

**I**n Lahore I re-started my practise which I had to give up in 1952 when I left for Paris. The period

of 1955 to 1968, when I was appointed to the Bench, apart from my work in the legal profession was very rewarding in the cultural and intellectual ambience. I was back in the company of my three friends, Hameed Nizami, Sheikh Khursheed Ahmad, and Dr. Mubasshar Hasan—all to have achieved national fame and importance. I would speak of them more easily if I were not their friend. Friendship calls for modesty, and the expressions of my admiration for all three of them is somewhat constricted by friendship. But only the expression, for an object need not be distant or comparatively known to appear admirable does not diminish the qualities of these friends. When I look back to this period of friendship with them, one has been dead now for more than 39 years, one for 32 years, and one mercifully is still with us, I admire not just their professional integrity but the whole man in them. And this is not the admiration which is compared to the big toe of St. Peter's statue, which owes its high gloss to the kisses of the devout.

Hameed Nizami was at the time an established journalist, editor and publisher of the Nawa-i-Waqt (roughly translated into English as "Echo of the Times") a daily newspaper in Urdu with a large readership and a very devoted and committed following. In the annals of journalism in Pakistan, in either Urdu and English, he would mainly rank amongst the best of the greatest.

In his college days in the late 1930s he was a thin bespectacled young man and he was a very committed believer in the movement of Pakistan, and with his efforts he laid the foundations of the India Muslim Students Federation, which Quaid-i-Azam organised. One of his contemporaries, Anwarul Haq, later to be the Chief Justice of Pakistan wrote of Nizami's outstanding qualities were his sharp intellect, intelligent interest in all that was touching the destiny of the peoples of the subcontinent, his convictions and principles, and his affection and sincerity

# Lahore: The city of my birth

This is the second and last part of the series of  
*Lahore 1955-1968*  
*Nasim Hassan Shah*  
Reflections of Justice (ret'd) Nasim Hassan Shah

towards his friends." I came to know Nizami in the late 40's, and I fully endorse the views of my distinguished predecessor. In 1954 he visited Paris and it was my great pleasure to show him around the city. But even during his brief stay in Paris he was most concerned about the direction events were taking place in Pakistan. Nizami believed in a Federal umbrella over a very autonomous provincial



*Late Hameed Nizami*

system. This brought him into conflict first with Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan and later the Martial Law of Ayub Khan. Prime Minister Liaquat's henchmen in Lahore cancelled the declaration of his newspaper, and he was obliged to bring out another newspaper by the name of "Nida-i-Waqt" He repeatedly warned that a small pebble thrown into this stream of national politics will cause at first a ripple and without our realising it will grow bigger and bigger till it becomes a whirl-pool and destroy everything in its wake. He was

prophetic in this observation as the breakup of Pakistan showed within a decade of his death.

At the evening salons with him in the tea room of Gardenia he always expressed the view that democracy and freedom are the first objectives of Pakistan, and with it the courage to listen to dissent. And the Nawa-i-Waqt practised what its editor preached. Nizami had come under the spell early in life of Allama Iqbal and Quaid-i-Azam and the portrait of these two worthies always had the place of honour in his study, sitting room, and private chambers.

Nawa-i-Waqt began in a small one room flat in an inconspicuous building in 1940 as a fortnightly. It soon became a daily newspaper and the vanguard of the Pakistan movement in the Punjab. It was an uphill task, what with the Hindu and pro-British Muslims interests directed against him. Nizami fought these forces with other leading Muslim newspapers and in 1947 could take comfort in the fact that they had brought the caravan of nationhood home successfully.

After Hameed Nizami's death his younger brother, Majid, who was working as the London correspondent of the paper came home to take the reins of the publication. It was a difficult act to follow, but now 40 years later the young man who came to Lahore and the paper he headed have all come of age. Nawa-i-Waqt remains the voice of the Punjabi Muslim intelligentsia, and the flagship of its several sister publication and the most notable



among them is the English daily "The Nation", edited by Hameed Nizami's son Arif. The Nawa-i-Waqt is now a Trust, with its own press and building, and a hall for discussion on subjects of public interests and a library dedicated to the late founder of the paper. It has been a remarkable progress from a one-room office to this edifice, with editions being printed in four major cities of Pakistan and correspondents in all major capitals of the world. The credit for this goes to Majid Nizami, a journalist of no mean caliber, a humanist, and a dedicated believer in Quaid's Pakistan. He opposed the Martial Laws of Ayub Khan, of Yahya Khan, of the neo-Fascist policies of Bhutto, and of Zia-ul-Haq. I have now known Majid for close to 40 years, and after my retirement from the Supreme Court I have been associated with him in many organisations and associations which further the ideology of Pakistan and serve as the intellectual base to counter many of the problems facing the nation. Being with him, and being his friend, has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my post-retirement life.

Sheikh Khursheed Ahmad, the second permanent fixture at Hameed Nizami's tea room table, was a lawyer full of exuberance and never wanting for pithy phrases. He had a flourishing practise and was handling some well-known cases which got reported in the Press. He was a firm believer in Human Rights, as against Fundamental Rights which had been suspended under the Martial Law of Ayub Khan. However, soon after the 1962



Constitution Khursheed became the Law Minister in Ayub Khan's cabinet, and also Minister for Parliamentary Affairs.

He remained a very devoted and committed supporter of Ayub Khan and during the Presidential elections of 1964 was his Election Agent. I supported Khursheed in this effort, and because of this I had to face the wrath of the lawyer fraternity which was all in support of Miss Fatimah Jinnah, the sister of the Quaid and the principal opponent of Ayub Khan. When the election results were declared Khursheed was shown on nationwide TV programmes and front-page newspaper photographs of garlanding the victor, Ayub Khan. Soon after, Khursheed resigned, and returned to his legal practise at Lahore. He died a few years later. It is he who said to me as I was taking leave of my friends after my wedding and escorting my bride, "Best of wishes, Nasim. Friends can go only this far!"

Dr. Mubashar Hassan, who is still with us, did his post-graduate engineering from Harvard, and earned a Doctorate in soil engineering, the first Pakistani to have achieved this honour. He and Hameed Nizami had become close friends in mid-40's, and under Nizami's influence he was outspoken in his defense of the ideology of Pakistan as propounded by Quaid-i-Azam. He married a doctor, later to become a nationally known pathologist, before he left for his studies in America. Mubashar is an intense intellectual, a Human Rights activist, and amongst the founding fathers of Bhutto's People's Party. In the 1970 elections he won a seat in the National Assembly, and on Bhutto becoming the President in 1971 he was appointed as the Finance Minister, and the country found in him a committed socialist. Unlike the Finance Ministers of the past he went about diagnosing the problems of the country, and the first one was poverty. However, Bhutto had changed his revolutionary socialist ideas and was now hobnobbing with the feudal class. Mubashar could not agree with this; he felt that Bhutto instead of taking to its logical conclusion the socialist programmes that he initiated in the first year in office had surrendered to the demands of

political expediency. While he was returning from a conference in Washington D.C and was breaking journey in Cairo that he was informed that he had been dropped from the cabinet. Mubashar is reasonably active in trying to promote Indo-Pakistan amity at the intellectual level, and though close to 80s keeps a very busy intellectual schedule.

Yes, these were the people with whom I kept company; and they were full men in their own right.

It was at Lahore in the years 1957 to 62 that I came to know Prof Ralph Braibanti, a very pleasant round-faced American with horn-rimmed glasses and full of the spirit of inquiry. He had come from Duke University to do first-hand research on Pakistan and Islamic studies, and was for two years the chief advisor to the Civil Service Academy, where young bright men, the cream of the youth, were being trained to take up positions replacing the elite Indian Civil Service of the British days. He is founding president of the American Institute of Pakistan Studies, and has over the years done more than any American in promoting the study of the political process in Pakistan. I was a frequent visitor to his suite at the Faletti's Hotel, and later his charmingly decorated bungalow in the Academy. To his soirees would come barristers, intellectuals and jurists. My distinguished predecessor, Chief Justice Cornelius, came to his soiree whenever he found time, and there developed between them a close friendship which is reflected in the almost dozen letters Justice Cornelius wrote to him. Prof Braibanti was fond of glossing over the details of the Pakistan Pakistani/Islamic heritage, and made anxious studies of the condition of the minorities, especially the Christian minorities, in Pakistan. I have kept up my association with him, visited him in the States on several occasions and more recently in 1999 I wrote the foreword on his book on Justice A.R. Cornelius.

In this period I went to Harvard on an Exchange Programme, it was 1957, and I met Dr. Henry Kissinger, who was the coordinator for this programme. We kept a steady correspondence, and I make it a point to meet with him when I

visit the States. He visited Lahore in 1960 and I invited some of the alumni Fellows of the programme at my house in a dinner in his honour. When he came to Islamabad en route to China we could not meet since I was on the High Court Bench at Lahore. In 1993, as the Chief Justice of Pakistan I visited the Supreme Court in Washington D.C and was invited to sign my name in the Visitor's Book. My name is just below the names of President Bill Clinton and Vice-President Al-Gore, who were making their first visit after being sworn in. A Washington think tank had awarded me with a plaque of honour of being the "Judge of the Decade" an honour no doubt bestowed because of the Supreme Court judgment in restoring the parliament earlier in the year. I, with my wife, were invited to the President's prayer Breakfast meeting in 1997, and there I had animated conversations with Justice Ginsberg and Justice Scalia of the Supreme Court on the developing role of higher judiciary in Pakistan. My wife went conversing with Mrs. Elizabeth Dole, the wife of Senator Dole and in her own right a leading Republican, having been a cabinet minister in the Government of President Bush, and later a contender for the Republican ticket for President. Mrs Dole was very interested to know what role the women were playing in national politics apart from the fact that Pakistan had in Benazir Bhutto a woman Prime Minister for two terms. My wife told her that our women were forward looking, getting educated and gave instances of our three daughters who after having finished their education were involved in the education field.

It has always been said that the judgments we pass on our contemporaries are distorted; there is an obligation of friendship, and the necessary perspective may be lacking. But this need not always be so. In the vast expanse of the universe, there is love and hatred, prejudice and understanding; but we perceive our strength only when we can make out all the pebbles in the courtyard. And this to my experience is the chain which makes for bondage of family and friends. ■

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