

As a nation, Allah has given Bangladesh an opportunity and now people should make full use of this opportunity. No matter how long it takes, the present regime should complete all the reform processes, reconstitute all state institutions, reestablish good governance, rule of law, and make sure that the political process never gets derailed any time in the future. Once this mission is complete, the people of Bangladesh want both local and national election immediately, not a day earlier not a day later.

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My Noble Parents

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My parents are Dr. and Mrs. ATM Mohyuddin. Abboo came to the US in 1974 and Ammoo and the rest of us joined him in 1975. Abboo is a Physician and Ammoo has a Master's degree in Bengali. They are the most decent individuals who have influence the lives of all of us. We always knew how wonderful they were when we were children, but as we became adults, we are in awe of their grandeur as human beings. They have experienced life with all its intricacies with dignity and patience. During this fascinating journey they have shown us how to tackle the ropes of life and never let go of it. AlHamdulillah! I would like to share a slice of life experience of my parents with our esteem community members.

Abboo and Ammoo lived in Quetta Pakistan since their marriage in 1956. Abboo practiced in Civil Hospital as a Pathologist and Ammoo stayed home to take care of us. Life was wonderful there. They put us in the best private schools to instill in us the value of a good solid education. Abboo would always drive us to and from school, even though many public transportation were available. He would leave from work to bring us home, and then return back to work. Abboo and Ammoo were very careful about our religious education. They hired the best Maulvi Sahib to teach us the Quran after school. We learned to pray salat early and we were already praying and fasting long before our peers joined us.

Ammoo helped us in surah memorization when we were very young. I remember how she would make it fun by telling us stories of the Prophets. Her storytelling extended to the classics too. Besides stories, she would teach us poetry and encouraged us to recite in front of company. I vaguely remember that when visitors came, she would ask us to recite surahs or poetry in front of them. I guess that was our first experience in public speaking.

Life was good, and anything good does not last forever. The year 1971 came with a bang. My twin brothers Naved and Junaid were born on 13th of March, and the trouble in Bangladesh (then East Pakistan) began on the 25th of March. Our Camelot came crashing down! Life drastically changed for us. We became the enemies of the state. We hated living in West Pakistan and wanted to go to East Pakistan. When Bangladesh was born later that year, our feelings to relocate got even more intense. During these troubling times we witnessed the true character of my parents. The kindness and generosity that they had shown to strangers in need was noble indeed.

The Bengalis of Pakistan who opted to return to Bangladesh, their new homeland, were laid off from their jobs. Suddenly, rich families became poor and helpless. Since Pakistan stubbornly denied the existence of Bangladesh due to pride and arrogance, the Bengalis living in Pakistan were treated as people without a land. They could neither work in Pakistan, nor leave the country legally. Suddenly illegal human trafficking became popular. The smugglers began to transport the Bengalis to Afghanistan, and from there

they went to India, and finally to Bangladesh. Of course, the smugglers charged a large sum of money for this trafficking. Most of the trafficking was done via Quetta, since it sits on the border of Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Many Bengalis started to contact Abboo for help. He welcomed everyone, even though it was such a risky business. My parents opened their home and hearts to so many strangers who lived and left for Bangladesh from our home. Once many people were hurt in an accident and all of them stayed at our house. Abboo requested his dear doctor friends to treat the victims. One newborn received brain injury and Dr. Chiraagh successfully operated and cured the baby. So many dramas occurred at our place. My parents never thought about themselves, but charged ahead to help others in need. Abboo narrowly escaped being caught by the local police for his unselfish (perhaps illegal) activities.

When Abboo was laid off, life became difficult. We were secretly planning to escape also. Late each night we would pack discreetly. We knew that we could only take a few items with us, yet we felt happy to move to Bangladesh.

I wonder how Ammoo felt knowing that her home and life of twenty years was coming to an end. All her collectibles would not accompany us to Bangladesh. She started to sell some of her expensive things. One lady who had five daughters to marry off bought most of her dinner sets, furniture and other valuables. Abboo had to sell off his brand new car, Toyota Corolla. When the buyer drove off with his car, he stayed in the driveway for a long time. Both of my parents did not express any worry or impatience. They

faced each day with strength and dignity. I wonder how I would have reacted if I were in their shoes! They had six children, ages ranging from 15 – 2 years. The future was uncertain. They held on to the Rope of Allah and even in the heaviest storms they never lost their grip.

Well, things got worse. We could not escape as planned. Suddenly on May 5th 1973, we were placed under house arrest. Abboo and two other Bengali uncles were arrested and taken away. I remember crying so much that my head hurt all night. When we had asked where they were taking them, the police refused to answer.

A week later we found out through unofficial sources that they were taken to a Concentration Camp in Karachi. During this time only the women and children were staying at our house. We had no protection. We were robbed on the third night, and some valuables were stolen. Ammoo never broke down or cried. She was strong and took care of all of us. Even though she had lived a privileged and sheltered life, she had the strength to face such unexpected hardship. I believe that her strong Iman had helped her.

After a harrowing two months we were taken to the same camp where Abboo was taken. All eight of us huddled together in a tiny complex. Yet we were so happy because we were all together. In October of 1973 we arrived in Bangladesh, our golden Bangladesh!

We soon found out that ‘all that glittered was not gold.’ Abboo realized that he could not offer us much in the brand new country. He decided to immigrate to the US to offer his family a ‘good life.’ Never did he think that how he could manage at his age. At age 48

he came to the US. At age 50 he became the oldest Resident at Meharry Medical College. He patiently completed his residency in Pathology.

Ammoo started her new life in Nashville. We went to schools and we all did well, Alhamdulillah! Abboo stressed education as well as religion. He was always fearful that we will lose our Deen if we are not made conscious of it.

My parents maintained their serene outlook in life. They never panicked over hurdles nor got too excited over achievements. They prayed and encouraged all of us to pursue the highest degrees and to hold on to the Rope of Allah.

Their patience was cruelly tested when my 18 year old brother Junaid died in a car accident. Naved survived with many injuries, but Junaid could not. That was ultimately the biggest trial of their lives. Even then they were patient. But their deep grief resulted in Abboos’ heart attack and Ammoo’s depression. Through perseverance and reliance on Allah SWT, they both overcame those hurdles too. Eighteen years have gone now, but the wound is still fresh for them. I often see that they become withdrawn when all of us get together. We pray that Junaid gets Jannah and that Abboo and Ammoo will get Jannah for their patience.

There are too many lessons that can be extracted from their rich lives. They advise us to be grateful to Allah SWT for His Blessings. They love to see us all together. Their struggles and fortitude have transformed them into gentle serene individuals. They are content with their lives, and never talk about regrets. They are just happy to know

that they are surrounded by family and friends who adore them.

One cannot ask for better parents than mine. I only wish that I am able to practice the life lessons that I have learned from them. They have experienced the British Colonial life, the Pakistan life, the Bangladesh era, and now the western life in the US. I pray that their wisdom will be embraced by all of us.

'RABBIR HAMHOMA KAMA RABBAYANI SAGHIRA' (Surah Al-Isra – 17:24)

"My Lord! Bestow on them Thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood."



A Sleeping Giant, Awakened

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The rental car is gray and dull. The rear seat affords little freedom, confining me

to a stifling existence of mile upon mile of ennui. The disc brakes and calipers firmly bring the car to a halt, delicately lunging my body toward the driver's seatback. A rogue smile, blasphemous to my stoic lips, climbs from the depths of my heart and graces my face, a barren, bumpy amalgam of exotic color and adolescent acne. I unbuckle the restraining seatbelt and unclothe the door, eagerly. There's no glorious wash of sunlight to greet me, for Helios's chariot is quickly approaching the horizon. Rather, the cool, crisp California air, light and airy with that rugged Sierra Nevada charm, welcomes me with open arms, as if I were an old acquaintance returning after years of travel abroad. The rental car, carrying the scars left by scores of brutal drivers, sits apathetically in the empty parking lot as my family exits. Yosemite Falls smashes its mighty aquatic fists into the stone base, resonating a sound like that of a toothbrush against teeth. It's sunset on the Merced River in Yosemite National Park, California.

My wandering feet lead me to a forest trail. Spruces, black oak, Jeffery pines, the occasional titanic redwood – such verdure tempt me to stroll into the forest, as though passing through the caliginous coppice would lead me to the gates of heaven. I do not doubt the prospect. The trees emit a distinct sage fragrance. My family, their arms filled with cameras, maps, and purses, follow me into the grove. The brown, earthy path is hard, callous, and unyieldingly firm. Sublime sprinkles of sunlight and shadow, ever common on a mid-afternoon forest hike, do not exist in this