

# **SAYED GHULAM MUSTAFA SHAH SOME PERSONAL GLIMPSES**

**By M.H. Panhwar**

Sayed Ghulam Mustafa Shah was intimately associated with Sindh Madersah High School and Sindh Muslim College. For years, he was on their boards of management. Pir Illahi Bakhsh, Minister for Education (March 1938 to February 1949), was his close friend and supporter. He was made incharge of Leslie Wilson Muslim Hostel (popularly known as Jinnah Courts now) built from funds collected from the people of Sindh with assistance of Mr. Wilson, the Governor of Bombay, who had felt that Karachi being predominantly a Hindu City, had no facilities for Muslims of rest of Sindh to come and stay for studies. This private institute was also managed by the Government through a Board. Ghulam Mustafa Shah was incharge of the Hostel in 1945. He was totally committed and very sympathetic to students but never allowed any one to take liberties with him or indulge in non academic activities. He always spoke in English with the students, probably to impress upon them that they are entering the competitive life of the modern world. In a dispute between two students, in which my room mate Ansari Muhammad Shafi S/o Muhammad Waris Junejo, was a part, he asked my opinion as a witness. I told him that I can not tell a lie but at the same time cannot betray my room mate of 8 years in the high school at Mehar and therefore, please do not make me a witness. He appreciated my stand and just dropped the case for lack of evidence. He knew that my words meant that Shafi was at fault. I developed a great respect for him and he reciprocated equally and trusted me that I won't tell a lie.

Some time in august 1946 some students issued a poster against him. He called me and asked: "Do you know who is the author?" I replied: "I am not the author". He asked me again: "Do you know who is behind this poster?" "I said, "Shah Nawaz has tried to take credit for it, but he had not done it". He fully understood that I know the background but will not tell the names. He then told me: "it is good that you have cleared Shah Nawaz otherwise Pir Illahi Bakhsh was already determined to rusticate him". The background was that Shafi had felt insulted in the previous inquiry and although no action was taken against him; it was obvious

that he was found guilty and he unnecessarily had carried grudge against Shah Sahib. The other student was Bachal Soomro (retired as Brigadier), who did accent. The two decided to issue a poster against Shah Sahib, but since both were not fluent in English, they wrote some nasty sentences in Sindhi and asked me to translate for them. I refused, but I and Shafi had many common friends and therefore, he approached this group. Ghulam Mustafa Shah had never suspected this until 1998, when I told him that it was written by Jariwala a Parsi gentleman, well known for telling Jokes and stories, who was working as assistant in Sindh Secretariat. It is typed by Ahsan Ali Shah, cyclostyled in the Sindh secretariat', Department of Education, on Government paper. The cartoon showed Ghulam Mustafa Shah with pipe and in the smoke the words spiralled to say. "I can't, Ishan't." It was drawn by Shafi Junejo (Retired Chief Engineer Irrigation). The bundle of 500 sheets was brought to the house of another friend of ours, distributed in the Muslim college Hostel by S.T.S. (Retired Chief Engineer Irrigation). The bundle of 500 sheets was brought to the house of another friend of ours, distributed in the Muslim College Hostel by (Retired Session Judge), and in the Leslie Wilson Hostel by Shafi, Bachal and some others. I told shah Sahib it was joke but since Pir Illahi Bakhsh had taken it seriously, every body was scared. Had it not gone to Pir Illahi Bakhsh, I could have given him names with full understanding that no disciplinary action was taken against any body. The same year Shah Sahib left for college as Principal on deputation. In 1953, I was appointed as agricultural engineer in Sindh, but my hobby of reading and collecting books on Sindh, periodically drove me to his office for borrowing books. This made us understand each other far better. He was a Sindhi nationalist but had many immigrant friends, class fellows or colleagues and therefore, he was ready to accommodate them, but not on cost of Sindh at all. My own opinion, as a government employee was, that all those who were to die and be buried in Sindh were Sindhis. I was convinced that urban people can not work as tractor operators, cleaners and mechanics, if they had to stay for many days a month in the field and therefore, these posts should go to Sindhis of the rural areas. Thus it became a matter of record that many of he engineers, supervisors and foremen recruited by me were urban immi9grants and formed majority in that group. But again credit goes to them, that for good treatment received by them, they protected rights of Sindh and Sindhis better than many Sindhis did, Ghulam Mustafa Shah's attitude was just the same. Late Dr. Mushtaque Rehman of Iowa State University told me that he

went to S.M. College to get some job. Ghulam Mustafa Shah asked him a few questions in English and having been satisfied with vocabulary of the farmer, told him: “I am not going to recruit you, but I am going to admit you in this college as student. You have a future in it. Pay rupees five to the accountant, fill your form and attend classes”. Mushtaq-ur-Rehman said: “I do not have rupees five”. Ghulam Mustafa Shah paid the money from his pocket and told the accountant that from poor boys fund; pay his fees regularly till he is able to pay himself. With the help of Ghulam Mustafa Shah, Mushtaq-ur-Rehman became the Professor of Geography in Sindh University. The effect of this treatment was that Mushtaq-ur-Rehman became a great geographer of Sindh after his own teacher Pithawalla.

In 1962-63 Ghulam Mustafa Shah while posted in Hyderabad probably in text book board rang me up that he was coming to see me at Tando Jam where I was posted as Superintendent Engineer Agricultural Machinery. I said that he should not take the trouble, I myself was going to come to him instead, but he replied by saying that he would reach my office before I got in my vehicle. He was there in half an hour. I told him that I respect you, and as such I wanted to come to you.” He said I need some help and that is why, I want to reach your office and sit with you for two to three hours and resolve the problem. He told me that he and his brother had divided paternal property and all the good and developed land had gone to him, and he had most undeveloped land left for himself. He needed tractor for breaking soil, bulldozers for leveling the land, tube-well and pumping set to pump water from the canal as the land was above level of water into the canal. I organised all these the very day and told him that most probably ground water is brackish and if it is good in shallow depths a 30 HP diesel engine can operate, tube-well as well as lift pump simultaneously. He had to pay 25% money in advance and rest in 10 yearly installments. I visited his land many times to help him the layout of land and plan for crops in next 2-3 years.

In 1968-69 he became Vice Chancellor of Sindh University. I went to see him in connection with publication of my book, “source material on Sindh”, which was delayed by Dr. Muhammad Saleh Qureshi, on flimsy ground that for each book in the list, I should give number of pages, Illustrations, maps, charts, drawings and etc. A task so ridiculous as Ghulam Mustafa Shah said: “To collect this information you need to spend three years in England and reach

various libraries and still there will be many books which are not available there”. He ordered to publish it immediately. After Shah Sahib left, the book was lying in the press for 8 years, probably deliberately and would never have come out, if Sheikh Ayaz who two months time otherwise the Manager of the University Press was to be suspended. That day Ghulam Mustafa Shah asked me to comment on a letter he was addressing to Dr. I.H. Qureshi, Vice Chancellor of Karachi University. I.H. Qureshi and many other had been distorting the history of Pakistan and Ghulam Mustafa Shah had a long comment to offer. I told Shah Sahib that his comment was highly constructive and many serious scholars are frustrated with this approach of present historians of Pakistan, but there will be no end to the controversy, if he starts confrontation. It is better if you encourage some people in Sindh University to write history in the positive way. He appreciated, I tore the letter apart and said: I am going to discuss with Professor Mubarak Ali as that scholar is capable of exposing the myth of I.H. Qureshi. Later on A.K. Aziz came out with “Murderer of History” and other book “Historians of Pakistan” in which he exposed the so-called historians like Dr. I.H. Qureshi, Dr. Mubarak Ali has also done an excellent job in the field.

In 1970 an army officer at Hyderabad misbehaved with a member of the staff of the University to show off the authority of the armed Forces. Ghulam Mustafa Shah with resignation in his pocket saw Rakhman Gul, governor of Sindh, and complained against the army personnel. He apologised for mis-behaviour of the army officers, and requested Shah Sahib to take back his resignation.

Due to mal-treatment of Sindhis by Commissioner Hyderabad and Police, the students agitated and they along with a number of university teachers were put behind bars in false cases.

After arrest Mr. Bhutto and later his execution, Ghulam Mustafa Shah vehemently opposed the government in Sindh quarterly. His editorials were censored, but his anecdotes which ridiculed Army Officers escaped their attention. So orders were passed by the Federal Government to arrest him, but Mr. Rafi the then Home Secretary with the help of the Governor sent a note to General Zia, that the Sindh Quarterly is read by no more than 600-700 well educated persons, officers, and scholars, but his arrest will invite serious agitation in Sindh, as he

has remained Principal of a leading college of Karachi, Director of Education in Sindh and Punjab, , vice Chancellor of Sindh University twice and he has students all over Pakistan in key government positions as also leading politicians, industrialists and zamindars and the resentment by his arrest would be difficult to suppress. General Zia withdrew the order of his arrest, on the eve of night he was going to be arrested.

Ghulam Mustafa Shah was the President of ‘Servants of Sindh Society’, since 1981 and very boldly supported Sindh’s cause. The resolutions of society are witness to his frankness, boldness and foresightedness.

Since he knew me very well and my interest in any thing pertaining to Sindh, he asked me to write for Sindh quarterly in 1975. The second issue of Sindh Quarterly came out with an article of mine running into 76 pages and the only other article in it, was his editorial. He was asked why no other article was included. He said that the total material in my article wa not only new to him but probably new to 99% scholars of history of sindh and so he was tempted wern to drop his editorial to accommodate my article. He said the only alternative was to increase the number of pages which he had to do. He published almost one article of mine in each issue, numbering to about 99, except probably three or four. I am grateful to him for introducing me to Sindhi scholars, although now I know that I have created more enemies than friends, due to jealousies o some petty minded Sindhiologist.

Ghulam Mustafa Shah was keenly interested in introducing fruit crops on his farm and I invariably volunteered to supply him with plants he wanted any I visited his farm to give further advice. He published an article about me in one of the issue of Sindh quarterly and told me that he had to do so, because from an engineer I had turned into a Sindhiologist and again from a Sindhiologist to the leading horticulturist of Sindh.

That he trusted me so much from 1946 that in 1999 before his death he would sit with me and tells me his personal things good or bad, printable or unprintable about his life, that many men avoid to tell.

When I saw him in 1985 along with my new wife he told me he appreciates it, encouraged her to read and write in her own field and out side her field, any thing that can help Sindh and humanity. That day in confidence, he told me that without a wife as a companion, I cannot be productive in life. Life and wife go together and intelligent as she is, she can make me many times as productive as before and results will come out soon. I and my wife saw him frequently and many times he came and stayed with us. We both went to see his farm many times. During the last days of life he wanted to see the books written by him to be published before his death. He also wanted to complete his autobiography, which remained incomplete.

-----

If you drop gold and books, pick-up first the books and then the gold.

----- safer Hasidim

-----

Great countries have to deserve to live, they have to will to live;  
they have to struggle to live.

----- W.Lynn Landrum

-----

A room without books is as a body without a soul.

----- Lord Avebury

<b>BOOK</b>	<b>SINDH QUARTERLY</b>
<b>ESTABLISHED IN</b>	<b>1918 – 1999</b>
<b>PAGES</b>	<b>44 - 49</b>
<b>VOLUME</b>	<b>XXVI, 2000.</b>