

Fatima of Sind

By Chacha Mohmed Ali Laghari

about this book... and more

This book is written by (Chacha- Uncle) Mohmed Ali Laghari who hailed from a small village and had a very limited education (Upto Primary level). He and his father with the entire family were landless tillers. They belonged to a tribal/clannish society rooted in traditional values and loyalty to kinship. It was totally and ruthlessly a patriarchal society. In that society when even the men had no voice of their own but of their clan leader the question of voice of the woman did not arise. Even their existence was subordinate to the male will.

With this background someone about his wife, about her tribulations and her courage, dedication and her journey into a political movement speaks volumes about the enlightened spirit, his boldness and courage of conviction. Man from a lower strata of society with a very limited education but with robust commonsense could play a significant role in Sindhi Nationalist Movement is in itself quite a significant achievement. This book will provide a resource material for History of nationalist movement whenever such a book is written. Contrasted with the fact that even today the electoral politics in Sind is in the hands of a handful of Feudal lords as they have created their fiefdoms in their respective 'territories'. In fact by its very nature the Sindhi Nationalist Movement is rooted in the soil of the Sind and sons of the soil is the mainstay of this movement.

It is necessary to understand the underlying reasons of the movement. The roots of this movement lie deep in the History and also in recent political developments in the subcontinent of India.

At the outset it is necessary to emphasise that linguistic and cultural boundaries are made by nature. People inhabiting those specific areas constitute one people. In this entire Historical and cultural cross currents do play their role but the core is not affected. Those influences if at all percolate become the part of that soil and historical psyche of those

people. Political boundaries in Historical context are merely shifting sands.

In this background the state of Pakistan that has come into being is unnatural state. It seeks to rely on the religion alone as the most binding force instead of other deep rooted factors like language culture and ethnicity. The very concept of religion being at the centrality of the identity is belied by the fact that so many states exist across the globe professing the same Islamic religion. In the case of Pakistan this myth was soon to be shattered with breakup of Pakistan and emergence of Bangla Desh as a separate nation. It is no secret that the British imperialism played a significant role in creation of Pakistan. All facts in this regard have been well documented by Captain Sarila (Aid de camp)To last viceroy Lord Mountbatten in his book " Under the shadow of Great Game" and in a book by Wali Khan " facts are Facts ". This was mainly to pursue the centuries long policy of containment of Russia. With the establishment of Soviet Union as a communist state this policy attained great significance. This was done in context of Geo-Political equation that was to emerge after the Second World War. Geopolitical equation is always in a state of flux due to inherent dynamics of power shifts. There are always points of convergence and contention between states and it is negotiating through these contradictions that the foreign policy of any country is conducted on tactical and strategic planes.

The creation of Pakistan is to be seen in this background.' *Raison de etre*' of Pakistan is sense of insecurity arising from the Hindu Majority India. Therefore it becomes inevitable for Pakistan to seek military parity of India. The size of the Pakistan and its resources simply cannot afford this parity. This situation leads to Pakistan becoming a client state of dominant world power. After the end of Second World War when USA emerged as a world power and in the aftermath of cold war with USSR Pakistan hinged to USA for military supply and aid. This resulted in a bloated military establishment that was not necessary for the size of the country like Pakistan. This over grown sense of power has a temptation to justify itself

by involvement in civil affairs leading to military take over. This explains many years of Military rule in Pakistan. Even when for the sake of optics civilian rule is established the actual power rests with Military. Therefore Pakistan cannot survive as a civilian state.

As the Pakistan exists now it suffers from another serious flaw. The demographic composition is skewed. The population of one province of Punjab outweighs the population of all other provinces put together. This even in the best of real democratic times is apt to tempt Punjab to treat the rest of 'Provinces' as a colony to be exploited and population be relegated to secondary position.

The refugees that came from India came with a sense of conquest and triumph and as they were mostly settled in Sind they felt that they were the real rulers and the indigenous Sindhi population as their subjects. This resulted in social- economic and political confrontations that were aided and fuelled by Military- Punjab axis.

There is a basic ideological problem at the root of Idea of Pakistan and historical ethos of Sind. The ideology of Pakistan derives its concept on the rigid and fundamental- sectarian interpretation of Islam. This dates back to times of Aurangzeb when all the religious institutions were put under the control of orthodox Islamists. Sind being a far flung area here the structure of Islamic institutions continued in the hands of liberal Islamists who owed their allegiance to Dara Shikoh who was sufi to the core. This resulted in continuation of Sufi ethos that stands for a very liberal interpretation of Islam. All this was reinforced by great poets Like Shah Abdul Latif, Sachal and many other poets who followed them in that tradition. This understanding continues till today. (This is evident by instances of Hindu Muslim amity in the beginning of this book itself). IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO CONTAIN SINDHI SUFI ETHOS NURTURED THROUGH CENTURIES IN A STRAITJACKET OF IDEA OF PAKISTAN.

Another fact that needs to be taken into consideration is that till 1843 Sind was an Independent Sovereign State and was last state to be conquered

and annexed by the British. In a sense the concept of Independent sovereign state is still alive in the minds of the people of Sind.

The present Jiye Sind movement is to be seen in this background. It was a great son of Sind Saeen G M Sayed who gave a vision of free Sind from the bondage of Pakistan. He inspired many with his vision mostly young students and all poor and disposed of Sind. Only those aligned to existing political establishment remained averse to it. Many young lives and careers of many have been sacrificed. As sated earlier for most of time Pakistan has remained under Military dictatorship and in such a situation all channels of communication between ruler and ruled are absent therefore the rulers have to rely for information on many spying agencies. There is a tendency of the ruling elite to keep an eye on the activities of each other also that gives rise to multiplicity of agencies. In such a situation many cadre and leaders of the movement unwittingly fell to mechanisations of those agencies. They successfully decimated the nationalist movement by engineering split after a split. After the demise of Saeen G M Sayed no towering personality has emerged to forge the Unity among various factions of the movement. It is in fact a situation of catch 22 where absence of a mass movement it leads to splinter groups and without Unity mass movement cannot be built.

It is self evident that today this nationalist movement is splintered and is ebbing. There are always periods of tide and ebb in any movement and what is future of this movement when period of ebb ends and tide rises again?

At the geopolitical level by strange quirk a long time ally of America the Pakistan state finds the presence of Chinese on its soil. Thus it is riding two horses at a time. America for its strategic reasons of balance of power in Afghanistan cannot jettison at present juncture and it has to contend with Chinese presence on Pakistan soil however ill suited it may be looking to USA china rivalry in economic and political sphere. In the field of artificial intelligence also a race between these two nations is discernable. The potentials of confrontation between these counties are

looming large. In this situation the position of Pakistan becomes unenviable. The 'comfort' of riding two horses is likely to trip it any time.

An idea never dies. It may be submerged for a time due to ebb but when tide turns it may resurface again with more vigour. In a History of any nation a period of century or so does not matter much. Its effect remains only skin deep. The idea of Saeen G M Sayed may return with full force. It may have to couch itself in a new idiom suited to space age and artificial intelligence era. It will have to work out new forms of struggle and adopt new strategies. It may be stated that in space travel the earth will remain reference point for humans to find their bearings. Earth has been divided by nature in various linguistic zones. The language is oldest tradition of man it will connect the man like umbilical cord to mother earth. In such a situation language assumes a prime position. The linguistic identity forms the part of core identity of any person in such a situation one thing is certain that Sind is bound to find its freedom from the State of Pakistan based on bigoted interpretation of Islam. Sufi Philosophy contains a vision for future of humanity in sync with space age wherein every atom is connected with a divine spark. A bright future awaits humanity and my soil of Sind.

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Dedication

To

Mirzadi

An epitome of Courage and self sacrifice

Foreword

Father of Dr. Anwar and Munawar Laghari has written a book on her wife Fatima. I had met her at Hyderabad on two or three occasions. Though she was illiterate and from a village but she was mentally more advanced in her thinking than many of the leading urban women. She was sincere and loved this soil. In my opinion she was more of an institution than an individual. She had to face many a mental, emotional and physical problems. She faced them with fortitude and courage. Even in a very grim situation she kept her sense of humour alive. She pined to see her son Munawar in USA for a long time. It was also a tragedy that he could not call or she could not go to meet him at that time. I was happy to know that

eventually she could reach Washington nad meet her son. Alas! It was too late. Her last days spent with Munawar are his real asset. Wish she had more time to live where she could have proved to be a source of great inspiration to many women.

I feel gratified that I have had an opportunity to meet mothers of Mazhar Sidiqui , Salim Memon and Munawar Lagahri who have cherished the loveof their soil in their hearts.

Fatima was not only mother to Munawar but she was mother to us all. She was our guide and teacher.

May God grant her eternal peace!

With prayers,

Altaf sheikh.

Fatiama of Sind in Washington

Pining for my country if I die here

Soomra!* Send my body to my Panwhars*

May I breathe the fragrance of creepers of my fore fathers

I will feel alive even when I am dead

-Shah Latif

On 1st May 2008 as we came out of Washington airport we called up our son Munawar with help of Afro- American attendant who assisted in moving the wheelchair out of airport gates and Munawar was there to promptly to pick us. He took his mother in his lap and saw that she is comfortably seated in the car. This gesture brought a glow of happiness on the face of his sick mother who was seeing her exile son after a long time. It was a face of mother who would be seeing her newborn for the first time. At that time all the happiness of existence is intensely experienced! As the car moved along wide roads, skyscrapers and shops filled with all type of merchandise Munawar enquired of his mother "Mom! If you require any thing we may as well purchase from here". She replied, "By seeing you I have got everything that I wanted in life and now I have no desire to have anything else." As we reached home Munawar called his friends and world famous sister Diana also. Sister Diana is working for persecuted and oppressed people. They were apprised about the medical condition of Fatima and soon she was admitted Security Hospital of Washington. In the hospital doctors were very courteous and helpful but the reports of the tests that were conducted completely disappointed us. Her cancer of was at the last stage. It had spread in the entire body. Doctors opined that now treatment is not possible. Next day Doctor Shyamlal who was practising in Virginia called up Munawar to bring his mother to him. We went to Goergia for the check up of Munawar's mother but his findings were also same as of the previous Hospital. They all were unanimous that at that stage nothing could be done.

Fatima was not educated in any school. Life had taught her through long difficulties and a few moments of enjoyment. She had learnt these lessons as if by heart. Though she could not understand a word of English Language but she could read everything from the facial expressions of the

doctors and she inactively realised that her days were numbered. At the Munawar was adamant that in this most advanced country of the world there must be some hospital where his mother could be treated and cured. Shah Latif has truly said:

Medicines can only help when mercy is bestowed

While returning from Virginia she held face of Munawar in her hands, kissed him and said, "For last eighteen years I have constantly longed to see you. Now my wish is fulfilled. Now allow me to go back to my own country and own people. Munwar was persistent he would not budge. He would argue that she has met him after a long time and now it was his duty to serve her and find a doctor who could cure her. She simply whispered that all the while she realised that her last wish to see Munawar has been fulfilled and she would like to go back to her own soil and people. After a month's stay it was decided that we would return back. All this time my heart was wrenched. While returning at the Washington airport I was in a pensive mood and distraught for the time of final parting had come.

When we sat in the plane her face clearly showed signs of satisfaction. She said, "Mohmed Ali the separation of Munawar for the last eighteen years has neither allowed me to live nor die. All this time I have spent in agony as if sleeping on the pile of burning coals. Now I will die a peaceful death "Hearing all this my heart was rent apart. I said in a muffled cry," Fatima how can you leave me like that? We have been together through all ups and downs of life. We have shared food together for years. We have worked together in fields so that our children may have good education." She whispered;" Now I am tired." Tears flowed through eyes and wet my cheeks. I could not control myself. The flood of memories rushed through my mind. With moist eyes I could visualise every moment through my imagination.

During night and at night we would hear the sounds of moving bullock cart, or cries of camels moving through, and twittering of the birds. At that

time everyone would take it that today at Gehimal's, food grain and grocery shop new consignment had arrived from Hoosri station or it could be that the goods from Tando Alam Mari have arrived at the shops of Thakumal, Cholomal or Jethomal. The main market ran from north to south in the village and that market consisted of about 20 shops. There was no usage of tea shops at that time that practice came much after the establishment of Pakistan. All shopkeepers were Hindus. Two tailors were Brahmins who apart from their vocation would perform religious rituals on holy occasions for Hindus. They would conduct the marriage and death rituals for them and would give some home remedies. They would worship their Gods installed in Temples situated in their households itself. In centre of the village was one shop run by Mrs. Kimat who would sell pickles various kinds. Those pickles were so tasty that people of my age still relish that taste and have not been able to forget it. I have not been able to taste such a pickle while roaming about length and breadth of Sind. Taste of Shikarpur pickle is nothing before it. This lady used to make '*Pakorās*' also of a unique taste. Today those made by Kaloo near Hyder Chowk taste like mud in comparison to those made by her. At that time poor Muslim ladies would help their men with harvesting of millet and wheat, they would make ghee from the curd, make blankets out of cut piece cloth and thereby make some money that would stand them in good stead at the time of marriage of their daughters and Hindu women also help in running their business in various ways. Our house was situated at the far end of southern edge of the village. At the time of going to Scholl I would get a handful of grain which I would sell to uncle Thakumal's shop for two pies and would purchase during recess gram from uncle Cholomal's shop. Uncle Cholomal was of a loving person of happy disposition and his behaviour with elders as well as children was endearing. Some times as joke standing on the bench of the school he would mock scold children to purchase his gram. He would raise a bench from one end and children would pretend to be afraid this would lead to peals of laughter all around. He was a poor man whose family depended on his selling the grams. He had no any other source of income. Yet he

was not a miser. He was a big hearted man indeed! This tall man would put gram in a big plate. Hawk around the streets of village and at recess time would arrive at school. If any child who did not have money to buy gram from him and would be standing alone in one corner, he would call him and say, "It does not matter if you do not have money today, now have gram you may pay me tomorrow." That tomorrow would never come. Due to poverty I was often one of the students who continued to have that opportunity to eat gram without paying him anything. I do not know now where uncle Cholumal is whether he is alive or dead. When I am in position to pay now there is no one to whom I can give and redeem my debt.

In the village apart from main market on eastern side there was a lane moving along parallel lines. It had all the workmen in it. Like blacksmith, barber, Carpenter and potter- brick maker and other menials. Ahmed the potter was courageous and heavy built man. He would have made a good wrestler but he stuck to his family tradition as that of potter. Near his shop he had a kiln. He would put a chunk of mud on the wheel and move it at the same time go on patting the mud to make it thin. When asked why he continues to pat the mud he would reply that if the pottery is not patted properly and made thin then his pots would be very thick and heavy. As it takes two men to raise a particular fat person they also need two persons to pick up. By patting the vessel it becomes strong. He would raise his finger and philosophically say, "I am a simple small potter but that potter (God) when he pats a man and makes him strong that creates in him tolerance, patience and courage and he is able to face any difficulty in life."

He would say "when Sohini* entered the furious river her pitcher was neither properly baked nor strong. If she had carried baked and strong pitcher she would have not drowned in the river." Traditionally potters used to be bone setters also. They would grind a special semi solid earth and make a paste. That paste would be covered by a muslin cloth and would make a mould to fix the bone. It would work as a plaster cast of today and soon the bone would be set. This work was done by Soomra

tribe washer man also. Ahmed the potter was very famous bone setter of those times no failure of his work of bone setting was ever noticed. He was not only an expert bone setter but a wise person also whose advice in any matter would be sound. He was at the same time prankster also. Till fourth decade of last century the workmen like washer man, potter, barber and others would not charge any money for their services rendered, instead at the time of harvest they would get a maund (About 40 kg) grain from every field and thereby they would make a living. All this was sufficient for their sustenance.

Once at the time of harvest, Ahmed potter went to take his traditional portion of grain from one landlord he tried to evade to give him his due and told him that this year his yield has been low and take your share next year. He immediately tied the hands of the landlord and measured his due share of the grain and told the landlord that he had not taken a grain more than what was due to him. Then he straight went to chief of the village and told him about the entire incident. He asked him to send someone to untie that landlord's hands and if due to his hands being tied if he died of starvation he should not be held responsible. Thereafter for many days this incident continued to be a topic of village gossip and ridicule of that landlord. That landlord due to sense of shame did not venture for more than two months.

Another time mounting his donkey, Ahmed potter was going from the edge of the canal. The watchman summoning all the authority of government servant rudely told him that did he not know that riding a donkey on the edge of canal was prohibited? He ordered him to dismount his steed. He requested him to be allowed as one time as an emergency and he could not dismount and move on the side of the edge as the entire ground was full of thorns. Watchman did not relent and his appeals fell on the deaf ears. This infuriated Ahmed the potter, he immediately tied the watchman hand and foot, put him on donkey and brought him to the Chief Adam Khan. Seeing this crowd of curious onlookers also gathered there to see this unique spectacle. Hearing the noise chief came out and asked what the matter was. Ahmed the potter very humbly narrated the entire incident to him. He requested him that as that man was a Government servant first

he should be untied and put honourably on the cot by his servants and then let him tell his version of the incident.

The village barber apart from plying his normal trade would be employed as cook during marriages and death ceremonies but were also able healers for any boils or wounds with their specially made ointments. They would do the work of removing foreskin of the Muslim boys when came of age. Juma the barber was fondly called 'Sagrou 'by villagers. Nawaz Ali though belonging to that community was considered as a pious man. His brothers and cousins carried on their ancestral work but he never held scissors of blade in his hands. He would often pick a harmonium and sing Sufi songs that would touch the heart. He was good at singing 'Tilang Raga' but at night when would sing 'Rano Raga' it would appear that the entire existence has come to stand still to hear his melody. Especially his rendering of Misri Shah's verses would transport one in a spiritual world. His music would demolish all walls the distinctions of religions and hatred. He never sang for money and never asked anyone of anything. He was so humble that he would move about his eyes cast down, away from the gossip of the world and he was respected by all poor as well as rich. Seeing him one is reminded of this line from the verse of Shah Latif:

He does not ask of cast or position
Only who works hard, only gets successes.

Today also I believe that he was a hidden Gem. Due to his humble disposition and poor condition he could not get wider recognition. His elder brother Soomar Faqir was a worldly man. He continued with his traditional work and this way they eked out their living. Soomar apart from his traditional work would remove the spots of horses and mend the shoulders of bullocks.

On the eastern side two carpentry workshops also situated and that place was used for the residence of their families also. Big Shop belonged to Manomal and his son Lalumal. Outside their house would be tied horses and donkeys that might have travelled a long distance reach there. Often passerby would wait for a while at their shop and get the news of going on at distance places and other villages. In this way in absence of newspapers and Television it was a centre of exchange of news dissemination. Many a time big landlords mounting their Horses would

also visit his place to exchange the news. Manomal's shop was also a centre where news could be had. Cots made by him would last for decades. In those times good wood was used and proper workmanship was done. There was no need to rush about the work and do inferior or shoddy job as is the practice now. Their houses still remain in the villages. Their decedents continue with the same work and they have a land of about 20 acres and they are quite well off. Opposite them were houses of Ali Mohmed blacksmith and Haroon blacksmith. The cutting instruments made by them were very sharp and durable. They would cut through any dense material with ease. Though Ali Mohmed was merely a blacksmith but his wise words were remembered by the people of many villages spread across miles. He was such an entertainer and amusing person whose company was craved by young and old rich or poor. I have seen many reputed people meeting him with due respect.

In the eastern lane itself were houses of traditional musicians Manganhars.* They would play musical instruments at accompaniment of traditional drum Dhol and with their songs add to festive atmosphere with traditional marriage songs. If at all any marriage was to take place without their being invited people would consider it as an occasion of mourning rather than happy occasion of marriage. This traditional tribe of musicians would invoke divine blessings for the couple and the entire family. For seven days before the marriage bride was kept confined and all sort of rituals and ceremonies would be conducted and musicians would be ply their music for all seven days during mornings and evenings. For all their efforts they would be paid handsomely so that they may be able to make their modest living. Additionally they would teach infant animals to walk. They would be given grain also from the fields of the surrounding villages. During 4th decade of the last century cars and buses were unheard of in interior of Sind. It was common for any one with means to own a mare or a horse. To teach them to walk in infancy is a complicated art and has to pass through various stages. The good steed would be judged by its speed and also a fact that rider would not feel any jerk in spite of its speed. As a test a rider would hold a cup full of clarified butter in his hand and while riding not a drop would spill over. Horse owners would organise such competitions for their horses and riders. At the same time it was said, 'Sons and horses who are stubborn are most loved ones.' There are some horses that gallop. Today on the race course galloping horses may be

valued in millions of dollars but such was not the case in the interior of Sind in those times.

Now a day the film music loudly blaring from the loud speakers at the wedding ceremonies fails to give that satisfaction or joy.

On the southern side of the village were houses of the scavengers. They still continue there. Two shops were also situated in front of their residences' were those of Foto and Kacho. Foto was an expert in making ladies footwear and Kacho was a tanner and an expert in making decorative objects of various types placed upon horses. He would mend them and polish them also. His expertise inspired such an awe that even a rich person would not go before him without leaving his footwear outside. They both were above religion and were Sufis in their outlook. In the morning after having a bath they would sing Sufi songs on one stringed instrument. Song of Mohmed Fakir was popular with them. Their voice had a quality that would attract people towards them and many would gather to hear them sing with joyful abandon. Their songs would melt all the feelings of differences and hatred. All would be bound in an invisible bond of unity and oneness. As Sachal has said:

"I am neither a Muslim nor Hindu

I am what I am."

AS if after a shower all trees and plants get washed of all the dirt their songs would also make hearts of the listeners fresh and free from any dirt of malice that it might have accumulated over a period of time. They were respected and loved by rich and poor alike. They would be often invited by Muslim noted landlords to sing at their public places and they would also be invited at the open business place of Hindu businessmen. All irrespective of their religion would gather to enjoy the spiritual songs that they rendered. They never made it their profession. It was all out of love to spread spiritual message of unity. They were invited sometimes by my father also. They had earned that wealth of goodwill through their good

behaviour and ethical living. I am sure that in comparison to any bigoted Mulla they would be enjoying being swung by houris of paradise.

Such was atmosphere of unity and harmony in my village Baksho Laghari and its vicinity. This place never witnessed any communal strife between two different religious communities nor did it witness any distinctions between Shia and Suni Muslim sects. Followers of both the sects continued to offer Friday prayers in the common mosque. All festivals like Eid, Holi and Diwali were celebrated together. During Holi festival uncle Cholumal and seth Gehimal would carry bucket full of colour and would drench every passerby be it Hindu or Muslim. All would be happy and the atmosphere of mirth and merriment would pervade. During Diwali Hindus would distribute sweetmeat throughout the village and during Eid Muslims would share 'Sewaain' with everyone. During Diwali the earthen lamps lit with pure ghee on the shops and houses of Hindus would convert the village into a fairyland. I also would take five pies or some grain from home and go and purchase sweet from the shop of Tahkumal. After Eid prayers even Hindus would embrace Muslims and exchange Eid greetings.

My and Fatima's parents were poor. Father (Gulan Khan) would tell us that he and his brother Hassan Ali worked as a manual labour at the construction site of Sukkur barrage for the compensation of 4 annas a day. (It works out to $\frac{1}{4}$ of a rupee). When my father would remove his shirt I would see some marks on his shoulder. When I would ask him what those marks were? He would reply that after digging the earth they would throw the bagful on the top of the embankments and that toil would continue for twelve hours every day of the week. That way through hard work they had been able to make a living. When Fatima was four or five years old she lost her father. Her mother worked hard to raise her and her three sons. Aunt was a self respecting person and she did not crave anyone's sympathy and she relied on her own hard work. She sent her son Ahmed Ali to school at the age of seven. She would make local blankets from rags, make curd and clarified butter from milk and sell it. She would

work as a labourer in the fields at the time of harvest and make a living for her family/. In this way the burden of house hold work fell on the shoulders of Fatima at the tender age of five itself. Only one lane separated our houses and I never saw her playing with her mates at anytime of the day. She would carry her one year old infant brother Shoukat on her shoulder and drag his three year old brother from arm and often would come to buy groceries for home from uncle Thakumal's shop. She would also help in delivering the rags prepared by her mother and other material embroidered by her mother. It has remained a tradition in our society to give preference to sons and not daughters. This attitude has not changed even in 21st century. In the middle of last century this attitude was more pronounced. Today also good food, good clothes and good education is reserve red mostly for the boys of the household. ' Girls after all are the wealth to be given to others' this attitude of discrimination is continuing today in our society. To obey husband is considered to be a matter of pride for a woman. Man is incarnation of God on this earth and it is duty of a good wife to obey his every whim and order. As our village was steeped in Sufi tradition this distinction between sexes was negligible. Members of poor families' men as well as well would work together in the fields. It was very rare that one would hear about the domestic violence against women. Girls of the village were highly respected by all villagers. In normal life there was no much difference between poor or Hindu and Muslim communities. If any issue arose both will sit and arrive at amicable solution. Master Moolchand would be often called to arbitrate.

In our village decency was greatly valued for that reason the rich landlord Rais Bhadur Khan got his daughter to uncle of Fatima though he belonged to a poor family. Being high or low on the basis of wealth was not a consideration in our village. There was not much pomp and show in our village in those times. Our neighbours Ghanorais' were very witty and full of humour therefore they were much sought by as a company in village gatherings. In the afternoon after being free from the routine works many including Rais Adam Khan would come for a gathering at our place. There huble buble (Hookah) would be always fresh and ready and many would

puff it more than once one after another. In the gathering news from many parts and on many topics would be exchanged and some from gathering would express valuable commentary or crack a joke which would send entire company into peals of laughter.

In south of the village, beyond the pit, there were houses of five or seven families of people of African descent. They were quite hardy and very hard working. At one time in the past their ancestors must have been captured in some war and were sold as slaves. They were continued to be sold as slaves from the time of Arabs till the time of Mirs.

After advent of British rule though they have ceased to be slaves but hunger, dire poverty and ignorance have still remained their lot.

On eastern side of the village there were two water wells. They were used to fetch water by men and women of Hindus as well as Muslims without any distinction. Both these wells were constructed by some philanthropic Hindu. Their repair and maintenance was also carried on by Hindus. Surprisingly water of the wells was cold during summer and hot during winters.

Today again I recall the book of stories taken from School library in my child hood. In one of the stories the great monster always kept on crying, "Scent of man... scent of man "to devour any human being that would be around. Looking to today's condition the situation prevailing at present does not appear any different. There is difference only in names otherwise these religious bigoted Mullas are virtually after human flesh! Before partition of the country even animals and birds were secure in their own environment. It was considered sin to even kill any insect. The Mula Mohmed of our village mosque was a very pious man and did not harbour any feelings of distinctions based on the religion. He did not demand any compensation for leading prayers in the mosque as now a day is a practice. He considered himself as seekers of mercy of that great merciful. He used to work as an ordinary postman at monthly salary of Rs.5/-. Early morning he would collect post from our school Teacher

Moolchand, collect another from village Buxo Lagahri and deliver it at the distance of ten kilometres at Tando Kaiser. He would promptly return for the prayers in the mosque. Shias and Sunis used to offer paryers in the same mosque and no one bothered as to while offering prayer someone is folding his arms or someone is half folding his palms.

Suddenly all of this peace and harmony was shattered. The entire village was a stir. The Hindu women would come with folded hands to bid goodbye to their lifelong Muslim lady friends and neighbours. In the streets would be seen men folk bidding a tearful farewell to their Muslim brethren. My father was a tough man and I never saw him shedding a tear but on that day I saw him crying like a child! He kept on pleading with them saying," Seth Thakumal, Seth Gehamam do not live your home land. We have much in common our cremation grounds and grave yards have existed side by side. Those who left sadly replied," Perhaps our share of water and food in Sind has come to end but it is certain that wherever we may be we shall always cherish you and your fond memories. "It such a storm in which many old trees is uprooted! Who could withstand such a raging storm that resulted in separation of generations of togetherness?"

As Shah Latif has said:

"What number of mom moments by fate

Only those moments one is destined to live."

Reminiscences

End: Friday 27th June. Her daughters were reading verses from the Holy Quran for her salvation and her everlasting place in the heaven; it was around 10.30 in the morning. She slightly opened her eyes and after seeing me she closed her eyes again. She tried to open her eyes again but failed. I asked her if she needed some water and kept spoonful of water on her lips. I gave her another spoon of water. When I tried third time my nephew Amir told me not to give her any more water. I kept the spoon and the water Jug on table. I took out a tissue paper to wipe her lips. Before I could touch her lips with the tissue paper she surrendered herself to GOD. It was 10.35 am.

May God grant her eternal refuge?

Village of Buksho Laghari.

Our village Buksho laghari is situated in the Taluka and district of Hyderabad at the distance of 21 Kilometres in the east. This village consists of about 100 households. This village apart from Laghari clan is inhabited by many of other clans like people of Afro descent (Sheedis), Kalohara blacksmiths, Bhil tribals, fishermen , even Sayeds and others.

Our elderly people used to tell us that the village had endured an antiquity of about 1000 years. The school which existed in the village was more than 100 years old. This fact could be verified from the records maintained in the school itself. As Sind is an agricultural province so is the village that till today subsists on agriculture and animal husbandry.

Though the inmates of the village may come from the same clan but they are known by names of their ancestors. In this way though all Lagharis belong t the same clan but they are differentiated by the name of their ancestors. Thus they maintain a separate identity. Among Laghari clan some are known as Lalni's, Muzrani's, Ghanorani's, Jiandani's and Jurani's. Among them there is no restrictions of intermarriages and inter relationship. All the same they all maintain distinct identity.

From view of neighbourhood we are recognised as Ghanorani's. We have inherited this identity from our ancestors and also we are well known for our hospitality, good behaviour, humour and tolerance. This is one the reasons that we can face ups and downs of the life stoically.

As stated earlier Sind province depends mainly on agriculture and more than 80% of population is engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry. In spite of this fact till fourth decade of last century there was no regular irrigation system in place. Most of the villages would depend for watering their fields and for drinking purpose on wells and water wheels. When the water table would rise in the well at that time poor folk would be busy collecting water on the backs of their animals like camel or a mule. At the same time they would get busy procuring the seed for their fields. That way working day and night they would meet their daily demand. This way from sowing to harvesting season they would do back breaking toil and for the rest of the time they would remain idle without any activity. It was only during active time that they had to make provision for the whole year. Poor people had to face many a health problems also and there was no hospital nearby and even the roads to traverse were conspicuous by their absence. In such a situation they would depend on the 'Miraculous' treatment of holy water and 'Talismans' of some holy Mula or Pir.

My father used to say as they were illiterate they did not remember the exact years of their births and deaths. He remembered that they were five brothers and when eldest one was about seven or eight years old plague had ravaged the entire region and thousands of people died in Thatta city at that time. At the same time the condition in the village Baksho Laghari was such that after burial of one dead person they would have to dig the grave for the next person. It is said at the place where Masudani's resided all the people living there fell victim to that epidemic. Only a brother and sister could survive from amongst them. During that period my grandfather and his three brothers also perished. Our grandmother whose name also incidentally was Fatima had to shoulder the responsibility of bringing us up. She would do manual work and his elder brother would help her. This way they were brought up in the face of grim poverty. Two brothers would go to fields to graze the animals of someone to earn something. Slowly they started working as labourers on the fields. With passage of time elder brother was married and soon thereafter their mother expired. She was a brave woman indeed! She had seen her

husband and her three brothers in laws succumbing to plague. She brought up her five sons ranging from the age of seven years to six months. She left for heavenly abode may her soul rest in peace!

Father used to tell us that he had not seen different countries of the world but as an orphan he had led a life of deprivation steeped in poverty and disease. That experience of toil and hardship had imbued them with a sense of humility empathy and they would always be ready to lend a helping hand to anyone in need. If they were told to do any work for anyone they never demurred or avoided it. In rendering any sort of help they would not only happily contribute physically but some time had to bear a financial loss also. All this brought them a recognition that was beyond any measure. All this not only added to our personality but our position in the clan also improved. We would get employment due our reputation. We were well compensated by shopkeepers also.

Father used to tell us that from financial aspect Lalani's were well placed their common place of gathering was also well decorated but for common gatherings and being a party to huble buble (Hookah) they used to come to our place. Ghanwani's from the beginnings have remained very social. Further father used to tell us that his marriage also was arranged with the help of family of Rais (Landlord) Adam khan and it was solemnised on 7th August 1940."

Food, Milk and milk products were available at the home itself. In those times milk was not sold. It was a common saying;" Sons and milk are not sold". Today I do know about sale of milk but about state of sons I cannot say.

Childhood of Fatima

In the village the locality of Ghanwani families consisted of about 20 houses. It was a congested locality of mostly square shaped houses. Fatima's residence was third house from our own. Her father Chacha Murad Ali Khan was a decent man and was respected for his courage and uprightness. He bore a distinct personality. Their elders were related to well known and affluent families of the region who were quite educated also. One of them was a Chief Engineer in irrigation department; others were a doctor and a session Judge. Her mother was sister to one of them. Due to unforeseen circumstances Fatima was raised as an orphan as her father died when she was nearly four years of age. She had an elder brother who was about the age of six years or thereabouts. She had two younger brothers as well. One was 3 years old and younger one was 18 months old. This way at the very tender age she had to shoulder household chores to help her mother to eke out a living for her family. She was mainly responsible for looking after her brothers and household chores to cut grain stalks, taking out onions from the soil and collect them in a heap to be sold by her mother. Her elder brother was admitted in a school to pursue education. This way they led a life of hardship that brought a lot of practical experience to her.

When her elder brother was admitted in a school the teacher of that school called my father and advised him to send me also to school

otherwise those in charge of imparting compulsory education would harass him. This way Fatim's Brother Ahmed Ali and I both started going to school from Ghanwani neighbourhood. Though age wise Ahmed Ali was elder to me by about two years yet somehow I continued to obtain first rank in the class and he always got second rank.

Here let me dwell for a time on the attitude towards education system of those days. In vicinity of Baksho Laghari Village there is a Bus stop known as "Makhan Moori". Some Pathan families reside in that area. Those who were in charge of compulsory education called a Pathan named Azim Khan and told him to send his son to school for education. He stubbornly refused with the result he was sentenced to jail for 15 days or a fine of Rs. 50/-. Thereafter the higher authorities insisted upon him to follow the rule of the land. He very innocently requested the authority to give him Rs. 50/- and he was prepared to go to Jail for 15 days. At this the person in charge was nonplussed and let the matter rest there.

We continued with our studies but at the time of partition of the country as many teachers were Hindus and they migrated the entire education system was suspended it was only during 1949 that education was resumed. Before that time about 600 students were on the roll of the school and average attendance would remain only 400 students. School had six teachers and one Moulwi was employed to impart religious education.

We both were regular and sincere towards our education and worked hard to maintain our position. Till sixth standard we were taught by a teacher of Thakur caste. As we entered seventh standard which was considered vernacular final we were taught by another teacher named Mohmed Sidique Soomro. He was able and learned man and he was from place called Bhindo sharif. Another teacher Habib Allah Soomro was also famous and it was said that for the final examination both were capable teachers and anyone who would care to have private tuition from them for last 4 months before they exams his success was ensured.

We both worked hard for our vernacular Final exams and were successful obtaining good marks.

Efforts for engagement of Fatima

After the death of Murad Ali Khan who was uncle of Fatima his son Sultan Ahmed Khan was selected as the chief of Ghanwani's clan. He was related to Fatima as a blood cousin and he was responsible for social obligations of the family who was looked upon as one responsible for the family as such. One day Fatima's mother took an opportunity to visit them. There Sultan Ahmed Khan and his mother both were present; her mother told them that as both elders were present she had come to broach an important subject with them. Now her daughter Fatima has matured and this is the time to look for suitable boy for her. In the normal circumstances had her father been alive he would have looked after all such affairs but she being a poor widow now this responsibility was cast upon them. Even otherwise daughters of the poor are quite vulnerable.

Both consoled her and said that such matters needed careful consideration and nothing should be done in hurry. It is easy to fall in a pit but to come out of it requires great efforts there they counseled her patience and caution in such matters. Thus they sent her back. After she left the son sought the counsel of his mother.

Mother suggested that he should move the matter with his father's sister as her son had been recently widowed and he was without any issue. Apart she is aunt of the girl also. Sultan Ahmed countered that the boy was a widower and as far as age is concerned he is quite older. We can not do such an injustice to girl. If her father were alive it would have been his discretion but in his absence it is our responsibility it is not advisable. Mother argued that the family of the boy was quite well to do and the girl would inherit all the property. Next day Sultan Ahmed's mother and her aunt visited that house and moved the matter. Mother of the boy told them that she wanted some time to think over the proposal.

Fatim's aunt pointed out, "After all you have to find the bride for your son and in the bargain you get the daughter of your own cousin from a poor house it will not only get you a daughter in law but even ordinary folk would be impressed by your large heartedness," yet mother of the boy persisted for more time to think over.

Next day aunt called an old woman from the village and confided her talk about the engagement. That old lady suggested that they should go to soothsayer lady (Wife of Local Pir) with occult powers on next Friday and find out the suitability of the match. They went on Friday to consult her. After taking her into confidence about their problem they were asked by lady to come to her on Monday. They again visited her on Monday, They were asked to sit in a separate room while the soothsayer kept herself busy for some time. After sometime that lady told them that her spell tells her that the girl is destined to marry twice. After the first marriage her husband would immediately die and again she will remarry as widow. In this way the first attempt at finding a suitable boy failed. Such superstitious news was bound to spread in the small village soon and it did spread adding to the woe of Fatima and her mother.

After all this Sultan Mohamed and his mother were worried. After pondering over the matter Sultan Mohamed suggested to her mother that her uncle's son was still unmarried and to get him married to this girl who is an orphan and poor. This will gain her divine blessings. She broached

the subject and the boy Abdulkarim flatly refused saying that we wanted to marry a rich and beautiful girl. After a few days Sultan Khan told his mother that in their neighborhood itself was a very decent family of Uncle Ghulan Khan . It is only a few paces away from our own house. Boy himself is disciplined and of good nature, apart both families are poor. In this way the problem of both poor families will be solved. Sutan Mohamed Khan called father and told him to bring a engagement ring for the girl and formalize the engagement. That way by giving a ring as token and distributing sweets our engagement was announced.

Our marriage

After appearing for my examinations I anxiously awaited results and in the meanwhile I used to help my father also. I was very concerned about the poverty that we used to face in our daily life. My education gave me an insight also and I started to think about moving out of this poverty.

Sometimes I would loath myself that after all the trouble that my parents went through to educate me I could not be of much help to them. I wanted to know the reason for this state of affairs. Where does the problem lie? Father is not addicted to any vice like intoxication or gambling. He is hard working and sincere also. He used to work on the fields of the landlords as a meager crop sharer. We had our own domestic animals. We had grain and clarified butter (Ghee) for our own use at home yet he was in perpetual debt Result of my Vernacular Final was announced. I secured 66% marks and that was considered good result. My teachers Mohmed Sidiq Sooro and Moolchand called my father and told him that as I was good at studies I should be allowed to pursue further education. They told him it is only education that will rid you of your poverty and there was no other choice. In absence of the education your family will continue to be steeped in poverty and doing backbreaking labour for the landlord and he would be always be trapped in debt.

Father was a victim of deprivation. He did not see any ray of hope. He felt being crushed under the debt. He had nothing so that he could bear the

expenses of my higher education. In those days higher education was available only at Hyderabad or Tando Adam. He did not want me to away from his eyes in a strange place. Teachers were however still insistent. They offered a cup of Tea to us so that we may time to reconsider. They suggested that it would be better to find out from the student himself as to what future he desired for himself.

My teacher Mohamed Sidiq asked me, "Do you want to study further or you also want to wield a spade just like your father?"

I very humbly thanked them for allowing me to speak to them in presence of my father. I requested them to forgive me for any in appropriate expression that I may use. I kept silent for some time. They all urged me to speak out my mind. I told them that I was sure that they as teachers and my father all had wished me a better future. If my father would willingly allow me to go for higher studies I assure you that I will do my best to acquit myself and come to their expectations. I assure you that I will face all the difficulties and remain in hostel. In case my father desires that I should help him with physical labour and wants me near his sight so that the financial condition of the family improves I am willing to abide by his wishes. I leave everything to God and my parents to decide my future. I crave his happiness alone. My father got up and told me to move with him. While giving me my mark sheet teacher Moolchand offered to go with me to Hyderabad, settle me in hostel, get me books and pay the fees for the first term also. It appears that father had been sternly warned by the landlord to repay the loan amount. He did not reveal anything and we just moved away. He simply thanked them and said if ever he decided to send me for higher education he was sure that they would always be there to help.

AS we reached home we found mother anxiously waiting for us. I was first male child of my parents after the birth of four girls in succession. In fact she was not ready that I should move away from her sight. She consoled me by saying that the boys who had studied only up to fourth standard were doing decent jobs and I was after all seventh standard pass (Final) I

would get much better job in the village itself. Anyhow God is merciful he will gracefully look after our needs.

Mother had a valid point too. After the partition of the country in 1947 educated population had moved away to India and many jobs left by them were available to less educated local population. Ghulam Ali Laghari of our village at that time was executive Engineer in the irrigation department. He had got employment to some less educated people.

In the meanwhile I started working with father in fields. My ambition for higher education had come to naught. Sometimes if I came across any scrap of newspaper of any periodical I would read it again and again. There was not a single educated or cultivated person in the village who would subscribe to any newspaper or periodical. Somehow 'Ibrat' newspaper would reach in post. That issue would be at least three days old by the time it reached there and it would be another three or four days before I could lay my hand. That was also very rarely that I would come across.

After I had to abandon hope of further education my younger brother Hussain Bux, (Father of Amir Karim and Rassol Bux) also lost ambition to study and he could complete education only up to fourth standard and left school when he was in fifth standard. I also did not get any employment and I was also not in any position to help my brothers to follow high education. When my father used to work alone he used to only fourth portion of the produce but after we joined him we purchased our own bullocks and now we started getting half portion of the produce. We put all our efforts to improve the yield. During all this time someone had recommended my name to Ghulam Allah Khan Laghari who issued a letter for my training for Irrigation. Letter was brought by hand Deh Buxo Laghari of our village and was working in the department. In fact I was to trained under him in village itself. I used to devote some time to training for six months and continued with normal work also. Training letters were issued others also but at the end of training period only two were given regular duty and all others returned to their usual work.

My brother told me that now onwards I should not depend on the false promises of unreliable people as my absence from the field had already adversely impacted our work in the fields and I should now completely devote myself to my usual work to recoup the loss suffered. After all this we got a message from parents of Fatima that it was high time we solemnized the marriage and rid them of their social responsibility. Our marriage took place on 8th April 1958.

As I have stated earlier our houses were in close proximity. We stayed for two days at Fatima's parent's house and on third day we came to live in our house. Thus a new

Chapter of our life together commenced.

Fatima was born on 2nd August 1940 and I was born on 7th August. This way Fatima was elder to me by five days. We both were eighteen years of age at the time of our marriage.

Expectation of addition in Family

Father myself. Mother and brothers we all were busy working on the fields. We had live stock of five buffalos and goats also. We were moving towards self sufficiency. Mother and Fatima both had taken their responsibilities head-on God's mercy and sense of abundance was there. We used to remember our times of deprivation and would thank God for this merciful bounty. Sometimes mother would express her wish for a small addition in the family. I would console mother by saying, " have faith in the mercy of almighty. All is in His hands. His Will be done." One day Fatima told me that when I next went to market I should bring special clay for her. (Eating of this clay indicates craving of expecting mother). My mother was very happy and told me that a new arrival in the family was on its

way. Fatima also kept herself busy with making blankets and other clothes for the new arrival. At last the much awaited child was born on 19th July 1961 at 2 pm. Child was healthy and mother had no any complication. We thanked God for His mercy.

Awaiting new arrival

WE all members of the family were diligently busy in our daily schedules. Male would go to fields and my mother and Fatima would look after household chores. Due to our hard work we had been able to augment stock of domestic animals. We were quite happy with the Grace of God almighty and we were grateful to Him. My mother now had only one wish that she would often express. She wanted an addition of a little angel in the family. I would comfort her by saying, "Everything is in Hands of God. He is merciful. He is capable of granting his boon anytime. By his grace all the woes vanish in an instant. "

One day Fatima told me that I should bring a special kind of clay while returning from my work. (Pregnant women have craving for this special type of clay) My mother congratulated me and said that little angel so sought for was on the way. Fatima also kept herself busy making small blankets and clothes for expected child. At last the much awaited new arrival came on 19th July 1961 at 2 pm. Fatima as well as child was healthy. She did not encounter any problem after delivery. After cleaning the child was shown to Fatima. We were instructed by midwife of the village to first whisper a prayer and name of the child in his ear. We followed the instructions and whispered the name "Anwar Ali ". We were particular that the name of the child should carry the name of "ALI ". Our marriage had taken place in the midst of poverty and we could not adequately celebrate and now this birth of a male child provided us with an opportunity to celebrate in befitting manner. Profession singers and dancers those who are called for such occasions were invited and celebrated the occasion to our hearts content. We believe that Glory and misery are in the hands of Almighty and we were grateful to Him for the opportunity provided.

Trapped in Feudal Setup

We had not only mastered the work of agriculture but we were known for obtaining best results. As a consequence were offered to till the lands of various landlords and were in great demand. My two younger brothers also were grown up enough to be sent for grazing of cattle. We brothers along with father and uncle all were working. We did not engage in any extravagant expenses and were free from any vice.

In the year 1956 river dam was breached and the residents of village Haji Wikyo Khaskheli with their families took refuge in our village for about two months. After two months most of them returned to their village but one of them who was a good tailor by profession opened his shop in our village and settled there. He would visit his village once a month or once after two months. He became quite friendly with my father and when I would be free I would go and sit at his shop. I used to assist him like stitching buttons and other chores of his trade. My father requested his friend to teach train me as full-fledged tailor as he found me interested in that work. He taught me his trade and for six months I concentrated on learning the tailoring work. After six months of training I was able enough to stitch usual garments for the use of villagers. My father got me a 'Singer' brand stitching machine. Fatima's cousin Sultan Ahmed Khan had a tea stall in centre of the growing village. Near that Tea stall he had an empty room. He was requested to allow me to keep my machine and start my work. He readily acceded to our request and removed his belongings somewhere else. I have always been adapt at the ways of rural culture and by sharing a cup of tea with any stranger on could make him as one of his own. This way the atmosphere for the establishment of my work became conducive. Within two years I had become a famous tailor who had more work than one could cope with. After great persuasion I agreed to take two assistants whom I would teach the work. During all this I managed to keep unnecessary crowd of gossipmonger villagers away from my place of work.

As my shop was a part of the tea stall, as often happens in the rural culture it became a meeting place of village idlers, gamblers and hemp smokers of the

village. I felt suffocated in such a place but was condemned to bear it all as I did not own the place and further more the cousins of Fatima who were owners of the place themselves were addicts and encouraged such activities. For two years I resolutely confined myself to my own work. Neither did I fall prey to any bad habit nor did I complain but bore it all patiently.

Soon village witnessed the spurt in the activity of cockfight. Sultan Ahmed Khan was one who was known as an ardent of this sport. He would often tell me to bring his fighting cocks. At last I also succumbed to this vice as after all I was also but a part of that rural-feudal culture. This adversely affected my work. Though I would feel guilty but then also I could not help myself such was me my addiction. My father, brothers and wife all would warn me and dissuade from such a harmful activity but daily a car of one or other landlord of the vicinity would come to my door to fetch me with my fighting cocks. I had really reared fighting fit cocks. I acquired the honorific of Mohamed Ai Khan or rather Rais Mohamed Ali Khan in place of simple Mohamed Ali as I was known before. I would proudly visit many villages and my shop would remain closed for days together .I was being flattered all the time. My customers left me and found some other tailor. I was oblivious to all the financial loss that this addiction of mine led to .In this way financial position of our house became weak. I would evade facing father. Father was also helpless who could he complain about his own son! In such a situation my brother was engaged. Fatima during this period lost her mental balance and was under treatment for quite some time. This came as a rude jolt to me and I started taking serious stock of the situation and thought about the way my own life was shaping up. Father had already to sell two buffalos for treatment of Fatima. He got well she found herself pregnant again. She could not feel any movement of the child. She confided in me this fact. I advised her to speak to her mother and she would speak to her mother who apart from being your grandmother is skilled midwife also. Not Further I consoled her that hence forth I would not go anywhere and she should also not worry in that condition. Her grandmother gave her some herbal medicine and soon she was in pain and delivered another son. At the time of birth of elder son Anwar we were well off and all were happy to celebrate but this time we were happy for the only reason

that Fatima had come out of this ordeal safe and child was also safe. I was asked about the name to be given to child. I replied that though this is normal practice that father names his son but as it is mother who bears all the pain of carrying and delivering a child it should be her prerogative to name the child and she should be consulted and name suggested by her should be given to the child. She said my elder one is Anwar and he is my Munawar but Suffix Ali should be with the name and child was named as a Munawar Ali. That name was whispered in the ears of the child along with a prayer.

Munawar was born on 25th October 1965. On the birth of Anwar Gala celebrations were held and singers and dancers from outside were called but the birth of Munawar was celebrated in a very modest manner only two pots were cooked and food was distributed among close family.

After some time father told me that my brother who was engaged to be married, his in laws were insisting on solemnizing the marriage at the earliest so that they may be free from their social responsibility. I consoled him that God the merciful will show us the way. We had already sold two buffalos for the treatment of Fatima. We were left only with two bullocks and we had nothing left to sell. In fact because of these able bullocks we used to get land for tilling. We decided to sell one bullock and keep one so that in time on need another one could be borrowed from someone. We had to exercise patience as auctioning the bullock would not have exposed our dire need for money but would have fetched far less price. Within a month we were able to sell one bullock and arranged marriage of my brother at a very modest scale as my marriage had been finalized. At that very time the health of Munawar took a serious turn .Fatima suggested a postponement of a week or ten days. As the marriage was to be conducted at a modest scale invitations were not sent to far off relatives. It was all within our own village. We continue with our own vigil for sick Munawar and our efforts and prayers were rewarded. We continued to administer the medicines as prescribed by doctors for a long time. With grace of God almighty life of our child was spared.

(Photographs to be inserted before this chapter Starts)

Crisis after Crisis

As health of Munawar improved Fatima herself told me to go ahead with the marriage ceremony of my brother. As already decided the marriage was to be conducted at a modest scale no one from outside was invited. It was a simple matter to cook some eatables and distribute among close relatives and daughters of the family and gift some clothes. Brother Hussain Bux's marriage with Mirzadi was as austere as was our marriage was. If no one had to boast about this marriage no one had cause to complain also. In poor households it is not the pomp and ostentation that matters but it is true love, affection and respect that matters. I can confidently say that in the family itself we were very happy. Let me make it clear that my sister in law was in fact closely related to my wife Fatima. Sister in Law's father and Fatim's grandmother (from mother's side were blood sister and brother). Among all of the family members it was Fatima who was most happy. My mother suffered from asthma and was able to do household work with great difficulty. At the same time Fatima was burdened with raising a sickly child Munawar Hearing about the marriage of son of uncle Gulan Khan's son Hussain Bux and Mirzadi many relatives would come to congratulate. In order to face this entire situation Fatima got a helping hand like Mirzadi who was very hard working but do the work that normally is done by men folk. With grace of God Hussain Bux

was blessed with a son within a year or so. We were leading a happy and modestly comfortable life when bad days befallen us. Huissain Bux was instigated by some mischief mongers that while all the work was done by him and his wife but all the credit was usurped by his brother and sister in law. This mischief induced in him a sense of jealousy. After the birth of a child as per custom his wife went to her parents. She did not come back instead he was persuaded to stay with his in-laws. His in-laws got him a land for tilling. He was really confused and could not oppose his wife or in-laws. He silently bore the situation. Father would lament that 'women gossip' had brought him to such an unfortunate situation. He felt helpless. Others from the family and his friends counseled him well but he would tell them that in face of adamant attitude of his wife he was helpless. He continued to toil all day long but eventually he became debt ridden.

On the other hand Father, me along and two brothers continued to work on the fields. A year or so after Hussain Bux left the home with the recommendation of Rais Khuda Bux Khna of our village I got a job as a conductor buses run by Alam and Brothers. In those days even job as a conductor was considered a respectable job on par with any petty government official. It entitled apart from usual salary commission and other allowances, in case of need one could obtain loan also. Buses used to ply between Hyderabad – Dighri via Matli moving through Tando Ghulam Ali, Tando-Aihar and other places of importance. Within six months I could gain the confidence of the owners. In comparison to other conductors I continued to give better returns. Within a year we came out of abject poverty. After one year of service I came back to village. I came to know that brother was not in a good condition. I along with father and mother went to his in-laws home took up his sons and told them to move out. It may be mentioned that during this period brother and sister in law were blessed with another son also. I sternly told him not to take anything from there. Even their personal belongings were to be left there.

Brother said that he had tilled and sowed the land and I owe some amount also besides he had purchased a buffalo also. Father said, "We will discharge all the debts. Let all those who owe him come and collect their dues. As regards land in concerned we shall not claim any compensation from the landlord." We called all

those who had to be paid and brought my blood brother with his family back to our own house. After all he was part of my own blood!

In fact I realized that he had not separated from the family but he was concerned about his reputation and sense of self respect that had come in the way of coming back home. I said prayers of gratitude to Almighty. I spent some days of my leave with family and relatives and was getting ready to go back to my work. Fatima advised me that a vacant piece of land that was lying open adjacent to our house I should try to get a new house built on that piece land. The work need to be started as Family was growing. After discussing the matter with elders of the family I told her to go ahead with the project. I gave her some money to start the work and promised to send more money to her for the purpose. Father also enthusiastically took to building the new house .I assured him also of funds that I had volunteered to send. I did not fail to meet the teachers of my children to find out how they were faring? This way being satisfied in every way I went back to my job at Hyderabad.

In the village father commenced the construction of new house. It was decided that the house should have a big courtyard so that even children could play game of cricket in it and rooms should be quite commodious. Once when the work on the roofing of the house was underway, concrete was being poured exactly at that time Munawar came out and the concrete fell on Munawar's head and he was injured. His wound could be healed after a quite some time.

In fact Munawar was very dear and near to his uncle Mohamed Bux he used to follow us like a shadow be it on the field or anywhere else. Father got him a baby goat and he would play with him and take him everywhere. He became very attached to his pet goat. Seeing such a deep attachment his mother told him, "It is good to love animals but if you get attached to your pet how will you study and progress in life? You will merely herd the animals!" Fatima advised the father to sell that goat. The amount that he got from selling the goat was given to Munawar who in turn passed it on to his mother.

Education of Children

I had led his life in poverty and with a sense of deprivation. There was no hope of any help from any relative or any other source. I had in a way lost hope of leading a decent life free from want. I had taken one firm decision of his life. I realized that my father could not afford good education for him due to poverty though I was a good student and deserved it. I firmly believed that it were those people who were steeped in ignorance had always been a barrier between a good and enlightened life and decent life. I had decided that he would educate my and brother's children without any gender discrimination. This was my way of extracting revenge from illiterate society bound in a web of superstition and tradition. During some of visits to doctors during illness and when he saw MBBS degree on the name plates that came as a challenge to me .I got my son admitted in a village school. At that time his teacher was Mohamed Bhurgiri. I bared my heart to him and he assured me that with the grace of God all will be well.

After some time I confided in his mother and impressed her that without a good education it was not possible for us to come out of the mire of poverty. I also told her that in all this endeavor the role of the mother is of utmost importance. She had to be strict with her children in respect of their study. She readily agreed and

said, "I am myself illiterate without your enlightenment on this issue I would have committed the same mistake that normally mothers are apt to do due to love. I told her that I was not prepared to tolerate any leniency in this respect.

After sometime when I realized that Anwar has become used to regularly attend his school and he will be able to understand basic things, I shared with him my views. I told him that we were poor people and we had not inherited any ancestral property that we had lost due luxurious living he need of or any vice like gambling or intoxication. I told him that his grandparents will bear this out if he doubted the truth of my statement. I impressed upon him the education. It was the only way to get us out of quagmire of poverty. No doubt in feudal society sometimes the education is ridiculed but that only helps to block the road to our progress. We had no assets that could be invested in setting up any business for them. It was essential that he should not neglect his studies. I further told him to keep his needs within reasonable limits. He should not be indifferent to education at any time as that was the only asset that we could bequeath to our children. This process continued for quite some time. Afterwards I smelled that Fatima was being soft on him due to maternal instincts for strict pursuit of his studies. I warned my wife against such an attitude but she shielded him saying," He is a mere child. He will become serious when he grows up." I told her that I also loved him equally as he was my child as well but being soft at this age will prove detrimental his own interest. Once when I returned in the morning after working in fields I found that he had missed his school and was enjoying playing marbles with vagabond children of neighborhood. I realized that we could not give an excuse in future to our relatives that we tried our best but our son was not interested in studies. I reprimanded my wife for such a lapse. I immediately called him and was about to thrash him when his mother intervened. I asked him to pick his book bag and I led him to school. I pleaded with his teacher not to punish him as I had punished him enough. I requested him that in case the child remained absent he should send someone to call him to school. Further I assured him that in future such an eventuality would not arise.

From that day onwards Anwar started taking serious interest in his studies and I did not get any complaint from his teacher about his being negligent to his studies.

Anwar continued to maintain that impression but after four years Munawar also came of school going age. Initially Munawar like his brother started playing truant but Munawar was less haughty and more intelligent. Once when Munawar missed his school on being reprimanded he accepted his mistake and meekly sought forgiveness and promised not to repeat such a mistake ever in future. Both boys continued with their studies in a systematic manner and I had no occasion to bother about their education.

Although one incident stands out in my mind and I hope they also must be remembering that incident. All I told them was for own good. Normally my relationship with my sons has been rather friendly. Especially I have enjoyed a good rapport with Munawar as both of us are witty. Though some times Munawar's wit does not evoke desired laughter sometimes his is better. Sometimes I would engage with her in witticism and her sons also would not lag behind at that she would in mock anger reprimand them. They would meekly ask for her forgiveness.

Baksho Lagahri to Hyderabad

In the year 1972 Anwar had cleared his matriculation examination and Munawar cleared his fifth standard. Brother's son was in fourth and his last son had been already admitted in the school and was studying in class second. Fatima asked me that Anwar was settled at Landlord's (Rai's) house but what plans I had for stay of Munawar for higher studies? She said that next year your nephew also would have to move to Hyderabad for higher education and we should think to make permanent arrangements for them. It was necessary to have our own abode at Hyderabad. At our village home it was a kitchen that used to be a meeting place for the family members to discuss any important issues or even otherwise we would meet there. It is here where we would exchange views and joke about and

plan our day's schedule. I told her that in the same building on the first floor family of Haji Hussain Bux. It would be prudent to ask them to accommodate Munawar for one year and within that period we should get our own abode at Hyderabad. This one year will be apart from being a breather for us will also afford us time get necessary things and furniture for our Hyderabad house. My wife had a constant complaint that though we had constructed a good house in the village but there was not enough furniture and many necessary things had yet to be purchased. I told her that by the time we moved her that complaint also would be addressed. Apart from this breather of one year by these arrangements at least both brothers would be staying in the same building. This would be a good moral support for Munawar. Fatima refused to approach Haji Hussain Bux's house hold for this purpose. She had approached for Anwar as those people were related to her by blood. She said that as mother of Hussain Bux was my cousin from maternal side and I was his favourite peasant I should myself attend to this task. It is a question of only one year. Incidentals Hussain Bux came to oversee his fields in the village. During conversation I shared my problem with him and asked him for a favour to accommodate Munawar at his Hyderabad house. He said he would consult his family members and revert back to me. This reply did not satisfy Fatima and she was pessimistic As per his promise he consulted his wife and she wanted to know his opinion. He said that the boy would prove to be a household asset as he would help in sundry chores. His wife told him that had he refused in the first instance he would have been held responsible for refusal but now in the village she would be held responsible in case of refusal. In this way the problem of Munawar's stay was resolved. My wife was happy at the same time credited herself for giving sane advises.

Anwar and Munawar both started going to Noor Mohamed High School. After them to school Fatima stayed at Hyderabad for a week more to satisfy herself about the arrangements. She left for the village after dully thanking the hosts and telling them to look after her sons as their own.

I continued with my duty as a conductor and would visit my sons in the evening. After spending some precious time with them and giving them some pocket money I would return to my quarters. In the meanwhile Fatima kept herself busy

by purchasing furniture for our new Hyderabad house. She purchased furniture like bed sets, mattresses, fridge and she even purchased a TV set. All this had to be kept in our village house as we did not have any house as yet in Hyderabad. In those times though in main cities TV set was not uncommon but in the village it certainly was a novelty. During this season we had a good yield and we made a good profit also.

At the residence of Hussain Bux Khan Munawar was charged with a duty to look after providing water for the house. Sometimes they used to get water by using a water pump on the ground floor. As the timings of the water supply were very odd Munawar had to perform this duty at 1 am. It was only after this time that he could sleep. Once while switching on the water pump Munawar sustained a severe electric shock. Thus in 11 years of his age it was third time that god had intervened to save his life.

This way one year had come to close. Anwar cleared his matriculation examination with flying colours. Fatima's maternal uncle's two sons were also studying at Hyderabad. Elder Shahid Khan used to work for Dalda Ghee Corporation and the younger one used to stay with her aunt's place belonging to Haji Shafi Mohmed Khan. Aslam used to be in the same class as Anwar and they had cleared Matriculation examination also at the same time. Both her uncle's decided to get accommodation and I was told that we should stay together at the same place so that the rent and electricity bill is divided equally. My wife Fatima further added that Aslam does not want to study alone as he had been with Anwar throughout the school and his company would be a morale booster for him. He considers Anwar and Munawar as his brothers. In this situation Fatima sought my advice. I told her that as it was she who had to stay together her decision in the matter mattered more. I told her that she will have to be careful and not to create an issue of any trivial matter so that in future it may create social complications. I do not want to save money at the cost of creating ill will among relatives. I told her that she should not be wary of spending more than her share as money does not matter more than human relations as they are very delicate.

They decided to stay together. Both were successful in finding a suitable place to stay and I paid the required advance amount. On being asked of my wife the auspicious time to move into the new house she said that I days belong to God any one day was as good as any other day.

Formally leaving for Hyderabad I summoned all the family members. The meeting consisted of my father and mother and wives of both the brothers. I apprised them about the problems that would arise after having two separate establishments at different places. I said it was imperative for Fatima to be at Hyderabad to look after the growing boys who were engaged in further studies. Whereas at the village home all the household chores which were shared will have to be faced by sister in law Mirzadi and as mother is old she could be of help only slightly. The work at village home was enormous. Apart from cooking for family members she would be cooking for the farm workers also and she will have to feed the guests whenever they arrived. I was sure that Mirzadi was capable of undertaking this responsibility. I also pointed out to the fact that to maintain two houses would be an additional financial burden also. I entrusted responsibility of the moving furniture and settle the family to new house at Hyderabad to my brother. After six months one of the nephews of Fatima said that he was not able to bear the financial burden of staying in a separate house and he wanted to move out but his brother a Aslam family member. I thought the one more mouth to feed would not pose much would emerge as an educated person.

Aslam and Anwar got admission Government College of Kaari Moori. Both opted for biology as main subject for their further education. We moved our residence from Liaqat Colony to Tando wali Mohmed and thence to place near Mausoleums of Mirs. All these were rented houses. During holidays boys came to visit village. During that visit Anwar's liver had been infected and he fell sick. My sister was married in the village of Gulab Lagahri and her son Rashid who was of nearly Anwar's age came to visit him. In the evening when he wanted to return he came to me to seek my permission and blessings. I told him to stay overnight and not to rush but saying that he had to attend to his work he left. Within about 40 minutes we were to see him badly mutilated, as in the Datsun vehicle in which he was travelling collided with a heavy truck which had caused a serious accident. I

rushed him to Civil Hospital at Hyderabad in a serious condition .Doctors there declared him as 'brought dead'. I had to carry his body to my sister's house at Village Gulab Laghari.

I cannot describe the distress that this accident caused to me. Actually I was devastated as I could not see the young boy like prince charming lying dead at the feet of his distraught parents. I had to accept it as God's will but within two months I was afflicted with Tuberculosis. Bleeding was profuse and after treatment of 9 months at Karachi I was cured of it.

Some steps towards prosperity

I continued to perform my duty as conductor and keeping watch on the progress of studies of Anwar. Munawar continued to go to school and in the meanwhile I got admission for my nephew also. I assured him that I treated like my own sons and as far as education is concerned he will not face any discrimination. They used to go to school together and return together. After doing their home work they would help grandfather and uncle on their field and would do all sorts of work assigned to them. Some times Munawar would collect the grain from the floor and sell it to shopkeeper and instead purchase a slate or a notebook that he needed for school work. He was rather obstinate and hot headed and in anger would smash anything that he came across. Once a restaurant owner insulted him

and he could not bear it. As retaliation he climbed the roof and started throwing stones with the result his customers scattered away. When I came to know of this incident I not only apologized to restaurant owner but as compensation got him new crockery.

One day friend of mine from Tando Quasir came to visit. After customary lunch the conversation veered to the topic of Tando Quasir being a centre of mango trade to Punjab, Quetta and other important trading centres. We decided to engage ourselves in this trade. Once we even as a monopoly purchased the entire mango producing gardens of our villages for export purpose. During this business I realized that in spite of one being honest the landlord would often palm off inferior goods and waste also and try to cheat. Once Munawar said, "As you are in the business of selling mangoes, give me some and I will sell them in retail in open. I will give you dues and I shall myself retain the profit."

In this way Munawar saved some money. He approached the village barber for his own circumscising ceremony. Village barber demanded Rs.200 but he bargained with him and settled the matter at Rs.100/-. He without any ado reached home and thus without indulging in any religious and social formalities he completed his religious responsibility on his own. He did not want to take our obligation for this and indulge in customary celebrations and unnecessary expenses. His grandfather applauded him over his bold step.

Brothers to be married

One day in Hyderabad I and Fatima were discussing sundry matters when she said that my younger brothers had come of age when they need to be married and settled in life. At the time she had entered our house as newlywed bride my brother that Mohmed was hardly eight years of age. She said that they had always respected her as their own mother. She volunteered to find the match for Mohmed and said that it would be my responsibility to find a suitable match for brother Gwhwanr Khan. When I asked her if she had any one in mind about Mohmed she replied that she had a daughter of her uncle and sister of Aslam as a bride for him. She said that she was sanguine that if approached with the proposal they would accept. I told her to try it her own way. By now I had left the job as a conductor and was busy in the business of orchids. By this time I had started feeling uneasy with partnership in the business and I withdrew from the partnership in business venture. Brothers were of the opinion that we should purchase a tractor. I booked the tractor also and expected delivery of the same within four to six months. I got the delivery of it within four months. I told my brothers to get a suitable driver to take it to our village which work was also promptly done. I continued to guide the matters related to land from Hyderabad itself. I used to look after the education of children also. One day Fatima told me that her uncle had come to see his son Aslam. At that time she had broached the subject of marriage of his daughter with your brother. She said that uncle said that our house was the most dear and near one to them. Sister in law Mirzadi was daughter of his sister therefore both of this family are also part of the family. The

Boy suggested, Mohmed Khan is virtuous indeed. He only wanted a time of a few days to finalize the things at his home. I told her to find the match of other brother also so that the marriages may take at the same time which apart from other hassles associated with marriage ceremony would reduce our expenses also. She told me that another girl was in our neighborhood itself. She was a daughter of her cousin Abdul Karim Khan. She refused to move the matter herself and we would have to find the way. It was holy month of Ramzan. During Eid holidays we all went to visit our village. We went to meet our relatives to exchange greetings as we met Fatima's uncle he told Fatima that now boy and girl both belong to you. He got sweetmeats of Rs. 500/- and formalized the engagement. Next day we also sent cash gift to the girl. After having tea and refreshments we came back after an hour. I enquired about Abdul Karim and was told that he was at his home. I along with my father and mother went to his house. After the exchange of customary greetings they enquired from me the reason of troubling my father and mother for the occasion. I told him to enquire from my Father. My father told him that we were their poor bothers and neighbors for a long time. He told him that he had come with a hope to be fulfilled that is expected from brothers. He and his wife asked for some time to think over the matter. After 2-3 days they Consented for a wedding proposal and sent a message that we may come and distribute sweets to formalize the engagement. Fatima was in the village itself due to Eid Holidays and she organized customary ceremonies of songs and dance that such a joyous occasion demands. In village as well at Hyderabad residence many people came to congratulate us for this good news. In village even my mother in law was busy entertaining guests that came to offer congratulations.

By this time we had moved our Hyderabad residence to Pathan colony. Suddenly one day we had a surprise visitor, Alimohmed Khan Son of Nabibux Khna Baloch who was accompanied his wife Zaibualnisa who was also daughter of respected Allah Khan Laghari. We extended our warm welcome to them for their visit to our modest abode. We offered them customary hospitality. They sat there for some time and during the conversation they enquired from us as to how much rent we paid for our dwelling. We informed them that it was Rs. 600 per month. They

offered that we may shift to their house for same amount as a rent and they would not insist for any deposit from us. We told them that there was a vast difference between our social position and theirs. Socially they occupied much higher position than they occupied hence we were apprehensive of the proposal that after some time if they asked us to vacate we would be in a difficult situation. On their insistence we agreed to shift there on the first day of the month. As by my personal nature I am socially amenable I gathered quite a sizable circle of friends and acquaintances. I was often invited on social occasions like marriages as well as Funerals. All this added to my social status in the community and I earned their respect. All the while I was conscious that I may not become arrogant and invite the wrath of my creator. I would always pray and seek His mercy. I tried to follow the virtues as exhibited by Imam Hussain of Islam. Every year I used to sacrifice a handsome bullock in His name. This would give me a sense of spiritual fulfillment. On day Fatima told me that due to improvement in our social position we are having numerous guests at our house at Hyderabad and at village home, all this has increased the work load of women and at Village Mirzadi alone was facing all the troubles. In the long run this stress may affect her health therefore it is necessary that now is right time to think about the marriage of your brothers who have long been engaged to be married. My mother had also expressed her wish to see marriage of her sons. It was decided that after the marriages of my brothers my sister-in-law Mirzadi would move to Hyderabad house. Fatima and she would look after the increased work load of Hyderabad house.

I was in full agreement with Fatima on this score. I contacted the parents of girls' and after the gap of one month decided the date of the marriage. During that period invitations cards for the marriage of both the brothers were printed and distributed among relatives and friends. I wanted to celebrate these marriages on good scale thus repay the social debt and gain blessings of my aged parents. For hundreds of years our family had been mired in grim poverty and previous marriages had taken place on a very modest scale but now God had bestowed his mercy on us and we were quite well off. Anwar wished to call a renowned singer Mohmed Yusuf to perform on the occasion and he was paid advance also but due

to some reason he could not come instead some more singers were present and with mercy of almighty all went well. I offered my prayers of gratefulness to God and contributed some amount to charity also for His continuing grace and mercy.

One Hussain Bux Khan described his memory in the words: "Marriage was performed on such a gala scale that even now you wish you will not be able to repeat such a feat.

Ups and downs of life

Fortune turns like a wheel. I am always apprehensive of future therefore I daily pray to almighty to grant me patience and sense of contentment. This prayer gives me strength to face my daily life. I pray that I may be spared from any adverse trial. I remember the words of immortal poet Shah Latif beseeching the creator to cover faults with the shield of His grace.

My mother was very simple, from a very poor family, an orphan and also devoid of love and affection of mother in law or father in law, as my father was also an orphan and poor. Poverty was such that in home without the name of great God there was nothing.

Her health permitted or not she was condemned to do all the house hold work like fetching water, grinding grain, cooking, washing and cleaning house. If she fell ill she had to rely on faith healing or home remedies. She delivered nine children. 4 girls and 5 boys. 2 girls and one boy died in infancy due to lack of proper medical aid. We two sisters and four brothers have survived.

Mother used to tell her that during her time there were no flour mills to grind the grain and it had to be manually grinded in the millstone by herself. During those days due to paucity of commodities sugar and other things were rationed and in short supply. She would stitch our clothes also by needle with her own hands. She had never expressed any desire to have anything to my father who was engaged in a constant struggle to earn a simple living. Once she called me and said that all her sons were dear to her equally and all her life she has prayed for our well being. She had one request to make to me. I told her that her word would be a command for me. She had only to express her wish and I promised to fulfill it at any cost. She said, "Your brother Ghanwar Khna wants you to purchase a passenger Bus for him." I told her that to work as a conductor was one thing and to run a bus service needed some other sort of experience but I assured her that I will fulfill her wish. Initially I wanted to consult my father about this proposal but fearing that he may scold my mother for having made such a demand I took my brothers into confidence. Much against my wise counsels, as I had intuition that this step would invite financial disaster, I arranged one lakh of rupees to my mother and told her to ask brother to go ahead with his plans. We got delivery of a secondhand bus against payment and rest of the amount was to be redeemed by monthly installments of four thousand rupees. Actually financially we were drained due to marriage expenses incurred during the marriage of our brothers.

Passenger Bus started running on the route on Sheikh Barkyo Road via Hyderabad to Tando Mohmed Khan. Due to our reputation we got good driver and cleaner etc;. Bus was good in appearance and tyers were also in good condition but we did not know that the engine and other repair work had been carried on temporary basis and within a month it started giving trouble. Especially its break would often fail which resulted in its being stalled for days together or it would stop midway and cause trouble to the passengers. This situation caused us the loss that we could ill afford. A thought to dispose this drain causing vehicle did cross my mind but my ego could not allow me to act that way. I always thought as to what others would say on my failure and was wary of their ridicule. This situation led to my brothers and friends being estranged from me. This caused me a great anguish as I had lifted the family from grim poverty to respectable middle

class level. The situation came to pass when this bus consumed all our harvest and live stock as well. Ultimately in 1988 before the riots unleashed by Mohajirs I sold it to a scrap dealer and settled my dues. In this way I found myself in a position from where I had started to build .My one wrong decision was to prove very costly to me as if all my efforts came to naught.

Father afflicted with cancer

In the month of October 1893 father expressed that he was suffering from failing eye sight as well as he had a nagging stomachache. Normally he has a great capacity to bear any pain and normally he would never complain. I mentioned this to my brothers who all advised me to consult Anwar who was already in the MLC medical college. He suggested that it would be better to bring him to our Hyderabad residence where good medical care be availed of. He sent this suggestion through Munawar. We brought him to our Hirabad residence at Hydderabad. There we consulted one for complaint of his eye sight and another for his stomach ailment. The prescribed medication was started. Yet it appears that he did not get any relief but he would bear all the pain Munawar to convince me to take him to village home. Munawar tried to dissuade him by saying, “This is also your own home. If need be here it would be easy to consult doctors and you should remain here.” After a week things aggravated more. Specialists were

consulted who advised further tests including a Ultrasound test. Ultrasound test revealed that he was inflicted with stomach cancer. This came as a rude shock. I was almost tearful. I told Anwar to arrange for a private room in the hospital. I stayed with my father and Anwar would visit after he was free from his college. His condition continued to slide and he had a problem in passing urine also. His condition took a serious turn. A tube was inserted to take out his urine. He again requested Munawar to take him to village. An ambulance was arranged to take him to the village. I took him to village while Anwar promised to follow us next day as he had to attend a marriage of Mumtaz Shah. Munwar was enraged at this behavior of his brother but Anwar decided to come after attending the marriage of his friend. I along with Munawar brought father to the village home on 1st February 1984 some other relatives also had come there with us. On 4th of February father breathed his last and went to be one with his creator. He was a symbol of hard work, honesty and integrity. He would always bless me that God almighty may not bring a day when I have to stretch my hand for any help to anyone. On the third day of his death ceremony the body of another person who was our neighbor whose name was Sahib Khan but due to his nature he was known as Raja (King). This way two really great men departed from the neighborhood on the same day.

Stepping into politics...

By the year 1980 Anwar was in MLC medical college and Munawar had reached matric class. Since 1972 'JIYE SIND' movement (A movement to separate Sind from Pakistan and create an independent state) was sweeping across the educational institutions of Sind. I have remained an ardent admirer of great poet Shah Abdul Latif. Munawar had taken liking to debating and elocution competitions and would take part in them at school level itself. I would help him write his speech and provide him debating points and by his hard work he would excel on the stage. I was also invited on such occasions. When Anwar joined MLC he became an active member of 'Jiye Sind' student organization. By that time people from the intelligence agencies of the state had penetrated the organization and by provoking disturbances they would see that educational institutions are shut for a considerable time to deprive the students of the opportunities that would accrue from education, thus condemn entire generation to darkness and ignorance. Punjabi students established an organization called "New Sindhi Students' organization ". They were equipped with arms and funded enough to instigate violence in various campuses. As far as I recall it was in the year 1982 that a person named Mohmed Ali Sheikhi with another companion attacked Sindhi student Quadir Magsi a Sindhi Nationalist Student. It was a murderous attack but he escaped with injuries. During this attack one innocent standby clerk of the university was also injured. Due to this incident the college was shut. The principal of the college Dr. Azim Almani was adamant that unless all students who are involved in the incident are not arrested he would not consent to re-opening of the college. In this incident the name of Anwar also figured. Warrants of arrest against all students were issued and sent to all police stations across the entire sind. Site where the incident took place was in-charge of Ghulam Rasool Lashshari who was SHO. He was an acquaintance of mine. He rushed

present to our village as I was not there the elders of the village sent him back with the assurance that I would present myself before him at the earliest.

Next day I went to see him. I told him that merely arrest of Anwar would not result in re-opening of the college as all students will have to surrender together. I told him that all are educated youth and they also have to think about their future. Further I argued with him that warrants had been sent all across Sind and as far as residence is concerned it did not fall under his jurisdiction. Further this political issue. He was obstinate and would not listen to reason. He told me till Anwar surrendered I will have to remain in custody. I tried to reason with him that parents of other students have not been summoned and they are living comfortably in their house. No argument could budge him and I was in police custody for 14 days. (*Foot Note: this appears to be a strange practice in Pakistan that in lieu of an accused someone from the family is taken into custody.) After 14 days a class fellow of Anwar Dodo Khan Rind brought SP Farooq asked him to release me as it was futile detaining only one person. I was released by Police Station in-charge with a warning that if necessary I would be summoned again. After a lapse of one month inspector from Jamshoro police station came and took me away to station. There I found uncle of Dr. Qadir Magsi and relatives of many others there. After detention of two days we were presented before an army officer. In the meanwhile all students had surrendered voluntarily and only thereafter MLC College was re-opened. Fatima taunted me that it was very brave of me to handover my son to police and return home with head high. I retorted if such brave sons were born of her womb she should also hold her courage.

More information about Fatima

She was born on 2nd August in the year 1940 in village Baksho Lagahri that falls in the district of Hyderabad (Sind). His father expired in her childhood. During childhood itself she was forced to undertake responsibility as an adult. She was a very capable and responsible person. She was conscious of her household duties. She was endowed by nature with many virtues. She would look after her younger brothers, would often carry the youngest one in her arms, and calm them when they went cranky. She would busy herself by cleaning the house, washing kitchen utensils, arrange them properly and lift mattresses and sheets used at night for sleeping purpose. She would not only do her own house hold work but would gladly run errands for her numerous relatives also without any fuss. As she grew a little bigger she would assist her mother in the field labour may it be harvesting or digging out onions. The rural agricultural work was seasonal. They would prepare their lunch before starting for work and have it between their toiling hours. During off season she would do embroidery and sundry stitching jobs. In those days it was essential for a girl child to learn all such crafts. In addition she would learn cooking also from elders of neighborhood. If by her labour she earned anything it would be given to her mother and nothing would be asked in return. She never complained about her torn and much worn out footwear. Even during Eid festival she never demanded new clothes or bangles. Her relatives as well as her neighbors' were all praise for her.

She would not only wash the clothes of the family but would segregate and arrange them for every member of the family. She was only girl among four

brothers. Her elder brother was schooling and she would make all that he required readily available. Afterwards her brother studied agriculture and got into government employment. It may be mentioned that village got benefit of electricity only in the year 1975 and till then all the work at night was conducted at night by lanterns or earthen lamps. She served to provide her brothers needs till sixth decade though she was married in 1958.

After marriage her responsibilities increased. She soon adjusted with new environs and new family traditions and with temperaments of new home members. Apart from usual household chores she would not only run the house with thrift and efficiency but she would look after the personal needs of her in-laws and brothers in-laws who were younger to her in age. She considered my younger young brothers as her own sons. She had an obsession for cleanliness and order. She believed in thrift. She would consider the children of her brothers and sisters also as her own children. They also in their turn treated her with respect that they would show to their own mother. She educated two sons of her sister Mariam at our Hyderabad house for higher education. She was mother to many more. Practically all children who came in her contact received maternal love from her and they also reciprocated in ample measure. During her sickness at Islamabad Hospital Dr. Ismail Memon, Dr. Abdulah Memon and Dr. Ghulam Memon Zardari treated her as their own mother. During the six months that she was in Hospital her nephew Abdul Rehman Laghari did not miss a day to visit her with gift of fresh fruits and he would often say that she was not his aunt but his mother.

Fatima was formally not educated and she was very simple by nature. She was an excellent hostess. After her son was imprisoned, his being underground and being harassed by police brought a big change. She was convinced that her son was incapable of any violence and his son was falsely implicated in the case. She told Munawar that previously she would get cross with them and be angry for their activism but now she was their comrade in arms in the just cause that they espoused. Munwar during two/three nights read out to her full novel of Maxim Gorky "MOTHER". That inspired her to extent that she volunteered to paste posters on the walls and distribute handbills of the nationalist organization. She

would not only feed their comrades but wash their clothes and will try to make them most comfortable. She volunteered to vacate her own room to accommodate their comrades. She remembered from the old Islamic History that during wars women did nurse the injured and if occasion arose she would not lag behind.

It was not only a momentary feeling that she expressed but actually she lived to her word. Our house at Hirabad became a refuge for all nationalists. It did not matter to which group or faction they belonged. It was sure that his needs would be met here. Dr. Qadir, Nawaz Gahoti, Ghulam Hyder and Anwar were released from detention and were continuing their studies at MLC. The Sindhi Nationalist Movement was gathering strength with every passing day. The centre of the movement was at Sunn village where Saeen G M Sayed resided but the back bone of the movement were universities and other educational institutions where students fired with zeal and this movement was enthusiastically conducted. In all this apart from Hyderabad Jamshoro University also emerged as an important centre. It was there that Sindhi Nationalist Literature was being published, lectures were being held and many activities connected with the movement were being conducted there. No doubt there was many other centers were spread across the rest of the Sind. Even at our Hyderabad home Fatima would carry out odd works assigned by her sons to her and a singer ' Bijal' would record cassettes of nationalist songs. During Zia Al Huq's regime the movement for restoration of democracy was at its peak and the driving force behind this movement was also Sindhi Nationalist Students. At that time near the railway gate of Thori rail station unprovoked firing by army on unarmed students and which resulted in many being instantly killed. Students were going from Mehran University to Larkana in buses. During this staged incident also some students were arrested and they were released only after four or five years of detention. To suppress the Sindhi Movement countless numbers of students were subjected to lashes.

By the time Munawar reached college he had distinguished himself as an able debater. During those days the birthday of Saeen G M Sayed was celebrated at his Village Sunn as a festival where his followers from all over Sindh would gather. In this gathering sizable number would be of students who would flock there from

various universities from all across Sind. Once when preparations for these celebrations were going on there ensued a quarrel between two groups of students of Sind University. Qadir Magsi was asked to mediate and bring peace in those two groups. As this process was going on some mischief mongers fired upon him when he was going with some of his fellow students. This resulted in injuries to him and his co-students Dr. Kkrishin, Dr. Dawood Aatho and others. Unfortunately Kamal Ramu died in this incident.

celebration. Anwar and Dr. Humayoon took Qadir Magsi and others to private nursing home to save their life and where they were operated upon and dressing was done. It was necessary to save them from arrest so they were brought to underground shelter. Two or three of students were brought to our Hirabad residence and Fatima was given responsibility to look after them and nurse them. After the post-mortem of Kamal Ramu, Anwar managed to deliver his body to his family. After performing necessary customs and burial he rushed to Sunn the venue of National Gathering. After he returned from Sunn it was imperative that the lives of those injured should be saved from any unfortunate eventuality. The police had intensified their efforts to trace the whereabouts of Qadir Magsi. With the advice of friends he was brought to our Hirabad residence. His parents were strictly instructed not to visit him under any circumstances. Family members were told to obtain in advance their requirements Anwar used to surreptitiously procure necessary material for dressing of the wound of Qadir Magsi fom civil Hospital to which he had access as a medical student .It was sent through his younger cousin brother Karim. This way they would hoodwink the authorities. At last after following Karim who would change the course of his movements everyday intelligence people following him could smell that something unusual was afoot. They wanted to find out as to what was being carried by him and he is running this errand on whose behalf? After they came to know that he was carrying dressing material it was not difficult for them to deduce that at place a seriously wounded person had taken a refuge. At that time they suspected either it could be notorious dacoit Kashmir Khan or Qadir Magsi.

One day at midnight Qadir Magsi said that Humayoon May be called. Now it is a time that he changed his place of residence. Fatima was upset thinking that

maybe she has not taken proper care of him. He reassured her that as his own mother she had nursed him, washed and cleaned him and he would always remember her as if his own mother and will ever remain indebted to her but the one who was hounded by police it was not advisable for him to remain at one place for a long time.

Humayoon came after that Amir, Karim and Munawar were assigned to scan three directions for safe movement and thereafter Humayoon and Anwar put him on a chair and took him in fourth direction at some unknown place.

In the morning when Fatima woke up he found that house was surrounded by police vehicles. She woke up Anwar and he found that they had come in full gear and with all preparations. He woke up Amir and Karim also. Their mother Mirzadi was also present at home. She decided to protest and oppose them. She decided that come what may they would not handover the boys to police. She feared that boys were young and under police pressure they may crack. That morning Munawar was to proceed to Karachi to along with Zubair Sheikh and Aslam Ansari. As per schedule they had reached outside our house. Seeing the house besieged by police, they turned back. They already knew that Qadir Magsi had already been shifted to another safe place. They thought it prudent to inform Anwar about the situation. There initially they were not allowed to enter the house even the knowledge about Qadir Magsi was denied but when they could convince them about their loyalty by sending a chit inside they were allowed and they informed them about the situation at which point in time Qadir Magsi decided to move from there also instantly to another safe place.

On the other hand police managed to get search order of the house and made necessary preparation to mount the search. As police entered the house Fatima and Mirzadi were ready wielding kitchen knives for opposing the police force. They challenged them and told them that if they wanted to enter they would have to bring with them a neutral person with them but if they defied them and entered forcibly they were ready to kill and be killed. The authorities were taken aback at this. They relented and wanted to speak to any male present in the house. Fatima retorted, "If any male member was present they would not have

been compelled to face them in this way,” They argued that they had orders to search their home. Mirzadi agreed to search on the condition that it would be conducted in the presence of someone eminent and known person. They were afraid that they may plant something and implicate them falsely. Officer pacified them that they also had families to look after and they were all men of honour and from respectable families. During search they could get only some items of dressings and bottles of Thatta syrup. On the basis of this find police wanted to take male children of the house with them to police station. This was vehemently and physically revisited by the ladies of the house. Fatima had an altercation with an officer whereas Mirzadi slapped an officer and wanted to know under which law the boys were being taken into custody. When they forcibly took boys into their vehicles Fatima and Mirzadi also went and occupied the vehicles. Fatima was forcibly removed from the vehicle but during all this assault Mirzadi pushed an officer whose arm was entangled in the belt of his gun and he fell down. All this happened in the full view of the public and none of them had the courage to come to their rescue. This way the operation that had started at 5am was completed at 8 am after full three hours. They took all the three young boys along with them into their custody.

All the way Munawar kept threatening Amir and Karim not to divulge anything if they failed to heed his warning he would befittingly punish them. They were taken to Jamshoro Police station. At the station Munawar introduced himself as Aslam Ansari son of Dr. Mohmed Ansari of Karachi and he had only come the previous day. He had to leave for his home today. He provided them the phone number and address and told them to verify his statement. They contacted the number given and on the other end Aslam’s mother confirmed the statement. Further she told them that he had come for a errand at Hyderabad and wanted to know the reason of his detention. She also demanded to speak to her son to find out in which condition he was. She threatened with a suit in case he was not immediately released. When they wanted to release Munwar he told them that he had no money on his person to go direct to Karachi and he required minimum of Rs.50/-. He was given Rs. 50/- and got rid of him.

They subjected Amir and Karim to third degree torture and wanted to find out if dacoit Kashmir Khan or Qadir Magsi had been given a refuge at their house. They maintained that they both were sons of a woman who has audaciously slapped an officer and had pushed a constable. It was only in the evening that after severe torture afterwards they were released and somehow managed to reach home at Hirabad.

In the beginning of 1985 the conditions for Sindhis in Hyderabad had become difficult. It so happened that during municipal elections Pakistan People's Party had boycotted the elections and Mohajir Quomi Mahaz (A militant organisation of Urdu speaking refugees who migrated from India at the time of the partition of the Sub-continent in 1947-8) propped up by General Zia Al Huq had seized the power. This resulted in armed attacks and atrocities against Sindhi speaking people. Armed attacks resulted in bodies being found in lanes and by lanes at dawn. A person from interior of Sind would not dare to venture out sporting Sindhi cap. This was the extent panic created. On 30th August 1988 Zia Al Huq the dictator of Pakistan was eliminated by a bomb blast in his aircraft and on 30th September fierce Mohajir Sindhi riots erupted. This resulted in killings of about 300 persons from both sides. Attackers were nonchalant and would freely roam about the streets of Hyderabad to strike fear among the local population. Urdu paper gave provocative headlines declaring that the riots were orchestrated at the instigation of organization led by Qadir Magsi. On seven to eight police stations First Information Reports against hundreds of activists were registered.

In the month of August itself we had moved from our Hyderabad residence to a residence situated at Jamshoro. My sister in law Mirzadi was not willing to leave Hyderabad residence though I advised her against such attitude. After the incident of 30th September Mirzadi along with her children moved to village. This situation in the family continued to cause me great anxiety. A week before 30th September Anwar and Hamid also came home to stay. Hamid Memon had come to stay along with his wife. He told his wife that as he was going out she had to remain at our house and consider us as her own parents. After 30 September Anwar and Anwar went to village. I continued to stay with my wife Fatima at MLCColony, Bunglow No. 7. On 6th October I received a phone call from a reliable

source that I should immediately move away from my residence as within half an hour my home was to be raided. I along with my wife immediately moved to our village by taxi. We could not carry any of our belongings. All was left behind. After a week or so I got a call from Nazar Mohamed Junjo that our belongings were lying on the road outside our house. I sent my nephew to pick up whatever was left of it. Only books and some sundry items could be found. On 15th October I got sad news that Karim and Ahsan were arrested from the flat of Dr. Mohamed Ali. Anwar and Munawar both were being hounded and the raids to get them were continuing relentlessly. This news caused me great anguish as Karim was my favourite and was darling of his parents. I tried to console them. While in custody Karim had been greatly tortured. We had no other way but to accept it as a bad luck! On the suggestion of Qadir Magsi we had already engaged Anwar for marriage. At that time Anwar and Hamid got a call for interview for job. Anwar's interview was scheduled at Hyderabad and Hamid had to go to Sukkar for interview. Anyhow Anwar managed to appear for interview and managed to escape but Hamid was arrested at Sukkar. I exerted myself to approach all those who had some influence with the authorities for giving some facilities to students while they were imprisoned. Fatima and Mirzadi organized hunger strikes and protests outside police stations and prison against unlawful arrests. Those all combined activities also were responsible for their getting better treatment in jail.

In the meantime the quarrels between native Sindhis and migrants continued unabated. Arrests of youth became a common feature. In those days the state was being governed by Pakistan People's party and leaders of that party were approached by mothers of students who were arrested. G M Sayed who was leader of the movement was also being approached for solace. They became part of ongoing agitation also. Their agitation was aimed only at the securing their lives. This mode of agitation and some result borne by it gave them more inspiration.

Due to fear only handful of native Sindhis would venture into cities in case of dire need only. Big Landlords who normally stayed at Hyderabad promptly moved to their village houses in panic. In such a situation women and daughters of Sind

stood together shoulder to shoulder with Fatima and Mirzadi who continued to lead protests in front of police stations and press club. One day Progressive Wing of the Sindhi Nationalist movement organized a mass prayer for all those who were martyred in the cause for nationalist movement. In this prayer meeting huge number of people participated. At the same time Fatima and Mirzadi were leading a protest march of hundreds of women to Hospital. By this time sister Gulnaaz also had become an integral part of their movement. The prayer meeting was planned inside the Hospital grounds. Fatima advised me that the prayer meeting be held on the open road outside the Hospital and I should lead the prayers. After the prayer the gathering was converted into a procession. This procession moved along Tilak incline, Hyder Chowk, S P Chowk and culminated at Press Club. This was first non violent procession in Hyderabad after many years.

By this time Fatima had gathered a dedicated band of women workers around her. Gulnaz was not only educated and focused but utterly dedicated to the cause. With Gulnaz were Pirha Sindhi, Marui Rustamani and Jamila Soomro. Such women's groups spontaneously emerged at other many places in Sind. To name the some women it would be necessary to mention Jamila Soomro at Jacobabad, Naila Rahoopoto at Nawabshah- Khairpur. They all inspired many women volunteers. At the same time police continued their hounding activities the cities of Sind. On 19th May at midnight Dr. Qadir Magsi and Humayoon Kazi were arrested from a bungalow situated at Gulistan Sajjad. As this news spread the entire Sind erupted across the entire Sind. Protesters included workers, peasants, students, women, children, senior citizens and others. Sind was shut down for nearly a week. Some elements took arson as a form of protest and smoke could be seen miles around. All this protest offered a sort of solace to Fatima and Mirzadi that they were not alone in this struggle and success was imminent. In the process a strong women's organization came into existence practically in all parts of Sind.

Gulnaz aided by Fatima and Mirzadi and some others were the moving spirit behind organization of women's movement across the Sind and thus Women's organization became a strong part of the movement.

Sindhi people protested for seven days without any fear of death and being shot thus saved the lives of Qadir Magsi and Kazi Humayoon. Government yielded before public pressure and admitted to having arrested Qadir Magsi and Kazi Humayoon. This resulted in ladies from households of Qadir Magsi and Kazi Humayoon getting in touch with Fatima and becoming active members of the movement.

Barely when only two weeks had elapsed the Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto of the ruling Pakistan People's Party held a public meeting at Hyderabad and told the gathering "If on the arrests of terrorists the entire province erupts into protests then how it will be possible to restore the peace?" In order to consider this absurd charge by Prime Minister a special Meeting of the Progressive group was summoned and as representative of Women's group Gulnaz and Fatima were also invited. After careful consideration it was decided to invoke great poet of Sind and Soul of Sind Shah Abdul Latif. It was decided to have a mass gathering on 28th June to pray to him to grant us courage and lodge a complaint against the atrocities being perpetrated against his children by mighty rulers and invoke divine justice. We were there to declare "WE ARE NOT TERRORISTS BUT WE ARE REAL PATRIOTS AND PROUD BEARERS OF HIS LEGACY".

The copies of this resolution and information about the planned event were duly sent to the press of entire Sind. At that time I appointed as Press Secretary of the Progressive Party. I had been elected as a convener of the committee set up to organize this event at Bhit Shah. After this meeting I was nominated as a patron and leader of women's wing (Nari Tehrik) along with sister Gulnaz. We could not inform our friends who were lodged in various jails across the province of Sind. It was strictly decided that no weapon of any kind be carried and no slogan should be shouted. These instructions were conveyed to the cadre of the party from time to time. This was also decided that only Flag of Progressive party could be carried by volunteers and participants on the occasion. Led by Gulnaz many lady volunteered mobilized the women to participate in the event. We aimed at the equal number of women participation. On 28th June at about 11 or 12 two buses from Bharia reached at the venue. Their entry was unique and that needs to be mentioned here. All were clad in black clothes, all were bare footed and they all

marched two persons together and raised a slogan “ YAA ALAH YA RASOOL QADIR MAGSI BE QUSOOR.” (O! God O! Prophet Qadir Magsi is innocent) Latter on this slogan was appropriated by people’s party for their partisan interests. People will today also vouch that the gathering was of not less than 100,000 persons. The participation of women being equal it was the first gathering where more than five million women had congregated. All the hard work and dedication of Gulnaz and her team had borne this fruit.

One piece of paper which was promptly taken from me by Comrade Hussain Bux and he pocketed it. He told me that as a senior I should address the meeting at the end. Perhaps he sensed that in my enthusiasm I may pre-empt them.

In this meeting the speech of sister Gulnaz was splendid and memorable the only her other speech could be compared to one delivered at the function celebrating the birthday of Saeen G M Sayed held at Sukkar. After Comrade Hussain Bux I was invited to speak. Function was being compeered by daughter of a teacher based at Sayadabad. She introduced me in a most unique manner. She announced now come **Chacha** (Uncle – father’s brother), he is your uncle, my uncle and uncle to all of us in this patriotic movement for our motherland. This honorific of “uncle” has become now a part of my name even my identity. Now I am called ‘Chacha’ even be my family members. In this way my wife Fatima became ‘Aunt’ (CHACHI) to everybody. I started my speech with a verse from poetry of Shah Latif. I told gathering that Qadir Magsi has informed me that I should thank all Sindhi people on his behalf who have demonstrated against his arrest and saved his life. God willing he would be in our midst soon. I asked the audience that the rulers have called us ‘Terrorist’ now it is a time and place for us to assert Whether we are terrorist or true Patriots. This needs to be answered. At this entire ground rose like a man and gave befitting answer to rules that they were indeed true patriots.

Some impressions about the Function

After the function was over I thought about the significance of participation of women who had participated in equal numbers thus proving that they stood shoulder to shoulder with sons of the soil for saving their motherland Sind. All the credit for this went to sister Gulnaz and her dedicated team. In fact after the function a senior police official told me that in fact they were apprehensive that some untoward incident may take place and congratulated me for the peaceful conclusion of the function. Here no weapons were used or exhibited and no slogans were raised. After some time Khaki Joyo informed me that some teachers from Mir Lagahri Khan want to meet you. I came down from dais and met them. After formal introduction they wanted a special meeting with me. I told them that as I was continuously on the move I was not in a position to give them any fixed appointment. They expressed their desire to do something for the movement. I encouraged them to do all they could do voluntarily for the cause in their own way. Now only I and some workers from Sayedabad remained to dismantle the decoration and other necessary material and settle the bills. The material was dully sent to Karachi by a truck.

In the morning we came to drink tea at the market. On enquiring from the shopkeepers about their business they were happy that during the evening they had more than three times business than usual. The items borrowed from Mahiran Univeristy were sent to them .After discharging all other obligations I offered my prayer of thanks to almighty.

29th May- Feminist Movement

It was nearly a year when Humayoon and Qadir Magsi had been arrested. Women's Movement decided to observe 29th May as a Black Day and a day of torture. A lot of effort had been put in to make this event a great success. At the same time authorities were determined to foil this. All roads leading to Hyderabad city had been sealed and closed for movement of any sort. As the buses with women tried to enter Hyderabad city from Tando Mohmed Khan and Matli they were stopped at near Fateh Chowk (Cross Road.) Buses coming from village Baksho Laghari and Ghulam Laghari, Sheikh Bharkyo were not allowed to proceed beyond the Lane Chanel and those coming from Mirpur Khas and Tando Aliyar were stopped at Railway Crossing. Women coming from Halla, Sayedabad and were not allowed beyond Kaari Mori and they were sent back. The bus carrying the women under the leadership of Dr. Qaram Rustamani from Nawabshah were also not allowed to proceed and they protested. From verbal protest it resulted into a physical assault. Police resorted to firing of arms and this resulted in the death of Fahim Abassi, a first year student, who was a niece of Dr. Njam Abassi. Many others were also injured in the police firing. Police took the possession of the bus itself. The news reached the Village named Rahul Khan Chhang and they rushed to provide necessary assistance. Injured were rushed to Hospitals and others were provided with food and water. At that time Dodo Mehri was working president. At that time (1999) mobile phones were not available for urgent or quick communication. He informed through letter "Uncle now enough is enough". Hyder Chowk was closed by putting up barbed wires and barricading it by piles of sand and stones. Now you may hold a meeting at any cross road and call off the movement. When this letter was shown to sister Gulnar she was furious and said that if I wanted I could step away from the movement but they refused to call off the protest. I arranged 4 Taxi cars for sister Gulnar. From Kumbhar Neighbourhood of Bhitainagar, from Hirabad, Tando Wali Mohmed, Khhai Road and neighborhood of well no 3, women congregated at

Marui Town. March started from there. March was joined by many students and nationalist party workers and initially the number that was merely in hundreds swelled nearly 2-3 thousand by the time the procession reached at Whadat Colony. The entire procession was being monitored by police pose and police officer. Police officer called me and ordered that we could not proceed further. I curtly replied, " you do your duty while we shall do our duty." This curt reply infuriated the officer. As procession reached near Indus Hotel, police resorted to firing tear gas shells and bullets. I was told by sister Gulnar and Praha to move away as it was not advisable for any one from central leadership to be arrested. They said they would face the police on their own. There was a training college to train junior revenue officer nearby and they in their patriotic zeal opened up college gates for the protection of protesters. They provided wet clothes also as a protection against tear gas. On that day my sister in law fought in an exemplary manner. She somehow got hold of teargas shell that had not exploded and she took it with her bare hands and threw it in direction of the police with all her strength. In the process she burned her hand. In this melee son of Khaki Joyo could not be traced. Eventually those who found him returned the child to his parents. Myself, Dodo, Fatima and sister Gulnar went for condolence of Gulnaz Fahim Abbasi and stayed there for three days. It was announced that the 40th day mourning ceremony would be performed by the party. On 40th day we all went and offered prayers, flower sheet at the tomb and bore all the expenses connected with that last mourning ceremony. Speech delivered by Dr. Najam Abbasi on the occasion was memorable indeed!

Anwar's Marriage

One day Fatima told me that she wants to meet Qadir Magsi in jail when his family went to visit him next time. I told her that his family members visit him twice a month. For one visit it is Nabila Shah who visits him and on another sister in law Shamim Visits him. She chose to go with Shamim. Message was sent to shamim that next when she visited Qadir Magsi Fatima also would like to accompany her, to which she readily agreed. She was requested to let us know a day in advance. Next time she accompanied her. When she returned she brought with her a letter written by Qadir Magsi in which he had written that it would be quite a while by the time he could be released. Karim's release was also linked to release of all those who were under detention and it will not be considered as a special case. He urged us to go ahead with marriage of Anwar and the marriage should also be celebrated in way that it would give the impression of part of the political activity. 30th December was decided as day on which marriage would be held. Invitation cards were printed and were extensively distributed among relatives, friends and our political activists. Even landlords of neighborhood were invited. Though we were not happy but we had to feign happiness. I specifically told Fatima that sister in law Mirzadi should not feel the absence of her son Karim. Traditional marriage singers were already known to Mirzadi they came on their own to perform at the marriage. Marriage was held at Abbas Bhai Hall. During those days this hall was quite an impressive venue. Mirs of Hyderabad Mir Ali Ahmed Khan, Mir Nabi Bux and Mir Rafiq son of Mir Rassol Bux also attended the wedding. It was a big gathering and special cooks were arranged to prepare food.

Marriage took place during day time. After completing the marriage ceremonies when we returned home it started raining. Even at that time photographers took group photographs of various family members. Karim was under detention but though Munawar was free outside but he also could not attend the marriage. After the hectic pace of the marriage ceremony was over Mirzad'si and Fatima's anguish at the absence of their sons burst into tears and wails prompted by fear that if at all they would be able to see the face of their beloved sons in their life time!

Incident of Tando Bhawal

In year 1992 as the Government of Nawaz Shariff assumed power it launched a General operation. Taking advantage of this order an incident was staged at village Tando Bhawal which is situated in south west of Hyderabad at the distance of about 8 Kms. This place apart from being fertile has many brick kilns. This work is mainly done by Pathans. (Residents from North West Province). Some of them are crafty enough to marry their sisters or daughters to local feudal lords and control all their wealth. Haji Mohmed Ali Khan Bhurgri was not only a rich landlord but also a village head. He had no child of his own at the same time he was known womanizer. One Pathan named Ghulam Mahiudin got his sister married to him but from that union also he did not have any child. Ghulam Mahiudin Khan occupied his sprawling bungalow at Hyderabad. In addition he had got converted a sizable portion of land also as his own property. Mohmed Ali's nephew also did not have any issue to succeed him. They coveted all their property. As General operation by new government was announced they took Rashid into confidence. About 10 persons who were impediment in execution of their nefarious plan were picked up one night and put in Datsun vehicles by Military authorities. One of them managed to fall from vehicle and escape. Rest of 9 persons were all shot at close range and weapons of Indian origin that had somehow come into possession of Major Rashid were planted along their bodies and it was announced that they were Sindhi Nationalist insurgents who had been eliminated in an encounter. This news was given wide publicity through electronic media throughout the country and even Prime Minister made such a statement in the assembly. This was exposed as a fake encounter by Fatima and her group party workers took possession of the bodies of those killed from Kotri and were brought to Tando Bhawal. In this Fatima and Mirzadi were accompanied by other women of village Baksho Laghari and other places. This time happened be Eid time also. All expenses were borne by the party. The agitation against these unjust high handed killings continued through protest marches and

demonstrations and the pitch of the protest rose to a level when Benazir Bhutto who was leader of opposition in the House had to take up this issue. All this is documented in the issues of Herald Magazine that bear the photos of Fatima and Mirzadi during the agitation. Eventually Major Rashid was arrested he was sought to be helped by self seekers and opportunistic elements and impede the process of justice. At this juncture two daughters of lady named Jundoo immolated themselves. This resulted in an outcry that resulted in conviction and death sentence against Major Rashid. This is the only instance when an army personnel of the rank of major was hanged at the age of 33. It is indeed sorry state of affairs that so far no one has been charged for the murder of 'Surya Badsha' and no one has been charged for the death of Zulfiqar Bhutto but the girls of Tando Bhawal immolated themselves to get the justice for their people.

Sister in law Mirzadi

Sister in law Mirzadi was born in the year 1950 in a poor family. Her father late Dahni Bux was a co- brother of Landlord Haji Jam Khan. Dhani Bux himself was a known consumer of local intoxicant hemp and was given to fun and frolic. His wife hailed from village Bhagu Dudani of Shadadpur situated in the district of Sanghar.

Normally he used to stay there. He had three daughters and one son. All his children are married and settled now in village Baksho Laghari. Mirzadi was the youngest of her siblings and among them she was most courageous. I was very happy to have a sister in law like her who was free from malice, jealousy and gossip. She was also free from the common weakness found among many women who are very possessive and protective of their children and cannot tolerate any admonishment of their children by other family members. Sometimes there is comparison of household chores assigned to other women of the family and this also results in bitterness. She was free from all these. In our home the traditional conflict between daughter in law and mother in law and a sense of rivalry between sisters in laws was conspicuous by its absence.

Sister in law Mirzadi had amazing capacity to bear hardships. She would be ready to face any situation at any time of the day or night may it be biting cold or scorching heat. May the work be of young or old of the family she never hesitated. She would willingly do that work. It did not matter whether the guest who came to visit was my acquaintance or of anyone else she would always be willing to lend a helping hand. Sometimes I would tell her to do the things though Fatima would be available but she never told me that why I have not given that work to my own wife. She would happily do it for me. Though she was sister in law to wives of my two younger brothers but she always treated them as her blood sisters. As for her capacity for hard work is concerned she was more than a match for any man. She is equal partner in our present prosperity and her contribution is no less. Basically we are farmers and in framing it is woman who contributes more. She entered our home as a bride in 1968 and my younger brothers got married in 1980. For full 12 years she bore the brunt of hard work .

Men would be busy working at the fields and she would attend to all household chores. Cook food for 12 family members and bring it at the fields by afternoon. She and our brother were estranged from the family for nearly two years yet I would not blame her for this. All this was due mechanizations of her mother and sister who poisoned her mind. Later on if anyone mentioned this instance she would feel ashamed for her that behavior and she atoned for that in her exemplary behavior towards the family.

She never gave ever even a feeling that we did not love her children any less than our own or Fatima is treating them as step sons. After shifting to Hyderabad she had done a laudable work. My younger brothers and their children have always treated their as their elder and have been respected as such by them.

I have not hidden anything from my family members. I realize the anguish of Mirzadi due to arrest of her son Karim. In spite of my best efforts I could not do anything to obtain his release. Sometimes I feel guilty on that account. I also realize how it is painful for a mother to go empty handed to meet her son while visiting him periodically in jail. We were all members of one family and there was no any kind of difference or discrimination among my sons Anwar and Munawar and sons of my bothers. Even the income and property was common.

It has already been mentioned that Mirzadi was extremely hard working. Till students were lodged in jail she would go to visit all of them, bring their soiled clothes for cleaning wash them and return to them next time. She would often wash their utensils also. One day when after cleaning the utensils she was going to return them at the flat of Abdulah Memon, while climbing an incline she fell down. She was taken to Hospital and due to injury she went into coma. She did not recover from that fatal fall and breathed her last on 27th November 1992. May God grant her eternal peace! Her strength of character shall continue to inspire many in times to come.

Old Mother

I have mentioned about my mother earlier also. She came from a family that could be considered below poverty line. She was the only woman in the family to take care of house hold that had three younger brothers in laws. She had no luxury of exercising any option she was do her work whether she was well or sick. Male members of the household would leave early in the morning to labor in the fields and she would be left alone at home to face daily drudgery and wait for their return in the evenings. She told us that in her times even the flour used to be grinded by them in stone mill. Cloth and food was rationed by then government and could be obtained only designated shops. She would stitch clothes also herself with needle and thread. She bore nine children at home itself. During delivery some local midwife or a kind woman of neighborhood would assist. She would cut the grain stalks herself and pick up Her family suffered from asthma and she had also had inherited that disease. She was away from village gossip. They led their life on the same lines barely existing. With passage of time she got daughter in laws. They all were obedient and respectful. She was happy that in her old age she could rest and all house hold work was being done by her daughter in laws. She has endured illness for a long time. She would always remember that at her urging I got a Bus for my brother and sustained a loss. My father also did his best in his life time. What I am today is due to their blessings alone. I suffer from the sense of guilt that I could not devote my time to my parents in adequate measure. Perhaps I have devoted more time to my social and political activities to attain fame and praise that by its nature in it is temporary. Sometimes I ponder over the time spent on these activities, about the time that I stole from my dear parents and family members. In her last days my mother would plead with me that I do not need your money for treatment I need you to be with me. I would tell her that you often get ill and by medication you always get better. I have an important engagement to meet. She would say son do as you wish and be quiet. Mother today I genuinely regret that I did not give you time that was due to you instead spent time in irrelevant activities.

When I was busy in a function I got a message that my mother was no more. May God grant her eternal peace!

Saleh Junejo

Saleh Junejo used to work at Sangahr suagr mills. Due to some dispute his services were terminated. He had appealed to the labour court for compensation. Due to intervention of Anwar through good offices of Zeen Shah he was awarded compensation of Rupees one hundred fifty thousands. Subsequently when Abrar Qazi's brother Amitaz Qazi was posted as a commissioner or an important official he started harassing him by leveling false charges against him. He would be sent to various police stations at different times. One his wife and his mother came to meet Fatima at our residence at Nassem Apartments. They apprised her of their plight. They said that it was more than six months that they were being sent from pillar to post at various police stations. Some say that he has been held Dighri Police station, while others say that he is held at Mithi Police Station. We are not able to find him and even party office bearers also do not know for certain as to where he has been actually detained. Now we are determined to find him out. We have come to you for help in this matter. We may not be able to get him released but at least let us find out where he is held? What are charges against him? Fatima Told them that she knew her limitations that she was an illiterate village woman yet she would not forsake them in this difficult mission and she would accompany them. I told her that it was a difficult situation and tried to dissuade her as she was completely stranger to various places that they may have to visit. I advised her to have enough cash with her and be careful of pickpockets.

Fatima and family of Mohmed saleh went by Rickshaw to bus stand that would take them to Mithi. They managed to reach Mithi Police Station, they were directed to find out from Salam Kot, thence to Diplo and eventually they were directed to Nagar Parkar. They boarded for Nagar Parkar but soon realized that it would not be possible to reach there in time. Therefore they returned to Mithi. In fact they were quite strangers there also and by the time they returned to Mithi it was already 11-30 night time. They enquired there about one Mr. Nanadlal but were told that there were many persons by that name. When they told them that he is associated in a movement led by Qadir Magsi and is known as comrade also.

They were eventually escorted to his house. By the time they reached his house it was already 1 am. Fatima introduced herself and her companions and rested at his house. She told them that they would leave for Hyderabad by first available train. They were informed that first Coaster Bus leave for Hyderabad early morning by 4am. They decided to leave by Coaster Bus. She requested them to lead them to bus stop if it was not inconvenient to them. They willingly agreed to help them and in the morning they came back to Hyderabad by bus. She and her companions were extremely tired and exhausted and I convinced those ladies to rest for a day at our place.

Dr. Hamid Memon and Anwar are class mates and good friends they are even related through their in laws. After the incident of 30 September he left his wife at our place and told her that her that we were her parents as well as in laws. After some time Fatima went with that lady to Karachi jail to visit her husband. Suddenly there was a downpour and streets were flooded. Due to roads being flooded even traffic and conveyance of any type came to halt. On the top of it they lost track of the road to take. At last they sought refuge in the house of a kind person who not only provided them a separate room to stay but provided them with garments so that their soaked garments may dry up. He provided them with night dinner as well as morning breakfast. After their garments were dried next day he hailed a taxi and saw them off comfortably to Hyderabad. Their family had to bear the difficulties for five years till he was released.

Fatima did all this not to oblige anyone but this selfless service speaks about her dedication and devotion to a cause serving that cause gave her immense satisfaction.

Fatima's behavior towards Cadre

Fatima was quite oblivious to nature and purpose of the movement to which she had dedicated herself. She was not educated and she had not known about freedom movements and their national heroes. She did not bother herself with high political slogans and did not care to attach any meaning to them. She was full of tender love and affection and she took upon her to spend it on any one who came in her contact. She knew only one thing for certain that all those who came to her were Sindhi children, precious to their mothers and most of them came from poor families. This alone entitled them to her love affection and selfless service. She was dedicated to serve them without any distinction. Some of the leaders of the movement would express their gratitude to her and respect her like their own mother till the end while some forgot all about it but she did not bother as she felt that she had done her duty to them. From 1972 to 2008 she continued to serve all those engaged in the movement.

One morning at our home was present with me Faquirudin Mohmed, Ashiq Solangi, Saleh Junejo and Nandlal Malhi. All were busy. Some one was reading, some other would be writing and some busy in some discussion. She prepared the breakfast for all and was about to serve them. At that very moment she felt dizzy and fell down. In the process her head fell on the gas cooker and was rendered unconscious. We all rushed to her help and Faqir Deen Mohmed Kumbhar sprinkled water on her face and she regained consciousness. They all told her to forget about breakfast but she insisted that she would boil some eggs and they could not even think of going from home of her aunt without a breakfast. Only after having a breakfast they could disperse.

House of that 'aunt' was like a headquarters of the movement. Our Nassem Apartments flat consisted of only two rooms yet it was sufficient enough to hold central committee meeting of the party. On morning the members of the central committee, apart from Qadir Magsi were gathered there. After the meeting they were relaxing there. Those who wanted tea were served tea and those who wanted something to eat were provided with sufficient quantity. Door was open.

Mehboob Abro was wanted by police in some case. SHO Hamid Tahim with some others rushed in and accosted him. He also went with them without any resistance. Thereafter all politically affiliated persons also left the house. Only family members remained in the house. After half an hour a pose of policemen swooped on the house again. They kept one policeman on our door and Fatima's nephew of 17-18 years of age was taken away by them. Fatima vehemently protested and told them that they were neither dacoit nor ran any illegal activity like gambling and drinking and was he not ashamed being a Sindhi to behave in such undignified manner. She admonished him that at least he should respect her as she was of his mother's age. This infuriated a constable and he pushed her. This resulted in her head hitting against the wall and she lay unconscious. By this time persons from Press and media also reached there she took her photograph in that state got information from and it was published next day in newspapers. Police was reluctant to release Rassol Bux but eventually he was released after 15 days.

In the year 1998 Progressive party decided under its leadership on a long March from Sukkar to Karachi culminating at Governor House. Lot of preparations were made and at last that day also dawned. At Sukkar's clock tower motherland day was celebrated and thereafter the march commenced. On completion of the first lap itself for tactical reasons the central leadership went underground. Rank and file of the party was instructed to give a call for Total Strike on 26th March instead. Workers were not ready to abandon that March and wanted to continue the March. They told Dr. Dodo to continue to lead the march. After much reluctance Dr. Dodo agreed to bow to the wishes of the party rank and file. As the March reached Moro the leadership ostensibly supported the decision to continue the march. At Sakran Raahoo all those participating in the march were fed and looked after by poor workers Abas Banglani and Qmar Burro. As the march moving from Saeeddabad to Halla we got ghastly news. In a bus moving from Nawabshah a more than six or seven Sindhi passengers were killed in a bomb blast. Relatives of those dead got the corpses of their dear ones on the next day which happened to be Eid day. (Holy day of celebration). To add to the irony those poor workers were arrested for this dastardly deed those who had helped during the long march! On

arrest of Ababs Banglani and Qmar Burro Fatima was greatly distressed. This was conveyed to me when some of friends came to meet me during long march.

It was decided even before commencement of the March that at least ten persons would undertake the march all along the route but instead of ten persons we could get only 7 volunteers for such an arduous task. It was decided that Eid day (Bakra Eid) we would spend at Bhit Shah (Village of Shah Latif and family members of those persons who had walked continuously would come and meet them there. In this case also only Fatima turned up with her all female family members and brought food for more than twenty five persons. She sat there with volunteers of that march and boosted their morale. She urged them to take up the cause of release of those arrested and also to condole the deaths of those who had died in the tragic incident that had occurred at Sukrand. She went to Hyderabad and organized women for the welcome of the March at Hyder Chowk. Participation of sizable number bore testimony to her hard work and organizational skills. For the first time she delivered public speech of her life. Dodo also delivered an impressive speech. When the march reached Governors house at Karachi on that occasion also Fatima ensured a large participation of women. She came with ten buses full of lady volunteers. After long March we returned home. Due to heat I felt very exhausted and she was also not well. We used to live alone. Munawar was away from us since 1988 stayed separately at Qasimabad at Nasseem Apartments in flat no. B-50.

Anwar was left separately as wherever we stayed it would become a base for political gatherings and activities. We felt that this situation in the long run may not be beneficial for Anwar.

On one day party workers from Jacobabad descended at our home on the occasion of Motherland day. It was a full wagon load of women and five to seven male workers. This became possible due to efforts of sister Jameel Soomro, Rubina Kalhoro and sister of Intzar. They all rested and reached the venue of function but while leaving, they kept some of their luggage at our home to be collected while returning. During that event party had arranged for food and Fatima worked as volunteer during that process also. After the function when

they were leaving near our residence was an empty plot. (Now at that place VIP flats have been constructed). Before the van could be loaded driver thought it prudent to take a turn and place the vehicle in opposite direction so that he may save some time but unfortunately that ground was of loose wet earth and van got stuck in the ground. In spite of all the efforts van could not be lifted. Fatima spent night with about 60 ladies in one room. Party leaders were resting at their homes after the function was over and we were left alone to face this unfortunate situation. I went out for necessary purchases as so many people had to be looked after. We got hold of some tractors to lift the van but could not succeed. We tried to get in touch with Transport Company that had provided the van to send alternate van to face the situation but they also refused saying all their vehicles were busy running on respective routes. At last we brought workers from Halani Corner who had heavy jacks. That way we exerted from early morning from 4 am to next day 11 pm. While leaving all thanked us for our trouble but on reaching their destinations none of them even cared to inform about their safe reaching. Such is the way of the world!

Aunt of Sind falls Sick

Since 2000 Fatima was not keeping well. Our one son is doctor while another is Engineer. Our Engineer son remains as an exile in a foreign country whereas for the future of our doctor son we thought it advisable for his future to stay alone. My nephew Ghulam Raza whom we fondly call Gul stays with us. (My brother Ghanwar Khan's son.) He is named after my father and I love him like my own son. This is a mutually beneficial arrangement as we look after him and his education he looks after us and our health. At a slight discomfort he would hasten to bring a doctor and get us medicines. Though he is not that old but circumstances have matured him. If he feels that he cannot handle the situation he gets in touch with his gets in touch with his cousins Dr. Anwar or Amir Karim. My brother's elder daughter Nasreen who has been admitted in Mira School for further education stays with her cousin Amir Karim. One of the reasons for this arrangement is that from the childhood itself she was brought up by sister in law Mirzadi as she did not have any female child of her own. Even after the demise of Mirzadi she continued to stay there. Even by blood relation Amir's wife was their aunt. I felt that to educate the children of my brothers is mainly my responsibility and Fatima concurred with me in this effort. Eventually I brought Nasreen also at my home. My brothers had suffered a lot for me apart from the labour they went through they had to knock at the doors of many police stations due to my political activities.

One day Fatima complained to Gul about her discomfort. Her blood pressure continued to be on lower side. At such time Gul would often give her salt and sweet water. On that day her body appeared to be very cold and he got in touch with Karim. He immediately sent his sister's son Majid with instructions to bring her to Rajputana Hospital and he rushed to book a room there. He deposited Rs. 5000 and reserved the room. She was hospitalised for about a week during that period I used to stay with her. After a week she was discharged and we returned to home.

I had also been suffering from asthmatic attacks. Somehow we pulled along. By the year 2000 Progressive Party had cancelled the membership of my son Munawar. Dr. Dodo also had been expelled from the party. I and Fatima also left the party. I was anguished at the situation that all our sacrifices and privations of last 16 years had come to naught. We felt ourselves cheated and in turn felt that we had created illusions and delusions among Sindhi masses and we were guilty on that account. We were satisfied that in our personal life we had remained very clean and had not indulged in any wrong doing. Yes! Let me confess we did take wrong decisions then. God will forgive us for our genuine mistakes. Thereafter within a short period many more left the party. There was abhorrent attempt at the life of Dr. Rahim Solangi. Entire Sind condemned such an act though in a muted manner. His life was saved for the sake of his children. After some time a few friends constituted a Sind National Council Forum but it was at a limited scale. In this venture also we had silent co-operation of many clean people of the society.

During the month of March a protest day against the construction of big dams is observed on International scale and we also wanted to join this protest and announced through a press conference the March of the Council from Sessions Court to Press club on that day. For this March also Fatima mobilised more than One hundred women protestors. To make this protest March a successful one we had co-operation of some good friends among them were Dr. Ashwathama, Abdul Fatah Daudpoto, Majid Soomro, Akram Soomro and others from Hyderabad. With the help of these friends new trends were introduced in Sindhi Nationalist Movement at Karachi and Larkana also.

We would meet and honour visitors to Sind from abroad and apprise them of the ground realities of exploitation leading to extreme sense of alienation of Sindhi masses from the state of Pakistan and desire from freedom. We had many guets including some women. Once Mr. Landry visited Sind from USA. We hosted him and took him around places like Sind University, Bhit shah, and Kinjhar lake etc; and apprised him about the political conditions in the state of Pakistan. No doubt all this perturbed intelligence agencies but it did not matter to him. He was happy and satisfied about his visit. After all this site seeing we escorted him to his Hotel

at night and returned next day at breakfast time. Comrade Hussain bux had already reached there. I and Rahim reached later. He complained that he did not get proper sleep and we got suspicious that perhaps he was threatened. But it was not so .He expressed his concern that he had a hunch that mother of Munawar would die before she could see him. Dr. Rahim told him that we had tried to obtain visa for USA several times in the past but every time application for visa was rejected. He asked when we had applied last time and we told him that it was in the year 2002. He told us that when we applied next copies of all the papers should be sent to him and he will do the needful.

Soon the mine and Fatima's health gave way and we retired from active politics.

Death of father of Karim and Rassol Bux

It was January night. Suddenly someone was at door. I prayed to God may something not be amiss. I found my grandson Karim Lagahri standing the door. He informed that his maternal grandfather was seriously ill and suffered from acute stomach ache. I immediately rushed him to Civil Hospital. No doctor or any responsible person was available and they did not admit him instead they dispensed some tablets and sent us back to our home. They told us to come next day in morning. We came back at our Saddar flat. As the incline is steep I asked Karim to help his grandfather to climb to the flat. That flat is situated at the ground floor. My house is situated on top floor of the building. In the morning after breakfast I reached him. Normally my brother is brave any is capable of bearing pain but this time I found him in acute suffering. Boys informed me that they had been in touch with Dr. Aziz Lagahri and he had given an appointment for 11 am to perform surgery. Hearing about surgical procedure I was worried and felt that now the chances of recovery were very slim. During surgery nearly half of his intestines were removed. It was difficult for such a patient to survive. His sons were also much worried about their father. I would dutifully stay everyday with him from 9 am to 11 pm. He had no control on his physical functions due to which his clothes were often soiled. They were cleaned and he was freshly clothed by me many a time during a day. Soiled clothes were sent for laundering. After 4 or 5 days marriage of Amir, Karim's cousin (On maternal side). Eid holidays were also approaching. I felt that he wanted to be at home at our saddar flat. I told him it would be difficult for him to climb the stairs to fourth floor. He said he could manage. I told Amir and Karim to remove him to our Saddar flat and thereafter they could go to attend the marriage. My sister also reached there for the sake of his brother. Marriage was to take place at Karachi and reception was arranged at our village Baksho Laghari. Fatima went to attend marriage but when she returned seeing his condition she did not go to village for reception. Ftaima stood by my side to help me. She would without any hesitation was his soiled clothes. I

would press his body parts to give him comfort. He would say that I was just like his father and I should not do it. Boys returned from the marriage and again he was shifted to Hospital. Eventually he was discharged and again he came and settled at our Saddar residence. His sons would suggest that they move to own house and he would reply that this was also his own house. Gul would obey his every word. Gul volunteered to accompany him to Qasimabad house. As he felt better he moved to village home. Again he had to face relapse of his abdominal pain. At the time of surgery itself Anwar had informed us that a large part of his intestines had been removed. He warned us that in such a situation he would survive for about six months. He was again admitted in Rajputana Hospital. His trouble continued to increase. He begged my forgiveness for any wrong that he might have done. He breathed his last on 9th June 2004 at 11pm. May God grant him eternal Peace.

Brothers are brothers after all. All love their brothers and praises them. I deem myself lucky that I had such a brother. At this juncture one has to stoically accept HIS WILL.

To USA for treatment of Fatima

In January 2008 Munawar called me to say that I would get some papers from the immigration department and I was to comply with the requirements and submit the same. In due course I got the papers and I got busy to collect required documents. Fatima's health also was on decline by every passing day. Fatima was distraught and told me that all my effort would prove to be futile. I persisted and completed the papers in all respects. At last American embassy called us for personal interview on 24th April 2008. One of the condition was that we were supposed to bring medical report along that should be only a week prior to the interview.. All the while I was busy collecting related documents and Fatima's health kept on deteriorating. As a result Fatima was admitted in Agha Khan Hospital at Karachi. As a son Anwar was allowed to stay with her mother.

We travelled to Islamabad. I told Fatima that all the required papers had been obtained with the help of Dr. Ismail, It was indeed the grace of God that we got the papers including those that were thought to be difficult to obtain. At Islamabad we stayed at the home of Zardari Ghulam Hyder. They served us well and looked after us as their own and we bless them and their children for their graceful hospitality. Mrs. Zardari reached us at American Embassy in the morning. Anwar wanted to accompany us in the venue of interview but he was not allowed. I told him not to worry and we would handle the situation ourselves. Before the interview I had ensured that all paper work was in order and I had prepared myself with convincing answers to expected questions, Further I was prepared to provide any additional information sought or any document required. As Instructed by Munawar I was not to voluntarily offer anything to them and I had to confine myself only to the questions asked. I was told by Munawar to carry 800 dollars along with me. It was possible that they may ask me to deposit any fee. After an hour or so our name was called and after negotiating various entrances we reached the counter. After getting affidavits executed from us they kept our passports with themselves, they congratulated us and said that we would get our passports fully stamped with visa at our Hyderabad address within a week or

two. As I came out I saw Anwar was anxiously waiting for us. I told him that we had been granted the visa .In the meanwhile Munawar also called from USA and Anwar apprised him of the situation. Munawar was a bit apprehensive as we had not deposited any amount he thought that we will get back our passports without visa stamp being affixed. He was reassured by Anwar. We returned to Zardari's residence. A friend of Munawar from Rawalpindi, DCO Jamal Mustafa Sayed who was in constant touch with us he wanted us to come and stay with him. On his insistence Anwar agreed to have dinner with him in the evening and we were to return back to Zardari's residence as our luggage was there and we had to catch a flight next morning. It was sumptuous dinner. Fatima could not eat much because of her health reasons. Next day we left and from Karachi reached Hyderabad at our home by taxi. On Saturday morning I got a call that our passports had been received. We confirmed about our visa and accordingly informed Munawar about the latest development. Munawar wanted us to reach there at the earliest as mother's health had alarmed him. Munawar tried to convince some of his friends to accompany us on this journey but that could not materialise. I told Munawar not to worry on that account and we would reach there on our own. Soon I booked the tickets. Though I felt concerned about the health of Fatima but believing in the grace of God I made all necessary arrangements. Many persons were there to see us off and give their good wishes. The house was packed with relatives and well wishers full night till we left early morning. Fatima was not well but at the same time all family members were exited that she was going to see her son after 15-20 years. At the airport I arranged wheel chair for Fatima and plane flew to our first stop over at Doha. This way we reached Washington airport also. I obtained assistance of an American of African origin. I offered him two hundred rupees and he not only got us a wheel chair but also brought us to Immigration Counter. All our papers were checked and our palm impressions taken. They wanted to see letter that we had received from Islamabad. I produced the same and we were allowed to move out. We retrieved our bags from the conveyer belt and came out of airport. I could not spot Munawar immediately though he was already present there. Our help called him on his mobile and within two minutes he was there before us. He tipped the attendant and fell at the feet of his mother. It was a moment of union of mother and son to

behold! He told Najam to wait with us and he promptly brought his car. We were on a way to home of our son in USA. In order to keep his mother in good humour on the way he regaled her with many tells. He wanted to know her favourite dish so that on the way he may purchase it. Mother only beamed with satisfaction on meeting her son after so many years. We already had stock of medicines from Agha Khan Hospital of Karachi. Immediately Anwar got busy contacting various friends and doctors. He fixed an appointment for the next morning. Next day in the morning first thing we were taken to an office of organisation named "TASK". This organisation is about the people who have been victims of state persecution. Anwar is a founder member of this organisation. Initially this organisation was established by five persons and now it has staff of more than five hundred. Now this organisation is headed by an elderly couple who have borne untold torture of their state apparatus. When they saw condition of Munawar's mother they were taken aback and felt very much concerned. They tried to urgently arrange for our breakfast but we thankfully excused ourselves as we already had one at our home before starting for this office. They at least compelled us to have tea with them. They wanted to host a dinner in our honour and Munawar assured them that we were there for some time to stay and during that period we shall be happy to avail of their gracious hospitality. They instantly fixed an appointment with Insurance Company and urged them to complete all formalities at earliest as we were parents of founder member.

We went to the office of Insurance Company and all formalities were completed within an hour or so. Lady Doctor at Insurance Company who checked Fatima for her health took quite an interest in her health condition. She called up security officer to take this case on urgent basis. After those formalities were completed we went to security Hospital. It was a very big Hospital and Fatima was immediately admitted in that Hospital. Hospital did not offer any facility for any relative or friend to stay with patient there. Fatima had to undergo many tests before any treatment would be undertaken. Initially they had to remove water from her abdomen. We all exchanged our phone numbers to be in touch in case of any emergency or to enquire about the condition of the patient. We waited for a while in the waiting room. Munawar suggested that I should settle at his place

and he would stay with his friend near the hospital so in case of need he may be able to reach there without any delay. I was at his residence next day also. Next day at 11 pm Munawar brought his mother back to his home. He said that water had been removed and we would get reports within a day or two. When we got the reports they were not encouraging. I do not know English language and further more I am not familiar with medical terminology therefore I could accept whatever was told to me. We continued medication for about a week and again Fatima had to be admitted for the repeat procedure. All our efforts did not bear the desired results. Munwar's friend Dr. Shyamlal who was from Dharki city of Ghotki district is a renowned specialist of cancer. He stays in the state of Atlanta. He urged Munawar to bring his mother to the hospital where he was working. Munawar was in daily touch with him about the reports and medication. He suggested that if we came there a team of doctors would be constituted to look after the health of his mother. We went there by flight that took two hours. As we reached there we found Dr. Shyamlal waiting for us at the airport. For a night we stayed at his home next day Fatima was taken to Hospital. We stayed there for about a week and from their talk we could make out that Fatima had only a number of days to live. They counselled Munawar for the worst possibility. Death has eventually to come to all and no one is immortal. They told Munawar to fulfil every wish of his mother. No restrictions in respect of food or anything else be put on her. He was also advised to send his parents to their native place as soon as possible. Hearing all this Munawar was inconsolable. Fatima was satisfied that her desire to see her son was fulfilled. She only yearned to see her son before her departure from this world. She would say that I also played a helpful role in fulfilling her desire.

Fatima would often bemoan the fact that when she was able she was not allowed to meet her son but when she is nearing her end her desire was fulfilled. Such was God's will and she accepted it gratefully. (In the meanwhile both of us got Green Card also). There are many Sindhis settled in USA and many of them wanted to arrange our gatherings with them and play host but due to circumstances we had to decline all such invitations.

Munawar was in touch with his brother Anwar all the time and kept him apprised of the situation. At last Anwar could convince his mother to return back to Hyderabad. It took Munawar one week to convince his mother. I told her that we were there to take only medicines the same medicines could be taken at our home at Hyderabad also. If need arose we have our visa and we can travel back any time we desire.

From Hyderabad Anwar and his son Assad were also insistent that we should return and they very much love to see us back. This way we could convince Fatima to return. Normally when we broached the subject of return she would say, " have we come all the way to return?" During her last days she would herself say that now she should soon return as she misses her grandson Assad a lot!

We had reached USA on 1st May and left on 30th May. Munawar accompanied us till Dubai. He went to Dubai and for us the flight was ready and we reached Karachi airport at 6 am on 2nd June. Outside the airport all our relatives were anxiously waiting for us. They had requested airport officials for our expeditious formalities so that we could come out on priority basis. One of my bags had not arrived from Dubai and I had to lodge a complaint and provide our Hyderabad address where the bag was to be sent. All our relatives' were happy at our home coming at the same time they felt concerned about the health of their 'aunt'. Till 22nd June Fatima stayed with me on the ground floor thereafter Anwar insisted to take her to his home. Fatima told him they all were working and they needed proper sleep and rest at that stage of life. Further she had no strength to climb the stairs. On 23rd June Anwar Picked her in his lap and took her to his home. Her health was getting precarious with every passing day. There apart from our other relatives my sister and her nieces were all were available for help.

It was 26th June Fatima told her grandson Assad that wanted to speak to Munawar by phone. He immediately and repeatedly tried to get in touch with him but could not through him due to poor connectivity. At around nine there was a call from Munawar. At that time Fatima had lost capacity to hear or speak

anything. See the irony of the situation! When Assad tried he could not get Munawar.

Now Munawar frantically wanted to speak to her and hear her voice and she could not hear him. These are unspeakable cruelties that life heaps upon us!

The girls of the house told me that uncle you must be tired now you go and get some rest and they would keep the vigil. It was 4 am. When I came back after having some rest it was 10am. Amir's wife was busy reciting Holy Quran. Anwar had gone out for essential purchases. I told girls that now were time for them to have some rest and I would be present there. I asked her about her health and she half opened her eyes. On being asked if she would like to have some water she opened her eyes again. I gave her one spoonful of water and one spoonful again. Amir told me not to give her more water. As I kept the glass of water and spoon she was no more. She valiantly fought with death but at last she lost that battle. It was 27th June and time was 10.30 am.

During her illness there were many among our relatives, friends and her well wishers. They all could not be named but i wish to express my gratitude to them. Special mention is made of Dr. Manzoor Memeon who right from January to June did not miss a day when he did not come to meet her and enquire about her health. Many relatives and well wishers across Sind also friends of Islamabad deserve my gratitude for standing in this period of crisis and providing moral support.

Munawar

My Mother

Mother you are Gone! I cannot believe it. You are always with me with your memories with your advises, your smiles and your tears. Touch of your hands, your fond kisses, your courage, your uprightness all lessons you taught me.

“ Always look after poor.”

“Son my blessings are with you always! No harm ever would come to you. You will live like a King. You will never be short of anything. You will roll in Gold and diamonds. Remember my words!”

You blessed me with these words till the end of your life. She used to shower these blessings in her Seraiki dialect with full confidence and love.

I knew that this bad news was to come any day. On her last day her insistence that she wanted to speak to me is ultimate in this lovely relationship of mother and son.

It is love only that matters in this life. This life is but a transitory. Everyone has to leave one does not know only time and place of his departure. Since her last two

days I had known that she was to fall silent and I was never to hear her voice again.

26th June is observed as Survivors day by United Nations and you survived that day and you left us on 27th June. Mother! We are not separate you are with me and I am with you all the time. I feel it.

Death for everyone is inevitable it is bound to come for everyone one day. This world is beset with many problems that are destiny of the man to solve. Life, death, religion and science I have pondered over all these subjects for quite a while. I have been thinking of these subjects before and after the death of my mother. My thinking has been influenced by many but the most important influence remains of my great poet Shah Latif 'Bhitai'.

In spite of her ill health mother could travel across the seas for more than ten thousands miles and stayed with me for about a month. During that period we had many a meaningful and memorable conversations that I will always cherish. I only wish that she were healthy so that I could take her to all the places where I had resided and spent the days of my life thus shared a part of my life with her. Her health was not good and I could not do all that I wanted to share with her.

Till today I am awestruck by her courage and capacity to face adversity and challenges of life! She spent one month with me and reinforced my faith in the superior strength of female gender. All this helped me to understand female characters portrayed by Shah Latif in a clearer perspective.

I had never seen before my own eyes the struggle between life and death so vividly.

I believe that apart from the lack of education or opportunities it is the condition of women in our society through the ages that has caused great harm to our society. Our entire society has been rendered crippled by this lop sided condition. The very question about the character and strength of woman is redundant. Latif has rightly said:

"Let us ask Sohini who knows how to love".

It is emotion of love that endows us with greatest strength. Sheikh Ayaz (An eminent Sindhi Poet) has also written “ it is love that invests us with greatest strength.” This really calls for great sacrifice!

Death, life, love, pain and pleasure relationships between father and brothers are all fine but a relationship of mother is something unique. In this relationship the character of woman assumes unprecedented heights. Mother is first school of a person. This institution is not dependent on any prior training, budget or any staff. One does not require any prerequisite to enter this school. This institution of motherhood needs to be properly understood. In our society it is taken for granted but it needs to be valued for its contribution to human civilisation and culture. Then a question looms if a child is devoid of a mother... in that case what would happen?

In fact mother is a form of a God on the earth! It this reason that whatever I learnt from my mother I need to ponder deeply over it. Death is phenomena to that connects us to, science, religion, nature and concept of Almighty. On this I had many discussions with K R Malkani. He opined that it is at the juncture of death that religion becomes necessary.

There is an anecdote. It is said during the times of Buddha there occurred an incident when a mother who was distraught at the death of her child and appealed to him to give life to his child. Buddha told her to bring the handful of grain from the house of a person where no death had occurred previously at any time. She went round the entire town and came empty handed at last to Buddha. He consoled her by saying all the life that comes into existence has to exist on day. This is the law of nature and we all are subject to that supreme law. All prophets, greats, poets and philosophers had to exit. After all dust has to return to dust. Therefore Shah latif says:

“ All night those who remerged beloved

Abdul Latif says their dust also evoked respect

Millions come and bow before them “

We have to respect the soil. Those who will ceaselessly serve her they will gain respect. Physically all greats had to leave this mortal coil. Some say that they still live. We are able to see and touch them. Some believe that they continue their watch over us. I have also experienced these two things. I always feel that my mother has moved only from one room to another and she is constantly under her watch.

She was loving as well as strict. She would scold at the same time shower with love. She could never remain angry for a long time and would easily be persuaded. She understood the real meaning of tears and laughter, pain and pleasure. She was proud of her being a worker and would often say that God is always friend of those who work. She was mother as well as friend. She faced troubles and tribulations in her life but she always said that she was amply rewarded for her troubles. She was grown up mature lady yet she had a childlike innocence. She was loving mother, sister and wife. In national political movement she would render her advice and work like a common cadre. As one friend put it she was like a character from Gorky's "MOTHER ". She was devoted to great poet Shah Latif Bhitai and understood deeper meaning of his poetry. Her advice to me was that " Risalo of Shah Latif " will remain as your education as well as your soul. It is his poetry that will brighten the path for Sind. He is your Master as well as your Protector.

She herself was not educated but she was great supporter of women's' Education. She was very strict about our education. She would often jokingly say that she had remained Principal of the institute that we went to.

She played a significant role in giving shelter to underground leaders and workers of the Sindhi Nationalist Movement. She would often nurse them when they were injured or bed ridden. She was a melodious singer also. She would sing to me many traditional songs mostly of Shah Latif.

Her separation is unbearable indeed! The state of Pakistan has deprived me of many things. It has snatched away my dear mother also. She is away from me in her physical form but she is always me through her guidance. She is with me in

my thought and in my life. I will always remember her instruction " Look after poor my son!"

May God give me strength to live up to her expectation!.

Long Live mother, long live Latif

Jl ye Sind! Huq Moujood!* (Let truth Prevail)

* Truth is all pervasive and eternal.

