbacks just mentioned above created a lot of bickering, resentment, and ill feeling among the people of Pakistan, especially between East and West. The tremendous progress made in the country could not be termed as balanced growth between the people and between the regions which the parties and opportunists fruitfully used to their benefit. The immediate big neighbor and power blocks were not also idle observers of this development. Before we can see how this changing wind turned into a tempest, two more factors need be dis-

cussed for correct appreciation of the development. First, the original demand for Pakistan was on the basis of a two-nation theory. Pakistan was to be a homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent where Muslims would order their political, economic, and social life on the pattern of Islam. Second, the political and constitutional framework of an ideological state where two wings of the country were geographically separated from one another could rule only through the democratic will of its people. Both these factors need separate treatment, as without them Pakistan can hardly justify its existence.

Ideology and Constitution of Pakistan

The concept of an Islamic state is an ideal for which Pakistan was established at a cost of about a million Muslim lives. Nine million more, sacrificing hearth and home in India, crossed into Pakistan as refugees; about 40 million more remained in far-flung areas of India to be treated as suspects and outcasts in all walks of life. It was more a revolution than a peaceful transfer of power. Given the good faith and sincere effort, much of the bitterness and blood of fellow human beings could have been saved before and after partition. Now the Muslims were free to order their lives according to the ideal of Islam to which they were pledged. The Islamic state, the first one established in the city of Medina by the Prophet Muhammad (p.u.h.)* about A.D. 670, was not exactly like the Greek city-states nor exactly like the modern states, but many things were held in common. Both the requisites of population and territory are very much there; so, also, the government and sovereignty. But there are peculiarities in an Islamic state that are a bit difficult for modern, Westernized thinking to comprehend.

There is no difference as to the branches of government, rather, the executive, legislative, judicial, i.e., all the branches with orderly financial arrangements, were very much present in the city-state of Medina, which gradually expanded to Mecca and throughout the Arab and non-Arab territories during the lifetime of the prophet (p.u.h.) and his successive four caliphs (representatives), Hazrat Abu Baker, Hazrat Omar, Hazrat Osman, and Hazrat Ali. The fundamental of such Government was the rule of the people but represented by those who were faithful and righteous. The people who would head or compose the Government would no doubt be chosen by the people, but they would be chosen

*(p.u.h.) peace upon him.

from among the faithful and righteous. Not anybody who is healthy, powerful, aged, wealthy, or educated could claim such leadership, but only the one or those possessed with the basic virtues could be given the responsibilities of governance. Faithful in the unity of the creator and creation and righteous in his words and deeds is an individual who is the cornerstone of such a government. The nucleus is the individual who is responsible not only to his people but also to his creator. So faith and righteousness, with a dual obligation to Allah and the people, are the characteristic of Islamic government in all branches of the executive, legislature, and judiciary.

The legislation, also, is for the ultimate good of the people, but man cannot be the final arbiter of good or evil. Since human knowledge is imperfect, human judgment is bound to be limited in time and space. So what may seem good today may prove bad or oppressive tomorrow; thus, man needs higher guidance. So the sources of Islamic law are: (1) Quran—the holy book revealed to the last prophet Muhammad (p.u.h.) completing the human code of life for all people for all times. (2) Hadith—the sayings and doings of the last prophet as aid to Quran. (3) Ijma—concensus of the jurists well versed in Quran and Hadith. (4) Qiyas—deductions from the established principles of laws as enunciated by the Holy Quran, Hadith and Ijma. (5) Ijtihad—fruit of research and culture by competent persons to cope with new situations. This fifth source has also been identified with Ijma by Muslim jurists. So Islamic law combines the temporal and spiritual experience and norms, which puts a limit to the power of the legislature. The Legislature cannot make and unmake any law to reduce God into a deity or to convert the deities into God, forgetting His revealed instructions. In other words legislature cannot travel beyond its jurisdiction where the laws are specifically propounded by the norms of the Holy Quran and the Sunnah. Its freedom of action is wide and unlimited in the residuary field not preempted by divine laws. Similarly, the judiciary is free from executive control with the aim of justice (A'dl) in the society irrespective of human fear or favor with ultimate responsibility to the Creator.

In financial matters, also, it was a combination of private ownership with legitimate share of the state in private property or wealth for the common good and welfare of the people, in the cause of the Creator—a middle course between capitalism and communism, free from exploitation and class struggle. A slow but sure process of economic justice, bereft of gluttony, hatred, war, and loss of freedom, which can achieve an equitable distribution and production of wealth for all.

The main difference with the popular concept of state and Islamic state lies in the "sovereignty." Here, the "S" of the people or the state

is subjected to the "S" of Allah—the creator, nourisher, evolver, and ultimate source of all power, the supreme, the benevolent, the merciful, and punisher. In the cosmic scheme, wordly human life and relationship are only transitory affairs, a stepping stone to the eternal life of hereafter, where we all, believers or disbelievers, will return to our Creator for reward or punishment. The people or their collective organization is only entrusted to represent Him on this earth under His laws and guidance; they are circumscribed by His power and cannot transgress His limits by claiming or exercising unflinching power of their Sovereign.

This is not the divine origin theory of sovereignty where it is reposed in or exercised by the king, nor is it like the "social contract" theory or "organic theory" or "theory of force" or "pluralist theory" of sovereignty. It is submitting the idiosyncrasies of man to the eternal and universal laws of providence. It is akin to the moving force of natural law as propounded by Sophocles or Cicero, followed up by its modern exponents, like Barker of England, de Tocqueville of America, and the rest.

From the very brief outline of the Islamic state, we can gather that emphasis is given more on the merit of the person than on the society, rather more on the society of righteous men than on the state because Islam and all monotheic religions believe in personal atonement. If the cells of the body are perfect, the body is free of illness. There cannot be a good society without its people practicing good; there cannot be an Islamic state without Muslims practicing Islam there. Although faith and righteousness are the sine qua non of good Muslims or good people, in Pakistan no such emphasis on personal character was given for running the executive, legislature, or judiciary. So an ideological state started functioning without much ideological dedication or bias; rather, bureaucrats, politicians, educationists, and other personages of the state machinery cared little for the ideal, though not hostile. This anomaly was carried on year after year, causing frustration among its vast majority of Islam-loving people, including Ulema, allowing alien and hostile ideologies to creep in and thrive. Even the most fertile and quality seed fails to yield a good crop without proper cultivation and care.

The English educated and those educated in religion, Ulema, were at loggerheads, and being distrustful of each other, hardly found common ground. Everybody fashionably talked of Islam, especially when he was in some need, but he hardly meant practice or translation into action either individually or collectively. Neither Islamic polity nor economy nor social conduct was given a fair trial in the state established for Islam, far less the promised brotherhood. It was the greatest tragedy for the Muslims of the subcontinent that they could not keep their pledge.

The heads of the state, the heads of the government, the political parties, the associations, the bureaucracy, the educated, the well-to-do, the Ulema, the teachers, the students, the workers and all have to share the blame, unequally though, for this gigantic failure. But it is better late than never. God has given ample time and warning to mend their conduct and fulfill their pledge to save themselves; there is still time before it is too late. The Holy Quran warns: "If you turn back He will substitute in your stead another people, then they would not be like you" 47:38.

I am not going into the merits of any system of society, whether it is capitalism or socialism or Islamic, but all that I honestly submit is that anyone who believes in any system should follow it in his personal and collective life, and there shall be freedom to advocate and practice one's own way of life without bloody conflict or persecution. The extremist idea of annihilation of one order by another on the plea that "mine is better" should give in to the spirit of free and persuasive coexistence.

The blood bath between communities, races, colors, classes, political or economic faiths, states, and blocks are all anachronistic, and they must be denounced and given a decent burial. The avenues for peaceful solution must be found for all old or new spheres of conflict whether it is war of liberation, class war, or world war. The animal spirit must yield place to the rational truth and justice; at least this much mankind owes to its future generation for a society worth living. While the majority has the privilege of its conviction, the door for others to follow their different ideas should be kept ajar so that fundamental human rights are not gagged by the majority or ruthless minority of the day.

The other dominant factor in the evolution of the present Pakistan is its political cum constitutional development. Here again, she suffers from the weakness of a developing country, i.e., without showing any signs of political maturity it revolved around personalities with their whims and ambitions—different from the state objectives or welfare of the people. Her basic weakness in the creation of a truncated, disfigured, and maimed Pakistan in two far-flung areas also contributed to this development. Jinnah, the Quaid-e-Azam, the president of the Muslim League, the first governor general, and the father of the nation died on September 11, 1948—just after the first anniversary of Pakistan. India had already occupied the better half of Kashmir by force; failing to make any further headway and apprehending Pakistan's further pressure on the basis of the Standstill Agreement, Nehru accepted the cease-fire and plebiscite on UN intervention in 1949 with British Governor General Lord Mountbatten still reigning in Delhi. The British Lord further retaliated against the Muslims of Pakistan and Mr. Jinnah, by allowing India to send her troops to Hyderabad, and to occupy it, violating Ni-

zam's intention to maintain status quo per those provisions laid down for the princely states in the Indian Independence Act. This was on the very date when Jinnah breathed his last and Pakistan was busy seeking a successor. Khawaja Nazimuddin of the Dacca Nawab family, a barrister, the chief minister of East Pakistan, was chosen as Jinnah's successor to the office of the governor general.

The Constituent Assembly, meant for framing the Constitution of the country, was busy finding out the acceptable framework to suit the needs of the two wings of the country in addition to the basic principles of an Islamic state. The Assembly, devoting more time to ordinary law-making, the new government facing the gigantic task of rehabilitating millions of refugees coming from India, and the food problem delayed framing the constitution. The Muslim League was the only party running the government. There was very little opposition in the Assembly or outside, but the leaders, untrue to their responsibilities or pledges, were more politicians than statesmen. Pioneered by Liaquat Ali Khan, the first prime minister, the Objective Resolution of the Pakistan constitution was accepted on July 3, 1949 in the Assembly on being approved by the eminent Ulema and public opinion. But the Basic Principles Committee Report, published in 1951, failed to reflect the consensus of the people, thus, the government met the first political opposition in the country. So the draft of the Basic Principles was not approved by the Assembly until 1953 in modified form, and the Constitution was still a far cry. The Consenbly was dissolved in 1954 by Ghulam Muhammad, the governor general. A new Consenbly was inducted in 1955. This new Consenbly actually succeeded in passing a Constitution in 1956 when Chowdhury Mohammad Ali was the premier of Pakistan. But much water had flown down the Indus and Ganges by then in the political firmament of Pakistan.

The new country, beset with its gigantic problems, like rehabilitation of refugees, the Kashmir liberation war, the monetary crisis due to devaluation of the pound by Britain and rupee by India, in 1948, and the food crisis in 1950 and the refusal of assets of undivided India to her also was threatened by actual invasion by India under the militant defense policy of Sardar Baldev Singh, backed by communal parties of India. India, already having entered into a secret defense pact with the United States also forced Pakistan to enter into a similar treaty in 1951 with the United States, preceded by massive food aid in 1950 by the United States for averting a famine in Pakistan. India also was successfully courting Russia simultaneously, while Pakistan remained one-track-minded mainly because of her aversion to communism and like-mindedness with the free world.

No invasion took place but a massive communal riot broke out in India to the horror of Pakistan and the world conscience, killing thousands of innocent men, women, and children all over India. There was slight repercussion of it in East Pakistan, followed by the Nehru-Liaquat Pact of amity and cooperation in 1951. This pact still remains unimplemented, primarily by India, although it ushered in a hope for new era of coexistence and good neighborliness.

In the same year, on October 16, Liaquat Ali Khan, the first prime minister of Pakistan, was assassinated in Rawalpindi while addressing a public meeting. Similarly Gandhi was shot dead in a public meeting in India on January 30, 1948. Sardar A. Rab Nishtar of NWFP was going to succeed Liaquat, but palace intrigues induced Khawja Nazimuddin, the governor general to climb down as premier with Ghulam Muhammad, a bureaucrat as governor general. The bullet that hit Liaquat also seemed to have hit the root of democratic tradition in Pakistan. The bureaucratic clique gradually got the upper hand, so much so that the same bureaucratic governor general dismissed the cabinet of Khawaja Nazimuddin just after the Assembly had adjourned on April 17, 1953 and inducted Pakistan's Ambassador in the United States, Mohamad Ali Bogra, as Premier.

In East Pakistan, the demand for Bengali, as one of the state languages, which started in 1948, has already gained tremendous popularity. Nurul Amen, the chief minister there, firing on language movement agitators, of which I was one, took a toll of several lives in February 1952, including a class fellow of mine in the university. Barkat was standing beside me in the medical hostel barracks when the bullet hit him. This factor, along with other political and economic failures, had brought the Muslim League to the rock bottom of its popularity.

A. K. Fazlul Huq, who practically retired from politics after his political elimination upon the creation of Pakistan, was looked up on as the personality who could redeem the Muslim League and political balance of the province. H. S. Suhrawardy, still out of power, was looked upon as another personality, who could redeem the politics of Pakistan. The latter had already organized an opposition party in the name of the Awami Muslim League, but the former had not yet revived his Krishak Praja party of Bengal in Pakistan. So we, the progressive Muslim Leaguers, who were fed up with palace intrigue and antipeople role of the Government in East Pakistan, gradually brought Fazlul Huq to the fold of the Muslim League. But our efforts to make Fazlul Huq the President of the Muslim League of East Pakistan in 1953 were foiled by Nurul Amin very ruthlessly in the council meeting at Dacca Curzon Hall. The most popular party was rendered a pocket organization of the people

in power—it became the Government party and not the people's party of prepartition days. I left the Muslim League platform then with its student branch of All East Pakistan Muslim Students League, of which I was then the president. The inevitable followed, the general election of 1954 was swept by the united front of Huq-Bhasani-Suhrawardy alliance with only nine seats for the Muslim League out of 309 in the East Pakistan Assembly.

In the light of the political upheaval in East Pakistan and in the interest of the bureaucratic rule in Centre, the Constituent Assembly was dissolved in October 1954 to centralize all power in the hand of the Governor General. This state of full democratic vacuum and autocratic hierarchy continued till June 1955 when a new Assembly was raised under public pressure and legal battle. While the battle of democracy was fought in the legal forum by Moulvi Tamizuddin Khan, speaker of the assembly in his famous constitutional case, which shook the entire authority and legal system of the country in 1954–1955, the political parties unfortunately played a subdued secondary role. This Assembly produced a constitution ultimately in 1956, based on the principles of Islam and democracy, incorporating a federal parliamentary system of Government for the central and provinces, merging all the four provinces of West Pakistan into one unit to be treated at par with East Pakistan, other unit. The principles of party and equality between two wings were guaranteed in the constitution along with the guarantee of fundamental human rights.

Among the political parties, the Muslim League had lost control in East Pakistan to the United Front. Its main components were the Awami League of Suhrawardy and Moulana Bhasani and Krishak Sramik party of A. K. Fazlul Huq and the Nizame Islam Party. In the West, the League became a pawn in the hands of the bureaucratic rulers, disconnected from the root of the masses, with the only other effective rival of Republican party, formed overnight again to suit the convenience of the rulers in Karachi. The unity of the united front, the strange combination of the Awami Muslim League, Republicans, and other parties did not last after an initial honeymooning and fell among themselves and against each other so much that governments were sworn in and dissolved overnight. A popular joke at that time was that a teacher asked a student in class the name of the prime minister of the country. The student asked the teacher: Which one, sir, the one who was premier in the morning or the one who was premier in the evening?

This crude joke continued even after the framing of the Constitution, which was yet to come into force mainly because of the unsatisfactory role of the political parties, on the one hand, and strong centrifugal

powers exercised by the ambitious bureaucratic clique, on the other. In this process economic development suffered, and so did the people's welfare. East Pakistan suffered more because of the predominance of West Pakistani officers in Government machinery who were actually running the Government. The lack of foresight and initiative of the political rulers of Dacca, who were mostly busy in keeping their chair (*godi*) intact, were no less responsible.

The Constitution was put into effect on March 23, 1956, to commemorate the day when the Pakistan Resolution was passed sixteen years before in Lahore. The credit goes to Chowdhury Mohammad Ali and his other colleagues for producing the first Constitution of the Islamic republic of Pakistan after eight years of her birth while India did it within five years.

In the meantime, Ghulam Mohammad, the governor general, had died an unceremonious death in 1955. The high office was succeeded again not by any politician but by another bureaucrat, Iskander Mirza, during the serious illness of Ghulam Mohammad. When the first Constitution was passed and put into effect, Iskander Mirza managed to elect himself as the first president under the Constitution by distribution of office and favors, holding out promises and threats, and breaking up new and old parties. Mohammad Ali Bogra held the post of premier till August 1955, and then came Chowdhury Mohammad Ali, who retained his position till 1957. H. S. Suhrawardy replaced Chowdhury Mohammad Ali but was soon replaced by I. I. Chundighar. The last premier under the 1956 Constitution was Malik Firoze Khan Noon, till October 6, 1958. So the country witnessed a quick succession of six premiers within a span of seven years, i.e., 1951–1958. In India, only one premier of the Congress Party ruled these years through Pandit Nehru.

In East Pakistan, after the fall of the Muslim League, the Nurul Amin Government, in the general election of 1954, the power was changing hands from the Awami League to the K.S.P. and again to the Awami League, followed by governor's rule in between. The United Front was no longer united, nor was the Awami League or K.S.P. within itself. The situation went from bad to worse until the Deputy Speaker of the Provincial Assembly, Shahed Ali, was killed in the Assembly Hall in a free fight between the Awami League and Krishak Sramik Party members in the hall itself in October 1958. Abu Hussain Sarkar of the United Front ruled for fifteen months without facing the Assembly, and Ataur Rahman Khan of the Awami League ruled for twenty-one months with intermittent interference from the Center and from his own Camp followers, led by Mujibur Rahman.

In West Pakistan, the four provinces were no exception to the rule

of changes in spite of Muslim League majority in the Assembly. In Punjab, the popular Government of Nawab Iftikhar Ahmed Khan of Mamdot fell prey to internal intrigue, followed by governor's rule and a general election of 1951. After victory in the election, the Muslim League elected Mian Mamtaz Mohd Khan Daulatana as its chief. But because of the anti-Ahmadiya movement, he lost his position when martial law was imposed to bring the patricidal blood bath to an end. Upon the lifting of martial law, Malik Feroz Khan Noon was nominated the chief minister without enough following in the Assembly. Soon thereafter, on the merger of the province, Dr. Khan Sahib was made the chief minister, who raised overnight the new Republican party in 1956 with the blessings of Iskandar Mirza, then the president of Pakistan, as successor to Ghulam Muhammad. In spite of the lack of majority in the Assembly, central connivance enabled Abdur Rashid Khan, then Muzaffar Ali Qizilbash, all of the Republican Party, to continue the minority rule—once intervened by President's rule in the unit of West Pakistan. In Frontier Province, of course, there was only one chief minister, Sardar Rashid Khan, after Abdul Qayum Khan, till the merger. This Rashid Khan was serving as inspector general of police when he succeeded Qayum Khan, who was elevated to the Centre. But again the Province of Sind has a checkered history of having seven chief ministers between 1947 and 1956 with tripos to Ayub Khuro in 1947, 1951, and 1955. The other notables were Pir Ilahi Bux, Kazi Fazlullah, Md. Yusuf Harun, and Pirzada Abdus Sattar, with one general election in 1953.

The Republican party Chief Minister Dr. Khan Sahib was stabbed to death, followed by instable Governments. The country as a whole was also economically hard up for lack of industrial, commercial, and agricultural development, rather for lack of proper planning, guidance and activization. The inevitable result of any weak or unstable Government is corruption, favoritism, inefficiency, repression, and lack of direction and purpose, which reflected in all facets of Pakistan life during this period. The country was ripe for a change either democratically, through election, or otherwise.

The election was announced, constituencies were delimited, voters' lists were being finalized, parties were feverishly engaged in their election campaigns, people were seeing the light of solution of political malady. But an ambitious Iskandar Mirza lay in wait to assure his autocratic future; he seized the opportunity of economic and political confusion reigning in the country. He abrogated the Constitution, dissolved the National and Provincial assemblies, banned the parties, and declared martial law in Pakistan with the help of the army on October 7, 1958. Gen. Md. Ayub Khan, Mirzas's main accomplice, was no longer the

person to play second fiddle, so he boldly appeared on the scene to accomplish his lifelong ambition. With the help of his fellow generals, he ushered out Mirza to a safe distance in London to overtake the position of both president and chief martial law administrator. On October 27, 1958, the second bloodless coup d'état took place in a month without a shot. The aspirations that the self-seeking politicians failed to raise in the people by democratic means were roused by the general with drastic steps against corruption, economic rot, and prostitution of political power, with promises for economic and political reforms of far-reaching consequences.

In the words of the general himself, the cause for takeover was:

The period between Liaquat Ali Khan's death and 1958 was distressing. Not only was the central Govt. at loggerheads with the provinces, but a great deal of intrigue and dogfighting was going on within the central government itself. A civil servant who had become Finance Minister at the time of Independence elevated himself to the position of Governor General. Another turned himself overnight from Secretary to Government (a civil service post) to Minister for Finance. All it required was rewriting the designation on the name plates outside their offices. The politicians were naturally dependent on permanent services, but the more powerful among the service had developed political ambitions of their own. Everyone seemed to have a group of his own and his sole occupation was to grind the axe regardless of whether the country was ground to pieces in the process.

The general proved himself to be no exception to his own observations about others in services about political ambitions of their own.

General Ayub, by then field marshal, appointed commissions for various reforms like land, pay and services, education, revenue, law, food, and agriculture, finance, and the Constitution. Justice Shahabuddin of the Supreme Court headed the constitutional commission. Among others, I had the opportunity to exchange views with the members at Dacca and Chittagong informally on the future Constitution of the country. They produced a report after touring the country and interviewing a cross-section of the people and experts in May 1961. Besides the presidential form and strong center that they recommended, hardly anything else was accepted in the Constitution produced by Ayub Khan in March 1962.

A presidential type of Government for Pakistan or any developing country was acceptable to a Parliamentary form of Government, for

which the country was feverishly canvassing then. Parliamentary democracy requires a people to acquire the training, education, tradition, and maturity for running the Government in an organized and patient manner. Presidential form, in its true sense, with proper checks and balances as in the United States, France, Egypt, Indonesia, Turkey, and Yugoslavia, not only gives stability to Government for 4 to 5 years, but it also brings sanity and political equilibrium in the vociferous emotionalism in developing countries, where the gap between the aspirations of the people and viability of the nation is always bound to be wide. No one can say that democracy lies only in Parliamentary form and not in presidential form and vice versa. But whichever is run best is the best.

The one-man Constitution given by Ayub Khan, which already had elected him as president by "yes or no" votes of the 80,000 electoral college members of Basic democracy, envisaged a unique system with practically all the powers of executive, legislative, and finance rolled into one authority, i.e., president. It was more a presidential system of an authoritarian socialist state than the presidential system of a liberal democratic country. The constitution was republican in name without Islamic character; fundamental rights were neither guaranteed nor made justiciable; political parties were barred; parity theory of justice between East and West wings was given lip service; and adult franchise for election of the Members of Assemblies or president was negated. The country again was plunged into a constitutional controversy, a controversy between direct democracy and controlled basic democracy. The nation was again at the crossroads.

Constitutional Opposition

In spite of some good points in the constitution, a countrywide movement burst out against it as soon as martial law was lifted, and the Constitution came into operation from June 7, 1962. I was elected to the first National Assembly under this Constitution by the Basic Democrats without any party ticket, but there was a pledge to the people to Democratize the Constitution. I was one of the chief spokesmen for the opposition in the Assembly. The important personalities, like Md. Ali Bogra, Fazlul Kader Choudhury, and Khan A. Sabur from East Pakistan and Z. A. Bhutto and others of West Pakistan, breaking their pledge, joined hands with President Ayub and formed the Government. Actually, the vast majority of members decided earlier in Pakistan House at Rawalpindi that they wouldn't participate in the Government before the Constitution was democratized, at least as to major issues like adult franchise, fundamental rights, guarantee for parity, and Islamization of the Constitution. Mohammad Ali Bogra actually opened the blistering attack on the floor of the House against the provisions of the Constitution and its real maker—"Rasputin, sitting now in the hills of Nathiagalli," meaning Manzur Quader, who did neither seek election nor was taken in the post-Constitution cabinet. But before a week of the session was over, President, who by now was not only a field marshal but also a marshal in politics, formed the cabinet with Md. Ali Bogra, Fazlul Kader Choudhury, Wahiduzzaman, Abdus Sabur Khan, Abudul Monem Khan, Z. A. Bhutto, and some more from the Assembly with formal promises to amend the Constitution as and when required on minor points. Moulavi Tamijuddin Khan was elected speaker of the Assembly unopposed. And so were Abul Quasem and Afzal Cheema elected Deputy speakers of the Assembly. To avoid any split in our united strength, I withdrew my nomination for Deputy speaker in favor of Abul Quasem.

Justice Munir, minister of law, and Md. Shoaib, minister of finance, were taken from outside the Assembly, and the president himself held the defense portfolio.

Another opportunity was lost to have a permanent Constitution for the country, as the country was divided on two courses: democratize and Islamize the Constitution through the limited powers of the Assembly gradually or totally abrogate this Constitution and replace it by a democratic one. The "nine leaders" of East Pakistan, outside the Assembly, called for a total nullification of the Ayub Constitution. The opposition leaders inside the Assembly preferred amendments to it immediately. Through great efforts inside the Assembly and public pressure outside it, we were able to get the First Amendment to the Constitution passed and enacted in 1963 incorporating guarantee of the fundamental rights and certain Islamic provisions. Political parties were also allowed to function by an Act of the Assembly in 1962. Certain other amendments were also accepted by the president, which were passed in the first and second National Assembly, gradually democratizing the Constitution in response to the wishes of the people and members of the Assembly. I had to play quite an active role in the Assembly in bringing about this position of viability of the Constitution by refusing personal offers of gain. But the politicians who were debarred by EBDO (Elective Bodies Disqualification Order) or PRODA (Public and Representative Offices Disqualification Act—a Pre Ayub Act) or the others who could not or did not get elected in the electoral college system, like Suhrawardy and Sk. Mujib of the Awami League, Nurul Amin of the Pakistan Democratic Movement, Choudhury Md. Ali of Nezame Islam, Moulana A. Hamid Khan Bhasani and Abdul Wali Khan of NAP, K. Nazimuddin, Mian Mumtaz Daulatana, and Khan Abdul Qayum Khan of the Muslim League were not happy at the loss of their power and influence, which most of them used to enjoy in the musical chair merry-go-round of the parliamentary system. So the opposing and disgruntled politicians had a go at the presidential system by setting up revered Fatima Jinnah, sister of M. A. Jinnah against Md. Ayub Khan in the 1964 presidential election. The vast majority of the people were in favor of Miss Jinnah, and thus they elected their 80,000 representatives to vote for her, but the mechanism of the electoral college was vulnerable to so much corruption and pressure, especially in West Pakistan, that Ayub Khan was reelected as president, which virtually negated the people's wishes in 1965.

It is worthwhile to mention two more incidents, the first one the banning of the Jamaate Islami Party by the Government; another is the purported removal of difficulties by the president allowing the ministers

to retain their seats in the Assembly—which was barred in the presidential system of Constitution. The first effort was challenged in court. The High Court of West Pakistan upheld the order of the Government, but the High Court of East Pakistan declared the order illegal. I had the privilege to prepare and appear in these cases along with the illustrious legal luminary, A. K. Brohi up to Supreme Court, the highest judicial organ of the country, which ultimately declared the banning of political party order as illegal and inoperative in *Moulana Moududi v. Pakistan* case. This was a victory of the democratic forces against authoritarian interference and suppression. The other matter was also tested in the court of law, which also nullified the presidential order disqualifying the ministers to retain their Assembly seats in the case of *Fazlul Quader Chowdhury v. Abdul Hoq*. The authority and independence of the judiciary was thus firmly established to protect individual and collective rights against executive excesses under the umbrella of the Constitution.

The country no doubt made tremendous progress in economic development, though not so much in the agricultural sector. But East Pakistan, being not given her right share in economic development, remained a constant breeding ground for discontent. Our great neighbor India never remained inactive throughout these years with its greater resources and pull in the international sphere. She went on fomenting the Pakhtoonistan demand of self-exiled Congress leader Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan in the West. And in the East, the demand for more autonomy against West Pakistan rule was magnified by her very cunning and shrewd moves, so that the integrity and strength of Pakistan might be weakened. The stable rule in Pakistan, with growing economic and military might during Ayub regime, became the headache of Indian strategists, especially after the Sino-Indian war of 1962 where India was mauled very disgracefully by China.

I have been an associate of Jamaate Islami since 1955. In the frustrating political situation in Pakistan, the enlightened writings of Moulana Moudodi inspired a ray of hope. Jamaat was in a very infant state in the East with Moulana Abdur Rahim as its chief. The well-knit party raised a hope of the ideal of Pakistan, though it was not able or aspiring for power at that time. After the exit of the Muslim League from the Government, the parties that mattered at that time were Republican in the West and the Awami League and the Krishak Sramik Party in the East; the Muslim League and the Jamaat could be said to be the only national party—the former had fallen from grace, and the latter was confined to its limited cadre only.

When I returned from England as a full-fledged barrister in 1958, I found all political activities soon banned under the martial law of Ayub

Khan. One who has tasted the bitter fruits of politics would never be allowed to stay away from it. Earlier I formed and worked through a child welfare organization named Sabuj Sena, and this time it was a social welfare organization of Tameere Millat. The journalistic interest was confined within the publication of the *Ittehad*, a daily newspaper. This also had to be closed down for press curbs of martial law and financial difficulties. My effort at this time to establish a jute mill for Barisal only ended with the loss of my savings, while others prospered through it.

Unlike other industrialists, the Bawanys of Karachi were devoted to the cause of Islam, and that is how I got close to them, but I never could take any undue advantage from them or others, though I found that other political elements were thriving on the doles of industrialists, mostly supplied backdoor, during and after martial law, whether they agreed with their program or not. This fishy transaction was more rampant in the labor front where the interests of the workers were bought and sold secretly by some mill owners and labor leaders. The honest labor force was actually being used as a bastion of power not only by the trade union movement but also by the political parties. This axis of industrial, political, and labor leaders, behind the back of the workers, really acted as an instrument of exploitation in developing countries.

So I decided to organize a labor welfare union on the basis of ideal rather than economic expediency when I became a member of the National Assembly in 1962. Not only did I voice the grievances of labor on the floor of the Assembly, I also formed Sramik Kalyan Union with the help of barrister Kurban Ali, Nuruzzaman, and Waheed Khan. My visits to the Geneva ILO office for UCACEP in 1963 made me feel more for these helpless have-nots. The veteran labor leaders like Fayez Ahmed Aftab Ali, having almost retired, the new labor leaders were getting physically violent and morally degraded in their operation. Myself with Farid Ahmed and Korban tried to remove some bad trends in the labor movement, but our task remained incomplete. More incomplete was our services for the much too neglected agricultural labor force of Pakistan or elsewhere. When I was elected to the National Assembly of Pakistan in 1962, I again became an associate of Jamaat. I was a spokesman of not only Jamaat but also of the entire opposition with Sardar Bahadur Khan, Mian Bari, Afzal Cheema, Yusuf Khatak, Mufti Mahmud, Khair Bux Murri, Ataullah Khan Mengal, Muhamed Hussain Chatah, and others of the West and Farid Ahmed, Moshiur Rahman, Abul Quasem, Mohbubul Huq, Qamaruzzaman, Mizanur Rahman, Abdul Huq, Begam Sirajunnessa Chodhury, Rokaya Anwar, and others of the East.

During this period, I extensively toured the whole of West Pakistan,

met the people, and addressed the meetings of public, bar libraries, students, and press from Khyber to Karachi. The warmth and respect of those people I can never forget. I could not become a member of Jamaat, but I was more than a member to them. I agreed with their creed but differed in policy. And when we met again on the same platform in 1971 on both creed and policy, it was rather too late.

In 1962, I sponsored a bill in the Assembly with the consent of Moulana Maududi and opposition leaders for Islamization and democratization of the Ayub Constitution, though it met the same fate as any other private or opposition member's bill in any parliament. The theme of the amendment was manifested in the First Amendment of that Constitution passed in 1963. Another effort also remained a dream. I introduced a bill in 1963 to abolish beggary, gambling, alcohol, and prostitution with measures to rehabilitate the affected ones. In the election of 1965, when the Basic Democrats defeated me due to the corruption and weakness inherent in the system, that bill was also defeated for good. Though my electoral opponent became speaker and acting president, too, those vices continued unabated in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. My resolution to declare Friday as an official holiday like other Muslim countries and the bill to extend the territorial waters at that time was also on the anvil. I am no longer there to voice the demand of the people, but I hope and pray that they all will be accepted one day.

Feverishly reequipped by Western powers and Russia against China, India wanted a practice battle against Pakistan, which they had in Rann of Kutch, with a bitter taste.

One of the Chinese generals who was in command of the NEFA operation, later as governor of Canton, while hosting our national delegation, was telling us on a dinner table during my visit to China in 1963: "Indians are such great fighters that we cannot catch up with them when they start fleeing." Actually, in the NEFA and Assam areas, the Indian army and civilians created a record not of fighting but of fleeing in 1962. I told him: "General, don't you think that next time they can fight better on the Himalayas with the submarines supplied by her friends?" There was a roar of laughter when the interpreter translated it to him.

Practically the entire opposition united under COP (combined opposition parties), a nine-point program that nominated Miss Fatima Jinnah to contest president Ayub. I was one of the organizers of the COP election campaign, starting from village-level Basic Democrats, and was an architect in her nomination and drawing the program along with Khawja Nazimuddin, Choudhury Md. Ali, Mia Momtaz Daulatana,

Moulana Bhasani, SK. Mujib, Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, Nurul Amin, Mian Tafaail Mohammed, and other national leaders. No doubt victory was ensured for President Ayub in the mechanism of Basic democracy, but it did not really reflect the popular will. It was not a fight to win but a fight to restore democracy through constitutional means as opposed to violent or military coup d'état. For that limited purpose and for ventilating the genuine demands of East Pakistan in particular and the people as a whole, within the national framework of one Pakistan, the COP policy was successful. From East Pakistan we suggested the names of Khawaja Nazimuddin, Nurul Amin, and Moulana Bhasani. Mvi. Tamizuddin Khan died a while ago, but the Awami League was opposed to all of them, and we found only in Miss Jinnah an agreement of all except Jamate Islami. General Azam's name was also opposed by NAP and Jamaat. I was summoned by Choudhury Md. Ali and Nawabzada Nasrullah to prevail upon my Jamaat colleagues to agree upon Miss Jinnah's candidacy. Khawaja Nazimuddin and Nurul Amin also had conveyed the same message to me. I flew between Karachi and Lahore for hectic consultations with Miss Jinnah, Jamaat leaders, and others. Ultimately, the difference was resolved, and Jamaat accepted her as the COP nominee as a part of their political strategy.

There was a mass upsurge against the Ayub regime and in favor of our nomination both in the West and East. I remember, on the first leg of election campaigns, Mohtarama Jinnah and various COP leaders of East and West Pakistan, including General Azam Khan, Moulana Bhasani and SK. Mujib traveled from Dacca to Chittagong by train, and it took us nearly twenty-four hours to cover the distance, which normally takes only 8 hours. The public enthusiasm and outburst of popular support were so great that no midway station let the train leave without seeing or hearing their popular candidate. The crowd was on the rail lines, on the platform, on treetops, on rooftops, and in every conceivable place to have a glimpse of the leader, sister of Quaide Azam, with placards, festoons, garlands, slogans, and applause. This enthusiasm also was reflected in the election of the electoral college, as practically everyone had to swear support to the COP candidate to get elected. But once the members were elected, this mandate of the people was not respected for obvious reasons, which ultimately resulted in the overthrow of the system after the defeat of the popular will. While I marked the shortcomings of the Basic Democracy system, the shortcomings of the opposition parties, also, to which I belonged, did not escape my notice. Both had their own merits, but both suffered from some fundamental defects, which I will narrate later.

Now with the victory of President Ayub, India got scared; their

veteran leader Jawaharlal Nehru had expired. The direct link between the commitments of Nehru for a plebiscite in Kashmir having been lost, the Kashmiris became restive and started their movement for emancipation. The popular armed uprising in Kashmir in 1965 was in natural course supported by Pakistan. The Indian military experts and political strategists found it to be the right moment to militarily crush the growing strength of Pakistan, which, during the stable rule of Ayub Khan, had grown.

On the night of September 6, India launched an open aggression of West Pakistan while the United States, Pakistan's first ally of mutual defense pact, failed to come to her practical aid. But the valiant Pakistanis, with the help of her friends, especially, Turkey, Iran, Indonesia, China and Saudi Arabia, gave a good account of their fighting mettle during the seventeen-day war. India did not touch East Pakistan to show her sympathy and distinction superficially, but, internally, her strategy was to isolate East from West. We all decried the aggression and thus as patriotic Pakistanis, supported the Government both by action and speeches to undo the long-cherished Indian design of destroying or maiming Pakistan. It was the plan, like that of Hitler, to swallow all its neighbors, to establish supreme authority or leadership. Not everyone is conscious of this Indian plan; otherwise, nations would not have condoned her invasion of Kashmir, Hyderabad, Junagadh states and Portuguese or French territories on the subcontinent.

Premier Chou en Lai of China nicely put it to us while we were visiting China in 1963 as Pakistan's delegation to Chinese National day in a dinner thrown by General Raza, Pakistan ambassador in China. Chou en Lai: Nehru was introducing me to other delegates of the Bandung Conference as if he were big brother of Asia, but he soon found out, that 700 million Chinese people are not meant to play second fiddle to India. The premier's words to the above effect clearly indicated that India's ambition to take up the leadership of Asia was palpable. To establish that leadership next to China, Pakistan was her number-one enemy. Failing to achieve by direct war, she did not give up the hope. And after the Russian piloted Taskhand Declaration Ayub became the target of criticism even of his own party men, India took full advantage of the war-shattered economy and political shakeup in Pakistan. In the West she went on injecting coramine to Pakhtoonistan movement. In the East she was bottle feeding the secession movement. The cold war continued till the internal politics of Pakistan became more confused and extremist forces went overboard. NDF had turned into PDM, the Awami League had framed six-point program. Bhutto, Asghar Khan, Wahiduzzaman—one-time loyal associates of Ayub—gone hostile, Jamaate

Islam out to oust Ayub on plea of saving Islam, the Muslim League still divided into bitter two—there was mutiny in the ship in the midst of the stormy sea. I found out in my humble way that the political struggle for power would sink the ship. So even in this desperate hour of fall, I sided with the captain in a bid to save the ship from external storm and internal chaos. I rejoined the Muslim League in 1968, during the bitterest political controversies of the country, no better than the dark days of 1958.

The country's politicians were all out to oust Ayub and throw away his Constitution before the next election due in 1969. The constitutional vacuum is always a dangerous thing, which only invites unscrupulous people to adventurism and chaos, resulting in suffering and sacrifice of the people. When the process of democratization had already started and constitutional amendments were also being passed and considered, the tempo of the people should not have been diverted to abrogation of the Constitution. The Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) was converted into the DAC (Democratic Action Committee) to accommodate extreme views of abrogation held by the National Awami Party and the Awami League. Both extremist groups had already taken recourse to violent means. Awami League leader Mujibur Rahman had announced his six points and virtually carried East Pakistan with him. The six points, secretly okayed by American and Indian diplomats, were not approved by the DAC.

His involvement in Agartala conspiracy case made things more confused and desperate. India's design to aid secession of East Pakistan through armed uprising of Bengalee forces became crystal clear in this case. But the way the case was conducted created reverse reaction in the mind of East Pakistanis.

Awami League leadership, instead of being looked down upon as a conspirator with a foreign country, made progress out of this case and rallied a big thrust against the Government of Ayub itself. Pro-Chinese Moulana Bhasani was also all out to dislodge Ayub despite his age and despite the people's apprehension that he might ultimately fall ill, as he did during the last days of the presidential election in 1964. Besides his NAP, which was also divided into two, like the Awami League and the Muslim League, he was organizing the peasants and labor in his bid to overthrow Ayub. His men started physical persecution of men—openly in so-called peoples court. Demand for release of Mujib from the conspiracy case was also taken up by him. In the meantime, the unity of opposition under DAC also added momentum to the people's emotion and frenzy. The ensuing election was threatened to be boycotted. Arrests in the West of Bhutto, Farid Ahmed, etc., and unrest in both wings

brought about a situation of lawlessness and chaos. There was demand for a roundtable conference to sort out the constitutional and other political problems before the coming election. The Muslim League party of Ayub Khan was also split from within. Some of the ardent supporters and erstwhile henchmen, having fallen from grace, decided to pressure their masters at this critical juncture. The result was confusion.

Ayub Khan could act in two ways: throw the country in the hand of martial law again or respond to popular wishes. He responded and agreed to a round-table conference (RTC) of all political parties and leaders. Bhutto and Bhasani refused to attend the conference, which they suggested, but others agreed on the condition that Sheikh Mujib should be allowed to participate. The country was heading for a booming crush to wipe out its own existence, exactly what India has been looking for and working for, for decades. Ayub could see the international conspiracy of India and other powers, so he abdicated his ideas and convictions on which he had been ardently working to build up the country for a decade, abdicated in favor of the would-be decisions of RTC, and ultimately abdicated his presidency, announcing that he would not seek reelection.

The historic RTC started in Rawalpindi. Mujib was released and brought to the conference table on withdrawal of the conspiracy case against him and others. The extreme left of Bhasani and Bhutto did not participate. Again, Ayub gave in as his Muslim League party was also in favor of democratization of the constitution. Among many demands, there was consensus on only two major points. The country would have parliamentary democracy and adult franchise; the National Assembly would be summoned immediately to incorporate these provisions; and election would take place soon thereafter. The demands like the six points of the Awami League and breaking up of one unit of The National Awami party, etc., could be considered and acted upon by the new Assembly when Ayub Khan no longer was their president. He was not actually willing to preside over the liquidation of one unit or for that matter the unity of Pakistan.

Election or Fascism

What more could the country expect to have by mutual agreement from an all-powerful president. The iron man, who started as a military dictator in 1958, gave up gracefully as a democratic statesman in 1969. The president summoned Manzur Quader and me as constitutional experts to prepare the draft to be placed before the ensuing Assembly. We were given only a week's time to recast the entire Constitution from presidential to parliamentary type, from limited franchise to adult franchise, with more autonomy for the provinces and more democratic provision as objectives—practically a new and fresh Constitution. It was a herculean task no doubt, but we worked day and night. The law minister, S. M. Zafar, and law secretary, Justice Gul, and staff of the law ministry and all other ministers, like finance, planning, etc., were always available with the answers to our queries and problems. The pattern we followed was the 1956 Constitution, but the improvement it needed was tremendous to cope with the changing popular demands of East Pakistan in particular and the people in general. We were conscious of our responsibility and of the mood the country was passing through. We read and wrote, we drafted and redrafted, we discussed and argued, and ultimately, on the fifteenth day, the draft was completed. We were surprised that we could make it in so short a time but happy that it was well done and the country need not wait for it. Finding that the draft was approved, being printed, and the Assembly was being summoned, I left Pindi for Dacca.

But a catastrophe was awaiting the country. Mujib, who himself and his advisers had agreed upon the consensus of RTC, who had also promised to the president personally before leaving Pindi to abide by the consensus, on reaching Dacca, resigned from his commitment for reasons not known to us then but known to the world now. As a result,

the DAC, of which the Awami League was a component, and the DAC, which got Mujib freed from a conspiracy case, and which still stood by the consensus of RTC, was dissolved, with the opposition bewildered and flabbergasted. The extremists who remained outside the RTC seized the opportunity and backed Mujib in his unholy breach of faith. Labor, students, and public again were called out in the streets to violate law and burn national assets and properties of political adversaries and persecute people publicly, to close down industries, schools, colleges, universities, and factories. The Government could not control the frenzied mob rule in spite of the release of Mujib and RTC consensus. The president could not watch over the liquidation of the Government and the state.

He called for the army and handed over the power to C in C General Yahya Khan on March 22, 1969. Again a martial law, with abrogation of the Constitution, gagged the country to silence. The leaders neither lifted their little fingers nor opened their big mouths to challenge the authority of martial law. Possibly they knew it or they wanted it.

What the president should have done was to hand over power under his constitution to the speaker of the Assembly who was from East Pakistan and call the armed forces to aid the civil authority in restoring law and order under emergency till the elections were held. But it appears that no election was possible, as Moulana Bhasani, Bhutto and Mujib declared: nothing to do with the election and nothing doing with the constitutional amendments. Election or no election, there would have been a blood bath, violence, and civil war. So the unlucky inevitable followed.

Mujib and other accused persons, though, were free from the Agartala conspiracy case, but it was no acquittal for them nor for India. It was a conspiracy of India at Agartala to supply arms and aid for an uprising in East Pakistan for complete secession from West Pakistan. Some junior officers of the army, navy and air force were to carry out the plan with the help of Mujib, of course, India backing. They were ready for action when President Ayub was touring East Pakistan in 1967, but it was detected by intelligence in time, and the plan failed.

The trial at Dacca was on its way toward completion when the countrywide agitation of opposition parties took a violent turn, forcing the president to sit with the opposition in RTC on withdrawal of the case against all accused persons. After the failure of all the Indian plans like politico-economic confrontation, Kashmir and Junagadh annexation, Runn of Kutch and 1965 wars, Agartala conspiracy, and continuous genocide of Indian Muslims, she worked upon a different strategy and scheme this time. In the public meeting at Dacca Race Course on June

7, 1972, it was confessed by Mujibur Rahman that he had prior understanding with India about her possible aid in the liberation of Bengal and that he never did believe in Pakistan and worked for free Bangladesh since 1947!

Let us conclude this chapter with events that followed after the martial law of 1969. General Yahya took over as president and chief martial law administrator, who promised a new Constitution and a new election. Later, the Legal Framework Order (LFO) was promulgated as the outline of the coming Constitution and election. Political activities were restored from January, 1970 to enable the parties to prepare for election. The president did not belong to any party, but the administration backed some parties, flirted with some leaders, and ridiculed others. Six points of the Awami League was in conflict with LFO, but it was allowed to be militantly propagated under army protection. The secessionists and Indian agents worked under the cover of the six-pointers, who never openly said anything about independent Bengal but harped bitterly on the hatred against West Pakistan and injustices done by them in East Pakistan. The national party of the Muslim League was now divided into three groups, only one supporting the Government (Qayum group) but opposing Bhutto; one supporting the Awami League (Council group), and one opposing General Yahya (Convention or Ayub group) and the Awami League. So the Muslim League could not generate confidence in people. Bhasani NAP was playing various discordant tunes with violent elements of pro-Peking leanings, Wali NAP was holding its forts in NWFP, and Baluchistan with Pakhtoon support and pro-Moscow leaning, and PDP, with Nurul Amin as its head, was trying to play a middle note with blessings from some generals and West Pakistan veterans. Jamaate Islami was trying to grow its roots deeper both in East and West in opposition to the Government and the Awami League. Bhutto's People's party was sweeping the rural and urban population with both socialistic and democratic promises of *Kapra-roti-makan*, for the ever neglected commonmen of the West Pakistan. The components of DAC or COP were split up; so were the supporters of Government parties. New alliances of strange bedfellows with new and old parties with catchy slogans and lofty promises went berserk in the election campaign.

It may be mentioned here that the six points of the Awami League were supposed to be the unalterable last word in their Bible. But while rejecting the agreement of the RTC of 1969 they took up the popular demand of one man, one vote, which would give East Pakistan absolute majority in the Assembly as Eastern wing has about 55 percent population of the entire country, thus denying the late Hussain Shahid Suh-

awardy's principle of equal partnership of two wings through the parity. Gen. Yahya Khan accepted this principle and allowed more seats for the Eastern wing in his LFO and election laws; Yahya Khan also broke the one unit of West Pakistan, once supported by Suhrawardy and now denounced by his followers, into former four provinces with separate assemblies to be elected. Autonomy of the provinces, including that of East Pakistan, was also accepted in principle.

The campaign started with public meetings and rallies in the East. The starting point was the historic Paltan Maidan of Dacca. The first meeting was held by Jamaate Islam, but their meeting was brick batted; their workers were mercilessly assaulted and killed by the supporters of the militant Awami League and NAP. People were terrified at the first example of democratic tolerance, all in front of the police, with the martial law assurance of protection. The meeting of the PDP and the Muslim League also met a similar fate in Paltan. Just to give an example of how fascism was creeping in under the cover of martial law, I may narrate my first-hand experience.

When one of the Jamaat workers showed me the injuries on his person after the meeting and narrated the incident of attack on the public meeting, I told him off as a coward. But when our first meeting of the Muslim League took place in Paltan with Fazlul Quader Choudhury, successor of Ayub as president of the party, presiding, the secessionist elements started shouting, carrying away the loudspeakers, brick batting and using all other fascist methods to break up our meeting. The meeting did continue with the help of our workers till the end. But when we started dispersing, there was again an organized attack of brick bats from the top of the stadium by groups of armed elements. Mr. Choudhury undauntedly walked through brick bats and charges of the miscreants. I, ex-Minister Fakhruddin, Ex MNA, Shahidullah, with some others, were behind them but were chased in a different direction by unruly elements. Before we could reach our car, Shahidullah was physically assaulted with a head injury; his watch and valuables were snatched away. The rest of us somehow took shelter, unhurt, in the PIA office of Motijheel, with rowdyism going on outside unabated for more than an hour. What was more shocking was that out of the persons arrested by the police on duty, thirty of our victimized boys were arrested out of forty to face trial in martial law court!

The war of secession had started; organised groups were out to create chaos to secure support for their cause with threats and violence till the end of the election. We went to address meetings in various districts but found the same fascist trend everywhere. In Comilla, again we were attacked after the meeting, and I received a head injury from

the shower of stones thrown on us, and Mr. Fazeul Quader Choudhury was hit by a brick. Even during the election campaign, the opponents of the Awami League were terrorized, their offices ransacked or burned, workers beaten, public meetings disturbed, voters threatened. Two of my own public meetings were attacked with hired armed gangs, but no effective police or army protection was given there or thereafter. Yahya Khan's state machinery was all the time repeating through its publicity media that a fine democratic and peaceful atmosphere prevailed during the election. The same type of rowdyism continued in Dacca as well where Mujib was contesting. His rival candidate, Begum Amena, had to withdraw from election to save her life after several rowdy incidents on herself and her workers in Dacca city.

What actually happened in the election itself is more amazing. A tremendous amount of publicity through press, paper, posters, festoons, and pamphlets flooded the country in favor of six points and against the Muslim League and other parties. They spread venom and bitterness of discord between the two wings and promised everything to the voters under the sun. They promised rice at twenty Rupees per maund instead of 40 Rupees, writing paper at 37 paise instead of 50 paise, mustered oil at 3 Rupees in place of 4 Rupees per seer, sugar at 1 Rupee, instead of 2 Rupees per seer, also higher wages and employment, more industries and business, i.e., the milk and honey would simply flow if they were voted into power. Their publicity was so expensive and extensive that nobody could account for the funds spent.

Their workers, students, and followers were so desperate and terroristic that nobody could oppose their militant mood. They combined in them all the fascist traits of publicity, pressure, and force of Hitler, so much so that on the voting day they had the monopoly of election agents, polling and presiding officers, and voters in the booths. Votes of the aged, disabled, or ill were found cast before their arrival; anti-Awami League voters were not allowed to come inside the booth, or if they came, they found their votes cast, polling officers themselves put the stamp on the ballot papers before the symbol of "Boat" marked for their candidates; opposing election agents or independent polling officers were chased out of the polling booth; and last but not least, ballots of all absentee voters were taken and put inside the ballot box. This is what actually happened in the name of democracy almost everywhere, while the army and police helplessly, or purposely, stood by. Some voters had cast as many as a dozen votes without much trouble or check. Indian-backed Hindus all rallied at the polling booths for the Awami League. They cast votes of even a dead man or woman. I told the voters: "Victory of six points will result in one point i.e., secession, whereby

India will gain more and you people will lose more." I used to tell them the story of a baby who was claimed by two women. They went for adjudication to Hazrat Suleman, who, hearing both sides, ordered to cut the baby into two pieces and give one piece each to the women. Hearing this order the real mother begged of the judge not to cut him but to keep him alive even if it meant giving him to the other woman. The other woman in her rejoicing asked the judge to carry out his order and to give her half the baby. The judge found out the false mother and punished her. But our simple and emotional people could not or did not find out the pretender; rather, they voted in favor of the pretender, which meant nothing short of bifurcation of the baby.

The election was won by the Awami League in the East and Bhutto's Peoples party in the West with the overall majority for the Awami League, but none of them got any seat to represent the other wing. The Muslim League, Jamaate Islami, NAP (Wali Khan), PDP, etc., secured only a few seats. Yahya Khan was upset, as all his plan and calculation received a serious jolt. But he was committed to the nation to transfer power to the elected representatives in spite of the fact that his LFO and the six point manifesto of the Awami League were fundamentally opposed to each other. He summoned the National Assembly to session on March 3 at Dacca. Yahya Khan wanted Mujib to talk over the future Constitution before the session began, but the latter refused to go to West Pakistan and said that his six points were unalterable. He further held that the Constitution would be discussed on the floor of the house. Bhutto, on the other hand, having a majority in West Pakistan but being a minority in Pakistan, started his jargon of sharing the Government power with the majority, 2 National Assemblies, sharing the right to constitution making by consensus of all the federating units—not by majority and lastly by boycotting the Dacca session. The East was practically out of hand, and the West was also fast going out of Yahya Khan's grip. So in usual bureaucratic fashion he postponed the Assembly session in collusion with Bhutto to save the confrontation in the Assembly with the plea of the 1958 Assembly House scene, which ultimately brought in the martial law of Iskander Mirza. But this act ignited the explosive resentment in the East and brought to the fore an unprecedented civil commotion fitting in with the Indian desire. Clashes between army, police, and people resulted in bloodshed and loss of life in Dacca. Martial law authority was challenged, and younger people started talking of secession openly with violence and rage. In the meantime, over an incident of hijacking of a small Indian Airlines plane by some alleged Kashmir freedom fighters, the overflight of P.I.A. over India was unilaterally stopped by her making it very hard for Pakistan to maintain the air link between the two wings.

Mujib declared noncooperation movement from March 2, it was not peaceful in East Pakistan, but his call for a strike and other directives of the Awami League, issued daily, were being followed by the people. Schools, colleges, universities, factories, even the Government machinery in the East came to a standstill, including buses, trains, water vehicles, shops, markets, the police force, the secretariat, and other agencies. Control of the central Government was paralyzed and confined only in army cantonment; the Pakistan flag was replaced by either red, black, or a new "Bangladesh" flag on all houses, offices, and vehicles. The radio, press, communication etc., became ineffective; rather, they were forced to obey the Awami League directives. Non-Bengalese, and their properties, became the victims of the rowdy elements—so were the pro-Pakistani Bengalees. The rage and violence spread throughout East Pakistan with a sense of extreme lawlessness and insecurity everywhere.

A grand public meeting was held at Ramna race course, with clattering bamboo sticks in hands of thousands of people, where Mujib announced his clear decision for the struggle of independence of East Bengal but within Pakistan. He told the people to get ready to fight for independence, condemned the Yahya regime, but ended with "long live Pakistan"—"Pakistan Zindabad" slogan with "Joi Bangla"—"victory for Bengal." The army was confined to the barracks with supplies of food, water, and electricity cut off. Things climaxed on March 23, Pakistan National Day, the day of the Lahore Resolution, by the hoisting of a newly designed Bangladesh flag, replacing the Pakistan flag on public and private installations and houses, including that of Mujib.

Yahya Khan, Bhutto, and all other West Pakistani political leaders had arrived in East Pakistan to have a dialogue for resolving the confrontation. The dialogue—intraparty and interparty—mainly of Yahya—Mujib—Bhutto, continued with flickers of hope at times for an overall settlement of the biggest political impasse of Pakistan. The people of both East and West overwhelmingly were in favor of transfer of power to the elected representatives, i.e., to Awami League. Even Yahya Khan addressed Mujib and gave him the treatment of next "prime minister of Pakistan." But lack of foresight and sincerity of the three parties were marring the chance of success by placing diametrically opposite views. Yahya Khan was too confident of his power of the armed forces, Bhutto was puffed up by his majority in West Pakistan, and Mujib was carried away by the skillfully designed Indian conspiracy of dismembering Pakistan in the name of full autonomy for Bengalees. They all lost the chance to rule in harmony; the image of one Pakistan was overshadowed, the people's welfare was ignored, and the stage for total confrontation was set.

Mujib, with his advisors, placed views and demands wider than the six points which could not be swallowed by Yahya Khan, as they were more in conflict with his LFO, whereas Bhutto was unconsciously walking into the trap of Mujib and insisted on his points of view, to make him majority leader in one wing, enabling Mujib to strike the iron for a separate Bengal. The dialogue continued till March 24 with Mujib's final proposal to divide National Assembly into two committees and transfer power before N.A session to Mujib by Martial Law order and for acceptance of all other demands in toto. The dialogue failed but show of hope was put up till the parties could get ready for the next maneuver. American, Indian, and Russian embassies in Dacca were receiving renowned visitors in privacy.

Yahya Khan fled to West Pakistan under a strict security cover; so did other West Pakistan leaders. Mujib issued instructions to his close followers to go to India while he alone would remain here. The plan was to raise barriers and resistance for the army with the help of Bengali soldiers, rifles, police, and students, and, if possible, to take over East Pakistan by force with India's blessings. An unknown ship was to wait in Chittagong's outer harbor to carry people or relay messages.

Nightmare of Crackdown

The dark night of the March 25, 1971 unveiled itself. All the five cantonments at Dacca, Chittagong, Comilla, Jessore and Rangpur were virtually under seige of the public, in compliance with Awami League directives. Supplies of water, electricity, daily rations, etc., were discontinued in most of the places, putting the army into miserable inconvenience. The rank and file of the army became restive; they wanted the authorities to act. In the meantime, the noncooperation movement, started on March 2, had taken a violent turn. Government and public vehicles were being burned or destroyed, railway, launch, and road services were dislocated, the new Bangladesh flag was hoisted even on public buildings on March 23, the non-Bengalees were being killed, their properties looted and their women raped and molested in places like Dacca, Saidpur, Mymensingh, and Chittagong, anti-Awami Leaguers were being heckled and harassed, gun shops were looted, complete lawlessness and a sense of insecurity prevailed in the length and breadth of East Pakistan, resulting in clashes between army and police versus the public. In Dacca University, halls like Iqball Hall and Jagannath Hall became armed fortresses for the extremists. Indian agents were located and identified everywhere, with Indian money and materials, and were looked upon as dearest friends by some. There was no Central Government working or Pakistan flag flying anywhere except in the cantonments. The secession or independence call of the supporters with the consent of the leaders were overvisible when Mujib himself hoisted and student leaders saluted in the stadium the new flag of Bangladesh on March 23.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Mumtaz Md. Khan Daulatana, Mufti Mahmood, Abdul Wali Khan, and the rest of the West Pakistan leaders, who all had very fruitful dialogue with Mujib, as they publicly said, must have

privately informed Yahya Khan of their "fruitless efforts" and dashed their way back to the West. So did Yahya Khan when there was no further dialogue viable after March 24 between the parties, asking General Tikka Khan to act.

In Dacca, after dusk, words went around to the Awami League and student camps that the zero hour had come—the army was going to crack down, so leaders should take shelter and workers create road blocks, making army movement difficult, if not impossible. This was going to be the final showdown. So thousands came out in the streets with guns, sticks, spades, axes, shovels, rods, bricks, etc., to resist the army. Big trees were felled on the road, junk cars were dragged out of garages, bricks and mortar were piled up, ditches were dug—all possible efforts were taken to block movement of all vehicles at every city corner and thoroughfare. The few mobile army and police patrol jeeps were jeered at and stoned.

The fatal hour really came—army vehicles in battle formation moved out with trucks, cranes, tanks, and artillery units before midnight. They fought their way through the barriers of men and materials, opening fire, right and left. Endless convoys moved to their destination in the city and outside places like Demra, Narayangang, and Tongi. A curfew was imposed, roadside huts were put in flames, crowds were machine gunned, Iqball Hall, Jagannath Hall and houses of important leaders were surrounded. The armed resistance at the halls was met with artillery fire, causing loss of valuable lives, but no militant student leader could be caught as they were already directing resistance in the city. No Awami League leader could be found in their houses as they were already in their hideouts or were crossing the border to execute the task assigned to them. Only undaunted Mujib was waiting for the army in his Dhanmondi house until they arrived ceremoniously, opening blank fire.

"Don't shoot me or my children—you can take me prisoner" was the greeting from Mujib in his trembling voice to the officer who entered his house. His body was searched by the army jawans, but Col. Khan and Major Bilal prevented any mishap and asked him to accompany them in the waiting jeep outside. Mujib took leave of his wife and children and left with army men to an unknown destination and destiny with his pipe in hand and tobacco in his pocket.

The army advanced to the Peelkna, the Headquarters of E.P. rifles, and asked officers and men to surrender arms, which the majority of them refused to do, so the fight ensued. The army also asked the reserve police at Razarbagh to surrender their arms, but there also they met with refusal, so the inevitable fight followed. These clashes and

incidents of firing and fighting continued till morning throughout Dacca and its neighboring places. The army was in control of all important places and installations. The curfew and military operation continued till the twenty-sixth. Nobody did come out on the streets or dared to resist the army further, so the curfew was lifted on the morning of the 27th. Signs of massive road blocks, burned huts and houses, damaged halls, littered roads, and fighting were visible everywhere. A few dead bodies were found in Dacca and in the adjoining river but taking the sound and fury the high flames and rumor into account, it was guessed that thousands of people, must have been finished by the army. I was confined by the curfew on March 25 at Gulshan, which was an untouched area, but the unprecedented sight of fire, flames, and rattling of guns in the city and suburbs on the fateful night led me to believe the rumors. All the foreign journalists were packed out of the country soon after the operation started, which was too much of an insult to their vanity and profession to be swallowed. So the angry press also picked up all the rumors adverse to Pakistan and gave them free currency from nearby stations without any means or intention to check them with the actual facts.

In Jessore, Comilla, and Rangpur the army found tougher resistance from the public, police, and rifles, as these places bordered India. In Cittagong, after a clash between the public and army over the unloading of a Pakistani ship, followed by a massacre of non-Bengalees, rebellion in Bengal had already started. The Bengali officers of the Chittagong army took the initiative well before the twenty-fifth, seizing the important posts, and arresting West Pakistani officers before that date. Actual fighting continued for several days in Chittagong between the army and these forces, particularly with men, of the Bengal Regiment—whose Headquarters was in Chittagong. The radio station was also in control of the rebels for a few days along with the port city. While one Major Zia was the rebel leader in Chittagong one Colonel Usmani was in contact with India for a total showdown with the Pakistan Army.

The air force and navy had to be deployed to bring the situation under control. Signs of foreign participation in carrying out the plan of secession by transmission of information and supplying materials were detected. Districts like Rajshahi, Mymensingh, Kulna, Barisal, etc., had to be reoccupied by the army after resistance. In most of the districts, especially the bordering ones, the Indian armed forces and civilians had made their free entry and captured, detained, or killed important pro-Pakistani elements with the help of the local Awami Leaguers.

This onslaught of human tragedy was directed mostly against the non-Bengalee Biharis, Pathans, and Punjabis, who were all commonly

known as Biharis. This planned killing, which started on the second of March, turned into genocide. Men, women, and children—rich or poor, anyone having a Urdu tongue—were mercilessly tortured or butchered, their belongings looted. These people mostly migrated from India as victims of communal riots there, rehabilitated themselves after great struggle for years in Pakistan, and again became the victims of conspiracy, losing their lives, honor, liberty, and property. In places like Chittagong, Saidpur, Mymensingh, Santahar, and Ishwardi slaughterhouses were opened to extract blood to extort money and to extricate life. Torture of women became a corollary of this plan; even in Dacca young women were recovered from some halls and houses by the army on or after the twenty-fifth of March crackdown. But, in Mufassil areas, the army could not reach for the rescue until April, transporting the surviving victims to different camps in Dacca. This tale of woe and suffering—some of which was caught in still and movie cameras, still in custody of journalists and the government of Pakistan—was not amply projected to the world to avoid bitter reactions, after March 25, against the Bengalis in West Pakistan.

I had the misfortune to witness some of these live and dead victims; also, their pictures. These killings, along with those that took place after the twenty-fifth as a result of army action, confirmed my anguish and shame against human killings in the name of war or revolution, political or communal upheaval; it further deepened my conviction to work for peace and tranquility at any cost.

History is replete with the smearing of human blood from the days of Cain and Abel, brother against brother, family against family, tribe against tribe, race against race, nation against nation. In short, man against man in all ages and places fought between themselves and among themselves with flimsy justification. Victor or vanquished, everyone suffered, but this diabolic process never stopped, never gave in to a pious wish for peace except for brief intervals to take fresh breath. It is the evil spirit in man, the devil incarnate, the cursed Satan, which the Holy Spirit in him has failed to harness. All religions have cautioned man against this evil spirit, but it seems that man is too weak to rise above the temporary gains and promises till their final doom. Yet hope springs eternal in the human breast, so they go on fighting this devil in the hope that one day they will win, one day they will successfully establish a better world of peace where truth and justice will prevail.

I learned about the massive loss of human lives in historical evolution, which was too remote, learned about tragic killings in world wars to which I was near enough. I witnessed the mass killings in communal riots in the Indian subcontinent in 1946–1947. I saw the victims of Indian

riots surging into East Pakistan in 1950. I saw the firing on the student processionists for state language movement in Dacca in 1952. I had the occasion to join the Labour party protest rally in London against the invasion of Egypt by the Anglo-French-Israel axis in 1956. I could never support the innumerable riots in India. I did raise my voice of protest during the similar riot in East Pakistan in 1964, the French atrocities in North Africa of the fifties and sixties, the Israeli militancy over Arab soil, the American atrocities in Vietnam, the Russian atrocities in Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. The Indian aggression of Kashmir in 1947 and on Pakistan in 1965 and 1971 are nothing short of the same crime against humanity. And what is happening every day in Northern Ireland, Eritrea, and the Philippines and what happened in Bengal (East Pakistan) are no exceptions.

My resentment against this blood bath burns me from within but one feels so helpless. Yet man goes on putting in his best effort to avert, minimize, or eliminate force as a means of settling issues between contesting parties. In individual or group levels, use of force has been branded as criminal by all civilized laws, but it is yet to see the same spirit transformed into interracial and interstate feuds, although in the latter case, use of force is more cruel and devastating. Human efforts still continue to harness this evil spirit, which demonstrates the animal habit in man both on the private and public levels. The organizations like Defence of Human Rights, or World Government through Rule of Law go on preparing the base for a better world of peace. Organs like the International Red Cross or Red Crescent go on mitigating the sufferings during and after such bloodshed. Societies like Amnesty International, Commission of International Jurists, and peace organizations work for defending the victims; last but not least, organizations like the League of Nations and the UN go on unceasingly, endeavoring to lessen the crime of force. Yet the mighty man feels at times so helpless and miserable against this devil in man, whipped up by self-interest, vanity, pride, lust for greatness, or defense of territory or ideas of salvation—political, economic or social.

To my mind, this noble effort of man on an international level suffers mainly from two shortcomings: first, in comprehending man in bits and pieces, not as a whole-soul reality; and second, accepting man or man-made organs like state, nation, etc., as sovereign.

Coming back to the sequence of events, April 26, the last stronghold of the resistance, Barisal, my home district of riverine topography, was broken and captured by the army after a brief encounter near the town at Taltali, with no loss of life or property of the town itself. There was no large-scale massacre of pro-Pakistani people in the district, but there

were a few cases of killing in Barisal and Jhalakati and a big massacre in the north on a launch carrying non-Bengalees in transit. As a result of this military operation, followed by mopping up the security risk persons, people from all walks of life started fleeing to India. The army had to practically reoccupy and establish its authority up to the Thana level, wherever they met some resistance, they were merciless not only with the miscreants but with neighbors minus identification. Members of forces, airborne from West Pakistan, hardly knew any language other than Pushtu or Baluch, Punjabi or Urdu, making it more difficult for them to know who was who. As a general rule, they would look for a suspect in a Hindu or a young man, which terrorized everyone. Some local elected members of assemblies, some Awami League leaders, some officers and some students looted the treasuries, banks, public vehicles, and other valuables and crossed the border with booties.

By April 17, the prior plan of India was given a concrete shape with the help of Mujib's designated men. India organized a show of celebration in a place inside India near the Kushtia border on East Pakistan and named it Mujibnagar, where the declaration of Independence of Bangladesh was first made. Independence of Bangladesh was in the slogan of Moulana Bhasani, Aatur Rahman Khan, and students for long after the election of 1970, especially after March 2, 1971, but this was the formal declaration on the April 17, not on March 26, as claimed by some. India scored another victory to her credit; she had been dreaming and planning since 1947 to undo or cripple her unwanted neighbor, Pakistan.

Rumor spreads as fast as lightning during an emergency or distress. It was rumored that all able-bodied Bengalee of Dacca city were killed by the army and all houses were razed to the ground. People found out on the morning of the twenty-seventh on lifting of the curfew by the sight of standing houses and streams of people trekking out of their houses that rumor was rumor. But such rumor of killing and destruction was carried forward from one place to another.

One young man from Barisal came to my office in the middle of April to inquire about the people and their condition in Dacca; he had traveled by boat, by launch, and by foot for three days to reach Dacca. He told me that it was common knowledge in Barisal that standing on the bank of Buriganga River one could see Baitul Mukarram Mosque about two miles away without obstructions, as all houses and buildings in between were burned into ashes, but to his greater surprise he hardly found a burned house or building there. He had not traveled beyond Motijheel then and asked me if it was a fact that all the university buildings, halls, and even the trees on the streets and students or teachers living there were no longer alive or standing. I asked him to see it

for himself and offered my car for a visit. He came back very happy but disappointed, as he believed in all those cock and bull stories like millions more at home and abroad. Even foreign papers carried highly exaggerated news and photos in their columns to create the gimmick in the mind of their readers. Rumor picked up every hour fresh points. That Mujib was barbarously tortured and killed in Cantonment was another rumor to which India was also swearing. So the Government of Pakistan had to come forward with his picture and disclose that he was healthy and safe in West Pakistan. Such were the days of rumor and panic; naturally, for the first few days, offices, business, school-college, transport, etc., were at a standstill until the military authorities openly came forward to assure the people of their safety.

The actual facts of some killing and destruction, multiplied by rumors and wild guesses in the absence of local and foreign journalists, normal means of communication, and nature of operation, became a gigantic terror in remote places. So the people started fleeing to the inviting host countries. The leaders and their followers did not even think of their promise to fight back or did not show the slightest concern for the safety or well-being of 70 million Bengali men, women, and children left behind. Added to it was the declaration of independence in April at the behest of India, which made things worse for the people, but they remained rooted to their soil. For the army now it was a point of no return, as it was no longer a question of establishing law and order in the aid of civil authority, but it was fighting a rebellion that was hitherto covert but now dangerously overt.

Preplanning helped the rebel leaders a lot so that they could go ahead step by step with the massive help of India.

A free Bangladesh radio station was set up in India to carry out the propaganda from "Mujibnagar," a symbolic name of its mobile capital at Calcutta. Relief cum publicity centers were opened all around East Pakistan, young men were recruited for training in subversion and guerilla war, the men and officers of army-air force-police were mobilized, regular allowances were arranged for the leaders and guerillas. All these were done by India like an unostentatious good, peaceful, and humanitarian neighbor in Russian pattern.

The stream of people who went away from Dacca, cantonment towns, district headquarters, or big business or industrial centers out of panic treked back to their respective homes, offices, or factories within a fortnight of April. But the non-Muslims, the vocal youths, or the Awami League leaders, the rebel forces, the inhabitants of border districts, or active agents mostly took their flight to India. The Pak army took control of the entire territory of East Pakistan. Baidyanath at

Chuadanga border, once claimed as the capital of Bangladesh, was also in the control of the Pak army. The people as a whole were peace loving, but they found themselves in the crossfire of the army and rebels, so they were feeling not only unsafe, but it was in fact unsafe to move about or pursue their normal avocations.

So the peace-loving citizens, first at Dacca then at other places, with the intention of restoring peace, order, and a sense of security, formed peace committees to help the people. And under its umbrella, people actually got so much relief in such an abnormal situation that they felt secure to come back to their stations of life. Apart from protecting the people from double excesses of the army and rebels, the peace committee also had to pacify and suppress the growth of Bihari excesses. The non-Bengalis, commonly known as Biharis, rose up to avenge the killing of their innocent relatives and compatriots. Their extremists, with the tacit support of some local army officers, became an equal menace, like Bengali extremists, in taking the valuable lives, honor, and property of their rivals. The committee, consisting of all political and social groups, was rendering valuable service to the people, who did not or could not go to India, the Bengalees and non-Bengalees alike.

After the army crackdown, I was bitter in my mind about the short-sighted confrontation of Yahya Khan on one side and misguided Mujib on another, as I was convinced from the sequence of events that both of them were playing in the hands of others, contrary to the interests of the people. So I kept myself aloof from all political or state activities, confining myself to my legal profession. Even I did not take any interest in the activities of the Muslim League of which I was then a national vice president. As days went on, the army no doubt was reestablishing its authority, but its atrocities took different forms. A few thousand West Pakistani police initially did good work but ultimately could not earn the respect of the local people. The Frontier Militia was brought here with the idea of fighting out the "kafirs," but when they found out that most of the Bengalees were also Muslims, they became disillusioned after the initial fireworks. A few of them committed petty crimes. The regular soldiers became bloodthirsty but hardly found a frontal battlefield to show their skill or worth; thus they became restive after the initial crackdown. There was no planning to channel these forces for earning the respect of the angry Bengalese, rather, they were puffed up to treat them as unpatriotic suspects. So the Central Peace Committee, formed at Dacca, had to come forward at all levels to ameliorate the lot of the people, victims or likely victims of army operation.

It was an incident out of so many that came my way that took me to the Peace Committee office. Malik Qasim, secretary general of the

Pakistan Muslim League came to East Pakistan in April, possibly the first leader of West Pakistan to visit the strife-stricken area. He requested me to take interest in the affairs of the day. I told him straightaway that I was not going to be a party to this massacre although we all believed in integrity, it was Yahya Khan's baby that he must take care of. He inquired from me and other sources the extent of damage and its repercussions on the common man's mind. I made no secret about our anger and anguish. I asked him to apprise the Pakistan authorities sitting in the West and the people there of the actual state affairs whose continuation would mean fulfilling the design of our enemies and frustrating our friends. He persuaded me to take an active interest, at least through peace committees, on humanitarian grounds so that the ideal of Pakistan would not be tarnished further.

Persuasion of Qasim, Khawja Khairuddin, convenor of the Central Peace Committee and two gentlemen in difficulty ultimately led me to join the deliberations of the committee. Both of these gentlemen were prominent Awami Leaguers of their areas, so naturally, being apprehended by the army, they were hiding with great difficulty—one was from Dacca and the other from Barisal. There came also elected members, students, workers, teachers, professors, principals, businessmen, farmers, doctors, government servants, lawyers—practically men from all walks of life—for clearing their names from army lists. The revolutionaries had moved out of the country to a safe distance, but there was none to protect or help the people who needed it so badly. Ultimately, I offered my humble services for these helpless people. I was glad that I could actually help countless of them. In this process of rendering humanitarian services, I got close enough to know and to be known to the local army authorities. Individually, they liked me, and I liked them, but the Government was hostile to my party, as we were hostile to its policy. However, no compunction or penitence ever pricked my conscience for my activities in the peace committee, as there was no ill will or hatred against anyone, only humanitarian compassion and sympathy. I remember having cleared and helped the rehabilitation of one Awami League leader of Jhalakati whose false criminal complaint against me and my men during the election was still pending in Court. After all, national interest is higher than private interest, as human interest is higher than national interest.

The entire resistance to the army had collapsed by the middle of April except a few pockets here and there in villages and borders; the country was settling down. But the rebels, from their pockets, started operations on the neighboring areas, killing important pro-Pakistani elements, chairman of union councils, the Muslim League, or Jamate Islami

followers, and well-to-do people or stray soldiers; they also looted and burned their houses. The army had to act. Some such places were ransacked, burned, and innocents killed or tortured by the army, unnecessarily creating havoc and terror. Around the army camps, there were also stray cases of excesses by Jawans, including rape, pilferage, etc. So when the people looked for security and peace, they got amazing rebuffs, but it was never genocide or mass crime, as has been represented to the world by the courtesy of Indian or pro-Indian publicity media.

India was training a liberation force and training in guerrilla warfare, which was named later "Mukti Bahini." Arms and amunition were being supplied by India in addition to those looted by the local boys. The Mukti Bahini started their planned operations from Indian bases in June. The men and officers of fugitive armed forces, East Pakistan Rifles and Police, formed the nucleus of their fighting force.

Indira Gandhi was simultaneously busy mustering world support on humanitarian grounds for the support of the refugees, to which the various nations, including the Russian and Jewish-backed countries, very favorably responded. By this time, the internal problem of Pakistan was given an international twist, and Russia openly asked Yahya Khan to settle the matter with the elected representatives of Bengal. Yahya Khan depending on the U.S. alliance for his promoting secret friendship with China asked the world, including Alexy Kosygin, not to interfere in the internal affairs of Pakistan, which situation India very favorably exploited. A case for the return of refugees was made, so Pakistan made arrangements for receiving and rehabilitating the returnees in cooperation with a UN relief organization. But India had different tricks up her sleeves, so the returnees were persuaded not to return to Pakistan on the plea of lack of security. Indira Gandhi actually wanted to use these refugees, over a million in number, mostly Hindus, as a lever and spring-board for her future action. Financially, also, she was no loser, as she procured international commitment of relief for billions of rupees and got that in cash and kind. The refugees suffered due to starvation, insufficient diet, or medical care, lack of housing or sanitary facilities, or lack of clothing, resulting in death of men, women, and children in refugee camps and streets of India. The major portion of relief materials, received by India from abroad, was wasted by mismanagement or corruption. But for the obstacles—physical and psychological—created by India, most of the refugees would have returned to East Pakistan through reception centers or otherwise. Yet hundreds of them started trekking back daily, which alarmed the Indian planners and their Bengali collaborators. So they stepped up sabotage and guerrilla activities by July. The Monsoon had already set in, so the West Pakistani soldiers, unused to

the monsoon and water, soon were getting disconnected with the marshy interior. East Pakistan in monsoon, July–September, looks like a vast sea of water with islands here and there.

The martial law authorities, faced with a law and order problem, had only about a fifteen thousand police force out of 25 thousand—the rest did not join or were killed or missing or were in India. Most of the notorious robbers, murderers, and ruffians, suffering different jail sentences or facing trial, who fled away from various jails after March 2, were also creating havoc in the countryside. The voluntary part-time Ansars auxiliary police force also got disorganized in this melee. So a new voluntary force was raised in the name of “Razakars”—to assist the police in place of “Ansars.” The Razakars had unofficially two wings named Al Bader and Al Shams—they were given short training and placed with the police force to maintain law and order and guard industrial installations, communication channels, and other vital establishments. Starting from 25,000 they were increased to 50,000, with nominal pay and ration. When they were found useful and effective, they were placed under army command in about August. It was presumed that the entire army would have to be detailed on borders to check infiltration while Razakars would maintain law and order within the territory.

Indira Gandhi and her emissaries, by their tour of Western and Eastern European and American capitals, partly succeeded in impressing upon the respective countries that Bengalees in East Pakistan wanted a separate state for which they were in armed rebellion, needing both arms and food. They were ready to render food and other aid in relief but not arms. But her main triumph was in the propaganda field where she could magnify the Pak army atrocities and belittle the position of Pakistan. The western journalists, being unceremoniously ousted from East Pakistan in March, swallowed every piece of publicity that went against Pakistan to feed fat their grudge and serve their hungry readers with proper dressing and flavor. The western countries refusing to secretly commit to arms supply gave a sympathetic lip for her political mission, which enabled her to dupe Russia into a military pact on August 12, 1971, in the name of a peace treaty with India. Like all military pacts, it was sugar coated and dedicated to the cause of peace (?) but with the guarantee of mutual military help in time of need. Besides fulfilling India’s ambition for such a guarantee from one of the world’s superpowers, it also suited the global strategy of Russia to encircle China and isolate the United States in this region.

Now fully emboldened by her political support abroad and military commitment of Russia, which naturally included her Eastern European

satellites, Indira gave her scheme a finishing touch and went on training her own commandoes, air force pilots, naval frogmen, and the rest for operation on East Pakistan. The Bengali guerrilla "Mukti Bahini" force was increased, training intensified, and modern weapons were supplied. By September, her full force was ready for both offensive and defensive action, but she had to wait till the end of the monsoon. In the meantime, the guerrilla activities were intensified inside East Pakistan for sniping on the Pak army, surprise attack on police stations, killing of important people, blowing up bridges and culverts, blasting power houses, dislocating the river, road, and railway communications, drowning food coasters and launchers, destroying running industries, burning houses, food and jute godowns, i.e., destroying everything to paralyze the economy and administration, doing everything to terrify people. Most of the difficult jobs out of the above sabotaging activities were carried out by the Indian army personnel with the help of the local Mukti Bahini. Unknown to the world the Indian frogmen, army engineers, explosive experts and commandos in general were deployed inside East Pakistan in the thousands as local civilians. I talked to some of these men and officers who participated in these operations during our detention as POWs, I also discussed these operations with local Mukti Bahini men and those who gave them shelter in villages and towns during my detention in Dacca jail. At this stage, when the nation was bleeding, its economy was collapsing, its moral stamina shattered and people's suffering knew no bounds, Dr. Malik and we stepped in to redeem the last hope of 120 million people. But it was too late. One of our colleagues, a minister, was also party to these operations for some time in Noakhali district. The boys who participated in these operations came up in radio and television programs with their first-hand report after December 16, only to corroborate this study of mine.

While the guerrilla force was busy completing their mission during monsoon, the Indian army, fully equipped and ready for the final operation, was deployed all around East Pakistan in November. About ten airbases around East Pakistan were made operational, by this time with newly acquired, Russian war planes. The Indian navy was alerted to accomplish a blockade of Eastern ports to disconnect all supplies from West Pakistan or the outside world. The radar network built by India's Western allies, like the United States, Britain, France, and West Germany, to detect China's air and missile movements were deployed for India's successful air offensive against Pakistan. Russia, like a faithful friend of India, deployed troops along the Chinese border to stop any initiative from the Chinese side upon India in support of Pakistan. The United States, an ally of defense pact, on the plea of her commitment

in Vietnam and Jewish pressure at home, did not take any decisive role. She repeated her old performance of 1965 of an active observer, and letting down an ally. Both China and America played a role of passive involvement in this crucial stage of confrontation between two neighbors, while Russia actively aided India.

President Yahya Khan in the meantime had announced a fresh schedule for returning to democracy by transferring power to the representatives of the people. Under this scheme the elected Awami League members of the assemblies who did not cross over to India or who did not participate in any crime of violence were to retain their seats, and the rest of the seats were to be declared vacant for which a bye-election would be held. After such bye-election, the Assembly would be called to session to frame the Constitution and ultimately to take over the government. Accordingly, about 90 out of 167 elected members retained their seats in the National Assembly, and more than 50 percent of the Provincial Assembly seats were also retained by the Awami Leaguers! The bye-election for the vacant seats were arranged by the election commission headed by Justice A. Sattar of East Pakistan under the same Legal Framework Order and Election Laws of the 1970-71 general election. Since the secessionist parties, like the Awami League or National Awami party, were banned, the parties like the Muslim League, Jamate Islami, Pakistan Democratic party, etc., took part in the bye-election with a view to restore democracy in the country accepting the majority of the Awami League members. The Awami League members also met informally with Begum Solaiman, daughter of Shaheed Suhrawrdy, Zahiruddin, ex-minister and Faizul Huq, son of the late A.K. Fazlul Huq and others participating to devise ways and means to play their proper role in the coming Assembly and national politics. The political parties divided and subdivided within itself and were at loggerheads with each other; in fact, they utilized the good offices of Maj. Gen. Rao Farman Ali, soft-spoken, pious Punjabi officer, to iron out their election differences. Parties came out with an agreed list of candidates in most of the seats under the leadership of Mr. Nurul Amin, the sexagenarian leader of the Pakistan Democratic party, and former leader of the opposition and newly elected member of the National Assembly. Excepting a few seats of some national leaders like Fazlul Quader Chowdhury, Farid Ahmed, Amjad Hussain, etc., and some seats in different districts, many constituencies returned their nominees unopposed. The election to the rest of the seats was scheduled to be held in the middle of December with the Assembly to sit in session in January and February.

I also found myself elected unopposed to one of the Provincial Assembly seats from Bakerganj, like some other colleagues of mine in

the cabinet. Four of our cabinet members were already elected in the general election of 1970, and now the rest, nine, had qualified to remain ministers. Even the People's party of Bhutto had bagged some seats in the East to qualify itself as a national party. Dr. Malik did not take any part in the election or its preparation, but his advisor, Rao Farman Ali, was the key man for this. With the Civil Government in action, with the elections at hand, with the returnees settling back in their houses, confidence was fast returning in the minds of war-torn people for a political solution. This state of confidence was contrary to India's scheme, calculation and preparation. Indira Gandhi, on her return from a tour of European and American countries, was beset with this situation and decided to hurl the final blow before time ran out.

Open Aggression

Over 700 million Muslims of the world had just finished their holy month of Ramadhan (fasting) by celebrating the Eid. But it was no celebration for the people of Pakistan, on the borders of East Pakistan, India poised for an all-out attack. On November 20, instead of a Muezzin's call for morning prayer, Indian artillery fire called the soldiers to attention on the Jessore-Kustia border. The direct Indian invasion for solving her neighbor's problem by force had come. All her pretensions of peace and camouflage of a Mukti Bahini fight for liberation was unmasked by an artillery and tank attack with a blockade of the sea front by Indian naval ships and submarines. The name of Mukti Bahini was still being used till her forces could actually penetrate into the Eastern borders.

It was a job to convince the already biased international press that actually the Indian armed forces were in action till November 25 when corpses of officers and men in the uniforms of Indian forces were shown to them. Efforts to penetrate into East Pakistan borders from the Assam, Meghalay, and Agartala sides on the eastern borders were also on. While testing the concentration of strength of the Pak Army positions, India was replenishing her forces on the eastern borders. With about 1 million troops on the surface, with 1,500 tanks, sophisticated artillery and missiles, with enough officers and men to keep 650 combat aircraft operational, with a sizable naval force consisting of air carrier and submarines, with thirty armament factories in full production, with ship building, and aircraft manufacturing plants in operation, India was five to one on overall strength with Pakistan. So none but a lunatic would dare to make an offensive war against a force five times stronger on two fronts. But India went on telling the world and even her own Parliament in Goe-bollian style that Pakistan was launching a war of aggression in the East so India had released her forces to go inside East Pakistan! But that

much of veil and camouflage was also lifted after November 25 when the Indian army—the Mukti Bahini having failed to make much headway except for the isolated sabotage by their combined guerrillas behind the lines—was found near Chougacha in the Kushtia district several miles within East Pakistan. In a frontal battle between Pak and Indian forces, tanks and artillery clashed well within the Pakistan borders, and Chougacha completely fell to Indians on November 27.

When Indira Gandhi, on return from her tour of Western capitals, was blowing her trumpet of peaceful pretensions on the floor of the Indian Parliament, a naked aggression was going on unheeded by the world on the soil of her neighbor. Her thrust continued toward capturing the border stronghold of Jessore cantonment without declaring a formal war—a strategy of Shivaji, the role of Dr. Jeckel and Hyde. This thrust from two directions succeeded only when Jessore fell to the Indians on December 7. India had also occupied some northern tips of the Rangpur district and was now throwing her full strength mainly on Kamalpur in Mymensingh district and Chagolnaia-Belonia in Noakhali district, Kasba in Comilla district, Hilli in Dinajpur district, and Karimganj in Sylhet district, and this was all before December 3 when war actually was taken to have started. The mountain divisions, trained and equipped by Western powers to contain China on the Himalayas, were fruitfully used in open aggression against an ally of the West on the greenery of Bengal. She occupied Belonia-Chagalnaia of Noakhali district by December 2 in addition to Chilmari of Rangpur district. Artillery shells across the borders were pounding Pak fortifications, tea gardens, industries, roads, and bridges, everything of economic or military importance all around the borders.

The Pak army had strict orders not to penetrate into Indian territory except in hot pursuit of short duration. This strict defensive strategy in the East has caused their defeat. In the early days of the war, Pakistan could easily have captured some strategic river and mountain points, which could give them better vantage for defense. The eastern command was made dependable on western control and help for land, sea, and air. But for this limitation, a different strategy or policy could be fruitfully availed of in the East. The undeclared war continued till both countries openly unleashed their war machines to wind up the hostilities this way or the other.

At about midnight of December 3, Dacca Airport was the center of an Indian air attack. The silent dark night thundered and was dazzled by the intruding air dragons and defensive ack-ack guns. The outdated, Sabres of Pakistan were no match for superior Russian MIG and SU7 and Indian Gnats. But the Indians had the shock of their lives, they lost

most of their planes and pilots in the first attack. The whole country was thrilled by this success, and practically everybody openly came out against Indian aggression in wild jubilation. But this sense of unity and pride was too short-lived. After about twelve hours of replanning, India swarmed in again from all sides with different modes of attack. From high-altitude bombing, they pounded the airport day and night and succeeded in rendering it unfit for the Pak planes to fly by the December 6. Superior Canberras and Hunters also joined IAF attack.

The sea front of the eastern wing was already under blockade of the Indian Navy, cutting off all supply and communication by water from the west. By air, the two wings could be connected only with risk, covering a military distance of 2,000 miles. The local defense capability was also harnessed immensely by damaging the only airport fit for giving air cover. Her troops were halted only on different points inside the East Pakistan borders. After traveling this far against all canons of international law and national sovereignty, she found it fit to recognize Bangladesh as an independent state to suit her machination and global strategy of some superpowers on December 6 only. The secret Delhi pacts between the Awami League leaders and India were implemented to meet her full scheme of dismembering Pakistan and installing a puppet government in the name of "Bangladesh" on the pattern of occupied Kashmir. Now with full backing of Russia under the treaty of August, with international opinion mobilized against Pakistan, with her troops well placed within and outside East Pakistan borders, with the only military airport at Dacca made unoperational, and with the blockade of the sea on Bay of Bengal, Indian troops advanced toward Dacca—as Nazi troops did in France, Poland, and Belgium. The allies of France, etc., came to halt the onward march of the Germans, but the allies of Pakistan, like China and the United States, in spite of their defense pact or understanding to come to Pakistan's aid by the north and south, did nothing but pose for sound and sign to halt the invasion of India.

The Pak army braved the superior attack of India from all four sides, exposed to India's encircled offensive till December 14. Indian air force planes pounded the Pak positions, on call from the Indian land force, on every front without any challenge from the Pak air force. The Mukti Bahini was clearing the way for the Indians from behind the Pakistan forward position by blowing up lines of communication or supply, ambushing contingent of force or transmitting military information. About 100,000 Mukti Bahini were effectively assisting about 300,000 troops of India on the eastern front with air and sea under their full control as against about 60,000 regular troops and their local militia of EPCAF and Muzahids of about 40,000. Even this numerically inferior force had the

courage to fight on with the resources in their hands for months if they would just get air cover. At least if the Indian air power was neutralized by Pakistan's allies, there would have been no surrender on the sixteenth by Lt. Gen. Niazi.

I remember Soviet Union to have told the U.K. in 1956 at the time of the combined invasion of Suez by Britain, France, and Israel, how would Britain like to see the city of London blown up by Russian missiles if the invasion did not stop forthwith. On that pointed threat, the invasion of three powers ceased and troops were withdrawn from Egypt. Of course, some ships of America's Seventh fleet steamed off toward the Indian Ocean about December 12 but with no positive gesture to warn or halt the aggression. With protests from the Russian block against this Seventh fleet maneuver, India quickened her mission of the occupation of East Pakistan. China's land force locked on the Russian border and in the snowy hills of the Himalayas, made no visible move towards the Indians like that of 1962. In spite of Pakistan's hurried contact of China and the United States through Mr. Bhutto to avert a debacle arising out of open Indian aggression, India scored her point. Pakistan once more was letdown by her superallies when she became an open victim of aggression. The generous aid that came from her friends like Iran and Saudi Arabia did not prove effective enough. There was no brave Soekarno in Indonesia or strong Eisenhower in the United States, nor intelligent Churchill in the U.K. or young Mao of Long March in China, so Pakistan was left alone to suffer aggression once more.

On the recognition of Bangladesh by India on the December 6, after her direct aggression from November 20, the whole civil war in East Pakistan took on a different shape, into an international conflict. Large-scale devastation was engulfing both the countries every day, causing loss of innumerable lives and material resources.

The main purpose of our civil government to transform the bitter civil war into a peaceful political settlement was thrown to the wind in this perspective.

Only on September 3 the civilian Government was inducted to replace the army rule of Tikka Khan. Tikka Khan, personally a tough man, aided by his son, a captain of the army, leaving his family behind in Punjab, discharged his assigned duties in E. Pakistan bravely but unpleasantly. When he first took over the governorship, beside his military duty, the country was already in flames because of the confrontation between the winning Awami League and the losing Yahya regime. The noncooperation movement of Mujib, starting from the March 2, had taken a violent turn with non-Bengalis and anti-Awami Leaguers as human casualties. At such a time, Tikka Khan was appointed governor

replacing Rear Admiral Ahsan, who before his governorship was an ex-navy man and ex-head of Inland Waterways of East Pakistan, a mild natured, nonpolitical administrator. The chief justice of Dacca High Court, Justice Siddiqui, refused to administer the oath of office to the new governor, as required by the constitution—which no doubt was abrogated but followed as nearly as possible subject to martial law regulations. After the crackdown of March 25, the same chief justice administered the oath, but Tikka Khan did not remove him or any other judge for their earlier refusal. Ironically, the chief justice and all other fourteen judges of the High Court, who participated in noncooperation with the Awami League in secret consultation with Mujib and kept the high court closed in March, all lost their jobs after December 16 by a stroke of pen of the Bangladesh government. Only a few were taken back later by an order of the Justice president, Abu Sayeed Choudhury. The high court lost not only its permanent judges but also its valuable rights, powers, traditions, and status even under the Constitution of Bangladesh when it came a year later. A judge of the high court, the president of Red Cross served up to December 16. Justice Nurul Islam even suffered detention without trial with us for more than a year. Judiciary and civil servants, the two pillars of Mujib's strength, were the two major casualties, next to pro-Pakistan elements, in the hands of the Mujib government. What a colossal betrayal!

The unpleasant task carried out by Tikka Khan naturally earned a bad name for him and his army. Moreover, all the excesses carried out by the individuals of the army, police, and civil armed forces at such an unusual period of conflict for six months made the split between Bengali and non-Bengalis complete with distrust, hatred, and terror. In the struggle for survival, everyone was desperate, and the animal in men rose higher than the man himself. One hut burned carried a bad name for one thousand, one rape or manhandling of a woman earned a bad name for ten thousands, one soldier killed earned the wrath of a thousand, and one Bengali killed earned the hatred for thousands. Everyone concerned hated to see the bitter end. When Dr. Malik took over the civil government on the third and swore in his cabinet on September 17 people heaved a sigh of relief. Over a million people, who went over to India and doubled or tripled themselves through ration cards, for the dole coming there from all over the world, started their journey back to East Pakistan through recognized and unrecognized routes in greater number. Huts and bazaars were getting more busy with more business. Educational institutions reopened with more attendance, commerce, and industries moved on more vigorously, and, above all, with the army mobilized mostly on the borders to fight intruders and saboteurs, there

was little of burning, killing, and other excesses by the forces within the borders. The civil government and peace committee came to the rescue of all the sufferers.

Soon people could think of bye-elections and political activities to travel back to the lost days of democracy. Skirmishes at pockets between army and Mukti Bahini were not uncommon, but people once more were looking forward to a political settlement in an atmosphere of sobriety. This changing mood alarmed the Indian Government which intensified its foreign publicity by sending more emissaries abroad of her own and of the secessionists under their control in India. This brought claims and counterclaims, resulting in occasional visits of American congressmen, British MPS, Japanese leaders, World pressmen and UN officials. Nobody was totally right or totally wrong, but it was apparent that things were settling down to the dislike of India and her allies. This time, Indira Gandhi herself went to Russia, America, the U.K., France, Canada, and other countries in her last bid to checkmate Pakistan. The next thing was to intensify sabotage activities inside East Pakistan, which the Mukti Bahini and Indian armed forces did very widely, dislocating the food supply, communications, normal business activity, and industrial production. They were destroying all that was built after partition. Indira Gandhi must have felt the pulse of the Western powers during her tour, so with the open concurrence of Russia, and secret blessings of western allies, she made the final assault on the Muslim soldiers, who had just broken their month-long fast on November 19.

The UN General Assembly was in session, but before the 132-member body could see the Indian game through the smokescreen of her publicity, she was already in possession of several strategic points inside East Pakistan. Reluctantly, the United States took up the issue in the 15-member Security Council after December 3, when India and Pakistan were no longer fighting an undeclared war. When they were debating the genuineness of Pakistan's claim of an Indian aggression and cease-fire, Russian-built Indian air force superior planes and rockets had already paralyzed Pak Airports and planes. The rattling of guns and clash of tanks was still going on in both wings of Pakistan with only a defensive fight of PAF in West and the mastery of IAF in the East. It was like the debate of the League of Nations when Albania was overrun by Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany.

The resolution before the Security Council for cease-fire was voted, eleven in favor, including the United States and China, two against, Russia and Poland and two abstentions, Britain and France. Russia's one negative vote was her third veto to protect India as she did several times before in the case of Kashmir dispute. Pak allies this time hurriedly

and determinedly went before the General Assembly to carry the resolution, which they successfully did with the support of 104 nations calling for an immediate cease-fire. According to UN procedure, the matter had to go back to the Security Council for making it operative where the same threat of veto from Russia was looming large. In times to come, it will be washed out of memory but history will keep on record how many times this power of **veto** of the five permanent members has championed the cause of **national ego** as against much trumpeted **world peace or justice**.

To avoid another veto by Russia, negotiation by Eastern and Western powers went on to obtain an acceptable resolution. And in this process the matter lingered on when the subcontinent was bleeding to death. The effort of Dr. Malik to get a cease-fire on the seventh by his cable through Paul Henry and John Kelly of the United Nations to its secretary general in New York did not cut any ice, nor did the questionable bid of Mr. Bhutto in the United Nations Assembly with all the lobbying of the well-wishers of peace.

The secessionist elements were no doubt fighting for their cause, but the dubious federalist characters could not rise above their pettiness. The one-eyed bureaucracy at the center, which nursed a suppressed ambition of ruling over the whole of Pakistan or to separate West from East, the few fat generals who thought their own pleasure more important than the nation itself, and the power-greedy politicians who believed in "better rule in hell than be ruled in heaven" came out of their ambush and gave united Pakistan their last parting kick. No cease-fire call was accepted in the UN due to their lapses until East Pakistan fell completely in the hands of the invaders. The mighty American and Chinese striking forces even did not neutralize the Indian air force or navy from their open aggression due to their folly.

Dr. Malik consulted President Yahya Khan, UN representatives in Dacca, and the generals in Dacca and sent a message to the UN secretary general directly for an immediate cease-fire with transfer of power to elected representatives. On the hope of Pakistan's allies for immediate material help, Yahya Khan disowned the efforts of Dr. Malik. During the last contact on phone after December 10, with Nurul Amin, who was at Pindi and in constant touch with the president, I was told that positive help was coming from both the north and south, meaning thereby China and the United States. The help from the brotherly Muslim countries no doubt reached Pakistan, but nothing from the specified north or south to save East Pakistan from falling to the aggressors. The army did not devise any escape route, either for itself or its civilian supporters. There had to be total annihilation, a fight to the finish or a

surrender. Our cease-fire effort failed. The President apparently was not in a mood to go through it for false hope from the allies. Indira Gandhi was not in a mood to accept anything other than a total victory at the behest of her own allies. To untie this Gordian knot, to prevent a massacre and the destruction of war and further patricidal bloodshed, to protect all that was built during the two decades of Pakistan for the people of Muslim Bengal, our cabinet went into final deliberations on December 14.

In Dacca Neutral Zone

Signing the warrant for peace and death, I walked out of the air raid shelter of Government House. The resignation letter was meant for bringing about peace among the parties to the conflict. It was no less for death; without any claim or provision for army or police protection, we would be easy prey to Mukti Bahini. So we accepted the advice of John Kelly to move to the neutral zone of the International Red Cross at the Hotel Intercontinental. Instead of escaping, I decided to take the chance of life, expecting that the mutually agreed neutral zone might be spared. There was an intermittent curfew in the city for the last three days, so neither my driver nor my security guard could report for duty on the day. Suleman was driving himself, so I took a quick lift in his car up to my official residence at 27 Park Avenue, during one of the intervals of Indian bombing.

It was 2:30 P.M. I just entered my residence to receive a wailing welcome from my wife, children, and brothers. Indian planes roared in again. My family thought that I was already under the garbage due to the repeated bombing at Government House, but finding me alive before them was no relief, as the planes were again over our heads. They zoomed down—one, two, three, and more—with all the sound and fury, without any challenge in the sky. And luckily for us this time, the target was the University Halls and Peel Khana, only a few hundred yards from my residence. Black smoke plumed high over the university campus with ack-acks thundering from far-off areas. Pieces of rockets and shells fell also in our compound without any casualty. There was not enough room within one small trench inside the compound, so women and children, numbering about 20, including relations, who were putting up with me since heavy bombing started on the night of December 3, used to hide under the staircase on the ground floor every time there

was air raid during day and night. This time, like daredevils, they all stood close by me to face death together. There was a pause in the air raid when I brought out the car from the garage. I told everybody to pack up for evacuation, knowing not who was to take shelter where. I asked my wife to go with Nasrullahs, but she refused to leave me alone. There was no time for planning or argument. We had to reach the neutral zone by four P.M., so with five children and a wife, we got into the car, leaving everything—personal, official, valuable, and memorable—behind. All were in tears—they would not be accommodated by the Red Cross so they had to leave for other shelters.

At the hotel gate some more colleagues were waiting with their families, but they were not being allowed in. I had to call for Kelly of the United Nations, who, after consultation with the ICRC people, let us in at sunset. From the light of freedom, we walked into a room of darkness. After proper checking, filling in Red Cross forms, and other formalities, five of us were bundled into one room on the tenth floor. Prof. Shamsul Huq, the minister for Rehabilitation, and Aungshue Prue, minister for minorities, were at Chittagong. The other ministers, except Musharraf, who could not get in, also got a room each for their families. Only Muzibur Rahman of Comilla and Jasimuddin of Sylhet, who were without their families, shared a room. Only two of my little girls were a little frightened; my only son Hasan was undaunted and still curious. The rest were praying with folded palms to none other than God Almighty. We prayed to Him that since Pakistan, a homeland for the Muslims, was trampled under the feet of invaders, we did not mind dying, but let it be with honor and faith—Iman and Izzat. They got mentally prepared to save my life with all their lives.

The moment for death for which we were waiting every minute in the hands of killers came but passed by without our knowledge. The Muktis had planted time bombs strong enough to blow us up during the night, but the army, still in control of the city, detected and defused them in time to save the lives of about five hundred occupants, including foreigners, foreign journalists, Red Cross people, hotel staff, and the sheltered men, women, and children.

John Kelly of the UN relief organization and Lampell, an I.C.R.C. delegate, were in constant touch with Dr. Malik in the hotel to keep us apprised of the position of cease-fire. General Niazi was not adamant to fight till the last, knowing fully well that the promised help from the North and South were not forthcoming. The maneuver of American ships in the Indian Ocean, part of the Seventh fleet, did not have the Pentagon instructions to interfere or even warn the invaders. The local navy and air force being already put out of action, the army alone could

fight and die, knowing sure defeat. This would have actually meant the destruction of men and materials to a limitless extent. Pak army, local militia, and volunteers on our side vs the Indian air force, navy, and army, assisted by Mukti Bahini on the other side would have resulted in fights worse than Vietnam in every district, village, mohalla, and street. This would have surely brought human casualties actually to the figure, that India and Bangladesh Governments inflatedly represented to the world to have been killed.

The Bangladesh Government itself and the Indians serving with UN agencies gave out various imaginary figures of loss of houses, agricultural fields, food, industries, communications, but they could never reach the 3 million figure of human casualties often quoted by them. So they did not publish the results of the census of human loss taken after liberation. But Himalayan-canard did do Bangladesh some good in attracting more aid, relief, and sympathy. To bring about the end to the hostilities, Gen. Farman Ali, the liaison between the civil and army authorities, was called to the hotel and held a long closed door talk during the night of December 14. It was conveyed that come what may army jawans are determined to fight. Dr. Malik, UN officials, and army officers all decided to discuss cease-fire with General Niazi through General Farman.

During the night, before cease-fire, fierce battle continued on all borders and around Dacca. We could see the glow of bombs and shells near Narayanganj on the east from the tenth-floor windows the whole night. From the early hours of the morning of the fifteenth, the violence of air raids started again. We ran up and down the stairs at least ten times before midday with the children for shelter. The Savar Radio transmission was bombed out of commission, so the Dacca radio went off the air. At one time, it was announced by the Red Cross people that the hotel will be bombed heavily along with other important installations in the city to force a surrender. Planes actually came thundering down, but they bombed the university, airport, Peel Khana, and other important places in or around the city, but the crowded hotel, with the panicky foreigners and protected persons, was spared. The smoke and fire could be seen after the raids at a distance in all directions. With weary legs, deaf ears, and throbbing hearts, there were no smiles but all tears or terror around.

By noon, army movements thinned out, and so did the air raids. I tried to accommodate some more of our friends, but in vain, as there was no accommodation left in the hotel as told by the I.C.R.C. The I.C.R.C. came with the news that Niazi has agreed to a cease-fire but had asked for time till tomorrow. This news was also announced on All

Indian Radio in the midday service, quoting a UN agency report. Niazi did what Generals Yahya and Hamid wanted. He did what Indira and Mujib cherished.

The most jubilant in the hotel were some of Western pressmen, first because their risky assignment was coming to an end, second because the defeat of Pakistan was to their liking. These folks appeared to have thoroughly enjoyed the Indian invasion, which they celebrated with drinks.

We the protected persons apprehended some trouble from Mukti Bahini during the night after the declaration of cease-fire. Actually the cease-fire turned out to be a surrender at Indian insistence, so they would be taking over everything from Pakistan. This was their opportunity to wreak vengeance on the supporters of Pakistan, the Mukti Bahini, the miscreants, the fortune seekers, time servers, all would now be active in riding the bandwagon. Though the night was otherwise quiet, for the first time after a fortnight, we got not a wink of sleep. The Red Cross people were very vigilant, and the Pak army control still seemed to be there. By the morning, the position as to surrender of the Pak army was clear. And the mob upsurge began.

December 16, 1971. The new sun on the green background rose in the east; the new country of Bangladesh emerged out of East Pakistan. So everything that was Pakistan was the target of jubilant and triumphant youngsters who came out in the streets with the new flags and guns in their hands. They came in hundreds and thousands chanting, "Jai Bangla," on the streets. They were around our hotel too, knowing that the governor and his ministers had taken shelter there. With angry slogans, they attacked the hotel at about eight A.M. The Red Cross people alerted us and heroically resisted them by persuading them to honor the neutral zone on humanitarian grounds. The first raid was avoided, but within a short while another wave, with a greater strength of the mob and Mukti Bahini, tried to break through the hotel barriers. This time with the help of one Mukti commander and the hotel staff, the Red Cross people and the journalists averted the attack. A part of the mob was diverted to the adjacent radio station while they scaled the walls, pulled down the Pakistani flag, and raised one small new flag amidst thunderous cheers. Armed Pak police were still there awaiting evacuation to the cantonment. They tried to get out to a waiting transport outside, but being chased by the mob, ran back to their trenches and took up positions in defense twice. Somebody in the crowd intervened to avoid any bloody clash when they were allowed to board the transport. Another bus, full of Pak army personnel, was proceeding toward cantonment with a white flag, but the mob stopped the bus, dragged

out the army people, and set the bus on fire on Shahbagh Avenue. The heaviest crowd was gathering around our hotel and peeping through our window; we were waiting for the next raid on us. The disorderly crowd, strengthened by more men and women, were looking out for another dash toward us. But Indian tanks and trucks started rolling in from the Tangail and Narayanganj sides after nine A.M. as if Germans had entered Paris or Warsaw. The mob busied themselves according a rousing reception to these soldiers and forgot us totally. The Indian soldiers in battle dress on top of tanks, trucks, buses, and jeeps, were hugged, kissed, and garlanded by boys and girls on the streets. The grim and tense situation turned hilarious, and by ten A.M., armed guards were posted at the hotel, so there was no further attempt on us.

Thousands of army men poured into the city from all sides by noon, mostly by our civilian buses and trucks in addition to their own tanks and trucks. I.A.F. planes glided over the clear blue sky of Dacca, as the airport was not fit for landing. Occasional columns of Pak troops on foot were passing by amidst cheers and jeers toward the cantonment to lay off their last arms. Their movement was not safe any longer, as they were defeated; they were moving with heads down, depressed in mood and appearance, naturally all with a sense of insecurity and uncertainty. General Maneckshaw, Commander-In-Chief of the Indian army, had promised them safe repatriation, but their minds were full of agony and shame. This moment in a soldier's life is worse than death.

It was just after ten A.M. One platoon of Pak troops was marching towards cantonment in single file when some people from the crowd fired shots toward them. In a split second, Pak troops lay down in position and fired back toward the shooters. The Indian army, surrounded by the mob, also took cover behind walls and fired back at them. A few rounds of fire went off when one officer from the hotel side asked them not to shoot, and within five to ten minutes both the army in position withdrew and the accident ended. But there was one dead, many wounded, and the crowd dispersed in a hurry. Many more accidents of violation of cease-fire occurred at different places, as it was unbelievable to many that war really has come to an end with none to supervise.

But the most tragic, abominable, and ghastly butchery was being staged publicly in Dacca race course, on street corners, in houses, and practically everywhere, reports of which were pouring in the hotel from the foreign pressmen, Red Cross people, and others. People with beard or cap, boys of tender age, important leaders, renowned educators, officers, businessmen, members of unions or town councils or peace committees, political party workers, journalists, teachers, workers, i.e.,

anyone suspected of collaboration with Pakistan were dragged out in public, humiliated, tortured, maimed, and killed by Mukti Bahini and their supporters. This crime against humanity continued openly in the streets and houses, huts and bazaars, villages and towns, all over the country. Biharis were victims, Razaakars were victims, Muzahids and EPCAF people were victims, and so were central and provincial ex-ministers, members of national and provincial assemblies.

I still cannot believe the stories of vengeance and cold-blooded murders of some close associates like Farid Ahmed of Chittagong, Azmal Ali Chowdhury of Sylhet, both ex-ministers and renowned for their service to the people. Dr. Sajjad Hossain, a renowned scholar and educator, vice-chancellor of Dacca University, and Dr. Hasan Zaman of Dacca University and director of Pakistan Studies were brutally tortured and thrown in the Gulistan crossing as dead. They miraculously survived but were permanently disabled. Similarly, teachers of repute all over the country were victimized. Fazlul Quader Choudhury, my party president and former speaker of the National Assembly and one-time minister, also escaped death after being apprehended and tortured by Muktis in Chittagong. All the skulls and skeletons exhibited to the world by the new government are no less of these victims than those of the victims prior to December 16. The earlier brutality was surpassed by the post-liberation one, if one could view it impartially. But the fact remains that victims on both occasions were human beings for whatever difference of opinion it might have been. There is nothing unfair in war and love, it is said. Yet it remains a crime against humanity—the barbarous game of killing in war or civil war.

In the afternoon of December 16, Lt. Gen. Jogajit Singh Aurora on the Indian side and Lt. Gen. A.A. K. Niazi on the Pakistan side signed the instrument of cease-fire and surrender in a formal ceremony at Dacca Race Course. At this place, Mujib, on March 7 of the same year, gave the clarion call to people to fight the West Pakistan army regime with the concluding slogans of “Jai Bangla” and “Jai Pakistan”—“victory for Bengal” and “Victory for Pakistan.” At this place, only within ten months, the historic document for “Victory for Bengal” was written and “Victory for Pakistan” was unwritten—but none for the whole of Bengal or for the whole of Pakistan. This was the document signed by the two Commanders on two sides of war:

The PAKISTAN Eastern Command agree to surrender all PAKISTAN Armed Forces in BANGLA DESH to Lieutenant-General JAGJIT SINCH AURORA, General Officer Commanding in Chief of the Indian and BANGLA DESH forces in the

Eastern Theatre. This surrender includes all PAKISTAN land, air and naval forces as also all paramilitary forces and civil armed forces. These forces will lay down their arms and surrender at the places where they are currently located to the nearest regular troops under the command of Lieutenant-General JAGJIT SINGH AURORA.

The PAKISTAN Eastern Command shall come under the orders of Lieutenant-General JAGJIT SINGH AURORA as soon as this instrument has been signed. Disobedience of orders will be regarded as a breach of the surrender terms and will be dealt with in accordance with the accepted laws and usages of war. The decision of Lieutenant-General JAGJIT SINGH AURORA will be final, should any doubt arise as to the meaning or interpretation of the surrender terms.

Lieutenant-General JAGJIT SINGH AURORA gives a solemn assurance that personnel who surrender shall be treated with the dignity and respect that soldiers are entitled to in accordance with the provisions of the GENEVA Convention and guarantees the safety and well-being of all PAKISTAN military and paramilitary forces who surrender. Protection will be provided to foreign nationals, ethnic minorities and personnel of WEST PAKISTAN origin by the forces under the command of Lieutenant-General JAGJIT SINGH AURORA.

JAGJIT SINGH AURORA
Lieutenant-General
General Officer Commanding in Chief
Indian and Bangla Desh Forces in
the Eastern Theatre
16 December 1971

AMIR ABDULLAH KHAN NIAZI
Lieutenant-General
Marital Law Administrator
Zone B and Commander
EASTERN Command (Pakistan)
16 December 1971

More news of atrocities by the Mukti Bahini in different parts of the city and the country were pouring in through the foreign pressmen, who were very quiet about it, unlike the days of Pakistan when these very people would throw all sorts of abuses for even lesser type of atrocities. Indian army officers and even Mukti Bahini people in their uniforms started pouring in the only dining hall of the hotel for food and drinks. We were further scared when some of them found their accommodation in the hotel rooms in the evening. Our rooms on the tenth floor could easily be recognized by them, and anything could happen any time to avenge the grudge of the victors over the vanquished. I asked my wife to stay in the room as I did others, till it was clarified from the Red Cross people in the morning.

With our fingers crossed, the sleepless night passed quietly. My eldest daughter Zeeba, aged only nine, went downstairs for breakfast and reported back that a meeting was to take place about the whole situation downstairs. My wife and I had our tea in one corner table with the foreigners and the men in uniform all round. They all were having a nice and cheerful time in the Neutral Zone. The hotel management was eager to please the Indian officers even with the short supply of drinks and foods that they had in stock. Every one salutes the rising sun.

Outside markets were yet to open, water supply was yet to resume, and electricity was yet to begin its regular supply. So everyone was kept on the bare minimum by the careful supervision of the I.C.R.C., whose protected free guests we all were. The I.C.R.C. chief delegate explained the rights and duties of the Neutral Zone—"dos and do nots" for the guests, the extent of our protection, extent of obligation of the occupying power, etc. When we came to know that we are protected by the I.C.R.C. for a limited period and that they were to close the Neutral Zone on the eighteenth handing us over to the occupying power, we protested. They promised to discuss the matter with the Indian army, as there was no Bangladesh army or government in existence as yet. Two of our colleagues left the hotel; as they were without family, they would manage on their own. The rest of us decided to stay till the lawful authorities would take care of us.

The representatives of Indian statesman and Amrita Bazar Patrika also were there to interview us. Dr. Malik gave some of his reactions, and so did Quasem and Suleman. I intervened, as a lawyer and by instinct I had a feeling that the new authorities would make us the scapegoats. So I asked them to keep their lips sealed, which they did not appreciate at that time. But they listened to my caution not without benefit, as three of them had already taken three different stands to justify their support of Pakistan against Bangladesh, in their disturbed frame of mind.

Fighting was still going on in the western sector. India having fulfilled her plan to dismember Pakistan, called for a cease-fire in the west. Yahya Khan announced that they had lost a battle but not the war, so no cease-fire against the aggressor, but ultimately had to hold fire in Western sector too.

On the evening of the seventeenth, we were told that Indian generals would see us during the night about our future. Major General Singh was there to talk to Dr. Malik and us in the morning of the eighteenth, the meeting was held in an atmosphere of cordiality. He assured us of our safety according to international law. Being encouraged

by this, Quasem even offered his house as our sanctuary under armed protection, very little knowing of our future.

Since there was no government of Bangladesh in existence, the law and order situation was anarchic, the Mukti Bahini and miscreants were in control of the destiny of the common man, police, army, or any other branch of administration had not yet started moving, business or commerce were yet to resume their activity. So the life or property of any individual was insecure. Killing, looting, and extortion were going on unhindered. Even the sanctity of the Neutral Zone was not being honored by those elements. The I.C.R.C. was too anxious to close down the Zone and get down to relief and other humanitarian services. Non-Bengalees or Biharis of the old city were either physically exterminated or confined in private jails for extortion. The few who could escape, mostly women and children, had taken shelter in the new town of Muhamadpur and Mirpur. Only a few were with us in the Neutral Zone. The ICRC started collecting more of them from different areas in the town or the hotel after snatching them away from the jaws of death. The Indian army had not started patrolling the streets till the eighteenth of December. They were trying to organize the local government and police stations.

On the eighteenth, in the evening, Major General Nagra, Major General Singh and Colonel Bra had another conference with us in the office room of the I.C.R.C. in the hotel. Before our entry, they had finished drinks and finalized our movement plan. We were told to pack up our things, though there was very little to pack, so that we could move out at three A.M. in a convoy. They had arranged for our detention in Dacca cantonment till further instructions were available from Delhi. We were all ready by one A.M. on December 19 in our respective rooms, we said our prayers, dressed the children, and got down into the lobby at two A.M. The West Pakistani civil servants, non-Bengalee businessmen, and industrialists, Bengali politicians, ministers and governor, foreigners—a galaxy of 300 men, women, and children—were ready to move out to an unknown destiny. The signing of papers and other formalities took time, and we boarded the waiting bus at four A.M. amidst sobs and tears. We were handed over by our protectors the I.C.R.C., to the victorious Indian army with only a promise from them for our safety and care under the Geneva Convention. We had no choice, no better alternative, but to forego our freedom to become captives in our own land, which we ruled the other day. This was better than throwing us before the hungry wolves.

Colonel Bra of Maratha Regiment, a softspoken and courteous officer, was in charge of the operation. Complimenting the I.C.R.C. del-

egates, thanking the hotel staff, and saying Allah hafiz to other compatriots of the Neutral Zone, we parted under the Indian command. Civil servants were taken to one camp, and ministers and the governor with their families to another camp, in Dacca Cantonment, and the rest to Ispahani Colony and other destinations under army guard. It was much more than we could expect in the state of lawlessness that was prevailing outside.

Captives of Indian Army

The sun was peeping out of the morning mist when we reached the cantonment. Everything around us was deserted, dark, morose, and melancholy, and so were we from within. We were frozen by the early-morning drive toward the north; especially, our little daughter of ten months was ice cold in her mother's lap. The eldest daughter, Zeeba, was only nine years old, the rest, three, were in between, so they did not know what was actually happening except that we were in some sort of danger. They were not very impressed by the dress or appearance of the Indian army and still thought that the Pak Army was smarter and better. My five-year-old son Hassan still was thinking aloud of Sher Khan and was inquiring why he was not there to drive away those tiny Indians. When his mother told him that Sher Khan, like his other compatriot soldiers, was also a prisoner of the tiny ones, he thought that we were kidding and told her not to worry as Sher Khan would definitely come with his army and set us all free!

The courteous colonel put each one of our family in the quarters earmarked for us one after another. Dr. Malik occupied one and eight of us occupied four more in an area near the rail line just vacated by the Pak army. The men of Marhatta Regiment were on guard, but we were allowed to move about among ourselves within the area. Because of the continuing mob rule throughout the country, the question of our moving out of the area did not arise. The valuables of the buildings occupied by us were removed by unknown persons a day earlier, and the things within that could not be carried away were still topsy-turvy—with broken windows, damaged bathrooms, littered floors, and missing water and electric appliances. The I.C.R.C. people were still looking after us. They were good enough to supply us with tea and food with great difficulty for the next two days.

Being busy otherwise, the army was not settled yet in Dacca, so they could not provide us with beds, furniture, food, or drinks for the first few days. The food godown of the Pak army was only a few yards away from us, full of stores of all kinds. We ourselves collected some cots and mattresses, tables, and chairs from the neighboring buildings that were left by the Pak army but could not be carried away by the looters. The International Red Cross supplied us some blankets free and procured some sheets and utensils for us on payment. Some of us had the time and wits to carry some money with us, but others were without, we had to help each other. Banks were yet to open, and we guessed that the new government would put an embargo on operation of our accounts, which they actually did in time. But for the Red Cross's help, we would have suffered in cold and hunger like the destitute non-Bengalees, marooned in Mirpur and other areas.

The children, though not used to this type of hardship, were nevertheless enjoying it as a camping picnic. The small children of Yusuf, Ishaq, Suleman, and I were actually keeping the dreadful gloomy atmosphere bright and lively. No doubt some of their problems vexed and perplexed us beyond our comprehension, but those naughty angels gave us the reason and inspiration to live in those morbid days. The horrid worries that mostly Quasem and Suleman used to bravely induce in our tired brains, causing sleepless nights, would glide away with the screams and laughter of the playful children. The horror of defeat, the pain of captivity, the worries about our future, all were dwarfed by the presence and affection of the children in our midst.

Dr. Malik, with his Austrian wife and young daughter, were secluded from us. Ishaq, with his kids and family, was jointly messing with Jasimuddin, whose family was in Sylhet. Quasem, with only his wife, his grown-up children being away from them, was jointly messing with Nawazesh, his wife, and a university going girl, Abbas with his only daughter, grandchildren, and wife, was messing with Yusuf and his kids. Suleman and I were in the same building with all the minor children with us. The houses were all so close that one soldier could keep an eye on all, but a few dozen were posted there. They were all fierce men doing their duty but without any fuss or ferocity.

We were used to the black out, so the absence of electricity for the first few days gave us no major trouble. The Red Cross procured some lanterns with kerosene oil for us so that we could have our dinners at night—self-cooked of course—from December 22. The Indian bombing put several cable junctions out of order. Now Indian engineers themselves had to repair them. The water system luckily was not damaged very much, so they got it quickly restored. The first few days passed

very quickly amidst visits of Red Cross delegates and army officers with lot of discussions and planning over our stay and status. We were a lost lot, so any arrangement to keep our body and soul together would satisfy us. The ordinary difficulties of restricted movement, lack of food or drink, or other hardship of confinement did not worry us much.

December 20 and 21 passed away quickly. Colonel Bra, Captain Pony, and other officers and men came several times to look after our requirements. They counted the number of persons several times, as they had to account for every one and supply ration for every one. Ration, dry ones, came only on the evening of the 21st so that we could start cooking our own food the following day. There was no meat, fish, vegetables, or eggs but plenty of flour, rice, vegetables, ghee, and condensed milk were supplied from the old Pakistani stock. There was no fuel or utensils for cooking, nor there was any maid or cook or help to assist. Men, women, and children all joined in the camp-life adventure of preparing our own food on this Robinson Crusoe island.

Later, one young boy from a nearby hut came to our rescue and used to get some essentials from far-off markets, though at exorbitant prices. At times, Red Cross people also bought some mutton, eggs, chicken, etc., for us. After a few days, the peddlers started coming every morning with daily necessities until they were stopped by armed guards for security reasons. The young boy also had no permission to move amidst us, but he continued to sneak in and get things and informations from outside on the extra patronization by coins and notes. One officer was good enough to take some ladies out to our respective houses one day under army guard. It helped our ladies to fetch some essentials and utensils from our houses in the city, which were left after looting and ransacking. The only valuable thing recovered from my house at Park Avenue was a TV set locked in one small room of the first floor. This TV set and radio sets of other colleagues were our only connection to the outside world. All children used to gather in our building in the evening to watch the TV when it resumed its program in January. Elders also used to join in for news or important programs. The TV was most enjoyed by the Indian soldiers stationed near us, for it was a new and novel thing to them. They hardly believed that East Pakistan had made so much progress during the Pakistan regime in TV, cinema, roads, buildings, factories, and everything else. They were also astonished to know about the better dress, pay, ration, and other amenities provided to the Pak army men compared to what they received in India.

From the jubilant crowd on passing trains, from the constant sound of bombs and guns, from the radio and TV performance, and from other sources, we could gather that law and order in the country was yet to

be restored. With the Bangladesh army and police not yet organized, the Indian army was trying to control the situation but Muktis, mobs, and miscreants were having a free for all.

Some Indian newspapers that reached us flashed news of killing of Bengali intellectuals. Local papers—hurriedly changing their name, loyalty, and management—picked up the gimmick without verification to cover up their past lapses. Killing of intellectuals even two to three days after the sixteenth were also attributed to Pak army, viz., Jahir Raihan, a notable film producer who was physically moving with the Indian army after surrender of all the units of the Pak Army. The period alleged for kidnapping and killing is between December 14 and 16, but we knew nothing about it up to the fourteenth when our government ceased to exist. The war was taken to be lost on the twelfth at Tangail, on the fourteenth at Dacca, and General Niazi accepted it officially on the fifteenth. Could there be such a drastic planning and execution in such a short time by the defeated Pak army and for what gain! Could there be some other planning by some extremists on either the Pak side or Indian side to do away with those arrested intellectuals? Most of them were not pro-Indians, nor did they join the liberation war. Who committed this abominable crime? Will there ever be any impartial inquiry and trial besides the motivated propaganda?

Another propaganda tirade was launched later that the Pak Army had destroyed mills and factories, roads and bridges, markets and fields, road, rail, and water transports during their occupation and before surrender. This is a subject about which I have personal knowledge, as I was in charge of industries and commerce departments, more than anything else. About 200 big industries, including jute, cotton, engineering, chemicals, fertilizer, iron, and steel, paper, refinery, virtually all of them built by Pakistan, were in tact till the surrender. All of them were in running condition except a few that were damaged by sabotage of Mukti Bahini or Indian bombing. Some of them, of course, were not running to full capacity because of short attendance of workers, short supply of raw materials, disturbed communications, and a sense of insecurity that was the inevitable result of the civil war. There was hardly any shortage of spare parts of machinery, and capital shortage was immediately looked into by my department and that of finance whenever there was any difficulty. The hardest hit were actually the smaller industries, which normally run with small-capital, ready-at-hand raw materials, and near-at-hand markets. They suffered not from destruction or damage but from the economic factors arising out of the disturbance. There were cases of sabotage and bombing, also, mostly along the borders. The number of these industries would be several thousands, and

they were intact till the last day of my office, whose production chart I used to check up every week to remove the bottlenecks.

Roads and bridges, rather, the entire communication system in riverine East Pakistan, had been very inadequate since British days. But, during Pakistan, especially during the Ayub administration, there was abundant growth of them so that practically every habitable part was linked up with roads, bridges, ferries, launches, and telephones. They suffered a great setback during the civil war, most of which was caused by guerrilla sabotage, to economically and militarily cripple the Pak administration. Roads were cut off, bridges and culverts blown off, launches and steamers sunk, trucks, jeeps, and buses taken away to India by fleeing leaders, even railway engines and bogies were shunted away to India in March and April. The army did destroy some markets and houses in Dacca and elsewhere to disperse and terrorize the resistance, but they did not destroy any crop or agricultural field, which guerillas did to stop cultivation of jute at the insistence of India.

This was all a part of an Indian plan to weaken or dismember Pakistan initially and also to create a dependent Bangladesh market of 75 million people for India's goods. This economic factor has always been the dominant cause of all various conflicts like world wars and local wars, and this tripartite conflict is no exception to that. Bengal, while trying to achieve its economic emancipation from West Pakistan, was unconsciously walking into the grip of an Indian trade octopus.

On December 22, the provisional government of Bangladesh, headed by Syed Nazrul Islam as president and Tazuddin Ahmed as prime minister, flew in an Indian defense plane from their capital "Mujibnagar" in Calcutta to the new capital in Dacca and took over the government as sovereign authority. Various types of planes and helicopters flew in day in and day out over our heads to land at the nearby damaged airport from Assam, Agartala, and the West Bengal side. People were busy celebrating their hard-earned independence with bullets, bombs, firecrackers, processions, and meetings.

So was the Indian army celebrating its victory but in a different way. Their trucks, jeeps, buses, and vessels came with soldiers and went away, multiplied with Pak transports, carrying guns, tanks, mortars, ack-acks, radar, and other sophisticated arms and ammunition of the Pak army. The entire equipment of three regular divisions and two divisions of the irregular army, every piece of equipment or store of the Pak army that could be carried by the Indian navy and air force from all their stations were silently and gracefully taken away. Chaps like Major Jalil and others, who objected to such large-scale evacuation of materials at Jessore, Chittagong, Comilla, Rangpur, were also evacuated

with materials. With the army came the civilians from India as refugees; they both combined in the next phase to evacuate other materials like machinery, stock in trade, jute, rice, gold, radios and televisions, watches, quality cloth, medicine, and everything that they could lay their hands on. They silently stripped the new country naked before its government or forces could organize and settle themselves. There was a flight of capital from East Pakistan to West Pakistan in millions during the last twenty-four years, but this time the flight was from Bangladesh to India not in millions but in billions—not in twenty-four years but in twenty-four days. We also witnessed Dacca cantonment stripped of all its valuable possessions within December.

The agonizing days of December were over, but the new year brought no hope for us. The local government was also not in a mood to settle down, as they were behaving like a herd without its shepherd. Bhutto, by then the president of Pakistan, ousting Yahya Khan with the help of some generals, had set Mujib free from his prison and accommodated him in a private bungalow near Pindi. They were having some sort of dialogue there while angry mobs here were still freely catching and killing Bengalees or Biharis alike, whoever was a suspected supporter of Pakistan. Life or movement was still insecure for everyone who did not possess an automatic weapon. Even people who were made to help the guerrillas were now fed up and scared of them. They were disillusioned, as the government had no control over the chaotic situation. Mujib would retrieve their position, so all eyes and ears were turned toward Pindi with hopes and anxiety. Bhutto ultimately announced that he would allow Mujib to return to Dacca with the hope that some sort of link would be retained with Pakistan by Mujib. For his release, Mujib had given some understanding to Bhutto that was not known to us then.

A tumultuous hero's reception was accorded to Mujib on January 10 when he reached Dacca via London and Delhi. There being no diplomatic relations with India or Bangladesh at that time, Pakistan earlier sent him to London on Mujib's own choice of places. He addressed a mammoth meeting at the historic race course on arrival where he totally denounced Pakistan to the great shock of Bhutto but to the great liking of Indira Gandhi. Mujib told his people that a grave was dug for him near his cell in Lyallpur jail. This was nothing but a war-time trench according to his own admission, but our people were gullible enough to believe this story, also. According to observers, Mujib was given a VIP treatment by Bhutto not only because he wanted to wash his hands of East Pakistan but also because the lifelong ambition of both were fulfilled in becoming rulers. Their ends justified the means.

Now that the secession was complete, Bangladesh was a sovereign territory with a government of its own, Mujib took its reign first as president and then as prime minister with Justice Abu Sayeed Choudhury as president from January 12. His lifelong ambition was achieved. Now he was named the "father of the nation" by the students. He was also "Bangabandhu," friend of Bengal, although half of Bengal was still under India, which was yet to be free. After all that was said and done, would India allow her portion of Bengal to join free Bangladesh?

Copies of the Geneva Convention of 1949 were supplied to us by the I.C.R.C. from which we ascertained our rights as protected persons. India was a party to the Convention, and so was Pakistan, but not Bangladesh. So some practical difficulties arose that needed clarification and agreement of Bangladesh. The Red Cross was running one hospital at Dacca and rendering maximum humanitarian help in terms of shelter, food, medicine, and other relief materials to all displaced persons. They expressed their helplessness in saving human lives from the brutal atrocities in the absence of an effective government. Nevertheless, they organized rescue and shelter operations for the victimized Biharis and Bengalees to save them from further material and physical annihilation wherever they could reach. The local government did not relish this humanitarian service; thus, to show their full authority, they wanted to take over the entire operation, although they were not yet fit enough to undertake such a matter physically or mentally. The government, in its bid, dismissed the old Red Cross committee headed by one high court judge, threw him behind bars, appointed a new committee with one ordinary Awami Leaguer as its head, and gradually took over the local Red Cross activities from the I.C.R.C.

The massive relief operation was taken over from I.C.R.C. to patronize the government party's own people with the I.C.R.C. only to supervise. In return, the I.C.R.C. made Bangladesh apply for its membership and become a party to the convention, which they did in April only. Through I.C.R.C. initiative, we were granted some of our due facilities like mail, medical attention, family visits, etc. We were actually overwhelmed the day my old father, younger sister, and her husband came to see us by Red Cross conveyance. The children were extremely happy, and so were the rest of us to find each other alive. We all had tears in our eyes, especially father, when he saw how Attya, my wife, was managing with the food in such a place and atmosphere. He could not believe that the granddaughter of Nawab Sir Salimullah could be interned in the city of Dacca or that she would have to cook the family food herself with doles. My octogenarian father was also taken into custody by the local guerrillas at Barisal after December 16, from where

he could only escape with his life by paying a ransom and promising more in writing. In Barisal and other districts thousands of Razakars, peace committee members, and political leaders were mercilessly butchered, thousands more were taken prisoners, and countless people had to hide for their lives with houses and business premises looted and ransacked—all after December 16.

We lost some valuable lives due to these atrocities. I cannot remember any important person who was killed by the Pak army in Barisal. In places of resistance like Jhalakati, Atghar-Kuriana, Muladi, Perojpur, Taltali, etc., there were some casualties during the army operation. But the cool and calculated murder by guerrillas before liberation and killing with inhuman torture after liberation had surpassed all record. One such victim was Matiar Rahman Talukdar, a businessman, secretary, Barisal city Muslim League, a pious and courageous man. He was dragged away from his housemates, women and children, taken around in street procession with shoes around his neck, insulted, kicked, wounded, and maimed. He was kept without food or drink, tortured for days and ultimately killed by the political opponents along with some others with a dynamite explosion. Another was Abdur Razzak Mia, chairman Jhalakati Town Committee, also Chairman of Thana Muslim League, my local election agent there in 1970. He was also brutally tortured with his house and business premises looted and ransacked he was shot and bayoneted to death and thrown into waters. His body was not allowed to be buried until after a week when local people came forward defying the killers. Yet another person of Bhola, an **alim**, a vocal supporter of Pakistan was similarly tortured for two days and asked to shout, "Jai Bangla," "Jai Bangabandhu" He said, "The voice that sings the hymn of Allah cannot sing the hymn of a Munafiq." His deep conviction and heroism cost him his life and many more fell like him all over East Pakistan.

The Holy Quran reminds us: "Say not of those who are slain in the way of God, they are dead.' Nay, they are living though ye perceive it not (11:154). There are thousands of such cases of brutal murder all in the name of "liberty" after liberation. They have all marched into the procession of the heroes to join the galaxy of the martyrs.

By the middle of January, we got used to the rigors of captive life. We were trying to get the usual amenities from the Indian army authority, mostly through the officers posted there; also, through the visiting Red Cross delegates. Some MCAs, some Indian leaders, some Indian pressmen, also visited us, and so did the relations of other colleagues and that of Dr. Malik. We used to get a dismal picture from them about the overall situation outside. Mujib, on return, was trying

to bring the situation under control, but it was a cry in the wilderness, hardly to be listened to by the men and miscreants with arms. His own followers were also busy collecting booty at gunpoint. Their unsatiable greed cost many lives, including their own men.

A word went around the camp that we all would be taken to India for safe detention there. We were asked to keep ready with bare necessities to move on short notice; family members would be allowed to leave. We packed our little belongings, including clothes for the severe winter expected in northern India. Quasem even procured a sufficient quantity of **chira** and **muri** (rice flakes) for the transit journey.

Detained civilians and prisoners of war (POWS) are the bargaining pawns of postwar chess. So they were anxious about our safe custody, especially that of the governor and his cabinet members on the civilian side, as per instruction of Delhi. We waited and waited, but the day never came.

The officers of the Marhatta regiment came to say good-bye to us, and we were quite moved by their individual behavior. The Guards were posted in the camp, and we reengaged ourselves in the formalities of captive life, this time with more rigor. But ration supply became a bit regular with the army supply being streamlined. We were supposed to get the officers' ration, but they were themselves complaining of short supply of bread, butter, ghee, oil, fresh milk, etc. They never supplied us those things, nor any meat, but fish and vegetables were plenty at times. We, of course, got our stores replenished by private supply from outside every now and then.

Eidul Azha was approaching, so we requested the officers to arrange for our congregation, to which they agreed. But till the last moment there was no arrangement or clearance, so we could not join the mass prayer of Eid. Some of us sat together for prayers within our premises, while millions outside observed the day with reserved solemnity. At Arafat and Holy Mecca a day earlier, millions from all over the world had gathered to celebrate the fraternity of Muslims, to be followed by animal sacrifice in the name of Allah, symbolizing the sacrifice of human passions on the altar of truth since prophet Abraham. There was so much of human sacrifice in this land, including our close associates, that we did not think it necessary to offer more sacrifice, nor was it compulsory for us in our captivity. The most shocking things that happened with us on that day was the treatment of the army with Red Cross people, Mr. Michael of I.C.R.C. was good enough to bring some visitors and food for us, but he was physically manhandled and turned out by the guards. Maltreatment aside, we were deprived of even an Eid visit.

One night we woke up from sleep by the cries and shouts from an

adjacent house. We apprehended worst danger in the hands of armed hooligans who were after our blood. But it was a danger of a different kind. Some poor civil employees of the old cantonment used to be lodged in the quarters just behind our bungalows. All the non-Bengalees had left, but some locals were still living in those quarters with their families. Indian Army jawans tried to force entry into one of those quarters to taste the young women living there at gun point. But the inmates, thinking that the intruders were Mukti Bahini people, raised a hue and cry to draw the attention of army guards and neighbors. Those jawans had made their way inside the rooms, but the surprise uproar and resistance from within made them run away in fear of detection. The guards on duty detected the matter but hushed up the incident of the sex hungry jawans. These boys must have been away from their homes for a pretty long time. Worse did happen elsewhere in Bangladesh to remind us of those dark days in Europe during or after world wars. Sex and wine are usually cheap in Europe and America, but they become cheaper in the West and East alike during wars.

We got quite familiar with some of the jawans on duty. A few of them knew also broken Bengali, which they picked up during their stay in the midst of Bengalis on either side of the border. We did not come across a single Bengali officer or soldier during our stay with the Indian army. Maybe the British tradition of distrust toward Bengalees had been kept up by Indian army, also. These boys picked up Bengali out of necessity, as some of them had been working as Mukti Bahini well within East Pakistan borders for the last few months. One such jawan from Rajsthan, looking like a Bengali, worked in Noakhali area for two months. He narrated how the local Muktis used to guide them and give shelter, food, and clothing for their effective operations. He passed three days in one house of a local shopkeeper apparently to collect information about Pak army movements. On the fourth day, he, along with Muktis, successfully blew up one railway bridge and returned to his base. His crack platoon moved to Mymensingh area later and repeated the similar operations up to liberation.

One evening, two colonels called on me apparently to watch TV but actually to know our thoughts about India and her army. They were a bit critical about the local law and order situation and malfeasance of the Mukti Bahini. One of them identified himself as a Pathan, originally from Peshawar, whose uncle was a barrister, so knowing that I was a barrister, too, he became quite friendly and frank, like real Pathans. The other colonel from Bombay was quite reserved and watched TV most of the time.

The officer from Peshawar, who migrated in 1947 to India with his

family, asked me about the day of bombing of Government House. During our conversation, he disclosed that soon after eleven A.M., they got the message that we were holding a cabinet meeting. They had already clearance from Tajuddin and Nazrul Islam of the provisional Government of Bangladesh and clearance from their command that the army or air force could hit any civilian target in Dacca or East Pakistan; even carpet bombing of Dacca was ordered by them to achieve military objectives. Within an hour of the receipt of the message, sent by someone from within or around Government House to an airport outside East Pakistan, IAF planes were ready to strike on us. They successfully carried out the operation without any visible obstruction, and by one P.M., December 14, Government House, now Bangabhavan, was in flames, being directly hit by Russian-built IAF planes. He said: "The pilots described it as duck shooting; in any case it did the trick and you surrendered." I told him we were negotiating cease-fire, but not surrender through the UN since the seventh, and we were in session on that day to finalize it.

Our detention by the army was a controversial matter, and so was entitlement to amenities. On queries by Pakistan and some international agencies, it was revealed by President Giri of India that Dr. Malik and his cabinet members were in the joint custody of the Indian army and the Red Cross and were looked after well. Only we knew how well we were. The lack of water, food, and electricity supply to meet our basic needs was no major suffering for us, as we were mentally prepared for worse. Worse was the agony of detention and uncertainty about the future.

The prospect of taking all of us to India as captive hostages became dimmer everyday. But it was decided to move all POWS to a safe distance in India along with some civilians who were being detained. Mujib came to the cantonment one day. We expected that he would visit us in a gesture of good will, so that it could be reciprocated by burying the hatchet from our side, also. But he is made of a different clay—which does not absorb anything in it until it is reduced or crushed into dust. He visited West Pakistani civilians and had a good chat with them. There was an apprehension that local people might obstruct the moving out of POWS, as they were successfully depicted, by the victorious press and other publicity media, as the worst criminals in history, even worse than Nazis and fascists! Our simple, emotional, and gullible people swallowed every story about them, knowing very little of the actual facts and the propaganda motive. But there was no incident when about 90,000 of them were lifted by road, rail, water, and air carriers to the different military camps in India. The Bangladesh government was hap-

pily relieved of its burden of custody and maintenance. The Indian government happily took over the burden to use them as hostages in the bargain with Pakistan. Both the army personnel and civilians like us who were not nationals of the occupying power or a party to the conflict during the hostilities were protected by the Geneva Convention of 1949.

But international law and conventions are yet to receive the full force and authority of municipal law in the hands of the national sovereign states. The concept of national sovereignty enables the states to follow international laws to suit their own requirements. The voice of sanity, humanity, or peace creates only an enchanting echo on the high national mountains. To give it an obligatory sanction for a big or small party is yet a far cry. There is no machinery to implement the accepted norms and principles of international conventions except by voluntary obedience.

The concept of national sovereignty practically negates the human oneness and the fundamental human values. Yet human efforts continue to evolve and nourish the spiritual or the human qualities in man as against its own animal and egoistic spirits. International agencies like the League of Nations, the UN, Red Cross, Red Crescent, One World Assembly, Peace Council or Committee, Society for Human Rights, etc., go on playing their own roles in knitting mankind into one integrated family of love and peace. Particularly at a time of conflict or conflagration, local or global, these agencies prove vital for the sustenance of those accepted values that are likely to be trampled under the feet of the conflicting parties—victor or vanquished.

The International Red Cross rendered tremendous service, true to their tradition, during this conflict of ours, rather more after the cessation of hostilities. They were observing the treatment of POWs and helping them, too. They were looking after the helpless Beharis, turned destitute after liberation, and helping them to survive. They were looking after the local victims and also victims like us—all at a great risk and cost. Yet they could not guarantee the observance of the conventions by the government of India or Bangladesh. They were not even allowed to see us after we were removed to the custody of the Bangladesh government in the prisons.

We had more or less a routine life at the camp. After the early-morning prayer and recitation of the Holy Quran, we used to have a walk, myself mostly with my youngest daughter and wife, invariably all other colleagues joining us. The grown-up children used to have their own walks and games throughout the day. We used to have our stroll until the sun was hot enough to remind us of our breakfast. At times,

we used to sit for a game of cards for the postbreakfast period, which used to be enjoyed by us but grudged by our wives. The wives had to meet our demand for tea or snacks in addition to their cooking, cleaning, and washing. My offers to help my wife in cooking were never accepted gladly by her. She was not a habitual cook at home, but she used to prepare the most delicious dishes, which we all relished. She had bleeding fingers on several occasions while slicing fish or vegetables. She burned her hand and her eyes became swollen while igniting a kitchen fire; she reddened her palms while washing the clothes, and she undertook all the rigors of captive life with a smile and cheer but hardly allowed me to share any of her pains. I took courage from her fortitude and faith in God, which I never found shaken during the days of agony and trial. None of the modern fictions of the renowned novelists or the world-famous cinefictions; to my mind, have depicted this image of postmarriage love and devotion of wives belonging to the Eastern world. Possibly it is too real to be epitomized.

Journey to Hell

January 31. The night was dark, cold, and quiet. The children were in deep sleep. My wife was waiting for me till I finished my prayer. A knock on the door, at about ten P.M., startled me. I did not answer the knock till one dark face peeped through one broken glass window, asking me to open the door. He was a man in olive green uniform with rifle in hand. Scenting something unusual, I hesitated to open the door at such an unearthly hour, but Major Badwa's voice, requesting me to attend some important discussion at the bungalow of Dr. Malik, made me to open the door.

My house was already surrounded by the men in uniform; the major's face was also gloomy, so I had no doubt that something fatal or important was awaiting us; these men were only to execute the decision. I had no choice but to obey their request, so I woke up Suleman in the adjacent room and lined up in between the army men to be escorted to the destination. My wife insisted on accompanying me, as she has been doing throughout all these days of trouble; in fact, she followed us in this midnight swoop. More military officers and Bangladesh police officers were waiting for our arrival in Dr. Malik's bungalow. All seven other colleagues arrived one after another, duly escorted in their sleeping dresses.

We were told that the Indian army had to hand us over to the Bangladesh government per orders from above. I argued with a bearded Sikh colonel and asked for the general in charge on whose promise of safe custody we were there. We expressed our concern at the sudden departure from the earlier arrangement, occasioning violation of the Geneva Convention. We were apprehending political victimization by the local government which was yet to establish full control over the law and order situation in the country. With the memory of mass execution

and public killing of political opponents after liberation still fresh in our minds, we were not convinced that the Indian army had any legal or moral authority to hand us over in such a fashion while we were the detainees of the Indian army under the supervision of the I.C.R.C. But reasoning is not yet superior human behavior to the superior force, nor is any humanitarian rule a matter of respect unless it suits the authority concerned.

The police gave us only five minutes' time to send for our essential clothes. He did not even allow us to meet our children or pack up our things personally or even talk to them or move out of the room where we were sitting. Some practically begged of them to allow us to bid good-bye to family members, which was rudely refused. For a while the Nazi days of Germany and Stalin days of Russia flashed back in our minds. The police surrounded us and hurriedly escorted us to the waiting pickups when the family of all the colleagues came running and weeping to see us off with the hurriedly packed baggage. The children, crying in muffled voices, the wives stunned, bewildered, and shocked and the other companions frightened and puzzled, bade us farewell in an unceremonious way at about 10:30 P.M.

The children were weeping, ladies had tears in their eyes, we were struck dumb—the convoy moved on. Even the I.C.R.C. was not informed, nor were they allowed to see us thereafter. Families with the children were left at the mercy of God with none else to look after them in the dark corner of the occupied cantonment of Dacca.

The Indian army escorted us to the perimeter of cantonment leading up to the airport. They bade us farewell in a sad and uncertain atmosphere in the gloomy night of the cold January month. The streets were deserted, the night was calm, only the speeding tyres of jeep and random gunfire here and there were breaking the silence. I asked the police officer about the gunfire, which he explained as a victory celebration by the liberation forces. No one knew who the victims were of such hilarious trigger happiness after two months of liberation. Surely the victims were non-Bengalis, the victims were personal and political opponents of the local liberation forces, the victims were anybody suspected of pro-Pakistan views, the well-to-do and the humble.

Sandwiched between Quasem on one side and an L.M.G.-equipped policeman on the other, I was talking to the officer sitting by the side of the driver in front, who was very stiff and curt in his conversation. Dr. Malik, sitting on the opposite side, was calm and tight lipped. Quasem, after getting over the initial shock, was coming back to his wits and asked the officer if it was the order of the government to shoot us. The officer almost smiled and asked him not to worry, as soon we were to

enter the prison gate. When the convoy stopped near Tejgaon police station, Quasem whispered into my ears not to believe them, as the firing squad was being picked up from the station. More policemen were taken to escort us to the jail gate; we reached it just after eleven P.M. About two dozen armed men and officers in khaki surrounded us in battle formation with pointed guns. They took us out of the jeeps and ushered us into the iron gates of Dacca Central jail. The journey was short but memorable, which reminded us of the captives in chains of the medieval conquerors or the captives in cages of the Nazi or Jap soldiers of World War II. What was awaiting inside hell for us was not much different in kind from those of the olden times.

As an advocate, I visited several times the gates of the Central Jail to interview clients or political friends, but this time it was different altogether. We did not know, of course, what were the charges against us, nor was there any warrant or information against us; we were, of course, the vanquished political opponents of Mujib and his overlords. So we deserved no legal or humanitarian protection. We entered the jail office in single file; we were searched, particulars were taken of baggage, much lighter than it was loaded in the jeeps, we were looked upon with scorn and bitterness. The ex-governor, first and possibly the last, and the ex-ministers were allowed to sit on stools or chairs when the wall clock struck twelve midnight. The kind and timid deputy jailor apologized for the unpleasant formalities when he found that there was none else to watch him. To the jail staff it seemed to be a big experience and event in their life to have the entire set of governor and ministers as their unwelcome guests.

Escorted by a deputy jailer and his staff, when we reached the cell area, we were divided into two groups to be accommodated on the first floor of New 20 cell; four each in two separate areas. Myself, Dr. Malik, Nawazesh, and Suleman were taken together and shown four cells—formerly used as segregation cells for dangerous criminals like **dacoits**, murderers, or the like.

Iron beds with dirty mattresses were placed in the filthy empty rooms. With dim electric lights on, we could read various names and writings, left as memories of the old habitants of these historic cells. The question of whitewashing or disinfecting the rooms was too much to expect, but floors were swept clean before our arrival. One small table and a dilapidated chair were the entire set of furniture procured for us, as we were given Division 1 by the government. In addition, two coarse used blankets and one worn out bed sheet, were also provided for our sleeping comfort. There was a common bathroom and toilet outside the cells with indigenous emergency provision within the narrow room of about 7' × 11' with no windows but with an iron bar door.

We actually did not notice any of the facilities or lack of it as we were mentally prepared for the worst. Moreover, our minds were all the time occupied with the position and fate of our families, left to themselves in the cantonment. We were at least safe here with or without comfort, but what was awaiting their fate God alone knew. While the jail staff was fixing things for us, we were talking about them and about the condition and manner in which we were brought here. But our discussion was cut short, as they locked us inside our respective cells after one A.M. We were feeling like fish out of water—those who ruled and served this realm were now confined in the tiny cells to be served by the servants. We were to be fed, clad, and bathed all in time and in these cells detached from the good earth and locked up in the cold air. But being tired and exhausted, I reclined on the shambles of the bed to find only thoughts. Sweetest songs are those that tell of our saddest thoughts.

It was 1949 in Barisal when I was a student of B.A. class. I was the secretary of the district Muslim Students League, the only student organization up till then. An old I.C.S. officer of U.P. was the district magistrate then, a veteran supporter of Pakistan. During an August celebration of independence, the children of Mukul Fouz, a social children organization, got naughty after their sports and boarded the speedboat of the D.M., kept near their sports ground. Some of these boys were reportedly caught and beaten by the D.M. himself. The same evening, we had a public meeting in the local town hall where this matter was condemned. At the instance of some heated students, a procession was taken out in protest that paraded up to the D.M.'s bungalow, chanting slogans. Naturally, as their leader, I had to head the procession. The police super personally came and dissuaded us not to carry it further and disperse, which we did later after lot of shouts of condemnation.

In our young blood, we could not digest the attitude of an old bureaucrat, Indian Civil Service mentality, even after independence. The bureaucrat also could not digest this hostile demonstration; in his desperation, he ordered the arrest of the ringleaders. In a predawn swoop, only I could be picked up by the police and thrown in the lockup of Kotwali police station. The police people were quite sympathetic but helpless, but the news spread like wildfire, which resulted in a spontaneous strike in the educational institutions. The college and school students came out in the streets in procession, demanding my release. Elderly Muslim League leaders were afraid of the D.M., but Moulana Madani, and some young leaders intervened. They came with a message to take me to D.M.'s bungalow, where I was to formally apologize, and he was to release me. There were hawks and doves in our midst, as to

be found in every sphere of society, but I politely told them that I committed no wrong, so I would be the last man to apologize; rather, it was the turn of the D.M. to apologize to the parents of the victimized children and to the students in general. They had to go back disappointed, as they were quite eager to get my release. By two P.M., things in the town were getting out of control, and more young boys were being arrested and dumped in the same police station. Our boys got the public also on our side and persuaded them to close their shops and stop the vehicles. Processions passed by the police station, and people flocked in numbers to have a glance at us. News of important developments in the town were reaching me almost every thirty minutes.

The materials that the police authorities supplied me as lunch on brass plate and bowl were so stinking and rotten that I could not touch them, but so much of snacks and sweets were supplied by my people from outside that the whole police staff could have it to their heart's content with me. They did not lock me up after two P.M., as the crowd was getting bigger. The police were kind and cordial to all our boys, but they had a duty to perform. By four P.M., the number of students arrested rose to about fifty—more were coming in. It was just after four P.M.; the negotiators came back with broad smile on their faces to inform me that the D.M. and S.P. has ordered my release. There was cheers in the crowd outside, but I told them to ring up S.P. to release the other boys with me, which they reluctantly had to do at about five P.M. We all marched in a victory procession to the town hall. After a lot of speeches, cheers, and slogans, we all dispersed.

The matter ended there to our simple and straight forward minds. But the D.M. could not swallow the insult, as in a district he is the uncrowned king by tradition from British days. In the early part of 1950, our student league was preparing to observe the state language day, and I was preparing for my B.A. final. One day, our party people implored me to be present in the committee election of A. K. School. By 5 P.M., the election was over in our favor, but I found the school surrounded by police. I was taken almost in a procession to the police station to be locked up in the same cell from where we marched out victoriously only a few months ago. Some of my party colleagues were already there as victims of the same authority. Many people came to see us there to express their resentment against the highhanded action. I had to console them by saying that when we have a good cause to fight the autocracy, this imprisonment will only further our cause, for which they must stand up to the challenge unitedly.

In that small cell, five of us spent the night gossiping and fighting with the royal-size mosquitoes. One of our boys, Selim, was very much

frightened who sobbed and trembled. We had a job to comfort him, but sleep came to his rescue. Later, we had one unknown companion, an elderly man, an accused in a burglary case. According to him, he was picked up from the street while begging, as he was without any work or food for the last two days. When we offered him our food, he really ate like an extremely hungry man and slept snoring all night. Three of us could hardly get a wink of sleep. Soon after morning prayer, tea and snacks from friends refreshed us a little. By nine A.M., we were filed up for the court; the police wanted to put handcuffs on us. We flatly refused to go to court with handcuffs, to which stand they had to yield. When the court took up our case, the room was packed to capacity with our lawyers and men. Shamsheer Ali, Lakitullah, and other lawyers pressed for our bail, which on instructions from above and on opposition by government representatives, was refused, but class was allowed in jail.

So I started my life in Barisal prison as a prey of old-time bureaucratic repression. My father was very much worried for me; so was I for my ensuing examination. Public resentment against the officer in question and his highhandedness was growing everyday, which echo reached the political authorities in Dacca. Barring a few politicians who always envy the popularity or influence of others, everyone moved the various government quarters in Barisal and Dacca for a settlement of the issue.

Nevertheless, inside that jail, we were getting VIP treatment with a jolly good camp life. The fear or horror of life in prison disappeared even from the mind of the youngest among us, Selim, after a few days. We had two convict mates at the disposal of four of us. We were accommodated in one spacious room with beds and blankets—quite airy and bright. The whole day used to pass very quickly, but the nights seemed sometimes long and fearsome. The day used to start with tea and a good breakfast of eggs and toast. Tea or milk was served again after ten A.M. with snacks or biscuits supplied from our homes. After long gossip, discussion, or a game of chess, the time for bath and lunch would come. Here I began my lessons of chess. One son of a Zamindar of Kalaskati, who was serving a life term on charge of murder, was allowed to come to our room and play chess with us during the day. Imadullah, was well acquainted with the game. They sometimes used to play cards, in which I did not have much interest.

There was a common saying that prison was the nursery for Communists and criminals. It, of course, depended on free association—if one receptive young mind was kept along with a hardened criminal or a Communist, naturally the strong mind would influence the other.

One Rashid, our **faltu**, a help, was a frequent visitor of the jail. This time it was his third conviction—all for minor offenses of pickpocketing,

theft, burglary, etc. He would divide a year almost equally between his stay outside or stay inside the jail—his second home. He showed his tricks to us of pickpocketing or keeping things inside his throat. This interesting lesson would naturally be imparted to his new disciples in the jail. He, like many others, had created a hole inside his throat with the help of a lead weight to easily hide jewelery, a watch, or money. He actually brought out some silver coins from that hole, then swallowed it again. We had no fear of contamination, so we enjoyed his trick and chatter quite well.

Before noon, we used to watch the drill or crow bathing of the general convicts near a long drain of water. Before dusk, all convicts used to finish their dinner, then be locked up in their respective **Khatas**—blocks. Counting of prisoners would go on throughout the day and night; especially, one would hear the rhythmic sounds of counting during the night, one number after another.

Finishing our dinner, discussion, and prayer, we would all be dead asleep by ten P.M. Rambling thoughts of the world outside would come to mind before the sleep could overtake us, or sometimes the agony of captive life would burden the soul till nerves were tired out to sleep. We were actually well looked after. We had everything we needed except freedom.

My father came one day to see me; he, although very strict and tough, was in tears. He asked me if I would agree to sign a bond of good behavior so that he could get my release. My father used to always command and not ask for opinions from a minor son, but when he asked, I took courage and politely told him not to think of such a proposition. Naturally, he was worried about my health and examination, but I assured him that I would not fail him in either.

There were repeated strikes in schools and college, with protest marches demanding our release. It was just a month to my final examination when one afternoon came the news that we were released. Thanking the inmates and staff of Barisal jail, we stepped outside the gate to be greeted by an enthusiastic crowd.

Those memorable days of back flashed into memory one after another, so although not a novice in political detention, I could not get any sleep. The night was dark, with mosquitoes singing their chorus and trigger-happy people in the city piercing the silent night with bullets every now and then. I must have gone into slumber when the **Azan** for morning prayer came floating into my ears. "The God is great," I was extremely glad to hear that voice after months with reassurance to my sinking heart that we were still alive—all were not dead.

It was our first morning in prison on the first of February. Our iron

gates would not be unlocked till the counting of prisoners was over, so we had to wash and say our prayers inside the room. The primitive toilet and washing system was to be employed for our benefit inside the cell. There were cells inside the jail with attached sanitary systems, but they were kept empty lest we get a hygienic or comfortable atmosphere. The warders on duty around the clock were stern and harsh on us, more than they would be to the ordinary criminals. We were treated as objects of contempt or pity, if not of hatred.

Tea with toast was served at breakfast at about nine A.M., which we all consumed sitting on a blanket in the verandah. We were allowed the freedom to mix and talk among four of us from dawn to dusk. Thank God we were not in iron chains or rod. We were no VIPs, although the ex-governors and ex-ministers who were there, made explicit on the arrival of the jailor, Roy. We all were called to attention by the warder when he arrived with his retinue of staff with due pomp and gravity. He was kind enough to explain to us that we were no longer privileged persons, rather ordinary under trial prisons for whom the government of Bangladesh was pleased to allow division—which, according to his mode of expression, we did not deserve as collaborators. We must not make any communication with the outside or anybody else within the jail, we must not go out, we must not make any noise, etc. Thereafter, he used to come now and then to admonish us with repetition of his two favorite ideas. One was that we were communal—I do not blame him, as, like most of his coreligionists he was deft in understanding the liberalism and universality of the ideology of Islam. Everyone belongs to some community or other; attachment to own community is no offense, but when such attachment creates hatred for others, it only becomes unethical. They would just close their ears and eyes to the fact that in the course of two decades of independence, there were no less than 1,000 communal riots in secular India. Victims of this blood bath were the minority Muslims in the hands of the majority Hindus there, whereas there was hardly any communal killing in Muslim Pakistan during this period.

Hindus, having four major castes, would consider their own lower castes as untouchables, unworthy of human treatment. The caste or classless humanism of Islam would just be jealousy abhorred by them, Polytheism being their creed, they could never come out of their limited vision to accept the unlimited expanse of monotheism, just as the materialists would never rise above the realm of perception or experience to the higher world of spirit. According to Professor Keith, the Congress was under the influence of Hinduism, proud of its past and intolerant of all changes; the result was that the Muslims who ruled over India for

centuries were led to ask for a separate homeland. Even the low-caste Hindus were the victims of Brahmin domination and riots in India.

The other idea of Roy was that by collaboration with Pakistan we committed a heinous offense and in no circumstances should we have accepted any office of the Pak government, being Bengalees. Dr. Malik on the first day and Suleman on the second day tried to convince him that acceptance of our office was only on humanitarian grounds to save our people by stopping patricidal bloodshed with an endeavor to bring about a political settlement and peace. Even on the third day, when he again repeated the idea (popularly held by most of the Bengalees), I had to ask him if he was in service during the Pak regime when the liberation struggle was going on or he crossed the border to avoid serving military regime. When he said that he was all along in service I told him that he was also a collaborator for aiding the Pak army, like 70 million people who did not cross the border—very much like us. We all laughed away the comment with the result that the jailer never repeated his ideas again to us.

He was also reminded of the history of Indian struggle for freedom where only the petty communalism and economic exploitation of Hindus actually made the Muslims ask for a separate homeland. In one part of that separate homeland is the present Bangladesh. Had there been no two-nation theory, there would have been no East Pakistan and without East Pakistan there would have been no Bangladesh.

Allotted to us for our use were one plate, two bowls, one mug and a spoon each—all of aluminum, with markings of East Pakistan. Even the uniform, belt, cap, etc., of jail staff were still carrying the same mark and material. There was no visible change in the method or manner of administration in jail except austerity or lack of facilities. Soon after liberation, all the detainees and convicts were freed by the freedom fighters at gunpoint, out of about 3,000 prisoners all but one in a mental cell escaped. While escaping, they took away all the government property they could lay their hands on, so did the outsiders who came to free them or loot. Gone were the veteran robbers, murderers, gang leaders, and all types of convicts or prisoners, but the man who refused to go is still here, leading an isolated life in a mental cell, all the time praying without talking to others or bothering about worldly needs. People call him **Aina Darbesh**—as he is a saintly man with a mirror in his hands.

Dacca jail was built during the British rule. Originally, this place had the oldest fort from pre-Moghul days around which all the paraphernalia of a fort, later used as palace, grew up. Quite a number of Nawabs governors of Delhi, used to reside in the palace within. For

some time, it also was the eastern headquarters of the East India Company. Moghuls had a wing here. Later on, the southern portion was built as lunatic asylum by the British.

The prison system in India was a developed and different version of the English or continental system of private jails, which used to be maintained by those countries even after the Industrial Revolution. In India, even during the Muslim rule, the prisoners were the responsibility of the monarch's government of the area. During the days of the East India Company and during permanent settlement, some private detention and torture houses of the Indigo planters or the landlords sprang up, but they were not actually the prison houses under the authority of the law. In Europe, appointed individuals used to be the custodians of the condemned prisoners, political or criminal, maintained in most subhuman condition.

The humane treatment of prisoners, whether captured during war or detained during peacetime, is one of the gifts of Muslim civilization since the days of Prophet Muhammed (p.u.h.) The captives of war were so well looked after by them that many of them embraced Islam, considering the humane treatment they received. After the wane of Muslim civilization in Asia, Europe, and Africa, prisoners were not considered as human beings with defined rights but the prisoners of Badr war were served with good food while Muslims lived on dry dates.

The British prison system was reformed and put on modern method only since the days of Queen Victoria; to be followed in India after the empire directly went under the British Crown. Initially, the prison houses were located inside the military forts like the Moghuls had but were gradually isolated with the process of consolidation of British rules coupled with increased civil intercourse with the natives. Some of these horror houses in forts still exist in both India and Pakistan, in Delhi, Lahore, and Bombay, as a reminiscent of the dark past. But for a short interval of six years, between 1905 and 1911, when East Bengal and Assam formed a separate province, Dacca had only a district jail for a capacity of prisoners of about 1,000 with still a large mental area. After 1947, it again became a central jail with a capacity of 1,900 only, but normally it used to accommodate between 2,000 and 3,000 with difficulty. Bengal has the densest population in the world, so with heavy pressure on land of its agricultural population, the crime rate was also quite high.

In December 1971, all criminals being set free, the jail was being packed with federalist pro-Pakistani elements after the mass killing spree by freedom fighters and miscreants was slowed down a little. By the time we arrived in jail, the number of lucky persons rose to 3,500—lucky

in escaping from the jaws of brutal killing. It was already overcrowded with no experienced convicts to look after their feeding, sanitation, or other necessities, but it started a mercurial rise in February. By the end of February, after Mujib had safely returned from Pakistan prison, he had imprisoned about 15,000 Bengalees and non-Bengalees in Dacca jail alone—the total in the fifty-six jails in Bangladesh must have reached a 100,000. The new prime minister, Mujib, Tajuddin Ahmed having been relegated to a subsidiary position, threatened to arrest more of those who would not obey him, if necessary to build new prisons or camps. There were camps, too, in Murapara, Muhammadpur, Cantonment, Chittagong, Saidpur, Khulna, etc., places where men, women, and children were dumped, mostly Biharis who escaped postliberation genocide.

The looting, arson, raping, killing, and forceful occupation of houses and properties of non-Bengalees rose to such an abominable height that people in Mirpur had to choose to die fighting. Where 90,000 well-equipped soldiers had already surrendered this flicker of courage of a desperate few was nothing but suicide. The inevitable followed: the live, able-bodied persons were driven to Dacca jail with their women, girls, and children dumped in camps, losing their hearth and home, cash and valuables, and honor and chastity. Here they were kept in animal conditions inside the jail without proper food, shelter, and clothing for days and weeks. The surviving men lost their clothings, cash, and everything either at Mirpur or in transit or at the jail gate or even inside the jail. Some deposited their last coin at the jail gate but hardly were recorded in their tickets; some even had to give away their only blanket or wrapper or pullover for a few pieces of bread and a cup of water. Some lost their little possessions even at the gate before the law-enforcement people. They did not receive the sympathy even that a jail cat gets. Under the open sky in bleak winter, with practically no food, their wailing and cries for help from the heavens would pierce the heart of even merciless Firaun, but it did not shake the minds of the leaders of the new free government or its agencies.

When once Tajuddin Ahmed visited the jail, where he also spent a considerable part of his political life, the condition of the Biharis in jail was pointed out to him, but it brought no sympathy to his mind. He and his colleagues cried hoarse for the values of freedom and liberty every day, but the plight of those creatures and the worse plight of their isolated family members in camps was of no concern to them. But for the relief provided to those in camps by the I.C.R.C., many of them would have died there, hidden from the world eyes. The world was busy counting the bones or skeletons of the dead and buried hither and thither and dug out by the government people or their party men and

flashed everyday in state-controlled papers. No one ever bothered to inquire whether those bones were of the preliberation or postliberation period, but all blame went to the Pak Army. No canard of this nature ever received international recognition without proper scrutiny about the alleged genocide.

The new government, soon after its takeover, ordered an elaborate inquiry and census of the actual persons killed during the nine-month period of liberation struggle. The official claim of 3 million dead and 200,000 women dishonored could never be substantiated with all the machinery at their disposal. Rather, on house to house census, when it was revealed that they could not find more than 200,000 Bengalees killed and no lesser number of non-Bengalees, they hushed up the whole census affair and went on harping on the mythical figure of 3 million killed. More interesting was the census of the dishonored women. The government could not find any positive proof of forceful violation of women's honor in more than five hundred cases, though the leaders quoted the inflated figure. In the above figure of dead, many Bengalees could be added who were killed by the freedom fighters, as to the dishonored women, many more could be added who voluntarily sold their honor for their own gain. Whatever is the number or whoever killed or dishonored the humanity all are no doubt animal acts of reprehensible nature that can never be supported or justified in war or civil war. One has to condemn the killing before liberation, and one justly has to condemn the same animal acts, committed freely in cold blood after liberation.

By the time we would get a slight ray of winter sunshine in our cells, we could get ready for a cold bath before lunch. We used to warm up ourselves by a little walk on the verandah with a little talk among four of us, the only companion, the overworked, ill paid, and ill clad jail warder. Initially, the warders used to keep mum and watch our activities and overhear our conversation, possibly also report to their superiors. Suleman was very cautious so that no one could listen to us, Dr. Malik was always softspoken and careful; Nawajesh was mostly tight lipped, so was I, normally a good listener. I had to keep the open talks going to avoid monotony and loneliness. But Suleman was a master talker as far as past activities were concerned, ranging from his association with Shere Bangla Fazlul Huq to his performance at home and abroad in the labor front. We used to discuss our childhood, family life, earlier experiences in jail, parliamentary life, social life, economic problems, games and sports. Dr. Malik, with his age, experience as ambassador and Minister for Pakistan for two decades, and a labor leader had enough to enlighten us. He was a friend of my late father-in-law,

so I used to regard him as uncle, but he was more an intimate and affectionate brother to me. When I fell ill later, he nursed me all the time in spite of his age and ill health.

Actually, the life in isolation, in spite of all the hardships, was blessed with two gifts: first, one could get to know the real man in his association; second, one could get to know the creation or his creator if one wishes through study, prayers, and meditation.

By 12:30 P.M., the **faltu**—Maqsood, a Behari, one of those unfortunate 15,000 live victims of liberation—used to bring the routine curry-rice luncheon for us to be had sitting over our common blanket on the verandah. During winter, I was not regular in taking a bath every day like others because of the cold water. We all used to sit together to enjoy the state hospitality. There was no regular cook, nor was there any trained convict to cook the food, so the under-trial or detained victims, though never permitted by jail code, had to heat, boil, and serve the few morsels to keep our body and soul together. For the division people, who were more than forty in February, with a subsequent increase in every month, there was common **chouka**, kitchen, with better food. The quality and quantity of better food was so poor that one of us had to volunteer to manage the kitchen. Major Afsaruddin, ex-army man and ex-parliamentarian, took on this unpleasant task since December, first as an ordinary prisoner, later elevated to division. When he came in, the situation inside jail was worse; he even was not allowed to use his slipper or socks for the first few days in the cold December. He, along with other respectable people, were even taken to do menial jobs, like sweeping or drawing water. Luck favored him but not Manzurul Ahsan, a senior advocate and a party leader, who had to actually draw water for a few days. We were glad to be latecomers; otherwise, the authorities would have fulfilled their vanity by making us to do the same.

We had to fill our stomach more with conversation or consolation rather than with food, but we never grumbled, as we saw the thousands lined up for hours in their courtyards for one cup of boiled rice with one cup of boiled lentil or vegetable once a day. These helpless people never grumbled or revolted for their allotted quota of diet, which would be no less than ten times what they were actually getting. No doubt it was a creditable job for the jail authority to manage the diet of over 15,000 people, but it is told that a full diet was shown to have been supplied on paper. Who gained by this is anybody's guess. It is a common saying that three **babus** Jail babu—"jail officer, "Naib babu"—landlords tax collector or "Daroga Babu"—police officer, are the real possessors of wealth and power in the Indian subcontinent. Whether the government or anyone else was responsible for the food or shelter of these

people or not, the fact remained that they had to live an animal life, being tortured, underfed, and underclad for weeks and months. Sometimes a simple movement, any conversation, moving away from line, or any other pretext would invite not only filthy abuses but hard hits from the batons of the warders or superiors.

By February some ex-freedom fighters, some miscreants, or the like, were also brought into jail to stop unabated lawlessness in the city. On a morning in February 1972, some of that element, not submissive and law abiding like the alleged collaborators, had picked a quarrel with some warder on duty. When the quarrel developed into a melee, a whistle was blown and the danger alarm was rung, inviting jail police on the spot and reserve police all around the jail. Jail officers with armed warders rushed to the spot, it was reported by eyewitnesses that without warning they opened fire on the melee. The result was that five innocent persons died on the spot; one died later in hospital; many were injured, but there was no news in the papers, nor did any proper public or judicial inquiry follow. Gone were more valuable lives, including one university student. Lives of human beings being the cheapest of all commodities in Bangladesh, no one outside even mourned their loss.

Animal Farm

After a postlunch rest of ten to fifteen minutes, we would all stand for *Duhr*-midday prayer. *Asar* and *Maghrib* prayers also we used to say together, there being no properly qualified *Imam* to lead our prayer. Dr. Malik and others would insist upon my leading prayer. I had no claim to piety, nor was I very envious to shoulder the responsibility. Yet I had to do it reluctantly under the circumstances. All of us got used to midday nap to pass the time; others used to read or write. Once in a while, the warder on duty would join us in prayer. After *Asar*, we used to have some religious discussion or *Salam*. At times, warders used to shout at us to do it quietly. Toward the end of February, Obaidullah Mazumder, our colleague in the cabinet, joined us, terminating his fugitive life. So all the five cells in our block were full. Mosharraf and Mazibar, who went into hiding, too, also surrendered to the notification issued by the government. Only Professor Shamsul Huq and Aung Schue Prue of our cabinet were still missing.

Soon after dusk, as soon as we finished our *Maghrib* prayer, we were locked up in our respective cells. Nights seemed to be very long and unending, specially when sleep could not overcome our anxiety. By nine P.M. our prayer, recitation, dinner, reading, and all other work would be over. We used to get bread and curry for dinner, which we would serve to ourselves cold. The last need of the angry stomach was a glass of cold water to be poured out of the earthen pitcher kept in one corner. Possibly water was the only unadulterated item in the range of food or drink in jail, which, of course, we learned later.

From nine P.M. till dawn, warders would be changed every two hours, so that no one fell asleep. These poor warders, for a very petty salary, worked hard with punctuality and discipline. Everyone had to work both during the night and day and invariably for eight to ten hours

a day with no weekly or festival holidays or overtime. The Awami League government promised them so much, but did so little for them that they gradually became frustrated. Even the leave, enjoyed during Pakistan were drastically curtailed. They were not given their due clothing; even rations of rice or other necessities were reduced. So they started having a little sympathy for us till they found out that all that we said or did was in the greater interest of the people, and the government was only having a political reprisal by fake devices of detention or trial. So the initial hostility that they exhibited toward us turned into respect and sympathy with the passage of time.

On his first visit, the deputy inspector general of prisons was very stiff and gave a lot of sermons on "dos or do nots" which we listened to very quietly. On subsequent visits, he was quite free and polite. There are four central jails in Bangladesh, fifteen district jails, a subjail for each subdivisions, of which there are fifty-four, and one Borstal jail. All these were filled with alleged collaborators, much beyond their capacity. The criminals made room for the better people and joined their ranks outside as Mukti Bahini. There was no dearth of arms in the country, so they made nice use of them by committing robbery, murder, or looting of banks, houses, or shops, molesting women, hijacking cars, and occupying our properties.

Till March, the sun never made its presence felt in our windowless cells. So on the "file day," the day of D. I. G.'s visit, we approached him to allow us some time to walk on the ground in the cell area. He flatly refused and reminded us that it was the direction of the benign government to lock us up in such cells from where we should not see the light of the day.

There was one bearded gentleman in civil dress who accused us of helping the Pak army in committing atrocities, which was challenged by Dr. Malik. When Dr. Malik was explaining that the caretaker civil government had nothing to do with army activities except that when approached by people for help, we saved a lot of men and properties. That civilian of the jail hospital, replied that we must have had the knowledge about the atrocities, so we were equally responsible. Without mincing matters, he had to be reminded that he had the better knowledge about atrocities committed, as he was serving in the central jail at Dacca. So would he accept responsibility of all the atrocities committed in jail?

Obaidullah was so timid that he used to cry like a baby throughout the day, thinking aloud of his detention and his unfortunate memory of the helplessness of his wife and minor children, the pending trial where the punishment prescribed was hanging or transportation for life,

his participation in the Awami League activities for the last eighteen years, his joining the liberation struggle but returning from India for the hardship, the short period of ministership, and all other personal or impersonal matters. He used to cry even before the warders, especially to one coming from his own district of Noakhali. Instead of sympathizing with him, one such warder abused him and all of us for our betrayal of the cause of free Bangladesh in collaboration with the Punjabis. We were all locked up so could not do anything but burn within for the tirade of false allegations uniformly leveled against us by high and low. Suleman was tactful; he called the warder in front of his cell and talked to him for about half an hour with this line of conversation.

Awami League was in the vanguard of liberation movement with Sk. Mujib as its undisputed leader?

Yes, sir.

The mandate of Awami League in the general election was for six points—full autonomy with political and economic freedom within one Pakistan?

Yes, but . . .

Was Independence of Bangladesh in six points or did Awami League or Mujib ever talk of or took mandate on free Bangladesh from people?

No, we first heard of it after military crackdown.

You heard of it all right, but before sixteenth December was any part of East Pakistan under the control or occupation of free Bangladesh government?

No, not worth mentioning.

Well, any tiny border area, if not controlled by Pak army in whose possession it was?

They say Mukti Bahini, but I know it was Indian army, say in Belonia, my area.

Now, please, tell me was Russia, India, and other powers talking of political settlement to end the civil war or of independence?

Till November/December, they all talked of settlement, but we knew that India was helping us for independence.

Well, by accepting ministry only in September to bring about a political settlement through civil government, how can it be betrayal?

You became ministers; only in September? No doubt it brought a great relief to us; moreover, it is common knowledge that Dr. Malik, becoming governor, had saved all Bengalee officers and also saved Dacca and its people from devastating Indian bombing. But, sir, Punjabis are butchers.

Well, when there is a fight between the central government and a

provincial people, blood was flowing needlessly—where army had to carry out its most unpleasant task on the orders of the head of the state, Yahya Khan. In army there were more Punjabis, no doubt, but there were about 30,000 Bengalees and similar number of Pathans, Beluchis, Sindhis in officers and men in Pak Armed forces.

Sir, they committed atrocities.

The civil war is no game of lovemaking, far less an open war of attrition. There were atrocities committed by army and freedom fighters. Both before and after liberation, there was inhuman killings both before and after twenty-fifth March, too of both Biharis and Bengalees. But who gained by this blood bath?

Sir, Bangladesh gained independence, but India gained materially. They took away all our war materials worth hundreds of millions of rupees. They also took out machineries, vehicles, gold, rice, paddy, cloth, radio, television, and everything valuable. What West Pakistan could not take away in twenty-four years India silently swallowed more after liberation.

Well, is it not that we reminded our people all the time that let us not walk into trap which they have been planning since the creation of Pakistan. We could decide our fate amicably and honorably, with Pakistan, as we did with British. Delay and patience would not have called for such massacre and loss. Now we may be reduced to another Kashmir or Sikkim or Bhutan or Hyderabad by India.

You are right, sir, but we will resist any Indian domination.

I: That is why we are being detained here so that we may not disclose the truth to the people that Awami League government has sold the country to India. After destroying our production capacity and potential, India will convert this territory of 70 million people to a vast market of their products—a colony, a vassal state. This is what we told the people before December. This is what you will see with your own eyes before long.

This is a type of dialogue that we had to enter into with anyone coming across us with a hostile attitude. Excepting a few persons in jail, practically all were hostile, but by April the hostility was ebbing out, giving way to sympathy and understanding from top to bottom. We found the new I.G. and the new D.I.G.—the older ones having retired—when they came to see us, very polite and courteous. The jailer also went away on promotion. International pressure from the UN and other agencies was mounting against the inhuman treatment of Biharis outside and all prisoners inside. I wished they could see our condition in jail, undernourished for months, even the strong ones also fell

ill—many of them died here unnoticed by the world outside; many more were preparing to die.

Tajuddin, the finance minister, came to visit the jail. He expected that all prisoners would greet him with welcome cheers of *Jai Bangla*, but he was very disappointed when he found that even dying people had the courage to ignore him. His immediate reaction was that the collaborators had not reconciled to the new situation, so they must suffer more. Obaidullah even sobbed and cried, touching the hands of Tajuddin, praying that Mujib should have mercy on him for his faults. Tajuddin snubbed his erstwhile comrade in action and arms, saying that he betrayed the liberation war by passing on their secrets on his return from India. Obaidulla Majumder, of course, denied that, but Tajuddin's government did not believe in mercy. We all in the cell felt so embarrassed in front of all the jail staff at the shameful exhibition of weakness of a colleague of ours that reluctantly we had to talk to Tajuddin:

Dr. Malik: Well, Tajuddin in the game of politics you have won the tournament, you have jailed us, the vanquished; now it is your turn to show sportsmanship by accommodating all in the national reconstruction. After all, Obaidullah is your old colleague.

Tajuddin: We will try you all in a court of law, and you will have your chance to speak there.

Dr. Malik: Ayub Khan and Yahya Khan also tried Mujib, but with what result?

Before he could complete the last question, Tajuddin left in a hurry, but it still remains unanswered; they will try us, but will the result be the same or similar? I firmly believed, went on telling and thinking and writing that people will one day understand and appreciate our bona fide belief, but I no longer care even if they don't, as my conscience is clear to my God. Prophet Yusuf suffered imprisonment, our *Imam* Abu Hanifa died in prison, innumerable more were jailed or tortured. I am a man of no consequence in this vast world, so why should I be afraid to uphold a cause, just and noble, against a government unjust and oppressive. For my dear family, wealth, property, social position, political status, or freedom? No, I am none to them if Allah wills it otherwise. But if it is His mercy to make me available for them, there is no power on earth to stop it. If this stand is blind, faith in predetermination or fatalism, I do not mind because the history of mankind teaches us that no man, however powerful he might prove himself to be, can mould the destiny of his own choice. The history of Greece, Rome, Egypt, the Indus valley, China, Europe, America, India, Islam, communism, or

other civilizations bear testimony to the fact that man is not the final arbiter of his own destiny. Nevertheless, man is not devoid of free will—only that “will” cannot be stretched beyond certain limits. The limits, of course, are not known or knowable to man in spite of his vast extension of knowledge. And that is why he is responsible for his own voluntary actions only.

Before leaving, Tajuddin had some private conversation with Dr. Malik. One has to live in jail with gossips and hopes, however wild they might be. So this short conversation became the subject matter of gossip throughout the jail until it gave in to other hot cakes. When Tajuddin had left, seeing for himself the pitiable condition of the thousands of prisoners, where he, along with Mujib and others enjoyed decent treatment, we called Obaidullah and reprimanded him for creating such an embarrassing situation for us the Muslims.

The Muslim nationality includes in it Bengalees, Biharis, Assamees, Punjabis, Indians, Arabs, Americans, Africans, Europeans, or everyone who believes in the ideal of Islam, i.e., unity of God with Prophet Muhamed (p.u.h.) as his last prophet. This idealism transcends all geographical frontiers. So a Muslim, wherever he is born or residing, is in his home. Partition of India in 1947 was on this concept of separate nationality of the Muslims, commonly known as the Two Nation Theory. Pakistan was nothing but the promised homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent where they could mould their political, economical, cultural, and social values according to the dictates of their ideal.

Communism is an ideal of materialistic revolution in economic, political, and social spheres, as Democracy is an ideal of political emancipation bereft of oligarchy, autocracy, and dictatorship. Socialism is an ideal of a classless society with means of production and distribution belonging to the society. One-world government is an ideal bereft of national sovereignties and chauvinism. Similarly, Budhism is an ideal of emancipation of man on the evolution of the self. Christianity is an ideal for the salvation of man in this world and hereafter on the teachings of Christ. And Islam is an ideal of the whole code of human life—material and spiritual—where man should live for each other and for his sole Creator in this world for the greater real life hereafter.

Religion in Islam has a wider connotation than the adherence to some forms or rituals—it incorporates the whole human existence both in its individual and collective totality. Politics, economics, education, culture, belief, etc., cannot be isolated or separated into watertight compartments from the mainspring of the ideology. So it is in conflict with the ideas of secularism, which treat religion as a private affair or atheism—without religion. Misuse or malpractice of religion must have given

rise to prejudices, hatred, bloodshed, or other evils in the society in different ages and places, but a society without religion or contempt for religion is bound to be basically unjust, oppressive, intolerant, and incoherent. The whole aim and exercise of all revealed and monotheistic religions are to do good and avoid the evil to find out the truth and to eschew the falsehood. Religion is nothing but a stout bulwark of morality, the edifice on which human values have sprung up and sustained the growth and progress of human civilization in the trials and turmoils of social evolution.

Human judgment of good or evil truth or falsehood, justice, or equity is bound to vary with the chancellors foot as with passage of time and space. So without divine or spiritual guidance, limited human knowledge can never find out the ultimate truth of good. Any claim to such perfect knowledge by man is pregnant with limitations of time and space, if not totally imperfect. To the occupants of the skyscraper, the deep foundation below may not be visible or even worth any consideration, yet the reality of such deep sustenance can neither be ignored or prudently denied. True religion is that eternal that permeates all strata of cosmic existence and transcends all frontiers of human knowledge, circumscribed by time and space.

Tajudding was told by us to be considerate of the helpless Biharis, as they were already ruined, but his response was more of revenge than of compassion. After him came Home Minister Mannan and Law Minister Dr. Kamal to visit us. Though the international pressure was mounting against the victimization and pauperization of these people, they kept up their vanity of teaching a good lesson to those who dared to oppose their view of dismembering Pakistan. When these two ministers came and talked to us with an air of indifference, we bothered them not with any idea or request. But Mannan had a private conversation with Dr. Malik, who must have advised him to open a dialogue with the leaders in jail. But the immaturity and lack of foresight of the juvenile government kept them blind of the problems that a new country was facing or likely to face.

February cold, March wind, April rose, May flower, all passed by; then came a June heat wave, when for health reasons, Dr. Malik and I were transferred to ground floor.

Some people with a few freedom fighters came around and looted all the huts in Dacca Highcourt compound, as they were non-Bengalis; they abused them as *dalals*, collaborators, insulted the women, and beat the males. By noon another group came and assaulted them once more, aimed to shoot, but left then in a hurry. The group that came in the evening took them all out in the nearby race course, snatched away the

rest of their valuables, shot at all the men, women, and children, and bayoneted them till death. Ayub, the only survivor, does not remember how he came to the hospital from the race course, but he could see only bandages all over his body. When he regained consciousness on the following day, he was sent to Dacca jail. It was February, his injuries still had not fully healed and with no one else in the world to care for him. While working in the small garden in front of our cell, Ayub was narrating the story with flowing tears in his eyes. He had no criminal case against him, fake or real, but there was none to take him out of this jail.

Karim, a college student of B.Com, could not believe that the Pak army had surrendered to the Indian army, but on a caution from his old father, a retired railway officer, stayed inside their house in old Dacca. It was in the evening, there were hard knocks on their door; nobody dared to ask who they were, as it was evident. Karim and a young sister of his were hidden in a wooden box. A younger brother and a younger sister were held tightly by their parents, who started crying, apprehending the imminent danger. The outsiders were abusing and trying to break the door; his mother took courage, and with the little daughter in her bosom, she opened the door. There were about a dozen men with guns and weapons who rushed in. They tied up Karim's father and assaulted his mother and the two little ones. First they took away all the valuables in cash and kind; the boys of the same ward inquired about Karim and his sister, and threatened to kill them all. They begged for life and told them that the other two had gone away to their uncle's house in Mirpur. In front of his mother, the father was shot; while she attempted to save him, she was assaulted mercilessly but not killed. While they were going away, one told them to finish the germs—they did not spare any bullet but bayoneted both the kids severely. When the old lady regained her consciousness, it was almost dawn; Karim was calling her in a low voice from the hiding, but this time she responded and opened their cover. Karim and his sister, both in male Bengalee dress, somehow reached Mirpur and joined the last battle against the onslaught of freedom fighters and Indo-Bangla army till February. Karim was released in August along with many others, but he left with a vow that he would join the 'Muslim Bangla' force and fight back the butchers.

There are thousands of such cases that deserve narration, but the case of Moulana Wadud should not be missed. He was a pious Muslim engaged in local social service, like establishing a mosque, madrasa (school), graveyard, etc., at Mirzapur, in the district of Tangail. He along with one of his sons was kidnapped from his house by the freedom fighters. Later, he was publicly insulted, assaulted, and injured severely.

After three days of inhuman torture, he was shot to death. His son was killed earlier before his eyes. One of his sons was in detention in Dacca jail without trial for months—the victim being further victimized in the name of law, which the new authorities have passed to rid the country of their opponents.

Mirpur and Muhammadpur—two primarily non-Bengali townships on the north of Dacca—were crowded with refugees coming from My-mensingh, Saidpur and old Dacca after the mass killings started from early March. Soon after liberation, some freedom fighters, neighboring fortune seekers, bad elements, all rushed toward those places to grab house, money, valuables, women, car, arms, etc. The massacre, plunder, loot, and rape at Muhammadpur horrified the people at Mirpur, so they decided to surrender their person and property either to the army or police but not to the unruly armed mob. This audacity of the non-Bengalis to defend their person and honor after the defeat of the Pak army was too much for those unruly elements to tolerate. So they raided section 1 of Mirpur and repeated the performance of Mahamadpur. The Mirpur men and women stood up in arms in self defense with one Akhtar as their leader. The one-sided massacre turned into a mutual fight. The mob, failing in their mischief, called the police and army on their side. The fight continued for seven days with artillery, air force, and public on one side and a few thousand desperate valiants with light weapons on the other. Water, electricity, food supply, were cut off—the pocket was beseiged till the tenth day when the Mirpuris surrendered to the army and police. Male members were brought to Dacca jail in humiliating condition, and females and children were whisked away to different destinations for different purposes.

Akhtar, the ringleader, had to be punished as an example, but there could not be any specific case against him. So they framed him with a case of murdering a nearby villager under the new law of Collaborators Order. There was no legal proof of murder under the normal law, but the new law hardly needed any proof. The judge had no way out to justice; he was sentenced to death. On the alleged date of occurrence, a date well before liberation, he was reportedly in Karachi; a P.I.A ticket was produced in Court in support of the defence contention. The contention had to be either believed or disbelieved according to law, but it was ignored to justify the sentence. The defense was neither recorded nor considered.

Hundreds of convictions followed in this fashion in different districts in the name of the people—the goodness of justice was being sacrificed on the altar of vengeance with none to protest. While awaiting the gallows, Akhtar did not know if his wife and children were alive or had joined the souls of the unknown and unnoticed.

My wife and children, whom I had to abandon in the cantonment when we were handed over to the police, had a miserable time on their own. The police officer promised that he would shift them to my house in Gulshan, but that was under the forceful occupation of freedom fighters. The police were good enough to get the house vacated after a few days and also dropped my family there with due care and courtesy. Similarly, Dr. Malik's house was also vacated afterward and his wife and daughter shifted to his own house. My family was dropped there in the evening, but the house was in such a ramshackle condition, without light or gas, with broken doors, windows, and bathroom fittings, that when the night approached, it seemed to be a haunted house. With no law and order in the country, with such a condition of the house, she decided to shift elsewhere for safety in spite of the request of some neighbors, who were very kind and helpful. These neighbors were good to us as we were good to them, but when ruffians would come with guns or weapons, what could they do? So she rushed out with the minor children, with no male or female aid. Her brothers, relations, all were in the city, but did not know where they were or if they were safe or alive. When she reached Rayer bazaar, in the house of my youngest sister, it was already dark. She somehow spent the night there where, incidentally, my father was also hiding. He had to leave our village home. My forefathers lived for ages at Nabagram where I was born, we all ruled and served the people of the locality for generations, and my mother, grandparents and the rest remain buried there on the bank of the flowing Nabagram canal. The old man took refuge in our Barisal house from where he was kidnapped by freedom fighters.

In this Barisal house, I spent the prime days of my life—from school to graduation. I was also part and parcel of the local town life, seeing through the movement of independence in pre-1947 days up to 1950, the early days of nation building. With all its charms and sufferings, my village and my town constitute the base of my social, economic, and political life, but it appears that the new setup in the country is determined to uproot me and my family from my soil and my people whom I love more than my own self. It was a common complaint of my family members that I care less for them than my own soil and people. Depriving my family, I used to spend my earnings on them as they needed it, more than my family members. I used to spend most of my time, including holidays among my people, who were mostly poor, to see them, to attend to their problems. My city life in Dacca had different attachments, but I was mentally country-oriented—still I love them most. My wife, with high education and upbringing, never begrudged me such intimacy with my locality, although I have seen that educated men

and women mostly vie for dazzling society life than for an unsophisticated country life. The few educated, the intelligentsia, the well-to-do, all having turned their back on their original home of villages, the vast multitude of rural populace grope in apathy, hunger, and darkness of modern civilization. This is the sad plight of all the developing societies of the East.

Coming back to the condition of my family, it needs mention here that my wife and children speak English, Bengali and Urdu; they also have a complexion that can easily be mistaken for a non-Bengali family. Besides the fact that they belong to my family, any one of the mob outside could point to them as non-Bengalees—the inevitable result would be harassment, dishonor or liquidation, as had happened to innumerable Bihari families. So father, very much afraid of inauspicious consequences, asked my wife to go to a different shelter. Being bewildered by such a suggestion, finding no other alternative, she set out in a public conveyance with a small child of nine to find a shelter—if her brothers or relations were alive and safe, they could accommodate her. She picked up courage out of tears and fears, knowing fully well that she might be stopped at gunpoint by anyone on the street. Apprehending that she might not reach her destination, still hoping that there may be a chance of one in a hundred, she moved from Dhanmandi to Paribagh, from Paribagh to Maghbazar, from house to house in Maghbazar, and ultimately found Khaled Nasrullah and other brothers. They themselves, hiding out of fear of wild victimization, had not gone out on the streets since liberation.

But they received her with delight. My children shifted late in the day, again accompanied by their sole guardian-mother, but uncertain of their future. The scooter drivers could be very nasty or dangerous, as it was the order of the day, but most of the time they were very nice. The landlord of Nasrullah also behaved very nicely and later made one adjacent flat available to my wife. Robbery, hijacking, murder, assault, extortion, were rampant in the city, so all had watchful days and sleepless nights, confined inside the house, isolated from the world. Thank God they were alive; of course, this I did not know until my agonizing days in prison were broken by one sympathetic warder. One fine morning in March, he told me that he took my little daughter in his lap, and they were all well and safe. I embraced him with tears of joy—what a joy it was no one would know unless he was behind the bars in such an ignoble condition.

In March, some of our colleagues were granted family interview; we could know something of the prevailing situation outside, as we were completely without any means of communication with the outside.

There was no radio. Quasem kept one small transistor, which was taken away, there was no newspaper allowed to us, nor was there any provision for writing or receiving letters.

The rule for weekly interview for family members was still there, but it was not enforced. My first interview was in April and thereafter every fortnight. As I was anxious for my family, so were my wife, brother, sister, father, mother, and the children. I first met them in the room earmarked for the interviews at the jail gate; they were all in tears of joy and sorrow. They were happy to see me alive, though my lot was reduced, but were sad to find me in such tightened security detention. Zeeba, in my embrace, was crying, Deebea and Labiba were in tears, Hasan and little Rabia, in my lap, were trying to understand the situation in close sympathy. Attya, Zia and I were trying to console them but could not check our own tears. When we recovered our voices, we sat around the square table on chairs and stools—with the children standing close to my sides, I told them to be brave and patient. Looking at our mental condition, the man from the government intelligence was courteous enough to wait outside the room despite instructions to listen and report everything that transpired there.

They narrated their condition of living, financial hardships, social isolation, and lack of security. With all my money, materials, and documents looted away from both my official and private houses, with no bank balance left, with hardly any cash available at hand, with all sources of income exhausted, and the only earning member being detained in custody, they were faced with starvation. A lot of people owed me money, as I could hardly refuse anyone any money or help when I had the ability to pay or help, but they would not possibly even bother to inquire about my helpless children. During my whole life, I never indulged in any luxury of smoking, drinking, or posh life, but we lived a comfortable, homely life with good earning and good spending. A major portion of my earnings used to be spent on religious and educational charity, on social and political activities, on loans and aids. I was awfully careless in bookkeeping, but I had never felt the necessity of tight fisting. My wife was also not meticulous in saving, nor I did ever give her any unaccounted funds. We never had any black earning or black savings—we spent everything we earned, rather, spent more. So we were faced with a situation, which everyone does, who does not plan ahead for rainy days. Luckily, I had some property, but in an abnormal situation, we did not know who was occupying which one to his own use.

We discussed, planned, and calculated many things during the interview besides wondering over our uncertain future in the hands of an

unpredictable government, but could come to no clear decision as to our future course of life or living. However, during a later interview, I gathered with great relief that Dr. Karim, my eldest brother, who was a senior consultant in a U.K. hospital, was looking after my family financially and otherwise. My younger brother, Fazlul Huq, an engineer, was still looking for suitable employment in London on his return from Dacca a few months ago. After March 1971, when the country was passing through a critical period, I actually whisked away the family of Dr. Karim and the younger brother Huq and his family—who were residing in Dacca at that time, to the U.K. My brother also sent passage money for U.K. for my wife and children, knowing that I would not leave the country. Passage was also booked and passports were deposited with the state bank for permission in April. Through my efforts, I sent away my relations and many friends and near ones but not my own family. Either they would not leave me or I would not stay there without them. I myself held up the state bank clearance, whose Legal Advisor I was, possibly at the dictate of destiny.

When the interview hour was over, the children did not want to leave me; they wanted to stay with me in prison or take me away with them. So the result was tears again at the end—tears at the end of every fortnightly interview that followed. Children would make so many queries about my life inside—if the cell was bigger than a tiger cage, why there were no windows, why there were no fans, how do I sleep in such suffocating heat, why they do not allow me to walk on the ground, why they do not give any eggs or cereals for breakfast, how do I swallow such awfully cooked food, why do not they allow any radio or TV or newspaper, do not I miss “Nancy” on TV or the Pak national anthem. I told them that for any big thing or big cause in life, one has to work hard or sacrifice comfort. Prophet Muhammed (p.u.h.) himself was confined to Mount Sheba near Mecca with his followers in a great distress for over two years. Even prophets like Hazrat Yousuf and our Imam like Abu Hanifa had to suffer prison for no fault of theirs. They took delight and felt proud of their father when I told more, that I was not a criminal who had committed any harm to anyone but a leader or guide who told people to serve others and to protect what is good but was disliked by the ruler of the day. They asked me who was the ruler in this country. When I mentioned the name of Mujib, one daughter said: “Please do not mention his name. He sold away Muslim Pakistan to Hindu India just to become a ruler.”

It was around May when a special team of investigators came to interrogate us. Dr. Malik was the first target. I requested him not to answer any of their questions before he left to be interrogated, or if he

must, he should not say anything that might incriminate him, us, or anyone else. But he was in a mood to make a clean breast of everything, as if it would earn him respect as in normal times, so that he would not be implicated in any case. When he came back to his cell, the good old man was in tears. He was praised, cajoled, threatened, mocked, intimidated, humiliated, in short, all tricks and trickery of interrogation were applied to get things of their liking from him, after lunch interval he was interrogated again, and it continued for days. The team was posing that they were only inquiring about the war crimes of the army, but they actually were after our blood, too. The octogenarian ex-governor was quite upset and afterward fell ill as a result of the interrogation.

I was already down with new disease like blood pressure and pain in the heart region, so my turn came after they had put all the other ministers to the rigors of interrogation. Suleman and Mujumdar were quite cooperative in villifying the Pak army, which the team relished very much. The team was also very rough and rude with Abbas Ali Khan and Moulana Ishaq. When my turn came, it was June, and I was not yet recovered fully. The chief of the team was one dark fat fellow who never disclosed his identity, but I guessed that he might be deputy super of police. Two more persons, probably inspectors, were there to record my statements and feed questions. Two more chaps sat a little beyond a separate bench, but I could not see the secret tape.

The chief interrogator was very aggressive from the beginning and talked irrelevantly and rudely. After standing his nonsense for a while, I flatly told him that I wouldn't answer any more of his questions until I saw my lawyer since they were not being polite and fair to me. He threatened me with third-degree methods to which I retorted bluntly. I also asked him if he was in service during the nine months of the civil war, to which he answered in the affirmative. I charged him that he was a collaborator of our government and also to the Pak army, as he served us. He was not quite prepared for such a countercharge, while he was bringing allegations against me of murder, abduction, corruption, rape, sedition, collaboration, and abatement thereof, but all without any basis or justification. The recording inspector, to avoid any extreme situation, took up the conversation in a polite but subtle tone to which I smiled to ease the situation. I was not afraid of their methods, even they were third degree; I knew that these people were capable of everything when their masters were in no civilised mood, but they wouldn't get anything out of a barrister whether it was cajoling or torture. He was one of us, like the seventy million people, who could easily be termed a collaborator under the obnoxious Collaborator's Order and also could be punished for a minimum period of three years without any evidence or proof.

This law had by passed all judicial norms of fair trial, which virtually treated all those who crossed the border only as virtuous patriots and the rest of the seventy million of population as notorious collaborators. All but Moulana Bhashani seemed to have accepted such an unethical incongruity in the fair name of trial. As a matter of fact, nothing succeeds like success, so with the victory of the forces of Bengalee nationalism, all those appeared to be against them must be liquidated or punished. Defense of the realm, what was honorable and pious, till the defeat, for everyone owing allegiance to that realm, had turned into a worst abominable crime to the victors. It may seem incoherent but not inappropriate in history; as in national politics, the patriot of yesterday passing through "myrtle, leaves and flowers" is reduced to the villain of today, crowned with thorns and scorns. During the victory march of Caesar, Alexander, Napoleon, Ghengis Khan, or Hitler, never was the feeble voice of crushed humanity given any audience.

So I suffered like others the outrageous, humiliating, and brutal interrogation. The world outside had not seen this face of Mr. Hyde—the world had only known the peaceful and triumphant face of the Bangladesh government. I had to undergo this ordeal thrice between June and July, but before different teams each time. They tried to involve me in abduction of some officer whom I never saw in the murder of unknown persons who might be missing, in misappropriation of public money, which I never accepted, in public statements, which I never made, in acts that were never criminal or immoral. Ultimately, when they charge sheeted me in February, they had to drop a few dozen of such wild and vague charges but found a *prima facie* case of only conspiracy, and sedition against Bangladesh along with acts of collaboration, viz., serving as a member of the Peace Committee and contesting a bye election.

These charges could be leveled against any East Pakistani, including Mujib, Dr. Kamal, or the like without much of fuss or inquiry but with equal force.

Life in Prison

Gone are the days when political opponents or even accused persons were thrown into the dark holes of suffering or death, whether in the East or West. Human history left all those dark traits of human civilization far behind our times. But what awaited thousands inside the Central Jail of Bangladesh was not much to the credit of the administrators of a newly liberated country in the last moiety of the twentieth century. To understand this, we will have to have a picture of the condition of the ordinary prisoners because my narration of prison life so far has mostly dealt with the privileged few of division one.

After signing the papers from the police, the jail authority took charge of the prisoners. Normally they were charged with robbery, theft, murder, assault, breach of peace, etc., but in our case charged with no offense. The unfortunate fellow is either an able-bodied Bengalee who might have supported Pakistan or a person with conflicting personal interests with a claimed freedom fighter or Awami Leaguer. These are the very lucky ones who have been spared the pains of total liquidation by their opponents, or the local police in good grace have given them shelter from victimization. They would be lined up by a warder for counting of the heads in the open, where they would be counted and recounted by the warder, jamader, and a deputy jailer; whether sun, rain or cold, it would take hours. Cards would be prepared in each one's name with his particulars, the body of each one would be searched and things deposited in his name. The prisoner would not know what was permissible for him to carry inside so he would surrender everything from a piece of paper, notes, and coins, cigarettes, matches, clothes, pen, rings, necklace to knives and pins. In most cases the things found their refuge not in the storeroom but in the pocket of the lucky searchers who said that they had a fraternity of faithfuls on higher levels to share the booty.

Some came with heavy amounts of cash and jewelry from their abodes, but some were snatched away on the way, some on the gate, and the rest on search inside the jail. Finding this situation, some of them burned thousands of rupees inside the jail compound—the warders even snatched away those burned notes. One detainee deposited Rs 5000 but 5 was shown in his card. One Rashid, a Bengali boy, deposited only Rupees 100/00 which was duly deposited in his card but was subsequently changed showing no deposit. When he reported this matter to D.I.G. on the file day, he was taken to the office and when the D.I.G left he was beaten black and blue. He could not draw water for fifteen days thereafter.

Between the time he was counted and taken to his ward, the poor incoming fellow in the file must have received several baton injuries in his body for not being able to follow the warder's order of keeping the line straight, or for talking to another or for asking any questions not to his liking or for asking a glass of water, not to speak of the extra abuses he had to swallow. From there the herd would be driven in a flock to the ward earmarked for them.

As all the wards, big rooms, in a building, known as *Khatas*, were already overcrowded with prisoners, they were taken, first to the "case table," if it was daytime, then to their respective place, i.e., a wide open field. If it was night time, they would be herded together to sit down for the whole night without any blanket or any other clothing, all under the open blue sky with chill and dew coming down to freeze them to a condition of life and lifelessness. If they came after dusk to their so-called wards, they could not expect anything to eat or drink hot or cold. During the day or on the following morning, these people are lined up again before the case table—where a subeder is the headman. Again, their particulars were checked and recorded, their cases noted down in their papers. If there was any case; otherwise, section 54 might be inserted, which meant suspicion only. It was almost impossible to answer a call of nature or to get a glass of water or even to move or stand up in line without getting abuse or a beating, although it would take hours for this ordeal.

In normal times, two woolen blankets would be given to every prisoner along with one plate and another cup, both of aluminum; this was the whole kit for the battle of survival. He was not entitled to any pillow, bed sheet, wrapper, mosquito net, towel, or any other necessities of life. During our time, no blanket was supplied to those thousands in the bitter cold of January and February. Most of them had to spend twenty-four hours in the open.

From the case table, the prisoners went to their respective allocated

wards—young boys below sixteen were supposed to be kept isolated from others, but that rule was not followed. Now a new prisoner was a part of the old gang once he crossed the "case table" where he followed the routine day in and day out. Unless one was in the open yard he would be locked up in his ward before sunset and unlocked with the sunrise. The day started about two hours before sunrise when everyone had to wake up from his sleep, if he had any, tie up his blanket if he was lucky to have one, then sit in rows for counting, which he could not miss without impunity. After the first count was over, within an hour or so he could finish his call of nature and wash in the improvised system. Invariably there was overcrowding, so the question of getting sufficient water or any hygienic wash or water for morning prayers did not arise. One did not even get drinking water or a drop to die during the night. After the first count in the ward, final counting went on in every ward of the jail to tally with the total. By the time the countings were over, added, and totaled, the sun was about to rise, and the bell would be rung to signal O.K.

When the two hour ordeal of sitting in rows came to an end, then one heard a noise of relief followed by quick march to the toilets, intermittently guided by the shepherds. A few fellow prisoners, called "paharas," were given authority to maintain discipline within themselves to aid the warders. One could identify them by the belt they wore or the stick they held. They would also keep their eyes and ears open to see or hear what to do, to either report or deal with them by the stick. After a short break for wash and cleanup, again with the bowl in their hand, for a cup of rice and or spoonful of lentils for their breakfast. Even this breakfast was not supplied to them when the number exceeded 12,000 in February—then there used to be only one meal a day, between eleven A.M. to two P.M., in the nature of breakfast.

After the said breakfast, when one was lucky to get it, a prisoner got an hour or so to take his bath or change. Due to the shortage of water and lack of proper sanitary facilities, these people had to be contented with the bathing of hand and face; the question of changing clothes did not arise, and he had none with him except the pair of trouser and shirt he was wearing. Sanitary arrangements were filthy. Those who were lucky to have an extra sheet, wrapper, or pullover of their own had to sell them to the warders for some extra bread or for a pack of cigarettes or for a blanket. In normal times, these things would rarely happen in jail, but these men were nothing but "collaborators!"

The new government had passed an executive order declaring all those who aided or supported Pakistan by word or sign, spoken or written, as "collaborators" punishable with death or imprisonment along

with fine or forfeiture of all movables and immovables of the accused and his family. Once arrested, even on suspicion, no court would have the power to release them on bail till trial and conclusion of the appeal, whether the filing of the complaint or charge sheet or conclusion of trial or appeal took months or years.

At about ten A.M., these prisoners would be lined up again for counting. That will be for tallying with the grand total of all the wards. If the jamadars in charge were good at counting, and there were no missing ones, the sitting or waiting was over and they would have their lunch at about eleven A.M. The self-service system of rice, curry, and lentils continued till after midday. Normal allocation was meat or fish on alternate days in addition to sufficient quantities of rice or lentils, but collaborators did not have even the scent of fish or meat for weeks and the quantity of rice or lentils was also an apology for their names, and the less said about quality the better. Our "*faltus*" used to bring their lunch or dinner to our cells, which even the jail cats or cows would not relish. Since there were no dogs inside the jail, dog food had to be consumed by mortals to keep their body and soul together. We had to share our food with them but that was not even a drop in the ocean, as our own food also was far beneath the standard prescribed, both in quality and quantity, but we had to eat it. For the whole month of February, the small lunch was the sole meal of the day, all of which they would have sitting in the open with dust, flies, and filth all around.

The warder who came on duty at about six A.M., would be changed at twelve noon, but the poor chaps could hardly leave the prison before one P.M. after all the countings were tallied once more after twelve noon. Like the morning bell, there would be a midday bell to announce that counting to the last person was strictly in order. There will be another change of guard, with a clearing bell lockup after dusk. This last warder on duty overstayed no more than an hour to see that no "cattle" head was missing. They did not get any overtime for extra duty. The new government also drastically curtailed their leaves.

After lunch, the prisoners would be herded to their wards or to their sheds or grounds for a rest. In normal times, there would be a limited number of prisoners, and most of them would be convicts, but now the number was astronomical, the majority used to good living and pious life. So when they wanted to say their prayers, five times a day, the authorities were initially hostile in allowing them such freedom but subsequently had to yield to their need. The prisoners used to say their prayers with '*Taammum*' mostly in congregation.

The congregation would weep, sob, or cry with their raised hands to the Almighty to have mercy on them, not to punish them in a manner

that they could not bear or to test them so hard that they were not capable of bearing, to forgive them of their mistakes and sins, to accept their sacrifice for the glory of Allah and Prophet, to protect their near and dear ones, left to the care of none except Him, and to guide those who were on the wrong to the path of Truth. Their voices during the darkness of nights or brightness of the days would pierce through the firmaments to reach Him, before whom they had committed no crime but to support and sustain His favored gift—the homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent. They were not against independence but wanted to keep natural Muslim character of their country.

Well before dusk, the prisoners were brought to files, counted, and served a "*chapati*" for dinner.

Rice used to be served only once or twice a week to the rice eaters of Bengal, as rice was selling between Taka 100 and 120 per maund. The prisoners, the warders, and everyone in the country found one of the Awami League's election promises fulfilled in the price of rice! They told the people that East Pakistan produces rice but West Pakistan takes it away and consumes at a price of Rs. 15–18 per maund, whereas the producers buy it at Rs. 35–40, so if they came to power, they would supply rice at Rs. 20/, to the people. Now they supply rice per maund at Rs. 20/ plus 100/. What a gullible people and what a demagogue party!

They promised cloth, paper, mustard, oil, sugar, wheat, etc., necessities also at about 50 percent less of the then prevailing price, but what a gigantic difference between the political promises by unscrupulous leaders and their fulfillment in practical life; the price spiral rose to 500 percent in most cases after liberation. Whatever potential the Bangladesh had in the field of production it was reduced to a minimum by the twin pressure of Indian market expansion, on the one hand, and socialism on the other in the hands of immature egocentric leadership.

Before dusk the prisoners would be locked up in their wards for the night—there they would remain till morning whether thirsty during the night, ill with vomiting, high fever, or pain. The warders would be changed every two hours during the night, but they could not render any help to these helpless creatures, if the need would arise, in a ward dumped with prisoners four to five times its capacity. With iron grilled windows 200 or 300 people in one room in winter was not that filthy or suffocating, but it was horrible to live in when the summer heat set in, in March. It was something like the historic *black hole* or *gas chamber*. By March, temporary sheds with bamboo fencing were also constructed by the government for housing the extra thousands, indicating the correctness of the prime minister's public statement that to eliminate the collaborators, he had arrested only 100,000 he would arrest more; if

necessary, new prisons would be built. Under the new law, he could arrest 70 million people. A history was created in the subcontinent by surpassing the all-time record of arrests both in number and versatility. The arrests included children, women, laymen, farmers, laborers, students, teachers, professors, educationists, journalists, doctors, scientists, artists, industrialists, traders, officers, members of local councils and assemblies, ministers, and the governor. And they all languished in this subhuman prison condition, in all the prison houses of Bangladesh, without any case or trial for months, with none to sympathize or speak for their cause or suffering. We were treated like slaves and animals without any protest from any quarter.

During the night, mosquitoes and bugs were the only outsiders to establish intimacy with the prisoners. These had no respect for the strict security measures of the government. In winter, these people craved for a warm blanket or cover, but when these were provided, in summer they needed ventilation, fresh air, and plenty of water, which were hard to get. Some people were without a bath for weeks, their hair and unclean beard looked gray with sprinkles of dust, physically reduced to half within weeks. Naturally, diseases broke out in epidemic form—pox, gastroenteritis, skin diseases, and others—from April, due to undernourishment, bad food, and bad living conditions.

Now that we have the picture of the routine life of a prisoner from dawn to dawn, let us see how the jail administration was run for these prisoners. I wonder if someone someday will read this and really understand the required reformation.

A jail is a world unto itself—you have everything within it except freedom—a gigantic Animal Farm. Food, clothing, medicine, shelter, even education and entertainment, everything that a modern state would provide to its citizens are available in jail. Food is cooked and served in time but a prisoner need not earn it; clothing is supplied to all convicts—in uniform quality and quantity. Medicine is ready for a patient, who only has to report; strong and safe buildings are there to provide him with a shelter, which everyone needs; classes for educating adults and youths are run by the authorities; even a library is there to satisfy his intellectual pursuits. Indoor and outdoor games are provided for keeping his mind and body fit and healthy. And all these are free of cost; one does not pay any tax; not even Ruble is in circulation. There is no private ownership or saving. All means of production and distribution are owned and run by the community of jail authorities with the productive labor of the prisoners without any wages. There are not devices of exploitation by the haves for the deprivation of the have-nots; there are no vices like gambling, prostitution, or intoxication or even

crimes like murder, robbery, rape or theft or breach of peace. This seems to be heaven on earth. One is reclining on his seat (in due time), drinking from silver goblets, moving (while on duty) under the shade of green gardens of mango, jackfruit, and other trees, passing his days (when he draws water) along the flowing waters of tap or tubewell, with green carpets of grass beneath; with companions of your age (one works in pairs), you watch the gorgeous blossoming of flowers in the well-laid lawn and gardens down below your ward or cell. Nay, it is more like a classless society where the state has withered away and everybody is working each according to his ability and receiving each according to his needs—the millennium, the utopia is here behind the brick curtains of the world.

Yet men never relish living in it; rather, they would employ all available means, legal or illegal, to get out of this “animal farm,” only to breath the air of freedom.

It is against basic human rights to engage one at hard labor until he is sentenced by a court of law to do so. But in our case not only the work of *chouka* but the hard and simple labor of all the existing jail departments were made to run by these unfortunate detained or under-trial prisoners. The young, the old, the able, the educated, the unwanted—everyone whom the authority deemed fit was made to work. He was not given extra diet or clothing or other facilities except, of course, when working as sweeper or scavenger. An educated man would be made to work in the office or medical branch or library or manufacturing department; the rest would be divided in other departments, as many as would be required by the respective departments for its smooth functioning. The men must work. Otherwise, they would be harassed or beaten.

In those crowded days, those who would work in the *chouka* used to be taken away from their lockup after midnight to prepare the meals of the day. They would bring rations, clean the utensils, prepare the spices, the oven, the rice, lentils, vegetables, and cook the food in big cans. Not everything would be supplied from the store, nor would everything supplied from the store be cooked, nor everything cooked served, nor everything served worth eating, nor everything of waste reach the houses of superior jail officers for their cattle or poultry. There are higher and lower tiers of sharing the booty among some authorities and some prisoners. But the routine went on very punctually every day of the year.

I remember during my young days when father threw a feast for 5,000 people after almost the simultaneous death of my grandfather, grandmother, and mother. The preparation for a menu of rice, beef

curry, fish curry, chicken with pulses, and curd with sugar took months, with hundreds of volunteer relations and hired cooks. And, ultimately, 6,000 guests were fed after two days of cooking and a day for feeding with quite a few taken ill out of exhaustion and overwork. So father took a vow not to throw any feast anymore. But by the grace of the Almighty, he is keeping up the family tradition of feeding about 1,000 village neighbors during *Ramadhan Eid*. I have participated in these festivals, and I know what an ordeal it is to conduct such an affair. But the jail authorities conducted this show with ease and precision every day, for which they really deserved credit.

All convicted prisoners were supplied with necessary clothes by the jail authority during the period of serving out their sentences. The ordinary prisoners got striped ones and the division ones got all white clothes. The manufacturing department had various branches of weaving, knitting, carpet and blanket making, furniture making, metal utensil making, tailoring, oil expelling, wheat and lentil grinding, carpentry, black smithy and the like. The jail produced goods and materials and had a wide market yielding good profit to the government besides meeting the entire requirement of the prisoners and the staff. Even the political prisoners were provided free clothing. But, after liberation, most of these departments stopped production. They hardly met their own requirements. Thousands of people detained here for more than a year, without having anyone to supply them their necessary clothes and things from outside, were living without it. The government did not bother about their necessities nor did they allow the International Red Cross or any other agency to deal with them. While the government was getting from the world in its beggars bowl food and other aid, it is curious that they were depriving these forgotten creatures. Most of the needy ones had to live on the charity of fellow prisoners to cover their backs, including some in the division, as all their assets or income stood destroyed or usurped by the new class.

By July 1972, most of the non-Bengalis had to be released under the mounting international pressure and internal mismanagement. They had no charge against them nor did they have any against many more, still languishing in the various jails for eighteen to twenty months. In the epidemic that broke out in May-June, about 100 persons breathed their last, practically without proper care and treatment, in Dacca jail alone. I remember one Mahiuddin, a student of eighteen years, of immense promise and prospect inborn in his features, loved by practically everyone in jail for his genial temperament and active habits, who fell ill while working in the jail office. He was transferred to jail hospital with fever, where there was no medicine for even severe headache. I

had to supply him from my stock. At the last moment he was transferred to outside the hospital where he died a very premature death of pox. He was one of my trusted workers in Barisal—he had no charge against him, but he was not allowed bail. His poor father, a teacher, procured some money to try for his release, came to Dacca, got his son released, but not in life—he was released from the bondage of Bangladesh forever. He was a courageous boy; he wanted to go out, to wrest the country out of the clutches of India, to make it free. He had joined the galaxy of the martyrs. A martyr and his cause never dies.

There is one hospital in Dacca jail and in each district and central jails there is one. There are doctors, too, but no medicine nowadays to treat the diseases. An unqualified doctor will be in attendance to look after the patients, who have multiplied because of an increase in the number of prisoners along with worse living conditions. Whatever the disease may be, the irresistible prescription for it will be either sulphadiazine or Carbinitive mixture, as there is no other medicine in stock. In case of a division prisoner who has more fashionable and sophisticated diseases, there is bound to be some additional prescription, but the result will be nearly the same with a mark on his medical card of the familiar, “no stock”.

In Pakistan days, there never was such a shortage of medicine or even diet. Yes, diet, for a patient is equally important like medicine for whose authorization a doctor has the sole discretion. One may have had to pamper the doctor a bit to get “extra” or medical diet in those days, but there never was such a restriction.

In the list of diet milk was also named. It was the same old cow milk, as old as creation, but it had nothing in common with it except the color. When the kind doctor allowed the extra privilege of having it one felt elated. But from the smell, the thickness, the dusty silt at the bottom, or its peculiar taste, one soon finds out that even the jail kitten refused to taste it. The warder told us that he had to supply ten to twelve seers of milk daily out of only 4 seers of a cow’s milk, so we surrendered this privilege.

Three or four seers of milk in the early days was one man’s drink. One may find a case even now. There was a man in our village named Rasul Sikdar who was renowned as a voracious eater. In those days of affluence, he was a common guest wherever there was any feast around. Once he fell ill and had a high fever for three days; the village quack doctor prescribed liquid diet on remission of fever. He took twenty bowls of barley as his diet on the fourth day; on the sixth day, when he was allowed a solid diet of fine rice, chicken soup, and milk, he had two seers of cooked rice with five chicken in the morning and five seers of

milk with twenty bananas in the evening without any indigestion. Shere Bangla Fazlul Huq, Khawja Nazimuddin, leaders of our time, were no small eaters. Shere Bangla, in his last annual dinner with us in Dacca High Court Bar, when he was above eighty years old and not in good health, took two full roast chickens with a good quantity of mutton *Biryani*, and several helpings of yoghurt with *rasgollas*.

It is not only this outdated and inhuman treatment of the prisoners that needed a reformation; the beastly mental attitude of the new rulers also needed a transformation. The time-old practice of sending the seriously ill patient for treatment to an outside hospital was stopped by government order in addition to the curtailment of various other facilities so far enjoyed by them. When I first had very high blood pressure, followed by a mild heart attack in September, a cardiogram was taken only in December. The civil surgeon and a medical board recommended outside treatment, but I was not sent to an outside hospital until March. By then the party in power had resaddled itself comfortably in power after another election of 1973. Dr. Malik had heart trouble, too, in addition to other ailments; his case was recommended by doctors for outside treatment repeatedly; the jail authorities even fixed a cabin for him in a medical college, but it was turned down by the government at the last moment.

The most tragic case in the series is that of Fazlul Quader Choudhury, formerly member of national and provincial assemblies, minister of the Central government, speaker of the National Assembly, acting president of Pakistan, president of the Pakistan Muslim League, and the most illustrious personality of the country, who was taken seriously ill in 1972. Government doctors from jail and medical colleges repeatedly pressed for his outside treatment for the complicated diseases he was suffering from. Every time he fell ill, he became paralyzed with various complications; he was shuttled between the jail hospital and his solitary cell several times. The doctors, the professors, the specialists felt the necessity of his proper treatment outside, but each time their recommendation was turned down most cruelly. Ultimately, on the July 18, 1973, he breathed his last in his solitary cell after lockup without a drop of water or medicine, with no jail mates, jail people, doctors, or near relations in attendance.

The warder on duty could bring the doctor after an hour of his need only to open the lock, to remove him to a jail hospital, and to push an injection on a dead man. The government, of course, gave a different version to the press on the following day to save its own brazen face and that of its own officers. Such maltreatment or death fits in with the government design of persecution and elimination of political rivals, but

how far it is in consonance with the accepted charter of Human Rights is yet to be seen. Similarly died Syed Md. Afzal in Barisal district jail, who was an ex-minister, too. These deaths were mysterious; they were surely killed.

Before Dr. Malik was removed to cell number 10 after his acrimonious conviction for life imprisonment, came Quasem, our cabinet colleague, Moulana Nuruzzaman, Quasem's erstwhile party colleague and Major Afsaruddin, my district man and assembly colleague to join us in cell 20. Khondaker Abdul Hamid, an editor of *Daily Ittefaq*, had gone on release with the help of his connections in the government party, but we missed him for his ready humor and literary discussions. The humor part was made good by Quasem's witty remarks and shifting faiths, sometimes he became an agnostic, sometimes a sadist, and sometimes a devout Muslim. He was a humble eater, so a lot of vegetables, dry fish, cooked food, fruits, biscuits, etc., used to come to him from his family almost every day, which we all used to share. No one would know from his nature of eating that he was an old diabetic patient. He had another disease like me, blood pressure, to give him company in jail. He migrated from Assam in 1950 as a victim of communal riot there.

Before lunch, we would finish *Duhar* prayer, but Quasem never joined in the *Jamat*. Moulana was the *Imam*, and Major Afsar the *Muazzin*, and we continued our evening *doa and salam* on Friday. The rest of the time would be devoted to the reading of the Quran or books or other pastime.

Quasem was an all Pakistan party leader but occasionally used to cross swords with Moulana, who claimed that he was quite familiar with all his egoistic motives and manner. Since he became a deputy speaker of the National Assembly in 1962, after my withdrawal in his favor, we never became so intimate to each other as this time while living together in bondage. I found him to be a well-calculated man of attractive nature. He was in his sixties, but had less gray hairs than I, all his children were grown up; naturally, he had less worries.

Moulana, besides being an old-timer in politics, was a good talker and an enlightened Islamic thinker. Like many old warriors, he had an almost inexhaustible store of anecdotes to narrate. And like many honest old politicians he had no bank balance to his credit.

Major was an amiable friend but is quite capable of bursting out like a ten pounder when some uncanny hand would touch the trigger. He was a good soul. And since he took regular exercise even in his fifties, he never complained of heart trouble like other politicians—his only complaint was toothache and stomach trouble. In jail, everybody fell ill sooner or later. Even Moulana once fell ill, and when the new doctor

came to see him, it was detected that he was suffering from low blood pressure. The doctor very sympathetically asked him why he was not given an extra diet of milk or egg or chicken earlier. The humourous Moulana, with a pause, answered, "Because we are neither physically beautiful nor politically youthful." The doctor allowed him extra diet this time to keep up his beauty and youth at fifty-five.

What did not happen in the colonial regime or in martial law happened in the liberated regime. Toward the end of 1972, subscription to newspapers, by the prisoner's own money, was stopped—a complete blackout ensued in the field of minds with not many readable books in the jail library—with no means to pass the long day of isolation we got fed up and desperate. Representation was sent to the authorities with a notice of a hunger strike. The government felt obliged to withdraw their order after a month but allowed only one English and two Bengali dailies to cross the jail gate. All three newspapers were supporters of the government. As things were not going the milky way, which they promised to our simple people, the government felt embarrassed to make known to the 'collaborators' and to the people in general that all the bitter truth we told the people had come true and all the promises they made turned into mirages. So they stopped papers for us and stifled the press outside with the help of an ordinance that was hitherto condemned as black law by the party in power—the Press and Publication ordinance 1960. *Pakistan Observer*, an English daily, *The Purbodesh*, *The Azad*, *The Sangram*, Bengali dailies *The Pasban*, *The Watan*, Urdu dailies, and weeklies and monthlies, all run by prominent people like Hamidul Huq Chowdhury, heirs of Moulana Akram Khan and the like, were taken over by the government under one pretext or another and run by the administrators appointed by the government or their nominees with new or old names.

The two dailies of the Pakistan press trust *Morning News* and *Dainik Pakistan* also went under government control. The other two dailies were already supporting government policies, so the country was virtually left with no opposition paper, where democracy is said to be one of the four pillars of the state in addition to nationalism, secularism, and socialism. In a democracy, the 4th state was under full occupation of the government. Whatever little opposition existed in the country rallied around Moulana Bhashani, the nonagenarian leader of the Pakistan movement of Assam and the free Bengal movement of Bangladesh. His only weekly mouthpiece *Haq Katha* was banned and its editor detained in jail with us. Two other weeklies, slightly critical of government lapses, *Mukhopatra* and *Spokesman* were banned, too, its editor thrown behind bars. Similar was the fate of other critical weeklies and dailies like *Gan-*

asakti, Ganokantha, Nayajug, etc. The undaunted journalistic community, to which I once belonged, went on fighting for its liberty, the right to speak the truth, not the half truth or the state manufactured truth. Two editors, one BBC correspondent, a publisher of the weekly *Holiday*, an editor of the daily *Mail*, an editor of the daily *Sangram*, one editor of *Ittefaq*, and some more were with us languishing in jail for months without any charge or trial. Some of them are still with us. I feel pity for these gentlemen because some of them even fought for the liberation of Bangladesh. I also felt hurt for them as I once belonged to that privileged class of pressman.

When I was a student of Dacca University, I was commissioned by my party to serve as a subeditor of the *Daily Millat*. During my university life, I also worked for *Daily Pakistan Today*. I had the privilege of editing my school, college, and university magazines, but this was a new horizon with fascinating interests. I remember my days in London where I came across practically all the international figures of the time as a news correspondent and a member of Commonwealth Correspondents Association. By allowing full press freedom for nationals and nonnationals of the U.K., the country never took cover under any subterfuge of safety or security of the state. In cases like *Pentagon Documents* and Watergate bugging scandals, neither the press nor pressmen were victimized for the pleasure or protection of the highest executive or government of the United States. I remember one important press conference that I attended in London. Krushchev and Bulganin were faced with barrages of embarrassing questions from us in their press conference in 1955.

I remember with delight some of other lunch meetings addressed by Menzies, the Australian prime minister, Nehru, the Indian prime minister, Lord Home, then minister for commonwealth affairs, between 1956 and 1958. All the leaders of the commonwealth used to be received by a reception of the city of London in the historic Guildhall after prime minister's conferences, where the multicolored and multilingual national leaders in their pageant and colorful national dresses used to converse in the lingua franca of English. No visiting king or president or prime minister or reigning monarch, while discussing top secrets, ever found the press "dangerous" or unwelcome in those days as the new monarchs of Bangladesh are finding it now. So even now we do not get any newspaper or news until it is state filtered through its agencies, and the free journalists feel that the press is gagged in Bangladesh, calling for a liberation of the fourth state.

The first festival, wherein Muslims usually congregate for discussion and prayers, came in the month of *Rabiul Awwal*, in April, the day of

our Prophet Muhammed's (p.u.h.) birth and death anniversary. The new Inspector General of prisons came to see us when we approached him to allow us to congregate for the celebration of the holy day. Requests were made from different cells and wards, but we were not allowed the privilege of offering salam to our Prophet (p.u.h.) in congregation. But after the deep darkness enveloped the cells and wards at night, there came the rhythmic sounds from far and near. The sound became louder and louder, merged in unison, bridged the gaps of space, ultimately becoming one voice of "*Lailaha Illallah.*" The sound had shaken the prison. Its power could turn all the bricks and bars into dusts.

There used to be weekly Friday prayers for the muslim prisoners in jail, and when we asked to have the same in central jail, we were told we could not have it any longer. I remember very well participating in *Jumma* congregation in Barisal jail in 1950 in Pakistani days without any molestation by the authorities.

The month of fasting, *Ramadhan*, came in November. The number of prisoners had come down to about 5,000, so we thought proper arrangements would be made for the prisoners, who were all Muslims and were fasting. But the same apathy and mismanagement continued, so much so that on many occasions we had to give up the *Suhr* (meal before dawn), as food cooked during the day had gone rotten. The quality of food supplied for the ordinary prisoners remained below human standard even in this month.

Congregation, under many formalities, was allowed on the Eid day, we all prayed and embraced each other while our beloved family members remained separated and miserable on such a happy occasion for all Muslims of the world. On the day of Eidul Azha, the second day of Hajj, in 1973, the Imam was asked by the jailor not to address the congregation of the prisoners for long. As a protest he did not deliver any speech at all but prayed for the deliverance of the country and the prisoners from the hands of the aliens and oppressors.

We felt a bit happy when we were allowed to visit other friends in different cells and wards just after the prayer. This solemn occasion and happiness was also marred by the physical assaults on some of the prisoners by the Subedar of the jail himself in front of us. For a moment, I felt like tearing the brute to pieces, but I sacrificed my passion of anger on this day of solemn sacrifice, remembering that Allah wants us to be firm and patient in suffering or adversity.

It is here that one gets the unique opportunity to patiently concentrate in silence on the truth of a better life of this mortal world or beyond. I remember the poet saying,

Stone walls do not a prison make
Nor iron bars a cage
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for a hermitage.

Childhood

While waiting for the gallows, I penetrated into memories of the past, of the childhood, youth, manhood, to find out to what extent one can mould his own destiny. Future is unknown and unknowable to man. And so shall it always be.

On the bank of one of the countless rivers of Bengal, I was born in a village popularly known as Nabagram, in the district of Bakerganj. When my father, Azharuddin Ahmed, passed his Minor school examination, people from neighboring villages came to see him; when he matriculated, people from distant areas came to see an English-educated boy with curiosity and surprise; yet when he was blessed(?) with his second son in me, he did not keep any diary of my birth date. Ever since I was aware of such a situation, I inquired of it from my maternal grandmother, my mother having died when I was only eight or nine years old, uncles, and aunts, but I could only get an approximate date and year. I was matriculating myself in 1946 when actually the date was pinpointed August 14, 1930, on the basis of my little research. Let me confess that surely I was born but not necessarily on that particular day.

I do not remember much of my mother except that she had to follow the directions of my grandmother in almost all household works, often admonished by her but sympathized with by grandfather. We found our father quite temperamental with everyone, including my mother. I distinctly remember her fair face brightening up with a smile when I or my elder brother would return home from school; she would be anxiously waiting on the front door of our country house. I can see her also smiling when her parents or only brother would come to our house to take all of us to their distant house for our summer vacation. We would reach there at Dhamura by boat after a full day's journey to have an ample supply of mangos, jackfruits, blackberries, and lots of chicken,

duck, and fish, accompanied with varieties of homemade pancakes and sweets for about a fortnight. Only those days seemed to be the most happy and careful days for mother and for us as well. Back in Nabagram, it would all go sad, especially for me, because it would mean dragging my most unwilling feet to a village school. My mother was most fond of her children, but I do not remember whom she used to love most. She used to be quite talkative about her sons and their future, but only with her very intimate ones, otherwise, she was very reserved and tight lipped.

I and my elder brother, Fazlul Karim, were sent away to our district town of Barisal for our studies when I was only six years old. It was our habit to come back home practically every Saturday in the dry season, covering eleven miles on foot, mainly to see our beloved mother. Mother used to wait anxiously for this day and affectionately cook so many things for us till Monday morning. She was quite proud and happy when we were growing up, but destiny cut short her life. My ailing grandmother had died, then my youngest sister died, then she fell ill. She suffered quite a few days. Father very affectionately treated her during her illness. But she died, possibly of shock.

One night a thief entered our house and was hiding underneath my mother's bed when my little brother Fazlul Huq, four years old, was giving her trouble at night, woke her up to lit a lamp, only to find a thief hiding in her room. In her shock, she shouted once loudly, but the thief fell down upon her knees and begged for his life. He was a known poor neighbour; he beseeched her not to call people, as he was starving for two days with the members of his family. When mother could recover from her shock and shivering, she thought of handing him over to people but instead, in her kindness, she gave the fellow some rice and other materials for food and let him go. She never recovered from the illness that followed this shock but narrated this episode only a short while before death when the treatment of the doctors totally failed.

My grandmother died before her husband. All that I remember of her is that my elder brother used to tease her when she would abuse him from her bed but could not reach him for her fragile ailing health. When we used to secretly consume her cod liver oil, she would instantly suspect my elder brother and threaten him with severe punishment when Azhar, her son, would come home. But she would never report against us to her son. As a result we discovered a great vacuum in our house when father took us home from Barisal after her death.

Grandfather Alhaj Safed Ali Gazi, a tall handsome man with gray hair and beard, was really a grand institution in our house and in the neighborhood. In those days of affluence, in the countryside, there used

to be a feast almost every month either in our house or in the house of some other villager. And no such feast or any village gathering would be deemed complete without his presence, followed by his master jokes and stories of his pilgrimage to Mecca. Only two persons used to disturb him and throw out queer questions during those sittings, but he would never hit or abuse them—his two grandsons. He decorated me with a nickname *Manu*, which some affectionately followed even now, but when I grew up, I felt embarrassed for this name, as it meant “little darling.” To save such embarrassment and confusion in later life, when one beget such *Manu* himself, I have gotten this practice of nicknaming a child discontinued in our family.

The practice of having “Christian” or “first name” or “surname” is not followed by the Muslims uniformly, which is how many Westerners get confused with different surnames of full brothers or their ancestors. But there used to be a common identity by the father’s name or family title in the Muslim world, but this has given in to the Western practice. I seem to be an unconscious victim of this practice, as my family title of “Gazi” is not traceable in my name or in father’s name, but my grandfather and his ancestors very proudly used to use it as a mark of distinction. When a Muslim boasts of his own inherited family title, it only smacks of his own ignorance about the unity and equality of Islam and its concept of classless Muslim society.

Gazis in Bengal have a checkered history of heroism and piety like their original ancestors of Arabia. A Muslim fighting in a holy war, “*Jehad*,” is called a “*shahid*” if he succumbs to death, but he is called a *Gazi* if he survives. Some such gazis of Arabia of the early Islamic period out of the spirit of heroism and adventure set out for different continents of the world with the message of Islam. They also landed on the coasts of India, Burma, Ceylon, Malaya, and Indonesia along with the traders and missionaries. In Bengal, they landed at places like Hoogly, Chittagong, Sonargaon, Backla, Kachua, and spread out in the fertile populated greenery to settle. With the passage of time, these traders and missionaries identified themselves with the soil and its local population through marriage and other social intercourse.

Besides the legendary Gazis (Gazi Kalu and like) in whose name Muslims of Bengal offer *fateha and Sirni*, even today the other noteables we find during the time of Sher Shah and Mughal conquest of Bengal and twelve Bhuiyans of Bengal. The entire Bahawal area of Dacca belonged to the Gazis, which was later shared by Isa Khan. Bahadur Gazi of Bahawal, one of the Bhuyias, had their palaces, mosques, and mausoleums in places like Chowra and Baligaon in present Kaliganj of Dacca. The tomb of Pahlawan Gazi can also be traced there. Later an heir of

Balaram, a non-Muslim Dewan of Daulat Gazi, son of Mahtab Gazi, grandson of Fazal Gazi of Sher Shah's time, surreptitiously got the Bahawal estate transferred during the British days in favor of one Rajendra Narayan Ray as Raja Bahadur as a reward for their collaboration with the British. In Sylhet, the great shrine of Gazi Burhanuddin at Kushighat still draws large devotees. The shrine of Badshah Gazi, which was situated in front of the shrine of Gazi Burhanuddin, was partly washed away by the river Surma very recently.

The Gazis fought the incursions of the both Mughals and British in Bengal. Babar Gazi, who declared himself the Nawab (Masnade Ala) of Bengal and Bihar in Hizli, was subdued by Mir Jumla, the great general of the Mughals. When Bengal lost its independence ultimately to the British, Gazis also lost their fame and fortune, only to go into oblivion. They can be traced to different parts of the world like the other Muslims in the subsequent period. My great-grandfather was Kalu Gazi, whose father was Bahadur Gazi, in their very names we get the combination of local and Arabic names to speak of their past and present.

The elderly Gazis of Barisal narrate that to get away from the serfdom of the *feringis* their forefathers settled in the inaccessible remote areas of Backla, presumably to reunite with some of the earlier settlers of Arab origin. So they took up an independent life of trade and agriculture, and their boys felt averse to service under anyone. When my father took up service in the dockyard of a British Company at Barisal, my grandfather was very displeased, he had to give it up very soon and enter into independent business.

Grandfather used to narrate his experience of pilgrimage in lucid style to his vast number of neighbors and admirers. How he boarded the ship from Bombay, how it reached Jeddah, where they put upon their *Ehram*, how they covered the distance between Jeddah to Mecca on camel's back, how his *Kafila* was attacked on the way by the Bedouins, then miraculously saved when they learned that they were going for Hajj, how he said *labbaik* for reaching *Kaaba* about *Tawwaf* and running between the hills of *Saffa* and *Marwa*, how he threw stones at Mina at Satans, how he again went to Medina to visit Rasulullah's *Rauja* on camel, what he ate, what he bought. Everything stage by stage was narrated by him before the gatherings at our house or elsewhere. In those days, performance of Hajj used to take several months for the slow transport all the way. For lack of security to the travelers, lack of medicine, water, and other amenities hardly, any pilgrim was expected to return home after his performance of Hajj. So one's leaving for Hajj in those days and more so his return home was a unique occasion for all his near and dear ones. But likely hazards were never treated as any

bar to the Muslims of early days in the performance of one of the five fundamentals of their religion. It is the well-cherished, sacred task of all well-to-do believers. For grandpa, it was also a visit to his original homeland.

Grandpa was so well respected by the Hindus and Muslims alike that he would be a common arbitrator in any dispute in the locality, and he would settle all disputes amicably without the breaking of heads of the rivals or knocking on the doors of the courts. The government-appointed *Panchayet* would come to him for his advice and opinion. He was very fond of my mother. During the death of my grandma and mother, we two brothers were away at Barisal for our studies, but this time I watched a living person pass on, the first one in my life of eight years.

He was in his deathbed only for a few days, with doctors from far and near attending him. On the day he was to die, he told everyone that he was leaving the world, and some very well-dressed, handsome people were approaching him with a *Buraq* to carry him away. He died a few hours later in a senseless condition, but his lips were moving all the time with the recitation of *Qalima*. "There is none to worship other than Allah and Muhamad (puh) is His prophet." He died a painless death at the age of ninety. So with all the back pulls of deep affection, vanishing one after another within a course of two years, we two brothers made our lodge at Fakirbari, Barisal, the pivot of life and living, with the object of educating ourselves.

After the death of mother, father married for a second time at Chakhar Kazi Bari, a niece of A. K. Fazlul Huq, which made our village home a little less attractive. The Syeds of Chakhar are looked on as of high status in our prejudiced society, so when my younger sister Rahima grew up, she was also given to marriage in the same family of Chakhar, where she still lives.

My maternal grandfather of Dhamura was of Majumdar family, also another respected stock in our society, who refused to keep my youngest brother of four years in our motherless house. And, thus, Fazlul Huq grew up in the extravagant affection of our maternal grandmother, uncle, and aunt at Dhamura, while we labored for our education under the strict control of our father at Barisal; without knowing what was good for us, we used to resent secretly or weep for the stern discipline of father. We used to go for the summer or X-mas vacation when we would get a chance to visit our little brother and enjoy all the affection flowing there. But father would insist on spending a part of our holidays with our new mother at Nabagram or Chakhar, which, of course, we did; these visits usually ended in unpleasant incidents. We grew so afraid

of our father that we never used to talk to or ask anything from him, which made things worse for us. Moreover, after hearing others about the stories of stepmothers, reading books like David Copperfield, we painted a dreadful picture of our new mother. But I must confess that ultimately we found those stories sometimes highly magnified. We brothers were mostly away from home; we took it for granted that a second mother can never replace one's own mother in affection or treatment so we did not expect much to be bewildered. We had our days of sorrow, agony, and despair over the years of childhood and adolescence. But we took it to be a part of a natural life to be lived when joy and sorrow, love and disaffection, pride and prejudice inevitably coexist in the eternal human relationship. So with one more brother, Ziauddin Ahmed, and one more sister, Nasreen, in our family, we lived a harmonious life with father, still alive in his nineties in good health.

In the months of January of the year 1937 we two brothers, with Syed Abdul Wazed, our private tutor, and Shafi, a cook, covered a distance of eleven miles on foot from Nabagram to Barisal. We stopped thrice on the way, the first being at the river ferry at Karapur, but the exhaustion was overcome by the excitement of new life. Father was already there in his townhouse, where we were lodged on the first floor. It was a two-story house, adjacent to, and north of the Fakirbari mosque, intervened only by the walled grave of the great saint in whose name the whole area of the town was named.

Brother had a scholarship, so he got admission in Zilla School in class V, but I was yet too small to go to high school. My tutor was preparing me for my admission in the lowest class in Zilla School next year. But on the advice of the Imam of our mosque, I was sent to his Madrasah, attached to A. K. School. I was more fond of games and gossips, that is why my village tutor had to drag me to the village schools against my will. Here, also, I did show no inclination to attend willingly the Madrasah. So I missed my classes and lessons from time to time with reward of cane treatment by the teachers and slaps from father. Brother used to love me so much that sometimes he would also join me in weeping, but when I used to be cross with him, he would also use his rod on me. Sometimes we used to quarrel and even fight when father would silently come upstairs and beat or abuse us both. But we were always together in thick and thin, more deeply attached after the death of mother.

It was very difficult for a Muslim boy to gain admission to Zilla School, which was a Government institution run by most efficient teachers with good reputations. But in the oral admission test in English, my teacher asked me after other questions. "Are you a bad boy?"

I answered promptly, "No, you are a bad boy."

I did not know then why the teacher laughed so loudly on hearing my answer, but I was immediately admitted to class III. Not only that, the said teacher, Naren Babu, also selected me as second captain of my class the next month and selected Sukhendu, a scholarship holder, as the first captain. From class IV onward, when the students were known to each other, there used to be an election for the coveted posts. Maintaining of discipline in the class in the absence of teachers and distribution of tiffin were their two main tasks. I had the good fortune to be elected as first captain from class IV till Matriculation, maybe for my friendly disposition to friend or foe alike. I had no enemy in the class, but there were a few contenders in physical power, and there were some really naughty or greedy boys to give me a rough time.

A rustic, unwilling child, now put in a new environment of a neat and tidy atmosphere, with sports and studies under the same roof, with discipline and encouragement coming from the same teachers, above all, with a sense of leadership over the fellow students, turned over a new leaf in his attitude to avoid education. The school became the center of attraction, with nice teachers, lively friends, a good library, provision for indoor and outdoor games, scouting and debating facilities. Our class teacher, Bisweshar Babu, used to shout at me for my inattentiveness to arithmetic and handwriting, but I pulled on well with other teachers.

Our headmaster, Sirajuddin Ahmed, with his appearance and dignity, like king George V, was the only Muslim teacher in the school besides a *Moulvi*. There were not very many Muslim students in different classes, as Muslim parents were not also in great number in the town. The town of about 50,000 people had barely a 25 percent Muslim population with very little position and influence in business, education, or service. In the villages, Muslims were not less than 70 percent, but everything was in the control of the Hindu Zemindars and businessmen. This anomaly and unnatural situation gave rise to social and political clamors, though not very much visible till it became explosive later. For us, the children, this Hindu-Muslim question was neither pertinent nor prominent at all. But one day, during the recess, I took water from a jar with a glass used by a class fellow of mine. The glass was taken away, the jar was thrown away, and I was produced before my class teacher for punishment. I realized then only that a Muslim is an untouchable to a Hindu. So are some lower-caste Hindus to their own higher castes, so much so that they cannot eat, drink, or mix together.

Attracted by the charm of the school and its environment, I became one of the very regular boys of the class. I became so regular later that I wept in class VI as I had to lose my prizes because of my illness, though

I bagged that on other years. I used to fight with other boys, whoever would tease me, but I got a taste for fighting in the battle of words, too, when I first watched the school boys debate. I was very keen to join the debates, but when I found my captain, Sukhendu, trembling in his pants with blushing face, I dared not participate in it that year. I was a regular debator from class IV; with encouragement from my brother and teachers, I turned into a school debator, winning various prizes later.

In class IV, I first came across school inspection. We were all in our tiptop dresses, so much so that some brought their hats, too, on that day. Hedayet was very smartly dressed with his brimmed hat on; some of us had caps on, others were bareheaded, as the captain had to shout "Stand" when teachers and inspector entered our room. The range inspector, entering the room, first looked around, asked us to sit, and asked Hedayet to take off his hat. Kanti, our class fellow, could not check his laughter when Hedayet reluctantly took off his hat. The inspector asked Kanti the first question, which he answered wrong; he asked the same question to Hedayet, whose answer was correct. When the inspector left, our class turned into laughter. We got a day's holiday for the visit.

On one rainy day during the recess, Shajahan and I were playing when he fell down on the floor from one of my pushes. His knee had one minor wound from before, but with the fall from my push, it started to bleed. He reported the matter straight to the headmaster, stating that I caused the whole wound. When the headmaster asked me if I did it, I admitted having giving him a push while playing, but the bleeding came from the old wound. He made me responsible for the whole thing and gave me one whip on my right palm whose mark was visible for two or three days. That was my first and last mark of the whip in school, but out of shame I did not talk to anyone in the class that day; I also wept a lot when I reached home with fuming anger against Shajahan. I did not talk to him for several days. My admirers in the class also abused him, but once he apologized, we were good friends again in no time.

I fought physically with three boys in my whole school life—one was Kanti, another was Nasir, and the other was Hasan. In class V, during the election of captains, Kanti was one candidate. When the election took place by raising hands in the class, two of my close friends were found voting for Kanti, though I won the election. I asked those two what was the matter with them; they frankly told me that Kanti had offered them peanuts and was to buy more for them when he would get elected. We had a row over this matter, and we had a free fight after the school hours; when defeated, he threatened me with a severe beating by his "gang," which never came.

Nasir was a newcomer but very fat and rude. Class fellows used to tease him by shouting “fatty” elephant at him, to which I also joined once. After school hours, in class VII, he chased those who teased him; everybody fled, but I stood firm to my place. When he hit me with his belt, I was furious and dragged him out to the field. We had a good bit of wrestling and boxing, but the heavyweight won the battle. The teasing continued unabated on the days that followed the brawl. Nasir was a good soul and had a soft spot for tiffin. As captain, I could give him the extras in excess, so he eagerly promised not to hit anyone anymore; thus, we became good friends till he left the school after two years.

Hasan came on transfer from a different district in class VIII. He was too smart to be controlled or reprimanded by the captain, which made me angry. He used to write a very good hand, but my handwriting was very bad for which our teacher Musharraaf, would make me write even after class hour. I wish I had properly listened to him at that time, as my handwriting is still very poor. However, Hasan, in spite of being a new boy, insulted me for my detention after school hours; this was a challenge to my established authority in the class. Hasan was short but strong. On the football field, he was playing as goal keeper on my opposite side and was stopping all the likely goals from my kicks. At last, I scored a goal and teased him as “Shorty.” He instantly came upon me like a bullet and threw me down on the rain-soaked muddy ground. I was waiting for this opportunity for a few days, so I gave him a good number of blows and kicks, but to my utter surprise he withstood all those in a smiling, nonchalant way. I fought for about fifteen minutes, got him under me, but he did not give up when others came and took aside the two fighting cocks. He thought I won, but I thought he won. This fight, instead of creating hatred, brought us so close that we developed the best friendship of our life in mutual respect and affection. Kanti migrated to India, after 1947. I hope he is well in life. There, Nasir is now in business in Dacca; Hasan is a journalist and literary genius—also well placed in life.

Closest friendships grow only during one’s early life when our minds are free from egos and vices. But the currents of life drift us so apart that we hardly can meet our friends stationed in different walks of life. Rathindra, I hear, is a top civil servant in India, Matiul also is holding a very responsible official position in Bangladesh Civil Service, Rahim and Ishaq, the two scholars, are professors in college and university, Mahfuz is a scientist in a foreign university with a foreign doctorate, Moazzem has retired as a saint from his good air force rank, Hedayet is a top executive in Dacca, Nasir is in business, Nuru, Dilip, Ranjit, and the rest are scattered all over the Indo-Pak subcontinent,

pursuing their own avocations of life, but no longer linked with each other in close cordiality as it used to be in those carefree days of school. I wish somebody else joined the political line like me and would be found here with me to compare our notes.

The main event that I can remember of class V is that I was taken by the editorial board of the school magazine. While collecting writings from others, I felt tempted to contribute something, and actually I produced a poem on autumn. Before accepting it, the teacher on the board asked me if it was my own writing; I told him, of course, it was mine. He praised me, saying, "Bravo," and it was printed in the junior group of the magazine. I found another poem printed in it that was composed by the contributor's private tutor, in an early-morning session on an empty stomach. From then onward, I grew an aptitude for writing, which ended up in journalism, with prose contributions in school, college, and university magazines in between, but I never could publish another poem in life.

Someone told me that poets draw their inspirations from smoking, drinking, and sex. I had no materials before me to confirm or contradict such a defamatory statement, but I never had any keen inclination to be a poet. If such statements had any truth in them, I had no qualification, either. My grandfather was a *hookah* smoker with that long hose, bringing out puffs, the tobacco fire at a distance, with rhythmic gurgling sound in water at the end of the hose; it had a soothing effect on eyes, ears, and nostrils. So one day when grandpa left his *hookah*, with no one looking around, I gave a puff, but due to the effect it produced on my throat, head, and ears, I never felt like giving another puff in life either on *hookah* or cigarette or pipe. No female in our family or father or elder brother was ever seen smoking. We do not think we have missed much in life. Similarly, I was fond of drinking milk and later grew fond of tea and coffee. I also drank fruit juice or juice of date palm on winter mornings, but I never touched alcoholic drink. I had been in the company of those who drink like fish, but nobody could induce in me the taste for this forbidden drink of inspiration to become poetic.

My mother left this world when I was in class V, and so did my grandfather next year. In this year, we shifted to the new school building, but the next year, in class VI we returned to the old one of about 100 years, where we remained till Matriculation. The war was on, though very little did we understand its implications then. On March 23 of this year 1940, A. K. Fazlul Huq of our district proposed the Pakistan resolution on the Muslim League platform at Lahore with M. A. Jinnah presiding over the conference. We did not realize what it meant to be independent except that we had a dislike for the "red carrots."

That the newspapers were so exciting or very much in demand was not known to me earlier. One day, Uncle Gaharuddin, a friend of father living in the same house with us, brought some papers and read out loud to father and others present about the invasion of Hitler in Europe. His Majesty's navy and air force were put into action. Every day there was a new development and exciting news, which we brothers used to overhear and discuss with full authority in our circles. I was promoted to class VI, and the year was 1941. I read in a newspaper that the price of rice had shot up to Rs.5/ per maund. We were all shocked at such spiraling up of the price of rice. Our cook Shafi had left us, so we were having our food in the mess of Quader; he also raised the monthly messing charge to Rs.5/ per month, which we all hotly discussed. So the war in Europe had also raised ripples across the seven seas, very much to our disliking.

I suffered a lot this year, being attacked with malaria and black fever. Mother and Rahima nursed me a lot, but I missed my own mother even in delirium, they all said at the village house, where I was confined to bed. The village quack doctor, Deven Babu, who was our house physician, treated me to recovery with a lot of bitter mixtures and injections after a month. I stayed on in the village after recovery for some weeks when I used to attend the biweekly bazaar, in the market adjacent to our house.

The bazaar on Tuesday and Saturday was the center of hectic business activity, with men of all ages crowding the place for buying or selling. The free tea canvassers, the lemonade manufacturers, the grocers, the stationers, the rice dealers, the jute growers, the fishermen, the milkmen, the carpenters, sweetmeat maker, the circus men, the cultivators, the gentlemen, the vagabonds, the beggars, all shouting for their business or fun from midday till nightfall. We used to enjoy a lot in our young company in this fair of human heads. When the sun set on the western horizon far beyond the adjacent canal and behind the green trees and bushes, most people would have left the bazaar—only the pimps and shopkeepers would be left to count their day's earnings.

But war was approaching, with the bombing of Pearl Harbour by the Japanese, followed by their quick advance in the Southeast Asian territories. War was the only hot topic for discussion, debate, writing, or condemnation in the year of 1941. As early as this, I remember two incidents of political importance where I seemed to have participated with interest.

Next year in class VII, we got two Muslim teachers, one is Moulvi Sb to teach us Arabic, the other, a newcomer, Abul Hashem, for English. On the first day, some students from the back bench catcalled at Hashem

Saheb. He asked me to find out the culprits, as I should know them as captain. I pleaded my inability, on which he made me and the entire back benchers stand up on the bench. The headmaster was passing by; on seeing the scene, he stepped in and asked all of us to sit down with a warning. I protested my punishment but in vain. Hashem Sb. called us to the teachers' room after class and gave a friendly sermon that took the wind out of the sails of anger. We found him to be a sweet person of good intentions, so our spirit of revolt and jest cooled down. He was young and worked hard for his lessons. But it was Sudhir Babu who infused life even in his lessons of geography or history. He had a dramatic style of teaching and mostly used to wind up his class with a story. In class VIII and IX, he even invited us to his residence for private lessons on difficult topics. I still remember the scholarly teachers like Ramesh Babu for mathematics, Nagen Babu for Bengali, and Sudhir Babu for various subjects for higher classes and Meser Saheb, Naren Babu, Mosharraf Saheb, and the rest for the junior classes. By 1946, when we left the school, we had a good number of Muslim teachers and students, as the awakening in Muslim society was more visible and vigorous.

We used to have Saturday as a day for debates and recitation. I was very fond of debating and always spoke extempore. Some boys learned their speeches by heart, some jotted down their points and a few would speak extempore. I liked to join the side of fewer persons, but ultimately the majority joined my side. In class VI, I first joined the school debate with credit; in subsequent years, I was unbeaten in both class and school debates, earning prizes. The annual prize-giving ceremony was a great occasion for the school. The teachers, the students, and the employees would all work hard to make this day a great success. Preparations for short drama, recitation, comics, physical feats, music, etc., started early in January. Parents used to attend this grand day of pomp, pleasure, and pride in February with two days of holidays to follow.

There used to be another function every year for bidding farewell to the outgoing matric examinees over a tea party of the senior students and teachers only. Another annual feature of great interest was that of the annual games and sports. For games, the whole school was divided into four houses to compete in football, cricket, hockey, volleyball, basketball, badminton, and tennis. I was a house prefect first for the green, finally for Shirajuddin House. I was a good jack of all trades but master of none yet got a place in school eleven for cricket and hockey but not in senior football. In annual sports, I was more an organizer than a participant in the later years, as I was then sporting more in political activities on the student front.

In 1942, the threat of Japanese invasion of India became very imminent, which alarmed the entire population in the eastern front. There was general evacuation of Calcutta and its neighboring places. The wave of panic also reached our remote district town, as we were in the front line after Burma—also because the people from Calcutta flooded the villages and small towns of Eastern Bengal. Quite a good number of people who never visited the interior of Bengal became the familiar faces there in our midst. The famous picturesque riverfront of Barisal became more colorful with smartly dressed boys and girls in the evening.

In summer some of our school friends were in the habit of morning walks, where also we found an influx of snow-white Dhuti-clad gentlemen of over sixty. The town became more gay, full of political and cultural activities, of course, with prices spiraling higher and supplies of essentials becoming more scarce every day. But this glamour was very short-lived, as the main source of rice supply, Burma, was no longer under free control of the British. Rice was being stockpiled for the armed forces to meet the emergency, so the prices were shooting up in sharp curves. The rice price, which was being sold at Rs.4 per maund before the war, shoot up to Rs. 10,15,20, and even 30/ per maund in months even in Barisal, which was the granary of Bengal.

Famine was knocking at the doors by the end of the year, it crossed all barriers and started taking human tolls here and there. Poor, even middle-class people came out in the streets with beggar's bowls for a morsel of rice or even a bowl of gruel; the bony, hungry, half-naked men, women and children flooded the towns and villages in an effort to survive. The government had to open a general kitchen with local help, grant test and cash relief, organize antihoarding and black marketing measure, but small barrages cannot stop the tidal wave. People died by hundreds and thousands in cities, towns, and villages, while a few fattened in their unscrupulous ways in collaboration with the warlords of the country.

On the political front, the Congress had geared up its quit India movement, the terrorists were active, too, blowing up government installations or shooting their arch enemies to death. The Indian National Army of Subash chandre Bose, "Netaji" was on its way to march to freedom through armed struggle in Burma front, and the Muslim League was busy rallying its support for the Pakistan movement to oust the colonial rulers. Both economically and politically the movement was about to erupt to uproot the two hundred years of British rule of India. With so much political experience of dominating the world, the Westminster leaders coolly but steadily were both fighting the war against the axis of Hitler-Musolini-Tojo and containing the political upsurge of

Congress and the Muslim League in this subcontinent. By the cryptic manipulation of Churchillian diplomacy, the Axis powers were made to face their erstwhile ally Russia in fierce confrontation on the one hand, bringing the remote United States into the hot gambit of firepower both on the eastern and western fronts.

One morning, our school was also closed down to keep us away from the stalk of famine, threat of Japanese bombs, and political turmoil. Before we left for our village, we had to deposit father's most favorite cycle in the government custody like thousand others lest the Japs would come and use this fast(?) transport to their advantage. We were again back to the quiet, peaceful greenery of our river-washed village. We wandered and enjoyed the summer fruits, we played and were drenched in the nonstop rains, plucking guava and coconuts from trees, lily and lotus from water, and caught fish in rivers and ponds. We enjoyed the winter drinking sugarcane and date palm juice with pancakes and *firni* to follow.

But things were not so rosy all the way, as the ghost of famine had also raided the villages. The stream of beggars and needy also flooded the rich huts of the agrarian population. The gruel kitchen was the only sanctuary for these have nots, supplemented by the doles of the kindhearted, well-to-do neighbors. Father was quite well off in the area and shared his affluence with poor relations and neighbors, but we felt at times, by the ghostly scenes of human tragedy around, that he should have exhausted all his stores and resources, as we read in the books. Yet during the annual feast of Eidul Fitr, uninvited guests tripled the number of invitees. So father threw an additional feast with the cows sacrificed during the Eidul Azha for a greater number of people. We fed people on those days to our and their hearts content. This welfare custom of feeding, is now out of date for being prohibitively expensive, but father has still kept it going; though not in that large scale or fashion as it used to be.

All the big and small boats of the villagers were seized by the government, as they did with all road transports in the towns. They were all taken away and drowned in big *beels* of the interior. Road-river transport became an additional problem for all, which resulted in lesser movement of goods and people, increasing the sufferings of the people. People of the neighborhood used to collect in the afternoon after finishing their hard day's work, in the adjacent market. Tea was no longer free, but some had already acquired the habit of having a cup every now and then on paying two pice with a little bit of biscuit or rice crispies for one pice more. The main attraction was *hookah*, which was supplied free from the shopkeepers to their large clientele for smoking a day of

agony away. Over this *hookah* and tea, gossips of war and famine would continue for hours. Only one newspaper in the village market used to come from Calcutta for its thousand readers and listeners. The younger Das would loudly read out the most exciting portion therein to his eager neighbors with an explanation of the context every now and then. Soon the Muslim listeners became bored and annoyed with undue publicity for Congress or Hindu Mahasaba, so they subscribed daily *Azad* in the opposite shop of Mridhas, adding more to the number of readers and critics. We younger ones were silent spectators, our eyes and ears open. Muslims were more in number but poor in education and wealth, whereas minority Hindus were prosperous in both. So to us it seemed to be an unequal competition of exuberance, nevertheless quite lively and enjoyable, adding gloss and glamour to the otherwise dull rural life.

We were summoned back to school in 1943 in the midst of the war scare. Famine conditions, high prices, black out, and political tension were all continuing in full vigor. We found trenches dug, air raid precautionary arrangements elaborately laid, and the public trained in civil defence. A.R.P., a new organization, was set up in every ward, and observance of blackout was vigorously enforced. The political leaders have assured cooperation to the British government on promise of quick transfer of power, although the method and nature of such transfer was being debated by all the parties concerned. The names of political leaders like Gandhi, Jinnah, Nehru, Patel, Lquat, Fazlul Huq, became household words to young and old alike. The teachers and the taught all seemed to be involved in this political upsurge generating enthusiasm and heat.

Abdus Samad, a thin man of grave voice, had his Khaksar office in our Fakirbari ward, where young and old used to gather to hear the endless table talk on current politics. His conversation was a source of inspiration to all dormant but conscious political minds. He had a devoted band of followers, some of whom used to take regular pity parade lessons in the afternoon with "*belchas*." When the Khaksar movement of Allama Mashriqi sided, with Congress, Samad ultimately isolated himself and worked for Pakistan movement with the Muslim League. I used to visit his office and silently sit in one corner to listen to his endless talk on the experience of World War I in the Middle East along with Kazi Nazrul Islam, the rebel poet of Bengal, the Khilafat movement of Ali brothers, Suddhi movement of Hindu leaders to Hinduize all Muslims, Christian, and Buddhists of the Indian subcontinent, emergence of the Muslim League and its separation from Congress, the Pakistan Resolution at Lahore, the progress of World War II, the advance of I.N.A. under the command of Subash Chandra Bose, the fall of Sin-

gapore and Burma to the Japs for the cowardice of the British troops under Lord Mountbatten, the mistakes of Gandhi and Nehru, the lapses of Jinnah, practically everything of political importance.

I did not have sufficient knowledge about all these big events, so I took to regular reading of newspaper with great interest. Reading of books also became necessary. I joined the public library and borrowed books from school as well. Listening to public speeches was no less important, so I started attending meetings of parties, held mostly in the town hall. I was finding interest myself in all these, but brother was more keen and attentive to his own studies. Much of my time for games and gossip were taken away by this new pursuit; no less was my class studies suffering in the process. I had joined Samad in many of his meetings and rallies, whose sacrifice and contribution for the political awakening of the people of the area, to me seemed to be no less than any other political leader. But his poverty left him heedless before the political giants; he suffered a death practically without treatment soon after independence. And there he lies buried in Barisal town graveyard, hidden from history like thousands more unknown heroes.

After breaking away with the Muslim League, Fazlul Huq formed Shyama-Huq Ministry in Bengal, which seriously damaged the cause of the Pakistan movement, which Huq Saheb himself had launched two or three years ago. I remember being present at one of the innocent demonstrations against this ministry when Huq Shaheb was holding a public meeting in front of A. K. School. The elders were taken to custody, but I was too small to be considered.

In this class VIII, Sudhir Babu, our favorite teacher, one day asked all the students of the class, one by one, to state his own aim of life. This was a new theme. I, being the captain, was on the front bench, his finger was pointed at me. I did not really know what to say except what we read in books of essays. But I stood up and gave a short speech on becoming a social worker to serve our teeming millions, who grope in the darkness of illiteracy, prejudice, vice, poverty, malice, and ignorance. Coming from the villages, as I do, like the vast multitude of our country, we cannot remove ourselves from the onerous task of improving our lot, who are deprived of all the facilities of civilization by the few city dwellers and rulers of the country. The teacher liked the speech, as did, also, my classmates; those who followed spoke more or less on the same theme, except a few who wanted to be engineers, scientists, businessman, teachers, and doctors. But at the end of the class, he asked me to see him, which I did when he told me privately that I did not aim at anything specific. So he said a doctor like Dr. Bidhan Roy, a barrister like Gandhi or Jinnah, a reformer like Raja Rammohon Roy, Asiwini

Kumar Dutta, a teacher like Dr. Zakir Hossain or Radha Krishnan, an educator like Allama Iqbal or Moulana Azad, Humayun Kabir—all are social workers and noble in their own professions. And I must make up my mind what I actually wanted to be so that I could prepare myself accordingly.

After a month he held the same class, where I told him clearly that to serve the people and to enable myself to work effectively for the social and political emancipation, I would like to be a barrister like Jinnah or Gandhi. It was a high ambition for a village boy of middle-class family of Bengal to aspire to such education and status. I did not fully realize its implication at that age, but felt a natural urge within me for serving the people, which I could best fulfill by becoming a barrister, independent in profession, with enough money from clients to serve the needy, ample time for social and political activities, and the status befitting a leader.

Sudhir Babu, in his affection, told me that he could see from my eyes and determination that I would become one such person one day, but I must work hard for it. I told this to my brother later, who gladly approved of my idea, as he was extremely fond of me, but he was not sure whether father was able or willing, as he took me to be a rotten egg. I was neither very serious nor diligent in my studies, but brother was, so he was more fond of him, and I used to get the most thrashing and abuse. I was a bit shy, too, before others. I was always a good listener who would like to see others enjoying their own talks, but once I was on the platform for debates, or speeches, I was a different boy.

In this year, brother passed his matriculation with letters and joined the B.M. College in Intermediate Science. His aim was to become a doctor, although father wanted him to compete in Superior Service and become an I.C.S. Brother was very good at maths, with an aptitude for science, so father did not persuade him otherwise but told him that he must get his B.Sc. before he joined the medical college. There were only two graduates in or around our village; even our private tutor graduated after us, so father had a point in spreading higher education, as he himself could not go very high. Actually, his keenness for education, with strict discipline, made us, the brothers, reach where we are; otherwise, we would be the spoiled children of an affluent father like thousands around in towns and villages. If we had less love or affection from father it was for our good, which good prospect he had always cherished in his treatment of his children. Sometimes I wonder if too much affection or too much apathy spoil a child, or if a child will become what he is made to be or what he is destined to be.

But every teacher was not a Sudhir Babu, nor were we the students

all the time too good. We had one Abinash Babu, an elderly teacher with a bad habit of repetition of some words, possibly a little stammerer, too. We had another Bengali teacher, a middle-aged newcomer, with a long pigtail on his head. We used to have lots of fun, frolic and fury, in the real naughty way, with these teachers in our respective classes. Many a time we had to suffer punishment in the process, but it would give us more encouragement, as mostly the wrong student would be punished. We used to have our own practical jokes on our class and schoolmates, too. Except on the day of April Fool, these jokes led to bitter quarrel, sometimes but never lasted long. We were all full of life, vigor, and happiness—the coming life of reality never cast any shadow on our behavior; we were youths. The only moments of despair seemed to be in dropping two or three friends back in old class at the year end or dropping points in a lost game of hockey, football, or cricket.

With the effects of war and famine still looming large, I began the most important year of 1944 in class IX; class X being the most serious year for preparation of matriculation examination; the boys of class IX took lead in all academic and extra-academic feats of the school. The school captain, the games captain, the magazine editor, the sports organizer, festival organizer—all used to belong to this class. I had to share the burden of most of these, some by election and some by selection. Besides the printed school magazine, which was not published the previous year for scarcity of paper, we published another handwritten magazine with the name *Agradoot*—vanguard—mainly with the help of artist Lutfar and scribe Sukhendu of our class. It was commended by teachers and envied by the students of other classes. I was coeditor of the school magazine with Rathindra, which was not published until the next year again due to a paper crisis created by the war.

Among the festivals that the school students jointly organized were the *Miladunnabi* for the Muslims and “*Saraswati Puja*” for the Hindus. We had to organize the *Milad* in the adjacent premises of Nawabzada Syed Fazle Rabbi. It used to be participated by special invitees, guardians, and students with essay reading, recitation *Naat o Hamd*, and speeches all on the life of our Prophet Muhamad (p.u.h.) and different aspects of Islam. It used to be rounded up with *Milad* and distribution of prizes and sweets. I got prizes mostly in essay writing and speech making, besides the prize of hard labor for two to three days in organizing the same.

In the town itself “*Muharram*” for the Muslims and various “*pujas*” for the Hindus were commonly observed. This year and the year before there was commotion in public as Hindu miscreants threw stones on the Muharram procession. The Hindus also insisted on beating drums

in front of Muslim mosques during their *pujas*, and they also wanted to stop the sacrifice of cows during our Eidul Azha as they consider cows sacred. There were lot of unpleasant incidents that made the Muslims aware of the intolerant communalism of the Hindus in general and their superior castes in particular. Communal riots in Indian cities over these festivals were the most ugly features staring the Hindus in their faces for centuries. Muslims, being in the minority in all the cities and towns, which were the common spots for these riots, were the worse victims. By the time reinforcements from neighboring Muslim majority areas would arrive to defend the Muslim victims, the Hindu-controlled administrative machinery with the pretentious Hindu leaders would invariably sue for peace. The humiliated Muslim families, without much opportunity to avenge the brutality, would gasp and fume before the peace meeting and invariably be termed as communal with one-sided peace forced upon them. This process had been going on in India since the reign of control passed from the Muslim hands to that of the British. Hindu leadership actually wanted to replace the British with minority Muslims under their subjugation, whenever Muslims wanted a distinct position with their own emancipation, too, they were termed communal. This all-time influential minority wanted to live in harmony and peace as equal citizens in any political framework that the British might design for India. But this condition of security, honor, and independent identification of the Muslims was looked down upon as a potential threat to Hindu monopoly in business, service, education, and administration of future India. The Roman Catholic and Protestant diversity in Germany and Ireland are two European instances of this mental framework.

Fed up with the shrewd and dominating acrimony of the Congress, the Indian Muslim League had to part its way with the Indian Congress. The combined Hindu-Muslim movement of noncooperation and Khilafat of the twenties could not keep them together in the forties as a result of this narrow and overpowering outlook of the majority leaders. Pakistan's proposal was a consequential outcome of this bitter animosity. Though snubbed by Gandhi-Nehru in the beginning, this proposal received serious consideration by 1943–1944. The movement for independence was augmented from all the political platforms of Congress, Hindu Mahasabha, and Muslim League. Their student organs were active in mobilizing public opinion in favor of each. Students were in the vanguard of this movement. The waves of their activities also reached the bank of Kirtan Khola River at Barisal. All Bengal Muslim Students League was the provincial body of the All India Muslim Students Federation. The Congress Students Organ, the Students Congress, had already formed its unit in various schools and colleges of Barisal, including

our Zilla School. On their call, we also joined their protest meetings and processions, as we had no separate unit of Students League. To carry out the Muslim League program, we also formed a unit in Zilla School like the Hindu boys, but Congress was more active with its vast followings among the public and students of the town.

Political activity in government institutions like ours were very much restricted in those days. Scholarships, free studentship, and secret report were the various levers used against the boys to keep them aloof from such activity. So our boys used to join the elders of B. M. College and other private schools, mostly outside the school premises, where I had to play an active role. Later, I was also taken in the district committee on the Students League. I was then slowly but steadily drifting toward the main current of the movement. Brother was no longer the watchdog in school, but reports reached him in college, and later to father, making them all worried and scared about my activities. Those who were militantly agitating for freedom were ending up in jail; I, in those days, was of youthful vigor and could meet the same fate, though they were aware that Jinnah believed in nonviolent constitutional politics. In any case, their constant watch over me made my position a little uneasy as an emerging leader of the students; it also curtailed my activities. Yet I made my first fiery public speech in a Muslim League meeting at the town hall on behalf of the students, where Sadaruddin Ahmed, an elderly leader, was presiding. The new political activities had curtailed my games and sports, so the main recreation remained in going to the pictures in matinee shows on Saturdays or Sundays, where I relished most the pictures of Tarzan or other fighting ones. Some school friends with some friends of Fakirbari were the usual companions for the picture and peanut sessions. We sometimes used to repeat this performance on Sundays in mock fights with great vigor, carrying real ropes, wooden swords, toy pistols, and paper masks. Another important recreation was to watch the amateur theater or plays like *Sirajuddoulla* or *Tipu Sultan*.

In spite of all these youthful distractions, the habit I could keep up in later years of life was that of saying regular prayers and morning recitation of Al Quran. Our house was adjacent to the mosque, so when not in school, the *Azan* for the five daily prayers would reach not only the ears but the soft mind as well. The early-morning call for prayer was a timely sleep breaker when we two brothers would rush for wash and prayers. The *Imam* of the mosque Moulvi Abdur Rahman, who gave lessons of Al Quran, used to hold a congregation on the eleventh night of every lunar month in memory of Hazrat Khawaja Mainuddin Chisti of Ajmer. We used to join for prayers and sweets.

During the month of Ramadhan, we used to fast from the early

days of our student life; I don't remember a year when I was irregular. In the evening, we had *Iftar* with others, mostly in the mosque. It was a great attraction for the fasting children. The *Mutualli* of Fakirbari *wakf* Shah Abdul Quddus was a great well-wisher of ours; so were other neighbors, although we had no relationship with them. I had free access to their houses, which developed into intimacy with elders and young boys and girls. With their help and encouragement, I established one youth club and library named *Tarun Mahfil*, Youth Society, which I believe still exists there by some other name.

During Eid festivals, with schools on holidays, we used to be present invariably in our village home to share the joy of our poor villagers and relations, form congregational prayer and feast. Even in later years of my profession and politics, I attended these festivals with my wife and children to share the joy and sorrow of my people. I really felt at home with these much neglected people of our villages, embracing them, feeding them, visiting their houses, and listening to their sorrows and sufferings. And to render any service to them.

Looking in retrospect from behind the walls of captivity, I feel pity for myself and for the goodhearted poor villagers, as I could do very little to ameliorate their lot, which had been my lifelong aim and purpose of political exercise. To serve the poor, the needy, the neighbor, and the people for the pleasure of God and not for the pomp, property, or power is the precondition of a society of love and peace. Let us remain firmly dedicated to this cause, whether we suffer or die in the process of the shifting sands of politics.

School to College

To be at the top is something that one can better feel than express, whether it is the top of the world or the top of Mount Everest or the top of the class. Here we were at the top of our classes with none to masquerade as our guardian angel, with none to challenge our superior authority over other classes, with none to report that we were either rude or disrespectful to our big brothers, with even the teachers treating us as grown-up elements. Above all, we were the top performers of all school functions, like the top leaders on a political stage. But it carried no less responsibility, as soon we would be called to prepare ourselves to crown the burden of matriculation.

The year was 1945; the Nazis, the Fascists, and the Japs were all being contained on their respective fronts. The madness of the global war seemed to be in sight, but the fight for national freedom in India was accelerated by a mass upsurge. The Cripps Mission Report of 1942, having failed to grasp the issues that troubled the minds of the Indians, was rejected by its leaders from the outset. Now it was the turn of another mission or any other genuine initiative on the part of His Majesty's Government to control the upsurge. The political leaders were busy planning negotiations and field activities to oust the British and wrench the freedom from their hands. The ripples also reached our district town in the form of conferences, public meetings, procession, demonstration, and strikes. We also went on strikes in our school and came out on the streets in procession with others; this, no doubt, was beyond comprehension of anyone of the students of government schools, but it happened more than once but in a quiet and disciplined manner. The words used to go around silently to the students a day before; there would be picketing by us in distant corners beyond the sight of the teachers. Some would, of course, break our cordon to peep

into the classes but only to find an unwelcome signal there, mostly from students and sometimes from the teachers. So we would have a holiday all over the town with a crowd of hundreds or thousands, always keeping an eye on either side of the road for the likely interference of our guardian angels. Yet with such throbbing hearts, each youth would thunder out like a bombshell in shouting, "Pakistan Zindabad", "Quaide Azam Zindabad," "Muslim League Zindabad", "Larke Lenge Pakistan," as if to reach the voices to the ears of the imperialists sitting in Calcutta, Delhi, or London. The Congress followers used to have separate strikes, meetings, or processions in the same way. There were no microphones in those days, nor were there guns or bullets; it was the voices of the people, a sure way to fight for freedom without loss of life or property in a peaceful manner. Nevertheless, the rulers spared no opportunity to shed the blood of the freedom fighters in places like Jalianwalla Bagh, Lahore, Delhi, Calcutta, Chittagong, etc. Nor did the unholy communal riots take a lesser number of human lives or destruction of property. There is no end to brute force, once accepted as a means to an end. And humanity is bound to be crushed under its feet at every turning point.

It has always troubled our minds whether students should participate in political activities or be left out to equip themselves with the greater struggle of turning the country into a better place to live. There are merits and demerits on both the sides, but it seems inevitable that in all developing societies they are the mainspring of a conscious, selfless section of the community that can either build or destroy its own destiny. So the students have been used and directed by the leaders as a very effective weapon of any struggle—whether it is for freedom, power, ideal, or revolution. The thin line of demarcation between these objectives can little be comprehended by the emotional youths of little maturity; hence, there arises the danger of their exploitation. So it is better to groom others as the pioneers of such objectives while our students, the future generation, grow wise and able to shoulder their future responsibilities. Like the use of force, once students are used as means to an end, there is no end to that end, that is, unfortunately, what we find today all around. With all my student career dedicated to movements, either for the cause of the students or the people, with all my humble experience as a politician, I feel that our students are too much involved in active politics. Rather, they are dragged into it by the pressure of circumstances. It is high time to call a halt to this.

In this year in Calcutta, two important organizations were formed for the Muslims. One was the Jamiate Ulamae Islam, with Moulana Shabbir Ahmed Usmani as president. Jamiate Ulemae Hind under the leadership of Maulana Hussain Ahmed Madani was supporting Con-

gress. The other was the Muslim League National Guards, the volunteers, with Nawabzada Siddiq Ali Khan as its head. Both these organizations were formed in support of the Pakistan movement, primarily to work among the Ulemas of India by the former one and to train a youth force of India with military discipline by the other. We had our district units of both in no time, which strengthened and consolidated the forces of Islam to work under the banner of the Muslim League.

By the middle of the year, the Axis powers were having their reverses in Europe, and the Japs were halted at Burma. Though it was difficult to sift the truth from the extravagant claims of the conflicting parties, it seemed clear that the Nazi troops could no longer claim advances beyond Leningrad, rather, they were on the retreat. Similarly, the Allied troops had already landed in Dunkirk and other places of Western Europe, with the combined help of air force and navy of the Allied powers. Japan also could no longer penetrate deeper into Indian eastern borders with her navy and air force already foiled by the Allied thrust spearheaded by an Anglo-American combine. Ultimately, Berlin fell, and Nagasaki and Hiroshima were atom bombed. The tired nations, with their more tired people, heaved a sigh of relief at the end of the diabolical war of killing and destruction. Winston Churchill's "V" for victory was now achieved and celebrated throughout the world. In spite of our political differences with the British, we felt once an integral part of the British Empire while celebrating the occasion under the Union Jack. We the students enjoyed it thoroughly, as we had holiday, sweets, and colorful festivities even in the remotest corners of the great world.

To pave the way for the promised independence, there came the cabinet mission to recommend the measures required to achieve the goal of peaceful transfer of power. While the inquiry was going on, the political passion and exhibition of strength of the parties and expression of the reasoning for each one's case were heightened to the extreme.

In the meantime, my elder brother had passed his I.S.C. with distinction. And now, with the prospect of war coming to an end, the rationing of food, cloth, and necessities was being lifted. With the danger of Japanese bombing of Calcutta no longer in existence and the communication, trade, and education being again back on its rail, brother wanted to do his B.Sc. in the best college of Bengal, i.e., Presidency College in Calcutta. On the intervention of Uncle Gaharuddin, father agreed to send his eldest son out of his sight to give him the prime chance of his life. Now with brother safely accommodated in Jinnah Hall at Mirzapur Street in Calcutta, with a seat in the presidency, I was my own boss in Barisal; to prepare for my final matriculation under the occasional supervision of father.

To keep a private tutor for me at this time was not only to keep me under double watch but also to make up the deficiency in my subjects, like mathematics, in which I was definitely weak. He was an elderly man with teacherly qualities but not equal to the art of youths' tricks of evading the lessons. But he knew that my distractions were not for any notoriety other than meetings or processions. He was a Hindu, but he never bothered me or talked of politics, this way or the other, unlike Bimal Babu, a new Bengali teacher at school, who was always full of political gossip, a staunch supporter of Congress. Bimal Babu was so forceful in arguments that mostly I faltered before him with my raw arguments in favor of the Muslim League or Pakistan. But it was a treat to argue with him and listen to his fine vocabulary of Tagore's Santiniketan. Even Sudhir Babu, our favorite friend, guide, and teacher, was never so vocal about political ideas, though he was a Congressite, too. We had a new headmaster, Mr. Paul Guda, a native Christian whose political affiliation we could never know. Our Muslim teachers, like Musharraf Saheb, Abdul Hashem Sahib or Moulvi Saheb, never talked of politics in school, though Muslim teachers generally were all in favor of Pakistan. The private town schools, most of which were run by Hindu management and Hindu teachers, were vocally in support of Congress.

Out of six high schools in the town, only A. K. School had a Muslim majority in both teachers and students. The founder of this school, Ismail Khan Chowdhury, an elderly Muslim Leaguer with all India reputation, was elected to the Central Legislature in 1946, when we also worked for him. The other illustrious son of the district A. K. Dutta, had died long ago, and A. K. Fazlul Huq was the living luminary. His services to the cause of the downtrodden Muslims of Bengal can hardly be overemphasized. But the original proposer of Pakistan had by then turned turtle to the movement and was currying favor of the Congress and Hindu Mahasabha, resulting in his expulsion from the Muslim League. Khan Bahadur Hashem Ali Khan, ex-minister in the Shyama-Huq Cabinet, a reputed lawyer of the district, was also another political notable besides Azizuddin Ahmed and Saduruddin Ahmed, both lawyers, by profession, of the Muslim League. Satindra Nath Sen and Abanindra Nath Ghosh were the two important Congress leaders of the district of those days. Mahiuddin Ahmed, a science student of B.M. college, was our Students League leader in those days.

To sit for the final of matriculation, to be held in early 1946, we submitted our fees for the exam. And we no longer belonged to the school, which we crowded for the last eight years. Traditional farewells to the outgoing boys were given over touching speeches and moving scenes where both teachers and students spoke and sobbed. It ended,

of course, in heavy consumption of sweetmeats, specially prepared for us from the shops of Gharbaran and Sashi sweetmeat makers of Barisal. We were then old boys—our only link remained in the afternoon sessions of coaching classes in the school. New boys had taken our positions in even the top class.

The old order changes, yielding place to the new—there remains no vacuum in the process of existence or no broken chains in the process of creation. How trivial it seems, our assumed importance, in the eternal process of the gigantic creation of the world and beings, whose presence, or continuity, we take to be indispensable because of his quality or stature today, it becomes nothing but a forgotten drop in the vast sea of existence. The knowledge of art or science we extol to be the last word for man just vanishes as a wave of ether in the far horizon of time and space. The theories of species, society, or science we acclaim as the apex of learning or utopia of living just only awaits the greater learning or discourse of the newcomers. The political thoughts, the economic theories, the scientific analysis, or the rest of human discoveries can by no stretch of the imagination be stamped as indispensable or final in the process of existence. They are nothing but the transient manifestations of the eternal, devised by the limited gift of intellect in man in the given time and space. We all, matter or being, high or low, big or small, weak or strong, dull or intelligent, only play our very limited role in our significant way in this vast expanse of continuity.

With political agitation all around, there was hardly the atmosphere for concentration on studies for the final. Nevertheless, I sat for it along with the bookworms in the big hall of B. M. School but could not do well in Mathematics. The results would take three months to come out, so we had the longest vacation without any burden for lessons or homework. With a mind to spend the vacation in seeing relations and touring places, I left Barisal. When I reached Nabagram, a lot of political and social activities awaited me. To spread the mission of independence among our simple unlettered village folks was no easy job. They would ask you the preliminary questions for which the city intellect is not of much use: What is freedom? What benefit will it bring for the cultivators? Do the "*Firingis*" really eat pig meat, and do they not go to mosques or temples? If there is only one *Firingi* ruling the district, why cannot you get rid of him? What is Pakistan, and what is Hindusthan? Why vote? Questions ranged from this nature to the following: If the British king will transfer power to an Indian or Pakistan King or Governor general, how will people benefit thereby? To what extent will the oppression of the Zemindars, the moneylenders, be removed by independence? How far can you assure the honesty in government offices and service of the

politicians to the cause of the people in a free country? Will freedom give us a just, fair, and religious society or a society of prosperity for a few and injustice to the rest? The questions, though, would not carry the weight of cross-examination in a court or a press conference, yet point directly toward the political, economic, and social realities of our country, to which our leaders had to address themselves quickly. The answers will have to be translated into action to make the image of freedom meaningful for downtrodden majority.

Have these simple questions been answered yet? My village, through, which flows a river and many roads, was dotted only by a few spots of civilization, i.e., a mosque and tomb of a Fakir, the collection office of Narailzamindar and the bazaar with an opium vendor of the government. There was no school, no post office, no hospital, no club or library to break the scenic silence of agrarian beauty. The smiling beauty of paddy and other winter crops, the landscape of green jute fields with shining waters of rains around, the summer fruits with a symphonic orchestra of birds and the abundance of trees and rank foliage, kept our innocent simple people ignorant and contented with what little they had. Only a mud road connected this human habitation of the day, ten miles away to Barisal. The village *Panchayet* used to settle the local disputes and occasional visit of red-turbaned, khaki-dressed police, besides the Nayeb of the Zamindars, were the other links with civilized life. Locally organized schools of Hindu pundits or Muslim moulvis were the only apologies for education even in the first moiety of the twentieth century.

During about 200 years of British rule, their education did not percolate beyond the lairs of towns, as they never aimed at mass education. The mass education media of local language was replaced by foreign English language, which only the favored few adopted primarily for running the administration. Muslims of India, who spread out in far-flung areas, being thrown out from their educational administrative, judicial, and revenue controls, were the worst sufferers of the transformation from Persian, Arabic, or local language-based education to English education. The Muslim rivals of the new rulers took a long time to adjust themselves to their new role of serfdom; hence, they were neglected to their doom. The vast majority of the erstwhile ruling people took refuge in agricultural life of the distant villages, while the new class of collaborators crowded the British seats of administration and commerce in a few townships. Depending on the revenue of the villagers the new class thrived in towns, but the villages remained detached from the growing civilization to suit the colonial rule. No effort, worth the name, was taken to reconstruct or develop the rural society where about 90 percent of the population lived all over India.

I found only one district magistrate, Nurunnabi Choudhury, quite keen for rural uplifting. A district magistrate in those days was the uncrowned monarch of a district, so a lot of people came out with enthusiasm for rural uplifting, but like mushrooms, they vanished with the transfer of the officer. The first graduate of our village, Syed Muhammad Ali, also had a knack for rural development, but soon he had to join his service, being baffled by the opposition of the unlettered critics of the villages. I was quite young and inexperienced in such matters, but I always nursed the ambition of serving my people. There was the base where I could begin; here was the need greater than anywhere else; here was a forum where one could serve even without political power on voluntary basis.

I had a number of friends and admirers in the village to whom I posed the problem. The young ones were quite excited, but the elders were quite skeptical and critical. Undaunted by the likely dangers or difficulties, we set out on a program of forming a society for village welfare, which I named "*Azadi Majlis*" (freedom society), a society meant for freedom from the evils, vices, pride, prejudice, want and ignorance, to spread education, communication, self-help, physical and cultural activities, and above all, to raise the consciousness for enlightened corporate life in rural areas. Within a month, we set up a temporary office, a nucleus library, a sports and games center, a rendezvous for youths, and a night school for elders. Our membership rose to about 100 with a few subscribers. It was enthusiasm all around based on voluntary labor and subscription. We took up the reconstruction of the only primary school house of the locality. We erected indigenous bridges for crossing small canals. We cleared ponds of hyacinth and roadside bushes to fight the mosquitoes and diseases.

After a month, I left for Calcutta to see my brother there. This was my first visit out of Barisal, but I left alone. I had to use the slow steamer of the then I.G.N. and R.S.N. Company from Jhalakati, took a train from Khulna, there being no train line in my district then, which fact still remains valid. I got down at Sialdah station of the cosmopolitan city of Calcutta. So much bustle, with so many trains and platforms in one station, with the sound of whistle and shunting of the mechanical dragons and the noise of the passenger and porters got me in a fix for a while. I did not inform my brother of the date of arrival, only to give him a pleasant surprise. I reached him safely in Jinnah Hall at Mirzapur Street. He was so happy but reproached me for not informing him so that he could attend the station. It was a vast city of buses, trains, factories, schools, colleges, parks, monuments, mosques, temples, churches, and museums. It was not as old as Rome, Athens, Cairo,

Istanbul, or London, but it was old enough for me to keep busy seeing its historic buildings, Dock, museum, Botanical garden, zoo, Howrah Bridge, Jame Mosque, Victoria memorial, *Garer Math*, university, Fort William, etc., built there during the 300 years of its history. Beginning as a small river port, it had gained the status of a world city of commercial, industrial, and political importance. Brother as usual was solely devoted to his studies, but I soon found avenues to visit the dens of political activities without missing the beautiful picture houses and crowded football grounds. It is an advantage of all big cities that one can easily get lost in his own pursuit—good, bad, or indifferent, without being spotted by others.

Besides the Muslim League, the two organs that helped create Pakistan most are Mohammadan Sporting Club and the *Daily Azad* newspaper—the two valiant forerunners of Muslim consciousness in two different fields as against its giant opponents. I had the opportunity to observe the brilliant performances of these two from close, so I also met the various political leaders of Bengal about whom I had read and heard so much.

Bengal was by no means dominated by the Bengalees, far less by the Muslims who constituted 55 percent of Bengal's total population. It was the center of minority rule. Britishers would not constitute even a fraction of Bengal's population, but they had full political and economic control. Hindus did not constitute more than 45 percent of the population, but they had the second-best control in wealth and administration. Marwaris of Madras and Bombay were again an insignificant fraction of the total population of Bengal, but they were the commercial or industrial magnets. Almost all the big government or commercial posts were held either by a Britisher or a high-caste Hindu. Hardly a Muslim was appointed or promoted above any clerical rank. Muslims had no place in industry, banking, or insurance and very little hold in big trade. Even the brilliant Muslims got opening in the field of education or profession with great difficulty. Doors of the armed services were closed to the Bengali Muslims, almost the same to the Bengali Hindus.

The Permanent Settlement well served the Muslim landlords to turn into a minority—even the chartered *lakhiraj* and other tax-free lands for religious or educational charities found their way to non-Muslim hands. To crown all these deprivations, the Muslims were denied the free performance of their religion—during *Eidul Azha* over the sacrifice of cows and during *Muharram* over the processions of the devotees. Muslim killings by Hindus were no rare phenomenon. Looking at the face of Calcutta, one could find the index of this unfair exploitation of the majority. Poised thus, the Muslims of Bengal had no choice but to ask

for a separate homeland for their economic, political, and cultural rehabilitation. It was neither a communal nor a parochial move but was verily a much-needed social revolution.

A month's stay in the metropolis is too short a time for getting acquainted with its life but it seemed too long for me as I was far away from my intimate sphere of activity. Leaving my roll number with brother, I journeyed back to my village. Busy but noisy, acquaintance but indifference, cars or mansions but discontent, money or material but dissatisfaction, dressed or decorated but unnatural, smile or courtesy, but artificial—all the unhappy effects of materialistic civilization seemed to have made a big nest in a big way in city life. I was happy to have escaped from the suffocation or urban comforts. In my small village of scenic beauty, with its simple people and simpler life, I felt happier. There was no tram or train, no car or carriage, no electricity or gas, no highway or pavement, no mansion or factory, no bank or mint, no cantonment or police line, no Marwaris or Sikhs, no Englishman or Delhiwalla, no fort or arsenal, no zoo or museum, no cinema or theater, not even a college or high school, yet we were happy, as our needs were few and demands were fewer.

But the invasion of civilization had already spearheaded through the natural barriers of our country life to throw us on the crossroads of turmoil. The isolated peaceful life when Adam delved and Eve spun, was no longer. The temptations of the brighter life were haunting the children of Adam. More so, when the cities are thriving on the sweat and blood of the teeming millions of the villages, these millions must also get their due share in fruits of their toil. We wanted to catch up with the city civilization in a very humble way. We did not ask for the sun or the moon or everything that was available in cities but the bare minimum to identify ourselves as civilized. A school, a road, a bridge, a doctor, a dispensary, a club, a post office, or a maternity would satisfy our bare needs, as asking for a house, a hospital, a college, a cooperative, or an orphanage would be too much for our administration to provide. Not to speak of the food and clothing for all; even the bare minimum of our community needs were not to be satisfied. The problems of rural credit, agricultural system, neglected cottage industries, oppression of revenue-collecting agencies, and the prejudices of ignorance also needed careful handling. The government of the day had no headache for all these problems, nor was there any effective voluntary movement for the amelioration of their lot on a self-help basis. Everyone was busy fighting for political freedom, which by itself would transform the entire society into a prosperous one, they held. But I felt that social reformation must never wait for political salvation but should go along with it to sustain each other, if not to precede.

The work that I began over two months ago, I took up in rights earnest. If my family had no baneful influence on the common villagers, my pious efforts would have been swept away by a few selfish fellows. Luckily, with the united will of the youths and benevolent gestures of well-intended elders, we survived all their cunning devices. We worked ourselves with spades, axes, and hammers, to build roads, bridges, school, and clubhouse. We rallied all people to read, listen, and learn. We moved authorities for post office, high school, telegraph office, and roads. We staged theaters and organized games and sports. We aided the needy and poor and resisted oppression and bad customs. We raised the human consciousness in the mind of the rich and poor.

The work that was started there over twenty-five years ago still goes on, but in the process we established high schools, colleges, post and telephone offices, cooperatives, clubs, madrasahs, roads and bridges, and many things to go with it. This program of self-help I have carried out not only in my village but in many more areas. Many of our essential schemes remain yet unimplemented, but today I can only hope and pray that my people will go ahead with them not in one but in thousands of villages that still remain forgotten and despised.

Even after achieving freedom, not much attention was given to the development of villages. But credit goes to Ayub Khan, who with his work program built a network of roads, bridges, culverts, permanent schools buildings, community centers, seed stores, union council offices, crescent and star clubs, Ansar clubs, and introduced I.R.R.I. rice cultivation with pumps and fertilizers, and agricultural credit through the Agricultural Development Bank and Corporation throughout the backwaters of Pakistan. Another pioneer in this field is a respected Punjabi retired civil servant, Akhtar Hamid Khan, who organized Comilla Rural Development Academy with model firms and cooperatives around. He is a dedicated man of missionary zeal with a program of rural development on a self-help basis in a free society. The government of Pakistan patronized his prize project, and so did various international agencies.

Petty jealousies, petty crimes, petty prejudices, and petty evils sometimes raised their ugly heads among the unlettered villagers. Quite often, these innocent devils, burdened with sheer ignorance and heavy debts of moneylenders, had to travel to the courts of law far away from their homes, only to find that to get justice is far too expensive. So they had to take recourse to the mediation of village elders to village groupings and rivalries.

The education of the girls was beyond question, but all Muslim boys and girls were taught to read the Quran in Arabic to enable them to say their prayers when they grew up. The girls would be given away to

selected bridegrooms quite early in their life to share the burden of their husbands' household work and for procreation of children.

Non-Muslim girls, who were married a little late, enjoyed little more freedom than her Muslim neighbors under strict *pardah*.

The Hindu caste system made the lives of their men and women miserable, but they were too rigid to be broken, even by highly educated or enlightened ones. There was no intermarriage or social intercourse between certain castes of their own religion—not even a cultured, educated Brahmin did take the water or food on whose container did fall the touch or shadow of a low-caste Hindu. Scheduled castes, being the lowest in the caste cadre, were the worst sufferers. Once, while passing by a Hindu house, I found the entire water of her earthen pitcher thrown out because my feet touched the other end of a bamboo mat lying on the ground when the passing woman had stepped on the far end of it. My apologies for the ignorance of such extent of untouchability met only with her spiteful abuses. But there are exceptions. Matilal Mukherjee, a Brahmin teacher, and Lalit Halder, a scheduled caste teacher of my locality, were not only against this system, but we also ate and drank together without fuss. I found the Hindu boys and girls more free and social than that of our family-centered Muslims.

The only entertainment available in villages was the music and songs arranged by the Hindus during their festivals or occasionally by the Muslims at a marriage ceremony or the like. The "Kirtan" or 'Kabi' (devotional songs) of the Hindus and "Jari" (songs on early Muslim heroes), "Puthi" (lyrical songs on heroes of romance and history), and "Jatra" (open-air theater on historical episode) were popular in our countryside. One would beat the weather, walk miles, and keep awake the whole night to be treated to these songs and the feeling of ecstasy. Elderly Muslims would undertake more vigor to attend a *Waaaj Mahfil* (gathering for religious sermons) where they could listen to *Gazal* or *Murshidi* (devotional songs). *Nabanna* (new crop harvesting ceremony) in Hindu houses and *Milad* (discussion on birth of Prophet) in Muslim houses were main attractions for the boys to enjoy home-cooked sweets. The villagers did not go by the minutes or hours of the clock but by the signs of the sun and the moon to phase their daily, monthly, or seasonal activities. Life was so easy, simple, affluent, and cheerful, but time had come for the flight of these people to the towns or to bring the urban amenities to their doorsteps.

I took admission in arts in Barisal B.M. College and got a stipend, too. The college life seemed to be a life of maturity, superiority, thrills, and freedom. We had less classes, more free time, and more hot politics. Barisal was once known as the Oxford of Bengal with renowned teachers,

brilliant students, and massive buildings of our college. For a while, I felt myself lost in the crowd of 2,000 students. Besides English and Bengali, civics, economics, commercial geography, logic, and arabic were the other subjects of my study.

It was fun for the students to give proxy for an absent friend; it was easy, too, in a class of about 200 boys, but I never exercised this privilege myself nor asked any one to do it for me. Friends used to pull my leg for this, but I never changed my view. In intermediate, girls used to have their separate classes but not in degree course, which was nothing but a halfway house between coeducation and separate education; this some liked but others disliked. I, some sort of a student leader, was never bothered with these Eves, though I cannot say that I would have disliked their company. As a matter of fact, when some of them attended our college room meetings with or without veil, I felt flattered, as they listened to my speeches in rapt attention.

The Bengali class of Sudhangshu Babu and the English class of P.N.D. were so popular that hardly anyone missed them. I would have met no Muslim teacher in my classes if I did not take Arabic. The situation changed, of course, after August 14, 1947, when some brilliant Hindu professors left for India. We never got that touch of affection and intimacy with college teachers or boys as that of the school days. Sports and games were the main features of extracurricular college activities. The College Union was not functioning properly nor were the debates and seminars organized with keen interest. The hot topic used to be the party gatherings; mostly, the Muslims and non-Muslims had their own functions separately. Hindu students and teachers formed the overwhelming majority, so they had much greater say in the college affairs. The partisan likes or dislikes were so overt and pronounced that almost a sense of hatred or enmity prevailed between the rival groups. It was indeed an abnormal time.

Freedom Regained

It was announced after the Simla Conference that a referendum in the form of a general election would be held to find out if the regions claimed under Pakistan proposal voted for the Congress or Muslim League nominees. The Muslim majority provinces on the west were the Punjab, North West Frontier, Sind and Baluchistan; on the East, Bengal and Assam. The rest of India was to form new India with three-quarters of the population, territory, and assets of the subcontinent. In the peculiar circumstances of the distinct and different language, culture, history, tradition, geography, and religion, even this was not to be allowed to the Muslims, who owed their origin to Arabs in Prophet Muhammad (p.u.h.). It was like denying the Christians or the Jews any right to rule in Europe or America who owed their origin to Arabs in Christ or Moses or Abraham or denying any right to rule in China to Japan to the Budhists who owed their origin to India. Hindu Mahasabha leaders threatened that the Muslims would be thrown out into the Arabian Sea or soil if they did not accept undivided Hindustan, as if division would mean cutting their mother India into pieces, which they would never tolerate.

So the election was announced to the provincial legislatures of India on the basis of the Government of India Act of 1935, which was already in force in the provinces. The country got feverish in its leaders' touring from one end to the other, its workers' canvassing in villages, towns, and cities and the people participating in the final round of the peaceful struggle for freedom. Muslims were one to three numerically, but they were much weaker from the standpoint of financial resources, Western education, political training, and organizational skill. So a small section of Muslims was procured by the Congress among the politicians—some Khaksars, some Ulemas, and some workers thus opposed the Muslim League and Pakistan. The scheduled castes were in favor of Pakistan,

but the rest of the Hindus directly or indirectly to whatever party they belonged opposed Pakistan. But the vast majority of the Muslims with the iron-willed leadership of Mohamed Ali Jinnah fought the battle of ballots undaunted or unnerved. Nearly two hundred years of British rule had not only rendered the mighty Muslims paupers but also had lulled them to a slumber of apathy and pessimism. It was really the Herculean toil of the students and intelligentsia that roused these sleeping millions to their consciousness. The men, money, publicity, and influence of the Congress tempted many Muslims but could win very few. Abul Kalam Azad and A. K. Fazlul Huq of Bengal, Moulana Hussain Ahmed Madani of Deoband, Abdul Ghaffar Khan of Frontier, G. M. Syed of Sind, and Allama Mashriqui of the Khaksar party openly sided with Congress but could not dissuade the general Muslims from realizing their cherished ideal of a separate homeland. Even the Muslims of the provinces, like Madras, Bombay, U.P. C.P., Bihar, Orissa, knowing fully well that Pakistan would never be comprised of their minority areas, did not hesitate to support Pakistan and to vote for Muslim League nominees.

Bengal was the focus of all parties, which became the main testing ground for the election issues. With the separate electoral system, the Muslim League was sure to sweep the elections, but Congress was successful in wedging a rift among the Muslims by getting the support of A. K. Fazlul Huq, who was tremendously popular among agricultural masses of Bengal. The Congress also managed to depute the Congressite, Khaksars, and some *Ulema* against the Muslim League with all the money and resources, public servants, and the mighty Zamindars at the disposal of the Congress. The League workers found it a tough time even on a fertile ground. Jinnah came on tour of Bengal, which roused the young and old, educated and illiterate Muslims to a further climax. The Bengal tigers, like Shahid Suhrawardy, Moulana Akram Khan, Khawja Nazimuddin, Abul Hashim, Pirs of Furfura, and Sarsina and the rest, with student leaders like Shah Azizur Rahman, Abdul Wasek, Muzibar Rahman, and the rest, traveled every nook and corner with the help of their followers. The firm determination, able leadership, and selfless work made up the gap in their material resources.

We in Barisal were feverishly campaigning for the election, carrying the message of Pakistan to every house. The "V" sign of Quaide Azam was carried by Shahid Suhrawardy at Barisal amidst immense enthusiasm of the students and public. This was the final round of our battle for Pakistan, so everyone, particularly the students, came out of their avocation or classes, reached the remotest corners of the towns and villages, met men, women, and children, and the slogan of Pakistan

was in everyone's heart and voice. Fazlul Huq, being a native of Barisal, was creating hell in his two constituencies, one from Bakerganj-Jhalakati and the other from Patuakhali, with all the support of Congress and Khaksars behind him. In my own Jhalakati, the motor launch of valiant Sahid Suhrawardy was even stoned and gheraoed by the mob of Krishak Praja party of Fazlul Huq. We rushed with volunteers in all the weak spots, risking our lives and forsaking all comforts.

Excepting four or five seats all the Muslim seats were won by the League with an overwhelming mandate of 90 percent votes in favor of Pakistan. Pakistan thus was born through ballot, a referendum on the soil of Bengal in the teeth of Congress's opposition. This was a clear defeat of the one-nation theory of Congress. However imperialistic the British might be, they had a democratic tradition at home. So the British government accepted this verdict of the people in favor of the two-nation theory of the League, which meant a separate homeland for the down-trodden and oppressed Muslims of the subcontinent. Again, Lord Mountbatten played his trump card in favor of Congress by forwarding the argument that since India was to be divided the provinces of the Punjab on the west and Bengal and Assam on the east must also be divided on the same philosophy of the Hindu and Muslim majority areas of the provinces. To support this logic, even a vote of the elected members of the provincial assemblies was suggested to decide whether they wanted it or not. The League was caught in this crooked Nehru-Mountbatten trap.

Even giving up the demand for Pakistan, the League accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan to wind up the bitter controversy and to quicken the transfer of power to one Indian Federation with three zones. But the Congress once more belied its own pretension for one India by rejecting the plan mainly because there would have been enough safeguards for the Muslims of the subcontinent to protect their culture and heritage in their respective zones against the outright, subjugation by the majority. The inner voice of the Nehru-Ghandhi philosophy thus nakedly exposed itself before the world that what they preached and what they meant were not the same thing. In their claim for one India, they meant to establish one Hindu empire from Afghanistan to Burma, which once was the dream of King Ashoke and Shivaji, and only one-fourth of the total population, i.e., the Muslims, could not be allowed to frustrate that design.

Faced with such a paradox, the League decided that since the arrogance of Congress' leadership left no room for compromise, they must press for Pakistan and Pakistan alone. They withdrew their acceptance of the plan and declared direct action for the realization of independence

on the basis of Pakistan. The Congress, instead of supporting this movement of direct action to oust the British from the soil of India, opposed it and to please their mentor retraced their earlier stand by supporting the cabinet mission plan. But this somersault of the Congress brought no laurels for them but only intensified the Pakistan movement. Lord Mountbatten, the last governor general of India, instigated the Congress to foil the direct-action movement of the League with a promise for their ultimate benefit. On the August 16, the program of the League of strike, procession, and meetings against the British rule were turned into a bloody clash between Indians by the organized hooligans of the Congress and Hindu Mahasabha against the Leaguers in various parts of India. Calcutta, Patna, etc., had a blood bath on that day, which later spread to other areas. Innumerable lives and immense properties of both Muslims and Hindus were lost, but the rulers remained almost untouched and unmoved.

In Barisal, we students and public were preparing for the day from well before. Squads were sent out to different parts of the district to make the protest day a full success through peaceful strike, procession, and meeting. We worked ceaselessly day and night, leaving our classes and homes with an unprecedented enthusiasm. We thought that independence would be wrested from the rulers finally on that day, and everything depended on the success of our countrywide program. With Mohiuddin Ahmed as our student leader and Azizuddin Ahmed as the League leader, we students were quite militant, but one of them was a hawk and the other a dove. We did not know that the leaders of Congress along with the Mahasabha leaders were secretly preparing to foil our program following the line of their central directives. On receiving such disturbing reports Azizuddin Ahmed apprised the district magistrate, Barnwell, of the situation, resulting in a joint sitting of all party leaders. During the sitting, the leaders of Congress were repeating the preachings of Gandhiji to maintain peace and communal harmony, to which they were all dedicated, but they were apprehending troubles from the League side, they said. Instantly, two cases were reported by the intelligence police supporting our contention that the Congressites had collected arms, spears, sticks, soda-water bottles, spirits, and explosives to be used on the League processions or meetings. This alarmed us and the authorities but exposed the hypocrisy of Congress. On the following day, our leaders could say with authority that an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, but the League would never be the aggressor. Now the congressites, out of shame and fear, asked for police protection. True to our central directives, our leaders assured the district administration that we would maintain peace at any cost; we would even take

the responsibility of a peaceful strike, procession, and meetings without police escort, but there must not be any provocation—physical or otherwise—from the Congress or Mahasabha side.

We were fully prepared for our defense, but our main strength was faith, unity, and discipline. From dawn to dusk, August 16 was a day of marching songs and unending processions coming from far and near. There was a full strike in schools, colleges, shops, offices, transport and industries, slogans and applauses, a meeting at town hall, and oath for the continued struggle till Pakistan was achieved—a deep determination in the eyes of every men and women, young and old, to shake off foreign slavery. The same thing happened in all towns, markets, and villages of the district. The Congressites, caught redhanded in their arms buildup, did not dare to provoke. We were ready for all consequences, but we kept our vow for peace. The day ended peacefully and triumphantly, and we knew that day no power could delay our freedom for long.

The direct-action movement of the Muslim League, though somewhat marred by the Congress-Mountbatten collusion, made it apparent that Muslims were a separate nation that would not be content with anything short of a separate homeland for themselves. The allegation against the Muslims that they were the henchmen of the British for which the independence was being delayed also proved false. The British, from the very beginning of their occupation, treated the Muslims as their rivals and enemies from whom they took over power in 1757 in Bengal and in 1857 in Delhi. Second, if the tree can be known by its fruits, the British administration always preferred the Congress to the Muslim League till its last day in India, which became grossly palpable in the biased actions of Lord Mountbatten in favor of Congress. Last but not least, among other causes was the propensity of the Britishers to minimize the importance of creating a state on the basis of a religion. The state, according to them, was the established domain of the Crown and not of the church. The West was yet oblivious of the fact that giving unto God what was God's and leaving unto Caesar what was Caesar's had already thrown about half of their people in the fold of godlessness. This no doubt gave rise to liberalism or free thinking necessary for a secular state but at the same time helped the unabating progress of godless materialism and communism.

Now the government at Westminster was convinced that India must be divided to give Muslims a separate identity and a state. Gandhi-Jinnah talks, tripartite conferences at Smila and Delhi, and, ultimately, the challenge thrown by the Congress to claim the leadership of both Hindus and Muslims was accepted by the League.

Now the unwilling Congress agreed to accept the concept of Pakistan knowing fully well that the popular will had decided the issue. Pakistan, when created, would be nothing more than a truncated one that, not being economically or politically sustainable, was bound to join with India later. This reasoning satisfied the vanity and future plans of the Congress leaders. A central government was formed for the interim period consisting of the Congress, the Muslim League, and the Sikh representatives, who were to facilitate transfer of power to the new dominions to be created per the plan announced on June 3, 1947.

I was only a second-year student of Intermediate Arts when this momentous, historic June decision was announced. We first heard it on the radio but could not just believe whether we were hearing it correctly. We rushed to the Muslim League office where the leaders assembled and to which students and public rushed. And we, in a tumultuous procession, broke the silence of the night and paraded through the streets throughout the night and the following day. The Congress and Mahasabha people had to be searched out from their hiding places with our assurances for their full protection. We were going to be free at long last, so we must bury our past differences and unitedly look toward our future. There was to be no political victimization of our enemies or rivals in the Islamic State of Pakistan. It was the primary political lesson of our Prophet when he established the first Islamic State at Medina about 1,400 years ago. The Muslims of India were actually inspired by those noble ideals of justice, equality and freedom, which gave us the opportunity to implement it again in the body politic of a country.

The Indian Independence Act of 1947 was debated and passed on the July 18 at the Parliament at Westminster, embodying the legal framework of two dominions of Pakistan and India to come into existence on August 15.

The Constituent Assembly, as constituted by the Act, composed of the members elected by the Provincial Assembly members of 1946 election, was continued in the respective dominions. Mohammad Ali Jinnah was elected as the governor general of Pakistan, whereas India retained her mentor Lord Mountbatten as her governor general. This decision gave the final stamp on the Congress about its collaboration with the colonial rule, but the Muslims, at first opportunity, established their independent identity, though at a great loss. The loss was manifold, viz., loss of territory in the subsequent Radcliffe Award, as explained earlier, loss of due share of Pakistan in the civil and military assets of undivided India, loss of some of the princely contiguous states like Tripura, Agartala, Kooch Bihar on the east and Kashmir, Junagadh, Manvadar, Hyderabad, Mahmudabad, Pataudi, etc., on the west. But

for the Congress-Mountbatten collusion, twenty-five years ago there would have been no standing Kashmir problem or there would have been no separation of East Pakistan. The contiguity to Kashmir by wrongfully awarding Gurudaspur district of Punjab to India and by keeping a corridor of sixteen miles' breadth between Assam and West Bengal along with depriving East Pakistan of a part of even Sylhet district after referendum were the two cancers surreptitiously grafted to the body politic of Pakistan with an eye to the future. The truncated Pakistan of the Act of Independence was further deformed and maimed by their unholy alliance, so that even if it survived, it had to remain dependent on India. The Congress and Mahasabha leaders of even Barisal raised huge funds for placing their case before the Boundary Commission of Radcliffe so that the district or any part of it may go to India. They succeeded in the case of Malda, Murshidabad, and Nadia district but not in Barisal.

It was the holy month, the night was the holiest of all nights, the night of power, the twenty-seventh of Ramadan. So was it ordained that on the midnight of that day, the August 14, at zero hour, the sirens, the steamer whistles, the bugles, the bells, the trumpets, and the call for the glory of God, "*ALLAHU AKBAR*," all in unison would announce the birth of Pakistan. We all joined in the chorus, prostrated before God, and raised our voices and hands in prayers for its long, long life and prosperity. We were free citizens of a free country. The major portion of Bengal without Calcutta became East Pakistan.

In the early morning, I had the honor of raising the new national flag in Fakirbari, in my town with the salute and slogan of our volunteers. Thereafter, we marched to the Town Hall, the park, the college, and on and on amidst applause and cheers. Arches and gates, festoons and decorations, myrtles and flowers, men and women, boys and girls, rich and poor, all gave the town and the country a festive look never seen before. It was a holiday and holy day for all in Pakistan—the Bengalees, the Assamese, the Punjabis, the Sindhis, the Baluchis, the Pathans, and the rest of the ethnic groups all were bound by the bond of one nationality based on their common will and the ideal of Islam.

In the meeting held in the overcrowded town hall, besides all the political and student leaders, the English district magistrate also spoke in his broken Bengali. I was so exhausted by the hard work of days and nights that preceded for the preparation of the day's function that when my name was called for making a speech, I was found dozing in one remote corner. Pran Kumar Sen spoke on behalf of the Congress.

Processions preceded and followed the meeting. There were such meetings and processions in every village and town, every school and

college, every river port and bazaar. Boat races, games, sports, musical soirees, *milad*, prayers, almsgiving, and feasts also marked this historic day of jubilation. It was the dawn of a new era for 100 million people.

I was yet to sit for my I.A. final, but brother had completed his B.Sc. with credit. He could no longer join the medical college at Calcutta, as the city and its neighboring districts were awarded to India. He had to join in Dacca, which was selected as the new capital of East Pakistan. Both the central and provincial capitals in Karachi and Dacca had to be built anew to accommodate all the installations and organizations of the government and its various agencies. From a pin to the press, from a tent to the secretariat, from a hut to a mansion, from a bullock cart to a bulldozer, from a lane to a highway, from a bullet to a cannon, from a piece of paper to Banknote, i.e., everything to run a country had to be manufactured or procured by this new country from the day of its birth, whereas India, with all its advantages of population, territory, and wealth got everything ready-made or ready at hand to start with. Even a district town like Barisal had to accommodate the provincial directorate of Land Records and many other regional offices in the dearth of built-in space at Dacca.

All the government servants were given the opportunity to opt for either of the dominions, as a result of which almost all the offices were found empty for want of Muslim officers or employees; similar was the case with courts, colleges, and schools. Nobody did actually realize before that Hindus occupied practically every position of consequence not only in government organizations but also in private trade, commerce, profession, service, school, college, university, and even literary or cultural fields. Even the vast majority of Zamindars, moneylenders, wholesalers, industrialists, bankers, doctors, teachers, lawyers, printers, publishers, washermen, barbers, and even the sweepers and scavengers belonged to that community. So their mass evacuation to India had brought Pakistan to almost a standstill. Not only did the human heads leave the country; there was also flight of capital and experience with, leaving a great vacuum in all walks of life. The Muslims, now 80 percent of the population, occupied no more than 20 percent of these essential vocations of life, except agriculture, when the freedom dawned in East Pakistan in 1947. Apparently, it was a great dislocation, but it opened up an unlimited opportunity for the Muslims in every walk of life from lowest to the highest, both economic and political.

When the college reopened, I found many familiar faces of teachers and students missing; the classes were no longer punctuated by "*Jai hind*" or "*Allahu Akbar*" nor were the corridors or common rooms surcharged with heated arguments. The youthful college life seemed to

have seen the days of grace and solemnity; the sweet faces of the better half were found almost missing. The procession of these young ladies in colorful sarees and enchanting hair styles with signs of romance in their looks, conversations, and movement were no longer adorning the college premises.

The attendance in classes were thinner, the vacancies left by the migrating teachers were yet to be filled, the Hindu hostels and houses were almost deserted, but we felt that we were the monarch of all we surveyed. This stage of transition and adjustment continued till the end of the year when we had more Muslim boys in first-year class than all previous years. The new Muslim professors were also trying to get in the college—there were more openings for them. The government offices and schools, the private schools and colleges, the business shops and the wholesale trade, the hospitals and the industries—all branches of life were now opened for the Muslims, with no more prejudice or restrictions against them. The optees from West Bengal and Bihar, and mostly the local Muslims, filled up all these positions slowly and gradually. Barisal was the hinterland of Calcutta for trade, industry, education, communication, service, etc., but now all faces were turned toward Dacca, the new capital, and Chittagong, the only port. Those who migrated from India with very little that they could carry flooded the streets of Dacca and other towns. They fled away from the jaws of death, leaving everything behind and became “refugees,” called “*Mohajirs*,” in Pakistan.

Soon after partition came the flood in Chittagong which inundated towns and villages and washed away houses, crops, and cattle. There were human casualties, too. We organized a flood relief fund, and with our student squads we collected cloth and money from door to door. The Additional Deputy Commissioner Kabir, was an enthusiastic social worker whom we selected as our relief committee patron. We directed all our collections to Chittagong through official channels, as the government by then was our own. I marked one thing then that the accounts of voluntary collections were not accurately maintained, so I tried very hard to plug in the loopholes for which Mr. Kabir commended my efforts.

The year was 1948. Three months after submitting my fees for the final of Intermediate, I really devoted my time to studies. Now with lesser need for the vigor and urgency for the student participation in political activities, I concentrated on my course, as a lot of uncovered field had to be explored in a short time. I rarely got the opportunity to get very close to my books since matriculation about two years ago. No doubt, I attended the maximum number of classes, but because of the

political upheaval, classes were usually boycotted or not held. I never used to cram things by heart, as I could never keep things in memory for long. So my effort was to understand the subjects and to try to reproduce them in my own language and style. This method ultimately helped me to appear in exam with confidence, whatever the nature of questions. And when I finished my exam, I found that I did much better than the bookworms. The new set of teachers set new types of questions, which were not very common in the past, but they suited me fine. So I got first division with a few months' efforts.

After finishing my exam, my main task was to activate the rural reconstruction society. Before independence, the well-to-do, educated Hindus used to look after the village welfare to a certain extent, but their exodus created a further vacuum in the already neglected rural education, health, and sanitation. We took up our work more vigorously and extensively in all these fields. My first effort was to establish a high school, a post office and telegraph office, and a medical center for which public support was organized, but there was none else to bell the cat. I made up my mind to move all authorities in Barisal and Dacca and worked out things accordingly for my village and its neighboring areas. The young and old of the area extended their cooperation, and the youths became my special devotees, as they were selfless, too.

Brother was already in Dacca sheltered in the temporary barracks built for the medical students. A part of the Dacca university was converted into the newly started Dacca Medical College and hospital. From the tower of Calcutta University, Presidency College, and Jinnah Hall, the Muslim students found their way to the earthly bamboo huts of the Dacca slums to shoulder the future responsibilities of the nation.

Dacca is associated with more ancient history than Calcutta. Dacca had its origin in the pre-Moghul days—more ancient is Sonargaon on the east of Dacca city, known in history as the city of "Muslims and mosques." It started as a humble riverside market as early as the eleventh century on the bank of a tributary of the Ganges known as "Buriganga." During the rule of Emperor Jahangir, his local governor named Dacca as Jahangirnagar, by which name the revenue district and the city are still known. The area now covered by "Sat Masjid," "Lalbagh Killa", Central Jail, Mitford Hospital, "Ahsan Manzil," Sadarghat, Badamtalighat, Islampur, Nawab Katra and Postagola all along the river Buriganga carries with it the history and tradition of over one thousand years.

After visiting the relics and monuments of old Dacca and the constructions of new Dacca, confined to some university buildings, an airport and a race course, I left for Chittagong, the only seaport of East

Pakistan. The train journey, which I started at night at Dacca, ended at Chittagong station in the morning after breakfast. This was my first visit to the historic city, which was equally in ramshackle. I put up with Prof. Ahmed, who was also a renowned psychiatrist. I was not hypnotized by him, but surely I was enchanted by the cooking of his wife, who really made me drop my prejudice against dry fish, "*Sutki*," which otherwise smells bad, but when prepared in the right way, like hers, is a delicacy.

Here, again, the town was buzzing with activities, with more people than it could accommodate. A third-rate wartime emergency port was placed with the burden of handling the entire import and export cargo of half of Pakistan. Only two or three dilapidated jetties of cranes, berths, and sheds were commissioned, practically without any modern facility, to perform the impossible. The entire jute-producing area had fallen to the share of East Pakistan, but Calcutta, its normal port and jute mills center, had gone to the share of India. So, initially, Pakistan had to export the entire raw jute either to feed the jute mills of Dundee or Calcutta. And jute, being the main foreign-exchange earner of Pakistan, Chittagong port had to play the most vital role. If the British cared for the Muslims or even for the cause of justice, Calcutta would have surely gone to the share of East Bengal. East Bengal was not only the prime hinterland of Calcutta, but this region also was the lifeline of that port and capital.

Chittagong city and the port has been renowned for its mounds and tombs. The hillocks in the town and the eastern region run up to Burma through Hill Chittagong. The population of this hilly area is mainly composed of the Buddhists, divided into various tribes like Chakma and Larma. These people have hardly seen the light of the modern civilization, no normal law or custom of the rest of the country apply to them. The unlettered, brave, but simple men and women of the hills are equally hardworking and peace loving. Only during Pakistan rule, education, transport, and power have penetrated deep into the inaccessible foliage of the sleeping hills. In the town of Chittagong itself, the roads and buildings are punctuated by the small hillocks, adding different elegance to the otherwise plain green East Pakistan.

Among the "*majars*" tombs, the oldest belongs to Hazrat Bayazid Bustam just on the outskirts of the town. It is doubtful whether it is the tomb or rather the place of the meditation of that great saint when he traveled to this part of the subcontinent in the early ninth century. Like the tankful of fishes of Shah Jalal in Sylhet or the tankful of alligators of Khan Jehan Ali of Khulna, here one can still feed the tankful of tortoises hundreds of years old. The saying goes that all these creatures

are nothing but the *Jins* captivated or reduced to these forms who pray to the glory of God. Whether one believes in the hundred and one stories in currency about them, all Muslims do believe in the existence of *Jins*, narrated in different verses of the Quran, as created out of fire. Like men, they are also created with a meaning or purpose in this universe, and definitely for prayers. So there must be good and bad *Jins*, like men, but our naked eyes cannot see them until they take a material shape or the viewer acquires the knowledge to communicate with them. One also finds the two wells of Sheikh Farid with a constant supply of water just outside the town. The saying goes that while in meditation for twelve years these two wells were formed out of tears of his eyes several hundred years ago. In the heart of the town, the tomb of another saint is situated within the mosque on the hills of court premises.

Besides the spiritual role of Chittagong, it has a checkered history of its own. As a natural seaport, it was the meeting place of the ancient Chinese, Arab, and other nationalities, where they did profitably exchange or sell their merchandise. It also once served as the confluence of Buddhist, Hindu, and Muslim civilizations to whom this place had different variations of the present name.

Chittagong, connected by a bridge over river Karnaphuli, was not only developed as a commercial seaport but also as an important industrial zone. The sophisticated industries, like paper, rayon, cotton, jute, steel, oil refinery, matches, shipbuilding, engineering, chemicals, hydroelectricity, etc., were all built during the days of Pakistan, which extends from the open mouth of Karnaphuli to the inaccessible forests of Chandragona. Like Dacca, Narayanganj, and Khulna, this place has also flourished industrially and commercially faster than many such places of the world within a span of twenty-five years.

My visit into the interior to places like Rangamati, the islandic district headquarters of Hill Chittagong, Cox's Bazaar, the natural sea beach later developed into a holiday resort. Chandragona, later developed as a town of industrial complex, Kaptai, the lake and tourist center being built around the hydroelectric project, were more panoramic. At that time, I was impressed by the varied natural beauty of each. But the old places, when revisited, could just not be recognized for the tremendous changes they had undergone; not all the natural beauty around could be tarnished by the modernization nor could all the charm or simplicity of its rural population be wiped out. The green fields and foliage, the bushy mountains and forests, the muddy streams and rivers, the hard-working, simple people of the hills and huts still bear testimony to the nature of its true color. One simply feels enchanted by this gorgeous display of uncultured beauty. Most of the important educational insti-

tutions now found there were established after the independence of 1947. They are the university, the engineering college, the medical college, the merchant marine academy, the cadet college, and the countless colleges and schools that speak eloquent of the progress in Pakistan. Some old Madrasahs here for Islamic education have also earned fame throughout the country and beyond.

Politically, this place earned fame during British days for the famous "Armoury Raid" by Surja Sen and others as a part of their revolutionary plan to free India by force. The story of the hanging of Surja Sen by the British still rings in the ears of the people as a legend in music like that of Robin Hood. During World War II, this was the most important base of the Eastern Command for the army, navy, and air force after the fall of Burma to the Japanese invaders. The other historical places in East Pakistan, like Mainamati in Comilla, Mahasthan in Bogra, Lalan Shah in Kushtia, and Paharpur of Rajshahi, I did not visit until later.

Neglected Rural People and Kashmir Liberation

The carefree and happy days pass very quickly. So did my postexamination vacation. I passed the Intermediate and was lucky to get a stipend. Though I wanted to go to the capital for education, somehow I stayed back in the old college for my graduation. In the first year of B.A., I was not only a senior boy of the college but a well-respected student leader, too. So in all college functions, whether it was sports, games, cultural, or political, a few of us were invariably in the forefront. As a student leader, I was elected secretary of the District Muslim Students League, I used to set up candidates for the Hemayetuddin Duty Fund, a book bank for the poor students, hostel, and college union elections. I was a common speaker in practically all the literary, cultural, or ceremonial functions of the college; thus, became very well known to teachers and students alike.

As ours was the only students organization, non-Muslims mostly having migrated to India, there grew up gradually another group of students opposed to us. This opposing group ultimately took shelter in a new students league formed in Dacca under the guidance of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and others. Our Provincial Students League was still being led by Shah Azizur Rahman, in whose opposition the new group stemmed up. Quaide Azam had already paid his last visit to Dacca; this group was critical of him. With Shahid Suhrawardy as their guide, they were trying to prepare the ground for his political rehabilitation in East Pakistan. It may be recalled that after the 1946 election, for which victory Suhrawardy worked so hard and with dedication, the Muslim League Parliamentary Party elected his opponent, Khawaja Nazimuddin, as its leader. So when Calcutta fell into the share of India, Suhrawardy stayed

back in home ground, Calcutta, leaving Khawaja Nazimuddin to reign in his home town of old Dacca. But Calcutta could no longer accommodate Suhrawardy or for that matter any Muslim leader, in its new political set up. So a powerful politician like Suhrawardy, while engaging himself in social activities with Gandhi in India was actually looking for proper opportunity to stage a comeback in his gifted arena of politics in Pakistan. Though the move for a united Bengal with Muslim characteristics had the blessings of the Muslim League's top leaders, including Jinnah, the whole blame for it fell on Suhrawardy when the Indian Congress snubbed it, forcing the partition of Bengal. The main criticism against him was, though he was the main architect of creating Pakistan on the soil of Bengal, he was the architect of united Bengal, which meant the undoing of Pakistan. This, of course, was the politics of personal clashes at the top, but it ultimately permeated into the rank and file of party workers and students. This division eventually split the Muslim League, also, and gave birth to Awami Muslim League of Suhwardy, when he migrated to Pakistan later.

We in *Mufassil* areas were more concerned with the welfare and progress of the new country with its millions unfed and unclad. Muslims were fast filling the gap left by the non-Muslims in the fields of education, business, service, agriculture, and industries in unprecedented zeal, and vigor. We students, in our enthusiasm, were taking part in all activities of progress, whether educational or not. We looked for accommodation of the Directorate of Land Records, we searched for the idle industries, we housed the refugees coming from India by the thousands, we found out more accommodation for the growing number of Muslim students in schools and colleges, we checked corruption of officers and traders, we received ministers and party leaders, we held public meetings and conferences, and we organized lodgings, aid, and stipends for the poor students. Apparently, most of these activities pertained to the public field, but our youthful initiative made our services almost indispensable for the officers and public alike. No doubt these unacademic activities took much of our valuable time, but luckily for the students, only a fraction of them used to be engaged in this type of active life.

The bulk of the boys in student activities like the bulk of people in politics are always led by the vigorous or vocal few. The rule of majority is nothing but following the wish of the determined few. Yet the charm of democracy is that the wish of the few is adopted by the majority, whereas in an autocracy or dictatorship that wish is forced on the majority.

Usually the first year of graduation class is a year of bossing the juniors and flirting with friends because there is less pressure of studies

in the full bloom of youth. The juniors looked upon their elders in higher class in authority, age, or style with awe and respect. Romance, usually with the junior fair faces in the same subject, was not uncommon in our otherwise dull-looking college life.

One of my friends became poetic in the pursuit of his chivalry after only one meaningful smile cast at him by one fresher Eve. He was almost mad because she never talked or smiled at him for the second time in spite of all his planned overtures to her day in and day out. After exhausting his efforts of dropping secret letters, sending perfumed handkerchiefs, and standing for hours on her approach routes, he disclosed his shameful helplessness to me one day. I enjoyed the story but could not but be sympathetic when he posed like a fallen man who could commit suicide. I was preoccupied so much with the activities of the students and their welfare that these girls never attracted me, though some of them were quite smart and pretty in spite of their Muslim shyness. But I knew that girl for whom my friend had gone "*Majnu*," so one day I talked to her on his behalf near our classroom. She smiled only to tell me that my friend writes good poems. She quickly ran away after telling me those few words. When I reported the matter to my anxious friend, he was overwhelmed with joy and entertained me with sweets. The melancholy, poetic, and indifferent friend became full of life, a different man altogether. But, on the following day, a maid of the college common room brought a small chit, reading thus: "My parents allowed me to join the college only after my marriage this year." This must have been the shock of his life when I handed over the writing to my friend. In most families of Bengal, particularly among the Muslims, marriage is still arranged by the elders of the couples. Peculiarly, to our modern concept of marriage, most of these partnerships ended in post-nuptial love with a happy family life. Yet facts and stories of romance in the true sense of the term are not uncommon in this part of the world.

Amjad Talukdar is now an elderly man, whom I call uncle with village courtesy. He was also young one day, with pointed nose, attractive eyes, fair color, and well-groomed black hair. In his home village, Nabagram, his house was surrounded by Hindu habitations of both high and low caste. To speak of open love even among the coreligionists in those days was an unthinkable proposition. Arunbala, a young girl of a respected Hindu family in the vicinity of Amjad's house, was still in her teens and a paragon of rustic beauty. Unlike Muslims, Hindus were a bit liberal about the movement of their girls, so the two met each other in usual visits. Their occasional meetings developed into intimacy, with the fire of prime youth engulfing the young hearts. Without knowing much about life or love, they found out that one could not live without the other.

Love accepts no frontiers of religion, language, caste, or class. But human society thrives on the multifarious barriers created to suit their age or place, and pride or prejudice. The talk of their association reached the ears of the shocked parents and neighbors slowly and gradually. The natural consequence was the persuasion of their well-wishers to discontinue the affair, resulting in their secret meetings at night. Then came the threats from the elders of the society, as it was a very touchy and slippery ground of communal prestige. A Muslim would not think of a love or marriage with a nonbeliever, nor would a Hindu tolerate it with anyone of different caste even though of the same religion, not to speak of such an affair with a Muslim family. Young minds are not abstinent and so are not the victims of love. Amjad and Aruna were humbled by social pressure, but they did not succumb to it.

One fine morning, the couple was found missing from their respective houses. Village after village rose to attention to verify such an unbelievable fact; police were informed by enthusiastic elders; searches were carried out in Hindu and Muslim houses, but the birds could not be traced. Tension in Hindu localities and shock in Muslim houses spread out far and near. Ultimately, the police found them living as husband and wife in a remote house and took both of them into custody. Guardians of Aruna pressed for taking her back to her parents on the ground that she was only a minor. Amjad claimed that she was his legally married wife. Her parents could not claim her custody as she was not a minor, and she had embraced Islam before their marriage. Aruna's statement became vital for adjudication on the points. The rustic girl, being fired with the zeal of love, wept for her parents but supported Amjad's statement. The whole town of Barisal, rather the entire people of the district, was thrilled by the bravery of this modern Romeo and Juliet.

But the Hindu community took it as a shame on their religion and challenged the statements before the magistrate and the judge. She was medically examined, she was threatened, coerced, and cajoled, but undaunted Aruna did not bend. She remained in judicial custody, and Amjad was not granted bail. The case went on appeal to the judge court where a non-Muslim judge favored the non-Muslim parents of Aruna. But the case went on appeal to Calcutta high court. Now the case became widely publicized in the press; it became the talk of the towns and villages; lyrics were written, printed, and sold by the village poets. It created history in the field of human emotion. Even the youngsters played Aruna-Amjad plays in villages, breaking all social conventions. The long and bitter court battle ended in a triumph for love. The high court allowed the lovers to live as husband and wife. Uncle Amjad would

be almost in tears to narrate this epic of love. Aunty Aruna died very young, but he never married again. And one can still find him moving with his smile on his face but quite shy to narrate his tale.

We organized a Conference of the District Students League toward the end of this year or early 1949 to rejuvenate our activities. We united provincial student leaders, some of whom attended, but students representatives from all parts of the district were present. They elected me as secretary of the District Students League. This position demanded much more of my time and money. I was rather shy or unintelligent in asking for donations from others to run the organization. Father was never liberal with my pocket money, as according to him, it might spoil my future, so I had to fall back mostly on my savings and stipend. It may be one of the reasons for which I could never indulge in the luxury of smoking or showy extravagance. I also never felt like pinching my father's purse, which I so commonly heard of from others, as my personal needs were very modest. I had a cycle, so I hardly had to ride a rickshaw. I was not a smoker, so friends did not bother me for cigarettes, I was not lavish at all, so my laundry and tailoring bill was quite small, and I avoided restaurants, which saved lot of tempest in tea cups. I think my colleagues used to like me for my simple or unostentious style of living, and above all they trusted me with all that they valued most.

Once I found a bundle of ten rupee notes on the chest of drawers of my father in my village home. In those days, one thousand rupees was quite a sum, so I felt tempted for a while just to remove it. When father returned from Barisal after two or three days, I asked him if he lost any money to which he assured in the negative. Yet I told him that a bundle of notes was recovered by me from the top of his drawers. Then he remembered that about a fortnight ago his account was short by a thousand rupees for which he suspected his cashier. But then he remembered that while tucking notes in his almirah, this bundle must have slipped unnoticed. I handed him over the bundle intact. He did not thank me to my face, but he narrated this incident to many.

Father was very particular about money and property. To save his increasing properties, he had to undergo the rigors of litigation, which we brothers disliked very much. Sometimes, in our simplicity and inexperience of life, we used to consider him as rough and tough. He was also sharp tongued with the cultivators and tenants, which earned him some enemies. But it appeared to us later that these manifestations were never one-sided, rather, mostly invited by the behavior of the adversaries. Our social life thrives on exploiting the weak and humble. The tendency of the strong and crooked is to take advantage of the weakness and goodness of others. Father was meticulously careful to fight for his

legal rights in a legal way, but he would never take away someone's right illegally, nor would he give in to extralegal methods of high or low. I, of course, never could appreciate this extreme stand; I rather always favored give and take for a middle course. Even as a lawyer, I never encouraged my clients to go for avoidable litigations. The litigations for properties or persons ends up in the triumph of only law and lawyers, with litigants as their common prey. Yet there is no substitute for justice; no doubt it is costly in terms of time and money.

Justice is the last bastion of a society of freedom and peace, whether we understand it in terms of Platonic expression of doing one's own part in his station of life or value as a measure of right or wrong. Without justice, a society would not be worthy of living. Justice delayed is justice denied, so also justice priced is justice deprived.

1948. The Dogra Maharajah of Kashmir violating the will of his people and the Standstill Agreement with Pakistan secretly called for the Indian army to protect him against his own people. So the Kashmiries rose in rebellion and wanted to join Pakistan. The tribal Muslims of North West Frontier joined their Kashmiri brothers to fight Dogra-Indian forces and almost occupied capital Srinagar and other parts of the valley of scenic beauty. Baffled by the onslaught of the freedom fighters, Nehru went to the UN for a cease-fire. When the issue was being debated there for hours and days, India consolidated her position by sending more troops and arms in flagrant violation of the Independence Act of 1947 and international norms and let loose a reign of terror and fierce door-to-door fight. Pakistan was still without an organized army, and all the arms and weapons of her share were held up by India with the connivance of Lord Mountbatten. The Kashmir liberation war was protracted, and before the well-trained regular armed forces of the British-trained Indian army the irregular freedom fighters were being pushed back every day with Kashmiri men, women and children taking shelter in Pakistan by the thousands. To set off this Indian aggression, Pakistan belatedly came to the aid of the freedom fighters with her ill-equipped nascent Army. The liberation forces again advanced toward Srinagar and other important points of Jammu and Kashmir under the valiant Mujahid, Sardar Abdul Qayaum. India, alarmed at this turn of situation and failing to perpetuate her plan of wholesale occupation, agreed to hold a plebiscite under neutral supervision on withdrawal of her trespassing army and accepted a cease-fire resolution of the UN on those terms as late as January 1949. For more than two decades, the matter was still on the anvil of the UN, with the wishes of the people still unrealized by way of the promised plebiscite to express their right of self-determination—all due to the intransigence of Indian military might.

As students, we collected donations for the freedom fighters, recruited volunteers, who were never permitted to go there, and participated in meetings and processions in support of the rights of the Kashmiris. But the battle of freedom must be fought by the people themselves. So it remains yet, to be seen when the Indian armed "liberators" of Bangladesh can be made to abandon its double-faced role of Dr. Jeckyl and Mr. Hyde, in Kashmir.

India was preparing to take over another native state of Hyderabad against the will of its ruler, the Nizam-Valiant Kashim Rizvi, the prime minister of Hyderabad threw a challenge to Sardar Ballab Bhai Patel, minister of India, that legally or physically Hyderabad could not be forced to join India. Patel was never in a mood to listen to the language of law or reason, so the Indian army again marched into another territory in the Nazi way, crushing all resistance of the Hyderabad government. It was the day following when Quaide Azam breathed his last in Ziarat, a hill resort in West Pakistan.

The great Quaid, with his frail construction and iron determination, was working hard to steer clear the ship of the new nation through the rough waters of the refugee problem, administrative reorganization, Constitution making, Kashmir war, division of assets, and a new economy. Ignoring the health hazards, he worked day and night while expecting the same from others to meet the challenge of the time. He always stood up to the expectation of the nation, but this time his health failed. The inevitable snatched away the beloved and trusted Quaid from the new nation on the September 11, 1948.

Khawaja Nazimuddin, the first chief minister of East Pakistan, was summoned to Karachi on the sudden demise of the Quaid. On the decision of the cabinet, he accepted the position of governor general while Liaquat Ali Khan retained the position of the prime minister, Nurul Amin succeeded as chief minister in East Pakistan with the approval of the new governor general. The war of liberation in Kashmir was still going on with a new government formed in the liberated area at Muzaffarabad. But a separate puppet government was set up by India with Sk. Abdullah as its head of the government at Srinagar. It was actually a fight between the Indian occupation forces and the people of Kashmir for which the UN was trying to find a solution to guarantee the right of self-determination of the 5 million Kashmiris. In spite of overwhelming international opinion against the naked intervention of the Indian army, Nehru was reluctant to accept the proposal for withdrawal of Indian troops to hold a plebiscite. So the battle of liberation continued against Indian military might, while the battle of words continued on the floor of the UN Assembly or Security Council.

The Chinese war of liberation under the leadership of Mao Tse-tung was nearing victory at that time, while Nationalist China was one of the big five powers in the UN Security Council. Postwar France under DeGaulle and postwar Britain with the Labor Government headed by Clement Attlee were busy in the reconstruction of their economic and social fabric in their respective countries. Though the USSR was badly mauled and the United States was heavily shaken by World War II, they emerged as the two superpowers of the world, representing the Communist world and the free world, respectively. One-time allies against the Nazi-Fascist Axis, the Pentagon and the Kremlin turned out to be the bitterest enemies on ideological and strategic planes within two to three years' time. Their disagreement was confined not to Berlin or Germany or Eastern Europe, but it hung over their control over Indo-Pakistan, China, Japan, and other territories of East and West. There was no room for coexistence in Marxist-Leninist philosophy between the Communist and the capitalist world, so they suddenly cast off the bitter lessons of the World War II and headed for confrontation—in ideological and physical fields. This was reflected in their roles in the UN as well.

In pursuance of the revolutionary philosophy of Russia, they should have been with the freedom fighters of Kashmir, but they sided with the military action of India. The United States, though sympathetic to the democratic cause of the Kashmiris, as taken up by Pakistan, was not willing to risk the hostility of big India. Yet at the initiative of the United States and with the support of other big powers, the UN resolution of holding a plebiscite on withdrawal of troops under a neutral supervision was adopted for Kashmir. On Nehru's solemn promise to honor and fulfill the pledge of plebiscite, the resolution of the cease-fire was effected in February 1949. Zafrullah Khan represented Pakistan in the historic UN debates on Kashmir and earned the credit of speaking for a record time on its floor, followed by Krishna Menon of India, but the problem remained unresolved.

Though political circumstances led me to leave the games and sports of the school days to the background, I was no doubt a great enthusiast of football and cricket. My favorite team was Muhammadan Sporting Club of Barisal, which always ran a hot favorite in the league championship, followed by Town Club, Northern Club, and Alekanda Sportings. In Barisal, the sports enthusiasts were divided mostly on local or personal association. So in the football season, all roads led to Bell's Park, the venue of the most popular game, where the rate of entrance fee was only one anna and two annas. With the hot game in front and hot fried peanuts in hands, the spectators themselves also used to get

hot enough at times to come to near blows. But after witnessing one accident in the field that cost the life of one of the top goal keeper of Alekanda team, I discontinued visiting the field for a long time. Barisal had produced a good number of all India and Pakistan footballers like Shajahan, Kabir, and Ghaznabi, who played in the national and international games.

There was no permanent theater in Dacca or Barisal, but we used to stage some famous plays like *Sirajuddowla* and *Tipu Sultan*. We organized quite a number of such shows for flood relief and other charities with local talents. After the migration of the talented artists to India after 1947, the amateurs like Sultan Mia, Malek Mia, and Paran Mia filled the vacuum with credit. The boys used to act as girls, as coacting was very much looked down upon in Muslim society. The staging of theater itself was discouraged by the devout Muslims for whom this art never flourished in Pakistan. Staging theater goes with modern art and literature in developed countries of today. A respectable branch of modern literature is based on the plays, whether it is Eastern or Western, based on historic or social events, real or fiction. These plays, instead of being read when staged, create not only a visual effect and ecstasy but also become the fountain of knowledge and entertainment. In the various ways of entertainment, viz, cinema, drama, dance, music, games, etc., the theaters may not be the oldest or best, but there is no real substitute for it—even the cinema is no substitute, for that matter.

But the fact remains that no civilization will be complete without these forms of art or entertainment, nor will any civilization be complete with virtues alone, without human vices. And the unending dispute between the right and wrong or evil and virtue shall continue till the day of our doom.

In our village we staged historical plays like *Sirajuddowla* and *Tipu Sultan*.

Nanda Kumar and social plays like *Pallimangal* and *Samajer Bhul* (*Social Error*, written, directed, and acted by me). In those days of ours it was a good preoccupation for us, the youths, and quite educational for our unlettered country folks. Some religious-minded elders were quite hostile to our activities, but they failed before our youthful vehemence. The theme of *Social Error* was the effort of one educated young man to rouse the neglected villagers to self-help where pride, illiteracy, prejudice, and superstition of landlords, village heads, and religious zealots were the invincible barriers. Against all odds, the hero lays the foundation of a better society of cooperation and peace.

The hired "*Jatra parties*," like Natta Company and others were extinct after partition, and the only other popular mass entertainer re-

mained in the “*Jari*,” “*Puthi*,” and “*Kabi*” musicals. These various forms of musical soiree were not only popular in villages but also in towns, and the open-air listeners would mostly sit for the whole night to enjoy it fully. Another popular falklore musical *Gunai Bibi*, the actual venue of the unusual love episode, being my village locality, was later screened in East Pakistan, attracting record crowds, and so it was screened as the popular musical *Nimai Sanyasi*. After the screening of these episodes, much of the original impact of the vocal source was lost for good. The mechanization has eaten up yet another trait of our rural culture. Those village artists now can, with great difficulty, be traced out in radio or television studios, but they no longer enchant the millions with their vocal symphony and superb musical dialogue. The once-silent countryside no longer breaks its wind with the bamboo flute of the shepherd or *bhatiali* or *Bhawaia*, music of country folks, or a familiar cord of vocal musicians, but it vibrates and revibrates with the old and modern songs and music on the modern transistor. Old order had changeth, yielding place to the new. But has it brought peace and happiness?

I do not remember having participated in college drama, but I clearly can see the picture of my participation in Salimmullah Muslim Hall drama of Dacca University only once, the last in my life, except, of course, for the political drama in life where I starred, without having to conquer the usual heroines of fiction. The last hall drama was also historic-political in theme. It was a musical shadow cum dumb drama. It began with the first Muslim conquest of Sindh by Muhammad Bin Qasem to stop the atrocities of King Dahir and ended with the rebirth of the Muslim nation under the leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah. The organizers were looking for one who would resemble Jinnah in his tall and thin figure with his Sherwani, Shalwar, and cap. To my utter surprise, when thus clad, I emerged on the stage out of the wings with my left profile toward the audience, there were repeated shouts of “*Quaide Azam Zindabad*.” I got a prize, and there was no end of congratulations for my short but cute acting. Thereafter, I only witnessed others acting on stages in London, Stratford upon Avon, Paris, and Peking. But if the world is a stage, as Shakespeare aptly put it, we all watch human drama of comedies and tragedies every day.

In the strict sense of the term, I was never an actor, not even in political life like noted politicians nor an artist of the humblest type, so the old controversy over art never could absorb my thoughts—whether art is for art’s sake or if is meant to be creative, or objective, or if it is aimed at creating pleasure or pain, subjective or objective. After all, art is bound to be both subjective and objective—it is creative in either field whenever it succeeds in heightening pleasure or pain. The pleasure or

pain is not confined to the end effect but also embraced in the physical and mental metamorphosis of the artist—the sufferings, the trials, and the sacrifice behind each piece of art before it can produce the end effect to its viewer. Similarly it can never imprison itself within the sophistication of the subject or the mastermindedness of the object; it is bound to encompass the both.

The demand for Bengali as a state language was magnified and opposed by the Central government of Pakistan. Khawaja Nazimuddin, as governor general, repeated the assertion of Quaide Azam that “urdu alone shall be the state language of Pakistan.” This encouraged the bureaucracy of Pakistan to treat Bengali as a sanscritized language of the non-Muslims, but it infuriated the vocal section of the society, students and teachers. The language of the majority population of a country cannot just be denied its rightful place in state affairs; after all, it is the natural vehicle of expression and inspiration of a community. The Bengali language no doubt draws primarily its letters and words from Sanskrit, but it was no less rich in Persian and Arabic words and phrases. Recent Bengali literature was not so much rich in Islamic thoughts; nevertheless, it was not a language of the pagans or unbelievers devoid of Muslim participation. Alaol, Kaikobad, Kazi Nazrul Islam, Farruk Ahmed, and the like have their most valuable contributions in this language. No doubt the anti-Muslim invective of Bankim Chandra, Bharat Chandra, or, at times, of Rabindranath Tagore earned the hatred of the Muslims, but no world language carries the monopoly of any religion, not even the Arabic or Urdu or English or Chinese.

Early this year, we voiced our demand for Bengali as a state language along with Urdu in the form of meetings and processions at Barisal under the banner of our Students League. Our parent body, the Muslim League, being in the saddle of power, kept aloof from us on this point, but the public seemed to be with us. However, the language movement was yet to reach its climax, but we the students made an effective case for greater national consideration at the very outset. The same demand was pressed the following year with wider support, which alarmed the local administration, as it alarmed the government at Dacca and elsewhere. That the popular Muslim League was drifting away from its people were clear enough.

By that time I was a final year student of the college, which meant the burden of student leadership in its entirety. The senior stalwarts, like Abdul Aziz, known as “Marshal,” had already joined the Pakistan air force. Kazi Bahauddin, Imadullah, Gafur, Nasir, Arshed, Nehal and Latif had scattered out to Dacca and other places for higher studies or avocations of life. Only Waliullah, Khalil, Hashem, Afaz, Muzibar, Nur

Muhammad, Salam, and the like remained with me to cope with the growing vagaries of student activities. Mohiuddin Ahmed was there to guide us as the secretary of the Muslim League but the elderly Leaguers were hardly available to meet the popular challenge of postindependence sociopolitical problems. Agile and lively personages like Moulana Nuruzzaman, Moulana Mustafa Al Madani, Lakitullah and Shamsheer Ali were hard pressed for openings in their respective spheres, and led a quite active social life. The close-knit students league thus became the mouthpiece for both public and students. We went on hammering for the railway, university, medical college, industries, and better communication of the much neglected district. Azizuddin Ahmed was even made the state minister of Pakistan in addition to Syed Muhammad Afzal, the provincial minister for food. But our demands for progress and development remained a far cry for many years.

I was preparing for my final exam in early 1950 when the inhuman atrocities on the Muslim population of Calcutta and other parts of West Bengal started at the instance of extremist Hindus of India. The government machinery, instead of stopping the communal riot there, secretly connived in the planning and execution of a master plan to eliminate the Muslim population, as they were mostly siding with the progressive political forces there. What a horror and tragedy it was to observe the destitute and injured male, female, and child who could escape the brutal wrath and cross over to East Pakistan. Broken heads or limbs, charred or mutilated bodies of women, severed off breast or marks of other violence and cuts and gaping wounds were the common picture of the refugees. Pretension of Indian secularism was never before exposed so much to us. Refugees started pouring in by the thousands with clear marks of vandalism perpetrated on their person and property—even the interior district town of Barisal had to accommodate thousands of them. This was the second influx of refugees from India. This created two fresh problems—the immediate relief and rehabilitation of refugees and to control the reaction among the local people. The government machinery was not good or strong enough to meet the situation squarely without active cooperation of the people. Muslim League workers extended active cooperation, and so did our student volunteers in this humanitarian task of great magnitude. Barisal, after independence, was no longer a Muslim minority town, but there were Muslim minority wards. So when the communal tension seized the town with the sight of the refugees coupled with exaggerated news and rumors, we found it pretty difficult to control the situation. We organized peace committees and defense squads in various wards with the representatives of all communities. Mohiuddin Ahmed, secretary of the District League, and

some of us, with the help of Police Super Ali Bashir, worked day and night to tackle the grave situation, but in vain. When the riot broke out in Dacca, we could check no more the anguish and fury at Barisal. Even the sensible people got worked up to avenge the killing of the Muslims in West Bengal, little realizing that one brutality is no justification for the other. But to our great surprise, this sporadic reaction in East Pakistan halted the riot in West Bengal in no time. What a queer animal instinct—we call it a human deterrent!

The new year of 1950 was tinged with human blood for the first time in Pakistan after numerous ones in India. There was quite a number of cases of arson and looting in Barisal. Thank God that our Muslim population was not crazy enough to compete with India in communal killings and destruction. After controlling the town, our workers spread out to remote areas of the district to prevent the recurrence.

When I reached my village home, the situation was quite tense there. Mati Lal Mukherjee, a congressite school teacher, and Lalit Hal-dar, a scheduled caste leader of our locality, assisted me locally in holding meetings in various parts of the countryside. Jogendra Nath Mandal was then a minister of the Central government who came and addressed a mammoth meeting of Hindus and Muslims at Kaparkati near my house. The frightened Hindus and the angry Muslims were pacified to restore their normal neighborly relations despite the communal frenzy in India. To restore confidence in the mind of the minorities, Jogendra Nath Mandal narrated clearly the role of the scheduled caste federation in support of the Pakistan movement against the role of Congress, which was nothing but an organization of Hindu aristocrats, feudals, and industrialists. He also asserted that they were equal citizens of Pakistan like the Muslims, so no one should migrate from Pakistan, their motherland; rather they would also take up arms for their self-defense. This wise statement was misconstrued by both Hindus and Muslims as one of fanning the fire. We, the local workers, had to intensify our vigil and propaganda for peace.

It was early 1950. Peace and normalcy was restored all over the province, although the communal frenzy in Calcutta and other places of India were yet to be fully controlled. The new year had brought smiles and sunshine again on the new and old faces of the college and school students. Excepting a few of us who were to sit for our final exam, the students all over were full of energy but less of studies. Those who seek action and agitation usually select this part of the year as their most congenial time, and we were no angels. We alerted our workers for the state language day. Muslim League Leadership was not bold enough to demand openly for Bengali to be one of the state languages along with

Urdu. The Awami Muslim League, in its effort to find roots in East Pakistan, tried to take up this popular issue along with the leftists of the province. We the students leaguers, being in the thick of the popular current and not totally bound by the discipline of the Muslim League, took up the issue on our own. Our provincial body was also divided in its opinion, so our radical section of the students took the lead and prepared to observe the day. Before the selected day, a few of us were picked up from the town at the insistence of the same magistrate, who once was compelled to release me after a day's detention. But this time his power and process enabled him to confine me behind the bars for a longer period but was compelled by public pressure to release me before a month was out.

Just after a month of release from jail, I sat for my final exam. It was no easy job for me with subjects like economics, political science, philosophy, and Arabic in addition to compulsory English and Bengali; but true to my promise to my father while in jail, I tried.

Father was quite apprehensive, no less was I, that a month at my disposal was too inadequate for the preparation of a degree examination. So I devoted my whole time and energy so that the ultimate aim of my life was not baffled by any further lapse. In fifteen days, I was deep into the sea of preparations with no shore in sight. I was shaky and nervous like the sailors of Columbus, almost on a flight to abandon the venture. I was cursing myself, cursing the district magistrate, and cursing the university with real or imaginary apportionment of unpardonable faults for each. As for myself, I flirted with politics too much; as for the D.M. he wrecked the vengeance of a bureaucrat at an odd time, and the university was to be despised for imposing such heavy syllabus and not willing to shift the date of examination. Why all the learned experts on education wanted their pupils to swallow and disgorge everything at a time in a biennial feast was not understandable. We could very well consume and relish all the courses if they were spread over breakfast, lunch, and dinner even if they were not all palatable, yet with regular intervals. But it was not to be.

So a desperate man paddled for the shore, as the alternative was sure extinction. Mornings and evenings or nights and days lost their distinction to me for the remainder of the days, with less care for food and sleep and more devotion to study and prayer. I could not cram things, so remembering my prepared points was deemed sufficient for answering any question, common or uncommon, in any subject. "Notes" did not interest me so much as did the general idea of the topics involved without time for further or thorough, intensive study. Yet when I faced the questions in the fateful days, I found them almost all within

my comprehension, which saved me from being totally disappointed like the goody bookworms who were almost in a fit of anger when they did not find their common questions. I could not return home with a smiling face on every day of my exam, but I was never too dejected. When the ordeal was over, I could feel that more things are wrought by prayer than men could seem to realize or believe.

University Campus

In the year 1950, I became twenty. I also passed the B.A. examination successfully, to find myself traversing the streets of the university campus at Dacca for my admission into the M.A. The admission in political science was not difficult but to get a seat in the hall, the famous Salimullah Muslim Hall, was no easy job. That is how I reunited with my brother in his hostel of medical college to put up with him till I was granted residential status in my hall. We were again in the same town for our pursuit of learning after five years. He was going to be a doctor after doing his B.Sc. He could get admission two years earlier, but father had a fancy that none of his sons should go for specialization before graduation. So brother did his B.Sc. from Calcutta Presidency College, with distinction, to father's satisfaction. But when father received the telegram of my success in B.A., he had tears in his eyes, as he never expected that I would pass after wasting so much time in politics and in jail.

As usual, I had a carefree time during the vacation after exam. I busied myself to complete some of the unfinished works of rural uplifting and students. After getting Nabagram post office, I concentrated on establishing a high school for the locality. A boy or a girl of nine or ten, after a primary education, could not physically or otherwise traverse a distance of four-five miles of country roads, beating all weather. Their poverty or social atmosphere did not enable them to go to big towns, so hundreds of promising youths just petered out before they could bloom further.

The village schools were mostly patronized by the well-to-do, educated men of a locality. On the wane of Muslim influence during the British days, the land, business, and English education were almost monopolized by non-Muslims as the favored class of the rulers. With

the large-scale immigration of Hindus after 1947 from East Pakistan a great vacuum appeared in the fields of educational institutions and their teachers. The existing institutions, with their absentee patrons, could not survive in most cases for lack of finance and management. So new institutions were needed to fill the vacuum and to meet the growing need of mass education of a free country. Actually, the decade of the Ayub regime saw this desired growth of countless schools and colleges at a later stage.

Besides the development work of the locality, I also enjoyed the hospitality of my relations far and near during this recess. Uncle Gazi Abdus Samad of Kirtipasha, my only aunt of Babla, uncle Atahar Ali Muzumdar of Dhamura, cousin Entaz Uddin Mollah of Magor, Uncle Gaharuddin of Nalcity, sister Rahima and aunties of Chakhar and other relations and friends overran my stomach with the delicacies of their feasts. Never before or never thereafter have I consumed so much of country-made choice dishes within so short a period. I only discovered with delight that I was a great gourmand with a very strong appetite to satisfy my host or hostesses. Still my sister or aunties used to think and comment that college boys cannot eat much. May God bless them for their enormous credulity and unblemished affection. I bless their souls more so, as many of them have left this earth forever, leaving little parallel for them in affection and piety. Yes, one is not meaningful without the other affection and piety; if one is given up, the other is bound to evaporate.

In the wider expanse of university life, one is the master of his personality either to excel in learning and virtues or to stoop to the worldly temptations of youth and vigor. A man is made during his school and college days, but his personality is firmly rooted and wildly flowered during these vital days of campus freedom. Here one not only chooses his future lifeline; if one can really so choose, here one shapes the nimble youth into manhood, too. As "he" includes "she" with consequential changes, the connotation of man also includes both animality and rationality. Thus, a reputed alma mater and its reputed professors are no criterion for the proper growth of the alumni's personality. Their lessons are confined to books and classes, their practicals are confined to laboratories and demonstrations, but the wider measure of the self remains wild, only to be controlled by the inner urge and outer environment of the alumni. One who is not so fortunate as to receive the bounties of these high institutions can yet develop his personality in the environment he confronts, fired by the energies released from his inner self.

That self is not just the lump of flesh and blood but a higher form

of power or spirit or a mind different from matters. This mind or spirit is not just an epiphenomenon of the brain but a power of enormous capabilities. This high institution no longer trains or develops this enormous power; rather, it tries to channelize them in the labyrinth of human ego, sophistication, and pleasure; knowingly or unknowingly a human robot takes birth in place of a human soul possessed of more animal faculties than rational, almost frustrating the purpose of noble creation. This is not slighting any noble institution or its purpose, rather a cynical appreciation of the prevalent system of our education detached from moral or idealistic objectives.

But I was only one in this procession of millions, so I could not but lose my identity; rather, I enjoyed the humor, the mirth, and the ecstasies of this crowd behavior. The university precincts were more colorful, more merry, and more virile with the exuberance of radiant youth, boys and girls, national and foreign teachers, quiet yokels and smart chaps. Muslims and non-Muslims, goodies and naughties, all have joined the march forward under one banner yet with different slogans.

Our head of the department was Dr. Newman, an Englishman, a tall and well-built, energetic professor of the political science department. As I took up LL.B. course simultaneously for my night classes, I also got Dr. Dahm, a German professor of law, for a part of my course. From the early days of Dacca University, from 1920, most prominent educators have adorned the chairs from home and abroad. From its inception, the type of university residential like Oxford or Cambridge, was still being maintained to a great extent inspite of overflow of the students after 1947.

When partition of Bengal was annulled only after five years of working on the strong plea of the non-Muslims, this university was given as a consolation to the people of East Bengal and Assam. The prosperous Bengal, with its capital at Calcutta, always exploited its eastern zone as its hinterland and was utterly neglected in the fields of industry, trade, and education. Under the leadership of Nawab Sir Salimullah, the genuine grievances of the people of East Bengal and Assam were being ventilated in the early twentieth century, resulting in the creation of a new province of East Bengal and Assam in 1905. Within a short time, this less prosperous area was growing in agriculture, trade, and education with cultural and political predominance, much to the chagrin of the non-Bengali and Hindu vested interest of the western zone. So the partition was annulled, reuniting Bengal in 1911. But the proposal for benefiting Dacca or, for that matter, East Bengal and Assam by even one university was delayed due to the stiff opposition of the illustrious Hindu leaders of Bengal. It only reveals how narrowminded and communal the

leaders were against providing scope for education to the downtrodden Muslim majority and low-caste Hindus of East Bengal and Assam. Maybe it was a plan of the British that they nursed.

Dacca University had earned a reputation for its qualitative performance, though always eclipsed by its sister university in Calcutta. This eclipse totally disappeared after Dacca became the capital of East Pakistan in 1947. Only three years from then, when I joined, it was shining in its full bloom. The main difficulty we faced was for our accommodation, in halls as the students had increased by several hundred percent. The major portion of the original university building accommodated the newly established medical college, so we had a shortage of classrooms, common room, cafeteria, etc., in our wing of the arts building. The science building at Curzon Hall was too small to accommodate all the branches of the faculty with the manifold increase in number of students. A new hostel, Iqbal Hall, was added to accommodate some of us, but it was impoverished for long.

I could get in my hall after three or four months of hard life outside. In the meantime, I used to share the brother's room in his medical hostel barracks, adjacent to the university. My younger sister, Rahima, was also living in Dacca, as her husband was posted here. So I did not feel homesick at all; rather, the new university life was more absorbing. As water seeks its own level, so does a political worker. Because of my past suffering, taxing my own small pocket for big political game, with warnings from father and brother's watch over me, I did my utmost to keep myself away from the turbulent university politics. Moreover, attending classes day and night was quite exacting for me without adopting the tactics of "proxy." The initial adjustment to a more cosmopolitan atmosphere also took some time. But it gently took off with the Law Students Association followed by the Political Science Association to have a smooth landing in hall elections. And once you are in thick of all these, with a background of speechmaking and agitation, they would not just let you alone. By the time I became a resident of Salimullah Hall, I was quite in demand for debates, speeches, and organizational works of department, hall, and university, endeared by both teachers and students. But it was like quicksand. The more I tried to keep out of it, the more I was devoured. Ultimately, I found myself in the top position of the Provincial Students League. The outgoing student leaders like Shah Aziz, Aulad Hussain, Shamsul Huda, were laying off their students' mantles for vocations of their own, so new talents were to fill their gap.

I found that some students were there in the university for years together whose routine was not to attend any class or sit for any exam

but only to take tea and snacks on credit from the Madhu's canteen in a group and criticize everything under the sun with a vicious tongue. I first took them to be the spoiled children of wealthy parents from the look of their dress, amount of credit piled up in their canteen accounts, or the fluent art of their confident criticism. But I soon found out that they had their own political ends to serve thereby, with finance coming from unknown sources. As a newcomer on the campus, I was quite drawn to that happy company, enjoying hot tea and hot discussions. But when my political views and affiliations came to their knowledge, they tried to take me to some of their student or teachers' circles for brain washing or intellectual training. I also read some of their literature, which started with the humanism of M. N. Roy and ended up with the writings of Marx, Lenin, or Mao. They had already formed a cultural branch of theirs that attracted many new boys and girls, and they had a nucleus of student organizations also, which later on grew up to the full-fledged "Students Union." The other "Students League" also was quite active on the campus and in different halls, with more followers than the outlying districts.

I was startled at first to find that some innocent-looking university teachers were behind all these student groups with very serious devotion. The teachers who were supporters of Islam and Pakistan were indifferent to our student or political activities, as if they had no responsibility to prepare or protect the minds of the innumerable students from the alien ideas or to nurse or develop the conception of the ideology on which the new nation was based and to which the new state and its teachers and taught owed everything. The education pattern and its syllabus were yet to undergo a major reform to develop and sustain the new State with the devotion of the teachers for the cause. The ideological moorings and training got the least consideration in a proposed ideological state with the result that within a few years of the creation of Pakistan, its mainstream of national philosophy was getting numb and moribund among the educated youths. In any unregimented society, the youth, in its natural vigor and agility, can hardly remain satisfied with docile or conventional ideas and actions. So a good part of it gets enchanted by the new ideas or progressive views, active or radical politics or dopes of pleasure and vice enjoying the ecstasies of each. This is the most difficult but delicate giant of Aladdin which needs constant work with sense of ecstasies for its taming. It is no less difficult than taming the shrew.

During this year in the Assembly of East Pakistan, two historic landmarks in legal history were created while the Constituent Assembly, sitting in Karachi, was still deliberating on the basic principles of the

Constitution. One of them was the State Acquisition Act of 1951, and the other was the Secondary Education Act 1950. The first envisaged revolutionary change in the colonial system of land tenure, abolishing all the middle interests between the tenant and the state, commonly known as abolition of the Zamindari system. Thus, the feudal land tenure system introduced by the British about two hundred years ago came to a ceremonious end, bringing back the land to the men behind the plough. The system of land belonging to the tillers of the soil, first introduced by Sher Shah in pre-Moghul days, confirmed by the Mughuls in different forms of overlordships over the tenants, dislocated by the Permanent Settlement of the British, was now again put on a system beneficial to the millions of agricultural population of Bengal. There was to be no more headhunting of the unruly tenants by their mighty landlords, nor was the chastity of a poor virgin girl to be trampled at the feet of a landlord's debauch *Naib* any longer, nor was a tenant's family to be thrown out of his hearth and home for his inability to pay the rent in time, nor would the landlords be turned paupers for not paying the rent before the "sunset."

The corrupt corpse of feudalism lay buried fathoms deep. The tillers became the direct tenants under the state, doing away with all the middle interests that existed there in scores, in between. Those who were against it still argue, with good reasons, that thereby the entire middle class, which was the backbone and moral structure of the society, was eliminated, resulting in chaos in the society. And, further, that by the abolition of the zamindari, only a new class of bureaucrats were inducted without corresponding benefit to the cultivating tenants. Nevertheless, this was a landmark in the process of agricultural revolution, which the newborn agricultural country needed most.

Another measure of the Muslim League government was also to have a far-reaching effect on the education front. So the compulsory Primary Education Act was passed. In the erstwhile British colony, where education remained confined to the urban and favored people, this act paved the way for mass education throughout the length and breadth of East Pakistan. Both these bold ventures were the fulfillment of the election pledge of the League in 1946, the well-earned fruits of freedom and victory.

But it was getting evident every day that after winning freedom, the sole political party of the country was losing contact with the people as a result of their sense of complacency. Vigilance is the price of political power; yet those who were saddled to it were heedless of their duty to their political functions with regard to the people to whom they owed their democratic authority. Hostile forces were working within and out-

side the government to push the ruling party away from the people so that they could seize the next opportunity. Such forces in a democratic setup i.e., the organized opposition, should not be viewed with alarm so long as they work within the legal and constitutional framework. But the Constitution of the country was yet to be framed although the Constituent Assembly was in regular session for both law and Constitution making. There came out only the Report of the Basic Principles of the Constitution after about three years of deliberations, which again was not found satisfactory by the *Ulema*, the people of East Pakistan, and the growing opposition parties for not meeting their expectations. After the cordial reception to the Objective Resolution, adopted by the assembly in 1948, the public rejection of the report was nothing but a shock to the authorities. The countrywide uproar against the report made the authorities announce further consideration of the principles on a fresh report, but they still missed the undercurrent of the mass awareness led by the vocal section of the society—the student, the intelligentsia, and the press.

To revive contact with the people, the prime minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, undertook a tour of East Pakistan. He also visited Barisal and addressed a mammoth public meeting at Bell's Park in urdu. Not that I or the majority could follow it in full, but its essence and spirit was caught by sonic enthusiasm of the public and students. The newly formed Pakistan National Guard, replacing the Muslim League National Guards, was in attendance alongside our volunteers to guide and control the leader's program. We, the youths, got excited when an airplane hovered over the gathering soon after the meeting was over, but it did not land, as there was no airstrip. There was wide gossip as to the purpose of its visit, extending to absurdities, but we soon found out the novelty of delivering important dispatches of the prime minister by dropping a parcel from the air.

The tension between India and Pakistan was continuing in spite of the cease-fire in Kashmir under the auspices of the UN. Communal riots were unleashed in more places of India by the Hindu extremists to totally oust the Muslims or annihilate them. The Nehru government was also dragging its feet over its commitment on a plebescite in Kashmir, and all the proposals put forward by the UN Commission over Kashmir were being rejected one after another. India even concentrated her troops along the borders of Pakistan to threaten its neighbor to toe the line. But Liaquat Ali Khan, by then popularly known as *Quade Millat*, expressed his firm desire to live in peace but to repel any aggression by all the might of man. His symbolic "fist" roused the nation to one man. Avoiding the path of confrontation, both the prime ministers met at

Delhi in 1951 and signed the historic Liaquat-Nehru Pact to settle the border, communication, minority, and other disputes outstanding between the two countries. If that pact were faithfully implemented by India, many of the problems and much of the bitterness and all the dangers to a durable peace in the subcontinent could have been washed out. The superciliousness of the Indian government even barred the transfer of a small enclave like Berubari Union to East Pakistan, not to speak of other bigger things agreed on in the Pact.

Coming to the question of enclave, it is rather painful to find that another such area, which is geographically, economically, and otherwise so much within the orbit of East Pakistan, is rather unnaturally being held by Delhi. I refer to the enclave of *Agartala* state on our eastern frontier, whose ruler actually came to join Pakistan and approached Khawaja Nazimuddin in 1947. But India, trailing the movements of the ruler, whisked him off to Delhi to get the instrument of accession signed under duress. That unnatural accession is still continuing to the disadvantage of both *Agartala* and East Pakistan, waiting to be righted someday. The Radcliffe Award contributed greatly to this situation by unjustly slicing off a portion of referendum—won *Sylhet* in favor of India. That also needs correction one day.

With the announcement of the Hall elections, to elect the representatives for running the corporate activities of the students by an autonomous union, the brisk activities started to rally the support of the resident and attached voters. Party meetings were arranged both in halls and on the university ground with popular issues and catchy slogans. I refused to be a candidate for any post, as I had so much work on so many fronts, but we set up party candidates for each post in Salmullah Hall. We had our nominees also for other halls in different chosen party names for each hall. Amtala, the famous open-air site for all party meetings, the Hyde Park corner of Dacca university, became feverishly busy with speeches of young orators and posters of attractive designs. All the visible places in the halls and university were practically plastered with multicolored publicity materials. Madhu's canteen, classrooms, corridors, ladies' corner, and even the otherwise quiet Curzon Hall science buildings became hotbeds of election politics. The candidates, the galaxy of stars, were shuttled between the hall and university-attached hostels and private quarters by their prominent managers in ever-smiling politeness. Their credentials, all so glorious, meritorious, and stimulating, were verbally announced in flowery language or circulated in printed brochure with party program to further educate the educated voters. On the election day, or even on days and nights before, one had to find a quiet refuge outside if he could not sacrifice his beauty sleep for the

vibration created by the nonstop microphone, publicity, or music. The scoop news or questions about the rival candidates were left for the election day to shock the candidates and confuse the voters. Exchange of hot words or breath or even skirmishes among the rival groups were well relished by the voting students to test the merit or strength of the contestants. The expenses, of course, were not all borne by the students; rather, they were plentiful and coming from their mentors outside. Our nominees, Mujibul Huq and Hedayet Hussain, were elected as vice president and general secretary, respectively. We also won in Fazlul Huq Hall and Iqbal Hall but not with the whole panel. The girls had a separate hall but used to be attached to one of the boys' Halls, thus making the hall precincts a bit more colorful by their graceful visits on voting day. The contest and the fight was no less vigorous than any of the elections for assembly and as usual were very tense and explosive till the countings were over in the evening. Maddening shouts, hilarious dancing, and emotional speeches by the victors and docile thanks given by the vanquished wound up the election madness. It was a training in the democratic process for the future citizens of the country; to some, of course, it was quite a nauseating exercise.

In the M.A. Part I exam, I got a mere second class. None could bag first class, though. I was also given the task of publishing the Hall Magazine, which consumed a greater amount of time, much more than it took me to publish the college magazine at Barisal. The sense of a prestige publication by the forerunner of the halls, goaded me to devote more time than usual, but I did not have to repent for it when it reached the readers. Like other college and varsity magazines, it had both Bengali and English sections carrying the writings of teachers and students. The annual magazines, though meant for opening up opportunities for young potential authors or poets, are like the showpieces of fashionable drawing rooms. One varsity quarterly with regular publication of selected standard writings and those of students could serve a real cause. But abdication of princely interests in favor of a greater kingdom, did not seem to be a reality then.

In spite of coeducation, our class had only three girls; one was the wife of a teacher, one dropped out after a car accident, and the last was eligible for anything other than talk or a gesture of friendship by her classmates. In my shyness and puritanical habits, I did not even care for comparing the class notes or new routine like my colleagues. I had an inner sense that a girl who has reached the last milestone of her cross-country race must have lost her breath on the way so was not fit enough for further emotional exertions. But I did not know how wrong I was until I saw her after half a decade still young and unmarried. Hoda or

Karim, my friend and classmate, and I, learning that she was a school inspectress went to see her together, expecting to find her with lot of children like ours. But a pleasant surprise was awaiting us at her official quarters. The name plate still carried the word "Miss" we once more hesitated to see her, but still shy and elegant, she received us with warm cordiality. It is quite unusual for an Eastern girl to pass the successive doors of school, college, and university without being hit by the arrow of Cupid. But our friend, being educated with the help of a distant relative, was determined not to marry until she could rear her orphan brother and sisters to maturity. This she accomplished and eventually got married when she was still in her thirties. This was an unusual case, to find any spinster in our society. A girl born and aged in Bengal meant a girl married.

The other girl with whom I came in close touch was three years my junior; she was doing her B.A. in the same department. She had a beautiful, smiling face with eyes of a gazelle. She got elected from her class to our Political Science Society in the executive body. As the secretary of the society, I had to work as clerk, cashier, librarian, and bearer, but in one of our meetings she volunteered to relieve me of some of my burdens, which was gladly accepted by the committee. Through our working association, I got quite infatuated by her petite features and pleasant manner. I felt somewhat like a hero of the famous novels and motion pictures, but I could not summon the courage to open the dialogue that so inevitably leads to romance. I waited for days, recapitulating the wit of those heroes while closely observing her movements with throbbing heart. One who spoke so much on a platform was found speechless facing a girl. One day, marshalling all my courage, I faced her in the university building.

Do you mind if I talk to you privately? She (Raising her blushing face and smiling): I am glad that you ask for my permission.

Have I embarrassed you?

Not at all.

It is rather a delicate matter.

I can guess.

I need not say then.

If you like you may.

Is friendship a mutual affair?

Yes, but it does not grow in the way they narrate in the books.

Do you hate the bookish way of love?

Mutual love grows only after marriage.

Being educated, are you going to accept the worn-out idea of one million B.C.

Education is not meant to rebel against the society but to learn the desirable.

Superstition and slavery or pride and prejudice are the phantoms of the Dark Ages.

So are the yearnings of man and woman.

Cannot they reach the lofty heights of purity before marriage?

Very unlikely to maintain purity without marriage.

Marriage heightens or thickens the feeling, but the process can start before.

That is only profane not sacred.

You mean human.

Yes, connoting animal passion as well.

But who can decide the best?

None but fate.

Predetermination can only block the passage of progress.

Is truth worse than progress?

One is not opposed to the other.

Should one be sacrificed at the altar of another?

For the ends of truth, progress may be sacrificed but not vice versa.

Progress can be seen and enjoyed.

It can also be suffered.

How?

Progress of civilization has rendered millions exploited—unnourished and unclad.

It is the gift of only material civilization.

There was never a civilization without material progress.

Matter is not opposed to the mind.

But matter grinds the mind to nonentity when it is taken as the sole criterion of philosophical existence.

Is not the mind an epiphenomenon of the human brain?

How do you explain the higher existence—superhuman or supernatural?

Must be motivated by a superbrain.

This motivation cannot be confined to limited human mind.

Is it limited?

Yes, by the vision or knowledge of our senses.

Is there anything beyond the senses?

Yes, say spirit.

Is the spirit confined within the bounds of the brain?

No, it travels beyond and transcends the frontiers of our material existence.

You mean the soul?

Yes, it is not confined to time and space.
 Is it the ultimate truth?
 No, it is an attribute of the ultimate which moves between the heavens and the earths.
 Does happiness mean the happiness of the soul?
 Pleasure and pain relate to both mind and body but real happiness relates to the soul.
 Can happiness also include pain?
 One would not be understandable without the other, but one begins where the other ends.
 Then what is mixed reaction?
 A borderline case—one almost overlapping the other.
 Can you prove that spirit or soul exists?
 Even science works on axioms and cannot prove many things.
 Is it then an unproved axiom?
 To some it is not even an axiom, but to a developed mind it is more than existence.
 Einstein, Marx, Freud, Darwin, Angel—do not they have developed minds?
 Yes, but with regard to a part of the total existence i.e., matter.
 Who are others whom you would call developed in mind?
 Millions of the past and present personages, including the prophets of the great religions, saints, and pious people and even others with devotion to the whole truth.
 Why are we not taught of those who can guide us to higher planes of life leading to the truth?
 Because our system of education is rather too materialistic.
 We must discard the Western system and evolve one of our own.
 Is not the Western civilization teaching us more of agnosticism and atheism?
 To adopt a system any prejudice on geographical consideration may not be very conducive.
 Is it not in the East that all great religions originated?
 They are also teaching us modern science and arts. We must not also forget the contributions of Spencer, Mill, Hegel, Nietzsche, Rousseau, Voltaire, and Spinoza.
 True, but are we not equally away from the religion like our Western brothers?
 Will it remain so when we see more of development and progress?
 Besides how much do we bother to learn about the Eastern thinkers like Khayam, Alzabir, Alchemy, Al Beruni, Ibne Sina, Ibne Rushed

or Imam Abu Hanifa, Ghazzali, Al Fesani, or even Syed Ahmed, Iqbal of this continent.

East is still more religious.

Let us not go Western or Eastern. Let us not be parrots of the East or West, but let us endeavor to find out whence or whither our life. And live up to its true objectives.

So shall we go Western?

Why? Life is composed of both.

Would you consider human emotions like love or hatred related to higher objectives?

Love is only an attribute of higher life.

Is individual love the starting point of higher life?

Maybe, but the passion often engulfs that higher ideal.

Can there be any love without passion?

Platonic love seems to have no existence in reality, but Freudian love seems nothing but expression of animal instincts.

So, is it not better to put off the mania of youth love till after marriage?

Oh, you are going back to your earlier point. But why?

Because I am already engaged to be married to my cousin.

Thus ended the one-act drama of my life's first semblance of romance between two students of philosophy.

On October 16, 1951 came the news of the martyrdom of Liaquat Ali Khan from Rawalpindi. He was shot dead by one man from his audience of the public meeting, who, in turn, was shot dead instantly on the spot. The last words that came from the lips of the first prime minister of Pakistan was: "May Allah protect Pakistan." His name was written in red letters of blood in the history of Pakistan. But it was not enough for its bereaved people, as the murder seemed shrouded in mystery of palace clique and political conspiracy. That mystery was never discovered; rather, it was followed by more in succession. Khawaja Nazimuddin, the pious old man, climbed down from a governor general to a prime minister to fill the vacuum. His vacant post was given to a civil servant, Ghulam Muhammad, without foreseeing the risk involved. Constitution making was still in process with the new Basic Principles Committee Report. And the country was in the midst of an economic crises and political restlessness.

This is the year when Pakistan entered into a pact with the United States to meet her economic and military needs but to the frowning and fidgety disliking of India and Russia. The leftist students also expressed their anger at this flirting with the West, which meant nothing short of

walking into the imperialist camp. But one courageous student of degree class, Salahuddin, blasted out in one booklet, in defense of the pact with a scathing attack on the forces of neocolonialism, which were trying to creep into the social and political fabric of the underdeveloped countries in the name of class struggle. The mendacious propaganda by the left against the forces of democracy failed to diminish the spirit of Salahuddin or many more, but it split the intelligentsia into two groups. No doubt Pakistan entered thereby to the fore of Asian confrontation between the Kremlin and Pentagon by dint of this innocuous pact, but how far the Western ally was going to be faithful in times of her calamity were yet to be seen. The Pentagon, to serve its global interests, and Pakistan, to ensure its viable existence, met at a point of discord vulnerable to its neighbors.

The Muslim countries, from Morocco to Turkey and from Iran to Indonesia, were slowly coming out of their slumber of "the cave." Despite the past exploitation or domination by the Western imperial powers, the affinity to the faith of the people in religions tended to tie them together with the West in some form of economic or political knots. Crusading against all religions the Communist countries were baffled with natural rejection of friendship from any such emerging state of Afro-Asian community. But the eternal vested interest of the Western powers pushed back some of these developing countries to the other cage to be equally exploited. Pakistan opted for the free world to the utter disgust of Russia.

Language Movement

It was past midnight, February 21, 1952. We were still arguing among ourselves whether or not to violate the order of restriction imposed upon meeting, procession, or any gathering of five or more. The restriction was imposed by the order of the district magistrate, Dacca, to curtail the countrywide call of strike to be followed by processions and meetings in support of the demand for Bengali as one of the state languages of Pakistan. The provincial government, headed by Nurul Amin, was opposed to this movement, primarily led by the students. The government also apprehended that violence might be let loose during the demonstration to be staged before the Assembly, which was in session in the old Jagannath Hall.

The Muslim League was not participating in this movement. Awami Muslim League executives, led by its secretary, Shamsul Huq, was not in favor of violating the order of 144. Tamaddun Majlish, headed by Abul Quasem, was in the movement but were not in support of the violation of the law. The Communist party was an underground organization, but their stand on this language movement was dubious, as they were demanding all the regional languages of the East and West wings of Pakistan to be the state languages. Our Muslim Students League was divided on the issue, but, as its secretary, I got its support behind the demand. The other Muslim Students League, supporter of the Awami Muslim League, was also in support of the movement. The newly formed Students Union was also supporting the demand as mouthpiece of their underground parent body. But on the point of the following morning's program the student organizations were all for a hard line. But nobody other than the new militant Union was in favor of leading the movement to a violent turn. We ultimately dispersed in the dead of night with the majority decision that the programme for a

strike would stand and that all the students of Dacca city were to gather at the university premise by eleven and without any procession. The leaders were to report by nine A.M. in the Madhu's Canteen, and the pickets were detailed out for the city schools, colleges, and Madrashas. The workers of the Student's Union, with their own plan and design, wanted to make their emergence felt through an extremist line. So they got hold of the violent section of the other Students League and Awami League to defy the ban on the morning, disregarding the decision of the All Party Students Committee of Action. By nine A.M. all the student leaders gathered at the Canteen and were discussing the points already decided. Allegations and counter-allegations, arguments and counter-arguments maneuvers and counter-maneuvers were being placed around the tables in heated debate. It was primarily a students' movement with a program for the students, but some of the nonstudent leaders were there to advise their supporters.

The demand for Bengali to be a state language had been raised by the students and intelligentsia for years. This language, representing the mother tongue of 55 percent of the total population of Pakistan, thus deserved its rightful place as a language of the state and medium of education. Those wedded to the ideology of Islam had some misgivings about this language on obvious grounds of its script. Oblivious of the contributions of eminent Muslim writers and poets in this language, it was looked down upon as a vehicle of alien culture by the extreme opponents. The leadership of the country was blind to the fact that but for the special significance of the Quranic language of Arabic, Islam was neither confined in nor monopolized by any language in particular. There is no reason why, in languages like Chinese, Russian, English, French, German, Bengali, or Spanish, Islamic literature and science should not flourish. Let the rose grow in all the gardens of the East or West, distributing its fragrance and beauty to all. For Pakistan, with its geographical and ethnic diversities, formed into one state, to have more than one lingua franca in the pattern of Switzerland was no heresy or unpatriotism. But the government was not to have that wide vision and foresight, nor were the West Pakistani bureaucrats.

In spite of the restrictions imposed, the university was on full strike; so was the medical college and other schools and colleges of the city. Students everywhere were bent on coming to the streets with a procession, but our volunteers were guiding them toward the university in groups of four. By eleven A.M., the varsity compound was packed with students of various institutions and was at a point of bursting out into violent demonstration. The meeting within the compound, while stressing the need of unity for the movement, was sharply divided again on

the point of marching out in a procession, violating the ban. The majority view for maintaining law and order and for carrying out a peaceful nonviolent movement was booed and heckled by the extremists, led by the few union boys. Even Shamsul Huq of the Awami League was howled down and insulted when he appealed for a peaceful movement. The determined vocal few were getting the support of the frenzied crowd when leaders sat down for a final decision. There was almost unanimous decision again on the spot not to violate the law but to go out in a procession of four at intervals toward the nearby Assembly building, shouting slogans.

I was on the gate letting out the students in batches when shouts came from outside asking us to disperse. We were inside the compound and not in a mood to obey, so we replied in a chorus of slogans. Up went a shot, a shout, and a cry. Tear gas shells in the middle of the compound made the crowd run helter-skelter, gasping in suffocation. Cries for water were ringing in the air when more shells came in, thudding, bursting, and raising a smoke screen with burning sensations in our eyes. Water in fire-fighting tubs, wet handkerchiefs, and cloths were rushed toward us. Now the roaring crowd of boys and girls really got militant, poured out on the street, and faced the police, many of whom were lifted in the waiting police vans, but the rest lined up in procession, marching toward the Assembly building. Some girls spearheaded through the police cordon, followed by our boys, but they were stopped and lathi charged near the gate of the medical college. The real brave ones, including some leaders, were climbing the walls in flight and spoiling their well-laundered clothes and well-nourished bodies out of panic. Unknown heroes came out and embraced the charge and arrest.

After twelve noon, the university premises were almost empty when some of us proceeded toward the barricade at the medical college gate. But we were forced to take shelter behind the nearby walls and barracks of the hostel. Brick missiles were hurled in volleys toward the police on the street, making them to take shelter under shields or run away. This fighting continued for quite some time with all the bricks piled up for construction works finding their flight path toward the police in manageable pieces. Movement of cars and reinforcement police were visible, and so were the number of combating students, increasing with better fighting plans and better brick missiles. Our efforts to dissuade the mob from adopting violent means were blunted by the exuberant fighters on either side. I was standing on the verandah of the barracks with some other colleagues, including Barkat, my classmate.

Another sound, slightly different from the tear gas shell shot, was heard just in front of us when the cry came from the crowd, "Bullet,

bullet firing." A few boys with bleeding legs were running toward us when more shots were heard. We were inquiring from the injured persons when another shot pierced through the bamboo fencing and hit the thigh of Barkat. Instantly, we carried Barkat to the nearby medical college where the injured were receiving first aid. The tall, handsome, and healthy Barkat was lying senseless, due to the profuse bleeding, on one of the emergency beds, with the doctors attending him in anxious determination to save the valuable life. The very bullet that hit him could very well hit me or anybody else as the distance was only a few inches. Unknown and rear ranking people became the victims of such circumstances. It is further found in these types of agitations that the masterminds achieve their objectives through calculated violence, remaining behind the curtains when the innocent, simpleminded, emotional youth are used as their instruments.

We were sincerely fighting for our legitimate demand, but the invisible forces worked from behind to create a situation of confrontation with the government, in which they succeeded well. Reports of fighting, naturally with casualties on both sides, were pouring in from Jagannath College, Sadar Ghat, and other places. The scattered skirmishes with police, with injuries and arrests, continued till the dull cloudy day ended in darkness. The processions never reached the Assembly, which was holding its budget session only a few yards away, but the desired impact was created in the right quarters because of the highhanded police action. Rumor went around the halls, hostels, and houses that dozens of students were killed by the firings ordered by Chief Minister Nurul Amin. Students quickly picked up this gossip, and the public joined in with anger and anguish to resent the barbarity.

Barkat ultimately succumbed to his injury during the night, and so did one Salam to his head injury. The committee of action discussed the next course of action and announced general strike and countrywide "*Janaja*" and mourning for the martyrs on the following day. We passed a sleepless night, running between city areas without any fatigue or hunger. The students were electrified, and the public was charged with the same emotion while resenting the unheard of slaughter of their boys by the police of their own government. The inflated number of casualties, exaggerated reports of police excess, and the emotional appeal of student workers turned the student movement to a mass movement. Full strike in government offices, commercial firms, shops, educational institution, and transport vehicles brought city life to a standstill on the morning of February 22. Encouraged by this unprecedented success, the students came out with processions almost spontaneously. The government took a stern attitude to maintain law and order in pursuance of the ban on

meetings and processions, which resulted in more incidents of arrest, clashes, and firings. Being guided by our emergency headquarters at Salimullah Hall through continuous publicity on mike and mobilization of volunteers, the movement took the shape of mass upsurge. Other centers of guidance at Jagannath College and Fazlul Huq Hall were also mobilizing the students and public for a protest march and street-corner meetings.

The government effort to pacify the students by handing over the two dead bodies to their parents could not achieve the desired outcome; rather, it helped the movement in quoting fabulous figures of death and secret burial. The upsurge continued the whole day with a number of clashes in different parts of the city. By the night, the fresh announcement went around calling for the continuance of the protest through strike meetings and processions. We had set up almost a parallel Secretariat for conducting the movement by sending our directives to government offices, business houses, transport agencies, and student units. And this concentrated in Salimullah Hall under my guidance with the vice president and general secretary of the hall and other office bearers of student organizations around me.

On the night came the objection from the provost, Dr. Ghani, that we should no longer use the hall as the bastion for antigovernment movement. He addressed the executive of the committee of action, as directed by his higher authorities, and asked us to surrender the microphone and stop campaign. On the following morning, student hostels of Jagannath College were raided and the mike was taken away. On threat of police action and mass arrest, the microphone of Fazlul Huq Hall was surrendered. *Shere Bangla* A. K. Fazlul Huq, Moulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani, and some other leaders came and addressed the huge public and students who had thronged the lawns, gardens, and streets around the Muslim Hall to listen to the latest development and directives. To avoid bloodshed and clashes, we directed all to peacefully parade the streets with our demands and approach the members of the Provincial Assembly for submitting their resignations.

Groups of students went around to request their M.P.A.s in Party House and their other places of residence to render their support for the cause of the Bengali language. There were hot words, sympathys, and also support from those members, almost all of whom belonged to the Muslim League party. But none but Md. Muzibur Rahman, the editor of *Daily Azad*, resigned membership from the Assembly. The movement was catching the attention of the students and public in mufassil districts, whence came the report of strike, meeting, and procession in support of our demand and protest against the firing of students. With the

closure of the centers elsewhere, Muslim Hall became the nerve center of all activities of the movement. The microphone continued booming out the fiery publicity from eight A.M. to eight P.M. under my control to the extreme annoyance of the authorities, but I refused to surrender it for the sake of the movement. Then came the threat of a police raid when some of my colleagues succumbed to the threat. Toward noon, our hall was surrounded by the police and rifles when more colleagues of the movement insisted that the mike be surrendered forthwith and the center be closed. I failed to understand the attitude of both the groups, one cowardly and the other two-faced, so I tried to persuade them to give up their weak policy. Some of our friends even openly challenged my authority, which made me more uncompromising. And I told them to call a meeting, but before we could meet, the police forced open the hall door. Most of the boys ran for shelter in rooms locked from the outside in toilets, in kitchen, and in every possible hideout. Some of us removed the mike, hid the pamphlets, and disguised ourselves. Our V.P. and some of the trembling scholars were arrested. But I, Gaziul Huq, Hedayet, Kibria, and some front rankers somehow escaped the notice of the intelligence men and the police. One officer, Shukkur Mia, recognized me on the stairs, but I was in menial's dress, which must have confused him.

The police left after three hours of search, arresting about forty of our boys, seizing the ready cash donated by the public, some signs and posters, and the mike. Our house tutors, the hall staff, and even the provost were quite helpful during the search, but the last fort in the city fell into government hands. The radio announced the closing of the varsity and colleges, sine-die with the order to vacate the halls and hostels immediately. After dusk, the available members of the Committee of Action met at adjacent Iqbal Hall and decided to continue the strike and spread out in the schools and colleges of the far-flung areas of the province. On the last day of our stay in the hall, we cooked *biryani* for our friends behind the bars and sent it to jail with the message that the people were behind them.

I stayed in the city for a week more to conduct the province-wide mobilization and underground activities in the city. During this week, I came in closer contact with some of the underground leaders of the banned Communist party and intellectual guides of the Students Union and Students League in our day or night rendezvous. The ingenuity and tenacity of those behind the curtain leaders left a lasting impression on my mind for the years to come.

The closure of the university and arrest of countless students actually drove the movement, so long centralized only in Dacca, to the

remotest corners of the province. We held meetings in towns and villages where students and public listened to us with tears and emotions, only to curse the government. The students, coming from all parts of the province, carried the message of the movement spontaneously and earnestly. The baffles created by the government actually helped the movement to take its root in the masses, so much so that we were convinced that victory would be ours. The crown of success, of course, came after two years of more toil and tribulation in 1954 when the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, sitting at Karachi, adopted the resolution accepting Bengali as a state language with Urdu.

The sacrifice of the martyrs became the source of inspiration for the future generation of Bengali-speaking people. The martyrs' monument, "*Shahid Minar*," was erected at the site of Barkat's murder between the medical college and the Assembly House, drawing crowds of devotees on the twenty-first of February every year. This movement later, in a twisted form, symbolized the advent of Bengali nationalism with solidarity for Bengalees, whether they belonged to Pakistan or India. This symbolism after twenty years forced Pakistan to sacrifice its eastern wing and is likely to cost India also a part of its territory for a complete free Bengal in years to come.

As secretary of the Students League and later as its president, I was invited to address its annual conference and public meetings in districts of which I remember the ones in Kushtia, Chittagong and Barisal vividly. The Kushtia meeting was rounded up with a musical soiree and later a tea party at the house of the district magistrate, Md. Yahya. In the other two places, we had two distinguished guests with me in A. K. Fazlul Huq and A. T. M. Mustafa. Shere Bangla had his first public appearance in Chittagong public meeting at Laldighi maidan with me after the creation of Pakistan. He appeared in his gray shirt and cap and made the public pray and weep with him while speaking in an emotion-choked voice, clarifying his position that he actually did not oppose Pakistan but opposed the Muslim League higher echelon. Barrister Mustafa was an intellectual speaker, his address to the councilors and intelligentsia at Railway Institute received wide applause and appreciation.

While staying in the Resthouse, Huq Saheb asked me what he should wear at the public meeting. I naturally advised him to wear the very best *sherwani* in which he traveled from Dacca by train. But he replied, "You are still a kid in politics. I will wear the very worst of my shirts." In spite of our disapproval, he donned a creased and soiled gray shirt and cap with white trousers and won the people's heart for his successful pose as a people's man. The same thing he repeated in Barisal, where, of course, the people, the elderly section, must have seen him

in his birthday suit as well. His words were few, his ideas were not very much consistent in speech, the substance was also not rich, but he was unparalleled in drawing applause and understanding for what he delivered. He would just win their heart with prayers, narration of short stories, and by his dress and physical expressions, just like a wizard.

The travel by steamer slowly swimming over the soily waters of Meghna, Padma, and Kirtankhola, with picturesque greenery on either banks, coupled with first class food served on the deck and the leisurely gossips and naps, made one of the loveliest river cruises on earth. The parallel I found only on the lakes of Switzerland or on the river Rhine in Germany. Huq Saheb was in his cabin, and we had a heavy breakfast in the morning. Some of us were in the upper deck with beds spread on the floor in assorted lines with walking passage in between. Before we reached Barisal station, Huq Saheb asked me to accompany him to the deck, which I did agreeably. No sooner he reached the deck than all the passengers stood up, saluted him, and started shaking hands with great respect and humility. In the way he talked to them and mixed with them, I was almost convinced that he knew all of them, and only the old friends and relations were having a get together after a long time. To climax it all, he all on a sudden sat flat on one of the beds on the floor and said: "O son of Talukdar, I have not had my full breakfast. I want to have it with you all." There were more than one person who could be called by the said name, and Huq Saheb actually would not know them nor their names. But there was a race among various persons to order for his breakfast. But Huq Sb. said again: "You know I do not love the rich breakfast they serve in the cabin and hotels, so bring me '*muri and kala*' in a bowl so that I can eat to my heart's content." The desired rice flakes and bananas came in abundance, and so did toast, eggs, butter, chicken, and more. But he touched nothing but flakes and banana and really ate them with all the people around him. And for his second breakfast, he consumed no less than what he did half an hour ago in the cabin with us. That was the tiger of Bengal—a man, a leader, a legend.

In Barisal, our reception at Steamer station, the students conference, and the public meeting at Town Hall were all befittingly organized. The old man, out of politics for long, was again getting the taste of politics as a hungry tiger would do by tasting fresh blood. He was getting out of his political exile and trying to rehabilitate his lost thrust and popularity. We arranged special food for him, as he was a voracious eater and had lunch one day with Abdul Wahab Khan, his old colleague in Bar and in politics and a relation, too. The illustrious Abdul Wahab Khan became the speaker of the Pakistan Consembly but had an ignominious

political death in 1962. We also arranged a special meeting of the intelligentsia for Mustafa in the District Board Hall in the evening—it was a delight to listen to his thoughtful speech with prophetic conviction of the creed on Islam.

Brother Mustafa liked me and Barisal so much after a few speech-making tours with me that he jumped at the marriage proposal with a daughter of Nawabsada Syed Fazle Rabbi of Shaestabad, Barisal. I also accompanied the bridal party and saw them married, followed by a decade of devoted conjugal life of extreme love and affection. In him I found an elder brother, a philosopher, a guide, a great orator, a sports fan, a man of conviction, and honesty—rarely to be found combined in a leader. We lost in him a great patriot and a Muslim when he died in action, during his speech in Cuba in 1965 as a national delegate, of heart failure. We have honored many lesser heroes, but that soul still keeps us in debt and gratitude with no gesture of befitting respect.

After the *Daily Sangbad*,—a Bengali newspaper, left the control of the Muslim League only to speak for the opposition, the party decided to publish another daily to project its viewpoints. Yusuf Ali Choudhury Mohan Mia, took the initiative and published *Daily Millat*. We decided to put in some of our own boys so that our viewpoints and display of news would be flashed objectively. I was one of those who volunteered to help the paper, and thus I worked as its subeditor for some time. Modabbir Hussain was the editor, and Sirajur Rahman was its news editor in those days. Because of my ensuing final exam, I could not serve the paper for long, but at the time of my studies in London, I worked as its London representative for several years. After my M.A. final examination, because of my interest in journalism, I joined the *Daily Pakistan Post*, an English daily edited by Serajul Islam, where I worked both as subeditor and staff reporter for some time. The journalists were very poorly paid then, but they had an image of social importance in the public eye as a tribute to their vivacious talents. The editor of the *Pakistan Observer*, Abdus Salam, also worked for the *Pakistan Post* in my time. I was so much contaminated by the influence of journalism that at one time I thought of taking up this profession as my career. I was no less under a spell of contemporary literateurs like Alauddin Al Azad, Shamsur Rahman, Hassan Hafizur Rahman, Ashraf Siddique, Askar Ibne Saikh, Farook Ahmed, etc., and the eminent editors of the various papers like Abdus Salam, Muzibur Rahman, Modabbir Hussain, Tofazzal Hussain, Zahur Hussain Chowdhury, and Khawaja Nooruddin. Hassan was my friend from school days; Azad and Shamsur Rahman were my university mates, but the rest were quite senior in age and standing whom I looked upon with reverence. Farookh Ahmed's poems were most in-

spiring and idealistic to us. It was only after 1962 that I came in close touch with Mazid Nizami of Nawae Waqt, Altaf Hussain of Dawn and the rest of West Pakistan. Nizami and Nasim were friends of mine from London days and Kawsar Niazi and Altaf Hussain Qureshi from the days of my association with Jamate Islami and Khawaja Nuruddin by relationship. They were all excellent people of their profession.

What struck me most was that contributions in the field of science, philosophy, political thought, sociology, religion, philosophy, history, geography, or any other branch of knowledge was rather poor in the Bengali language. Fictions and poems have no doubt occupied a respectable field, but there was a world of vacuum in other spheres that this language suffered. There was no less than 100 million Bengali-speaking people, but their percentage of education was very poor, and poorer still was their reading and writing habits, which called for a radical change or revolution.

Soon after my final M.A. exam, the All Party Committee of Action of the students launched a movement for realizing the pressing demands of the students and employees of the university. In the strike ultimatum submitted to the vice chancellor, I was one of the eleven signatories representing my organization along with other organizational heads and the elected representatives of the halls. When the negotiations failed the students went on strike for an indefinite period on our call. One fine morning, we found all eleven student leaders expelled, which, instead of helping the authorities, put them to a test of strength and spirit. The strike continued with renewed vigor, paralyzing the whole university administration and education. The results of the examinations were out, but that of mine and Shamsul Huq were withheld since others were not examinees. My law course was not complete as yet, as it had a three-year term. So I was hanging in the air with the master's degree withheld and the law course suspended. The zeal and justness of our cause kept me so engrossed that I never felt for the personal loss. But some of the bookish boys and dissidents, when questioned on the propriety of continuing the boycott indefinitely, had heated arguments, and it occurred to us that the students, for the redress of whose various grievances we were fighting even at our own cost, were not quite appreciating our stand. We felt hurt. But differences or even a split are not uncommon among followers when a movement or struggle is protracted without victory in sight. Mutiny on Columbus's ship was a normal phenomenon. Some were even considering tendering an apology to the authorities so that the expulsion order would be withdrawn. But I did not budge an inch from our stand, and I found most of our colleagues reinforcing our faith in our ultimate success. Those whose degrees were withheld con-

sulted the eminent lawyers, including my senior advocate, Nurul Huq Choudhury, to whom I was an attached article. None of them could assure us of our sure victory in case of a court battle. In one of those days of depression and low spirits, my eyes had tears rolling, which no one knew or saw, but never could I think of doing anything that might stab the cause in the back.

At this time, Khawaja Nazimuddin was dismissed as prime minister and Mohammad Ali Bogra was flown in from Washington to take his place. The party, which elected Khawaja Nazimuddin as its leader, was still commanding the majority in the Assembly, but it did not lift its finger in protest; rather, it accepted the new leader imposed by Governor General Ghulam Muhammad. Nevertheless, during his visit to East Pakistan, he wanted the cooperation of all, including the students. We were assured by him that all our demands would be sympathetically looked into. Some were readily accepted, and the order of expulsion was withdrawn. We victoriously rejoined the university with pomp and celebration, and we got our results published, also.

After two rounds of glorious battle over language and university demands, we had the convocation ceremony after a gap of a few years amidst peaceful jubilations.

On the lawn of Curzon Hall, Karim, Obaid, and Iqbal, all B.A. class residents of Salimullah Hall, approached me one day with a proposal of visiting some countries of Southeast Asia with a good-will mission of the students. The idea was novel and popular, but they needed me to be representative and presentable to which I agreed. We also decided that since this would be a private delegation, we must have one university professor to lead the delegation, and we selected Dr. Syed Sajjad Hussain of the English Department. When we met him, he also agreed and actually gave our plan the final shape. Abdur Rahman Siddiqui was the governor of the province who encouraged us for our venture and made the first donation to our private fund. Being thrilled with our initial encouragement, we pooled our private resources and raised some more money from the philanthropists and finalized the tour program for Indonesia, the biggest Muslim country. Correspondence was opened with the government and Pakistan Embassy in Jakarta, but due to the bad line of communication and worsening internal condition in Indonesia, the approval was being delayed. We waited for more than a month and got restless and impatient to wait further. The message initially delivered to us from Jakarta was that we could visit Indonesia as arranged, but the internal conditions there wouldn't allow us to travel beyond the capital city, but they were arranging our itinerary. The next message came that the clearance would soon be available. Expecting to

get the clearance, we left for Burma, on our way to Jakarta, our closest neighboring country.

Sultanuddin Ahmed of Dacca was our ambassador in Rangoon, who warmly welcomed us and arranged for our stay in his residence. We enjoyed his hospitality and attended various functions at the embassy, at the Muslim Association and other places. Our visit to the historic Buddhist pagodas, massive and gorgeous in architectural beauty, crowded by the devotees and tourists, enchanted us. Our trip on the river Irabati and our visits to the shopping areas were no less exciting. Surprised were we when we found during our visit to the university how little we knew of each other, though we two people had a common border and even were a part of one India, with an overwhelming Buddhist population. The local Muslims and the Muslim traders of East Pakistan, mainly of Chittagong and of Madras, had a great say in the economic and social affairs of the country. Arakan on the contiguous coast of East Pakistan had a majority of Muslims and was still fighting for a Muslim autonomous area under the leadership of one Kashem Raza. In the north, the Karens and other rebels were still holding different areas of Burma who used to have their surprise raids even near Rangoon.

One morning Obaid was excited on a newspaper report that one man was picked up by a woman by force from the river front. He was excited because he could have been the pleasant target if he stayed there for half an hour more, the spot he left to meet us over a dinner invitation only half an hour before.

Men and women had the advantage of mixing, working, and loitering together without any social or religious restriction, which was quite an experience for our own conservative Muslim society. Short and strong-built Burmese were quite fond of food and clothes—all of their own style and preparations, the *lungi* being the common dress for both men and women and rice and *nuppi* being common items of food. They belong to the rice-eating group of the Asians, but by build they are of Mongolian stock.

Rangoon, after seven years of world war II, was still bearing the scars of Japanese bombing; on the buildings and factories. The much-needed recovery from the devastations of the monstrous war was not as rapid as it ought to be in this old port city of the East. Because of the sufficiency of food, unostentatious living habits, humid climatic conditions, lack of fast communication, and political insecurity, life seemed rather dull during the day and dumb with the nightfall. The gay night life, reminiscent of the days of war, still carried the virility and vices of life, but the common man seemed to be quite happy with his quiet

family environment in slums and houses after dusk. The men and women, boys and girls, we found, were quite friendly but not wildly warm in their habits; a sense of mild happiness and mental contentment ruled their behavior.

While waiting for the final message from Jakarta, we were having lunch together with our ambassador. We were in the midst of our last course when he said that he had a message to deliver. He kept quiet for a few seconds; then all of a sudden he picked up one glass and threw it on the floor. We thought he must have been angry at the servants. But neither the glass broke after such a violent throw nor did he abuse the servants, who were serving the dishes.

Dr. Sajjad: How strange the glass is still in one piece. What is the matter, sir.

Ambassador: You see, it is unbreakable glass. I wanted to show you that if even glass can be unbreakable, why not human courage. I have a piece of bad news for you, so you must not break into pieces.

I: Please tell us, we are rather anxious to hear.

Ambassador: His Excellency, the ambassador at Jakarta, informs with regret that no tour program is advised till after two months because of the new law and order situation in Jakarta and other places of Indonesia.

It was a great shock to all of us, but the ambassador consoled us by saying that since that good-will mission to Indonesia is no longer a practicality, he will compensate it by arranging some other program in Rangoon with a longer schedule of our stay. We did stay in Rangoon for a few more days with a broken heart, but it was a retreat from halfway to our goal.

1954 Election

It was my ambition to become a lawyer, a barrister, whereby I could help myself to stand on my own feet independently and also help others to find justice and fair play in this miserable world of strife and struggle. But, by 1953, the Inns of Court in London had imposed a restriction on admission. Though I was more than a graduate, an M.A. in political science, I had to have a law degree for my admission. I was yet a year away from the final LL.B. examination. The next educational task was to appear for the LL.B. final in mid-1954. When I met Dr. Dahm, the head of the law department, he advised me to work hard and be away from politics.

Nurul Amin, the chief minister of the province, after six years of rule without any election, had ultimately to announce its time. The internal pressure within the government and Muslim League and the external pressure of the giant opposition leaders and hostile student community made him hold the election in early 1954. As a popular student leader, I was asked by my followers and friends to contest the same. I was yet to complete my studies. Fazlul Huq, Bhashani and Suhrawardy, to whom I was well known as a budding politician, were trying to form a combined opposition. Nurul Amin had already his blessings for one branch of All East Pakistan Muslim Students League, limited in the city of Dacca with one, who was once a student, as its head. He was busy frequenting the Burdwan House rather than attending the problems of the students or even organizing them. I would never visit that house after the firing of February 21 on the language marchers, nor would I associate myself with my student followers with the Government Muslim League.

In the All Party Committee of Action meeting, which normally used to be held in Aatur Rahman Khan's house in old Dacca, persons like Oli

Ahad, Kamaruddin, Suleman, and Abul Quasem used to advise me to seek the nomination of the United Front. But the experience that I gathered from their leaders meetings in the House of *Shere Bangla*, Hamidul Huq Choudhury, Suhrawardy, Bhasani, Ataur Rahman Khan, and the rest did not inspire my confidence in them. They fought with their extremist followers not only among themselves, but sometimes these respectable leaders were also victims of physical assault and humiliation by the intragroup cadre. The noisy and rough scenes that were prevalent in framing the twenty-one points of the United Front continued more vigorously during the Parliamintary Board meetings for selecting the nominees. I had the misfortune to watch the violent roles played by some leaders of the component groups, including Mujibur Rahman, Syed Azizul Huq, and Abdus Samad.

On the other hand, the otherwise docile Muslim League became virulent for distributing nominations to its nominees. But most of the nominations went to the blind followers of Nurul Amin himself. Even Fazlul Quader Choudhury, the most vigorous Leaguer from his student life and a strong favorite of his constituents in Chittagong, was not a recipient. Hardly any young or valiant was groomed by Nurul Amin nor anyone with potential capabilities or popularity was given the nomination from his party. Even Shamsul Huda, the student leader of Dacca, his ardent follower, well qualified and intelligent was deprived.

The people of the province were, of course, taken to storms by the antigovernment United Front with its highly catchy 21-point election program. The triumvirate of Huq-Bhasani-Suhrawardy, despite their self-conflicting aims and attitudes, were out to reap the benefit of the unpopularity of the Nurul Amin government. So the people did not bother whether the opposition program carried reforms or measures of short term or long term, economic or political, for the ultimate benefit of the country or its people. Their attitude was simply negative, to get rid of Nurul Amin whether by a Phillip drunk or sober. People's emotion rather than conscious judgment were raised to so high a pitch that any lamp post nominated by the triumvirate would secure the people's vote, but even an angel coming with Nurul Amin's blessings was to be denied considerations.

I had no money, no political organization, no experience, and no inclination to seek any such nomination. So I was not going to contest the election. But when the people of my Jhalakati constituency found out that neither the United Front nor the League was going to nominate anyone belonging to that constituency, they tried to accommodate someone discarded by his home constituency; they made me file a nomination paper.

I was contacting other districts of the province from Dacca when I was summoned to Barisal to find that the apprehension had come true. So I was to fight a general election as an independent candidate, opposed to both United Front and the League. Syed Azizul Huq of Chakhar, a nephew of *Shere Bangla*, was planted in my constituency by the United Front. One unknown, Ismail Dhali of the Muslim League, and Ashraf Ali Sardar and Asmat Ali Sardar, two more advocates, were also in the run for this prize membership to the Provincial Assembly. I had to discharge the responsibility reposed in me and thus set up election camps in the length and breadth of Jhalakati and Wazirpur police stations. My volunteers, mostly the youths and students, selflessly worked day and night and rallied the people. Wherever I went, I was received cordially and heard with rapt attention in schools, Madrasahs, bazaars, and public places. People were about to disown both the League and the United Front for me. The League nominee was not canvassing at all, that United Front nominee got panicky, and the other independents were moving in their stealthy fashion.

Frantic calls and visits brought Shere Bangla to my constituency to save his dear nephew, my relation too, from drowning his "Boat!" For a most legendary popular leader like Shere Bangla, in the height of the most popular support for United Front throughout the province, one public meeting was good enough to throw my "Ink Pot and Pen" into the river *Dhansiri* for good. But his first public meeting in Jhalakati Town was dispersed in a melee in support of the demand "We want Akhtar by your side—not Nanna." His next attempt to address the people of Shekherhat, a riverside village where Shere Bangla himself spent his days of childhood, met a worse reception, so much so that he was not even allowed to land from his floating launch.

The other leaders traveling with Shere Bangla did not address any meeting against me. The efforts of my rival to bring Bhashani or Suhrawardy bore no fruits. So Shere Bangla was made to address twenty-seven meetings in my constituency alone, out of which the only peaceful audience he had one was at my village Nabagram where I was personally present.

Nurul Amin, Bhashani, Suhrawardy, and a host of young and old leaders were having hurricane tours. Abdur Rab Nishtar, Abdul Qayum Khan, Pir of Manki, and other West Pakistani leaders also came and participated in these election meetings. When Nurul Amin came to Barisal, an untoward incident took place. Opposition parties interfered with the meeting and processions took place on the visit of the League leader. In one fight that ensued, one League worker was assaulted to death. The brother of the deceased Abdul Malek was Abdul Mazid, an oppo-

sition worker of Advocate Shamsheer Ali, who joined the League in protest. Public opinion was so militantly against the League that they even justified or condoned this crime of the United Front supporters. They even insulted the peaceful Madrasha students from Sarsina who were supporting the League. The songs and writings of B. D. Habibullah had already made these centers of religious education controversial spots. His songs against the Muslim League and its government were in popular demand all over the province for fomenting discontent.

Warrants of arrest were issued against the opposition political and student leaders in Barisal to frighten us and curb our activities. Whatever sympathy was drawn by the untoward acts of the opposition was again neutralized by this false implication of leaders in a criminal case. But it curbed our activities. I could no longer hold meetings in public. I had to address them in remote areas away from police stations or during the night. I also had to move incognito till the election was over. So, sandwiched between the popularity and public addresses of Shere Bangla on one side and having a warrant of arrest issued to the government on another, I followed the fate of hundreds of other defeated candidates in the popular election of 1954. But I considered myself lucky in not losing the security money, like other opponents of the United Front.

The United Front bagged nearly 300 seats and the Muslim League only 9 in the first general election in the East Pakistan Assembly, with a few independents like Fazlul Quader Choudhury and Major Ghani. But Fazlul Quader Choudhury, after winning the election, joined the Parliamentary Party of League to make it 10. The United Front formed the government with its election pledge of twenty-one points, unseating the Muslim League for the first time in East Pakistan. Aatur Rahman Khan was their first chief minister. My experience in this election of a half-educated developing country were three. First, the voters fell prey to corrupt practices like false voting and pressure. Second, money became the dominant factor in publicity and procurement of votes. Last but not the least is that voters went more for lofty ideas and promises than for any realistic program. One still can call it democracy!

Losing the battle in my home constituency, I shifted to Dacca. Practically hiding in my sister's house, I started to prepare for my final examination of law. I used to attend top meetings of the Language Committee of Action and Students League working committee only; three months time was left for the exam, and I had to cover at least five subjects.

There came the flood the first natural challenge to the new government. The streets of Dacca were visited by knee-deep water and boats. There were the problems of communication, food storage, residence,

health, and the aftermath. The leaguers started opening their mouths to say that people voted for "Boat," so it had to come on their invitation. "Hurricane lamp," the election symbol of The League was very much in demand to cope with the darkness of Dacca without electric supply. The relief and rehabilitation work required for avoiding the consequential epidemic and suffering army was deployed. Help from foreign countries also poured in massive scale, including supplies from the United States, Britain, and Canada.

The United government of Awami League, Krishak Sramic Party, Ganatantra Dal, and Congress were found busy mostly with power politics at central and provincial levels. People's relief needs were being reduced to a secondary position along with the election promises. Internal quarrels among Huq, Bhashani, and Suhrawardy had already started, raising its ugly head on issues of selection of portfolio and division of government favors. Even the quarrel among Aatur Rahman Khan, Abu Hussain Sarkar, Mujibur Rahman, Mahmud Ali, and others became a regular feature of news and gossip. Their preelection differences of personalities and ideas unfolded themselves in unpleasant incidents within and outside the precincts of the Assembly, embarrassing even their own supporters.

I kept myself aloof from all the din and bustle. I quietly sat for my exam and slipped out to my home town, Barisal, thereafter. My results were soon out, and I passed to my great relief. East Pakistan, though politically mismanaged in the beginning, had already made some headway on the economic front. Some heavy industries of jute, cotton, paper, hydroelectricity, and the like were installed in the hitherto agricultural area, and more were in the offing. Communication by river, road, and railway was improved. Interwing communication by air and sea was also making considerable progress. Export of raw jute and hide was the main foreign exchange earner of the whole of Pakistan. East Pakistani people were occupying more and more important positions in government service and private trade, hitherto inaccessible to them. Schools, colleges, and universities were increasing in number to accommodate more boys and girls. Daily, weekly, and monthly papers were no longer scarce or a monopoly of the non-Muslims. It was an allaround resurrection in the socioeconomic life of its people, opening the wide gates of opportunities for the erstwhile deprived and neglected people of the East.

The victory of the United Front, instead of carrying this march of progress faster, was showing signs of confusion and hesitancy. They were harping more on the tune of provincial or personal gains than on fostering national unity or progress. India, of course, was happy at this

turning of the tide and was patronizing the United Front. Shere Bangla, was then the governor of East Pakistan, who on his stopover at Calcutta, made certain open observations to please the Indian Bengalees. This was termed as an overt gesture of undermining the integrity of Pakistan. The Central government, practically run by the bureaucrats, was still being headed by Muhammad Ali Bogra as prime minister and Iskandar Mirza as governor general. To discredit the United Front, Fazlul Huq was dismissed on this plea by Iskandar Mirza.

The day I was sitting with the Lloyd's Bank's office at Dacca for completing the formalities of foreign exchange remittance to London was a day in January 1955. Before that, I was not quite sure that I could make it, as father was reluctant to bear my entire expenses of education in the U.K. Ultimately, my elder brother, Dr. Karim, who was then a captain in the army posted in West Pakistan, came to the rescue.

One fine evening, my friends, relations, and admirers all saw me off at Dacca Airport with tears in their eyes. It was so touching a scene that it appeared that I would never see them again. Yet they wished me well and asked me to come back home as early as possible. They were waving their hands till the P.I.A. plane taxied away completely out of sight.

When I landed at Karachi Airport, for the first time in my life, it was still dark. But the eastern sky was getting the tinge of red, and the grounded electric stars were still twinkling. "BOAC passengers, this way, please." Invited by a hostess in the lounge, we followed her to the nearby Midway House. We washed and had breakfast there before our change of plane. I was feeling quite lonely and downtrodden after the breakfast. And it was for about two hours that I looked around the airport and its unending flow of people of all sizes, colors, and dress. Then the call came. "Attention, please."

It was a bigger plane with more passengers but very much pressed for elbow room. The blue cap and pink smile were already standing there to ensure the fastening of seat belts but not empty handed. First came the sweets then the soft drinks, and I was offered the other drink, too, later. The takeoff was smooth but noisy. I was watching the change of panoramic views from my window seat. The big city became smaller, the buildings and men became tiny tots, and ultimately nothing but blue sea below and blue sky above were seen. I was watching the game of the sun's reflection on the floating clouds when the passenger sitting by my side asked me about my destination. I told him that I was going to study in London, but I had no one there who knew me well. He was to get down at Damascus; otherwise, he would have helped me in that strange country.

We landed at Bahrain, a British colony rich with oil. There were only a few buildings and few people in or around the airport, but it was the refueling for which the plane stopped. It was a small island in the Gulf but a prosperous place, I was told. Even in January it was very hot there.

We had a heavy dinner at Damascus. Damascus, the capital of Syria that I had a mind to see, both for historical and religious importance, I had no plan to break the journey. Though it was an Arabian airport, I hardly noticed anything other than Western dress, food, and people. No one should judge a country from what he sees only at the airport. But I was sure that it was only the Mediterranean away from Europe.

I thought that I was very much afraid of a long air journey. But it was nice to know that I did not even wake up from my deep sleep in the mid-European station. When I really woke up to have a glimpse of historic Rome, I was already at the London airport. *Time* magazine, which was handed over to me by the tall brunette hostess before midnight, was still lying on my lap. After the bumping we had on the Mediterranean, the entire journey was smooth and comfortable. The little girl who was vomiting on the aisle seat was also tidily following her mother to the stairs. I was at the tail end of the line with my attaché in hand waiting to begin a novel life in a new world.

Life in England

London, February 1955. It was a pretty long drive from the Airport to Victoria terminal. A thick fog was obstructing our quick movement of the BOAC bus. All that we could see outside was the street lights in the landscape of dark houses, uniformly built on either side of the road with traffic crossings. The slow speed, the cold weather, and the quiet passengers turned the atmosphere into a mourning procession. The life restored in the bus when we really reached the terminal. There was none to receive me either at the airport or at the terminal. And I had no idea where to go or what to do. So I followed the advice of the English gentleman along the reception counter to ring up anyone whom I knew.

It was quite early in the morning, yet I tried the first telephone number I had. A. M. Abbas, a barrister of East Pakistan who was practicing in London, answered the call himself. He gladly asked me to go to a known place, "Everest House Hotel," and gave me the direction. I was expecting in the Oriental way that he would call me to his house or guide me to the Pakistan embassy where I would receive a warm reception of embraces and breakfast. But I realized later that no one should be disappointed if it does not happen that way. And it never happens that way in the West. Yet when I reached the said hotel near Chancery Lane on Clerkenwell Road, I was surprised to find that an East Pakistani gentleman and one English lady were waiting for me after they had a phone call from Barrister Abbas. I was overwhelmed when they also brought me a good English breakfast in my room on the third floor. They tried to make me feel comfortable, but I found it difficult to follow their accent of English, yet I valued their warm cordiality more than their language.

I was tired of the journey, but I decided to change and go to the Inns of Court. I asked the housekeeper, I asked the elegant blue-suited

policeman, I asked a gentleman, and ultimately a West Indian young man to find my way to the Inns. My imagination about these historical old institutions of legal learning was quite different from what I saw. All the four Inns of Court were independent of each other but quite contiguous. They were all around the High Court Buildings on Chancery Lane with their old English design of architecture hundreds of years old. They were not at all colorful but elegant, not at all gorgeous but massive, not impressive but sober looking, and not airy or sunny but cold and roomy. There were grounds and open yards with old trees naked of leaves above or grass below. Maybe the spring or summer would give them a brighter look.

I was conducted by a fellow student to the nearby Council of Legal Education. After the formalities of admission and payment were completed, on the basis of the records earlier sent to them, I was given an appointment with the under treasurer, Mr. Fairchild, on the day. It took me less time than I thought, and all the formidable obstacles seemed to be standing in the way were gone. The rigidity that the council applied to the Commonwealth students no longer appeared to me unreasonable. I opted for Lincoln's Inn.

The other Inns, like Grays Inn, Inner Temple, and Middle Temple, have the same system of education or examination with different libraries and dining halls. The only compulsory thing in this system of education is to have at least six dinners a term with the masters of the bench and fellow students. You get a sumptuous four course dinner with port or sherry, ending with a toast. The other compulsory thing, one might say, is to pay for all these dinners in addition to the fees. That is why it was commonly said that to become a barrister you only have to know how to eat dinners.

The lessons in bar etiquette are part of this training no doubt but how hard are the examinations, how useful are the classes, and how vast is the course can only be comprehended by the wearer of the mantle. Thus, when I walked out of the nicely heated cozy office of the under treasurer on the following day, I got a full picture of my duties and obligations of a student of the bar. The softspoken, well-groomed, middle-aged, fair-looking Fairchild briefed me on my long course, due exemptions, and the noble profession. Because of my results of LL.B. from Dacca university, I was given an exemption in some subjects in part I of the examination. He politely asked me to see him whenever there was any problem or difficulty. But probably I saw him only once more after I passed my final in 1958. He was fair enough but not a child. The Treasurer, Rt. Honble Lord Coehen, was not to be seen except in an exceptional case.

Why I joined Lincoln's Inn and not any one of the other three is yet a mystery to me. But I remember that the prominent barristers of the Indian subcontinent, like Gandhi and Jinnah, were students of this college. So I found that most of the boys of the commonwealth countries fancied this Inn and felt at home here. Lincoln's Inn has a checkered history, and so has this system of legal education.

I had no telephone number of uncle Ruhul Amin, who was studying law in London since years past. I was thinking of dropping him a letter when Barrister Abbas told me that I wouldn't get him in classes, as he was working in the Pakistan High Commission like many other Pakistani students. When I went to see him in his residence cum chamber in Tavistock Square, his lady secretary led me to his room, where I was warmly received. He also observed that our boys unwisely take the legal education to be very easy. But sitting in examination, which takes place in every term of three months, they found out that it was easier to fail than to pass. By the time they get serious, their home remittances were stopped, landing them in the midst of a clerical job in the High Commission or a menial job in some hotel or factory. I was reminded not to commit that mistake.

While walking to the common room of our Inn one day, I heard that two smartly dressed young men were talking in mixed English and Urdu. I introduced myself to them, and they took me for coffee at the canteen. Muntaquim was from Sylhet, East Pakistan, and Kazmi was from Lahore, West Pakistan. We got friendly and discussed classes, examination, the coffee, house and chess. They took me to Barkers and Fifty Shilling and got me a heavy overcoat, which I needed very badly. We roamed along Tottenham Court Road, Oxford Circus, and Piccadilly Circus. They were describing to me, mostly in English, the things and places, where to go and where to eat, what to see and what to enjoy. Kazmi was a poetic type, fond of reciting his own verses and also those of Allama Iqbal. He was doing Bar for five or six years and still clearing his part I. Handsome Muntaquim was enjoying life in the company of boy and girl friends but Kazmi, being philosophical in nature, could not very much enchant his friends of either sex and thus was a bit desolate and sad most of the time. But Muntaquim, in four years, had completed his part I and was preparing for the final. Amiul Islam Choudhury and Abdur Rob, who came from East Pakistan long ago, joined our company; we were constant companions in and out of Inn.

The first class I attended was of equity in the old hall of at least 300 seats. The hall was cold, but the professor was quite warm and witty for the most difficult lesson he was giving. Students present were marked in a register, and we took notes on the lessons. The class was

for about fifty minutes, and the number of attendees was little more than 50. There used to be 2 or 3 classes every day of the week by important professors with voluntary but good attendance of mostly new comers.

Among the new friends were one William, already a barrister but an occasional visitor to the library or common room. He was a tall young man nearing thirty-five but very unassuming and carelessly dressed, still a bachelor but very good at chess. Mostly I was a loser, but when I won a game, that meant another cup of coffee with another game no matter whether it was night or day. The English coffee houses, which are famous for idle music, idle gossip, or idle love, were no place for neglecting the young Eves. But William bothered for none but chess even in those dark dens around Piccadilly or Oxford Circus. Kazmi was also indifferent to those common vices, whether he was sitting in a coffee house or park, but other friends used to take active interest in girls, sometimes more than the classes.

I was discouraged to buy textbooks or attend classes by my friends. But I found them most useful, which led me to attend either class or our rich library of the inn every day. The warm, cozy and serene atmosphere in the inn library was a place of quiet concentration for students and barristers alike. So I dared to sit for one subject in the first term of examination and very luckily cleared it. Thereby I got courage to sit for the rest of the papers; later, though, they were getting stiffer every day. Raman of the West Indies and Roy of India were trying unsuccessfully to clear their final for the last ten years, so I was quite apprehensive of the future. But I also found that Ishtiaq came after me but cleared the final with me within three years. We had to finish twelve terms, i.e., three years before we could be called to the bar on passing the final exam. But exemptions were allowed on special grounds to deserving students.

Legal knowledge is an ever-expanding field of human experience. The English system, followed throughout the commonwealth countries, is still the mainspring of modern national and international laws. Still linked up with the Latin language and oldest Roman law, it has developed tremendously in scope and extent in the field of the civil, criminal, land, sea, air, ecclesiastical and temporal laws. It has kept touch with laws of Islam mainly through the Anglo-Muslim laws of India, Pakistan, and Egypt but never allowed itself to be mixed up with it.

Lincoln's Inn, my university college, if I may call it, was established in 1422. The other Inns came into existence about eighty years after, i.e., Middle Temple in 1501, Inner Temple in 1505, and the youngest Gray's Inn in 1569. When Edward I, the ruling monarch, decided to hasten the

end of the clergy as lawyers in the king's courts, he passed an ordinance in 1292 placing the legal profession under the control of the judges. To house the budding professionals, these inns and temples were established as hostels and training grounds. There were chambers built to live and work, a hall to eat and drink, and a chapel to pray and a library to consult books of reference. Today, after 500 years, the basic structure remains, but a few Barristers live in the inn chambers, more work in their respective chambers here, but all belong to any one of the inns, whether resident in London or not. Today it is more a temple of learning than an inn in which to live or dine. Each inn consists of students, barristers, and benchers. The teachers belong to the council of legal education, and they deliver common lectures to the students of all inns or temples. The Masters of the bench hold the highest rank of any inn. They form the governing body of an inn whose numbers rise gradually, but in our time it was about fifty. On election to the bench, each one is fined substantially to increase the inn fund. But I do not think that the honorary royal benchers like Prince Albert, King George, Prince George, or Queen Mary were ever fined for their election to the bench of Lincoln's Inn.

Lincoln's Inn derives its name from the Earl of Lincoln, who died in 1311 and on whose land it stood in the beginning. Besides his arms, the lion in the monogram of the inn was taken, and on the right of it stands a crescent and stars. The ancient institution is adorned with ancient halls and buildings. The old hall dates back to 1480, i.e., before the discovery of America by Columbus. Sir Thomas More joined the inn in 1496 and spent much of his professional life here, like many other legal luminaries who followed him in succession. This Hall was renovated in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and still stands as a masterwork of fine architecture. This hall, besides being used as a hall for dining or moots, was sometimes used as a court of justice, especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, till Queen Victoria opened the Royal Court of Justice in 1882. Even the New Hall, built across the green, dates back to 1843 when Queen Victoria opened it. We used to take our dinner in this hall every term with fellow students and benchers. I was also called to the bar in this hall on the February 4, 1958 and pronounced an utter barrister. A world of things happened in between my admission and call, some of which I still remember as things of yesterday only.

One day I was reading quietly in the 500-year-old inn library when Raman approached me to buy a raffle ticket. I was tired of concentrating in the tough subject like constitutional law, yet I was annoyed, as Raman always went around with extra-academic activities, which kills time and

costs money. With a fixed remittance from father or brother, I had no money to spare or squander. But to get away from the dull evenings, I bought a ticket.

It was a casual hall, and students came there with their female partners in late evening.

I was watching as I did not know how to dance, nor did I have a female partner. Raman and Muntaquim were encouraging me to participate, but I was gasping. Raman brought an Austrian girl friend, who had invited her friend Maureen to join the barrister's ball. In the enchanting music, in the whirl of pairs, and in the dimly lighted hall, some romantic atmosphere prevailed. But I was feeling like a fish out of water, smartly dressed but lonely seated. When Raman introduced Katherine and Maureen to me, they expected that I should offer these girls the next dance. Raman got up with Katherine in the music of a waltz, and Maureen, being a girl, could not invite me; it was for me to offer her the company. I only tried to talk to her; she was looking very elegant in her pink dress with black cardigan on her slim, petite body. But she left abruptly as the music stopped. I went out and several times had soft drinks and enjoyed watching other couples enjoying themselves till midnight.

"You insulted my friend," Katherine said when the last dance was over.

"Never, I was just talking to her." I tried to defend myself in a lawyer like way.

"Yes, young man, just to talk and not to invite a young lady while the music is on is not only insult but a crime."

I was trying to brush up my memory on criminal law, which I had just passed, to find out if it was so. All of a sudden my wits came back. "What is the penalty, mademoiselle?"

Raman was smiling, but Maureen was stiff.

"Coffee for all." Katherine came to the rescue.

It was Saturday evening, and we stayed in the coffee house around Piccadilly Circus till late hours listening to music and sipping coffee. In this underground world, you see couples behaving in a most intimate way, freely and friendly. But it was not until we were departing that Maureen came to her normal disposition. She talked quietly, as if reluctantly, while our other two friends were deeply absorbed in their Romeo-Juliet enchantment. I explained to Maureen that I did not mean to offend her, but I was yet to get lessons of dancing. We parted as friends and also met on the next weekend in the same coffee house.

For several weeks, I was awfully busy with finding another accommodation for myself. I searched for a suitable accommodation with Rob,

Muntaqim, and Sultan, but in most of the places it was either “just gone” or “colored not allowed.” I was fed up with spending my evenings and making phone calls in this pursuit of finding a dig. One day, Sultan suggested that with this amount of energy he could possibly buy a house rather than renting a flat. I just laughed away the idea, but Sultan, with a business background, was quite serious. He proposed that we share the down payment and the balance could be arranged by mortgages. He was the son-in-law of a very rich man of Chittagong, but I had very little savings. But the idea got into my head that instead of looking for rooms we look for a house of our own. We talked to estate agents, solicitors, and insurance agents and started really looking for a house.

The summer vacation was coming, so I decided to earn something for the down payment. I got a job in some pipe industries in the dock area. I got a job in a warehouse of garments near St. Paul, and I worked in a gas board office in North London. By the time I finished them all, I was richer by few hundred pounds. I continued even after vacation for the extras I needed. And in the land of the dignity of labor, I never felt myself small, nor did it detract me from my mission of study, but it was hard life. Ultimately, one fine morning Sultan and I found ourselves as the owner of a five-storied red-brick house of 54 Addison Gardens in West London. Neither I nor our friends could believe it until they were hosted in our apartment there. There were furnished and unfurnished tenants, and we had a floor to ourselves. Even Maureen did not believe it till she was my guest one evening over rice and curry. Most of the old English houses were without baths as whatever little bath they were used to take weekly or so the public baths outside were good enough for them. The difficulty I faced in saying prayers without proper wash and bath was removed, as we had two nice bathrooms in the house. I hardly missed any Friday prayers whether at the Pakistan High Commission or at Regents Park mosque. While working for wages in East London, I used to attend the East London mosque at Aldgate. The number of the Muslims in London were in the thousands but attendance in mosques was poor like the Protestant churches. To whatever religion one belongs, if he is not steadfast to it, he is bound to behave like a ship without radar.

The biggest religious congregation we had was either at Woking Mosque or at Regents Mosque at the time of Eidul Fiter and Eidul Adha. Muslims from all parts of London or even outside used to come for these two yearly festivals. Common prayers, meeting brothers coming from all parts of the world, black, white, or yellow, and a buffet lunch were the common features besides handshakes, kisses, and embraces. Even the women and children participated in these festivals in their multi-

colored, multinational dresses. After all, all Muslims form part of one Ummat as there cannot be any distinction among them whether he is Arab, Azam, African, Asian, Chinese, American, or European. It is the core of human fraternity bound by common origins and faith leading toward the greater fraternity of mankind.

I was serious about my studies, but I was never a bookworm. So I used to spend my spare time, mostly weekends, seeing important or beautiful places or things and expanding the barriers of experience. And there were a hundred and one things in London or around to keep one engaged in all seasons of the years. Broadly speaking, there are two seasons in England—the winter for nine months and the summer for three months. The autumn or spring epitomized by great poets and writers in their verbosity, disappear as quickly as they come within days or weeks. We hardly find the eulogy for rains in England like that of Indian or Pakistan poets or writers, as it drips throughout the year and hardly rains in torrents. But summer in England is really beautiful, with the advent of tulips, roses, cosmos, genia, sunflower, and other flowers of gorgeous colors and shades. In this summer, we visited places like Oxford, Cambridge, the two citadels of learning, Stratford upon Avon of Shakespeare, sea beaches, parks and palaces at Windsor and Alexandra, the zoo, football grounds, cricket fields, and lakes.

I was invited to Maureen's on Christmas day and found her family quite friendly. I enjoyed their festival and the turkey dinner with Christmas pudding. It was a pleasant experience for me. Maureen did not drink because of me, but she was quite emotional, and so was I. Emotion itself is intoxicating enough.

In winter evenings, we visited the Museums, of which there are dozens in London itself, including the British Museum. We also used to visit the Art galleries, the famous theaters, the best films in West London, the orchestra in Royal Festival Hall, the ballet in Covent garden, and sometimes the Chinese restaurants. The years rolled on so quickly that it appeared like a dream of wonderland.

When I was working in a garment warehouse, one Dutta from Calcutta, working in the same office, became a friend of mine. We decided to spend our summer holiday on the continent. We did not have enough money, and I had to save for my house-purchasing plans. So we approached the National Union of Students in the university; out of their several exchange student plans, we selected one for working and earning in Germany. Our plan was to travel out of our earnings in Europe. One fine morning, Chitta Dutta and I set out on our adventure with two light suitcases. We crossed the English Channel by boat and reached Brussels by train.

In Brussels, we spent the day sightseeing. Despite our language difficulty and shortage of cash, we made best use of our time till evening. We reached Bonn to report to the student union office there; they sent us to a remote industrial town. We were herded into a YMCA hostel with more boys and girls coming for vacation work from Holland, Sweden, Belgium, and Spain. In the hostel, we had to prepare our own breakfast and lunch in the kitchen and do our own beds. The camp life lasted for a day, as we were all assigned duties either in the agricultural field, offices, or factories on the next day.

Dutta and I were placed in a factory near Cologne where electrical goods were manufactured. We got a warm reception from the male and female workers. They helped us in the work, with the language, and even shared their lunch of sandwiches and cold milk or drink. We only smiled and said "Danken shuen," as our vocabulary in German was very limited. During lunch break, we were received by one manager, who talked in German language through his lady secretary, who spoke both English and German fluently. They thanked us for coming from the U.K. to participate in the postwar reconstruction of Germany.

It was about twelve years after devastating World War II, yet signs of destruction were quite visible even in the remotest parts of Germany. It is easy to destroy but difficult to build. What war cost Germany in six years may not be restored within several decades. Losses of war are not only material but also human and moral. Materials may be restored but not others. Fathers, mothers, sons, and daughters lost in the war will never come back, nor can the love, affection, or faith be restored to its own place. What is lost in war is lost forever—things may come back better or worse but never the same again. Only the deep desire and sincere efforts for peace can preserve and sustain the dearest possessions and values of life. And this attitude is different from hate, pity, imposition, or violence.

The workers in the factory, employees in the office, and the management at the top were all hardworking. They were devoted and determined to build up the country anew. Their working hours were longer than in England in factories and fields. Both men and women were not so well fed or well clad but neat and straightforward—more friendly and dutiful. They would not discuss controversial matters but were quite social. Some would say that Hitler was wrong, and some would say it was a conspiracy of the world Jewry where people were mere pawns.

I was on a machine welding some parts of electric switches; there was a girl in between, doing some other parts, and Dutta at the end of another doing something else. During our three-week job we changed our work and the machine only once. The job was not a difficult one in

the company of cheerful comrades, so the weeks passed by rather quickly. One day we invited the female secretary and a male colleague for office lunch of Hungarian goulash, but we were quite embarrassed when they insisted on paying the bill. They said, "No, you are our student guests." One Saturday evening, we two were invited to a private party of a German family. The girls were quite proficient in English, so while we brushed up on our German, they tested their English. The boys were quite bright and lively. There was music but no dance. We had games and conversations. Dutta was quite good in table talk.

On Sunday, we went out to the nearby forests and the lake. Our host workers and ourselves were quite sad when we drew the last wages and parted our way. We spent the evening in the hostel, bid good-by to other students, and took a night train to Cologne. We had only a week left to cover the important places of Germany, France, and Switzerland. We saw the high cathedrals, still-devasted city, and other historical sights of Cologne during the day and left for Bonn at night. We also spent only a day in Bonn, the capital of West Germany. Half of Germany and part of the original capital of Berlin were still in the occupation of Russia. Here, also, we left our boxes and luggage and carried only the camera with us. The university, the Parliament, secretariat, and other important places, we visited during the day and had a nice German dinner in one of the inexpensive restaurants of Bonn.

On the following morning, we took a trip by boat over the Rhine River. It was one of the most enjoyable boat journeys we ever had. The boat crossed through mountains on either side with intermitant cha-teaus on their tops. The crowd on either bank waved and cheered the passengers, enjoying the bright sunshine of Germany. The whole journey had a cheerful and festive look of carefree holiday makers.

We reached Paris by train in the afternoon. We were dead tired, so we immediately lodged ourselves in a hotel. We thought of enjoying Paris by night but decided to take a bath to shake off the effect of sleeplessness of the last three nights. But the hot bath did the trick. We relaxed for a while, and when the telephone of Dutta from the nearby room woke me up from sleep, it was past midnight. I was not feeling like even waking up for a bite. He wanted to drag me out of bed, but he could not. He left me alone to sleep, and I left him alone to enjoy the night.

One who has not seen Paris at night has not seen life in action. But when I woke up early in the morning, fresh and hungry, the night was no more there. In my sadness, I rang up Dutta, but there was no response. I had my continental breakfast in the hotel all alone, thinking of our day's program. Tired of waiting, when I stood up to go to my

room, Dutta came in sight in the far-away lobby sitting by the side of a beautiful blonde. After ten o'clock, we set out for sightseeing. The museum, the Arch of Triumph, the Eiffel Tower, the Seine, the monument, the Senate House, and the shopping arcades were all covered during the day. We only had a self-service lunch break for an hour, but the rest of the time we were on our two-footed carriage seeing things and people one after another in quick succession. Before the war it would be difficult to converse in any language other than French in Paris. But now everyone seemed to know English—it matters little whether the accent was British, American, or French.

We had no time to wait for the night, as our journey by night was the greatest time saver. So we passed through the black forest, Alps, and the Rhine and reached Switzerland on the following morning. It was another beautiful country full of lakes and mountains. The weather was nice, so we traveled by boat on the lakes of Neuchatel and Inter-laken, and enjoyed bright sunshine with swiss chocolates and rolls. The quiet lakes were like calm rivers, with shops on either sides at small neat towns. And it was the holiday crowd, gay and colorful with bright green background spotted by blue lakes along the mountains. Our enchanting days passed so quickly that three days in Switzerland seemed like three hours. We enjoyed every second of it by walking on foot, rowing the boats, and moving by mountain chairs, resting only on one night.

The return journey we planned was completely different. We took a day train this time to see the countryside of Switzerland and France. We traveled the whole day to pass through the green fields, plain valleys, small stations, variously dressed country folks, playing children, and grazing cattle. The speed, the wind, and the shakes would make one sleepy in cozy seats, but memories of recent days strong in our mind, we had so much to talk and so much to feel that we even did not doze. We crossed the channel at Calais and landed at Dover by boat, loaded with sweet and useful memories. Never will we be so young again, nor will we enjoy so much in so short a time with so little money.

Examinations were getting tougher every day. Uncle Amin was appearing with me, and so was Habib for the final. Edward of the West Indies also joined our company in Hammersmith Library for notes and revision. Only at tea break and lunch did we three discuss our course or the world issues or the gimmick headlines of daily newspapers. We were so much absorbed during the week that we called a break only on Sundays over lunch mostly at Amin's place. He was fond of cooking, and all the materials and recipe of Eastern cooking were known to him. And Amin was a good host. I passed after completing three years, Amin after eight years, and Habib after I left London. So did Edward within three years; he was quite sharp and intelligent.

When I passed, Maureen came to congratulate me at my house like other friends. After some time, she became sad and asked when I would be leaving.

"I am not leaving. I have to do the Post final course."

"After that you won't need me," she said.

"Why do you say that?"

"I just wonder. A barrister would go home start his practice, marry a girl in saree, and forget that he ever had a friend in England."

"I know how you feel."

"If you knew, you would never leave me."

"I never gave you any false hope."

"Nor you ever loved me."

"I do not know but I liked you so much as a friend."

She had her face on her lap and started sobbing. We had been good friends for a long time, but my preoccupation with studies did not enable me to go deeper than that. I had no answers to her sudden outburst. And the answers I had were no good logic of emotions. So we parted our way for good.

Post-Bar Period in Britain

I was no longer a student—no class, no exam, and no library. The whole world was before me to explore or enjoy. Abbas Mirza one day called at my house, and we went to Naseem's place. Yahya Sayeed, another journalist friend, also was picked up from the Pakistan High Commission. Our topic for discussion was Kashmir's fate. Kingsly Martin of the *New Statesman* openly argued for partition of Kashmir in the reception the previous evening. I was cross with him, and Naseem of Karachi Dawn reinforced me. Yahya of the *Dacca Morning News* was not present that evening. I sent a dispatch to my *Daily Millat* about the luncheon meeting with Prime Minister Menzies of Australia in the Asian Correspondents Association of which we all were members. I was going to quote Kingsly also, but Yahya asked me not to, as it was off the record. Menzies supported the UN resolution for referendum in Kashmir. But when we faced Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru over the same issue after the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference of 1956, he evaded the question on different pleas.

The weekly briefings at the foreign office were another spot where Kashmir and other burning problems were discussed thoroughly after the short on-the-record session. We used to meet our press fraternity mostly here, besides special press conferences held by visiting foreign dignitaries of Russia, the United States, and others. After completing my bar, I devoted more time as press reporter and got acquainted with politicians and diplomats of various countries. Once one diplomat of an Iron Curtain country entertained me at dinner. He was slowly trying to infuse his ideas of Marxism, as he found me very vocal against capitalism. But he soon found out that journalists were creatures not to be duped easily into any trap, rather, there was apprehension to the contrary. However, we ended up with the conclusion that the Kashmir

issue, which was created by India, was no longer a bilateral issue with Pakistan but an explosive situation that needed UN intervention.

Suez invasion of Britain, France and Israel in 1956 was halted primarily by Khrushchev's threat of atomic retaliation. But Israel, an unwanted entity in the heart of Arab lands as a result of the Belfour declaration, continued to threaten the peace of the Middle East. Palestinians were uprooted from their soil and were rotting in refugee camps in subhuman conditions. Premier Anthony Eden had to resign when the news of secret meetings among the three invading powers created an uproar in and out of British Parliament. Eden was Sir Winston Churchill's successor, and now Macmillan held the rein from him, shortly to be ousted by the Labour Party victory under Hugh Gaitskell whom Harold Wilson succeeded later. Hugh Gaitskell, with whom we had a luncheon meeting before he became premier, was a Fabian socialist and not a communist as his enemies would think.

Pakistan, by its pro-Western pronouncements on the Suez crisis, lost the confidence of the Arabs only to be later regained in President Ayub Khan's time. The people of Pakistan were always pro-Arab, rather pro-Islamic, so when the government of 1956 failed to openly support the Arab cause our students and people burned the British Information Office to ashes at Dacca, and the government of Suhrawardy became unpopular with the people.

In the east, the Korean War had stopped, dividing the country into North and South under two governments of opposite views, one patronized by China and Russia and the other by the United States with its Western allies. But a new front opened in Vietnam between the Communists and the nationalists. This time neither the UN nor the United States directly intervened; the people were left to settle their score in blood among themselves. A protracted civil war was on with arms trading on both sides.

In South Africa the white apartheid continued against the original black inhabitants. In education, administration, commerce, politics, and society, majority blacks were not allowed rightful participation. In their own country, they were treated as outsiders, third-class citizens, and outcasts. Even world pressure and boycott could not bend the incorrigible colonial habits of a few whites because the country was rich and in real crisis would be backed by other white nations. Blacks there or elsewhere were yet to rise up and assert themselves morally or forcefully.

Segregation in the United States was waning out, but the animal instincts in man raised its ugly head in Little Rock and other places every day. The intervention of the Congress or the Supreme Court seemed at times too weak to control this crime against humanity between the blacks and whites.

Peculiarly but not surprisingly, the popular uprising in Hungary was trampled under the wheels of Russian tanks. So were Polish and Czechoslovak demands for freedom, but Yugoslavia took a different stand, breaking from the Comintern. And Russia found it difficult to fully dominate the 600 million neighbors of China. The breakup was complete in 1958 when Russia withheld all her aid and loan and withdrew all her materials and technicians.

American massive aid under the Marshall plan to the war-torn European allies, of course, ended its own Kellogg-Briand Pact of noninterference, but it also rendered a great help to the ruined people. No aid is without strings so Nato in Europe, Seato in Asia, and Cento in the Middle East sprang up in support of collective security and against another world war ally, Russia. Both military and economic aid was flowing in, in the East and West to build up a line of defense for the United States far away from its own borders. When Fidel Castro of Cuba posed a threat on the very nose of America, the Pentagon had to be so decisive in its action that Khrushchev ordered dismantling of all missile bases there aimed at threatening the security of the United States. The tug of war of supremacy between the two superpowers continued in all directions dangerously dividing the world into two distinct camps. The third world was yet to emerge as a balance for peace.

I did not have my press pass then. One evening, I stood in line to enter the general visitors gallery of the House of Commons under Big Ben on the Thames. There was a lifeless debate, so I did not have to wait for long. Facing each other only few MPs were in their benches before the speechless speaker sitting high up in his chair. This historic House had witnessed the rise and fall of countless kings or queens, prime ministers or leaders of the opposition, passage of acts, or orders and debates on motions and questions for several centuries. Democracy was reared here from infancy to maturity through trials and errors of passing time. Members of Parliament, were all honorable, whether sitting in the treasury bench or in the opposition. They are only "honorable", when they are elected by the people, for the people and of the people in the House of Commons. House of Lords is different from the House of Commons but sitting not far from it, having similar powers but not exercised nowadays except for endorsing the views of Commons. Membership goes by appointment or heritage of this upper House, used as a traditional check and balance on the effective lower House. The Commons has extra budgetary power, and so has the Lords the extra-judicial powers. This bicameral legislature has worked well, not always smoothly, in this country of no written Constitution.

I was going to get out of the House when all of a sudden the leader

of the opposition took his stretched leg off the table and rose to his feet. The benches were being filled with more members, both at the front and at the back. "Point of orders" from back benchers interrupted the speech of Mr. Gaitskel. On some issues he called for a snap division. Quickly out and in went the whips and members including all the familiar faces like Churchill, Eden, Gaitskel Wilson, and the ministers, filled the House. "Ayes" to the right and "Nos to the left," the House divided to vote. It was quite exciting, but I did not wait after midnight when the voting was still going on. I anxiously looked for the result in the morning press to find the usual victory for the government party.

I do not exactly remember when the general election took place, but I found my name on the voters' list, as I was a resident for more than six months. I thought there would be meetings, processions, demonstrations and canvassing in the land of free democracy, so much so that everyone would be disturbed or agitated either in favor of the sitting Conservative Party or opposition Labour Party or almost forgotten in the third Liberal Party. But I noticed no election fever or campaign except through the papers, posters, and pamphlets. A few meetings in big halls with occasional boos were not warm enough for a general election. The "Gallup poll" and canteen discussions were not so hot to warm up the cold weather, either.

The orderly quiet and methodical British men and women voted mostly on the dotted lines from morning till evening without any fuss or noise. The nearby party offices would guide anyone who needed it but won't bother you unnecessarily. I went to the nearby polling booth, got my ballot, and cast my vote without anyone even noticing it.

I was eager to know the result of my candidate and waited in Trafalgar Square where countrywide results were displayed with light signs every minute. The Conservatives retained power under Anthony Eden's leadership. The Labor Party was close enough, with a few seats only to the Liberals. The conscious electors of Britain always choose between two parties and left another party as a standby. The Liberals, who ruled the country for many, many years under statesmen of world repute, are no longer in the limelight after the Second World War. British people, through trials and errors of centuries, had developed a nature of parliamentary democracy with the Crown as their titular head.

Besides the mass rally organized by the Labour party at Royal Albert Hall against the invasion of Suez in 1956 by Britain, France, and Israel, which I participated with Arab and Asian friends, I remember well two more social functions. One was the annual Pakistan Society dinner attended by the favorite retired civil servants of Pakistan and notable political leaders and students. The other was the Pakistan Day program

of 1958 organized by Barrister Abbas, Amin, and myself with the help of fellow Pakistanies at Holborn Hall. This was a grand function, with our speeches and those of the MPs of the Pakistan group rounded up by a variety performance of international nonprofessional artists. High Commissioner Ikramullah and some British MPs were our guests of honor, who enjoyed specially folk dance of Kashmir and snake dance of East Pakistan.

In London, one can get lost if he wants to in the variety of functions, lectures, seminars, shows, and meetings, as there are so many of them every day. But one does not notice the fun or fury of any one unless he is participating himself even in the speakers corner at Hyde Park.

After I finished my post final a telephone call came from Barrister Abbas.

"Would you like to appear in a case?"

"I would love to, but I have no experience."

"How can there be experience without a beginning?"

"I know nothing about the case. When is it posted?"

"This morning at ten thirty. I know that you can do it, so come and collect the brief."

It was 8:30 then. I took courage, took my gown, put on my striped trousers and black vest and jacket, and collected the brief and a wig from Abbas's secretary at 9:30. Abbas had already left for another court appearance, so I was to handle this one on my own.

When I reached North London County Court, my first visit, it was already ten o'clock. I hurriedly went to the barristers' cloak room, put on the collar, the band, the gown, and the wig and looked at the mirror. It was a different Akhtaruddin, a real barrister with a real brief.

I entered the courtroom five minutes before 10:30. The clerk received me with a smile and asked me in which case I was.

"We will take up your case first. But do you mind sitting on the left side, as you are for the plaintiff," the clerk very politely told me. I know now that I was for the plaintiff and started looking up the brief. I did not know my own client.

"Is your client here?" the clerk asked me.

I applied my wit and requested him to wait for few minutes. The case was for a civil claim of sixteen hundred pounds. A few minutes later, a dark man in a dark suit and bright tie asked me where he could find Mr. Abbas. I told him I would appear for him and asked him to get ready. I had no time to test him. He frowned at me disapprovingly and sat near me. The judge appeared, and we exchanged our bows. The case was called. I opened the case briefly and sought leave to examine the witness. My client took his oath and stood in the box for examination.

I examined him about his claim and proved a document. When I was elaborating, the judge politely told me, as this was an undefended case, that would be enough. It struck me then that no more witnesses were to be examined. I concluded my case with forceful argument. When I took my seat, I was perspiring in that cold. The judge and my client both approvingly smiled.

"Is it your first appearance?" asked the judge.

"Yes, your honor."

"You have done very well."

I was blushing when the clerk smiled. After ten minutes, the judgment was delivered decreeing the suit in my client's favor. In excitement, I rushed to the chamber. When Abbas came, he joyfully embraced me and issued me a check. The amount was small, but bigger was the encouragement. I won my first court case of life and with a reward.

I was preparing to leave and needed money. My father and brother were repeatedly asking me to go back home, otherwise, I would have stayed longer. So I sold our house on a good offer and purchased essential books and goods for myself and family members. The balance left in my share was not enough for a new car but would be useful if invested in a smaller property in London. Maybe my brothers or our children would come one day for their education and face a worse color bar or other difficulties in finding any accommodation. So I talked to my solicitor, Sampson, and the estate agents and luckily got a small property arranged at 93, Sulgrave Road in Hammersmith area. It was partly occupied by controlled tenants, so I got it cheap. I asked the agents to manage it.

The day came when the connections and companions of about four years were to be parted with. Leaving behind everything of attachment, I took a train from Victoria, as I planned to see as many countries as possible on the way. I traveled three days after crossing the English Channel and saw Berne in Switzerland and Lyons in France among other nice spots. I was in time for my ship to Bombay, sailing from Marseilles port through Suez. On the air journey, as when I came to England, one does not see much of a country or its people. One also misses the local delicacies, nice souvenirs, and varied people one comes across. I was traveling by night train and dozing when one passenger asked me something in French. Looking at my dumb face, he asked me in broken English if I was from India. I said, "No, from Pakistan."

He said: "Muslim?"

I said, "Yes."

He jumped from his seat embraced me and kissed me on my cheek several times. He was an Algerian fighting for freedom against France. Pakistan was their friend.

The Mediterranean Sea was quiet and sunny, making our journey more pleasant with nice food and deck environment. It was a French ship with French dishes and attendants. Nights were gay and days full of games, swimming, and fun. We came across a few fellows enjoying themselves thoroughly with drinks, dance, and dames. Someone would just relax on a deck chair looking at the blue sky, blue sea, and flying birds in the bright Mediterranean sun. The younger ones kept themselves busy with swimming, games, or gossips.

The Indian engineer, returning home after five years, said to me from a side chair, "Do you know that the couple standing there are not married?"

"How do you know?"

"She had no ring in her hand when I danced with her last night."

"Well, what grievance can I have if you stand exactly the same way on the railing with her?"

"No, suppose not. Will you help me?"

"In what?"

"We will invite her to drinks tonight."

"You know, I do not drink."

"If I could talk to her."

"All right, I shall call her for you if you do not dare."

"Please do."

On the following day I saw him and the other Goanese boy quarreling with each other; the girl asked me to stop them from fighting. I told them: "There you can see Egypt, so get ready for landing." People were already on the move to pack up to Egypt. So the quarrel stopped without much ado.

We were five men in a group who decided to land and board the ship at the other end of the Suez Canal after a full day. I took both the Goanese and Indian boy with me, leaving the Siamese Eve in the ship to seduce someone else, if she would. The destination of the ship was Vietnam via Bombay and Singapore. I wanted to see some historic places of Egypt before I reached Bombay. Our group of five hired a taxi, after hard bargaining, that would take us around Cairo, the nearby Pyramids and Sphinx, and be in time for the ship a hundred miles away at the southern end of Suez. We visited Al Azhar University, which was few hundred years old, and a center of Islamic learning.

Life in Egypt has taken a new turn after the overthrow of King Farouk by Naquib and Nasser. General Naquib, the hero, was under house arrest after Nasser took over from him with the help of young army officers. The ambitious Nasser did away with many old institutions and values and jailed or hanged his opponents, including the workers

of Muslim Brotherhood. He dissolved the assembly and parties and became the president-dictator himself. When America refused to build up the prestigious Aswan Dam, Nasser completely switched to Russian camp and turned the country into a socialist state. He harped too much on Arab nationalism to establish his image as the undisputed leader of the Arabs. He even instigated rebellion and coup d'état in his neighboring Arab countries like Iraq and Syria. The rebels mercilessly killed King Faisal of Iraq and Nuri Alsaïd, his premier. He also tried the same with all his opponents in Arabia. He nearly succeeded in every country except Jordan and Saudi Arabia, whose benevolent kingship had shown an era of prosperity and understanding. But Nasser did not succeed in his wars against tiny Israel, who, with the backing of world Jewry, was getting bigger in every clash. His effort at union with Syria also succeeded, but Israel, with the direct backing of the American government, was not to give up its occupied territory. Russia who helped Israel to come into being was now with Egypt to contain Israel and curb the American influence in the Middle East. She successfully took practically all the Arab countries out of American influence, including CENTO member Iraq, but she also did not want to eliminate Israel from Arab soil, which the Arabs insisted on. In the process, the Palestinian people suffered, and Suez remained a gunpowder keg to be ignited at the free will of the superpowers.

Our visit to the museum, the Kobbah palace and the high Pyramids, and Sphinx took us back to the history of thousands of years. Some would say the Nile valley civilization was the oldest, some would say no, the Indus valley civilization was the oldest. The historians and archeologists go on discovering the past ruins of human existence, leading to these debates. But I thought that anyone believing in the Holy Quran, the Bible, or even the Jewish Scriptures could not get away from the fact that Adam and Eve were the first man and woman on earth. The civilization that they started must be the oldest. And where are they to be found? The *Jabalur Rahmat*, the Holy Mount, is still in existence, near which the world Muslims congregate at Hajj every year. And the extra big graveyard of mother Eve still lies in its ruins in the port city of Jeddah. And the Holy Mount, where the penance and prayer of Adam was accepted, and they reunited there about fifty miles away from Jeddah is in Saudi Arabia.

We stayed the night in a Cairo hotel after doing some shopping. The night life in Cairo was no less Western or dirty. We watched the famous belly dancing in a night club among the fat-legged and big-eyed hostesses and drank the black coffee. The hostesses were surprised when I ordered coffee instead of wine, as in Paris or Bonn, the hotel waitresses

were puzzled when I ordered for plain water instead of beer. The women in general had given up traditional Muslim veil and took to half skirt without any head cover. The men were almost all in Western suits or shirts. But for their feature and language, one would not recognize them as Arabs, though they were championing their cause. The spirit of Al Azhar was no longer in force; rather, a new spirit of Arab socialism had occupied the field. The mosques drew only small crowds. Yet the developments in the field of better housing, industries, and communication were visible. They were trying to catch up with modern education, culture, and material progress under Nasser, who was quite popular with his people. He had given up the royal pomp and extravagance of Farouk and was streamlining the administration and politics of the country. Muslims do belong to different geographical nationalities over the world. But that is subservient to his identity of fundamental faith. Communists are united; so should be the Muslims and the Christians—not fighting each other but for peaceful adherence to their orderly lives. All men are mortal, so they should order their short life of decent human living than fighting for animal existence. No man can do that if he loses his faith.

When we got into our taxi after breakfast, my packet of souvenirs was in my hand. The driver took it away to place it in the rear boot. We had to hurry up. We drove along the canal. We could see the other bank, also sandy with rare green vegetation. Then we took a straight road through the desert with wide horizon of blue sky and shining sands all around. Sometimes a road side village, sometimes a caravan, and sometimes a herd of sheep with a shepherd boy or a passing car would break the otherwise lonely drive. All on a sudden we saw shining water at a distance on our road. We thought we arrived by the sea, but it was nothing but a desert deception to our eyes—the mirage. In olden times, many a caravan would get lost behind this mirage in search of water.

The countryside looked poor with roads and huts; village women were still to be seen in veils and men in long Arabian clothes. We stopped in one big village on the way where men and children came up with cold water in jars and desert fruits in shabby dresses. We still had some Egyptian coins, which we delightfully utilized.

The ship had not arrived at the port when we reached Suez. So we took out our luggage and waited at the nearby tourist restroom. But the driver could not give back my packet of souvenirs. I argued, he shouted, and the police intervened. But the packet was not to be recovered.

As soon as we came out of Suez, we could feel the heat of May in the Red Sea. On our left bank was Saudi Arabia, the holy land of Muslims where the last prophet Muhamad (p.u.h.) held high the banner of Islam.

Mecca and Medina, the two holy cities, were not very far off. But our next stop was at Aden, from the anchored ship; as there was no jetties, we got to the shore by country boat. It was a port town of wild growth, of shops full of foreign goods. It was a British colony, a free port, so goods were quite cheap and abundant. Our friends bought watches, clothes, and other goods. I only stared and observed how far behind in the progress Adenese people were. The traders were not all Arabs but speaking in Arabic and broken English. We had a change of taste with some local bread and meat in a restaurant. The food was also cheap but not neatly cooked or served. Yet we enjoyed it very much. The little boy who carried the shopping bags to the country boat said thanks in Arabic, English, and French when he received his tips.

The ship was now in the Arabian Sea and gradually started rolling in the high waves. On the following day, weather turned worse, and the travelers got seasick. Even the robust Goanese boy and Indian engineer forgot their Siamese girl and lay bedridden with vomiting and dizziness. I was no exception and could not eat anything for the whole day. This was the worst part of any travel by ship. On the second day, the wind slowed down, and the rain washed the decks. Some were bathing in the rain to feel better. When the rain stopped, the rolling also came to a halt, and life came back to the young and old in full vigor. The dancing hall, the bars, the games, and the swimming pool again became lively.

The gateway to India, Bombay, was in sight, and everyone got busy again—the Captain, the crew, and the passengers. Many would end their journey here, and some would proceed further east. I packed my things in two parts. The main luggage was to be booked by train to Calcutta, as I did from London to Marseilles, and was lying in the ship's hold. I took with me a light case for my tour of Delhi, Agra, Banaras and Calcutta. I spent the day in Bombay seeing the queen's necklace, Malabar Hills, where Quaide Azam's house still stood, the Muslim saints' grave and mosque in the midst of the sea, the museum, and the high court. On this side of the Indian Ocean, the people, their dress, food, cloth, language, and culture, everything, were different from what I left behind in Europe or the Middle East. The weather was bright and warm, but the city was dull and colorless. Only the loud voices of the people and noise of car and carts kept the day humming.

At night, I took a through train to Delhi, the capital of India. In the morning, I reached Delhi and asked a cab driver to take me to a hotel. After breakfast, I set out again to see the historic places and things of the city. Muslims ruled the Indian subcontinent primarily from this city for 700 years. Today only the historic relics speak of them and they are

now ruled by others even after the British left the empire. A part of it turned to Muslim hands in Pakistan, but the rest remained in alien hands. But a day may come when present India may split into more sovereign states and Muslims may become majority in whole of India or in any such state. The Hindus in India apprehend that situation for which they either kill or keep them down politically and economically. What I saw in old Delhi was all the heritage of Muslim past, and what I saw in New Delhi was the heritage of British days. New India was trying to emerge here, and there were new names but nothing very important till then.

After the killing of Gandhi by extreme communal Nathuram Godse, Pandit Nehru was ruling the country through the Congress party. For other parties to have control in all the multi-racial states of India to match the organization and resources of Congress was still a far cry. So in the absence of a national catastrophe, Nehru could expect to rule India for ages if Congress could be kept intact. And with a mature political background he was managing well, also, in the international front by extracting the maximum economic and military benefit from both the world camps. So he had to speak of socialism and democracy in the same breath. Starting from the tomb of Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia, the great Muslim saint, the tall Kutubminar, spacious Jame Mosque, and massive Red Fort, and all the like speak eloquent of Muslim spiritual and temporal achievement in India. The religious spots were mostly deserted after the frequent communal riots and ravage that took place in India from 1947 onwards. In New Delhi the Parliament, the Supreme Court, the museum and secretariat stand as the most impressive architecture of the modern times. While looking for the *laddoo* of Delhi, I ended up eating *Kabab-Paratha* near Jame Mosque.

When the vendor learned that I was from Pakistan, he refused to take any money and asked me only to pray for the safety of those who still survived the wrath of the majority community.

Agra was not far from Delhi, which I reached by train, and spent the day. The great Tajmahal of Shajahan built in the memory of his beloved wife Mumtaz still stand erect as a nice piece of Mughul architecture. The Dewane Aam and Dewane Khas situated just beyond the dried up Jumna river still talk of the history which ran through the pomp and grandeur of Mughul rulers of India.

I bought one marble work of Tajmahal from a shop in Agra. I asked him to securely pack it in a box, which he did, and delivered the box to me. But when I opened the box on my arrival in Dacca a few days later, it gave me a shock. It was neither marble nor one shown to me but a smaller one of inferior material. A similar thing happened to me

in Egypt with my souvenir. But on my train journey from London Victoria Station to Marseilles, I booked a heavy box of my belongings. When I took delivery of the box at the railway station of Marseilles, I found the locks broken but securely tied up by still strips. Before opening the box I thought that all my valuables must have been taken away. But to my utter surprise I found everything intact except that the goods were in a mess. I realized that during the carriage the locks might have broken due to rough handling, but when detected, it was secured by steel strips. The difference of the sense of right or wrong shocked me.

It is true that in Europe we find that human morals are at a low ebb, especially in matters of relationship of man and woman. One hardly finds a grown-up girl or boy there without practical experience of the illicit connections. They enjoy the forbidden fruit without social condemnation, resulting in the increase in the number of unmarried mothers and social vices. Men and women also indulge in intoxicating drinks legally permitted by the Western society. There, also, we find the absence of happy family life, consisting of the beloved parents or brothers and sisters. We also see the segregation of religion from normal life there, drifting the whole population toward naked materialism. "Eat, drink and be merry" seem to be the philosophy of general living, though we are thousands of years ahead of epicurean days. Yet there are some qualities in their behavior that sustain the Western society. Honesty and learning are some of these qualities.

I did not ultimately stop at any other place after Delhi, as weather was getting too humid and hot. On the last leg of my journey, I only stayed in Calcutta for a day to have another glimpse of the historic port city, which really belongs to Bengal but by political contrivance was kept as a part of India. To please the Bengalees in India, a province was still named West Bengal but was really ruled from Delhi. Calcutta, which I last visited in 1946, was not the same as I saw in 1958. The cleanliness, the orderliness, and the brightness of the great city or its memorable institutions were not there. The Assembly House, the university, Senate Hall, Fort William, the Victoria Memorial, the Botanical Gardens, the zoo, the Howrah Bridge, the Nakhoda Mosque, and the rest were all there but not with the glory and serenity of its own past. The city was like a child kept away from its mother's lap—the hinterland of its nursing mother, East Bengal.

When the crescent and star flag carrier PIA plane landed at Dacca Airport, a jubilant crowd of relations, friends, and admirers greeted me with bouquets and garlands. I could see tears of joy in many eyes for the homecoming of an Eastern youth from his abode of learning in England. I was again in the midst of my people on the soil of Bengal.

Profession and Politics

In June 1958, I was enrolled as an advocate of the High Court of Judicature of East Pakistan. My seniority date was counted from the date of call to the bar, i.e., February 4 of the same year. My brother, Dr. Karim, had taken a release from the army and was then attached to Dacca Medical College. By then he had married, and I got a hospitable hostess in his house where I was putting up.

The first case I got was a motion against acquittal on a respectable fee. I prepared the case thoroughly, filed it, and moved it before a single judge. I argued slowly but vehemently, only to realize that motions against acquittal were not usually admitted for hearing by practice. At the end, the judge asked me, "Finished?"

"Yes, my lord."

"You have no strong grounds for admission."

"Except my last ground?"

"What is it?"

"This is my first appearance."

The judge laughed and admitted my case for hearing. My colleagues congratulated me, and the client came home in the evening with box of sweets.

Soon after joining the bar, I visited my favorite village home. My dear villagers took me in a procession with garlands and cheers from a riverside spot of Sugandhia four miles away from my home. I had to address a meeting of public, teachers, and students of Sugandhia school and another in front of my village school, which I established years ago. There were cheers and tears of triumph, love, attachment, and hope. I still remember them and always pray for them.

The legal profession is an honorable one. But it used to hurt me when I found that everybody does not behave in an honorable way nor

was the method of handling the clients so honorable. As a beginner, the idealism of profession was kept aloft by me. So I could not accept the offer of some higher earning advocates to join their chamber. I opted for another idealist, Barrister "Atom" Mustafa, as he was popularly known. He was more a sportsman than an advocate, to be found more in the stadium or sports clubs. Mostly, I was the lone visitor in his chamber till he would turn up in the late evenings for tea and tales. But he was excellent in advocacy and superb in etiquette.

In a murder case in which I appeared with him, he worked very hard as the poor old father requested him to do so in tears for his client. The hearing continued for two days, and Mustafa argued the case with the conviction that the accused client was innocent. He himself waited in the court to receive the judgment. When his lordship delivered the judgment, dismissing the appeal with modification, Mustafa was almost in tears. Outside the courtroom, the old bearded father of the accused was unmoved. He came close to us and said. "Please do not be upset. Justice was done."

I said, "What do you mean?"

The old man said, "He is my only son; otherwise, I would not even come for his defense."

Mustafa asked, "Why?"

The old man said, "I saw the murder with my own eyes. My son committed it but not in the way the prosecution had proved."

"If you told me that, I would not have argued the case."

"You have done your duty. Sir, the sentence was reduced by the judge."

Gradually, I set up my chamber with the increasing fee that was being earned by me every day. I had made some mark in criminal cases, but my real interest was in civil and constitutional law. Thus, the writs and company matters became my more favorite line in later life. The joy I used to share with the clients when I would win the appeal in a death sentence or transportation case was something great but winning constitutional cases meant greater joy and satisfaction.

In a double murder and robbery case of Barisal, seven people were convicted; five were sentenced to life and two for different terms. I was engaged by the accused persons for their appeal. As it usually happened, I could not take proper fees from them. The clients mostly came with request from my relations, friends, or neighbors to charge less fee. My fee was moderate and never very high, yet I had to accede to their request. An old client even delivered a speech in one of my election meetings that his case was done not only free, but he was also lodged and fed free during the hearing. I totally forgot it until he narrated it after five years.

So the clients of the robbery case came with fish and fruits and produced three letters from my near ones, without looking at the letters, from their very appearance, I could understand their content. I asked my clerk to receive the papers so that I could peruse them in the morning. My clerk, NurNabi after a while said that if the case was not filed next day, the appeal would be barred by limitation. I immediately asked my junior and clerk to prepare the case for filing, and I read the brief during the night. Costs were paid but practically no fee. When the case came up for final hearing, I argued the case for three days to establish that the clients were involved out of long-standing enmity when the real robbers made good their escape. The place and time of murder were also different from what the complainant set up to involve those accused persons. The medical evidence corroborated the defense case as to rigor mortis, nature of wounds, and the weapons of murder. The records of previous litigations between the parties were submitted with the statement U/S 342 of criminal procedure code but not considered by the trial court. A lawyer does not remember or differentiate between a case where fee was paid in full or another where fee was not paid. He has to represent the case on merits.

My junior came running from the court to inform me that all were acquitted by the court. The clients were weeping with joy, and I was happy, too. One of those accused persons, when released from jail, came to see me and told me to keep him as my servant for life. I did not do it, but he served me loyally and selflessly at all times of need in private or public life. Not everybody is grateful in this world, but he was.

I did not know that there were touts in the profession, but when some of them approached me for commission on the fees, I refused to take their case. There were some advocates who used to thrive on them and cheat the lay clients. The common clients who knocked on the doors of justice were mostly rendered poor by the time and expenses involved in getting justice. The progress of civil cases was slower than criminal cases. So sometimes the second or even third generation would have to fight the same case to the high court and supreme court—through the process of impleading the heirs of plaintiff or defendants. “Justice delayed is justice denied.” This maxim had no bearing on the practice in law courts designed on the British pattern.

After I joined the bar in 1958, there was martial law in the country. The Constitution of 1956 was abrogated, but the country was run as nearly as possible on the late Constitution. So the writ jurisdiction was restricted with the suspension of the fundamental rights. The martial law took away many of the basic rights by the stroke of a pen, but the

country was engulfed in a quiet political atmosphere. This calm atmosphere, with all political parties and activities banned, gave me the time I required for building up the career.

Habeas corpus was allowed in a restricted way. So my first constitutional cum criminal writ case came for releasing two leaders, K. J. Murad and Moulana Helaluddin. One was an engineer, and the other was a professor of a college. I interviewed them at jail gate with the special permission of the Home department and moved petition for them in the high court. I was not dissuaded by the threats of risk held out to me by my near ones, as this was purely a professional duty.

Freedom of a citizen is most invaluable and cannot be curtailed except in the due process of law even for a second. When the illegality of detention was pointed out in my argument, the state counsel took time. On the expiry date of ninety days, the said counsel disclosed to the court that the detainees would be released, so the case might be withdrawn; otherwise, the writ would become infructuous. I submitted to the court that I would accept the position if there was no rearrest. The counsel took time again to verify, and the detainees were released the same evening. And there was no rearrest even if with government direction. The remedy was obtained through court even without a judgment on the issues involved.

About two years elapsed, and my parents, brothers, and sisters became very anxious to see me settled by marriage. Barristers and civil servants were the two most coveted class in the society, much sought after for marriage by the wealthy, educated, and noble families. Marriage in our society was mostly an arranged affair by the relations. And for a Western-educated barrister, there was going to be no exception by choice. Offers came for money and houses, car and chamber, bank balance and business shares, of course, with a girl in every case. But my family and myself were not after belongings, rather after a nice being. And one does not know, though can somehow judge, who is nice or who is not, as our girls do not mix freely or undergo any courtship. Moreover, what I saw of courtship and free mixing in Europe did not inspire me at all to accept it as a means to a sacred marriage. Some girls of our society also made similar advances to me, believing that I would love or fall for it.

But everything comes at its appointed moment, and man does not know when that moment comes. Also, the human pairs are ordained from before by providence. And I did not know that I was agreeing to marry a girl whom I did not formally see. I only vaguely remembered that I saw her once, and she was acceptable to my eyes then. I was told that she was educated and pious. Moreover, she came from the Dacca

Nawab family, a granddaughter of Nawab Sir Salimullah. My next-door neighbor brought the proposal, my brother agreed to talk to W. B. Kadri, the then commissioner of Dacca and the brother-in-law and guardian of the girl. Her father Nawabzada Nasrullah had died as deputy high commissioner of Pakistan in India.

I was invited to tea in the commissioner's house. I reached there with my friend Nur Mohammad, who tried in vain to find out the girl on the first-floor balcony. I did not see the girl, but she saw us. We said our Maghreb prayer on the lawn, and enjoying the second cup of tea and snacks, returned home after a long conversation with Kadri. I did not know that she was very choosy and had already refused many eligible candidates like the princess of old days. Nor did I know that she saw me practically every day from her college going by horse carriage. Her Eden College was then very near my house, across the street of Bakshibazar.

Kadri agreed, my family agreed, and the girl agreed too, in this marriage. How or why I cannot explain today. The date was fixed during the long vacation of the high court on September 29, 1960 for the ceremony. But other ceremonies started a month before that date. Shopping for the bride and bridegroom started on either side, relations started crowding the houses, real and fake telephone calls and personal visits of intimate ones started to flow in both directions. Nawab of Dacca Khawaja Hassan Askari and brother-in-law Masood came to take me to the best tailors and shoe shops of Dacca for measurements. The jewelers, the sweet makers, the chefs and decorators, were all engaged. Cards were distributed by hand and by post for the honorable guests. Everyone, everywhere got busy either for some task or for fun—men and women

The procession of cars started after dusk, headed by the flower-clothed limousine with the turbaned golden-laced bridegroom. The pipe band, the multicolored bright decoration and the red carpeted stage to welcome the prince of the night really created an unprecedented melody well before meeting the princess of the night. The holy ceremony was attended by the high dignitaries of the city, including my friends of the bar and the bench and relations. The procession was too long, I was told.

At the dinner table, Khawaja Nazimuddin, former governor general and premier of Pakistan, my wife's uncle, was on my right and Moulana Jamal Mia Ferengimahal was at the front, and my father was on my left. The dinner was most delicious, but my eyes and mind were waiting for the more delicious object with whom I already had wedded for life a short while ago.

Amidst shouts of joy and fun, I was inducted in a hall overcrowded with ladies and children at about ten P.M. Some were whispering about how tall, handsome, and elegant the bridegroom looked, but others were saying "our Attya is much better," and others were saying it was a nice match. But noisy ones were jeering either at me or at the crowd of boys trying to break through cordon of girls. With my head down, I was trying to look sideways to locate the bride, but she was not there. I was perspiring for minutes when muffled sobs and voices approached me. In pink and gold, in red and silver, a dazzling figure was carried to my side, fully hidden by decorations. One lady very slowly and elegantly took off the golden veil from a face that was exquisitely pink and beautiful. And there she was with half-closed eyes and a sweet smile, wishing to look at me, but as shyness would have it, she closed her eyes instead. I stretched my hand to touch her and to reassure her that there was nothing to fear, as she was mine, and I was hers, and the crowd would soon disperse.

By the time we came out of the bride's house and reached our house, and the crowd of men and women dispersed, it was past midnight. But near ones stayed on, had their jokes, fun, and entertainment till very late.

Attyah was her name, which in Arabic means "gift." After the girls' formalities were over, I was taken in the room reserved and decorated for us. The dim light, bright decorations, and a brighter face were awaiting my arrival. I stepped inside, looked at her shy face, came closer, lifted her face by the chin, and she raised her hand for mine. I was hers, and the gift was mine.

After the long vacation and our honeymoon, the high court reopened in November. Brother Dr. Karim was transferred from Dacca to Kishorganj as medical officer. We spent a few days with him and enjoyed the delicacies of fresh fish and fresh-milk-made sweets of Kishorganj. On reopening, I got so busy with my practice with the overflow of cases that I took a bigger chamber and house at Dhanmandi where I also bought a piece of land. I also had a junior, Advocate Latif, to help me, besides my clerk.

General Ayub Khan had already assumed the title of field marshal. He had also taken a mandate from the local "Basic democrats"—union council members—by "Yes" or "No" ballot to frame a Constitution. The Constitution Commission was headed by retired Supreme Court justice Shahabuddin and assisted by Justice Abu Sayed Choudhury of Dacca High Court and other nonpoliticians. They submitted a report recommending a presidential type of government and elected assemblies. Political parties were not to be revived according to the scheme of the

proposals. Most of the political leaders, including Khawaja Nazimuddin, Choudhury Md. Ali, Nurul Amin, and a few more were debarred from politics by EBDO (Elective Bodies Disqualification Order). In the Constitution that was announced in 1962, some of the recommendations of the Constitution Commission were adopted. The capital of Pakistan was transferred from Karachi to Rawalpindi near the army GHQ. F. M. Ayub Khan also was treated as elected president for five years. And the 150-members—75 from the East and 75 from the West, National Assembly was to be elected not by the direct vote of the people but by an electoral college of 80,000 Basic Democrats, which body was elected by the people. Manzur Quader, the law minister was the main architect of the scheme of Constitution but the idea was of the president Ayub Khan himself for a stable government in Pakistan, which assured his continuation in power as well. The reforms carried out by Ayub could not be disturbed by the new Assembly nor the structure of the Constitution or financial and executive powers of the president. Even the "Islamic" word was deleted from the name of the country along with justiciability of fundamental rights, which were in the 1956 Constitution.

The country was not prepared to accept this Constitution, nor did they like the continuation of a military rule under the guise of a constitutional rule. There were two courses open to the people and politicians: to overthrow Ayub Khan by popular confrontation or force; alternatively, to participate in the election and democratize the Constitution by slow but peaceful process within its framework.

The country was divided in its approach to the course to be followed. But the forces of violence raised its head in East Pakistan, mainly centering around imprisoned Suhrawardy and Maulana Bhasani. Moulana Maududi of Jamaate Islami, Khawaja Nazimuddin, and Nurul Amin of the Muslim League were for peaceful movement for democratization and Islamization of the Constitution, with parity between East and West.

I was a supporter of Jamaate Islam since I ceased to be a member of the Muslim League. Parties were not functioning in name, but I was summoned by my local people and Jamaat leadership to contest the election from my home constituency of Barisal-Jhalakati. Muslim leaguers and young sections of the population were also behind me, but the votes were in the hands of Basic Democrats, who were Ayub oriented. "Basic democracy," as they called it was put to the test. The president, being already selected by the 80,000 Basic Democrats in Ayub Khan, a National Assembly was to be raised by the same electoral college. All the 75 members of East Pakistan, representing 55 million people were to be elected by 40,000 electors, and another 75 of West Pakistan were to be elected by 40,000 electors of that region, barring a few who

were to be nominated, to represent 45 million people. No public meeting was necessary nor permissible. In state-organized projection meetings of the electors, candidates could place their program and identity. On the voting day, these electors would come with their identity cards and cast their votes in favor of the candidates of their liking.

The procedure was simple, and the atmosphere was calm. And in the meeting at Barisal Town Hall I had to face two more candidates in speechmaking, followed by question and answers of the electors. Khan Bahadur Hashem Ali Khan, an elderly advocate and ex-minister of Bengal, and Ashraf Ali Sardar, a senior advocate, were the other two contestants. If witty and catchy answers to speeches were the standards of success of this new experiment, it looked very much in my favor. I was desperately criticizing the Ayub Constitution in favor of peoples' fundamental rights and their legitimate economic rights. Other speakers were cautious and timid in their approach.

"How can you fight for our rights against such a powerful military dictator?" came one question.

"In the same way Isa Khan of Bengal fought Mansingh of Delhi."

"If you are elected under Ayub Constitution, how will you come out of it?"

"In the way our Prophet Yunus (sm) came out of the stomach of the big fish."

Supplementary question: "He did it by prayers—what about you?"

"Prayers of my tongue and heart will be too hot for this Constitution." I also told my electors that the best way to save the disintegration of Pakistan was to shift the capital to Dacca. And this they approved.

My constituency was very vast, spreading over four police stations. While I was on tour, bad news came that Khan Bahadur died in a boat mishap in the storm that swept the area. It was indeed a sad death for such an honorable old man. We again had to go through the process of filing nomination and projection meetings. This time, Advocate Shamsheer Ali and Fazlur Rahman, a businessman, replaced the deceased candidate. The Basic Democrats, with the help of my organizational network of devoted workers, had already rallied around me as their true representative. The money, the false rumors, and other cheap election tricks of the adversaries were all humbled by my bold and honest convictions. Among others, three loyal election agents Lalmia, Hafez Faiz, and Mannan Mridha, respectively, held the forts at Barisal, Jhalakati, and Banaripara polling stations on the election day. The students were no voters but were helping the voters—Hindus and Muslims came all out in my support in an unprecedented way.

On the midnight before the election day, in the last-minute prep-

aration meeting at Barisal, my election advisers strongly recommended feeding the electors and paying them pocket money, as others were doing. There was little choice left for me as it became the weakness of the system of limited electors either to materially or otherwise help them for their precious votes. But I told them: "Whether it was defeat or victory I am not going to buy votes."

One pleaded: "It is not buying, it is just paying their expenses for traveling all the way."

"And feeding them as guests," said another.

"I am not going to be a party to this corrupt practice even if I had the money. I better withdraw from the election."

Only valiant Lalmia supported me. And when the election results were out on the following evening, it was all garlands and congratulations for me. I won it. I went around the entire constituency before returning to Dacca where political activity had started. June 8, 1962 was the day fixed for the opening session of the National Assembly at Rawalpindi.

In spite of the press curbs of the martial law regime, the West Pakistani press was more advanced and conscious. But its people, with a bare existence of middle class, were dominated by the bureaucrats and mighty landlords. Whereas in East Pakistan, with a predominant middle class and more education, people were more politically conscious, but its press was less developed. When we landed at Lahore Airport en route to Rawalpindi, the press, though controlled and though martial law which continued till June 7, came out boldly about our stand on the Constitution. We continued our parleys among our west Pakistani colleagues at the Pakistan House, at Pindi where we were accommodated. And there was almost a consensus that we would set up one nominee for the election of speaker with united support on constitutional reform. We selected Moulvi Tamizuddin Khan unanimously as our nominee. President Ayub did not expect so much hostility from the members pledged to uphold his Constitution. So he tried to set up his nominee, Habibur Rahman, his cabinet colleague elected from East Pakistan. Seeing no hope of his election, no second name was proposed to contest Tamizuddin Khan, an old veteran of Quaide Azam's days. My name was proposed by Farid Ahmed and other colleagues of East and West Pakistan for the office of deputy speaker. But I withdrew in favor of Abul Quasem of East Pakistan to maintain the unity among ourselves.

On June 8, after the oath-taking ceremony by Chief Election Commissioner Akhtar Hussain, the elections to speaker and deputy speaker took place. Tamizuddin Khan, who was once the speaker of the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan but dismissed by Governor General Ghu-

lam Muhammad, was again elected unopposed, and Afzal Cheema of Layalpur and Abul Quasem of Rangpur became deputy speakers, both of whom held identical views on the Constitution and rights of East Pakistan.

The president, alarmed at this outcome, maneuvered palace intrigue. He called some important members of East and West and baited them with ministership. Before the news of their defection reached us, they were hurriedly sworn in soon after the first blasting of the Constitution took place on the opening debates in the Assembly. The solid opportunity of the members in pressing the president for the democratization and Islamization of the Constitution, with rightful economic justice to East Pakistan, thus once more slipped out of the hands of the legislators. The executive once more took the full rein of the fate of the people with very little power left in the Assembly to wield or mend. The object in favor of democratic rule in Pakistan, which could be achieved by a peaceful, united stand of 150 members, was once more bartered away for a mess of pottage by a few. And the integrity of physically divided Pakistan lay in nothing more than a democratic rule where people could change the government if it did not serve their collective interests or ideas.

With a cabinet of Assembly members to support the president, we still commanded the majority in the House. And day in and day out the President was annoyed at the fiery speeches made on the floor of the House and prominently displayed in daily papers. I, Farid Ahmed, Mashiur Rahman, Mahbubul Huq, Syed Sultan, and a few more from East Pakistan and Mia Bari, Sardar Bahadur Khan, younger brother of Ayub Khan, Khair Bux Murri, Yousuf Khattak, Md. Hussain Chatta, Sardar Ataullah Mengal, and a few more from West Pakistan were the valiant and vocal ones to keep the house active.

The first offer came through Muhammad Ali Bogra and then through Fazlul Quader Choudhury and then through my brother-in-law, W. B. Kadri, who was the secretary of the National Assembly, to tone down and join the government as a minister. A similar offer came to Farid Ahmad, Afzal Cheema, and a few more. Some members defected both from East and West Pakistan as minister or parliamentary secretary but none from the named vocal ones.

My speech on the budget, like Farid, Mashiur Rahman, Chatta and Mahbubul Huq and the leader of our opposition, Sardar Bahadur Khan, was so pungent and hard hitting that the president could tolerate no more. He summoned his cabinet in a midnight conference and told them point blank that he could tolerate the nonsense on the floor of the House no more and was going to dissolve the Assembly with martial law again,

as the country was not fit for democracy as yet. During the discussion, the president was persuaded not to be in a hurry "till the steam was out" of the members, rather to call them individually and persuade them politely. So the gloomy threat disappeared for the time being. Following that cabinet meeting, I was invited for tea with the president in his drawing room. After initially courteous conversation and tea, he came straight to the point.

"Akhtaruddin, do not you think that some members are violating the parliamentary decency by their invective language in the assembly house?" asked President Ayub.

"Well, sir, if it was so unparliamentary, the speaker is there to expunge it."

"You know that Moulvi Sb (speaker) is too good a man to control the House."

"Your ministers are there to point out."

"Oh, those ministers! But why cannot you people control your tongue?"

"What do you mean?"

"Do you know that I can in a moment dissolve the Assembly and put all of them behind the bars?"

I stood up instantly and said, "Are you threatening me?" He looked at me askance, not expecting such a strong reaction from a young member. Before he could open his lips, I thundered again:

"You can arrest me. You can shoot me, but you cannot change my opinion so long as I feel that I am right. I must go now."

The annoyed and strong president in his cool voice said: "I did not mean it, Akhtaruddin. Please sit down." He came up to me and we talked for a while standing.

Thereafter the president became more keen on me and found out that I was the son-in-law of his friend, the late Nawabzada Nasrullah of Dacca. And he tried very sincerely, I must say, to take me in his cabinet, but I never gave in. The budget was naturally passed, as there was no provision of no confidence or even cut notion in some heads of expenditure. So it was passed as a measure of liberal political activity, the Parties Act restoring the banned political parties. The constitutional amendment was also promised. Even my last obstacle to the budget on a point of order for examining the provisions of Islamic law on the point of *riba*, interest, as applicable in Pakistan, was also accepted. The mighty president was responding to political ideas and even showed his willingness to accept proper amendments to his Constitution. His followers even convinced him to restore the Muslim League under his leadership.

Jamaate Islami was revived the same night the Political Parties Act

was signed by the president. The first mass tour of West Pakistan I took with Moulana Yusuf of Khulna was organized by Jamaat. Our tour covered Frontier, the Punjab, and Sind.

In Peshawar Chawk Yadgar, when I finished my short English speech, one old man came and kissed my hands in his usual high turban and belted slippers. Tears came out of his eyes when he was saying, "Thank Allah, praise of Islam can also be spoken in the language of feringis." This simple comment of a pathan, a retired army man, was no less delicious to me than the whole roast lamb and chapli kabab I had in plenty with those hospitable people of mountains and villages. Pathans are usually frank and good-hearted people, very friendly to others but deadly to its enemies. The hitherto neglected area has seen progress in the field of education, industry, and agriculture, starting from the days of Qayum Khan to the days of Ayub Khan. The tribal people still with different laws and customs were quite conservative Muslims of small needs but of great independence.

The Punjab was most developed in West Pakistan in education, communication, industry, and agriculture. The march of conquest from the days of Alexander, Genghis Khan, and Sultan Mahmud through Khyber Pass always had cordial hosts on the rich banks of five rivers in the valley of the Punjab. Its people were well built and hardworking but remained still under the feudal rule of British days. Economically, people were enjoying the progress of Pakistan, inherited from the British and Sikhs. Its politics also were controlled by the landlords, infested with clan interests of historical antiquity. Historic Lahore, where various remains of Mughal rule still dominate, was witnessing the boom of modern art and architecture, education and culture, and political and economic expansion. Our visits to Gujranwalla, Lyallpur, Campbelpur, Sialkot, Jhelum, and the rest took us through all planes of places and people. And all the way we met our colleagues of the Assembly in their home grounds, who were all very well off. When I visited the houses of our colleagues in East Pakistan later, many of them did not have even a good house to live in. But they still represented their people, who were equally poor in both wings.

Sind and its people were a bit different in outlook, excepting Karachi, which was by then no longer the capital of Pakistan but a big cosmopolitan city, which had accommodated the maximum number of refugees coming from India. It was the people of Karachi who enjoyed most my comment in the Assembly that "Pakistan had four capitals—Pindi, Dacca, Karachi, and Tejgam." The administration was flying between these places, including Tejgam—the fastest train between Karachi and Pindi. Farid Ahmed added one more, i.e., PIA.

I visited President Ayub's Hazara all right, but there were restrictions on our visit to Larkana, his pet minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's home town. I visited Mustafa Jatoi's Hyderabad, Qureshi's Nazimabad, and Jam Saheb's Layari quarters amidst enthusiastic crowds. I also addressed mammoth night meetings in Parks and grounds of Karachi in my broken Urdu. Our speeches and comments in the meetings or press conferences not only got wide, illustrated publicity, but also prepared a strong ground for our activities inside the Assembly. Colleague Siddique Dawood, the independent industrial tycoon, always kept a car at the disposal of Farid Ahmed, who also requested me to accept his hospitality, which I always avoided. Karachi was represented not by the landlords but by the money lords in the Assembly. But the rest of Sind followed feudal system of Punjab in electing their representatives, i.e., the landlords would get elected whether it was adult franchise or limited franchise.

During this tour and subsequent activities, I got very close to Moulana Maududi and his secretary of the party, Mian Tofail Muhammad. Karachi's Choudhury Md. Hussain, Prof. Khursheed, and Ghafoor Ahmed. Akhlaq Hussain, and Rana Allahdad of Lahore, Sayeed Khan and Sher Muhammad of Frontier and Geelani and Fateh Md. of Rawalpindi, all of Jamaate Islam, became intimately known to me as good people and friends. Moulana not only excelled in his writings on Islam but was equally well conversant with the politico-social problems of Pakistan, rather of the whole Muslim world. A scholar and a politician of his stature and understanding could really bring the country to its correct destiny. But he never wanted political power for himself, nor did he prepare his party structure for that task. So the people who gathered around him could never rise to the heights required of politicians to handle national problems. But Moulana's services to the Muslim world through his writings and his party remains unparalleled in contemporary history. When the Lahore martial law court in 1953 sentenced him to death, it was only one with firm conviction in Allah who could defy filing a mercy petition and saying: "The decision of life and death is in the hands of Allah and no man can alter it." Syed Kutub of Egypt was executed but Moulana survived.

I was touring the interior of my constituency. The high court was still in recess for the long vacation. There came the telegraphic summons for attending an emergency session on the border clash between China and India on the Himalayas. India never stopped nibbling into the affairs of Tibet since the Dalai Lama took refuge in Delhi. China never liked this interference within her country despite the *Panchsila* of Bandung Conference. So when the pinpricking of the Indian border troops on the

height of Himalayan frontiers reached its peak China decided to chase them. The chase continued up to Mitla pass, making the Indian troops take to their heels with unprecedented speed. They even evacuated the entire NEFA area and would have overrun their own settled areas themselves but for the halt called by China on its own.

India frantically alerted all her troops and alleged an invasion by the Chinese, calling for Western and Russian help. China did not involve herself in a big way, nor was it her intention to invade India, Pakistan, as a friend and an ally of China, was naturally concerned over what was happening next door. Our National Assembly gave unanimous support to China's stand and repeated that India could not play the game of Kashmir everywhere. We urged upon the government to take a positive step on Kashmir at that time, which Bhutto refused on behalf of the president.

Soon after that, I was attacked with pleurisy and was in Dacca Medical College for treatment. I had to postpone my further public meetings and tour of East Pakistan. Dr. Ibrahim and Dr. Shamsuddin treated me for months till I could travel for the budget session in Pindi. With doctors' permission from Pindi Hospital, I took the floor on the budget discussion toward the end. Fazlul Quader Choudhury was in the chair and listening to my speech for half an hour, he said, "This is not the voice of an ill man."

"My voice today is the voice of my people and my heart," I replied. When I finished my speech of nearly two hours, I knew that I carried out the mandate of my people, but I had to go back to the hospital.

Our pressure in the Assembly was coordinated by the popular demands of the nine leaders of East Pakistan, which included Shaheed Suhrawardy, Nurul Amin, and Bhasani. The president agreed to constitutional amendments, for which a Bill was introduced, incorporating some of our demands as First Amendments to the Constitution. The Bill, after initial criticism and opposition from us, was referred to the select committee of which I was also a member from the opposition.

Two illustrious sons of Pakistan we lost in the meantime in Speaker Tamizuddin Khan and Foreign Minister Mohamad Ali Bogra. Fazlul Quader Choudhury, as the president's nominee, was elected speaker in his place, and Begum Mohammad Ali came in, in her husband's seat. Justice Munir resigned, succeeded by Advocate Khurshid Ahmed as law minister. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto became the foreign minister, which post he cherished for long. I was one of the strong critics of the government's foreign policy and of the antipeople role of our ambassadors and officials. Bhutto was also a barrister and a very good speaker. He was chosen very young as a minister during the initial days of martial law in 1958

when Iskandar Mirza was still the president and he was still continuing to the best liking of Ayub Khan.

Foreign Missions

I had just come back from the high court, finishing an important writ case, and was having a late lunch with my wife in my Dhanmandi residence. The telephone rang. Bhutto was there on the phone from Rawalpindi. He wanted to know if I would agree to go to China on the national day celebration as a delegate of Pakistan. I felt honored, but I wanted to know the nature and composition of the delegation. Moulana Bhasani, for his pro-Chinese political role, was being sent as leader with Mashiur Rahman, our colleague, General Habibullah Khan, and others. I gave my consent and thanked the new foreign minister of Pakistan.

All but Moulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani, the president of the National Awami Party, and the leader of our delegation, flew into Hong-kong from Karachi. We landed at the strip of the runway jutting into the sea of the blue waters. From the air, the port city of Hong Kong looked magnificent, with high buildings, curbed roads, green mountains, and blue sea. This last remnant of a British colony on the mainland of China was too overcrowded with Chinese and foreigners. As a free port, the goods were quite cheap, and so were the human beings. Humming of industrial and commercial activities of all kinds also included the free trade of women. It was worse than London or Paris where one finds at every streetcorner some one asking if you need a girl. The most damaging thing the colonial powers did wherever they ruled, was to spoil the morals of the people. And Hong Kong is that living specimen of trade and fun.

We took a train to the border of China and were received there by the representatives of the Chinese government in a very cordial way. Another train took us to Canton in the evening, to be received again with bouquets from sweet little girls and warm handshakes of the blue uniformed men and women officers, looking alike. In the evening, the

governor of Canton hosted a dinner of a variety of dishes and bowls of soups. One small blackish item looked like mini-cucumber, and in my usual cautious way of having food and drink I asked what it was. The governor, sitting by my side, told me through his interpreter that it was cucumber. Being convinced by the appearance, I put one into my mouth with chopsticks. It was a spongy rubberlike thing, tasting of vinegar. When my sharp teeth faced difficulty in chewing it, I took it out and asked politely, "Do you grow this cucumber in plenty?"

"Yes, our seacoasts are full of it."

"How do you treat them?"

"Well, after it is brought out of water, we preserve it in vinegar and serve it as a delicacy."

Whether a delicacy or not, it was definitely not vegetable cucumber. It was a sea insect if not fish. Chinese people take all sorts of animals, birds, vegetables, and seafood for their meals without any discrimination. It was predominantly a Buddhist country, but after the great socialist revolution of 1948, many of their social or food habits underwent a transformation. They were no longer the opium addicts, as the colonial rulers turned them to be. The largest population in the world, 700 million, needs everything to keep stomachs full. And it was no easy task to remove hunger and the addiction to opium.

The governor was the commander of the army, which betook the Indians to their feet on the Himalayas in 1962. So he was hilariously describing how the Indian troops beat the world record of running away so fast. And he hardly used the ammunition and weapons at his disposal. He was all praise for the Pakistani people and its army, some of whom visited China for courses.

We took a plane from Canton to Peking. The airlines of China got a setback after the Soviet Union withdrew all its support for China in 1958. Because of the ideological difference, the "revisionists" not only stopped all their ongoing aid and loans but physically took away all their materials, including the blueprints of development programs, they said. They added that Russia had given up her socialist policy and turned into a neocolonial power with half of Europe in her stomach. She was using India as her agent in the Western world and a stooge in her expansionist policy in Asia. So we ought not to expect the imperialist comforts in their national airlines, which was all manufactured and run by China without any foreign help, per the direction of Chairman Mao, explained our interpreter when we stopped for lunch in one midstation.

In every station, we were received by government representatives, but one common person used to be there in attendance. He was to be a representative of the Islamic Association of China, having a Muslim

name with membership in the Communist party. He would talk very little but when asked would be all praise for Chairman Mao and Premier Chou. Language, being different, we could not talk without an interpreter, and as guests we did not want to embarrass them with any leading or incriminating questions.

After a heavy lunch of several courses and rounds of toasts, ending with "Kambe," we boarded the same plane to Peking. In trains, plains or on street corners, the patriotic songs would be relayed almost without break to reorient the people to the revolutionary philosophy of Mao. We were one of the many delegations that were being received at Peking airport in a cordial and ceremonious way. The illuminations gave a festive look to the busy airport, but there was no lack of discipline or dearth of arrangement for the honored guests coming from at least 100 countries of East and West. The countries without having official delegates were the United States, USSR, and India with whom China had cut off diplomatic relations. But we Pakistani delegates were given prominence everywhere.

We were accommodated in a posh hotel with chauffeur-driven Rolls Royce car at our disposal. Of course, the question of going on our own in those cars did not arise. We had no private engagements or visits to make. Everything was planned and organized for us. On the very first night of our arrival, two or three days before October 1st, the day of national celebrations, a dinner was arranged by General Raza, our ambassador, in our honor. Premier Chou was invited, but with his too busy schedule, he might not make it to attend. Moulana Bhasani was yet to arrive from Dacca, for whom we were waiting. The table was set for dinner, and General Raza and we were chatting when a call came in to say that Premier Chou would be joining us for dinner in a short while. Before we could realize the importance and honor it meant for Pakistan, the premier's car drove in.

We all felt very happy, and so was the Premier, in his top mood. He talked freely in English with French accent without the help of an interpreter. He was educated also in French and narrated French jokes. He talked about his experience in Bandung Conference. He inquired about Pakistan, his "dear friend," Ayub Khan, Kashmir problem, his dislike of pretensions of Pandit Nehru, and his tour of East Pakistan without diplomatic formalities. He was with us also for coffee and stayed for more than an hour, leaving a lasting impression in our minds.

It was a Friday, so we wanted to join the congregation in a Peking mosque. Some of us were taken in an old mosque with library of handwritten Al Quran and Hadith, well preserved for visitors. We were introduced to a director of the Islamic Association and shown around

the office, followed by prayers. Every town had an Islamic Association, he said. It was quite a big mosque, almost full with visiting delegates from African and Asian Muslim countries. Only the Imam and a few more elderly Chinese were in the mosque. The only young man I found was a boy in his teens who accompanied his invalid old father or grandfather. The *khutba* was recited in Chinese, the prayer in Arabic. We shook hands with many but could not talk to anyone except Muslim greetings of "Peace be on you."

In our curiosity, we wanted to visit the province of Sinkiang where 80 percent of the population were Muslims and were reported to be in very bad condition. But we could not go, as it might embarrass our hosts. We knew that Muslims were still fighting for their cherished values of life there after fifteen years of Communist takeover and being reduced to the serfdom like Soviet Samarkand or Bokhara. No author writes or no Muslim power invites antagonism of great Russia or China by inquiring of their brothers in faith even for a humanitarian cause.

We were invited by Premier Chou to the great People's Hall for a luncheon talk. The great hall was really very big and massive, built within two years with millions of people working day and night. It accommodates their Assembly of peoples' representatives when they are called to attend; it is the venue of the big receptions and dinners given to the thousands of delegates, it accommodates many government offices, including one of the premier, and it has smaller halls for parties and meetings. It commemorates the peoples' victory of Long March. Earlier in the morning we lay the wreaths on memory of the martyrs of the Chinese revolution near to it.

The premier himself received us at the gate of his office, where after a short talk we were led to the luncheon table. Amidst our conversation, Chinese courses were served one after another, there must have been no less than a dozen. The dish the Premier introduced as most favorite was the "Peking Duck." It was sliced into pieces and was to be taken with rolled thin bread with soya special sauce. The cooking itself was special and delicious, too. He also demonstrated to us the way to hold the chopsticks for use on meat, fish, or rice bowl. We thoroughly enjoyed it and also ate with them quite nicely. Soup, sweet dishes, and fruits were also there. But the special to us, customary to Chinese, seemed to be the proposing of a toast every four or five minutes. One had to return the same in their way. China-made light alcoholic drinks were used for the toast, but there were soft drinks and water available for us. All of us were not soft drinkers, so one cannot blame the host. Kaiser Rashid, our secretary of the delegation, and Mashiur Rahman, Allama Iqbal's son, Zaved Iqbal, and General Habibullah Khan, and the rest of the

delegates were in attendance, but Moulana was running a fever. After "kambe" and "sche sche" we left the premier amidst a very cordial atmosphere.

A meeting was arranged for us in the hotel to explain to us the economic program and political achievement of new China. A top economist delivered a lecture with graphs and figures to show how the "great leap forward" of Chairman Mao offset the Russian betrayal in economic development in industrial and agricultural sectors, how the Chinese communes were functioning in a great way, where the Russians failed, how the old capitalists were also engaged in paid services in the industries, and how the Chinese government runs with the support of non-Communist parties in a neo-democracy. Questions were answered by the expert on private initiative, salary of the workers, communes, export and import, and of economic recovery. Moulana, at the end of the meeting, observed that this was the type of economy and politics he wanted for Pakistan, only with one addition. The addition was to be the free right of practicing religion.

The octogenarian, Moulana, sometimes would lose control over his language. And that is what happened in the official reception luncheon party in the Peoples' Hall. In reply to the address of Chinese welcome, Moulana in his full voice said in Bengali: "We have come here to take your revolution back home in Pakistan, and we need your help."

As the leader of an official delegation, it was undiplomatic of him to say so openly, even if he personally meant it. But Barrister Shaukat Ali Khan, who was translating his Bengali into English, saved the situation by a twisted translation.

We had an audience with Chairman Mao. And after attending the program of October 1, Moulana fell ill and was hospitalized. General Raza had sent a cable for the nomination of the acting leader, which I did not know until Kaiser came and told me that Mashiur Rahman was leaving for Hong Kong. When I asked the reason, I was told that he expected to succeed Moulana, and Bhutto agreed, but President Ayub Khan wanted me to act in place of Moulana. I felt honored but unhappy for Mashiur Rahman. If I knew it before, I could have asked him to lead the delegation. This happened two days after the celebration.

So the day came, October 1, 1963. From early morning we took our position, earmarked for Pakistan, in between the Peoples' Hall and the old royal palace, facing the huge square very tastefully decorated. Mao, with all the top dignitaries, was on the balcony of the palace waiting for the minute to start. Hundreds of thousands of people in various colors and dresses were lined up in the square depicting different writings and signs. It looked like a vast garden of spring blossoms with music around.

How colorful, lively, and gorgeous it was! With signal on time, the national anthem began, and there came a flow of more people to pass by in salute to their beloved leaders. They were in different formations and movements, changing color and design while passing in hundreds and thousands. Mao was taking the salute amidst thunderous claps of the multitude. The processions of people representing different provinces, different trades, different communes, different universities, and different themes of revolution and progress went on rolling ceaselessly in perfect harmony, discipline, and timing. Simultaneous with it was the bands, while standby participants of the square were matching their on-the-spot movement, adding gloss to the color of the whole show. It was an unbelievable massive rally of human performance of all kinds and colors. And it lasted for hours, together with tumultuous applause of the guests till midday. Millions of men, women, and children must have participated in this well-disciplined show on that great day. We were really impressed by this great feat.

The great dinner was arranged in the same evening inside the Peoples' Hall with thousands of round tables for the guests to sit, sip, and sup. On each table, reserved for delegates of a country, there was one official, one interpreter, and on our table an extra officer of the Islamic Association. Before dinner, Mao appeared on stage for a short while and greeted all his guests. Mao left and dinner continued for over two hours with more than a dozen dishes of Chinese delicacies, only intercepted by dozens of toasts.

The main function being over we were taken around to the historical palaces, museums, and gardens in and around Peking. We went around silk, cotton, and iron mills and Peking University. The Chinese silk, pottery, and jade still had their old reputation in design and quality.

The big campus of the university, totally oriented for education of Marxism, was no less advanced for its faculties of science or world languages. The courses of history and geography were also completely different from the imperial or colonial days. The general students and teachers were completely cut off from world events and pattern of modern education. There was no discrimination between a boy or girl either for education or work. The monthly or weekly salary was quite low, whether he/she was a factory worker or engineer, a teacher, or a farm worker, but men and women would get the same pay for the same job. The highest and lowest salary would vary between 60 and 600 yens per month.

The most glaring achievement of new China is the eradication of social evils. There was no feeling of high or low in vocation or society; everybody was provided with accommodation and clothing, no one was

unemployed or without food, and everyone would ride a cycle or bus. Even the highest officials were no exception to this, barring a few, who would use official cars on official duty only. Once popular horse racing, gambling, rampant prostitution, and alcohol or opium were all abolished, those affected thereby were rehabilitated. Even the beggars or crippled were not to be found on the streets anymore.

Medical treatment was free for all working people. And both the modern and Chinese system of treatment were running side by side in the same hospital; goods in the open market were extremely costly, whether food, cloth, or other materials, but everyone had his quota of ration on a fixed low price. China, though strictly adhering to the Marxist economy in theory, was trying to strike a balance between extreme communism and extreme capitalism to suit its own people and environment. It is "neodemocracy," they say. Behind all its regimentation lay the supreme sacrifice of its party cadre and leadership, starting from the long march to the final victory over a period of about two decades. The resulting preemption of personal freedom or political rights were compensated by the economic justice, they believe.

Before our departure for the tour of the interior, we were again the guests of a distinguished gathering in Peking with Moulana Bhasani in hospital and myself as the leader of the delegation. I was to make an official speech. General Raza inquired if I had anything noted down, as that was customary. General Habibullah intervened to say it is better to have it in writing. But there was hardly anytime left to prepare a written speech when I was asked to act in place of Moulana. So I told them to leave it to me. The leader of the host welcomed us through his speech, toast, and thunderous clapping. When I rose, there was a question mark in the eyes of our ambassador, but when I finished, it was thunderous applause again with a warm handshake from the ambassador, General Habibullah and Kaisar. They were now confident that the gun was on the right shoulder. They requested me to repeat the same speech everywhere, but as an extempore speaker I could never do that, nor would it befit all occasions. And I was yet to propose a lot of toasts and make many more speeches. In Hangchow, a beautiful lake city with mountains and palaces, in Shanghai—the once-notorious opium and women port and in other important places, warm welcomes awaited us from the governors, mayors, and other dignitaries. We enjoyed the food and the friendship in all these places of historical importance.

When dinner was served in the poshly decorated guest house of Hungchow, the chef came and introduced himself as a Muslim in broken English and recommended two special dishes. The one was frogs' legs, which Barrister Shaukat and Zaved Iqbal, also a barrister, thoroughly

enjoyed. The other one was under a cover. The cover was removed by the chef, and the live shrimps were found dancing there. We thought it to be a joke, but the chef took two chopsticks and a kicking prawn in between held it in a cup of soya sauce specially prepared for it, and put it in my mouth. The prawn, still refusing to be brainwashed, was fighting for its existence on my tongue, but I, for the sake of peace, chewed it to pieces. It was a thrilling experience with a delicious taste but I could not swallow it with the shells, but others did.

In Shanghai, on the roof garden on the sixteenth floor of the hotel, we not only had another delicacy of fish and meat luncheon, but we also enjoyed scenes around of steaming ships on the sea and banks, factories, shops, and rhythmic physical exercise of young and old on the lawn below.

Our visit to one covered stadium for games and sports was quite interesting. But more interesting was our trip to the communes of the agricultural population. We were taken through the fields full of working men and women, farms of gigantic sizes full of crops or vegetables, and farm kitchens meant for supplying food and drinks and small farm-houses used as habitations. The people were working in organized groups with modern and traditional equipment to produce the maximum in any piece of land, all owned by the commune. The erstwhile landlords or middlemen with hired labor were no more there—the land belonged to the state, also the workers belonged to the state, with no private ownership. Everyone had to work in return for food, clothing, shelter, none sitting idle or unemployed. Maybe the family is split up in the process with no traditional freedom for them with labor-intensive cultivation. The communes have produced so much as to make the country of floods and famines into a smiling field of self-sufficiency. It was no easy task for the peoples' government to achieve this situation but it was working well. The three weeks of state hospitality soon came to an end when we left Shanghai for Hong Kong, leaving Moulana Bhasani behind to be treated for his various ailments of mind and body. The proverbial Chinese hospitality was unbeaten, and we thanked the great people and their great leaders at the hearty sendoff at the airport.

I wish I did not visit their courts and inquired about their judicial and legal system. I wish I did not visit the Muslim mosques or Buddhist temples. And I wish I did not ask them about the freedom of expression or thought or movement or association or press, otherwise, my impression about communism could have been much better. Yet what I saw was heralded by the supreme sacrifice of its leaders and a great leap forward for its people. What I saw of China was definitely not the China of lazy opium eaters anymore. It was a new China of great potential and progress.

Another official tour I took earlier in the same year of 1963 is worth noting. I was extremely busy with the debates and select committee proceedings of the First Constitutional Amendment Bill. The session was on in Dacca, and Speaker Tamizuddin Khan was still alive. The opposition was determined to get the basic fundamental amendments to the Constitution, and law Minister Khursheed Ahmed had a very tough time in the committee and then on the floor of the House. Without our participation, the bill could not have the required two-thirds majority, so besides having the peoples mandate of democratizing the Constitution, the votes were also in our hand for the passage of the bill. So we succeeded unexpectedly in getting the name of the "Islamic Republic" restored with more Islamic provisions, and fundamental rights were made justiciable once again without a blanket cover of all Martial Law Regulations and reforms. The president was all the time watchful of what was being recorded from our fiery speeches and our support for the Bill. Mian Abdul Bari, Mufti Mahmood, Sardar Bahadur Khan, Farid Ahmed, Mashiur Rahman, Mahbubul Huq, Yusuf Khattak, and all other stalwarts were solidly behind our stand, though some of them ultimately did not participate in divisions. After acceptance of our minimum demands, we voted for the bill to be authenticated by the president as an Act. It was practically a victory for the opposition and a big leap forward toward a democratic Constitution.

I was summoned by the speaker to his chamber where Secretary W. B. Kadri was also present along with Raja Hassan Akhtar of Rawalpindi. I, Fakhruddin Ahmed of Mymensingh, and Serajul Huq of Rangpur were to proceed on a parliamentary delegation on the invitation of British government. It was my first official tour, so naturally I was delighted more so when I was selected as the delegation's deputy leader; the Senior member Raja Hassan Akhtar of Murree was to lead the team of six members.

The weather was just warming up, though summer was still a way off when we landed at Heathrow Airport, to be received by the officials of the host government. There were no cheers, flowers, or decorations, but it was a warm, courteous English welcome on a bright sunny day. Our whole program was already set but finalized after short discussion. The old London had not changed much since I last lived there five years ago. But our program was quite a busy one and was to cover Scotland and Ireland, also. We started with our call to the minister of commonwealth affairs, followed by a visit to the Parliament—the seat of legislation for the kingdom, colonies, and commonwealth. Britain was no longer that empire where sun never set, yet its domain over the colonies and commonwealth, of which Pakistan and India were still members,

like Canada or Australia, was still continuing. Till then, Britain was one of the big five powers, not by courtesy but by right. She still had colonial control as far as Hong Kong and Singapore in the Far East, Rhodesia and Uganda in Africa, Buraimi and Aden in the Arabian Peninsula, and the West Indies in the Caribbean Seas. Her army, navy and air force were still in top form, with nuclear and conventional arms superiority only next to the United States and Russia. Her trade was still controlling the world market, mainly with industrial supplies and machineries, enjoying imperial preferential terms. A small island of only 50 million population was still grinding the destinies of the nations across the seven seas. And all this was controlled from this mother of Parliament sitting under Big Ben.

We had discussions about the Parliamentary standing orders like our own Rules of Assembly in the speaker's office; we had luncheon meetings with the MPs in their exclusive restaurant; we had the speakers' gallery reserved for us for watching the foreign policy debate, and also had visits to the party offices of Liberal, Labour, and Conservatives. There parties are the bastions of British democracy, with free press and enlightened public opinion as its two arms.

We drove by car from London to Scotland through the green fields, over the bridges, and by ferries. Our midway stop for lunch was different not only because of the stonebuilt houses but also due to the variance of language, dress and food. In the afternoon, we were in the land of Scottish bagpipes, and Scotch whiskey. Our visit to the well-bred cattle farms and poultry farms were no less interesting than having fresh salmon from the sea. We also enjoyed our visit to the jute mills of Dundee and luncheon by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. How interesting it was to find that the jute grown in remote areas of East Pakistan were weaving the hessians and cloth in Dundee for hundreds of years beating the long distance of space and growing competition of synthetic fibers.

Leaving behind the Scottish castles, we crossed into Northern Ireland to find more castles all the way on the mountains and along the coast. Here we met again our compatriots of Assembly of Northern Ireland. This was like a provincial parliament but far short of the demand of the IRA to have a separate state and Parliament of the Irish people. The speaker, his deputies, and important members hosted a lunch for us, and we discussed the scope and procedure of this house of laws.

Ireland was still commanding the market of international shipbuilding in its various modern docks, in competition with Japan and Germany. We looked around their docks in a launch for several hours. The drive along the coast, the delicious lunch on a castle restaurant, and the

less prosperous but friendly people that I met I can never forget. But what I really cannot forget is the loss of the tie of Ireland, a souvenir gift that I preserved like my Inn tie but was looted away long with my belongings in 1971 in Dacca. Gone were my photo albums and other important papers too.

A BBC correspondent asked me what in my opinion was the reason behind the British supremacy in the world. I told them that it was neither the wealth nor fashion, far less its moral degeneration, but it was the intellects like Professor Arbury, in every branch of knowledge, who were keeping the British still high in the estimation of the people. We spent an evening with Prof. Arbury during our visit to the university town of Cambridge. He was one of many such scholars that Britain had nursed and nourished to sustain knowledge and progress.

Before my return, I fell ill one night. One Harley Street doctor treated me, which was followed by hospital investigation. My brother, Dr. Karim, was doing his MRCP and also helped in the treatment. The hospital attention that I received was superb. British Health services were still unparalleled in the world both in modern techniques and personal attention. It is a part of their welfare program for the benefit of the people in their social security system. If Britain was a cruel colonial ruler abroad, at home she had the tradition of a sound democratic welfare state for several centuries.

The other important places that we visited during this tour were Tehran and Istanbul on our way to England and Holy Mecca and Medina on our way back home.

Tehran, present capital of modern Iran since 1783, with a population of about 3 million, has a history as old as the ninth century. The fast-growing city, humming with commercial and industrial activities, would appear today quite Western in outlook without losing its Oriental characteristics. The terrain of heights and plains, with ornamentally planted greeneries and well-laid roads, make it a most enchanting city of charm and grandeur. The Shahansha's palace on the hills, Mehrabad Airport at a height of about 4,000 feet, green and flowery parks, the peacock throne, and Darya Noor diamond of crown jewels, old Gulestan palace of arts and carpets, colorful museums, Majlis and Senate Houses, Universities, and last but not least the bazaar, make the city a confluence of a civilization old and new—Islamic and Zoroastrian. The overwhelming majority of Iran's people are Shia Muslim. But no visit to Iran is complete without a taste of *Chelo Kabab*, *Nan* bread and fresh caviar. Its turquoise stone, natural *Zafran*, and pistachio are no less important.

When we were received by Pakistan embassy people at Istanbul airport, we did not realize that we were in Europe. This is the only area

in Europe that Muslim Turkey is still inhabiting with all its mosques and tombs. The high minarets around Bosphorus not only gives a serene look but also makes it a glamorous city of Muslim art and culture. The city, founded in 2600 B.C., has a history of 1,000 years as capital of Roman and Byzantine empires. In 1453, Sultan Mohammed II conquered the city whence it remained the capital of the Ottoman Empire for over four centuries flourishing with trade, industry, art, and architecture, whose remains are still visible in the midst of new skyscrapers and shanty bazaars. Sultan Ahmed Mosque, commonly known as Blue mosque, Ayasofiya the basilica of St. Sophia, now a museum, Topkapi Palace, now a very rich museum of art, arms, calligraphy, porcelain, and jewels, and other historic museums, minarets, and mosques and no less the covered bazaar are the enchanting attraction of Istanbul. Modern Turkey, built by Kemal Ataturk, has a new capital in Ankara, but Istanbul has not lost its historical or spiritual importance. One can see the garments of Prophet Mohammad (p.u.h.) in the Topkapi museum, well preserved, along with other relics. The tomb of Hazarat Ayub Al Asnari, an associate of Prophet, also lies in state on the bank of the Bosphorus, not far from the old bridge connecting Asia and Europe. The fresh fish and shikhabab one cannot miss in this peninsula between the Sea of Marmara and River Golden Horn. Not many Muslims visit the well-decorated mosques five times a day, but its 400 million population take great pride in its Muslim heritage.

After finishing our mission in England, we set out for our journey back to Pakistan via Berne, capital of Switzerland. Fakhruddin Ahmed, Sirajul Islam, and I decided to perform Umra, and the itinerary was arranged accordingly.

When we landed at Jeddah Airport, it was all dark around, and not much we could see of this oldest city of the world, with mother Hawa lying in state on the bank of Red Sea. We were driven straight to Pakistan embassy where *Ehram* was kept ready for us. The embassy driver took us smoothly along the road, which was traversed by our dear prophet on a camel's back with so much of pain and hardship. With *Labbaik* in our voice, with heart already reaching for the holy Kaaba, and the desert wind singing the praise of Allah, we did not notice the time until we reached Hodaibia. This was the place where our prophet camped for performing Hajj on his journey from far-flung Medina. But on a treaty of peace, he returned back to Medina to come back in peace next year. The dry well, which gave water to the Muslims, the hill from which the Kafirs watched the discipline and unity of the Muslims and the place where they signed the Treaty of Hodaibia, all stood there as testimony of Allah's mercy and inspiration.

We entered the *Hudude Mecca* in prayer. We approached the *Haram* with folded hands and looked on the Holy *Kaaba*, attired in black and gold, in complete submission to His will, mercy, and forgiveness. Tears rolled down our eyes unknowingly, our voices forgot all the prayers that we learned by heart, and our legs moved slowly toward that great house with the mind somewhere higher above. We went down in prostration in the *Mataaf* facing the old house for glory and thanks to Allah.

It was about midnight, but endless people were encircling the *Kaaba* in the floodlit perimeter of *Hazre Aswad* (black stone) a stone from heaven, blackened by human touch from time immemorial; we started our first of the seven circles together. Just after kissing the black stone on the first corner, we passed by the door of *Baabe-Multazim* and then the *Muqame Ibrahim* the big footprints of prophet Abraham (s.a.) on stones that worked as his elevator in the reconstruction of the House on the orders of Allah. Then comes the *Hatim*, a semicircle, which originally was a part of *Kaaba* but left out by prophet Abraham (s.a.) on the direction from Allah.

There are several graves of holy people under the *Hatim* and the roof pipe carries down the rain waters on it. Then on the fourth corner of *Kaaba* is the *Rokane Yemin* facing Yemen. The second and third corners are named after Baghdad and Syria as they face those places.

We went around *Hatim* and kissed the stones at *Rokane Yemeni*. There are seven separate prayers for seven rounds of *Tawaf* and one for all the seven rounds between *Rokane Yemeni* and *Hazre Aswad*. And with prayers we finished all, not knowing how long it took or how sublime and absorbing it was. In the last round, while kissing the black stone, among other things, I also prayed to Allah for a son, as I had all daughters.

After finishing the rounds at *Multazim*, I prayed, touching the *Kaaba* and its gold-plated doors, and also at *Muqame Ibrahim*, after saying two *Rakats* of prayers. *Tawaf* was completed on drinking water from the eternal well of *Jamjam*, flowing from the days of prophet Ismail (s.a.)—the prophet born from the wedlock of Hazrat Ibrahim and Hazrat Hazera and thrown in the wilderness without food or water. Millions drink this water every year, and immemorable faithfuls get relief from their incurable diseases every now and then. This is one of the five places within *Haram* where Allah surely grants prayers of the faithful.

From the mount of *Safaa*, we started our first round of walk and run to Mount *Marwa*, symbolizing the pursuit of Hazrat Hazera to find water for his infant child Ismail. From *Marwa* to *Safaa* makes the second round, and this we completed seven times in prayers. The whole mosque, built during the Turkish rule, was now being expanded in a more

massive and gigantic scale to accommodate the growing number of devotees. The Safaa was also being given a roof and an elegant finishing to facilitate the movement of the *Hajees*. When we finished our "*Halaq*," haircut, after completing *Umrah*, it was past midnight, but the *Kaaba* was as crowded as before with devotees saying their prayers, reciting the Holy Quran, or circling the *Kaaba*. The night was no less bright than the day, and we felt brighter than ever before. Besides the House of Allah, this is the city where our prophet was born over 1,300 years ago; he was brought up here and received prophethood and revelations in this city. Yet he had to migrate from his birthplace amidst humiliation and torture only to come back victorious with His cause.

From a distance the high minaret of *Masjide Nabi* was visible after our over 400 kilometer drive from Mecca. On the road we stopped at Badr—the venue of first *Jihad* between our prophet and *Kafirs* of Mecca; 313 Muslims, led by Prophet Mohammad (p.u.h.), against a better armed 1,000 *Kafirs* won the first battle of Islam with the leader of the *Kafirs*, Abu Jahel, killed and with many more killed and captured. The graves of fourteen martyrs still lie near the present road to Medina.

Under the green dome lies our prophet in state with his two Caliphs, Hazrat Abu Bakar and Umar, lying by his side, and maybe his daughter Hazrat Fatema, also. When we entered the big mosque, Azan for Asar prayer was being echoed one after another from all the four minarets in most melodious voices. The city as we entered, the mosque as we stepped in, and the '*Rouza*' as it appeared before our eyes, all looked serene and peaceful. More peace and sublimity lay in wait for us till we finished our prayers and joined the procession of devotees to offer *salam* and *doa* on Allah's most beloved friend and last prophet. We just could not believe that we were so fortunate enough to be physically present there and offer *salam* to our Savior. Tears of forgiveness, thanks, joy, and prayers of heart were all that we could offer with *salam* to our prophet. May Allah grant His mercy and pleading of His beloved prophet on me, on my near ones, on Pakistan, and all the Muslims of the world dead or alive.

Ups and Downs

Politics was a jealous mistress that distracted me from both my family life and profession. Attya felt every day that people became more important to me than her. Clients also felt that my tour and speechmaking were more important than their briefs. This was a terrible jeopardy, as my people loved me, so I was devoted to them. My wife was too devoted to me, but I did not have enough time for her, and my clients liked me, too, but I had not enough time to devote to them.

She was touchy, though, like all girls, but very understanding with a deep faith in God. In our bitter moments of quarrel or dispute, either of us always showed patience to let the other cool down. So we always have remained friends, devoted to one another in times of all ups and downs in life or politics.

I asked her once. "Coming from such a family and being highly educated, how could you agree to others' selection?"

"It was my selection."

"How come?"

"I saw you from the balcony of the commissioner's house while you all were having the afternoon tea.

"I intentionally kept my face opposite to the balcony while talking to Kadri."

"Not all the time, young man. Moreover—

"Yes, go ahead."

"No, that is my secret."

"Please tell me. I am curious."

"Well, curiosity kills the cat."

"Never mind, please tell me your secret."

"All right, you won't laugh at me."

"No, nothing louder than a giggle."

"You, clever."

"Please."

"You remember one day you were going to the high court while I was going to the college in our horse carriage and you looked at me."

"No, I do not."

"On many occasions, I looked at you from my carriage either on the road or in your chamber."

"Really?"

"Yes, but I looked with interest the same face when your proposal for marriage came for one of my cousins."

"Yes, I remember now."

"When I looked on that day, I thought you were quite imposing and attractive. But you were meant for my cousin sister."

"Did you really wish anything at that time?"

"Maybe I did."

"But how is it that you passed by my chamber to your college every day, but I never noticed you?"

"Well, you were gentle and shy, so I thought you must be good."

"You thought, but am I not good?"

"No, you are too naughty."

I had a pleasant shock for her too when she repeated my question.

"But how come a barrister educated in London, practicing in high court, and agreeing to marry a girl just by hearsay?"

"You think like that, do not you?"

"You always tell me that hearsay evidence is not admissible."

"It was no hearsay, it was the best evidence—eyewitness."

"Still hearsay, as someone else saw me and told you that I was a paragon of beauty and this and that."

"This is again my secret. In your case, it was my own selection, too."

"Maybe, but you did not see me before the first night."

"That is my secret that I saw you more than once before marriage."

"How could you?"

"One day you were in a car going away from the college. My friend Muntaqueem told me if I knew the girl sitting in the car. I admitted my ignorance when he told me that she was Nawabzada Nasrullah's daughter. He was interested in another girl, whom he ultimately married."

"Yes, I know her. But you were not interested in me."

"I really got interested when I saw you for the second time in front of commissioner's office accompanied by some other girls. I was going to the commissioner's court when I saw you waiting in a parked car."

"Maybe, I was waiting to pick up the commissioner brother Kadri for lunch on my way home from the college."

"Yes, it was after one o'clock."

"I looked at you and you also looked up."

"Brother Kadri used to tell me about a bright young barrister from Barisal."

"That was poor me."

"He actually arranged the marriage."

The providence united these two hearts, secretly yearning for each other. One was created out of the ribs of the other, so no undue emotion, fantasy, or courtship were necessary. We lived a happy life of love and legend in the modern way, but a modest way, in the conservative way, but a happy way. And we wish to live longer for the love of people and their creator.

Because of the growing popularity and opposition to President Ayub, Jamaate Islami was banned by the government, soon after all the parties were revived. Its top leaders, like Moulana Maududi and some more from East and West Pakistan, were thrown behind the bars on the allegation that their activities were subversive to the state and the party was always against Pakistan. The government tirade, led by Home Minister Habibullah Khan, was picked up by others of the Muslim League Party and Mufti Mahmood group. I was summoned from Dacca for consultations with advocates S. M. Zafar at Lahore and A. K. Brohi at Karachi.

Zafar was a pro-Jamaat young promising lawyer of great legal acumen. And Brohi, ex-law minister of Pakistan and a personal adviser of Moulana Maududi, was undecidedly the best living lawyer of Pakistan. Zafar, Abbasi and I prepared a writ petition and Brohi filed it in West Pakistan High Court at Karachi. After admission, the case was heard by a bench of three judges for several days on various legal and constitutional points of supreme importance. It was not just banning a party but an attempt to stifle the opposition voice and encroach upon the fundamental rights of the citizens. So this became an important constitutional case, which Brohi argued with missionary zeal but in vain. In East Pakistan High Court, also, I prepared another petition, and Brohi moved it with similar fervor and tenacity where we succeeded. Thus, the High Court of East Pakistan ruled that banning the party was illegal, though the High Court of West Pakistani judges dared not to do so. Naturally, the cases were taken to the supreme court by both the government of Pakistan and Jamaate Islami. In the historic hearings in the Supreme Court, the judges established an unblemished record of justice, and we won the case.

During the days of President Ayub, the Courts proved the real guardians of the rights of the people against the dictatorial executive powers not only in our but in dozens of cases. Law secretary Snelson's case of contempt, Minister Fazlul Quader Choudhury's case of losing the membership, Basic Democracy's order writs of East Pakistan, Farid Ahmed's victory in his election petition, and many more in both high courts and supreme court led the people to greater aspirations for full democracy.

The nine leaders of Pakistan had created a great sensation in the country by their demands for revocation of the Constitution with return to democracy. They also asked for economic justice for East Pakistan, which was being exploited by the vested interests of West Pakistan. Though the demands of the people were the same, whether voiced from the floor of the Assembly or from public platforms, yet there was lack of unity or understanding between the leaders of the two forums. The members of the Assembly primarily felt that return to democracy must be through constitutional process and not through violent politics. The nine leaders believed that they were barred under the constitution even to contest elections or participate in any party politics, so the Constitution must be annulled and the military president, who came through force, must be ousted by force. So there was a basic difference in the approach of the entire opposition, including Jamaate Islami. We in the Assembly had already set the ball of democratization rolling by the major First Amendment to the constitution. We, through our vocal opposition and political pressure, had also convinced the government to bring the Second Amendment as another step forward to extend the franchise and also to liberalize the laws of political detention, press ordinance, Parties Act, and the Basic Democracy order. Jamaat was adamant on Family law ordinance and adult franchise and other groups in the opposition—both left and right—were more adamant for provincial autonomy, breaking up of one unit and abolishing the system of basic democracy.

The sum total was a great people's upsurge in the country against President Ayub despite political stability and tremendous industrial and agricultural development. The development in the field of education, village uplifting, communication, and art and architecture was also phenomenal during Ayub's time. But like any other developing country, the welfare of the people fell far short of its actual aspirations. So discontent became the order of the day, with the upper hand of the elements of violence. The elements of violence were patronized by the foreign powers hostile to Pakistan or its prosperity. As a front-ranking member of the combined opposition, my heart used to bleed at the behind-the-scene activities of these masterminds of foreign powers. But I was com-

mitted to the people and conscientiously could not violate their mandate so long I was their elected representative.

Towards the end of Ayub's five-year term and First Assembly's thirty-month term, the election was announced, but through the electoral college of the 80,000 basic democrats again. The election of the president was to be held first, like putting the cart before the horse, and election of the Assembly was to follow later. The campaign for the election of the electoral college was afloat with Ayub Khan as the nominee of the Muslim League.

The Muslim League was headed by Ayub Khan at the insistence of his followers after Choudhury Khaliquzzaman's term of organizing the convention was over. Another part of the Muslim League, in its council meeting, elected Khawaja Nazimuddin as its head. Thus, the major party, the Muslim League, was divided into two. The National Awami Party was also divided into two after some time, with Moulana Bhasani as the head of pro-Chinese group and Wali Khan, son of self-exiled frontier Gandhi Abdul Gaffar Khan, as the head of pro-Russian group. Both had national socialism as their goal. The Awami League, Nizame Islam, and other minor parties were also divided into two. Some revived themselves in their own name and style, but some remained nonrevivalist in the National Democratic Front headed by Nurul Amin. So there were practically as many parties as there were leaders of stature. This suited Ayub Khan very much, for his retention of power, but was most suicidal for the opposition. It was very difficult to get a common candidate of stature who could have the backing of the combined opposition to challenge effectively Ayub Khan in his own device of election. Names of Khawaja Nazimuddin, Azam Khan, Moulana Maududi, and Moulana Bhasani came under discussion. Shaheed Suhrawardy had already expired after his release from detention. The great leader, imprisoned for long, was resting in Beirut after release. Sheikh Mujib and other followers of Suhrawardy wanted him to come back and lead the party. But as ill luck would have it, his body only came for burial in Dacca to the great shock and disappointment of the people. The great Shere Bangla Fazlul Huq also breathed his last on his own soil and so did the Speaker Tamizuddin Khan, and they all lay buried in Dacca when the country needed them most. Abdul Qayum Khan of Frontier, Momtaz Md. Khan Daulatana and Choudhury Md. Ali of Punjab and A. K. Brohi of Sind and Nurul Amin of East Pakistan were the other living personages of consequence.

All these figures were either discarded by one party or another, or they were disqualified by government order from contesting elections for some more years. When ultimately the choice fell on Miss Fatema

Jinnah, the spinister sister of the Quaide Azam, Jamaate Islami raised objection. The only change of united nomination was being frustrated when I was approached by Khawaja Nazimuddin, Azam Khan, Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, Mashiur Rahman, Sk. Mujibur Rahman, Choudhury Md. Ali, and others to persuade Moulana Maudoodi to accept the nomination of Miss Jinnah. Moulana Maudoodi, whom I interviewed in Lahore with Choudhury Rahmat Ilahi, was in detention for a long time. Moulana would not commit as he thought that he could not exercise free opinion from jail, but he would not stand against the opposition decision. In principle, his opinion on a lady becoming the head of the state was too well pronounced as negative. Yet he, on his political judgment, thought that Ayub must go, and Miss Jinnah could possibly do it. With tacit consent from Moulana, we flew to Karachi and met Miss Jinnah in two sessions with Jamaat leaders to clarify certain of her viewpoints and programs. She had not given her consent without being sure of support of all opposition factions. Now the passage was clear with the support of Jammat.

Yet no one would know how difficult it was to get her nomination accepted not only with Jamaat but with the National Awami Party and the Awami League in the meetings of the combined opposition parties. COP was formed with the participation of all political opposition groups with a nine-point program. The agreement on 9 points was also the result of marathon sessions of hostile leaders of conflicting political views. And it was an experience of life to work with the leaders of extreme groups who all had their own motives behind the unity. Mian Tofail Muhamad, Choudhury Rahmat Ilahi, and I had to represent Jamaat in the COP executive sessions. But for the tireless, sincere efforts of Khawaja Nazimuddin, nothing would have come about of unity with everyone thinking about himself to be too indispensable for the unity.

When the nomination of Miss Jinnah was announced by COP, there was a tremendous public upsurge. Her tour of important places of East and West Pakistan moved the upsurge to frenzy, so much so that there was hardly any member of the electoral college elected in East Pakistan without promising support for the COP nominee, Mothere Millat Fatima Jinnah. In West Pakistan, public consciousness was dependent more on local landlords and official pressure. The students were in the vanguard once more of a campaign which can be paralleled with Pakistan movement only. Our meetings in the nooks and corners of the country roused the people, equal to the challenge of Ayub Khan. The predominance of the press and radio, favoring the president in power, was overshadowed by the emotions of the people.

Ultimately, a majority of the electors were elected who pledged

support to Miss Jinnah. But when the election of the candidates approached, those electors started moving away from their pledges because of the inherent weakness of the system itself. The opposition was out to abolish the electoral college system by adult franchise. The electors could not be expected to sign their own death warrant by voting for an opposition nominee. So Ayub Khan won the election, defeating public opinion through his mechanism of indirect democracy, which was susceptible to pressure and corruption. He got more votes in West Pakistan, but he had the majority in East Pakistan, also.

We were taken aback, but there was no surrender in politics. We contested the Assembly elections. There I was faced with one justice, Abdul Jabbar Khan, in my seat, who was the sitting president of Provincial Muslim League. For my service and popularity in the constituency, I was sure to be elected, but there again corruption and my opposition to the system of basic democracy played the decisive role. I could have easily purchased the twenty-eight votes required for my victory, but I did not do it like others on principle. In this process, majority members were elected from among the supporters of Ayub Khan both in the National and Provincial Assemblies.

I filed an election petition to prove that rampant corruption was practiced in forms of entertaining the voters by food and paying money, violating the law. I even seized proof of twenty-five bank checks besides other evidence. I was sure to win in the tribunal, as Farid Ahmed did, but I withdrew my case on other political grounds.

After the shock of defeat was absorbed by the opposition, they hatched different plans to oust Ayub Khan in unconstitutional ways. Their plea was that all doors of peaceful transfer of powers were closed, so they must launch a nationwide movement, resorting to force wherever necessary. This could lead to bloodshed and civil war. Many foreign friends, including our neighbors, were ready to finance and back this. I was alarmed at this situation. I consulted my party leaders and other top-ranking politicians of different views. They were out to take revenge on Ayub Khan, who seized their political rights, perpetrated his rule of tyranny or corruption, and according to some, uprooted the values of Islam from Pakistan. So they consulted internal and external sources of support. With so much of service for the opposition, this new extreme approach was not acceptable to me. The Kremlin, Peking, the White House, and New Delhi all seemed to be involved in this struggle for power of a developing country of 125 million people. The Himalayas on the north and the Indian Ocean on the south borders with China, Russia, India, Iran, Afghanistan, and Burma; this country strategically or otherwise could not be ignored by the big powers. Moreover, the nearest

neighbor always vied with its existence from its very birth. And with the political stability and economic progress, Pakistan became a great headache for her. After forceful occupation of Hyderabad state, India invaded Junagadh and Manvadar states, which had already joined with Pakistan. She also took over the French and Dutch colonies of Goa and other smaller states on the Indian coasts. By then the defense umbrella of the United States, Canada, France, Britain, Germany, and other Western states against China was completed for India at a huge cost. Russia was also pampering her with armament and MIG factories. While her people remained unfed and unclad, she became a great fighting power.

The continued detention of Sheikh Abdullah, denial of the promised plebiscite, and repression of the people roused the Kashmiris to rise in arms for their freedom again after several years. Indian troops marched in to suppress the freedom movement. Volunteers from Pakistan also moved in, making the situation like that of 1947–1948. Emboldened by her new acquisition of arms and support of both the Pentagon and the Kremlin, she attacked Pakistan in the darkness of the night on September 6, 1965. The Indian commander in chief had planned to have tea in Shalimar garden of Lahore on the following day and practically reached the outskirts of Lahore. The United States, bound by the mutual defense pact against army invasion did not act. Had Israel been the victim of such aggression, New Delhi would have been pounded to dust by U.S. support. But the valiant Pakistan army, undaunted by the open aggression of a power four times bigger and the betrayal of her Western allies resisted the Indian forces at Sialkot, Lahore, and other sectors with heavy casualties. The East Bengal Regiment also heroically fought on the West Pakistan borders. The freedom movement of Kashmiris was stopped by this massive attack, and it became the question of survival of Pakistan itself.

Help came from China, Turkey, Iran, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, and other friendly countries but not from the United States, the greatest ally of the defense treaty. The war of defense had to be fought by its own people. And really the country, so much politically divided, rose as one man in support of its army. The valiant boys of army, navy, and air force died but did not surrender; they even penetrated deep into Indian borders.

Astonished by this feat of valor and determination of Pakistan, Russia and the United States came forward as the messiah of peace. That is how all neocolonialists behave. After seventeen days of devastating war, a cease-fire was called followed by the Tashkhand Declaration. India achieved its limited goal of suppressing the freedom struggle of Kashmiri people and shaking up Pakistan. Russia became another master benefactor of Pakistan after the Pentagon betrayal.

Only the Awami League remained quiet during this national calamity, confirming the belief of many that it was an Indian-inspired party. But all other opposition parties expressed their full support for the defense of Pakistan.

I was out of the Assembly and also out of agitational politics, so the time was consumed by the consolidation of my legal practice. I had already separated my professional chamber from my residence. Thus, I devoted undivided attention to the chamber during the day, leaving the evening free for family or social engagements. In Bengal, a lawyer's life was a full-time job, where neither family nor social activities played any dominant role. Even Sundays or weekends were occupied by the clients. No part of the day or night can exclusively be earmarked for personal occupations if one had the chamber and residence under the same roof. So I, like a few more advocates separated the two. This, of course, resulted in politics and profession in chamber and late evenings with family.

Yet the most important civil, criminal, and constitutional cases I fought during this period, taking me to the top of the High Court Bar. My appearance in supreme court, whose advocate I became in 1963, also became of increasing importance to me and my clients. Besides my junior colleagues, Latif, Korban Ali, Nawab Ali, Nur Muhamad, Muhammad Ali in High Court, my friend Attorney Hoda in Supreme Court matters were helping me. My appearance with A. K. Brohi, Hamidul Huq, Choudhury A. T. M. Mustafa and A. M. Abdullah were not many but were mostly for constitutional cases. And most of these and my other cases are reported either in Pakistan Legal Decisions or Dacca Law Reports for their importance.

The old saying that justice delayed is justice denied cut no ice in the judicial system of India or Pakistan. Sometimes a criminal appeal would take a longer time for disposal in the high court than the prison term of an accused. And it so happened in one case, also, with me, that by the time the bail order of an accused reached the jail authorities, the accused was enjoying his home meal after serving out the sentence. The civil cases had the speed of a snail taking mostly more than one life to finish.

The law commission set up by President Ayub Khan recommended some measures to cut short the lengthy procedure of court battles. But different bar associations used to the old British practice of hundreds of years did not accept them. Many of the reforms brought by President Ayub were rejected by the bar, as much of the independence of judiciary was sought to be curtailed by the Ayub constitution. Yet, during his time, that judiciary asserted its rights most than ever before. Justice

Kayani of West and Justice Murshed of East became the judicial idols for their bold judicial pronouncements on various politico-legal battles. Their forthright decisions against various government actions and laws curbing the fundamental rights of the citizens roused the people's consciousness to a high pitch.

From 1968, the country was again feverishly preparing for ousting President Ayub from his saddle. The opposition, heterogeneous in their program and ideology, had combined again in their desperate bid to oust Ayub Khan, and to some it even meant use of force or breaking up Pakistan. The strange bedfellows were looking for their support, no less, on the external mentors than on the support of the people. Some of their mentors were cunningly favoring the separation of East Pakistan to suit their national or international strategy. Being a member of the opposition, I could see this game of power politics from within the arena. I warned my close political associates about the dangerous consequences of the trend, but not all of them did understand me then.

I, in my personal judgment, had to take a decision. I changed my party affiliation and joined the Muslim League, not to gain personally but to save the disintegration of Pakistan. I could somehow see that the country was preparing for the debacle that actually came a few years later. I gave the ideological interest greater importance than the party, personal, or political interest. This aspect of my personal decision was not duly appreciated by men of average understanding until the day of the debacle came.

Naturally, President Ayub Khan, Abdul Jabbar Khan and the rest of the Muslim Leaguers were gratified with my decision and hailed my reentry into the Muslim League fold. Moulana Maududi, with whom I corresponded on the subject, was quite understanding of my difference of opinion with the role of Jamaate Islami in that historical context. I worked for Jamaat in and out of Assembly, I defended Jamaat in court and platforms, and upheld its position and prestige at home and abroad. When I left its fold, I never defamed or absued it for the difference of opinion I had with its policy and program. I knew that the cadre-based Jamaat could not rise to challenge that the hostile popular forces were throwing. It was the duty of all Islamic parties, including Jamaat and the League, to counter the challenge unitedly rather than fighting each other.

An organization similar to Jamaat had made immense contributions in the Arab world. The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and elsewhere established a scientific organization with research and dedication for an Islamic renaissance. Their great leaders, like Hassanul Banna, Syed Kutub, and the rest, even became martyrs for Islam in the

hands of Arab rulers. But their cadre-based organization could not rally popular support against the ruthless oppression of nationalism, militarism, or socialism. Jamaat was following the same ideals and the Muslim League in name only.

On joining the government party, naturally I was offered various positions. First, I was offered the post of deputy attorney general of Pakistan, while Peerzada was the attorney general. I was also offered to become a Judge of the East Pakistan High court and also a ministry. I accepted none.

Bhutto had left the government party after challenging Mujibur Rahman on its six-point program. He was ambitious to get to President Ayub's position, as Ayub Khan was losing popularity and support after the Taskhand Declaration of 1965. Though Bhutto himself was a party to the Declaration, he, for his pro-Chinese leanings, showed discontent for the Russian-inspired truce declaration. The people also disliked the Declaration, which Bhutto utilized to his own benefit in West Pakistan.

The six-point program of Mujibur Rahman, inspired by secessionist elements at home and abroad was very popular at the expense of the united opposition. It became apparent that all the superpowers, in their global strategy, were out to break Pakistan to contain China. They also did not appreciate the emergence of the Islamic block after the Rabat Conference where Pakistan played a very important role. The emerging Muslim countries, about thirty-five in number, tried to unite themselves on political, economic, and cultural fronts in which the superpowers saw a shadow of coming events.

In the midst of the Agartala conspiracy case, one day the law secretary of the government of Pakistan flew to Dacca and contacted me, as desired by the president. He wanted me to assist the chief counsel, Manzur Quader, for the prosecution in the conspiracy case. After discussing the case with the then law minister S. M. Zafar, law secretary, and Manzur Quader, I declined to take up the case, though the fee offered to me was quite respectable. The president was not pleased with me for this, so I wrote to him about my honest opinion about the case. The opinion came true later.

Soon thereafter, the law minister visited Dacca again when the Muslim League Council reelected President Ayub as its president for another term in the stormy session at Ramna Green. At about midnight, Fazlul Quader Choudhury, who was no longer a speaker or minister but as a Member was sitting in the National Assembly as an independent, but opposed to Ayub Khan, approached the law minister with a request for Mujib's release from the conspiracy case. Zafar told him that Mujib was out to break Pakistan, so how could he bring such a proposal?

Choudhury told him that Moulana Bhasani was also out to break up Pakistan. So it was necessary to let one fight against the other instead of both fighting against Pakistan. Zafar asked my opinion on the argument in the presence of Mr. Choudhury. I told them that both the persons were unpredictable and working at the instance of foreign powers, none could be gained over without gaining their mentors. And, unfortunately, they had the people with them under their spell.

Moulana Bhasani's policy of open murder of pro-Pakistan elements took the country by storm. One day, the VIP's rest house, where Justice Rahman was residing, was burned to ashes, and the occupants narrowly escaped with their life. Nawab Askari's greenhouse was also set on fire, burning all the historic relics, antiques, and valuables of the Dacca Nawab family. The whole province of East Pakistan was ablaze as burning and killing went rampant, a clear expression of discontent set the country on the verge of a civil war.

One night during the R.T.C. conference in Pindi, we were discussing the structure of a new Constitution with Manzur Quader in Hotel Intercontinental, Law Minister Zafar came for briefing us. Dr. Kamal and Professor Muzaffar also dropped in and discussed things of the agreement with us for a while. Then came the Home Minister A. R. Khan and Rizvi, the intelligence chief of Pakistan, to apprise us all of the latest situation as to law and order. They narrated, with reference to a message just received, that 20,000 Indian army and civilian infiltrators had already entered into East Pakistan with small arms and explosives to undo the peace move of the leaders. They were engaged in setting fire, killing people, and creating unrest all over the province in collaboration with local political elements.

Soon after the agreement of R.T.C. was reached, I was sitting with the president in his office. After discussion of the conference, his decision to abdicate and the future of Pakistan and Muslim League, he told me. "We are running against time. I want to call the Assembly to session within a fortnight. So I give you only a week's time to draft the changes in the constitution.

I replied, "The country could not prepare an acceptable Constitution within twenty-three years, and you want us to prepare one within seven days!

The president, despite all his worries and sadness smiled and said, "All right I give you ten days' time because I do not know whether we have more time at our disposal."

In that short statement and the talk that followed, he hinted of things that did not meet the public eye, the undercurrents that shook the country.

The global strategy of the Pentagon and Kremlin needed a shakeup in Pakistan in which China did not want to lose. India was waiting for such an eventuality where she could reap a rich harvest. The stable government in Pakistan, despite political discontent or rapid industrial cum economic progress in Pakistan during the decade of Ayub rule, was not at all to the liking of her greater neighbor. And Yahya Khan himself was ambitious for power.

Governor Abdul Monem Khan was being replaced by Dr. Nurul Huda. Monem Khan, an assembly colleague of mine, was appointed governor of East Pakistan in 1963 and was still going strong after six years. Gen. Azam Khan, as the governor, ruled East Pakistan as a popular figure during martial law, but Advocate Monem Khan ruled the same province for a longer period to the great disliking of the people at large. All the unpopular acts of the central government were ruthlessly carried out through him in the East and Nawab of Kalabagh in the West. Their unpleasant acts overshadowed the all-round progress in industrial, educational, communication, and other sectors. So the personality of the man, basically pious and well intended, was lost in the reputation of a highhanded ruler.

Dr. Huda, a professor of economics of Dacca University, though aligned with the ruling party, was known for his unbiased administration. So President Ayub chose him to succeed Monem Khan, which also had the approval of Muzjibur Rahman. But Muzjibur Rahman, true to his own mettle, on arriving at Dacca from Pindi, disowned the agreement of the Round Table Conference. Bhasani had already prepared the ground for such a somersault, which Bhutto also wanted. So all the strange bedfellows combined to violently overthrow Ayub Khan despite the agreement for peaceful transfer of power through election to take place within a few months of the constitutional enactment. The ink of the draft Constitution was still to dry. I was yet to receive a printed copy of the draft, which I and Manzur Quader prepared and Law Minister Zafar approved as being nearer to the 1956 Constitution. I was discussing its salient features with Dr. Huda, the newly sworn in governor, when the radio announcement came that Yahya Khan had taken over as the president and martial law administrator and Ayub Khan had retired. Martial law was again imposed on the country after several years of constitutional rule.

I met Ayub Khan later when he was still holding the presidency of the Muslim League, and I put the question to him for such a drastic decision. He told me that the country could sustain a division in political ranks but not a division in the army. He failed to unite the political leaders, even abdicating himself so he could not take the risk of dividing the army by taking any drastic action to restore his authority.

"I did not want a bloodbath to preside over the liquidation of Pakistan," he remarked. We wanted Ayub Khan to retain the Presidentship of Muslim League, but he wanted a successor. Fazlul Quader Choudhury, his first admirer and later an opponent, was gracefully accepted by him when the League councillors adopted him. President Ayub totally retired from politics to reside peacefully in his Islamabad villa.

When Yahya Khan met us in Dacca, he repeated that he would transfer power to the elected representatives as soon as the country returned to normalcy. The violent leaders had all quieted down with the promulgation of martial law as the mice do with the approach of the tomcat. He was flirting with leaders and parties opposed to Ayub Khan and condemning the Muslim League and its achievements, so much so that he had frozen the entire Muslim League fund. Yahya Khan followed in the footsteps of Ayub Khan in many respects except that he went for popular things without caring for the integrity of the country. West Pakistan was divided into four provinces again, breaking the one unit. A new military governor, Admiral Ahsan, succeeded Dr. Huda in East Pakistan; after a while, Air Marshal Nur Khan was appointed governor of West Pakistan. To him, Bhutto and Mujib became the two pet leaders.

The Legal Framework Order was promulgated by Yahya Khan for the ensuing election, to be held at the end of 1970. The new Assembly was to frame a Constitution on that framework on the basis of one man, one vote, giving East Pakistan majority in the Assembly. Provincial autonomy was assured to East Pakistan and all other provinces. Economic justice was also to be ensured in the Constitution for all regions. The L.F.O. was completely in contrast with the Awami League six-point, or Bhutto's socialist program. Yet Yahya Khan found it fit to allow the inherent contradiction to nurse and flourish till the Frankensteins came in open conflict with its mentor.

In such confusion, no one could expect real democracy to thrive or to be restored through election. Any election could neither be free nor fair in such an anomalous situation, which Yahya Khan knew himself and which we told him personally on many occasions, to which he agreed. But he always meant to have something up his sleeves, not understood in common parlance. Fond of wine and women, his seriousness of statecraft never rose above the level of a uniformed politician. He was supposed to have a group of expert advisers in his cabinet and outside. Military ruler is bad enough for a democratic country, and when he is without any moral or idealistic sense of direction there could be nothing worse.

The situation suited the elements who were out to grab power at any cost for their own ends, but we, those who valued the welfare of

the people and integrity of the country most, were in a tight corner. We had no alternative but to face the election and try out a solution; a desperate bid to save the country from a dive into a precipice.

A devastating cyclone and tidal wave overtook East Pakistan during the election campaign of 1970. The apathy and mismanagement of relief operations by the Central government drove the bitter feelings between East and West to a dead end. The public frenzy, roused to a high pitch about the exploitation of East by West, was testified to by a recent example.

The truth of the unity of Pakistan and its people was overshadowed by the clouds of misunderstanding and misrepresentation. The Central government created a wrong image of its duties and functions to its vast majority, and the parochial leaders created a false image of deliverance. Thus the people and ideology of Pakistan became the worst victims of the two-pronged onslaught.

I was caught in this crossfire of the political ups and downs of my life without knowing what the destiny of the nation or its 120 million people would be. There was no means to mould the destiny of the one or the other by human efforts alone.

Last Days in Prison

I had a mind to recount the Indo-Pakistan sociopolitical history of fifty years from 1930 to 1980. But it became apparent by 1973 that the last chapter could not be written from prison. The gallows for which we were waiting were moving fast away from us to the other direction. The 90,000 prisoners of war were still being threatened by Indo-Bangladesh governments by their trial for alleged war crimes. India was using the government at Dacca as its publicity mouthpiece, while she and a peace council, patronized by Russia, were busy mobilizing international opinion. The unfortunate victims, detained in different prison camps in India, were leading a most miserable life as a reward for their patriotism. General Niazi, General Farman, and other officers and men on the military side, Chief Secretary Muzaffar Hussain, I. G. P. Chowdhury, and many more top civil servants, and a good number of journalists and businessmen, with or without family and children, were included in among the POWs. A few on health grounds were repatriated and a fewer on daredevil escape designs had freed themselves. Bhutto, in his own gesture of goodwill, had freed all the few hundred Indian POWs, mostly Sikhs. He had also made a dash to India and reached an agreement with Indira Gandhi at Simla, freezing the Kashmir and East Pakistan issues and gaining the phased repatriation of POWs. Aziz Ahmed, Bhutto's main aide in this historic negotiation, also achieved a via media on the touchy question of trial of POWs without directly recognizing Bangladesh. The territories occupied by each other, other than East Pakistan, were also to be vacated soon.

Among the many points that defeated Pakistan had to give in was one that involved millions of "collaborators" of Pakistan who were either languishing in prison houses of Bangladesh or were the fugitives. Those were the forgotten patriots who defended Pakistan at the cost of their

life, property and honor. Bhutto reportedly helped all those who could reach West Pakistan. But no public or private help reached these millions from the government of Pakistan to their diehard devotees. Bhutto probably did not own them or their sacrifices, though we were sure that people there must have been praying for our freedom as that of the POWs.

So our trial started under the cover of a presidential decree entitled "Collaborators Order." The executive order was devised in such a way that anyone charged with collaboration with Pakistan with or without criminal participation could be automatically convicted and sentenced, from hanging to imprisonment of any term, with confiscation of properties. The normal law of evidence and procedure were not to apply to them. The said law, which was made retrospective, became an instrument of autoconviction. So the detained people were produced before the tribunal on dates after dates and one day were returned as convicts. Even the lawyers were not allowed to freely defend them. It was a process of lawlessness in the name of law.

The same lawlessness was also prevailing in the country at large where life, honor, or property of all people were in the hands of lawless armed brigands. Even Mujib's sons, nephews, and party workers were reportedly busy in the looting, secret killing, and molestations in a manner that would horrify even the Nazi Gestapo or Russian K.G.B. The gains of this looting reached so high that the proceeds, besides being utilized for vicious activities within, mostly found their way into Indian and foreign banks, rendering the country and its people paupers. The value of Taka fell down to its lowest ebb, and inflation engulfed the whole economy, coupled with the unabated smuggling of jute, fish, rice, and other essentials to Indian markets.

Even the huge relief materials that came to alleviate the sufferings of the war-devastated country found easy passage to Indian markets. The Awami League hierarchy, which controlled the administration of the country, and the Red Cross thus enriched themselves fabulously, exploiting the people whom they pledged to serve.

The major industries and trade houses were all nationalized to fulfill the socialist mission of equalizing the people and their resources for a classless society in the Russian way. But the management of these organizations of production and distribution were entrusted to unscrupulous party workers, who, in their lust for wealth and power, drained out the resources to their own benefit. The party workers, in their exuberance of deliverance, also shared the booty with the management so much so that within a month's time industry and trade were brought to a state of decay, stagnation, and losses. State borrowing rose to an

unprecedented peak, making the Cental Bank issue more paper money without the backing of gold or foreign exchange reserves. The notes printed from India were in duplicate or triplicates, losing its whole value except for smuggling purposes.

No effort was diverted to channelize the boiling energy of the people of a newly born state. The message of their revolution had ended in villification of Pakistan without a definite creative guidance for nation building! The loot and lawlessness became the order of the so-called revolution with only idolization of Mujib. No effort was made to unify the people for any cause worth the name.

An organization was formed in London for defending the victims of the Mujib administration, i.e., the collaborators. They sent Dingle Foot Q.C., one-time minister of labour government of the British to defend Dr. Malik, the last governor of East Pakistan. He was on trial like other "collaborators" on fake charges. So the London organization decided to defend him and challenge the order as a test case. When the counsel arrived in Dacca airport with a regular entry permit obtained from London, the Mujib government became nervous as the show of trial and pretensions of justice would be exposed to the free world. So the government at Dacca decided not to allow the counsel to defend his client and thus avoided the risk of exposure. So Sir Dingle Foot was unceremoniously whisked off from the airport to the next available outgoing international flight. Instead of finding himself either interviewing his client in central jail or defending him in the tribunal, he found himself landed in Bangkok for the next plane to London. What a just trial! Even Mujib was allowed to be defended by a prominent English counsel in the Agartala Conspiracy case, but we were not to have the right to defend.

So the trial took place with Advocate Ataur Rahman Khan defending Dr. Malik. This advocate was also threatened, and humiliated by the Mujib's men openly during the trial. Neither the advocate nor his client was allowed to take pleas that would normally be taken by an accused. The result was foretold, and when it was announced, it was life imprisonment for him. The death penalty was not given for his age and checkered public career, said the judge!

The same thing happened to Moulana Yusuf, Abbas Ali Khan, Moulana Ishaq, Mujibur Rahman, Jasimuddin, and other cabinet colleagues—all sentenced to life imprisonment. The worst thing happened with Md. Suleman, who tried a trick by betraying his own conscience. In his defense statement, he eulogized the achievement of Mujib and vilified the Pak army in an effort to free himself from sure punishment. But, astonishingly, he was punished on three counts with two sentences for life and one for five years.

Abul Quasem tried to delay his trial by different legal pleas. And I decided to defend myself. I filed an application in the high court to enable me to appear in person. I also advised my colleagues to adopt the same strategy so that one could make a clean breast of one's just and correct stand of the right to defend the freedom of an established state during a civil war and foreign aggression, and also to prove to the world that any defense was meaningless in the system of autoconvicting executive law. But my colleagues were afraid that for such a defense one could be hanged. But I wrote my statement in the light of our stand that we took for the defense of united Pakistan and its people and waited for the trial. I knew the outcome of any completed trial so my self-defense through a high court hearing was my real remedy. And I knew that death would come only once in life.

On the only date when I was produced before the tribunal, I gave out my mind to the tribunal before the jam-packed Court of Advocates and public. The government junior counsel called his chief and host of other prosecution counsels to strengthen their argument. I was not afraid of the conviction or the government arguments, but I was scared of the secret agents of the government who could commit any mischief to me or the judge. But the police escort on duty was very dutiful. And I argued my preliminary points of law and jurisdiction and disclosed the miserable jail conditions in which we were kept. I also prayed for bail on health grounds. To avoid greater damage to the government image, the prosecution counsel quickly asked for adjournment, which the embarrassed judge was too pleased to grant. Our trials were not even allowed to be published in newspapers lest it would bring the whole truth to the people that we were no enemies of the people or its freedom; rather, we were all for it in its right context.

The repatriation of POWs had already started, and so had the release of prisoners from different jails. Mujib was still harping on the trial of POWs and elimination of collaborators, although he was losing the support of the people for the misrule and economic rot that he was harboring. The international pressure and internal demand was mounting high every day for our release. Abul Mansur Ahmed, through the columns of *Daily Ittefaq*, an organ of Awami League publicity, and Moulana Bhasani, through his political platform, were airing the demand of our release. The people, already frustrated by the wide gap between the tall promises of Mujib and his actual practice, were getting to our point of view and appreciating the reality of the coming events about which we forewarned but were not formerly believed. Mujib, to contain the people and satisfy the public demand, was releasing more and more of our people from the black holes of Bangladesh.

We knew by then that we could not be kept in prison for a very long time but did not know that we were already welcome in the country by the people. The visiting relations and friends, mostly of our political belief, used to apprise me of the actual situation outside the jail, but it was too hard to believe that we were no longer considered the enemies of the new country. I found this out from the police, the doctors, and public who came in touch with me, especially during my two months of stay in Mitford Hospital for my treatment.

Diseases had stormed into my physical defense due to worry, tension, maltreatment and malnutrition of jail life. So on repeated requests of the medical board I was transferred to Mitford Hospital under the treatment of Professor Zaman. Despite my fears, I was very well looked after and well treated in the hospital by all concerned. My family and friends could also visit me in hospital with the willing consent of the authorities. They all felt that I deserved a better deal. The officers, the doctors, the nurses, the police, and others visiting me on or off duty gave me a dismal picture of the corrupt and oppressive rule of the Awami League Government, worse than ever before. They had already started talking of the good old days of our administration.

During this time my brother-in-law, Khaled Nasrullah, visited me only once. He was also ailing due to the shock of the situation. On one fine morning, a telephone call was relayed to me in hospital to say that he would visit me no more. The young and spirited had breathed his last to suffer no more the freedom of Bangladesh. He joined the galaxy of millions who were really free forever.

My children wept again when I was removed to jail after two months and after footing the bill of my treatment with wife's jewelry despite being in government custody. They thought that the government would kill me in jail, as they did to Chowdhury Fazlul Quader. One Awami League labor rally even stormed the gates of jail to take us out and hang us upon the streets on May Day in 1973. But the public was no longer with them, nor was the police or jail administration with them. So they left the gates shouting and ridiculing themselves. But one such effort of their colleagues succeeded in Rajshahi central jail where seven prisoners were taken out and killed outside the jail gates.

Thousands were already convicted to different terms of sentence from hanging to imprisonment of various terms. Yet the victims or would-be victims were undaunted, as it was public knowledge by then that the farce would end soon, and we all would be set free because Mujib was no longer running the country, as the people willed: The Peace Committee members, spread over all the town and villages of East Pakistan, who fought for peace and integrity of a sovereign state, were

now termed as collaborators. The heroic Razaakars, no less than 50,000 in number, organized into two wings of Al-Badar and Al-Shams, and volunteered to fight for the defense of the realm and its values of Islam; they were also dubbed collaborators. These were the people who saved the people from the crossfire of the army, on the one hand, and the rebels, on the other. They were the near and dear ones of those who crossed the border for fear, gain, or cause. And most of them very courageously upheld the concept of a united Pakistan. These young volunteers, mostly from pro-Pakistan parties, came forward in the great hour of need. They not only helped in maintaining local law and order but also protected the industrial establishments, rail, road, and water transports, powerhouses, and all other civil and military assets from destruction.

The armed forces, the police, and the officials, who attended their normal duties, the judges, the advocates, the journalists, and the teachers; the leaders, the farmers, the labour, which kept the normal life of the citizens going, and possibly all the mothers and sisters who reared their children and kept the family alive were also "collaborators" according to the "Collaborators Order." Strictly speaking, none but a million collaborators of India, who termed themselves 'Mujibnagaris' out of a population of 75 million could escape this accusation and punishment.

So after the victory and return of Mujib from the prison house of Yahya Khan, he decided to divide the people instead of uniting them for a new nation building into two groups—"collaborators" and "freedom fighters." Thousands were brutally killed or convicted by this time, thousands more were facing trial or detention without trial, and millions were fugitive in Golden Bengal. The victims, though reduced to serfs or objects of government condemnation, remained undaunted, as it was public knowledge by that time that Mujib had betrayed his people and their hopes. Rather, the political, economic, and cultural supremacy of the big neighbor was unfolding itself to the naked eyes of the Bengalees, as predicted and forewarned by those "collaborators." The Awami Leaguers, who were pro-Pakistan or against Indian subjugation, and even the "freedom fighters," who were duped into this cesspool of corruption and misery, had started resentment.

A Constitution that was passed and the election that was held in March 1973, again in an atmosphere of intimidation and confusion, brought no relief for the people. It returned another Assembly of all Mujib supporters excepting a few valiants like Ataur Rahman Khan. The real opponents were either eliminated or still behind bars, so it was a one-horse race for Mujib. He could manipulate a mandate for life if he

so wanted at that time. But he must have taken that lesson from history. Nothing gives a political ruler any greater length of life than he deserves.

With this Assembly of 300 behind him, he posed himself to be a little Stalin. He even introduced an "ism" like Marx and Engels, which was named "Mujibism," little realizing that in the vast expanse of the world, his type of dictatorship could not even create a ripple in the sea. The onslaught of this personality cult created an atmosphere of devastation in political, economic, educational and cultural fields. The party higherups reaped all the benefits, sacrificing the interest of the people. It did not end with political exploitation, rather, its octopus grip drained the economic resources to their own selfish benefits. Corruption of the highest magnitude, smuggling of limitless dimension, and misappropriation of an unbelievable extent on public and private levels were carried out by the closest associates and family members of Mujib, unchecked and unhindered. Despite the controlled press, which every dictator needs, these matters became public knowledge. Even the moral and educational norms were brought to the rock bottom of any civilized standard. Under the cover of socialism, anarchy and exploitation thrived with the blessings of Russia and India. The internal situation served the interest of both powers but not that of the people who brought Mujib to power with a different hope and aspiration. Russia was given the naval base at Chittagong in the name of fishing to control the Indian Ocean from this point of warm water. And India was given hegemony over Bangladesh under the cover of a friendship treaty of twenty-five years. Under a similar treaty with India, in 1971, Russia got the octopus ring of hegemony closed against the peoples of the area, and free world. Mujib found out that he was losing control over the people faster than one could anticipate. So, to placate them, he announced a partial amnesty for the collaborators in early 1973. It had a nice publicity value at home and abroad, but it brought very little succor to the victims or their supporters.

Relief materials worth billions of takas were pouring in from the UN and other international sources, but they hardly reached the deserving ones. Lawlessness by government supporters crossed all bounds of peaceful life in rural and urban areas. The price of daily necessities of life shot up sky high. Industries were almost at a standstill despite nationalization. The main foreign exchange earner, the golden fiber, jute, had humbled itself under Indian control. Foreign exchange earnings out of jute export had halved in Bangladesh but tripled in India at this time.

We were now being given VIP treatment in jail. Most of the unfortunate prisoners were released, leaving a few thousand top ones in various jails of Bangladesh.

Bhutto, after the Simla Conference with Indira Gandhi, had written off officially East Pakistan from his books of account. He was getting back POWs to the soils of Punjab, Baluchistan, Frontier, and Sind, redeeming part of his mandate for high office. But in his pressure for release of POWs and repatriation of pro-Pakistanis, unfortunately, he did not include the high collaborators of Pakistan. Maybe he was fearful that if the elderly politicians of deep conviction reached Pakistan they would not support him for his contribution in breaking up Pakistan. Maybe he reached a secret understanding with Mujib and Indira Gandhi about us and other matters. Both Bhutto and Mujib were power hungry. One was leaning toward China and the other toward Russia. But their secret liaison with the United States brought both of them to power, and maybe that would either sustain or eliminate them again.

We the captives were known as rightists, though we considered ourselves Muslims first. Russia had no love for us or our faith, but the United States, in her own interest, felt that as rightists we must survive to offset the wave of communism that was reigning supreme in Bangladesh. But that no support, however strong it may be, forth coming from outside is any substitute for the people's will was once more proved to the hilt. Superpowers oppose or support any national move more for their own national interest than for love. People who wanted Mujib in power now wanted our release more than ever before. The disclosure about the secret and open pact with India left no doubts in their minds that our predictions about new government were all coming true.

People thought that we were the ones who told them the bitter truth. So we were the ones who could bring them out of the mess in which their messiah had put them. So our release became a talking point at home and abroad even for our enemies. Those who were facing the gallows were once again looked upon as the heroes of the day. And when the Almighty wills, nothing can undo it; rather, everything goes that way.

December 1973: a cold morning brightened up the jail compound with the news that we were no longer collaborators but "free citizens." So we were to be released; actually, on December 8 the jailer came himself and broke the news to my cell. Dr. Malik, Abbas Ali Khan, Moulana Yusuf, Moulana Ishaq, and others, who were convicted, and Abul Quasem, Dr. Sajjad Hussein, Dr. Hassan Zaman, Khaja Khairuddin, and the rest, who were going to be convicted, all joined the galaxy. Yet there were thousands more who were not yet to be released, though involved in the same act.

By the time I reached the jail gate and completed the formalities, my heart became heavy with the memories of two years spent in jail

precincts and the associates whom I was leaving behind. I bade good-bye to the attendants, the guards, the jailer, the deputy inspector general, and our comrades. The jail gate was unlocked, the sentries on duty once again saluted, and I stepped out of the gate.

I could not believe that people were waiting outside with garlands and greetings, and they were a big crowd. They hailed, shouted slogans, and embraced me in tears. I was free again as a welcome citizen in the same soil that disowned us two years ago. What a nice thing to be free. What a nice thing to know that people whom I loved still loved me. And nicer still is to learn that even the enemies admired our courage of conviction. In a procession of cars, when I returned to my family, it was tears of joy again.

Friends and foes all came to see me. In politics there is no eternal friend or eternal enemy. So those who were vocally against us talked highly of our role. We could not thank Him enough for this turn of the tide in such short a period. The two years of suffering, agony, and sorrow could never be compensated to anyone by anything. And the new country could not promise them anything to work for or live for—not until the values for which they lived and suffered were restored.

It was not the name alone that mattered—East Pakistan or Islamic Republic of Bangladesh or Muslim Bengal. But nothing short of a confederation with Pakistan could restore those cultural, historical, economic, and political values of the people of Bangladesh. Without this, the remaining Pakistan may also lose its sense of identity, giving into the parochial or linguistic upsurge either on their own or at the instance of foreign powers. And for the rest of the subcontinent, also, a confederation with West Bengal and Assam on one side and South India on the other, flanked by North India, as an independent state, with Sikhistan in East Punjab and Hariyana would also help restore those values, bringing lasting peace instead of bloodshed in the region. One day again the whole subcontinent will come under Muslim rule, including Kashmir. It should come through peace.

Nationalism or Islam

Before we came out of prison, we all had taken a solemn oath to work for the cause for which we suffered so much. We were lucky to be alive but many of our compatriots had already joined the galaxy of free souls in the world hereafter for the same cause. We did not allow ourselves to be cowed down by the new national upsurge rather we vowed to serve a cause greater than territorial nationalism. A cause which Allah had asked man to serve—for salvation of man in general and for the faithful in particular. To us Pakistan was not merely our political entity but a cause which was confined to a definite territory. Muslims who never belonged to or even have visited the holy places of Mecca and Medina still feel and rightly that there is their spiritual home. And Pakistan was established for the very cause where Muslims could ordain their lives freely on the tenets of Islam. For the cause Pakistan, so long continues to nourish or preserve it, will always be a homeland for the Muslims whether they physically live there or not. Again Bangladesh, if can nourish or preserve the same cause—90% of its people being Muslims may make it acceptable to them as their own home land both physically and ideologically. But not otherwise. Muslims all over the world should also shape in the same way wherever they live.

When I resumed my practice after 2 years I found that most of my briefs were either taken away by juniors or clients. But some clients did not want to leave me. And they said that they would not leave me till my last breath. Some even paid fees to my family secretly in those difficult days of life and death. Many of the civil cases, of course, did not need any attention during two years as their judicial disposal was practically nil.

Moreover, Mujib kept no High Court running and when it was reconstituted with his chosen men as judges it was just a names sake

MUSLIM POPULATION (1976)

Over 50%	5% to 10%
21% to 50%	1% to 4%
11% to 20%	Less than 1%

with a new constitutional jugglery of rolling both High Court and Supreme Court into one. He even admonished his own appointed judges to behave which meant that they must toe his line and not the line of justice. Even the hand picked judges could not be devoid of conscience. And when I began to appear again before them in 1974 on civil matters—old and new, criminal matters mostly defending the alleged collaborators and constitutional matters, whatever was left of it, I found under their show of sound and fury a profound sense of justice. I wish I could compliment them all. One really could not blame them as everyone could not rise above the environment of crude injustice and lawlessness which was prevailing in the country at the behest of the party in power. All were under the bondage as the whole country was a prison house.

Besides a Awami League, a Communist party, two National Awami Parties, a National Socialist Party (JSD), and a few more political parties were functioning in the country in the name of democracy. But democracy was the worst victim in the hands of their protagonist. Socialism was the order of the government under the patronage of Russia and India. But pro-Chinese or third international socialists in spite of foreign backing were either being physically eliminated or thrown behind prison. Pro-Moscow groups were having their hey days politically, culturally and even financially.

A time had already come when we 'collaborators' were no longer publicly condemned rather respected. The official groups were not only criticized but hunted out by the armed supporters of anti-govt. groups and physically eliminated in broad daylight. Those who mercilessly butchered the pro-Pakistani elements were being publicly executed by new elements with the support of the people. With arms in everyone's hand the secret killing was no longer onesided monopoly of the government supporters rather it had permeated into everyone's blood for political or personal causes. Though not a full scale civil war was raging the country but it surely was taking no less a toll of life than 1971. On the other hand the economic condition of the country was going from bad to worse despite the massive relief operations of national and international organizations including that of International Red Cross and United Nations. The country proved to be a bottomless bread basket. Only the high cadres of pro-government parties were basking under the sun of affluence though famine had started in the countryside taking heavy tolls. Village people who with high hopes voted blindly in favor of Awami League were now crowding the streets of Dacca to get some work or dole but in vain. The healthy men and women of Pakistan had all turned into bony ill-nourished rickets; traversing the roads of Bang-

ladesh for a morsel of food or a piece of cloth. They even looked worse than the *Biharis* who were reduced into homeless paupers by the new nation.

The proceedings of one of our secret cell meetings, where a proposal for lending strategic cooperation to Mujib regime was turned down, reached the press and authority. The result was inevitable. Some of our colleagues were taken to custody again throwing the rest underground. At this time the pro-Chinese nationalist groups working both overboard and underboard got very close to us. We had the support of the people and they had the strength. So all their top ones wanted our cooperation to overthrow Mujib. Even some groups within the armed forces were also prepared to bring us back to the fore to save the country. Trained in democracy we could not rely upon such short cut. The issue before us was not to capture power. If we wished it was not beyond our reach in 1974 but the outcome would be more uncertain. It was necessary to prepare the society of the people for the state to be. The state that was there was nothing more than an apology for it.

Repression of the people and gagging their free opinion was not peculiar in Bangladesh alone. Dictatorial overtures were visible in West Pakistan also. Bhutto as prime minister under the cover of emergency was consolidating his own position rather than of his party. The victims were the leaders of Muslim League, Jamaate Islam and National Awami Party. Even his own party rivals were not spared. His economic promise to the people of *Kapra, Roti and Makan* got subservient to political expediency of the "prince". He was trying to be "brave like a lion and cunning like a fox", a Machiavalian hero. And he well matched another Machiavalian hero—rather a "princess", the prime minister of India—Indira Gandhi.

Nevertheless Bhutto proved himself equal to the challenge in international politics. The POWs were returning home after their great ordeal and the occupied areas of West Pakistan and Kashmir were being vacated by India.

So Bhutto was having the backing of the army barring a few. He also screened the army of potentially dangerous elements. People were just getting over the shock of losing the eastern wing. Their demand for Ayub's return to hold the reign of the country was soon lost by his not all too sudden a death. A parallel leadership in Moulana Moududi, Ashghar Khan, Wali Khan, Abdul Qayum Khan or anyone else was not in a position to replace Bhutto's skill or wisdom in ruling the country. Some of my political colleagues were either sharing the power with Bhutto in the centre or were running the provincial administration in the Punjab, Sind or Frontier. A good number of them including Moulana

Tofael Muhammad of Jamaat and Malik Md. Qasim of Muslim League were being held and humiliated in prison.

Some of my friends in West really offered me and my family all help and support that I would need. But those in office were busy with their own affairs so did not have time to help our fellow victims in Bangladesh. So I could not convince myself of accepting any favour from anyone. For the sacrifice our people made for the cause of Islam we are glad that no material help belittled their position. Bhutto helped only some of those who physically were present in West. Yet when Bhutto came to Dacca in 1974 he got a hero's welcome to the utter astonishment of Mujib. It was a real people's welcome on his first visit to Bangladesh. That was just a glimpse of the people's return to our fold. Bangladesh ministers were jeered and insulted. Bhutto and his associates were given an unprecedented ovation of welcome. It seemed to be a reversal of the celebration of December 16, 1971 rather restoration of the spirit of 1947. Both Bhutto and Mujib compared their notes of success. They both got what they wanted—to rule all that they could survey, but people remained deprived.

This visit normalized the relations between the two countries and ultimately helped us bringing Bangladesh to the forum of Islamic Summit Conference in Lahore. After Rabat this was the most important conference of over 35 Muslim states of the world which the various heads of the state including King Faisal of Saudi Arabia and Col. Gaddafi of Libya attended.

Various positive decisions were taken in Lahore for the consolidation of the Muslim world. Mujib for the first time identified himself with it despite his concept of secularism. But nothing could restore confidence of the people in him any longer. He was rather being looked upon as the champion of betrayal of both Bengali and Islamic interests at the dictate of his masters. His demagogy, his popular trick, his patronage of devotees and even the gestapo type *Rakhi Bahini* were no more sure to keep him to power. A time had come when he must repay for his sins in this world but none knew how. He was sure to follow the historical path of the oppressors but no one knew when. The praying hands of the oppressed, the unfed, the unclad, the shelterless, the jobless, the deprived and the pious have all gone up in unison calling for an end to his corrupt slave rule. None can defeat the power of genuine prayers of the oppressed.*

'Secularism' as an antidote to religion and a nursing ground for communism was accepted as a pillar of Bangladesh Constitution. The

*Mujib was killed by his own revolutionary army on August 15, 1975 two years after this writing.

99% population of the country will one day find it contrary to their aspirations and beliefs—be he a Muslim, Hindu, Christian or Buddhist. Even India's constitution does not recognise secularism as state principle. It may only be a policy of some government.

Socialism, another pronounced constitutional principle of Bangladesh again may be a policy of some government. But to say it is a constitutional obligation of Bangladesh had already ruined the entire agricultural and industrial fabric of the country. The economy of state owned industries were all on the verge of collapse. The employer state and working labourers were all on point of starvation after the initial jubilation. The welfare economy of Pakistan days was now being remembered as golden means.

The last of the 4 principles of the one party constitution, 'democracy', never had so deplorable a fate in Indo-Pak subcontinent since 1947. The country was leading towards the one party rule of a sole dictator full of vices and corruption.

The people were again thinking of real independence from the twin clutches of foreign domination and internal exploitation. Even in Pakistan the people were not so anti-Indian as they turned out to be in Bangladesh by 1974. The government seemed to represent the interests of its mentors in form of 25 years treaty, Farakka sellout and smuggling across the borders. The infiltration in the fields of trade, culture, education and industry seemed to be too irritating for the people.

So Bangladesh was faced with two alternatives. She has to struggle for real independence of Bengali nation which lies in the territories of East Bengal, West Bengal and Assam. Thereby she can become a state not to be dictated by her neighbour politically and also become a formidable economic power of agricultural and industrial potential. The components can well form a federation of their own choice as Bengal or Bangassam. Alternatively by the history and culture of 90% population of Bangladesh i.e. Muslims, it should become another homeland for the Muslims—Muslim Bengal. The state principles of secularism and socialism do not fit in with the aspirations of the people. Once Bangladesh declares itself as a Muslim state its oneness with the Muslim world will be identified to steer clear of many of its inborn problems. Mujib may come and Mujib may go but people of Bengal will remain there to lead their chosen way of life whether its present allies or masters allow such a thing to take place or not. Only people can do that by any recognised method of taking over the rein of state for that cause.

As to India itself the people must one day get rid of the still predominant caste system of human insult. This they can do by either accepting Islam as a code of life or humanising the entire social pattern.

The minority Muslims or untouchables there should no longer be the victims of communal apartheid or genocide. Otherwise they have to claim another separate homeland for themselves in India.

A great resurgence of people's awakening in Bangladesh became evident in all walks of life through the efforts of our people. The Ulema, the custodian of Islamic and Arabic knowledge and tradition, once again became the vanguard of this awakening like the dark days of British rule. Their educational institutions, madrasahs, highly patronized during our time, became known as enemy centres with the creation of Bangladesh. Thus they were first discontinued by the government but gradually came to life by voluntary initiatives. The great such centres of learning in Kishoreganj, Hathazari, Sarsina and Dacca again pulsed with life. Religious gatherings and prayer meetings became a popular event in rural and urban life. The meetings, strikes and demonstrations in political, labour and student fields to rid the country of the bondage could no longer be controlled by the government.

While in prison I dreamt once that I was reciting certain verses from the holy Quran. It was in Mecca or Medina. The verses were located in full in Sura—The Ranks (As-Saff) 61:11 "Believe in God and His prophet and strive in the cause of God with your property and life." There could be no better guidance for me, for that matter for any one. I promised in my heart that at the first opportunity I shall make a pilgrimage to Mecca and visit Rasulullah in Medina and take further guidance.

It was barely 9 months that I had started my practice in courts. But cases and fees came in abundance so much so that besides accomodating a few lawyers in my chamber in their time of distress, besides helping the needy and the poor, besides repaying some of the debts and meeting expenses of high prices I had enough to pay for two for Hajj out of my own earning. How happy I was when the names of myself and that of my wife came in ballot for Hajj. We were to proceed to that land where the holy House of Allah stands since the days of Adam. We were to pay our respects to Hazrat Muhammad (p.u.h.) where he lies in wait to answer our *salam*. We were to visit Meena where the supreme sacrifice was offered by Hazrat Ibrahim in His cause. We were to visit Arafat where the mountain of mercy stands, where Hazrat Adam's penance was accepted resulting in his reunion with mother Eve. And there our last prophet gave his last sermon and there we all will rise on the day of judgement. We were also to visit the places where our prophet was born and the land he treaded—where the people first hated and then loved him, the land and places where he prayed, he lived and fought wars for the cause of Allah and where he lies in prayers for us the erring mortals.

Performing Hajj was one of the main five obligations of Islam for any capable man or woman. And I was too pleased to follow the foot prints of my father and grandfather from whom I heard so much about it. Thus on Dec. 8, 1974 leaving behind the minor children, dear friends, relations, the home, the people, the land and everything of attachment, we took off for Mecca and Medina, the holiest of places from Dacca airport.

Man is born free. Human faculties are at their best when he is free. Captivity only twists and cripples those faculties but cannot destroy them. The soul in man always seeks its elevation even in bondage.

Two years of captivity had ended but it left me twenty years older both mentally and physically. My hairs had gone grey and I was feeling a disgust for politics. My mind was looking for something higher—much higher than what my environment could offer. I did not know exactly what it was. So I began to have reflections of what I had seen and what I would like to see.

The most important subject for reflection was the nationalism—Indian, Pakistani, Bengali, Muslim or else. Geographically by birth Bengal was a part of India so I had Indian nationality like 40 crores more under British Commonwealth. But in 1947 that part of Bengal became Pakistan by choice of votes recorded by a period of struggle for national independence. Bengal gave 90% votes in favour of Pakistan more than any other parts of Pakistan. So one can safely say that Bengalis became Pakistanis by its own free will. Added with it was a part of Assam—Sylhet district, who also cast similar percentage of vote in a separate referendum held for ascertaining their will like North West Frontier Province. If referendum was held as promised and agreed, Kashmir would also have opted for Pakistan nationalism. Yet thereafter hundreds of thousands of Muslims from India migrated to Pakistan on their own choice leaving their old hearth and home. And so did some Sikhs and Hindus from Pakistan to India.

Thus at great pains and sacrifice two nations were born and people found their geographical footing with defined territory, government and sovereignty. For any new born or old states or for their people in the name of citizenship, defending their territory more than any thing else, become an act of duty, patriotism and honour. One need not raise his little finger if human rights and values are trampled under its feet within or across its frontier. One is not even obliged to help his fellow beings if the other suffers in disease or hunger. One need not physically protest if the honour of a mother or sister is defiled by its own whims.

One is even more helpless against any political repression or economic exploitation done in the name of nationalism. Even if the Almighty

creator is disowned or defamed it becomes a permissible affair in monolithic states and a personal matter in democratic countries.

Wars were fought for mere territorial integrity—which territory remains changing every now and then. And valuable lives and properties are sacrificed in its euology. If three wars were fought between Pakistan and India hundreds have been fought between other countries of Asia, Africa, Europe and America. The more old the civilization of a country the more number of wars go to its credit. The two devastating world wars were fought for pride and prejudices of nationalism. So we have been fighting for ages for ever changing, transient, short lived territorial integrity. In the modern times this integrity has taken shelter under nationalism whereas in earlier times it was under various other pursuits of pomp, power or valour. Not many wars were fought for noble and just causes.

Only within 25 years of the creation of Pakistan another nationalistic spirit came forward burying all the emotional and physical sacrifices of 1947, giving birth to Bengali nationalism in the desecration of their cause for Pakistan in 1971. The very soldiers and people who fought for the defence of Pakistan on the borders of West Pakistan in 1965 did everything possible to undo Pakistan for their newly discovered nationalistic spirits. Within such a short period the values of nationalism had changed which called for a sacrifice of innumerable lives on either side. More surprisingly even this Bengali nationalism was on the wane when I was free from its clutches only in 1973. It did not take even three years for the people to have a second thought.

The concept of geographical nationalism is not of very recent growth but it came to its full bloom after the industrial revolution. The heroes of Carthage, Rome or Greek history were imbued more with the desire for personal pomp or power rallying the vested interests behind them, whether slaves or free men. The Persian, the Byzantine and the Moghul conquerers also followed the pattern of personal or ethnic characterization of power or glory without any definite geographical frontiers. The colonization of the Portugese, Dutch, French, Spanish and British nations served the interests of the rulers only at the cost of their colonies. As against this the colonial people also rose to national consciousness for their struggle for survival. 'My nation right or wrong' became the theme both of international exploitation and national suppression of fundamental rights.

After the decline of the Papal authority of Rome the Protestant movement gained support from geographical entities in Europe. Loyalty to a homogenous authority was divided and sub-divided in this process creating sense of close geographical entities wedded to spiritual values

in some and secular belief in others. It was the consolidation of nationalism in Europe to counter the vices of Papal authority. The Crusade between the Cross and the Crescent having ended Europe was left with no cementing force to keep the different linguistic, ethnic or cultural entities to live under common domination. Whatever spiritual attachment was left to such national states, it gradually gave in to the newly found secular beliefs. Gradually those secular states stepped towards a social revolution later identified with democratic socialism or totalitarian communism.

Theoretically socialism negates geographical nationalism. But both democratic and socialist states being secular in nature ended in the eulogy and defense of geographical nationalism. Every one spoke of freedom, liberty and economic benefit of its own people but the welfare of mankind as a whole was never given the due recognition in this ambivalence. The Arabian and Moorish intellectual activity radiated from Mecca, Medina, Baghdad, Cairo and Cordova influenced the western world up to sixteenth century but its reversal took place thereafter in the eastern world including Muslim countries of Asia and Africa. Thus the secular and socialist belief occupied the intellectual field in East giving rise to similar nationalist aspirations—ethnic, linguistic or geographical, giving up its own ways of governing system. The two world wars have demonstrated the ugly faces of such national states and their prejudices in the 20th century. The post war periods have shown urgency or importance of international homogeneity for human survival. The human effort reflected through the League of Nations or United Nations only evidenced the higher aspiration of human existence. But the basic mistake of accepting national sovereignties as the foundation of such international bodies led them nowhere but to a state of war or cold war between the national states or their camps. The spirit of Ghengiz Khan was refined by Hitler and the spirit of imperialism was refined by communism but none came up with the message of liberation of mankind as a whole for its physical and metaphysical existence as Islam did. Thus the salvation of man through love and peace remained a far cry in a world of hundred and odd national states of modern times.

The reaction to the western philosophy of imperialism or communism mildly filtered through the concepts of democracy or socialism has been one of passive acceptance in the east. The eastern style of existence through spiritual superiority over the material existence was already overshadowed by the superior material power of the western world. The cradle of civilization, from where all the monotheistic religions like Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism or Islam originated, was practically under the subjugation of the western power or thought. The superior

domination of the west well before the end of world wars had occupied the eastern world not only economically or politically but also by education and thoughts. Thus Kamal Pasha of Turkey, Reza Pahlavi of Iran and King Farouk of Egypt though were Muslim rulers were fully under the influence of the western thoughts of nationalism and materialism. Even Tojo of Japan, Chiang Kaishek of China, Gandhi of India and the leaders of Afro-Asian countries consciously or unconsciously were subscribing to the western ideas of nationalistic thoughts.

Communism in Russia and China has influenced various western and eastern countries and their people enormously as an idealistic force of social revolution. Never-the-less Russia remains a monolithic state of uncompromising nationalism and so are other such communist states of west or east. In spite of the strong Marxist doctrine neither the state nor money has withered away in Russia, China, Yugoslavia or any of its camp followers. Rather nationalism has taken deeper roots there like the U.S.A., U.K., France, Germany, India or Pakistan.

After all the sovereignty which becomes the inalienable right of every national state really does not belong to it. None of the theories of sovereignty is fool proof whether it is the "divine origin" theory for the protection of the King or any ruler, "organic" in its functions, "social contract" in its development, "pluralist" in the modern sense or even "peoples" in the marxist pattern; they do not reflect the real sovereignty. If the states were really sovereign how one could fight another. They must be parallel sovereign or mini sovereign or no sovereign. Sovereign is one who owes nothing to anyone else, everything must be subservient to the sovereign, he must be the cause of all causes, the *causa sui* or *summum bonum* and the source of all powers. No human being or any of its institutions national or international can really claim to be sovereign. It is only Him and nobody else who is Sovereign. And man can lead a life of peace and prosperity not in mutual conflicts or chaos but in the discipline of the cosmos.

So the root of these conflicts i.e. national sovereignties, must be surrendered first to a supernational organ consisting of all the global units of administration. The states must remain subordinate non-sovereign to a super state of all mankind. This super organ should no longer recognize or guarantee the national sovereignty. Rather it should stand as the vice regent of the real Sovereign committed to abide by the rules and morals of the Sovereign for the welfare of mankind. If the United Nations can fulfill this obligation by changing its basic concept, there is nothing wrong in it. But it seems that a new world order of divine law has to emerge where God is supreme; not people, wealth nor might of any individual or nation.

Divine law is again necessary to guide the world order as no human law—old or new, has ever proved to be infallible or all pervading. Many cannot see what is beyond the walls so how can he determine laws good for eternity. Since man is confined in time and space his wisdom of natural or social science is also limited. So obedience to Divine law will lead us to avoid the conflicts of national or human laws. Natural question will arise what divine or religious law should be followed. Were there no wars on religious grounds? Yes. But “there is no compulsion in religion; righteousness is distinct from evil”.—Holy Quran, 2:256.

The main purpose and function of the world body should be to do away with the concept of war as a means of settling disputes of any kind. Once that can be done all the weapons or potentials of war will have to be eliminated. What remains thereafter is only reasoning and persuasion to adopt divine laws. We have to find answers of world peace in this and not in superior weapons or state sovereignty.

While our people remain unfed, unclad, or distressed the war preparations of all ages including the modern thermo-nuclear arms race consume the most vital portion of world wealth for human destruction. Sense of national pride or superiority in the name of its people makes its men, women and children to suffer the ignominious results of war or brink of war—economically, socially and morally. This colossal wastage can be diverted for all round progress and happiness of man all over the world. The animality in man can be harnessed if its destructive qualities are channelized for human wellbeing. It is high time for the superior reasoning and power to take control of the ever worsening situation before we find ourselves engrossed in another world conflagration. Thermo-nuclear war with any amount of preparedness will leave us none to enjoy the fruits of victory. So it is time to work out world order of peace, not in words but in deeds. Instead of becoming heroes of national sovereignties causing bloodshed everywhere let us be the citizens of one world government of love and peace.

The Islamic concepts of state which originated in Medina during the life of the holy Prophet Muhammad (p.u.h.) was carried through the days of the four great Caliphs on the basis of the thoughts enunciated in the holy Quran and Hadith. Though subsequent rulers of Islam did not adhere fully to the concept of Islamic state yet it ruled the field till the days of Crusade. The expansion of Islamic polity in Asia, Africa and Europe was not based on geographical, ethnic, linguistic or any other criteria of western nationalism. Islamic state cannot be confined to any such criterion rather it takes the shape of a global existence. A man is not considered here as an instrument of holding such national values or prejudices rather he will be upholding the spiritual and physical

values of dignity of man and his fellow human being primarily responsible to the laws of his creator. The Islamic thinkers like Abu Hanifa, Ibne Sina, Ibn Rushd, Ibn Khaldoun and Al Ghazzali enunciated the principles of Islamic polity in great detail. But the vacuum in the field of physical and social sciences in modern times was not effectively filled up until the recent thinkers like Dr. Zaki Nusseibeh of Turkey, Syed Kutub of Egypt, Dr. Iqbal and Moulana Moududi of Pakistan greatly contributed in this realm of political challenge of the modern world.

The challenge of the western concepts of democracy or socialism manifested in national conquest and glory is well answered in the fundamental principles of Islam though not well practiced by all Muslim countries of the world. Instead of implementing the state principles of Islamic Commonwealth of the people we have developed isolated national states on the basis of territorial or linguistic national sovereignty. In fact no one other than Allah can claim the sovereignty be it the state, the emperor, the priest, or the people. "To Allah belongeth all that is in the heaven and on earth". Holy Quran, 2:284.

"The Authority rests with none but Allah. He commands you not to surrender to any save Him. This is the right way". Holy Quran, 12:40.

The sovereignty belongs to Allah alone and man His supreme creation is only vice regent. Islamic state would be the kingdom of God but not a theocratic state. It is not the priest or the king who runs the state by his superior wisdom or power but the people run it in accordance with the Book of Allah and the guidance of His Prophet; which is neither theocracy nor dictatorship. The limits on the popular will or liberty defined by divine law is only to maintain the ideal balance between human rights and duties. It is the middle course between the extreme of totalitarian and democratic systems in all vital aspects of human life and society.

Life is not merely a pursuit of spiritual aspirations denying material needs. Nor it is a process of continuous strife or class war for material benefits only. Human life consists of personal and collective efforts through faith, reason, love, devotion, respect and cooperation for material and spiritual ends. Both the ends and means must be justified that is why greed, hatred, jealousy, lie, oppression, bloodshed and violation of others rights have been treated as sins in all divine laws. Religion is neither phantom, opium, superstition, rituals, ascetism nor feud. It is rather a complete code of noble human life. That code was only perfected in Islam.

"This day I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favours on you and have chosen for you Islam as your religion". Holy Quran, 5:4. This divine law has prescribed the universal brotherhood

of mankind irrespective of colour, tribe, race, language or nationalism. "O mankind, We created you from a male and female and made you into nations and tribes that you may know each other. Verily, the most honoured of you before Allah is the most righteous of you; surely Allah is Knowing, Aware". Holy Quran, 49:13.

Can we deny our origin in Adam and Eve though we have divided ourselves in Christianity, Judaism, Budhism, Hinduism and Islam? Can we deny that mankind is one though we belong to democratic, communist or nationalist states of today? While we suffer from black, white or brown colour complex can we deny that we all are human beings? While we are either European, American, Asian or African can we deny that without discipline of cosmos we cannot survive however advanced our technology, knowledge or power may be. "Your Allah is one, you are from Adam and Adam was from dust; an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor white over a black except by righteousness"—Al Hadith. "Mankind is the family of Allah and the most beloved of them before Him is one who is best of His family"—Al Hadith.

So the bloodshed in the name of racialism, atheism or religion must come to an end. Exploitation of capitalism, communism or nationalism must be abrogated. Despite all the conflicting views and systems developed by human genius the concept of universal brotherhood with righteousness under the sovereignty of God must be accepted as supreme law of one World Government. And this we very much owe to the Creator of cosmos and to the mankind for Islam or Peace.

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