

Makers of Indian Literature



*Mohammad Mujeeb*



Meher Fatima Hussain

**Mohammad Mujeeb**, the *Padma Bhushan* awardee was an eminent historian, educationist and scholar. Born on 30 October 1902 in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh in a reputed family, Mohammad Mujeeb had the privilege to acquire education in the best national and international institutions. Committed to secular and democratic ethos, Mohammad Mujeeb served the nationalist cause through his commitment to academics and education and serving Jamia Millia Islamia (Delhi based Central University) since 1926 as Professor of History and as Vice Chancellor from 1948–73. Mohammad Mujeeb mastered several languages including Urdu, English, Russian, German and French. *The Indian Muslims* is his *magnum opus* though Mohammad Mujeeb has many more books, dramas and articles in Urdu and English to his credit.

Mohammad Mujeeb was widely travelled and represented India at the UNESCO and UN General Assembly. He was member of several prestigious institutions including *Taraqqui Urdu Board*, *Hindustani Talimi Sangh* and the *Sahitya Akademi*. The Government of India honoured him with the *Padma Bhushan* in 1965 for his contribution in the field of literature and education.

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MOHAMMAD MUJEEB

The sculpture reproduced on the endpaper depicts a scene where three soothsayers are interpreting to King Suddhodhana the dream of Queen Maya, mother of Lord Buddha. Below them is seated a scribe recording the interpretation. This is perhaps the earliest available pictorial record of the art of writing in India.

*From:* Nagarjunakonda, 2nd century A.D.

*Courtesy:* National Museum, New Delhi

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MOHAMMAD MUJEEB

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SAHITYA AKADEMI

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## Introduction

The life and career of Mohammad Mujeeb is a saga that entails several dimensions of conviction, commitment and erudition. Brought up in an age when India was reeling under colonial rule, still gasping for independence, Mujeeb could not remain untouched with the developments around him. He was an agent of change contributing to the transitions that took place, both in colonial and free India. As the country longed to break free from shackles of slavery and servitude, Mujeeb made his foray in serving the country in his own ways. Under Mahatma Gandhi movements for *swadeshi* and boycott of British aided institutions, Jamia Millia Islamia was founded by stalwarts including Hakim Ajmal Khan, Mohammad Ali Jauhar, Maulana Mehmud Hasan, Abdul Majeed Khwaja, Mukhtar Ahmad Ansari, Saifuddin Kitchlew and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad at Aligarh in 1920.

Mohammad Mujeeb was studying in Germany when he responded to the cause of the nation by choosing to work with Zakir Husain and Abid Husain for Jamia Millia Islamia. Jamia abhorred colonial subjugation and experimented in Gandhian ways and in furthering the cause of nationalist interests, Mohammad Mujeeb provided yeoman service. He served closely with Zakir Husain, Shafiqur Rehman Kidwai, Abid Husain and other nationalists in building the institution along secular and progressive lines. Mohammad Mujeeb's career is inseparably imbedded in the life of Jamia Millia Islamia as an architect, teacher and scholar. Gandhiji wrote a couple of letters to Mujeeb expressing his happiness and satisfaction in his joining and serving

the institution that are aptly incorporated in the monograph. After India won its independence in 1947, great emphasis was laid towards streamlining the educational and cultural institutions in consonance with the principles that formed the bedrock of the freedom movement and Mujeeb played instrumental role in shaping such developments.

A polyglot, Mohammad Mujeeb mastered several Indian and foreign languages. He left behind several valuable literary works that forms important part of the monograph both at the level of analysis and as corpus that helped constructing facets of Mujeeb's literary career and his life in the university wherein he dispensed responsibilities in several capacities, being the Vice Chancellor, one among them. Though not formally trained in Urdu, Mujeeb was a regular contributor to *Jamia*, an Urdu journal of Jamia Millia Islamia and authored several original works in Urdu and English with *Indian Muslims* being his *magnum opus*. His compositions have strong nationalist and cultural concerns bearing robust reflections on issues of national pride and integration. Mohammad Mujeeb was widely travelled and his education in coveted institutions in India and abroad coupled with his understanding of Indian and western literature and culture shaped indelibly his literary formulations.

The monograph is but a modest attempt to chronicle the career and literary contributions of Mohammad Mujeeb and I am greatly indebted to Sahitya Akademi for giving me the opportunity to write the monograph.

I am thankful to Dr. K. Sreenivasrao, Secretary, Sahitya Akademi, Dr. Mushtaque Ahmad and Dr. Sufian Ahmad for extending cooperation during my writing the monograph.

I extend my gratitude to Prof. Sabiha Zaidi, Director, Jamia's Premchand Archives and Literary Centre, Jamia Millia Islamia and Dr. S.M. Amir for supporting my work by facilitating access to usage of primary materials and other valuable sources on

Mohammad Mujeeb including his photograph. I am indebted to Zubair Mahmood and other staffs in the Zakir Husain Library, Premchand Archives and Maktaba Jamia of Jamia Millia Islamia for the support extended to me during my writing of the Monograph on Mohammad Mujeeb.

I would further like to extend acknowledgement to friends, relatives and colleagues as the monograph draws a lot from their encouragement and support.



## Life and Career

Mohammad Mujeeb, a multi-faceted personality was a distinguished historian, academic visionary, educationist, playwright and one of the architects of Delhi based flourishing Central University, the Jamia Millia Islamia (National Muslim University). Mohammad Mujeeb's scholarly works and his contributions make him one of the most revered personalities of modern times. Writings by Mujeeb in English and Urdu offer valuable insights on his ideas and achievements that facilitates in constructing dimensions of his career and writings. Essays written by friends, colleagues and researchers, particularly in Urdu help in further understanding Mujeeb as an individual and writer. *Jamia, Mujeeb Number* edited by Ziaul Hasan Faruqi is an important collection on Mujeeb that comprises articles by Mujeeb and others. The work *Mohammad Mujeeb: Hayat Aur Khidmat* by Sadiqa Zaki based on her doctoral research carried out under guidance of eminent Urdu litterateur and *Padma Bhushan* recipient Gopi Chand Narang is a valuable addition on the life and literary contributions of Mohammad Mujeeb.

Mohammad Mujeeb was born on 30 October 1902 in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh in an affluent and aristocratic zamindar family. One of Mujeeb's uncles, Mohammaduzzam had christened children at home, also named Mohammad Mujeeb. Members of Mujeeb's family drew from diverse streams like politics, business, law and arts, and each made their mark in the profession their own ways. Sadiqa Zaki gives some genealogical account of the family of Mujeeb. Mujeeb's grandfather, Choudhary Riyasat Ali was a landlord of Bahlolgarhi and was married to Salarang Bibi.

They had two sons, Mohammad Yusuf was elder and Mohammad Nasim (1859-1953) was younger. The family experienced colonial impact during nineteenth century as the British confiscated some part of their land. It was important to look for new enterprises as economy dwindled. It was Mohammad Yusuf who was instrumental in facilitating higher education to Nasim.

Mohammad Nasim was a notable Lucknow Barrister practicing since 1890. He remained associated with political developments in the city and had the distinction of hosting the Indian National Congress session held at Lucknow in 1916. Being supporters of India's freedom struggle and composite culture, the family, among other committed leaders shared proximity with and confidence of leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru.

Mohammad Nasim was married to a Mahfuzunnisa. Nasim had three sisters, eldest Nafisun Nisa, Wahidunnisa, and youngest Maqbulun Nisa. Choudhary Khilquzzaman of Muslim League was son of Maqbulun Nisa. Samiuzzaman, another brother of Choudhary Khilquzzaman excelled in Mughal painting. Salimuzaman was a distinguished scientist.

Mohammad Nasim had three sons and two daughters. Mohammad Wasim (b. 1885) was eldest son, studied law and was a successful jurist. Mohammad Wasim migrated to Pakistan to become the first Advocate General of the country. His son Mohammad Haleem (1925-2006) had the distinction as longest serving Chief Justice (1981-89) of Pakistan.

Mohammad Habib (1895-1971), the eminent historian and *Professor Emeritus* of Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) was second son of Mohammad Nasim. He delivered the famous presidential address at the Indian History Congress session at Bombay in December 1947 that became memorable for his passionate secular and communist concerns. Some of Mohammad Habib's books include *Mahmud of Ghazni*; *Hazrat Amir Khusrau of Delhi* and *Political Theory of the Delhi Sultanette*. Mohammad Habib had two sons Kamal Habib and Irfan Habib. Irfan Habib

(b. 1931), *Padma Bhushan* recipient is a renowned historian and *Professor Emeritus* Aligarh Muslim University.

Among the three sons of Mohammad Nasim, Mujeeb was the youngest. Mujeeb's sisters were Shakira, the eldest and Sabira was younger to him and he was exceptionally fond of both his sisters. Shakira was married to cousin Salimuzzaman, the scientist.

Mohammad Mujeeb married Begum Asifa in a respected family of Sandilya in 1929. Begum Asifa was daughter of Maqbool Hasan, an affluent and successful Advocate of Hardoi. She had liking for Urdu literature and wrote for Urdu magazines including *Payam-i-Taleem*, of Jamia Millia Islamia. Mujeeb had two sons, his first son Mohammad Moin was born on 3 March 1934. Unfortunately, Mohammad Moin passed away very young on 5 February 1954 in Lucknow. He was nearing his twentieth birthday. Moin was in college only that suddenly he fell seriously ill and passed away. Mohammad Mujeeb's second son Mohammad Amin was born on 8 February 1938. He took higher education in Europe and was Professor Biosciences at Jawaharlal Nehru University and in Jamia Millia Islamia. He passed away in 2014.

Mohammad Mujeeb was born at Qaiserbagh in Lucknow where his parents and relatives lived. Later, the family shifted to Dalibagh in a big house surrounded by huge land with river Gomti flowing close by. Mohammad Mujeeb was nursed by a close caretaker Rukmun. She was also the cook of the house. Mujeeb's other caretaker was Bibi Amman and the staffs were very affectionate and caring. The food and clothes of Mujeeb were taken care of by Bibi Amman and Mujeeb gradually became very close to her. Mujeeb spent his childhood days here that he counted as the best days of his life. Associated with this were the fond memories of Ramzan Ali, an illiterate villager in whose company Mujeeb grew. Mujeeb was hugely impressed by Ramzan Ali, regarded him as his friend and lovingly called him 'Naan'. It was Ramzan Ali's responsibility to drop and pick Mujeeb from school. On way, Mujeeb enjoyed a lot with Ramzan Ali, the memories of which Mujeeb cherished forever.

Ramzan Ali had several interests that exposed Mujeeb to different things. Mujeeb fondly remembered Ramzan's tastes for fishing, hunting, growing vegetables, making ornamental walking sticks with his knife, searching for edible wild fruits, training dogs, chasing monkeys and jackals and even killing snakes. The region bustled with snakes that Ramzan Ali used to kill. There were fruit orchards and seasonal vegetables were also grown. There were ample opportunities for fishing as well. Mujeeb remembered Ramzan Ali for all his engagements centered mostly on his likings. Ramzan Ali was deeply involved with nature, flora and fauna around him and would do only what he liked. He had passion for doing a large number of things and was always in possession of four things, a knife, a stick, his dog and bait for catching fishes. Under Ramzan Ali's influence, Mujeeb developed interest in nature and fascination for practical knowledge. Mujeeb became great admirer of Ramzan Ali particularly his eclectic tastes and love for free life. With Ramzan Ali, Mujeeb loved to frolic around in the city. Many interests that Mujeeb entertained were because he imbibed them from Ramzan Ali in one way or the other. Mujeeb admitted that it was Ramzan Ali who exposed Mujeeb to the idea of free life and was his "real teacher". Several years later, Mujeeb wrote an article in memory of Ramzan Ali that got published in the journal *Jamia*.<sup>1</sup>

Since childhood, Mujeeb faced health problems and suffered from stomach disorders very often. While very young, Mujeeb once felt seriously ill and there was hardly any chance of his survival. It was problem related with liver and Mujeeb was under care of a homeopathic doctor. He also underwent an operation. It was at this time that Ramzan Ali had come to their home. Mujeeb's home was a favourite destination for guests and relatives and there remained constant hustle bustle in his parental home.

Mohammad Mujeeb was given traditional education at home and the *Bismallah* ceremony was done on *Baghdadi Qaeda*. He also received at home the first lessons in Arabic and then Quran Sharif was introduced. The teacher responsible for taking these lessons



had a very disinterested approach towards teaching that irked Mujeeb. Also Mujeeb at this time was too young to understand the true essence of the teachings of Quran. The teacher was replaced with another teacher and Mujeeb and his sisters studied together, though Shakira studied behind veils, Sabira did not like paying much attention to the lessons. Mujeeb then read *Gulistan-Bostan* by Shaikh Sadi in Persian that was based on moral teaching. He read all the five Urdu books of Maulana Ismail Marethi to learn the language. After the lessons in Urdu ended, a teacher called Kali Charan taught Mujeeb English and mathematics. Mujeeb was good in English but a cipher in mathematics.

Mujeeb often shared that he was not much attached to his mother and Mohammad Habib was more doted son. As some of earlier siblings did not survive, hence Mujeeb's mother was very attached to her elder son Habib. She was very religious and particular about namaz. One day, Mujeeb in his quest to gain mother's attention offered namaz where other female members of the family collected for the rite. Mujeeb thought that by doing so he could draw his mother's attention towards him. Next day, he did the same thing again but got uncomfortable when he saw women of the house smiling at him. Mujeeb realized that he was exposed and started making fun of him, himself. But Mujeeb admitted that he had a special connection with his mother as he often pondered who loved his mother most. Mujeeb wrote in his autobiographical account that his mother had a very uncomfortable relationship with Mujeeb's aunt Maqboolunnisa (sister of Mujeeb's father). Mujeeb's mother spoke *Purbi* (eastern dialect spoken in rural areas) and the language was despised within the high culture of Lucknow. Mujeeb's father also complained about this but she did not stop speaking her *Purbi*.

Initially, Mujeeb did not even identify his father and by the time, Mujeeb started recognizing him, he had also developed some sort of non attachment with him. Though Mujeeb was scared of Mohammad Nasim, but admitted that his influence on him was great. His father inculcated discipline among children.

Mohammad Nasim had developed a culture of carrying out conversations during breakfast that polished the language skill of children. He used to engage children in exercise in Urdu when the family collected together during breakfast. Mujeeb feared making mistake before his father. He admitted that the impact of this experience remained with him forever and he felt embarrassed and surprised on discovering any error in writing or committing spelling mistakes.

Mohammad Mujeeb's father was very fond of his daughters that somewhere taught Mujeeb to respect and appreciate the women folk in society. Also, Mohammad Nasim had the habit of helping talent beyond constraints or consideration of family or community and had the magnanimity to appreciate the success of others more than his own. Mujeeb admitted that he owed to his father the interest he had in the happiness of other people and the gratification he felt for any success they achieved.

Mujeeb was very young when her mother fell ill and passed away. Young Mujeeb and Sabira were unable to comprehend as to what happened when they saw people crying at home. Seeing this, Sabira asked Mujeeb *"why was everybody crying?"* Mujeeb replied that *"he did not know but since everybody was crying, let both of us also cry."* Mujeeb said that after her passing away, his father did realize she did not get the love and attention she deserved. Her passing away changed Mohammad Nasim and he became particular about namaz and Quran. During evening namaz, the staffs and other religious people of the locality collected and Mujeeb also participated. Mujeeb's father always wanted him to evolve as a good Muslim and a fine human being.

It was around four-five years of age that Mujeeb was enrolled in Loretto Convent at Lucknow. This was the first school that Mujeeb went. When Mujeeb was around twelve years of age he came out of Loretto Convent and was enrolled in a Muslim school for a year. Mujeeb studied in Cambridge Preparatory School in Dehradun and received education according to Cambridge University course. He came in contact with Robert

Talbot Dalby, the Principal of the Cambridge Preparatory School, a wonderful person who loved and cared about his students. He taught them a number of subjects including English literature, Latin, mathematics, physical geography and the Bible. Dalby was a theosophist and under his influence, Mujeeb also developed interest in theosophy. Mujeeb renounced meat eating after he came to know that Dalby has left it. Mujeeb read the Bhagavad Gita, books by Annie Besant and other theosophists because of Dalby and he devoted time to learn Latin. Mujeeb also studied Persian in Dehradun. From Dalby, Mujeeb learnt to appreciate the importance of 'trying' even if not successful but at least making effort towards doing something new. These experiences broadened Mujeeb's vision and understanding.

Mujeeb later studied at Oxford said that even in Oxford he did not find anybody to match Dalby's personality. P. Roberts was one teacher who was like Robert Talbot Dalby in Oxford.<sup>2</sup>

After passing the Cambridge exam in 1918, Mujeeb returned to Lucknow. Mohammad Nasim then decided to send him to Oxford where Mohammad Habib was studying. At the age of seventeen years in 1919, Mujeeb went to New College, Oxford to join Mohammad Habib in educational pursuits. Mujeeb chose to study history. Mohammad Habib and his close friends KPS Menon (*Padma Bhushan* recipient; Indian Ambassador to China, USSR, Hungary and Poland), MC Chagla (Ambassador of India to USA, UK, and Education Minister) and AK Pillai (nationalist) also studied history. Mujeeb was hugely impressed by them.

Mujeeb developed habit of smoking in England. He happened to smoke pipe one day but felt very dizzy and uncomfortable. Mujeeb also tasted wine in England. In a social gathering organized by KPS Menon, Menon offered Portuguese wine to his guests and it was here that Mujeeb tasted wine for the first time.

Mohammad Mujeeb's interest to learn languages also enhanced in England and he learnt French. Mujeeb realized that he was more inclined towards literature than history. He became very interested in Russian literature. Mujeeb read Anton Chekhov

and collected several of his works. He found the characters in Anton Chekhov's compositions were different from characters of William Shakespeare and those in old Greek dramas. Chekhov characters were those men and women that one can relate to in day-today life. After Anton Chekhov, Mujeeb read Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevsky.

Mujeeb completed his studies and graduated in History in 1922 from New College, Oxford. As Mujeeb passed honours at the age of twenty years, he was considered underage to appear in any other desirable examinations. At this juncture, Mujeeb was advised by Abdul Rahman Siddiqui to learn printing from Germany. Mujeeb had met Abid Husain in Oxford while the latter was doing his research and Abid Husain liked talking in Urdu that impressed Mujeeb. Abid Husain at this juncture faced financial crisis, he also decided to move to Germany. The fact that Mujeeb would stay with Abid Husain in Germany further encouraged Mujeeb to leave for Germany. Abid Husain was the first to move from Oxford to Berlin later joined by Mujeeb.<sup>3</sup>

Mohammad Mujeeb and Abid Husain were staying as paying-guests in Herr Schwaner's house at Schlachtensee near Berlin. When Zakir Husain reached Germany in September 1922, he also joined them and stayed as paying guest at the same house. Mujeeb recalled that it was in Herr Schwaner's house that Mujeeb got first full view of Zakir Husain. Schwaner's wife was cordial towards Mujeeb and Abid. Their daughter Miss Aneelas taught Mujeeb German and Mujeeb taught her English in return. In her company, Mujeeb also started showing interest in music. Mujeeb started to learn the art of printing and composing that he found very tiring. He had to stand for around four hours at length during composing. But then he also realized the importance of discipline, a virtue he adhered all his life.

In his biographical account, Mujeeb recalled that he was hugely impressed by a Foreman and his dedication towards work. The Foreman was upset with government's decision to reduce working hours from twelve to ten while the Foreman believed

that one should work even beyond twelve hours. Mujeeb said that it was a great experience to meet such men in Germany and Mujeeb learnt the importance of dedication and hard work.

After staying in Berlin for a year, Mujeeb moved to Leipzig to learn the higher and finer arts of printing. There he stayed in the house of an old lady whom Mujeeb respected as a mother. On her insistence Mujeeb started taking dance classes. One day, while dancing with a girl in a party, Mujeeb realized how amateur a dancer he was. After this incident, Mujeeb chose to leave the house of the old lady and shifted to some other place.

Mujeeb always had a feeling that he was short heighted. He came to know about a dance teacher who knew a dance style in which the learner was first introduced to some exercise through which the learner can gain in height. On knowing this Mujeeb got himself enrolled in the dance school and stayed there for sometimes.

In Germany, Mujeeb got interested in music of the country and started learning violin and said that despite constant effort for two years, he was not able to achieve much success.

Though, in Leipzig Mujeeb was not able to acquire efficiency that was desired for the art of printing, but during this time, Mujeeb believed his mental horizon broadened. He was reading the German and English translations of Russian stories, novels and dramas. Mujeeb read Ivan Turgenev, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, Chekhov, Maksim Gorky and other writers. Mujeeb shared that he did not find anybody in Leipzig with whom he could discuss these works and all his readings were but isolated personal experiences.<sup>4</sup>

Mujeeb realized that he was reading the translations of Russian literature then why not read them in Russian language. He learnt Russian from a German friend and a Russian lady and read Alexander Pushkin. Mujeeb became so fond of the language that he took pride in saying that his original language was Russian while his friends said that it was either English or Urdu.

The desire to experiment in writing came to Mujeeb in Germany. He wrote an essay and read it out to his friends. He got critical response as some of his friends commented that he had brought in many issues in one article. After this experience, Mujeeb did not write any article for some time. Then he wrote a story that was liked by Sarojini Naidu's sister in law, Mrs. Chatto (Sarojini Naidu's elder brother was called Chatto by his friends) who was an American. After two weeks, Mujeeb again wrote a story and took it to Mrs. Chatto but this time she was not very appreciative. The last exercise of Mujeeb in Germany was this effort to write.

In his autobiographical account, Mohammad Mujeeb shared experiencing racial onslaughts both in Germany and England. One day, while travelling on a local train to Potsdam in Germany when a heavily drunk fellow passenger approached him and tried to pull Mujeeb from his seat saying that he was a Jew. Some other fellow passengers in the compartment came to Mujeeb's rescue and forced the man out of the compartment. Mujeeb said to the man sitting next to him that he was an Indian and not a Jew. Mujeeb realized that he might be looking like a Jew whom Germans despised and that would have enraged the passenger.<sup>5</sup>

Mujeeb faced another racial assault in Oxford in England, again a train incident and was assaulted by a British soldier. Nobody in the compartment moved. Then a man from the compartment went out and with him came the conductor who took the soldier out. A case was lodged against the soldier by the Police and Mujeeb was asked to file a complaint. However, Mujeeb said that he chose to keep out of this<sup>6</sup> and realized how British worked with silence and in a focused way with attention.

Mujeeb stayed in Germany for a period of four years from 1922-26. He polished his capacities in arts and languages and learnt German, French and Russian languages besides trying his hand in printing.

Herr Schwaner, in whose house they lived, was publishing a magazine for Primary School teachers and his son in law Dr.

Ehrentreich knew English well. It occurred to Zakir Husain that a book on Gandhiji could be brought out in German language. Zakir Husain proposed to print a book in German on Mahatma Gandhi that was accomplished with the help of Abid Husain and Mohammad Mujeeb. Zakir Husain and Dr. Ehrentreich together prepared the text and *Die Botschaft Des Mahatma Gandhi* was published. They invested their money in the task without any financial negotiation with the publisher. They thought that the money given to them was free gift and Zakir Husain's generosity did not allow him to remove this misunderstanding. The consequences can be imagined. The book was received well in both the academic and political circles in Germany.

Zakir Husain got a very attractive and reliable edition of *Diwan e Ghalib* printed from Kawiani Press in Berlin. The press established by Taqi Zada was acclaimed for its publications on modern Persian literature and Oriental studies.

Mujeeb admitted that he learnt from Zakir Husain that if somebody wanted something to be done in a nice way then one should not be worried about expenses. Mujeeb also learnt from Zakir Husain that one should take interest in everything around himself. With Zakir Husain, Mujeeb met many people of cultural and artistic tastes and his stay and experiences in Germany enriched his personality. He realized that the British wanted everybody to copy and adopt their ways while the Germans wanted to know the customs and cultures of people from different nations rather than expecting others adopting their ways.

Mujeeb had the opportunity to meet and interact with people that helped him understand the culture and literature of the country broadening his exposures to foreign ideas and culture in Germany. He spent most of the time in the company of Zakir Husain and Abid Husain.

Apart from these intellectual engagements, Germany had something more to offer that gave meaning to the life and existence of Mujeeb. It was Mujeeb's companionship with Zakir Husain that unfolded into something more magnanimous. One

day Mujeeb heard Zakir Husain saying that he had to take control of Jamia Millia Islamia. Abid Husain offered to join him. Mujeeb said that he too would like to join Jamia Millia Islamia. Zakir Husain said that Jamia was not the apt place for him and asked Mujeeb *“what would you do over there?”* Mujeeb replied *“I will do what you will do.”* Zakir Husain replied that *“if I take you to a deserted open ground, and tell you this is Jamia Millia, would you believe me.”* Mujeeb replied *“if you say so I will believe you.”* In 1926 Mujeeb came to Jamia, a university founded with initiatives of Mahatma Gandhi, Maulana Mahmudul Hasan, Syed Mahmud, Maulana Mohammad Ali Jauhar, Hakim Ajmal Khan, M.A. Ansari, Abdul Majeed Khwaja and other nationalists. The discard of government run or aided schools and institutions during the Mahatma Gandhi led Non-Cooperation movement gave birth to Jamia Millia Islamia on 29 October 1920 at Aligarh. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan remained the principal source of inspiration. According to Mohammad Mujeeb, Syed Ahmad *‘had a larger view of life than any of the purely religious leaders, and one must be grateful to him for having given common sense its rightful place in religious thought’.*<sup>7</sup>

The University was shifted to Karol Bagh in Delhi in July 1925. Mushirul Hasan and Rakhshanda Jalil observed that *“though founded by Muslims, Jamia was Muslim only in name, and the atmosphere was mixed and cosmopolitan. Thanks to the presence of several Hindu and Christian teachers, including a few from Germany, a country where some of Jamia’s founders and well wishers developed their antipathy towards British colonialism.”*<sup>8</sup>

In fact it took much dedication and commitment to live up to the dream of keeping the institution running that was different in its own ways. Faced with multiple challenges, the institution was on verge of being closed down. When Zakir Husain in Germany came to know about this, he had said that Jamia should not be closed down. Hakim Ajmal Khan said that in case he can bring Jamia to Delhi, to what extent he was ready to offer his service. The reply was he was ready to work for Jamia without



remuneration. Hakim Ajmal Khan replied that Jamia has to continue and in case money is required, he was ready to beg for Jamia. On 31 March 1925 it was decided that Jamia will be shifted to Delhi. Buildings in Karol Bagh were taken on rent and Jamia was shifted there in 1925.<sup>9</sup>

Tabeeb Jamei, (studied in Jamia) recalled that when he came to join Jamia in August 1926, much of the region between Delhi railway station and Karol Bagh was uninhabited and it was difficult to locate Jamia there. There was lack of proper roads and Karol Bagh had no electricity then. Tabeeb said that from outside nothing was clear that could be called a college or school. The boarding had no furniture nor flooring and boxes served as tables. However, strict discipline was maintained, things needed to be kept in place and nothing was to be left cluttered. When electricity came, great care was taken that it was utilized with care and not wasted. There was an instruction to switch off electricity when not required.

It was the same year that Zakir Husain, Abid Husain and Mohammad Mujeeb came to Jamia. They sailed by the Norddeutscher Lloyd steamer, SS Derfflinger to reach Colombo from where they reached Delhi in train. News about their departure from Germany was already ripe in Jamia. Zakir Husain, Abid Husain and Mujeeb joined Jamia in February 1926 and the team was welcomed with open hands and enthusiastically by the *Jamia Biradari*. Their coming led to the dawn of a new era in Jamia Millia Islamia and the institution started undertaking changes.

At this time Tahir S. Mohammadi was serving as Vice Chancellor. In the biography of Zakir Husain, Mujeeb wrote that Tahir S. Muhammadi performed his duties conscientiously and induced the teaching staff, who had become quite lax, to take serious interest in their work. But he and his contribution were completely forgotten in the enthusiasm aroused by Zakir Husain's arrival, and he was so deeply hurt that he withdrew completely from the social life of the Jamia, confining himself exclusively to

his teaching work. Any efforts at conciliation that Zakir Husain may have made evoked no response.

Halide Edib wrote about Zakir Husain that “*with his usual discrimination and persuasiveness, he selected suitable colleagues to create the new centre, and among them Mujeeb.*”<sup>10</sup> Zakir Husain became the Vice Chancellor, Abid Husain Registrar entrusted with additional responsibility of management of magazine *Jamia*. He was supported by Maulana Aslam in management of magazine *Jamia*. Mujeeb met Hakim Ajmal Khan, Shafiqur Rehman Kidwai and Hafiz Fayyaz Ahmad in *Jamia* and was hugely impressed by them. Mujeeb became Professor of history. *Jamia* in Karol Bagh had its office, library and class rooms. Mujeeb taught the history of India and England in Urdu. His students helped him in translating English words in Urdu. Mujeeb said to them that as he had memorized the Bible, his English was fine but he faced challenge with Urdu and wondered as to how to improve Urdu. It was then Mujeeb started writing in Urdu and evolved his own style of writing. As it was considered important to write for journal *Jamia*, Mujeeb started writing for the journal.

Mujeeb became in-charge of the newly established *Jamia Press* at Daryaganj, Delhi in 1928. Press in *Jamia* was opened with financial assistance of his father (Mohammad Nasim) and it could run only for two years. Mujeeb wanted to set the quality and standard of press as was in European countries. However this was an expectation that could not be met given the time and condition in India then and as Mujeeb also found mental incompatibility with this work, the press was finally closed down.

There were other constraints as well. The initial group of teachers in *Jamia* was faced with severe austerities since the university in consonance with the principle of Non-Cooperation with the British did not take any government aid and depended solely on nationalist support and initiative. Likewise, Mujeeb chose to work in *Jamia* at a salary of rupees seventy five rupees per month that was challenging. Zakir Husain founded the *Anjuman-e-Talimi-Milli* in 1928 and its members including Mohammad

Mujeeb and Shafiqur Rehman Kidwai signed the pledge to serve Jamia for next twenty years on a monthly salary of not more than rupees hundred and fifty. Joining of Jamia was a choice made by Mujeeb much against the wish of his family and friends. He was dissuaded by some close members of his family and relatives not to join Jamia on such a low salary. Mujeeb said that such assessments never featured when he chose to join Jamia.<sup>11</sup> Halide Edib said that *“with his abilities, backed by his family, he could have easily obtained a lucrative position. But, Mujeeb, preferred to work with Dr. Zakir, he chose the position of poor professor at Jamia- for those who work there must leave behind all desire for an easy life. Including the Principal, all received seventy-five rupees per month, which is barely enough to provide them with a roof and an austere sort of subsistence. This is a matter of principle at the Jamia, and though the choice of a voluntary collective privation has been achieved by a great many Hindu institutions, it is unique among Muslims. They explain this, because it means an inner discipline and sacrifice for an ideal which must stand the test of material privation, since the appalling low standard of the majority cannot be raised, though who pretend to teach them must share their hardships, and reduce the external difference to a minimum. It is sound psychology, hence the popularity of the Jamia among the poor. It is sound educational principle for those who, above everything, want to emphasize moral values and inner discipline as the only means of achieving freedom for the individual and the community.”*<sup>12</sup>

Mahatma Gandhi always wanted Mujeeb to work for Jamia. There are letters that Mahatma Gandhi wrote asking Mujeeb to continue in Jamia and his family to support him. While Jamia was still in Karol Bagh, Gandhiji wrote a letter to Mujeeb dated 5 March 1926 in which Gandhiji expressed his happiness at Mujeeb joining Jamia. Gandhiji said *“I am glad you are all fixed up in the Muslim University. I remember having heard from Zakir. I expect great things from you as I know you through Hakim Saheb and Khwaja Saheb. I would certainly love to see you and talk to you to come to Sabarmati.”*<sup>13</sup>

In another letter dated 7 November 1929 addressed to Mohammad Mujeeb, Gandhiji again talked on the issue of Mujeeb joining Jamia. Gandhiji said that he had a chat with Dr. Ansari about Mujeeb in Delhi and Dr. Ansari undertook to speak to Mujeeb's father and ensure Mujeeb's allowance from him. Ansari asked Gandhiji not to worry about Mujeeb. In Aligarh, Gandhiji made it a special point to speak to Mujeeb's brother Mohammad Habib, and wrote *"As soon as I mentioned the matter he said he would do as I asked him to and he agreed that you should be supported by your father and brothers. He seemed to be quite proud of you and proud of the fact that you were serving the Jamia. I mentioned rupees hundred and fifty as that was the sum you thought would be enough for you. Devdas just now tells me that rupees hundred and fifty might not be enough for you. I hope however that you will so regulate your life as to make rupees hundred and fifty pay your way. If you are now restored to health completely I would like you to go to Delhi at once and take up your work."*<sup>14</sup>

The next day that is on 8 November 1929, Gandhiji wrote to Mohammad Nasim and expressed his happiness at meeting Prof. Habib in Aligarh and had a chat with him about Mujeeb. Gandhiji wrote that he doted on Mujeeb praising him as one of the purest minded young man whom Gandhiji had the pleasure of knowing. Mujeeb is an acquisition to the Jamia. Gandhiji further expressed concern how Jamia was passing through financial crisis with many professors having cutting down their honourarium to rupees seventy-five per month. Gandhiji appreciated Mohammad Nasim for having been good enough not only to give Mujeeb to Jamia but to support him. Mujeeb told Gandhiji that his father had refused to support him. Gandhiji requested him *"will you not reconsider your decision and not only bless Mujeeb in his work at the Jamia but also give him all the financial assistance he may need which I was glad to be informed you were well able to do? If Mujeeb was not working in a poor national institution I would fully appreciate your refusal to support him for I do believe in parents not pampering their children. But here it is not a question of*

*supporting a pampered boy but supporting an institution to which he has the spirit of sacrifice enough to dedicate himself without reserve. Prof. Habib was good enough to assure me that he would have no objection to supporting Mujeeb. It will be a great relief to me and I am sure to Jamia to feel the assurance that you would support Mujeeb.”<sup>15</sup>*

A decade later in a letter dated 21 August 1939, Gandhiji again enquired from Mujeeb about his financial status and about well being of Mujeeb and Zakir Husain. Also Gandhiji was concerned about attendance at Jamia.<sup>16</sup>

Mushirul Hasan and Rakhshanda Jalil wrote about Mahatma Gandhi that he helped Jamia at every critical occasion, not only financially but also with encouragement and appreciation.<sup>17</sup>

The affection and concern of Gandhiji for Jamia served as source of strength to those serving the university. Mujeeb was deeply impressed by Gandhiji and mention of this finds place very often in Mujeeb’s writings. The idea of non-violence, patience, focus on responsibility, national integration and development that Gandhiji upheld and followed were impressing. Mujeeb hugely appreciated Gandhian idea that *‘mortals perish but good deeds persist in this world.’* In an article ‘Mahatma Gandhi aur Jamia Millia Islamia’ translated in Urdu by Ziaul Hasan Faruqi, Mujeeb wrote about Mahatma Gandhi’s interest with the institution. The article mentions the formation of Jamia Millia Islamia at Aligarh at Mahatma Gandhi’s call for Swadeshi and Non-Cooperation Movement in 1920. Mujeeb in this article wrote about the visits of Gandhiji in Jamia that were never planned in advance. Mujeeb observed that Gandhiji came to Jamia just the way as an elder visited the family without prior planning. During his visits, Gandhiji remained concerned about the educational and financial status of the institution. Mujeeb also wrote that it was Gandhiji who opposed the suggestion of change of name of the institution when it was proposed to remove the word ‘Islamia’ from the name of the institution.<sup>18</sup>

Mohammad Mujeeb read an article titled ‘Gandhiji’ (published in *Jamia* in 1964) at Jamia Millia Islamia on sixteenth death anniversary of Gandhiji that focused on the salience of Gandhian ideas in contemporary times. Mujeeb said that Gandhiji worked to enhance self competency. He was a man of principles and one needed to learn from his life and adhere to values and principles that he promoted. Despite the fact that Gandhiji had played such a formidable role to win country’s freedom, Mujeeb observed that many of his values were lost with one very sad development being rise of communalism.

However, Gandhiji stood as a model for architects in Jamia and they continued to be inspired by Mahatma Gandhi with Mujeeb being one of his ardent admirers. It was in 1926 that Mujeeb met Gandhiji. As Gandhiji had asked Mujeeb to come to Sabartmati, Mujeeb decided to visit the place. In June, 1926, Zakir Husain, Abid Husain, Shafiqur Rehman Kidwai and Mujeeb went to see Gandhiji at the Sabarmati Ashram (in Ahmadabad). For some reason the telegram informing him about the date and time of their arrival was sent in Mujeeb’s name. This was misread as Moonje (B.S. Moonje), with whom just then Gandhiji had come to a parting of the ways. In the Ashrams office, the telegram must have been put aside and they arrived as unexpected guests. They were, however, given lodgings and by next morning amends had been made for the mistake. The guests were asked to come for breakfast to Gandhiji’s hut and were seated in a row with Ba, as Kasturba Gandhi was affectionately called, serving us food when someone from behind said, “*How lovely!*” and they turned to see Gandhiji coming towards them with long strides. He seated himself on a cot nearby, with smiles of joy on his face, a gesture that Mujeeb remembered forever.<sup>19</sup>

Mujeeb fondly remembered the morning prayers in the Ashram and how Gandhiji followed strict disciplines including food and dress habits and wanted same to be followed in the Asharam. Mujeeb had the habit of smoking. During his stay in the Asharam, Mujeeb’s worry was where to smoke. Finding no

other place, Mujeeb used to secretly smoke in the bathroom in the Ashram.

The visit was a memorable experience for Mujeeb, the memories of which he revisited in Zakir Husain's biography that he wrote later. It was a historical visit with regard to their vision for Jamia. They had long talks with Gandhiji about Jamia and the possible methods of raising funds. Gandhiji said he was willing to go round with his beggar's bowl for Jamia. He wanted spinning be promoted in Jamia. For this purpose Gandhiji chose to send Ramchandran to Jamia who had spent some time with Gandhiji in Santiniketan.<sup>20</sup>

Mujeeb was close to Ramchandran in Jamia and shared some commonalities. Both were highly educated but adorned simplicity, were hardworking and cared about the students. Mujeeb used to play violin for the students on the other hand Ramchandran engaged the students in debates and discussions and promoted spinning. They upheld composite culture of India and inculcated respect for different religions among the young minds in Jamia campus. During his Farewell in Jamia, Ramchandran said *"the culture of Jamia and the brotherly treatment has impressed him a lot... the Hindu-Muslim differences are only because of ignorance and illiteracy. It is the students only who can bridge the gulf between Hindus and Muslims to create harmony and solidarity."* During the event, Mohammad Ali acknowledged the contributions of Ramchandran and said that the way Ramchandran served the interests of Muslims, the Muslims should also serve the Hindus as Islam also preaches the same principle.<sup>21</sup>

Mohammad Mujeeb was the first teacher to have a house constructed for himself among the teachers in Jamia Nagar in 1936 followed by Abdul Ghaffar Mudholvi, Barkat Ali and others. Hafiz Mohammad Fayyaz and Zakir Husain constructed their houses in following years. Mohammad Mujeeb faced hardships in Jamia yet he continued with grit and enjoyed his life in the campus. In the article, 'Speaking for Myself' Mujeeb recalled, *"I know that I offered to join Jamia Millia on an impulse and have*

*never been able to explain my action even to myself. But I have always hated looking around for the better job, and the line of least resistance has led me to seek wholehearted satisfaction in the choice I had made.... We had to justify continuously the existence of Jamia Millia Islamia, to remove suspicions, to withstand ridicule. And so service in Jamia meant really giving without question all that one could give and accepting without question whatever was doled out in return... we never had enough workers for a reasonable distribution of the total work, and so everyone had to try his hand at everything.” He also tried his hand at everything and to quote him, “I was not exception, and my failures made me sharply aware of my shortcomings. These failures were fortunately, were part of a long and continuing account. But being aware of them did not produce despondency or feeling of inferiority; it just corrected my perspective. The joy in doing what I could became keener and I saw, at the same time, that the shortcomings of others were as natural and inevitable as my own. But what has been most helpful to me personally is the habit of freely admitting my mistakes and of inviting others to do the same.”<sup>22</sup>*

In the chapter ‘Speaking for Myself’ Mujeeb raised a philosophical question about himself that he admits he had been asking very often to himself that “*whether am I wanted or not wanted.*” Talking about his experiences in Jamia, Mujeeb admitted that “*working in the Jamia made me feel that he could live a full life even if, according to any reckoning, he was classified as unwanted.*”<sup>23</sup>

Undoubtedly, Mujeeb believed the reason for his life lay in service to the institution. Much later, in a piece of writing Mujeeb again reflected on his decision to join Jamia. Mujeeb wrote that he joined Jamia without calculating the losses or gains. Mujeeb’s decisions to join Jamia met with appreciation from different quarters though his relatives did try to explain to him that joining Jamia and working on meager salary was not advisable, when he had better career options elsewhere. However Mujeeb explained that joining Jamia was not a ‘decision.’ Also, Mujeeb was never concerned to prove to others the logic behind him joining Jamia



and said that on this issue, he preferred maintaining dignified silence.<sup>24</sup>

He worked quietly and sincerely for Jamia. Abdur Rahman, a student of Mujeeb (Graduated from Jamia in 1943) recalled an incident when Jamia reached the uninhabited Okhla. The playground was in a very bad state, far from maintained. Students in Jamia were asked to clean and maintain the playground but they were reluctant. One day, Mujeeb reached the ground and started cleaning the ground himself. The students got their lesson, they felt embarrassed and then onwards they started cleaning and maintaining the playground.<sup>25</sup> Jamia got registered as a Society on 4 June 1939 after it was shifted to Okhla from Karol Bagh, however the university continued to reel under financial crisis. When it was registered, Abdul Majeed Khwaja was Chancellor, Zakir Husain Vice Chancellor and Hafiz Fayyaz Ahmad Registrar.<sup>26</sup> Mohammad Mujeeb was treasurer of Jamia Millia Islamia since 1932, an honorary position he held till 1947. The life-long members who had pledged to serve Jamia for not more than rupees hundred fifty a month were not able to draw salaries even up to that limit and were paid on an average rupees hundred to hundred and twenty five. Zakir Husain and Mujeeb's salaries were only eighty rupees a month and that too were delayed for months. Under this condition of financial paucity when the treasury section was literally dried up, one can well imagine how difficult it was for Mujeeb to deliver the responsibility of a treasurer.

A unit to collect financial resources was set up called the *Hamdardan-e-Jamia* by Shafiqur Rehman Kidwai and he used to collect donations, funds, grants for Jamia. Though shy, Mujeeb often accompanied Kidwai during such tours to raise funds on Shafiqur Rehman Kidwai's insistence.

KPS Menon in the convocation address on 29 October 1969 shared that Shafiqur Rehman Kidwai and Mujeeb reached Ceylon (Sri Lanka) in 1931 with the aim to collect funds for Jamia. Menon was posted on official assignment in Ceylon during 1929-33. Kidwai and Mujeeb stayed with Menon in Ceylon. For the

first time an Intelligence Agent of the British government started to keep an eye on Menon's house and the staffs of the house were being interrogated about the designs of Mujeeb there as Mujeeb was known for his nationalist proclivities. After Mujeeb's departure, Menon received a letter from Girija Shankar Bajpayee, Government of India Secretary that he (KPS Menon) made a mistake by sheltering Mujeeb in his house as Mujeeb had been delivering speeches in Ceylon against the British government.<sup>27</sup>

KPS Menon further said in the convocation that those times were known for anti-British designs by nationalists of India. In the same way, there were police reports on anti-British proclivities of Mujeeb. Despite this, Mujeeb and his colleagues in Jamia were held in high esteem and respected by the people and even by some members of the British community.<sup>28</sup>

Mohammad Mujeeb assisted Zakir Husain in day to day functioning of the university. The Government of India committee gave recognition to Jamia's degree by 1945 while Zakir Husain was its Vice Chancellor. The next year marked the *Jashn-e-Simin* (Silver Jubilee Celebration) that was a very special occasion for the university and its people. The Silver Jubilee Celebration committee comprised Zakir Husain erstwhile Vice Chancellor, Mohammad Mujeeb, Irshadul Haque Registrar and Abdul Ghaffar Mudholvi as members.

The invitation letter addressed to the well wishers of Jamia carried out the future plans for Jamia. It also contained an enclosed list of subjects soliciting support that may go for the welfare of Jamia like setting up of a library to host important books on Islam and India, starting a vocational centre and foundation of a women's madrasa. Apart from these educational buildings, desire was also to set up a Jama Masjid and a hospital in Jamia. Zakir Husain placed a request in this invitation that support may be extended for such works on occasion of *Jashn-e-Simin* so that the initiative shape up in coming years. Guests were invited to visit Jamia during the occasion to witness for themselves the works and achievements of the university. This appeal set out by Zakir

Husain met with exorbitant success. Zakir Husain targeted to collect ten lakh rupees, but, Jamia received financial support of around twelve lakh that exceeded the target. The appeal met with support from Bombay and the city alone contributed two lakh and twenty-five thousand rupees including a donation of rupees fifty thousand from TATA Trust.

The *Jashn-e-Simin* took place between 15-18 November in 1946, held from Friday till Monday. Programmes ranged from flag hoisting, laying of foundation stone of Jamia Masjid, women's functions were held and speeches by ulema were delivered. All India students' debate, seminars and mushairas were held, functions by Old Boys Association, swimming, sports meets were organised, dramas were staged and Scotts rally was held. The foundation stone of Elementary School was laid. The event was marked with other celebrations and certificate distribution.<sup>29</sup>

*Khanajungi*, the drama written by Mohammad Mujeeb was staged during the *Jashn-e-Simin*. Shaikh Sarmad's role was enacted by Obaidul Haque, Aurangzeb by Mohammad Ekram Khan, Dara Shikoh by Noor Ahmad. *Khanajungi* was readied for staging by Mujeeb and it was a hugely attended affair.

Incidentally, the period was marked by communal flare up and riots. Under this condition, guests' safe arrival in Jamia was a big challenge. Men like Akhlas Ahmad Siddiqui, organiser of Scotts Association and Abdur Razzack, who was the teacher in Jamia and their friends ensured the safe arrival and departure of guests during this Silver Jubilee celebration.

The *Jashn-e-Simin* witnessed enthusiastic participation by women. Despite the fear and constraints, apart from Muslim and Hindu women, European women also participated and Begum Mujeeb was very active during the event.

17 November 1946 (Sunday) was a special day for Jamia as the Silver Jubilee special function witnessed attendance by stalwarts like Zakir Husain, Abdul Majeed Khwaja (Chancellor), Nawab of Bhopal, Asaf Ali, Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad,

C Rajagopalachari, M.A. Jinnah and his sister Fatima Jinnah. A large crowd had assembled to see the guests in Jamia.<sup>30</sup>

A year after the celebration in 1947, Mujeeb was appointed the Pro-Vice Chancellor of Jamia to assist Zakir Husain and he became Vice Chancellor of Jamia in 1948 after Zakir Husain joined Aligarh as its Vice Chancellor. Mohammad Mujeeb took charge of the office of Vice Chancellor Jamia on 8 October 1948.

Indira Gandhi, erstwhile Prime Minister of India visited Jamia and during the Convocation on 13 November 1976 said that she was happy to see Mohammad Mujeeb in Jamia. Praising, Mujeeb, Indira Gandhi said that he was with Jamia in its toughest time and provided yeoman service to the institution. He took charge when Zakir Husain was entrusted with other important duties for the nation. Mujeeb had been a true friend of Jamia in all its difficult times.<sup>31</sup>

Post independence, Jamia faced paucity of resources as well and its funds began to dry up. As Vice Chancellor, Mujeeb sought the UGCs recognition for the university, but to his disappointment and dismay, Mujeeb's request was rejected initially. The rejection pained Mujeeb who observed *"those of our leaders who acted with courage and wisdom in other matters seemed to be inordinately afraid of objections when dealing with the Jamia Millia Islamia. They do not seem to have considered what we could be expected to do because of our history and special aptitudes to forge new and fruitful relationships between education and social aims, for which the college and universities that followed the prevailing pattern did not have the same experience as we. On the contrary, they obliged us to show that in fact we were not different from the usual type of government institutions."*<sup>32</sup>

Initially, the university banked on resources it had collected during the Silver Jubilee celebration but soon the funds began to dwindle. Mohammad Mujeeb put the case of Jamia before the Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. Jamia received a grant of one lakh rupee in 1952. This was followed by a Maintenance Grant two years later.<sup>33</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajendra Prasad and Prince

Mukarram Jah visited Jamia on the occasion of celebration of fortieth anniversary of Jamia's foundation in 1960.

Mohammad Mujeeb was hugely impressed by Jawaharlal Nehru and in an essay he wrote that discussing the life of Nehru would be like discussing the history of India for a period spanning seventy to seventy-five years as Nehru's life and personality had fused with the nation. He had pledged his life in service to the nation. Mujeeb remembered seeing Nehru for the first time in 1919. Mujeeb called Mohammad Habib *Bhaijaan* whose friend Mukundilal had come from Oxford and wanted to meet their family and explore Lucknow. One day Mukundilal said that Jawaharlal Nehru had visited Lucknow and was staying in Rajasaheb Mahmudabad's house. They all reached the Raja's house at Qaiserbagh where Mujeeb had the opportunity to see Nehru for the first time. Mujeeb remembered him as a young man of thirty-three years of age, very handsome, well dressed and sophisticated. However in this meeting, Mujeeb did not speak with Nehru. It was over the years that Mujeeb noticed the many qualities in Nehru and that he was a 'very nice man.' Also, Nehru wanted speedy implementation of things and did not like unnecessary arguments that he considered as wastage of time, though Nehru always adhered to and respected democratic expression and ideas of one and all. Mujeeb wrote that Nehru was fond of Jamia. In fact, Nehru was apprehensive of the fact that Jamia remained a little aloof from Nehru though Nehru always wanted to keep this institution close to himself. Mujeeb said that once there was a function at Delhi University followed by tea. The function was well attended and there were big tables, Mujeeb was on the other table. While Nehru was leaving, people lined up and passage was created in between for Nehru to depart. People were moving ahead and Mujeeb kept stepping back. When Nehru crossed ahead of him, he said to Mujeeb "*Acha Hum se Chupna Chahte ho*" (so you want to hide from me).<sup>34</sup>

In another essay, Mohammad Mujeeb praised Nehru's faith in secularism and nationalism. He looked up to Nehru for imbibing the best of western education serving as a link between India and the west.<sup>35</sup>

In fact, Mujeeb too imbibed the best of Indian and western cultures and critically responded on matters of secular and nationalist concerns. Ziaul Hasan Faruqi wrote that Mujeeb wrote the essay 'Wardha ki Talimi Conference' after attending the Wardha Conference.<sup>36</sup> Mujeeb in this article wrote about the deliberations that took place at Wardha, both in favour and against the scheme of new education policies as proposed by Mahatma Gandhi that centered on the concern of education through work for a self financed education. Gandhiji believed that it can enhance production and address unemployment. The article deals with both the limitations and the possibilities that can occur with the implementation of the Wardha scheme of education.<sup>37</sup> Mujeeb supported co-education for girls. He was critical of the British educational policy and said that it crippled Indian indigenous system of education. Jamia supported vocational education which was experimented in education policy implemented in the university. Arts and crafts were emphasized. Thrust was laid to undertake different occupations with focus on moral and intellectual growth and development of the individual and the society. Education was imparted as the means to acquire self-respect and reliance with accountability towards the society and the nation.

Mohammad Mujeeb promoted the idea of *Hindustani* and expressed concerns over communalisation of language. The Hindi Sahitya Sammelan's meeting held on 15 April 1935 in Indore decided the foundation of Bharatiya Sahitya Parishad. The views of Parishad's members and Parishad's paper *Hans* made Mujeeb unhappy and he disagreed with their ways. Essays published in *Hans* were in chaste Hindi and its editors were Munshi Premchand and Kanhayya Lal Munshi. Mujeeb concerns on language issue found vent in a letter addressed to Mahatma

Gandhi, read out by Jawaharlal Nehru during the Nagpur session of Hindi Sahitya Sammelan that was presided by Mahatma Gandhi. In the Sammelan, Jamia was represented by M. Aquil and Osmania University was represented by Maulvi Abdul Haq. On the issue of national language, Mujeeb wrote that at the call of the Indian National Congress to evolve a national language even Suleman Nadvi being a writer of chaste Arabicised Urdu simplified his style to suit '*Hindustani*.'

Urdu was not a language confined to any region or any community. Hindus outnumber as speakers of Urdu in north India. Even if Urdu cannot be called the national language, *Hindustani* can be called the national language, but Hindi cannot be called the national language. Concerned at the national language debate, Mujeeb observed that the way Hindi was being sanskritised, it would not be acceptable to the Muslims. Mujeeb further said that at the Indore meeting of HSS, Gandhiji identified Hindi with *Hindustani* and his message for *Hans* first issue had also expressed the same opinion. Mujeeb observed that by this though Gandhiji was using Hindi to mean the common language of the people who are zealots of Hindi and who are least concerned about language and are communalising the language issue in the name of Hindi. Even Bharatiya Sahitya Parishad is also inclined in the same way. Mujeeb said that he was very happy at the foundation of the Bharatiya Sahitya Parishad and believed that its foundation will strengthen the national language concern. He felt the same happiness at the foundation of *Hans*. However, he was disappointed after going through the content of *Hans* despite Munshi Premchand being its editor who had been a writer both in Urdu and Hindi. After reading *Hans* one gets the feeling that it was a journal of a particular religious community. Compared to other journals in Hindi, more words in Sanskrit were there than Hindi words. By calling the language of this journal as *Hindustani* would be as strange as calling its language as English. The contents of *Hans* do not conform to the fact that Indian communities were a single society comprising of diversities. Mujeeb raised the question that if there wasn't any

other community existing in the country than only one. And if this was so, then it was dictatorship. What further irked Mujeeb was why call Bharatiya Sahitya Parishad as Bharatiya and not Hindustani Sahitya Parishad. He expressed concern over effort towards revival of Aryan culture and sanskritised Hindi like *Gram* for *Gaon* (village) and *Varsh* for *Baras* (year). If Arabic is considered a foreign language than in that case Sanskrit was never the colloquial language of the masses. Mujeeb said that he was not against revivalism of Aryan culture and Sanskrit language but there should be a separate forum for it and not under the call for national language.<sup>38</sup>

The understanding of Mujeeb on language issue was supported by Zakir Husain and other people of Jamia also upheld the same view.<sup>39</sup>

Mohammad Mujeeb served the office of Vice Chancellor for a period of twenty-five years up to his retirement in 1973, the longest term ever served by any Vice-Chancellor of Jamia. During his term as Vice Chancellor, Mujeeb played instrumental role in bringing infrastructural development and introduction of various academic and technical courses in Jamia. Mujeeb was careful about rapid expansion of Jamia. He wanted to ensure the basic characteristics remain intact and focused on consolidation. Shamsur Rahman Mohsini wrote that developments in time of Mujeeb as Vice Chancellor can be divided in three phase, the first phase 1948-56 when Rural Institute was set in Jamia. Financial assistance to Jamia for erecting buildings and staff quarters in Jamia. Jamia College two blocks were erected with government assistance, sixteen two storey staff quarter, probably from jubilee fund.<sup>40</sup> In the second phase in 1957-62, Jamia received financial assistance for erecting buildings for higher education. In the third phase 1963-72, financial assistance were received from UGC for erecting buildings like the faculty building, science block, Jamia library, college and teachers canteens and teachers college extension wing. Jamia guest house was also built during this time. Jamia got its infrastructure in shape when Mujeeb was the



Vice Chancellor. Higher education was introduced, government funds were received and University degrees were recognised.

Since the beginning, medium of instruction was Urdu in Jamia as one of the basic components of Jamia's characteristics. But when M.A. in history was introduced with the initiative of Mujeeb, English as medium of instruction was introduced. This was against the basic characteristic of Jamia. Mujeeb argued that the M.A. students once they would go in the teaching profession, they would find it difficult if they were not able to teach in English. The responsibility of correcting copies of M.A. students fell on Mujeeb's shoulders as quality and efficiency had to be maintained.<sup>41</sup> Mujeeb mastered English with proficiency that was matched only by A.J. Kellat, the teacher of English in Jamia.

Educational exhibition was started in Jamia for children called '*Bacchon ka Mela*.' As other educational centres of Jamia also aspired to participate, subsequently by 1940-41, the *Mela* got transformed to include other centres and came to be known as *Talimi Mela* (Educational Fair). The *Talimi Mela* was held on Jamia's Foundation Day with the objective of celebrating the cultural and educational aspects of the university. In the workshop, Jamia displayed its intellectual outputs. Other centers from Delhi were also invited. Seminar, conferences, workshops, debates, sport competitions were organized during *Talimi Mela*. Exhibitions became a regular feature that gave opportunity for Jamia's centres to showcase their achievements. Initially, it was a one day affair but gradually it developed into two days and later three days and eventually a one week event. Delhi College students started participating and women involvement too begun. Cultural and literary activities were organized and dramas were staged to suit interests of children and elders. Members of Congress were also invited. Preparations were closely monitored by Mujeeb and sometimes he chose to write dramas for the occasion. This opportunity was utilized to showcase the works to different sections within Jamia and the Government also got apprised with the works being carried out in the university. This

was an innovative exercise that involved educational and cultural activities. Also, Mujeeb wanted to promote the motto of 'work is worship' among the Jamia fraternity<sup>42</sup> through such exercise and it was a great learning experience.

As part of consolidating Jamia was Mujeeb's continuous effort to get Jamia recognized by the government and under D.S. Kothari (Chairman UGC) Jamia was given the status of Deemed to be University by the Government of India under UGC Act in June 1962. Mushirul Hasan and Rakhshanda Jalil observed that *"With this recognition the Jamia employees were able to draw regular salaries in accordance with the Government and Pay Commission rules. The process of recruitment also began with the introduction of the Master's programme in History and Education in 1963 and undergraduate degree courses in physics, chemistry and mathematics. This recognition hastened the process of breaking through old barriers and awakening interest in the problems of teaching and research."*<sup>43</sup> Jamia became a Central University on 26 December, 1988.

After getting Deemed to be University Status, Jamia was able to offer various Graduation and Post Graduation courses, the doors of higher education was opened with efforts and initiative of Mujeeb. As Vice Chancellor, Mujeeb determined the major policies and refrained from interfering with day to day administrative activities. He was devoted to research and study and gave autonomy to officials in administration. Sadiqa Zaki observes that Mohammad Mujeeb was soft spoken but stern with his views and ideas. He never forced his ideas on others but discussed them to convince others.

Despite not being formally trained in Urdu, Mujeeb was sincerely dedicated to the cause of promotion of Urdu. He expanded the ambit of Maktaba Jamia by incorporating scholarly publications in languages other than Urdu. After getting Deemed to be University Status, Jamia had to incorporate changes to meet the demands of education. Jamia was attracting students and teachers from colleges where Urdu was not then the medium of

instruction. This requirement of accommodating them was taken care of by trying to promote other languages as well.<sup>44</sup> Department of Urdu was established and M.A. in Urdu was introduced in Jamia. Under the leadership of Abdul Ghaffar Madholvi, Urdu script writing course were set up so that aspirants from distant areas can learn Urdu and thousands of people benefitted from this course.

Under leadership of Shafiqur Rehman Kidwai, a department *Talim-o-Taraqqi* (Education and Development) was set up as part of the objective of Urdu education. Books in Urdu were written in simple language, easily comprehensive manner, keeping in mind the taste of readers among general masses and their knowledge of Urdu.<sup>45</sup>

During time of partition the university was targeted by communal forces. Mobs gathered in Delhi and angry crowds also surrounded the university. At this time, Mujeeb requested authorities to take control of the situation and the troublemakers around Jamia. Authorities also posted P.M. Madras regiment around the campus as a precautionary step. Mahatma Gandhi, visited the university campus on 8 September 1947 as mark of solidarity to the institution in the time of communal tension and infuse confidence among the people in Jamia. In a Prayer Meeting in New Delhi on 10 September, 1947, Gandhiji said “*I went to the Jamia Millia. I had lent a big hand in building up that institution... Just imagine, the national institution where many Hindus have been educated, is now afraid that angry refugees and the people who instigate them may attack it. I met the refugees who have been somehow accommodated in the compound of the Jamia Millia.*”<sup>46</sup>

Post partition years, Urdu suffered as there were few takers of Urdu left in the country and the language issue was communalized. During partition violence, the Maktaba Jamia was burnt down. It was revived by Mujeeb. The monthly journal *Jamia* was restarted post independence by Mujeeb and Mujeeb was a regular contributor to the journal.

Mohammad Mujeeb was very considerate over issues of women and refugees and remained concerned over offering service in ensuring rehabilitation of non Muslim refugees from Pakistan. He opened the doors of Jamia for refugee children. Mujeeb set up Urdu centres in refugee camps and books in Urdu were made available in these centres so that the refugees continue to get books for study purposes. *Urdu Marakaz* (Urdu centres) were established in places like Malviya Nagar, Bada Hindu Rao, Indira Nagar and Kalka Ji. Mujeeb wrote that post independence Jamia was assigned many difficult works and they were asked to make initiatives to develop cordiality between the Delhi Muslims and the refugees. They called the refugee and Muslim children at Bada Hindu Rao and they played together while their parents interacted. The same year in March, forty-five grief stricken refugees were admitted in the *Ustadon ka Madrasa* in training. Mujeeb said that they adopted them, trained them and sent them for works. Literature was required for adults. They got three hundred booklets published in Hindi and as directed by the government, they send them to different provinces. Two research institutes and institute of art, education and nursery school were started post independence.<sup>47</sup>

Mohammad Mujeeb often paid the fees and other expenses of these children quietly from his own pocket. After completion of education, he would support them till such students became self reliant. Embracing the wandering children was also recalled by Mujeeb in his speech during the Golden Jubilee celebration of Jamia Millia Islamia that took place in 1970. Mujeeb said that “*we adopted them as our own and conveyed the message of friendship and affected through them to their homes.*” When Urdu magazine for children *Payam-i-Taleem* was restarted, Mujeeb in his message wrote that *Payam-i-Taleem* was started in 1926 to enhance the interest of reading and writing among children. It got very popular among children. It was also expected that elders too take interest and write for children. Mujeeb recalled that when he had come to Jamia Millia Islamia, it was very difficult for him to express his views in his own language (Urdu) and the

journals *Jamia* and *Payam-i-Taleem* became source of his literary training.<sup>48</sup>

Mohammad Mujeeb contributed to other issues of national development and initiated and headed several organizations. The Taraqqi Urdu Board (replaced by National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language since 1996) was set up by the Indian Government with the initiative and efforts of Mohammad Mujeeb and Mujeeb headed Taraqqi Urdu Board for years. After the establishment of The Central Religious Educational Board, Mohammad Mujeeb was appointed its Joint Secretary in 1955. He became member of the *Adre Tahrir* (Editorial Board) of monthly magazine *Aaj Kal* published from Delhi in December 1956. Mujeeb was a member of Union Government's appointed committee in early 1960s to suggest recommendations on the review and reform of Muslim Personal Law. The committee had Hafiz Mohammad Ibrahim, Humayun Kabir and Begum Anis Kidwai among others as its members. Mujeeb was nominated member to the National Integration Committee by the Government of India in 1962. On the call of Jawaharlal Nehru, Mujeeb accepted membership of National Integration Council.

Nehru associated Zakir Husain and Mujeeb with Planning Commission to develop an integrated approach to education. Mohammad Mujeeb served as member of *Hindustani Talimi Sangh* and *Sahitya Akademi*.

Mohammad Mujeeb was widely travelled and lectured in several national and international institutions. He visited countries including Liberia, China, Russia, Yugoslavia, Turkey, United Kingdom and United States of America as member of delegations and seminars. Mohammad Mujeeb represented India at various forums internationally. He represented Government of India in the United Nations General Assembly in 1949 and travelled to China in the Indo-China Friendship Committee Delegation in 1951. He went to Geneva and Paris in 1952 and represented Government of India in the meeting of UNESCO in 1954. On 20 September 1954, Mujeeb visited Yugoslavia.

Mohammad Mujeeb was nominated member of delegation constituted by the Government of India to study the educational system of Russia in 1956. Mujeeb delivered the Welcome Address in the tenth annual session of the World Confederation of Organisation of the Teaching Profession (Washington) on 27 July 1961. It was convened from 27 July till 07 August in New Delhi. He visited Canada in capacity of Visiting Professor of Mc Gill University, Montreal in September 1961 and returned to Jamia Millia Islamia from Mc Gill University in 1962. The same year, Mujeeb represented India in the meeting of the religious scholars from different religions from diverse countries at the conference in Germany. Mujeeb delivered the Convocation Address at the 14 convocation at Shibli National College, Azamgarh on 20 February 1965. He delivered lectures in Universities of Ankara and Istanbul on invitation from Government of Turkey in 1966 and participated in the seminar on the subject '*Partition of India*' organized by School of Oriental and African Studies, London University in July 1967. Mohammad Mujeeb went to America to deliver lectures on Mirza Ghalib in various American Universities in April 1970.

Mohammad Mujeeb used to lecture on Indo-Islamic architecture and organized educational tours. One day (11 December 1972) when he was with his group of students on an educational trip to Qutub Minar, he began to realize that he was falling short of memory. On consultation with doctors, it was diagnosed that Mujeeb was suffering from brain tumour. Mohammad Mujeeb was operated on brain tumour on 16 December 1972. Post surgery, Mujeeb continued to suffer from amnesia that is loss of memory. He was unable to remember and recognize even the names of closest members of his family. The fact that he had lost command over his memory and knowledge pained him a lot and he started to feel the uselessness of his life. Mujeeb often complained to his doctors that if he could not be made fit to regain his knowledge, his life would turn futile and worthless. He requested the doctors to medicate him suitably so that he was able to recover his lost knowledge. However, the

doctors were helpless. Mujeeb mastered several languages but was unable to recover any of them. While he was recovering and gaining physical strength he started the quest to relearn English and it was only Mujeeb's self determination that paid. He started practicing the basic letters of English alphabets with a thick pen on big papers like a child of nursery class. After perseverance of practice, Mujeeb was able to recall English in a couple of years. The same effort he made for Urdu.

It was only miraculously that Mujeeb revived his knowledge of Urdu. Mujeeb wanted to write a letter to Hakim Abdul Majeed of Hamdard Dawakhana and he wished not to write to him in English. Hence he attempted to write to him in Urdu. Miraculously, he was able to complete the letter with few minor errors and there after was once again able to read and write Urdu. 'Meri Duniya Mera Deen' was the first article that Mujeeb wrote after he regained knowledge of Urdu.<sup>49</sup> He also wrote essays for 'Jamia' magazine. Mujeeb took charge again as Vice Chancellor, Jamia Millia Islamia on 2 April 1973 and retired on 8 October 1973 after serving as Vice Chancellor for twenty five years and in other capacities after 47 years.

Farhat Jahan visited Mohammad Mujeeb said that he was very fond of reading and was particularly fond of the Bible. He often used to translate English poems into Urdu. He had grown very old and because of his illness he had forgotten to write Urdu. This vexed him. Mujeeb used to say that he was helpless and often committed mistakes in writing. He started to practice as a child and after persistent effort, Mujeeb was able to write in Urdu. Still some words used to go wrong and Mujeeb felt sad about it. However he did not stop writing and after translating from English to Urdu, he used to give it to Farhat Jahan for suggesting corrections. Mujeeb was very sophisticated and Jahan observed that he always used a particular type and size of page and wrote with fountain pen. Farhat wrote that Mujeeb was very particular with time and followed strict routine as to when he had to read, take his food or sleep. Mujeeb knew wood carving and had kept

specimens with him. But as he had grown very weak and could not exert himself in such tasks, therefore he chose to spend his time more in reading and writing. Farhat Jahan met Mujeeb a week before his death and said that he looked vexed. He said that he was finding difficulty in breathing and sleeping. However Mujeeb was still writing the drama *Meri koi ma nahin hai*. He complained Farhat Jahan of tiredness and gave the drama to her for corrections. It was also difficult for him to listen properly because of which he was not able to understand properly what the others said to him.<sup>50</sup>

Ali Ashraf (served as Vice Chancellor, Jamia Millia Islamia 1983-1989) wrote that when he joined Jamia in 1977 as Professor, he had the chance to meet Mujeeb. Mujeeb had recovered from illness but then the impact of the illness was still on him. He had grown weak but was still a man of strong mind and intentions. Even Ali Ashraf praised that so well educated, Mujeeb could have got an occupation anywhere else but he chose to remain associated with Jamia. He recalled Mujeeb as being very broad minded and particular with time. He was careful in his conversations and encouraging towards others. Mujeeb was very happy with Ali Ashraf when after many years Ali Ashraf reintroduced *Talimi Mela* in Jamia on Jamia Foundation Day. Ali Ashraf observed that for Mujeeb the idea of Foundation Day was incomplete without the *Talimi Mela*.<sup>51</sup>

Chief Minister Jammu Kashmir, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah in the Convocation Address on 25 November 1975 praised the selfless services of devoted workers like Abid Husain, Mohammad Mujeeb and Shafiqur Rehman Kidwai to Jamia. He said that the impact and influence of their selfless service has left an indelible mark on him. The environment of Jamia therefore creates a common milieu to all those who carry similar ambitions for the nation.<sup>52</sup>

Mohammad Mujeeb passed away on 20 January 1985 in Delhi and was laid to rest in Jamia Millia Islamia cemetery.



Rajiv Gandhi, erstwhile Prime Minister of India expressed his condolence in following words, *“I am aggrieved to learn that Professor Mujeeb is no more. He was a staunch nationalist, a born teacher and a historian of vast erudition and grace... Jamia Millia and the country lose a fine representative of the culture of our land.”*<sup>53</sup>

## Personality

Mohammad Mujeeb was average looking and small statured but man of towering qualities and achievements. A calm and composed man, Mujeeb never surrendered to vicissitudes of life and faced challenges boldly in his personal and professional life. Thin and fair complexioned, Ale Ahmad Suroor recalled Mujeeb as sherwani and pyjama clad with a cigar always present in his hand. A man of reserved temperament, Mujeeb was generous, cultured, soft spoken and hospitable. Shamshur Rahman Mohsini wrote that Mujeeb had a reserved personality and talked less. A voracious reader, Mujeeb often kept awake reading till late in the night unless Begum Asifa interrupted him for rest. Whenever Mujeeb was engaged in writing, he hardly cared about food. However, he liked having repeated tea being served to him, the tea cup to be kept quietly on his table without reminding him to drink it.

Abdul Lateef Azmi said that Mujeeb was a straightforward person. He was magnanimous with tremendous sense of sacrifice and service for others. Affectionate, sensitive and compassionate, Mujeeb understood problems of others, readily agreeing to extend help to someone in need in all his possible capacities. Mujeeb was given to maintaining high standards in life and valued discipline as a very important dimension of an individual's personality. He was a man of honest principles and accomplished his works with sincerity and commitment. In fact in his autobiographical account that he wrote towards the end of his life, Mujeeb admitted that he appreciated a person who was hard-working and principled. Mujeeb championed freedom of thought and expression and

encouraged likeminded people in creative endeavours. Soft spoken but stern with his views, Mujeeb never forced his ideas on others but discussed them to convince those who disagreed with him. He had control over temperament and never showed uncontrolled anger on anybody. Mujeeb championed democratic values and fraternity, qualities that were also promoted by other members of his family.

Mohammad Mujeeb was fond of art and culture that were evident from his conversations, interactions and engagements. Other than literary and scholarly tastes, Mohammad Mujeeb also had an artistic bend of mind. Other than reading and writing, Mujeeb kept himself engaged in creative works like painting and stone-sculpting. He used to do wood carving in free times and Suroor wrote that he also gifted one sculpture to W.C. Smith.<sup>54</sup>

Mushirul Haq, Mohammad Mujeeb's Personal Secretary said that Mujeeb was fond of good dresses. His *almiras* were occupied with sherwanis that were sewed only in Lucknow by his favourite tailor Baqar. Mujeeb's connection with Lucknow was special as he was born and brought up in Lucknow and his connection with the city remained in one way or the other. In fact, the way his personality unfolded was because of the ways he was nursed and brought up in his early days, the impact of education and his relations with his family, friends and teachers definitely being decisive molders.

Mujeeb was secular, enlightened and broad minded and read the Quran and some works in Persian in his childhood. His interest in religion and philosophy made him study different religions, cultures and human civilizations as he desired to explore truth about the universe. Gopi Chand Narang said that like Zakir Husain, Abid Husain and K.G. Saiyaddain's personalities, Mujeeb also combined in himself the best elements of east and the west with rationalism and liberalism acquiring unique dimensions. Mujeeb had deep historical understanding and valued art and aesthetic<sup>55</sup> and was fond of *qawwali*, *sama*, *gazals* and music.

Though, Mujeeb did not observe the Islamic rites and rituals in conventional sense and hardly fasted or offered namaz but had deep understanding of Islam. His ideas of religion and philosophy and his concerns are present in scattered forms in several of his writings, stories and dramas. Akhtarul Wasey observed that Mujeeb was a quiet and unassuming person who always tried to remain withdrawn in himself but the more he withdrew, the more his creativity and intellectual talent became prominent.<sup>56</sup>

Mujeeb read Maulana Azad very late. However, once introduced to the writings of Azad, Mujeeb got deeply impressed by him particularly Azad's religious articulations. He read Maulana Azad's views on religion in Urdu for the first time as before Mujeeb had not read book on Islam either in Urdu or by any Muslim author or even in English. Mujeeb was under impression that writings on Islam were still orthodox meant only for propagation of religion.<sup>57</sup> It was only after reading Maulana Azad that Mujeeb felt the desire to understand Islam beyond rituals that he later discussed in his writings. Mujeeb wrote on beliefs and characteristics of Islamic civilization, discussed the history of Islam, civilization and culture and believed that Islamic civilization influenced the civilisation of world to a large extent.<sup>58</sup> He observed that Islam was not spread at the strength of sword as Muslims came to India interested in trade and administer as Islam also promoted migration and travelling. Belief to serving others was the spirit behind Hazrat Moinuddin Chishti coming to India. The sufis spread Islam to far off lands, far away from their places of birth. Mujeeb considered Islam as a complete package for human life and valued humanism as an important aspect of Islam. Mujeeb was liberal and adopted a scientific approach towards religions. Mujeeb promoted rationality and reasoning and was against superstition and orthodoxies of any form. A balance in life should be achieved through self control, principles and practices. For progress, balance between community and nation was desired, diversity be respected and economic equality achieved. Lessons from past and knowledge of history are prerequisites for a healthy and developing society. It is important

that human beings interpret the contemporary developments taking lessons from past experiences.

Mohammad Mujeeb was spiritually inclined towards Sufism. Mujeeb did not have formal education in Sufism, but Zakir Husain's attitude and views on Islam and his research made him inclined towards Sufism. Reference of sufis and sufism formed important component of Mujeeb's writing. He respected the sufis and held them in high esteem as their life and teachings helped in empathizing with sufferings of others. The sufis served society and humankind and Mujeeb upheld these values that helped him in understanding the concept of a good Muslim and human being. Infact, he regarded Sufism as the most valuable contribution of Muslims to human culture. Akhtarul Wasey observed that *Mujeeb lived the life of a thinker meditating upon the fundamental questions of human life, society and universe. He also lived as a sufi continuously trying to enrich himself and others spiritually....*<sup>59</sup> Mujeeb dealt with theme and aspect of sufism in several writings including *Indian Muslims*.

Mohammad Mujeeb had his own imaginations of a good Muslim and used quotes and sayings of sufi saints to illustrate his understanding of a good Muslim. Mujeeb often used sayings of sufis and saints to promote virtues in society, one being Shaikh Abul Hasan Noori who used to say, "*Sufism stands for independence, chivalry, transparency and magnanimity. A true Sufi is one who does not discriminate and considers all his children.*" Shaikh Moinuddin Chishti said that God considers Him close to one who possesses three qualities namely *dariya ki fayyazi* (river like generosity), *aftab ki si khairkhahi* (sun like beneficiary) and *zameen ki si mehmannawazi* (earth like hospitality).<sup>60</sup> Mujeeb too practiced these principles. He use to refer in one way or other in his writings to the preaching of eminent sufi saint Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya and his concepts of *t'at-i-lazmi* (performance of obligatory rituals) and *t'at-i-m'utaudi* (service of mankind performed voluntarily). In *t'at-i-lazmi* one benefits one self and an individual earns merit for himself. In *t'at-i-m'utaudi* one performs

such services that benefits the other people and is meant for welfare of society. This form of service benefits mankind. Mujeeb kept *t'at-i-m'utaudi* closer to his heart and practices as he valued social service. He felt disgusted with imposters of religion.

Mohammad Mujeeb was deeply impressed by Amir Khusrau and about him, Mujeeb wrote "*whether one wishes to...study philosophy or folklore, to sing or to induce spiritual exaltation, Khusrau is there as archetype. With him tradition becomes suddenly rich, versatile and exquisite. For centuries he was looked upon as the creator of Indo-Muslim culture. And even now we have to recognize him as the source of much to cherish.*"<sup>61</sup>

Amir Khusrau enriched the Indian culture by his experiments with language, music and singing styles. Mystics believed in cultivating the spoken language and they were the first to make the language of the people the medium to express spiritual ideas and to quote Mujeeb, "*nothing that has come down to us from that period is more delightful than the mixed Persian and Hindi lyrics of Amir Khusrau.*"<sup>62</sup>

In another article titled 'Shaikh Farid Ganj-e-Shakar' written for *Jamia* in 1970, Mujeeb reflected briefly on life and times of sufi saint Shaikh Farid highlighting the selfless service and compassion the sufis preached and practiced. He reflected that in present times, we have many facilities, despite this one has a feeling that nobody has the time to listen to others. This was in contrast to what the sufis delivered. Shaikh Farid and other sufis were always considerate towards those who came to meet them with any problem. They gave a patient hearing to the issues and concerns of people who visited the sufis. In fact, the sufis refrained from entertaining coveted positions in courts and camps so that they could engage in social service.<sup>63</sup> Mujeeb opined that it was due to this reason the influence of sufis was greater than powerful kings of the regions.

Amir Khusrau's ideas of liberalism, humanism, tolerance and reverence for all beliefs were central to Mujeeb's understanding of religion. Mujeeb wanted that religion should be followed in a

practical way and freedom be enjoyed in a responsible manner so that best of religion could manifest in man's action and deeds. His interest lay in understanding Islam beyond writings and scriptures. He yearned to understand the philosophy and practical approach that religion offered in a critical way. However, Mujeeb never wanted to be identified as a religious scholar. He was interested not only in Islamic religion and culture but also religions and cultures of the world. Mujeeb read about religions of world and Islam and was fond of the Bible. Farhat Jahan visited Mujeeb during the latter's last days often found Mujeeb reading the Bible.<sup>64</sup> Mujeeb read and studied different religions and culture to understand the essence of Islam. He used to recite the Quran and laid emphasis on understanding the true meaning of holy Quran. He valued noble and liberal values and tried to understand and evaluate political, literary and religious issues in historical perspective.

Mujeeb adopted mysticism, liberalism, intellectualism in his day to day life. He was engaged in his works and thoughts on issues of humanism and spirituality, a feeling manifested in his works and his relations with the people near and far. Abdul Lateef Azmi, the Managing Editor of Maktaba Jamia was close to Mujeeb said that the latter was often called a sufi. However, Mujeeb was not a sufi of any *Khanquah* or as understood in classical Islamic sense. Mujeeb was temperamentally a sufi that got reflected in his manners and behavior. A compassionate and non materialistic person, Mujeeb valued simplicity and non artificiality. Mujeeb was always helpful to others without expectation and never returned anybody empty handed.

Mujeeb's spirit of selfless service and his wish to serve human cause brought him to Jamia Millia Islamia at a time when the institution was suffering from all sorts of crisis. Despite being educated abroad, Mujeeb preferred to serve Jamia with passion and commitment. He did not go for some lucrative career. It was with his selfless services that Jamia sailed through difficult times to emerge as centre of modern and secular education and

learning. Mujeeb used to say *“Man should work relentlessly without distinction of loss and gain, big or small work, with concentration on day today work, execution with commitment and accountability towards work, these small tasks will give man his identity.”*<sup>65</sup>

The way Jamia evolved was but a manifestation of perception and services of men like Mujeeb. He did not consider serving Jamia as a sacrifice as when he left Germany with Zakir Husain, he had nothing in his mind but a determination that he had to live in Jamia and serve the institution. This is something he wanted to do and was happy with his association with Jamia. He executed his responsibilities with tremendous dedication. Hard working, affectionate and punctual teacher, Mujeeb made efforts to inculcate the same values particularly discipline among students and was supportive in matters of merit and vision. The curriculum of the university was designed to integrate cultural values of different religions and the same spirit was promoted among the students. Mujeeb wanted the students not only pursued high standards of education but inculcate a deep sense of respect for the composite and secular culture of India. He wished that they should not only learn and understand but also identify themselves with the rich Indian heritage and culture. Mohammad Mujeeb not only promoted cultural and moral values but his personal life was also imbued with these principles.

Mushirul Haq (Personal Assistant to Mohammad Mujeeb; Graduate from Jamia Millia Islamia) said that Mujeeb always kept himself engaged even at his home in Nasim Bagh. Even when he was stressed, he would never lose temper. Fond of alcohol and cigar, Mujeeb would engage himself in activities like wood sculpting, mud sculpturing and gardening preferably after coming back from work.

Despite helming affairs in Jamia, he never tried to gain personal advantage. Mushirul Haq wrote that Mujeeb had a big bungalow but residents were few that included his family and staffs. Mohammad Amin (younger son of Mujeeb) was at this time studying in Delhi College and there were whispers around



the corner that Delhi College was preferred over Jamia by Mujeeb for Amin because it offered better standard of education in English medium. However, Mushirul Haq said that Mujeeb preferred Delhi College for Amin so that he may not be given any preferential treatment on ground of being son of a Vice Chancellor in Jamia.<sup>66</sup>

Mohammad Amin recalled that he lovingly called his father 'Miyān Jaan'. The sudden and unfortunate death of his elder brother Mohammad Moin in February 1952 deeply impacted Mujeeb. Mujeeb pretended that this did not influence him much and he continued to offer solace to Amin and Begum Asifa. But actually, his enthusiasm and happiness for things had diminished. After coming back from Lucknow, the three used to remain silent and separated from each other at home. Begum Asifa spent most of the time in reading the Quran and offering namaz. *Miyān Jaan* in order to lessen his grief made mud statues and then he started carving in wood. Amin wrote that the first head that he carved out of wood was of *Bhaijaan* (Mohammad Moin). People in Jamia used to sympathise with him and the home environment was also not allowing him to forget the tragedy. Amin noticed that during this time *Miyān Jaan* preferred to meet more people from outside Jamia biradari. Then Mujeeb decided to send Amin to Germany as the looming sadness was not congenial to his health and education and Amin was getting weaker. Mujeeb also visited Europe and Turkey during this time.<sup>67</sup>

Mohammad Mujeeb's family was very close to Abid Husain and Saleha Abid Husain. Mujeeb and Abid Husain often discussed issues related to Jamia whenever they met. Saleha Abid Husain used to organize Muharram *majalis* (assemblies in memory of martyrdom of Imam Hussain and martyrs of Karbala) attended by families of Mujeeb and Zakir Husain. They often met on other occasions as well and hospitality predominated during such meetings. Saleha Abid Husain mentioned that Mujeeb was fond of tea and cigar, however he ate very meagerly.<sup>68</sup>

Mohammad Mujeeb was a dedicated teacher. A large portion of his salary was spent on the requirements of students and needy. Khwaja Mohammad Shahid reflected on Mujeeb's understanding of a good teacher. According to Mujeeb, a teacher is not a 'saleable commodity' and may not move to a place that offered higher salaries. He emphasized on teacher's training as an important practice in the educational culture of India. Jamia had a focused mission of training teachers in methodology of education for effective teaching. The teachers of Jamia were embodiments of patience, sacrifice and service. Zakir Husain believed that the teachers of Jamia did not perceive them as employees of Jamia but believed Jamia to be an integral part of their entities.

As a teacher, Mujeeb personified these virtues. In a speech at Aligarh Muslim University, Mujeeb reflected on the importance of education as articulated by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan.<sup>69</sup> Mujeeb said that Sir Syed Ahmad Khan never visualized education merely as means to get a job. His vision was broader. Sir Syed wished expansion and dissemination of knowledge and wanted important literary and educational works to be translated in Urdu. He even wanted to initiate Arabic and Persian institutions and wished expansion of scientific education. However, he did not get enough support from people so that his ideas could transform to reality. Apart from understanding the relevance of Sir Syed, the Muslim community needed to understand its own importance in plural India. Those living in India need to understand the problems faced by members of the other community/communities. There should be concern with regard to interventions towards ensuring justice to the depressed classes. One should empathise when members of the nation face any tragedy or disaster. Taking up welfare and constructive works, Mujeeb advocated were also promoted in the Quran.

Mujeeb in the article 'Taleem aur Jama'ati Kaam'<sup>70</sup> wrote that guiding forces in man's life are desire, principle and model (set examples in life). Apart from this, individual capabilities also serve as important guiding principle. The objective of education

is welfare, development and to have a life of comfort and as means for development of capabilities and wisdom. Education should be imparted in society to integrate society with religion, culture, history and generate awareness on contemporary developments. The role of a teacher is important not only in imparting education but inculcating values in students. Teachers who can integrate education with development of society will insist that the students follow them in such tasks. Work should acquire central space in life and targets can be achieved when unnecessary desires and emotions are held in control so that focus from work is not lost. This principle is followed by all developed countries of the world. Mujeeb while concluding this article observed that Jamia Millia Islamia was set up by those people who are fond of innovative crafts, they remained in contact with society and yet were independent. They believed in their capabilities and hoped they would progress with their efforts. Jamia served an example of this model.

Mohammad Mujeeb promoted research and study and encouraged autonomy to officials in administration. Shamsur Rahman Mohsini quoted Abdul Ghaffar Madholvi (another teacher of Jamia) that Mujeeb once donated his entire salary during the summer vacations to Jamia Millia Islamia so that books could be acquired for Jamia library. A devout teacher, Mujeeb believed that one should know the background of his students for better communication. Mujeeb Rizvi wrote that once an honourable member of Parliament raised question over ratio of Hindu and Muslim students in Jamia. Mujeeb responded to the Ministry of Education saying that *“we do not enroll Hindus and Muslims in Jamia. We enroll only students.”*

Despite being constantly engaged and working, Mujeeb maintained his wit and optimism alive. When he found any body sad and disappointed he infused liveliness by saying *“smile and see beyond.”*<sup>71</sup>

Mohammad Mujeeb was an agent of change. Selfless service and sacrifice set Jamia aside from other institutions and Mujeeb always wanted this character of Jamia to stay alive. He once said that to keep this spirit alive, the teachers in Jamia should get paid a little less, even by rupees ten, than their actual salaries. This Mujeeb thought was necessary as reminder to the fact that they are sacrificing something while serving a university looked up as an institution of sacrifice. Even, if the teachers do not get less paid then at least they should work for some more time so that their service exceeded their salaries. He promoted the sense of sacrifice by promoting this idea in consonance with the foundational values of the university.<sup>72</sup>

On the occasion of the hundred death anniversary of Mirza Ghalib in 1969, Mohammad Mujeeb got Mirza Ghalib's statue erected and installed in the campus of Jamia Millia Islamia. At Mujeeb's initiative, artists from Jamia made and gifted portraits of Mirza Ghalib to different distinguished universities.

Ale Ahmad Suroor wrote that Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi in his paper '*Sidq Jadid*' expressed severe objection to the installation of Mirza Ghalib's statue in Jamia and called it a deviation from the culture of the university. Ale Ahmad Suroor defended Mujeeb and said that Mujeeb's vision was broader than Daryabadi's views. According to Mujeeb, the statue was reflective of the virtues of Mirza Ghalib.<sup>73</sup>

Mohammad Mujeeb's understanding of Indian culture was mature and he respected diversity. He believed that respect for each other's culture and heritage was imperative for composite culture and the reason why he was adamantly opposed to partition. Mujeeb's concerns for India's freedom struggle premised on his efforts in championing the cause for an undivided India and opposing Muslim League's 'Two Nation Theory' and partition. Once while scrutinizing a draft constitution of Islamic State that was sent to Mohammad Mujeeb by some Muslim League leaders, Mujeeb found faults in it and commented "*for those who were thinking of creating an Islamic State did not realize that they were*

*creating in vacuum which grows out of established political and social ideas and habits, that it must be the culmination of efforts directed to a particular end and not the starting point of a religious and political adventure.”<sup>74</sup>*

Mohammad Mujeeb preached the Indian Muslims to remain loyal and committed to the nation and abide by country's democratic and secular ideals. They should participate in the social and political life of the nation and oppose tyranny and injustice in all forms. Explaining the importance of national integration, Mujeeb observed it to be a dynamic process that entails constant endeavour towards achieving it.<sup>75</sup> He identified music, poetry, art and architecture as important cultural roots of India and major binding force for the country.

KPS Menon in the Convocation Address on 29 October 1969 said that Mujeeb always envisioned preserving the composite culture of India. The partition of India came as a rude shock to the vision of a united India. It was a defeat for all those who had dreamt and worked for upholding the composite culture of India. Therefore, the mission was to preserve the cultural solidarity of India and men like Mujeeb remained committed to such dreams. To give this dream a practical shape, Mujeeb made all possible efforts.<sup>76</sup> KPS Menon praised Mujeeb to be dignified scholar and writer who has dedicated his life to Jamia. Mujeeb's life was an example of selfless service and sacrifice that he continued to follow despite facing personal tragedies.

Prof. Masud Husain Khan (succeeded Mohammad Mujeeb as Jamia's Vice Chancellor) remarked about Mujeeb in foundation day on 1st November 1973 that *“Mohammad Mujeeb remained associated with Jamia Millia Islamia for a period of forty seven years, and for last twenty-four-five years, Mujeeb had guided Jamia as the Vice Chancellor. Mujeeb was committed to Jamia with dedication and sense of sacrifice, such example is very few in history of educational institution. He is one among those selected personalities of Jamia without whose reference the history of the institution will be incomplete.”<sup>77</sup>*

## A Man of Letters

Mohammad Mujeeb excelled in realm of history and literature and wrote on myriad themes and subjects with depth and erudition. He was well read, widely travelled, inquisitive, intellectually committed and shared his wisdom in creative writings. Mujeeb wrote on themes of history, education and culture, sufism, secularism, art and architecture and life sketches. The gamut of Mujeeb's literature comprises of books, dramas, articles, essays, stories and biographical sketches. Personalities like Mirza Ghalib, Mohammad Iqbal, Amir Khusrau, Guru Nanak, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Umrao Jan Ada and Zakir Husain are few among many that Mujeeb touched upon in his writings. He was also constantly engaged in subject of comparative religion and tried to see the points of convergences and amicabilities between different religions of India and the world. His knowledge of English, Urdu and foreign languages facilitated his translations and he was very particular about pronunciation.

Mohammad Mujeeb penned many works on social issues and matters of universal human concerns. While Mohammad Mujeeb preferred to write in English and Urdu and carried out some translations as well. Mujeeb had immense exposure, he was a voracious reader and all these experiences helped him evolve as a writer. He wrote on myriad themes including religious, political, historical with deep intellectual insights and the present monograph draws a lot from them in drawing articulations on the life and personality of Mujeeb.

Mushirul Haq wrote that for Mujeeb, 'quality' was the prerequisite and he ensured objective and message oriented

writing. He understood his responsibility as a writer. With background in history, Mujeeb lacked formal education in Urdu and despite being engaged in administrative works in different capacities in Jamia, Mujeeb contributed immensely to Urdu literature.

After Mohammad Mujeeb joined Jamia, he contributed articles in Urdu journal *Jamia* on a regular basis and wrote essays on different subjects for the journal. A list of identified articles that he wrote for *Jamia* and in other journals is appended at the end of the monograph. Mujeeb authored and translated several works on subjects of history and literature. Some of his important works in Urdu include *Kimiyagar Aur Doosre Afsane*; *Shaidulla Aur Doosri Kahaniyan* (based on Russian stories); two volumes of *Rusi Adab* (History of Russian Literature); *Tarikh-i-Falsafa-i-Siyasat* (History of Political Philosophy); *Tarikh-i-Hindustan ki Tamheed* (Introduction to Indian History); *Insha, Adab aur Adib* (Literary Articles), *Duniya ki Kahani* (World History) *Nigarshat*, *Ustad Banne ka Mazaa*; *Hamari Azadi* and *Teen Natak*.

His dramas include *Kheti*, *Anjam*, *Khanajungi*, *Aao Drama Karen*, *Habba Khatun*, *Heroin ki Talaash*, *Doosri Shaam*, *Azmaish* and *Meri Koi Maa Nahin Hai*, the last remaining incomplete.

Mohammad Mujeeb's important books in English include *The Indian Muslims*; *A Glimpse of New China*; *A Bird's Eye View of Yugoslavia*; *World History, Our Heritage*; *Education and Traditional Values*; *Ghalib*; *Akbar*; *Dr. Zakir Husain - A Biography*; and *Islamic Influence on Indian Society*.

Some of Mohammad Mujeeb's articles in English are collected and edited by Akhtarul Wasey and Farhat Ehsas in the book titled *Education Literature and Islam: Writings by Mohammad Mujeeb* published in 2008. Articles comprising the volume include Right and Wrong in Education; Education and Traditional Values; Culture; Amir Khusrau; Iqbal; Glories of Indian Art; Islamic Influence on Indian Society; Gandhi and the Muslim Masses and the Meaning of Indian History and some others. Mohammad Mujeeb reflected on issues of historical concerns,

Sufism, education and culture in these articles. In the chapter on Shakespeare, Mujeeb acknowledged the great influence Shakespeare had on him particularly in enhancing his articulation and understanding the association between language and feeling. As part of school syllabus and out of his own interest, Mujeeb read Shakespears' *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *King Lear*, *Julius Caesar* and the *Merchant of Venice*. Mujeeb admitted that the writings of Shakespeare thrilled him to consider English beyond a medium or a language to its rich and vivid expressions.

In another chapter Mujeeb talks of the cultural richness that Urdu offers as the most widely spoken language of North India. He was appreciative of the collaborative approach that Hindus and Muslims had towards evolution of Urdu as a literary and conversational language and observed that such elements of cultural repository must be preserved. Mujeeb wrote thoughtfully on aspect of Sufism and composite culture with deep understanding of the cultural ethos of India. In the chapter 'Islamic Influence on Indian Society' Mujeeb observed that as early as the first decade of the fifteenth century, a Muslim Sufi was asked why he was so favourable to Hindi. And about a hundred years earlier people had seen that when Persian verses failed to produce a mood of exaltation in Shaikh Nizamuddin of Delhi, the singers took up some Hindi folk songs, and the Shaikh was soon in rapture.

The importance of indigenous system of education and the role of teacher in life of students is the crux of the chapter titled 'Education and Traditional Values' by Mujeeb. He made following critical observations regarding introduction of education by the colonial masters. The British Government introduced the new education basically needed subordinate officers who knew English. The new class that emerged had interests attached with British system, though they could not become members of the ruling class, and they could not become fully responsible to the people as well. The knowledge which the new education provided was limited as it came through the medium of a foreign



tongue, there was hardly any question of Indians making material contributions of its advancement. The new education fostered a feeling of intellectual superiority, the educated looked upon the ignorant and superstitious, and thought it a blessing that they could do so. Mujeeb observed that there were obvious advantages in the Hindu continuing to call himself a Hindu and the Muslim a Muslim. Religion was gradually converted into what we now call communalism; and the impatient among us regard it as the cause of most of our tensions. The new education taught us to exploit religion without being religious, to be free thinkers without being thoughtful. According to Mujeeb, the first task which education must accomplish if it is all to reinterpret values and thereby justify itself is to establish by all means possible the belief in India being one country and Indian being one people.

Mohammad Mujeeb observed that though the resources of the State cannot be utilized to teach religion; but they can be utilized to impress upon young minds the qualities of belief which makes it indispensable in our life. In this chapter, Mujeeb emphasized that teachers should encourage personal interaction with students as it is important for 'formative influence.'

Being a staunch secularist, Mujeeb dealt on the subject of secularism in perceptive fashion. Secularism must be inculcated wisely and patiently through positive concepts: the human being as the end product of evolution, the striving for physical and material welfare as the expression of true religiousness, personal fulfillment as the achievement of perfect harmony between material and spiritual values. The future of India depended on secularism and he believed that the organized institutional religions in India were not opposed to a secular state.

Different aspects of human behavior is analysed in the chapter on Umrao Jan Ada (originally biography of a courtesan by Mirza Ruswa). Umrao Jan makes a deep impression by her deep spiritual qualities, dignity and innate virtues, her sense of detachments that helped her survive the vicissitudes of life are

some of the aspects that Mujeeb dwelt upon while discussing Umrao Jan.

The collection comprises many more chapters and is a trove of knowledge and wisdom and also a source where Mujeeb shares some very personal reminiscences like his school days or his life in Jamia Millia Islamia.

Mohammad Mujeeb was initiated into learning Urdu by reading Ismail Marethi's books. Mujeeb was advised to read Annie Besant's translated English version of the *Gita* by Robert Talbot Dalby and he read with interest the translation of *Gita*. At Oxford, some of Mujeeb's friends on latter's request read out a Sanskrit poem on religion that influenced Mujeeb on India's plural culture. In the course of these experiences, Mujeeb developed liking for reading more books on philosophy and religion. It was in Germany that Mujeeb was drawn towards exploring Urdu literature in friendly company of Abid Husain and read Mir Anis and Mirza Ghalib. Ziaul Hasan Faruqi observed that though Mujeeb was educated in Dehradun and Oxford, but it was his stay in Germany that he understood aspects of history and civilisation with greater depth and analysis.

Mohammad Mujeeb read works of Russian writers including Anton Chekhov and was deeply impressed by latter's writings. He began searching for his books and gradually collected several works of Chekov. Mujeeb found the characters of Chekov's novels and dramas were based on day to day life and were different from characters of Shakespeare or as in ancient Greek dramas.

After reading Chekov, Mujeeb also read works of Fyodor Dostoyevsky and was moved by his writings. His works made him curious to learn Russian language to further understand the literature by Russian authors, writers and poets. Within a span of four years in Germany, Mujeeb learnt Russian language so that he could read the works in original. He read works of Leo Tolstoy. Mujeeb realized how the Russian dramatists in their works projected serious issues of society through simple characters. The realistic and candid representation of realities of life, happiness,

pain, elements of human psychology that were dealt in writings of Russian litterateurs and poets deeply influenced Mujeeb and impacted his writings.

Earlier, Mujeeb mostly wrote in English but later under influence of Abid Husain and Zakir Husain, Mujeeb started writing in Urdu and evolved a distinct style for himself. Ale Ahamd Suroor praised Mujeeb, Abid Husain and Zakir Husain as prominent writers of Jamia. Abid Husain was more inclined towards philosophy, Mujeeb towards history and Zakir Husain towards economics. Mujeeb's education in the missionary school and west impacted his ideas, writing style and formulations.<sup>78</sup>

The contributions of Mujeeb, Abid Husain and Zakir Husain was acknowledged by K.G. Saiyidain during 1965 Convocation address (10 November 1965) in Jamia. Saiyidain praised Zakir Husain for promoting the interests of country by his relentless services. Abid Husain served Jamia for thirty years and excelled in realm of philosophy and literature particularly Urdu language and literature. Mohammad Mujeeb devoted himself to Jamia Millia Islamia saying no to other lucrative career. K.G. Saiyidain said that Mujeeb was known for his speeches and writings particularly more in the language (Urdu is indicated here) in which Mujeeb was not very trained in the academic medium.<sup>79</sup>

Gopi Chand Narang observed that Mujeeb and his contemporaries broadened the ambit of prose in Urdu and Mujeeb's name may be counted one amongst those writers whose impact on twentieth century Urdu prose is immense.<sup>80</sup>

On the request of National Book Trust, Mujeeb wrote a book detailing the life and times of Zakir Husain. Mujeeb ensured that he maintained objectivity and authenticity. Mujeeb sent Abdul Lateef Azmi who was his Personal Assistant to Etawah to explore the exact and original date of birth of Zakir Husain and seek information related to his early school education. The book gives brilliant accounts of Zakir Husain's life. Mujeeb stayed close to Zakir Husain from their days in Germany to Jamia and had the opportunity to understand him closely. The book is authentic

with deep insight on developments related to life and career of Zakir Husain. Usage of personal anecdotes makes the work interesting and incisive.

Mohammad Mujeeb's monograph on Mirza Ghalib in *Makers of Indian Literature Series* was published by the Sahitya Akademi. He translated several verses of Ghalib. Realizing the difficulty in translation and making selection for translation, he said "*it appeared more judicious in the interest of Ghalib, and the present translator, to make a selection not on the basis of what is best known and most admired but of thought content and imagery... the ghazals and verses here translated are mainly from the earlier phase, and not from the well known edition, but the translator has consulted a number of persons with literary tastes and not relied on his own judgment only.*"<sup>81</sup>

Mohammad Mujeeb highlighted some very important dimensions of Mirza Ghalib as a poet. Ghalib sincerely acknowledged Bedil (Abdul Qadir Bedil), who wrote in Persian as his master, "*My admiration is so passionate, I cannot portray the majesty of Bedil's genius; how can a drop reveal the ecstasies the vast ocean bears?*" Mujeeb opined that Ghalib was a poet by nature and discovering the meaning of his poetry was a challenge to his audience. He could not be ignored, his verses difficult to understand and acquiescing to this fact implied a confession of defeat. Apart from this there was the majestic rhythm of his verse, the startling combination of words, never before attempted in Urdu to convey shades of meaning which the same words did not express when used in the conventional way. According to Mujeeb, nature did not inspire any of Ghalib's moods. He had an urban mind, and he could regard nature only as a background to human life.... no matter how far an intellectual or a romantic quest might take him, he returns to himself, to man. The poetic tradition which Ghalib represented was more than literature, more than culture. It expressed, vigorously and coherently, the response of human nature to the problem of human existence.<sup>82</sup>

*Akbar* was written by Mohammad Mujeeb for the National Integration Series of NCERT to educate the children on the cultural heritage of India. The 'Foreword' of *Akbar* was written by Shib K. Mitra, the Joint Director of NCERT. Mujeeb brought to the readers the information on Akbar's life, his thoughts and his reforms in a lucid manner.<sup>83</sup>

*Indian Muslims* by Mohammad Mujeeb is the *magnum opus* that delineates on Muslims' experiences in India. It further deals with issues, concerns and their participation in the country. Various facets of their life and activities are discussed in early, medieval and modern India. This is a very deeply researched volume and attempts to promote understanding on Indian Muslims, their administration, social life, religious thoughts, sufi traditions, philosophy, poets and writers. The voluminous book was published in the year 1967 in Great Britain. *Indian Muslims* is a classic, a milestone not only in the literary career of Mujeeb but also in the literature on Indian Muslims. Mujeeb gives a very classic definition of Indian Muslims as "*Indians who called themselves Muslims, who believe in the unity and fraternity of the Muslims as a religious and social community, and are capable of showing in practice that they act in accordance with this belief, however they might differ in doctrine and observances.*"<sup>84</sup>

Mushirul Hasan and Rakhshanda Jalil had observed that the book has force and unity, and is readable. Its breadth of view is impressive; its coverage is something incredibly learned. According to V.N. Datta, Mujeeb's close friend, the book is a brilliant *Tour de force* and a major work of reinterpretation and synthesis, skillfully constructed and engagingly written. The book has won and will long retain a special place in our historical literature undisturbed by changing concerns, for it is firmly rooted in knowledge and scholarship.<sup>85</sup>

In *Indian Muslims*, Mujeeb aimed to remove, as far as possible, the fallacies and illusions that arise out of the community's integration with some belief or practice, political figures, military or political achievements and social or political norms. He was

firm in the opinion that generalizations about Indian Muslims can only be partial truths and therefore would be misleading. He was equally perturbed over fact that history was under shadow of communalism and Aurangzeb was identified as a Muslim and Shivaji as a Hindu. Mujeeb expressed concern that an objective criterion need to be evolved by which both should be judged rather identification on religious lines. Need was to work on common interests. Mujeeb believed to identify common interests on secular lines rather than on religious bias. Things should be worked out in a way to find more enduring solutions. Common interest in history writing needed to be developed to arrive at unity at spiritual, political and administrative levels. He desired to establish moral and social standards, applicable to the people as a whole rather than any particular community, caste or individuals to problems like localism, regionalism, linguism, communalism and casteism. These problems, Mujeeb believed, deserved enduring solutions and historians can take a lead in discovering a solution. In his words, *“It is realized that children brought up on distorted versions of Indian history cannot later correct their perspective and become fair minded and tolerant citizens, and sufficient discretion ought to be exercised in presenting their history to them.”*<sup>86</sup>

While Mujeeb wrote *Indian Muslims*, he also came out with another book titled *World History, Our Heritage*. Major books and articles that Mujeeb wrote were at a time when he was discharging responsibilities as Vice Chancellor of Jamia Millia Islamia. Despite meeting official challenges as the Vice Chancellor, he was deeply committed to academic activities and the stress of the former never eclipsed his zeal as a writer.

Ghulam Haider wrote that a group in Jamia complained that Mujeeb was not paying attention to Jamia’s administrative matters that irritated Mujeeb to the extent that he resigned. It was only after intervention of Akhtar Husain Faruqi, Shamshur Rehman Mohsini and Anis Kidwai and they convinced Mujeeb to continue as Jamia’s Vice Chancellor that Mujeeb agreed to stay in office.<sup>87</sup>

It is no doubt that Mujeeb was engaged in various capacities in the administrative life of Jamia but he continued to contribute to academics and literature. Gopi Chand Narang said that despite being engaged in administration works, Mujeeb's academic and intellectual arena was expansive with equal command on English and Urdu. Though *Indian Muslims* is his commendable work, in the same way he made his mark in Urdu prose writing, despite his area being history and culture.<sup>88</sup>

Maulvi Abdul Haq was hugely impressed with Mujeeb and held him dear for being a fine and serious writer in Urdu. Encouraged by Maulvi Abdul Haq, Mujeeb wrote the history of Russian literature in Urdu during 1930-40 titled *Rusi Adab* in two volumes. He completed major part of this work under guidance of Maulvi Abdul Haq in Aurangabad (Maharashtra) in 1930. *Rusi Adab* was result of Mujeeb's interest in history and culture that eventually drew him closer to study literature. Mujeeb had read English translated works of Russian writers, poems and dramas in England and in original during his stay in Germany. *Rusi Adab* was thus a culmination of Mujeeb's extensive reading and understanding of Russian literature particularly works of Alexander Pushkin, Turgenev, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Anton Chekhov, Leo Tolstoy and Maksim Gorky.

The first part of '*Rusi Adab*' deals with introduction, the background of Russian literature, Russian poetry is discussed in five chapters and Russian drama is discussed in three chapters.

Part two details on political literature, literary criticism and Russian novels, the last category occupying the maximum space. Social and political developments of eighteenth and nineteenth century especially literary trends and movements are also discussed. Mujeeb wished to write a third volume of '*Rusi Adab*' but due to other engagements and constraints, this desire was not accomplished. Sadiqa Zaki observed that despite the fact that '*Rusi Adab*' was a commendable work by Mujeeb, it was not given the recognition it deserves.

Other historical writings of Mujeeb include the book titled '*Tarikh-i-Falsafa-i-Siyasat*' (*History of Philosophy of Politics*) in Urdu that was first published in 1936. '*Tarikh-i-Falsafa-i-Siyasat*' was later published in 1973 by National Book Trust. Mujeeb discussed and analysed the various ancient and modern political views in this book. Different political thoughts are explained and Mujeeb observed that the objective of politics is to strike a balance in the life of the citizens. This is possible in a milieu where there is cooperation and coordination between the society and the individual. Mujeeb believed that human problems can be addressed if one maintains balanced views on things. This principle was something that Mujeeb also preferred to adhere to.

Another very important historical writing is '*Tarikh-e-Tamaddun-e-Hind*' (*History of Indian Civilisation*) in Urdu published in 1951. The book was published by National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language in 1972. It discusses the growth and development of ancient Indian civilization, richness and diversities of Indian history and culture and synthesis of foreign and indigenous cultures through exchanges that forms the uniqueness of Indian society. The book comprises of eight chapters beginning with the study of Indian civilization in the first chapter while other chapters looking into different phases of ancient Indian civilization up to tenth century A.D. History of Aryans, Indo-Greeks, Parthians, Kushanas, Satvahanas, Mauryas, Guptas and Sangam period are discussed. The cultural exchanges with outside countries during different times and religious philosophies of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism are dealt in elaborate manner. Al-Beruni's '*Al Hind*' and foreign accounts of Hiuen Tsang, Indian medicine, astrology, dramas, polity, art and architecture in India are discussed. In fact, '*Tarikh-e-Tamaddun-e-Hind*' is a very rich and valuable book on early history of India.

Mohammad Mujeeb used to deliver radio talks later published in book form in Urdu titled '*Duniya Ki Kahani*' in 1938. The collection comprising seventeen talks are related to growth and development of different civilizations and culture from ancient to



modern world discussed in an interesting manner. Mujeeb made the narration lively and interesting and deals with the difficult issues of human persistent struggle for progress and development.

'*Nigarshat*' is a collection of selected Urdu articles that were written by Mohammad Mujeeb in duration of twenty years that is during 1927 to 1947 and were published in journal *Jamia*. In an article on the subject, Anisur Rahman (Professor, taught in the Department of English in Jamia Millia Islamia) observed that Mujeeb wrote on different subjects like history, religion, philosophy, education, art, culture and issues that were important for society and individual. He identified issues in society and wrote about them in an interesting fashion with suggestions as to how to deal with them or to resolve them. He further observed that Mohammad Mujeeb reached great intellectual height amongst his contemporaries and his name may be listed amongst top intellectuals of modern times.<sup>89</sup>

Ziaul Hasan Faruqi in the Foreword of '*Nigarshat*' said that Mujeeb came back to India after stay of six years in Europe. Writing in Urdu was not an easy job for Mujeeb. Though there was no dearth of education and training, yet translating his ideas in Urdu was extremely difficult for Mujeeb. It was only Mujeeb's immense love, devotion and loyalty for Jamia that Mujeeb started writing in Urdu for journal *Jamia*. Mujeeb admitted that his stay and experiences in Germany, particularly Russian literature enriched and transformed him intellectually.

Some of Mujeeb's other important writings are '*Tarikh-i-Hindustan ki Tanqid*', '*Kimiyagar Aur Doosre Afsane*' and '*Insha, Adab aur Adib*'.

'*Kimiyagar Aur Doosre Afsane*' is a collection of eight stories written by Mohammad Mujeeb in Urdu. In the Preface of the collection, Mujeeb wrote that two stories '*Pather*' and '*Baghi*' were originally written eight years ago in English while Mujeeb was living in Germany. As the Preface was written in 1932, it implies that the two stories were written around 1924. It was after reading these two stories the editor of *Jamia* requested Mujeeb

to write more stories to which Mujeeb agreed. When Mujeeb wrote the earlier two stories that is 'Pather' and 'Baghi' he was under influence of European culture, particularly the Russian impact was huge on Mujeeb. The characters were kept simple and one can understand the nature of the characters through their conversations taking place in different situations. They are realistic as Mujeeb restrained them from being artificial or loud. Also he did not try to address any philosophical issue but left the stories and characters open to interpretation of its readers. The stories collected in '*Kimiyagar Aur Doosre Afsane*' are briefly discussed below to apprise on his style and concerns.

The story '*Naya Makan*' is about Ayub Khan, a *taluqadar*, realizing the words of his *Pir* who used to tell him that man remembers God only when some tragedy befalls him. However, this did not impact Ayub Khan who continued to lead a life of luxury. Unfortunately, Ayub Khan lost his young daughter and a ten year old son both within a week. Their death came as a turning point in his life and he decided to spend the rest of his life worshipping Almighty. Ayub Khan started getting a new house constructed where he could spend the days worshipping God. However things changed again when he got attracted to a young beautiful woman labourer on the site. Ayub Khan got trapped in a dilemma. His wife had passed away and now he wished marrying the labourer. The fact that she came from a very humble background vexed him. How will his relatives respond and what will be the other social implications. All these issues disturbed Ayub Khan. However, when the house was near ready, he was taken aback to know that the maiden eloped with some other worker from the construction site. Ayub Khan sat in his car, ordered the driver to move on even without looking back at the new house. Mujeeb made use of language that suited the characters in the story to give it a natural appeal.

The story '*Khan Saheb*' is about Khala and Khan Saheb who were temperamentally opposed to each other. Khan Saheb was selfish and self-centered while Khala was a pious lady. While

Khala spend all her wealth on welfare of others, Khan Saheb was a miser. An imposter, all the time Khan Saheb would chant praise for God but in reality hardly took care of his own family. His wife and daughter Sakina lived in miserable conditions. Khala was very fond of Sakina and Khan Saheb's wife often used to send Sakina to Khala so that she could imbibe better values from Khala. Khala used to take good care of her and wanted to get Sakina married to a decent fellow who however was not very rich and earned meager salary. Ignoring this virtuous boy, Khan Saheb got Sakina married to corrupt old *nawab* just because the *nawab* paid him *Mehr* (security money paid by a Muslim groom to his bride at the time of marriage) ten times more than what the boy could offer. Through this story, Mujeeb tried to expose fake people living in society who pretend to be very religious but in fact are imposters and do not even spare victimizing innocent family members for their vested interests. The piety and innocence of Khala contrasted with the dishonest and selfish character of Khan Saheb.

In the story 'Pather', the 'stone' personified the character of Ghulam Ahmad, an indolent young man. Lying on a bed in a one room flat, Ghulam Ahmad often cursed himself for his lazy nature. Everything around him appeared to be out of his control and he despised the conditions and the people he lived with, his home, his wife and his servant. At times, thoughts did cross his mind that he should command responsibilities with greater conviction but then he was unable to break the shackle of sluggishness that kept him tied to his lazy life bereft of any happiness or enthusiasm. He was unable to move for any change just as a stone lay on the ground aimlessly.

The story 'Andhera' is based on relations between two village men Bhagwandeem and Mangal on a journey and things turning awry as they quarreled on way. Angry Mangal hit Bhagwandeem fatally, to be left lonely and shattered in the journey. The story delivers a very strong message that one should not fall victim to doubt and suspicion that can ruin man's longstanding relationships. This blurs man's intelligence and one may commit

blunder that one may repent later on in life. The title '*Andhera*' in fact symbolizes man losing wisdom in shadow of doubt and suspicion. Mujeeb used colloquial language for the conversations the characters carried out.

The story '*Kimiyagar*' is about Hakim Masih, an immigrant from Turkey who settled in India at a place called Khalidpur. Although he stayed in Khalidpur but somewhere he was dissatisfied as he longed to live in Turkey and the same was felt by his in-laws who despised living with the Hindu populace. Hakim Masih came under influence of his in-laws despite the fact that he was loved and respected by the Hindus living in the region. When cholera broke out in Khalidpur and was about to take the form of an epidemic, Hakim Masih was compelled to leave the place. But, he was very disturbed. He saw a traveler in his dream who said that true love for God lay in serving the society in a selfless manner. This dream changed his perception and Masih realized that one should not run away from responsibilities but execute them honestly. Hakim Masih regretted his decision of leaving the sick population in Khalidpur. He rushed back to Khalidpur and devoted himself day and night in serving the ailing denizens. He was soon joined by his wife in this service.

The story '*Chiraghraah*' is about a passionate lover of mangoes, Mahfooz Ali who lived in a small *qasba*. His grandfather wasted all his money in merrymaking. Mahfooz Ali's father Maqsood Ali was given to wine drinking and intoxication. Mahfooz Ali was well settled and entertained a different passion altogether. He was extremely fond of mangoes and invited guests to relish on all qualities of mangoes during its ripe season. He used to stay vexed during April-May when winds and rains destroyed crops and waited eagerly all through the year for mangoes to ripe. In order to take care of his mango groves that were attacked by pests due to negligence of caretakers, Mahfooz Ali asked for leave from his workplace. On denial of leave, Mahfooz Ali resigned in protest. Due to his passion, things started going out of his hand and the edifices of his well settled life began to crumble. His wife

quarreled with him and his family also abandoned him. People laughed at him, yet Mahfooz Ali remained adamant as he lived and died for his passion. A mango tree grew in midst of his grave close to place of his bosom, symbolic of passion that Mahfooz Ali had for mangoes.

The story '*Baghi*' is about a village railway station, the station master called Bade Babu, Ticket Babu and the Signal Man deployed at the station. Station Master was an optimist while the Ticket Babu was a nervous man and the contradictions in their perceptions and approach towards life is the central theme of the story. The Station Master was very fond of mango *kunj* (grove) and praised this wonderful creation of God whose canopy was source of peace and serenity. But the same grove was perceived by Ticket Master as hosting snakes that could bite and kill. It was this attitude difference that was displayed by both the characters in their relations with the outside world. While the Station Master remained calm in adversities, the Ticket Master would become panicky and frightened in the same situation.

The story '*Baghban*' is about two sisters and their approach towards life. Their father Wajid Hussain had taken up occupation in Bombay and earned good money through respected means. He was a champion of liberty of women and girls education and got both his daughters join school. After he passed away the responsibility of bringing up the girls fell on the shoulders of Zaibunnisa (his wife). The girls were different in looks and temperament, the elder Neyaz was simple, outspoken and the younger Arjumand clever. Neyaz had several suitors but she felt betrayed in different ways by Nadir Hussain, Abdullah and Hidayatullah who came in her life in different times. *Baghban* is the longest story in the collection shows how clever people gain by being manipulative.

The stories in the collection are interesting and carry strong social messages. Religious and communal bias should not come in between human relations and one should be responsible towards society. Passion can be the guiding principle in one's life while

perceptions matter in handling a situation. One should truly love religion and this should be manifested in man's action rather than in false impositions. The stories carry similar messages and the sentiments are very central to human life.

### *Translation*

Mohammad Mujeeb had knowledge of several languages that facilitated translations. Some of the works, Mujeeb translated were from Urdu to English and vice versa. Also Mujeeb translated some works from Russian and German languages meant to apprise a larger audience with works in foreign languages.

The translation of Mujeeb's drama *Aazmaish: 1857 ke Waqiat ke Mutalaq Ek Drama* is *Ordeal* and the drama marked the centenary of the outbreak of the first war of independence. Nationalist sentiments are evoked through this composition and later generations are introduced to the commitments of martyrs and freedom fighters in *Ordeal*.

Mohammad Mujeeb wrote *Shaidulla Aur Doosri Kahaniyan* in Urdu comprising stories that Mujeeb had read in Russian. This is a collection of six stories and Mujeeb translated them from Russian to Urdu as he found them interesting and meaningful. While the first story *Shaidulla* is about a lazy man who fails to make the best out of opportunities, *Jhoothi ki Kahani* is about two friends one of whom was a liar. However, his friend teaches him a lesson and exposes his falsity. *Kisan aur Lomri* is about a farmer trusting a fox. The maxim *habit die hard* is proven in this story. The fox killed all the hens of the farmer whom the fox had promised to guard. *Aqab aur Makri* is about reaching ones goals through honest means and sustaining success. *Phalsaphi aur Mali* teaches to remain focused and efforts made in right time bear fruit. *Sher aur Insaan* proves the maxim, discretion is the best part of valour.

Mohammad Mujeeb wrote '*Ustad banne ka Mazaa*' in 1965 which is Urdu translation of book written by Muriel Wasi titled '*The Romance of Teaching*.' The book is inspirational meant to

educate children of around fourteen to seventeen years of age attending High School and Higher secondary. The 'Foreword' of the book was written by Prem Kripal, the Director of NCERT. The book is message oriented and informs regarding lives and works of teachers like Laxmi and Vikram. A teacher's life is of dedication and commitment. Apart from teaching text lessons, a teacher plays major role in molding the character and inculcating values in the students. He should not only have command over his subject but set example through his works and commitment as a teacher continues to influence his students in one way or the other all his life. A teacher persistently educates his students to achieve heights of glory and takes pride when a student earns laurels.

'*India Wins Freedom*' by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was translated by Mohammad Mujeeb in Urdu titled '*Hamari Azadi: Ek Tareekh Jo Aap Biti Bhi Hai*' was published by Orient Longman in 1961.

Mohammad Mujeeb translated three dramas of Rabindranath Tagore, the collection called '*Teen Natak*' for Sahitya Akademi. The dramas translated are *Dak Ghar*, *Raja* and *Lal Kaner*, the plays of Rabindranath Tagore being *Dak Ghar*, *Raja* and *Raktakarabi*. '*Teen Natak*' was published in 1962.

Mujeeb also translated Mirza Ghalib's verses in English and sixteen century Korean poets works are translated in Urdu with the title *Korea ka Adab*. *Chand Nazmein* is Urdu translation of nineteenth century American poetess Emily Dickinson's poems by Mohammad Mujeeb published in journal *Jamia* in 1970. Mujeeb translated in Urdu the English poems of sixteenth century titled *Angrezi Shayari*.

*Dhauns* is story translated by Mohammad Mujeeb from Russian into Urdu published in *Jamia*, November, 1930. The work of Anton Chekhov is translated with the title *Shaadi ka Paigham*.

## Dramas

One very important aspect of Mohammad Mujeeb's literary career is dramas. Mohammad Mujeeb wrote dramas in Urdu on social, reformist and historical themes. The dramas of Mujeeb include *Kheti* 1931, *Anjam* 1934, *Aao Drama Karen* 1941, *Khanajungi* 1946, *Habba Khatun* April 1952, *Heroin ki Talash* October 1953, *Doosri Shaam* October 1956 and *Aazmaish* July 1957. *Aazmaish* was translated by Mohammad Mujeeb in English published with the title *Ordeal*.

These dramas were written by Mohammad Mujeeb between 1930-57. Sadiqa Zaki observed that Mujeeb did not write any drama after this as post 1957, Mujeeb was engrossed in English writing and was also translating works of Mirza Ghalib.<sup>90</sup> However, around six months before his death, Mujeeb started writing his ninth drama, *Meri Koi Maa Nahin Hai* that he was not able to complete and this may be the reason it was not listed in earlier writings. The first scene of the drama was published in *Jamia Mujeeb Number* edited by Ziaul Hasan Faruqi in 1986. This was the also the last composition of Mujeeb, therefore, this piece of writing is important in Mohammad Mujeeb's literary career.

Farhat Jahan wrote that Mujeeb was writing the drama *Meri Koi Maa Nahin Hai* when she used to visit him for providing assistance and Mujeeb gave this drama to Farhat Jahan to suggest corrections, if any. During these times, Mujeeb used to give his writings to others for suggesting corrections. The portion of the drama was still with Farhat Jahan when the sad news of Mohammad Mujeeb's demise reached her.<sup>91</sup> This ninth drama of Mohammad Mujeeb, thus, remained incomplete.



For *Meri Koi Maa Nahin Hai*, Mujeeb was able to write only the first scene. Mujeeb passed away in the midnight of 20-21 January 1985. It was around six months before his passing away that Mujeeb started writing the drama that eventually remained incomplete. As this was the last composition that Mujeeb was writing in Urdu, therefore this work acquires special importance. The drama is about Shahab, an educated, working, young man from a respectable family background from Calcutta and Zareena whom he proposed to marry. The drama involves another character Saba who wished to marry Shahab, however the latter was indifferent towards Saba. It is these complexities that the first scene of the drama entails with Zareena trying to convince Shahab that he did not know anything about her background and her mother. The drama is not able to reveal much in the first scene. The characters get introduced but as drama remained incomplete, the curiosity gets buried intermittently.

Among the other eight dramas that Mujeeb wrote, four were written before independence and four after independence. Abdul Lateef Azmi observed that before independence there were no female characters in the dramas of Mujeeb. Women came in Jamia post independence due to which the pre independence dramas of Mujeeb were devoid of female character. This was not because Mujeeb was against female representation in his dramas or was against their stage performances. As Mujeeb wrote the dramas to be enacted in Jamia and as there were no female in Jamia to play the characters, the dramas did not have woman character. Also, men of Jamia did not feel it right that they should enact female's roles. This would have affected the aesthetic feel as well. Azmi adduces these reasons to explain the absence of female characters in the earlier dramas of Mohammad Mujeeb. Post independence dramas of Mujeeb had female characters as women were part of Jamia able to play the characters. Mujeeb always wanted women representation and empowerment, so one way was to introduce women characters in his dramas and keeping woman central. Mujeeb was involved with the dramas not only at writing stage

but also as director, makeup man, actor and in stage setting that also involved carpentry works.

Mohammad Mujeeb specialized in history and had deep interest in sufism as such sufism also had its impact on his dramas. He admitted being influenced by Indian and European styles of drama but he was more impressed by Russian dramas. The realistic and candid representation of realities of life, happiness, pain and elements of human psychology that were dealt in writings of Russian litterateurs and poets impacted Mohammad Mujeeb. He assessed contemporary issues in the light of past occurrences that added a unique dimension in Urdu drama writing.

Abdul Lateef Azmi wrote that Mujeeb's dramas are counted as literary dramas of Urdu and not as professional dramas. He also mentions that there is a detailed book titled history of *Tarikh-i-Adabiyat Musalman-e-Pakistan o Hind*, (*History of Literature of Pakistani and Indian Muslims*) in fourteen volumes. The tenth volume of this collection is devoted to Urdu literature from 1914 to 1972 and discusses Urdu dramas but has no reference of Mujeeb's dramas. The chapter on dramas written by eminent scholar Ishrat Rahmani does not even mention about the dramas of Mujeeb despite the fact that dramas of lesser eminence by others are mentioned there.<sup>92</sup>

Ali Jawad Zaidi observed that plays written by Abid Husain, Mohammad Mujeeb, Ishtiaq Husain, Mohammad Umar Noor Elahi and Arzu Lakhnavi touched an extended field of human behavior, covering all social layers particularly the deprived and the usually misunderstood.

In the process of evolution of ways to educate children in Jamia Millia Islamia, the institution experimented with new methods and one of the ways was education through dramas. On special occasions in Jamia Millia Islamia, dramas were staged that not only entertained the children but also enhanced their knowledge on societal issues. Through dramas, effort was also made to inculcate discipline in children.

Though it was decided to educate the children through dramas, however, dramas that would suit the age and psychology of children were unavailable then. The responsibility was now on teachers of Jamia to write dramas for children. It was articulated that children should be given importance and priority as they are the ones who would shoulder responsibility of the country and community in future. With this desire and sense of responsibility, a favourite teacher, Abdul Ghaffar Madholvi took the initiative and wrote the drama titled *Qaum Parast Talibe Ilm* (Nationalist Student) in 1927 that was staged for children the same year in Jamia.

Further, it was Mahatma Gandhi who said that students should be engaged in educative exercises but he was also of the view that senior students, if required should plunge in the nationalist fray along with their elders. It was this vision of Mahatma Gandhi that served the theme of the drama by Madholvi. *Qaum Prast Talibe Ilm* was staged in front of a huge audience in Jamia also attended by Mohammad Ali Jauhar. The students enacted scenes related to freedom movement and it won immediate praises from Mohammad Ali and created fervour among students. After this drama by Mudholvi, a number of dramas were staged in the year 1927-28 in Jamia. However, even by then, dramas were not written and staged for senior students. Inspired by one drama of Agha Hashr and with some modifications, senior students were prepared for this drama. Madholvi observed that preparation of seniors for the drama was more herculean task than preparing young students.

Professor Wahajuddin of Hyderabad wrote a drama for teachers *Nikah bil Jabr*, (Forced Marriage) that was staged in Jamia and Mohammad Mujeeb's involvement started with this drama. It was Mujeeb who readied other teachers to participate and enact in the drama. Rehearsals were done and Mujeeb himself played the role of an astrologer. Madholvi wrote that Mujeeb was expert in make-up and selection of characters.<sup>93</sup>

The culture of writing dramas for adults and teachers was first started by Mohammad Mujeeb in Jamia and he also acted in some of them. Through his dramas, Mujeeb upheld and disseminated the ideas of rationalism, secularism and nationalism. Zafar Ahmad Nizami also observed that Mujeeb introduced the culture of drama in Jamia. *Anjaam*, *Kheti* and *Khanajungi* were the plays that Mujeeb also acted in. He was a very efficient make-up artist and had equal competence in selection of artists. Also Mujeeb converted the tours to historical sites as educational experiences elevating it from ambit of mere entertainment.<sup>94</sup>

Since Mujeeb's dramas were meant for staging in Jamia, they were first printed prior to staging. It was only after being staged that the dramas of Mujeeb were finally published. The dramas of Mujeeb were staged by Jamia Drama Club from time to time and got published from Maktaba Jamia. Mujeeb was very dedicated to Maktaba Jamia. He was Chairman of Board of Directors. It was his publications in Urdu from Maktaba Jamia that gave initial prominence and fame to the Maktaba.<sup>95</sup>

*Kheti* is the first drama of Mohammad Mujeeb written in 1931. *Kheti* has strong patriotic delineations that audaciously expose the opportunism of religiously motivated politics. It was staged for the first time on 30 October 1931 on the occasion of Jamia Foundation Day. During this time the Congress Committee held its meeting in Delhi and M.A. Ansari got the participants of Congress Committee Meeting to come along with him to see the drama *Kheti* in Jamia.

*Kheti* is based on the social and psychological understanding of the lower and middle class Indian Muslim community and deals with elements of superstition, prejudice, ignorance while highlighting importance of social values and reforms. Mujeeb expressed concern over the inertia that had crept in the Muslim community. He gave a call to the community to rise up under pragmatic leadership to participate in the country and community's developments. Muslims should work hard and fight against evils in society as it is real *jihad*. One should adopt the concept of

*jehad* not to manifest ones personal grievances but real *jehad* is fighting evil for the betterment of self, country and community. The community should understand the real meaning of the life of the Prophet that set example of sacrifice and hard-work. Muslims should follow liberal and right path. A true Muslim shall use his resources properly and rationally for development of country and community. Initiatives are needed within community for holistic progress and development. Mohammad Mujeeb advocated that one should be introspective, hard working and learn to earn one's livelihood through honest means without much indulgence in wastage of resources. One should not indulge in undue luxuries, vanity and arrogance. Philanthropy is advised. There should be peaceful coexistence between Hindus and Muslims. Conflicts needed to be avoided. Mujeeb advocated this also as the message of Islam.

The drama highlights how people behave selfishly for their vested interest. Community should be careful of masqueraders who mislead people in the name of religion. They manipulate the religious sentiments of innocent people for personal gains. There is an urge to foster national integration and emphasis on pristine values of village life is promoted by Hisamuddin. There is strong message to forge national solidarity. Written in the backdrop of the freedom struggle, there is effort to sensitise on issue of freedom movement and the Indians focusing on their organizational strength and indigenous works to avoid being tool in British hands. Mujeeb gives the message of peaceful co-existence and cordial relations with members of other communities with devotion for the country where one is born.

*Anjam* is a satirical drama on superstitious customs and practices that leads to the misuse of faiths and beliefs. *Anjam* was staged in March 1934 and was based on theme of conflict between individual's conscience and his own self as a consequence of sin, fear and repentance. *Anjam* has strong social and moral message and Mujeeb exposes imposters of religion. The central character Shaikh Najmuddin was involved in vices and corruptions of all

sorts while he was in service. He indulged in cheating, bribery, embezzlements, dishonesty and manipulations of all sorts fomenting injustice on many. He was so despised that even a Faqir refused taking alms from his home saying he is a sinner. Shaikh Najmuddin's conscience cursed him and post retirement he sought repentances for his wrong doings. He feared old age and death and tried to find solace by reposing faith in dogmas and artificial means. Through this drama, Mujeeb worked to expose the vices prevalent within the religious clergy who often mislead people in name of religion. The manipulations that Najmuddin suffered at hands of clergies troubled him and he became psychologically disturbed. A nightmare haunted him. A dark figure with a noose scared him. Unable to cope up with the stress Najmuddin ended his life by strangulating himself with his own hands. Through the drama, Mujeeb wanted to communicate the message that evils, corruptions, injustice, religious orthodoxies are suicidal elements, not only for individuals but for entire society. It is honest prayers, pure heart and virtuous deeds that bring an individual close to God. Mujeeb advocates that one should follow right path of religion. Repentance cannot be achieved for lifelong wrongdoings by paying homage or visiting dargahs and shrines in the end of life seeking forgiveness.

Other characters of *Anjam* were Maulvi Abdullah and Noor Mohammad. Their characters were created in such a manner to show how such men are a blot on Islam and humanity.

*Aao Drama Karen* was written by Mohammad Mujeeb in 1941 meant to introduce children to principles of drama. *Aao Drama Karen* is in five parts and educates children on subject of play and its staging. It tries to inculcate interest in drama among children. Mujeeb held drama as a strong medium to disseminate social and historical ideas and wanted to aware children on nuances of drama. Characters of Mahmud, Rashid, Khalid, Razia and Majid Saheb are central to this drama. Mujeeb intertwines a story in the process of educating on various aspects of drama writing and staging. For a drama, story is important coupled with

stage and actors. The plot has to be workable with apt portrayal of expressions by the actors to impress the viewers with the theme and message of the story.

On the occasion of Silver Jubilee celebration of foundation of Jamia Millia Islamia, the drama *Khanajungi* was staged in 1946. Among the dramas of Mohammad Mujeeb *Khanajungi* is the longest drama. *Khanajungi* highlights differences between rigid Aurangzeb and liberal Dara who was more educated and popular than Aurangzeb. Dara was ready to clash with Aurangzeb to prove his ability and authenticity to rule after he was challenged by Aurangzeb. Dara had support of the liberals and the Hindu populace. Aurangzeb had support of the Ulema and military. Dara respected Sheikh Sarmad. The death of Dara Shikoh and Sheikh Sarmad at the hands of Aurangzeb was symbolic of demise of liberal values in the society.

Mujeeb Rizvi wrote that in *Khanajungi*, the differences of opinions, ideologies and practices between Aurangzeb and Dara Shikoh were used as a metaphor to reflect on civil war, communalism and polarization during 1946. As the drama exposes the menace of communalism and fanaticism, it sends out a strong message that religion be treated separately from politics that remains a sensitive issue with the country. Exposing these limitations, Mujeeb hinted at the importance of pluralism, humanism, secularism and the need to respect the composite culture. Mujeeb viewed religious bias as a bane to plural accord of the country that he depicted through *Khanajungi*. Bashir Hussain Zaidi (*Padma Vibhushan* recipient; Member Lok Sabha and Vice Chancellor of AMU) after reading *Khanajungi* observed that even if he had not known that Mujeeb was an intellectual and an eminent historian or a writer but after reading *Khanajungi*, he (Bashir Hussain) would have been equally impressed with Mujeeb's literary proficiency.

The drama *Habba Khatun* has historical underpinnings and was published in April 1952 by Maktaba Jamia and has great aesthetic appeal. The drama has strong elements of sufism and

portrays the social, political and religious problems of Kashmir. The central character, Zoon, popularly known as Habba Khatun is central to the drama with overarched political developments in Kashmir. She was inclined towards Sufism. Mohammad Mujeeb had great understanding of the Indian culture, upheld the unity and integrity of the country and considered sufic ethos as binding force. Therefore, he interwove the element of sufism in this drama as well.

Mohammad Mujeeb remained well apprised on developments that took place around him. The disturbance of early 1950s in Kashmir and the challenges and efforts to rebuild Kashmir inspired Mujeeb to write this drama. Kashmir was affected by partition between India and Pakistan.

*Habba Khatun* carries 'Foreword' by Mujeeb. A fine poetess, Habba was contemporary of Mughal emperor Akbar. When the Mughals conquered Kashmir, Habba Khatoon defended the state's right of regional suzerainty. She promoted the idea of regional autonomy and was against Kashmir being subjected to any outside control and upheld ideas of humanism and respect for cultural values. Her persistent defiance of an outside authority and their interference in Kashmir region evoked a sense of support for her democratic aspirations for Kashmir among likeminded people.<sup>96</sup>

Habba sang for liberty of Kashmiris. She was married to Aziz Rather but the latter divorced her at behest of Yusuf who became the ruler of Kashmir. Aziz Rather was bribed and he took no time to divorce innocent Habba that extremely saddened her. After she became the queen, Habba insisted for better and accountable governance with emphasis on deliverance of welfare measures for people. But Yusuf was weak and alcoholic and did not stand the expectations of Habba and people of Kashmir. After Mughal invasion, Yusuf escaped leaving the people at the mercy of the Mughlas. He was incapable in defending the rights of the people and Kashmir. Kashmir was under rule of Yakub Shah while Habba wanted Kashmir to be in hands of Kashmiris. People wanted her to continue singing for the liberty of Kashmir.



Habba observed that if Kashmir is not defended, Mughlas will kill Kashmiris, all resistance will be silenced and the Mughals would say, “*it is peace prevailing in Kashmir.*” References of sufis and Sufism are important in all works of Mujeeb with reference of Syed Mubarak in *Habba Khatun*. As Habba is the protagonist in the drama, Mujeeb promoted the idea of respecting woman’s autonomy and creativity.

The drama *Heroin ki Talaash* was first staged in October 1953. The background of this drama was search for a woman who could suitably play the character of Habba Khatun. The characters in *Heroin ki Talaash* are Jyoti Prakash, Mrs. Mehra, a promoter of arts, Lala Swaroop businessman, Kailashnath lecturer and Kamla teacher.

A drama was written by Jyoti Prakash on the initiative of Mrs. Mehra and was meant to be published and enacted. It required a heroin Roopmati who should be a wonderful and virtuous personality. She should be experienced yet young, a pleasing face with nice voice and liberated attitude.

Kailashnath, Shiv Charan, Mrs. Mehra and Kamla comprised the team searching for heroin but it was difficult to search a person with so many attributes.

Kanurani, Purnima (wife of Keshudas, an IAS officer) and Nirmala were shortlisted to play the character of Roopmati. In the process of selection of heroin Mujeeb raised many social issues. He condemned the caste system, the missing values in life and attacked social malaise and stereotypes. Mujeeb said that drama writing and enacting in India is important. There was lack of respect for drama culture and women participation was not deemed fit as was evident from the decision of Keshudas who objected his wife Purnima from acting in the drama. As an IAS, he did not deem it fit for his stature that his wife performs in public. Women working on stage in dramas were still unaccepted in the society.

Nirmala the wife of Ramratan was also shortlisted and the team went to Lalaji Ramratan house but there also the issue did not materialize.

The search for heroin was turning to be futile and the team lost interest. It was mooted that Kamla can also be the heroin but Mrs. Mehra was unhappy with the idea. The role of Roopmati was offered to Mrs. Mehra in the last as the drama was written on her insistence and she was interested to play the character. However her age did not suit the character due to which even this idea had to be abandoned. Finally the role went to Kamala. Mrs. Mehra got upset and ousted Kamla from her house with the team with the insistence that they need not come to her home again.

Mohammad Mujeeb used different contexts to highlight the need for reforms in society. Freedom of women and liberty in decision making was infringed and Mujeeb voiced concern for women education and liberty. Through this drama, Mujeeb advocated the need for women to take interest in cultural activities that would add richness to society. As an important segment of the society, women need to be aptly represented in the cultural realm as well.

The drama *Doosri Shaam* was published for the first time in October 1956 and manifests an artist's (Chaudhary) mental and emotional condition. Sadiqa Zaki observed that compared to other dramas of Mohammad Mujeeb, the plot structuring of *Doosri Shaam* is more compact. Problems of characters are well brought out in *Doosri Shaam*. The theme of *Doosri Shaam* was based on problems of matrimonial life. The central character of the drama is an artiste Chaudhary who ignores the love and devotion of his first wife. Chaudhary feels suffocated by the overindulgence and impeccabilities shown by his second wife Shyama as well and fails to satiate emotionally both his wives. The first wife was careless about the artistic capabilities while Shyama was educated, ambitious, cared for his artistic qualities wanting the world should see and praise Chaudhary's art. However, Chaudhary was content with his creations and was not

much interested in shows and exhibitions that were insisted on by Shyama. Chaudhary in frustration wanted to abandon his home and at this juncture, he was stopped by his first wife.

The message is that matrimonial life is successful only when there is understanding between spouses and the relationship is based on respect, care and compatibility. Also, for a devoted artist, his creativity, his sincere passion for his work is his reward and he hardly cares about showcasing his work to the outside world.

The drama *Aazmaish: 1857 ke Waqiat ke Mutalaq Ek Drama* was written in 1957 to mark hundred years of First War of Independence, 1857. *Aazmaish* was a very successful drama of Mujeeb. In this historical play, Mujeeb talked of the freedom movement and martyrdom of Indians during the war. Participation of different classes including women against the British for freedom sake and the retributions unleashed by the colonial regime are vividly discussed.

*Aazmaish* was translated by Mohammad Mujeeb in English published as *Ordeal* in 1958. Mohammad Mujeeb in the Foreword of *Ordeal* wrote that “*this play presents some aspects of the struggle of 1857 at Delhi which have generally been ignored by historians and politicians. It was the participation of the people on which the play concentrated and it also marks an attempt, mainly by implication, to distinguish between issues that were relevant and those that were irrelevant. The characters and incidents of the play were not entirely fictitious. Bakht Khan was a historical figure. There was evidence in regard to the participation of the Kahars of the Boys’ Brigade. There may not be documentary proof for all the details, but the action of the play was in harmony with established historical facts.*”<sup>97</sup>

*Ordeal* has five Acts with Act Four divided in three scenes. The different Acts deal with different phases of the war including the Mughal rule, Indian army seizing Delhi and the takeover of Delhi by British army. The undaunted spirit and the *en masse* participation of the Indians under extreme difficulties is the highlight of *Ordeal*.

In the first Act, the stage is set as the Dewan Khana of Mirza Mughal's palace. The rebels reach Delhi and declared Bahadur Shah Zafar as the emperor of India. Also there was confusion and chaos in Delhi with people being beaten up and houses looted. In the second Act, Mujeeb talked of *chapatis* being distributed all over the country for about a year. Mohammad Yusuf, the Court Jeweler said that *"those who were given chapatis ate a bit and passed them on to others. No one has told me what this means, but I ate my bit of chapati and passed it on, because I felt it was some mysterious means of creating unity of purpose among us."* The idea of the war gets promoted and disseminated. In the third Act, Mujeeb wrote about General Bakht Khan and the condition in Delhi. There was crisis of food and discipline among the ranks and files of soldiers who had assembled to fight for the cause of freedom. Soldiers were starving and there were crisis of all sorts that troubled Bakht Khan.

Mohammad Yusuf reported Bakht Khan that men were ready to fight and said *"I do not know how many of them are Ghazis, but every mother's son is an enthusiast, fighting in the name of God. They all know under what circumstances they have to fight, how much hope there is of victory and what fate awaits them in case of defeat."*<sup>98</sup> Mujeeb also talked of women participation including Munnī Begum (a singer) and Salma Begum (Mohammad Yusuf's fiancée) offering their service during the war.

The fourth Act discusses the last days of the siege of Delhi when the administration and the army in Delhi had become completely disorganized. Mujeeb said that despite the fact that there was anarchy, young boys showed their enthusiasm to join the ranks of mutineers defying death. The British broke into the city from side of the Kashmere Gate and unleashed retribution causing death and misery on the Indian masses. The martyrdom of Munnī Begum is commemorated in following words of General Bakht Khan, *"What can the British take away from those who have such riches."*<sup>99</sup>

Mohammad Mujeeb shows Bakht Khan talking of the departure of the Old Man (Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar) the women folk and his Hakim to Humayun's Tomb. Even Bakht Khan contemplated to leave Delhi for some other destination. The British are capturing the town. However Mohammad Yusuf continued to stay in the city and continued putting up resistance. His patriotic sentiments were depicted in following words, "*I was fighting against the British and my only chance of victory is in surrendering my life.*"<sup>100</sup>

The last Act deals with chaos in Delhi. There is image of death and defiance. Bhagwati wife of Ram Sahay gave asylum to Rani Kishan Kunwar and Salma who had taken part in the great uprising. House of Seth Ram Sahay was searched by British soldiers and the two ladies Rani and Salma appear before them saying, "*we have fought for our country and our emperor... we have shot down enemies.*"<sup>101</sup> These soldiers were Indian who had disguised themselves as British and were sent by General Bakht Khan to trace the two women and bring them back to him safely. The drama ends with national anthem '*Jana Gana Mana*' signifying the struggle for independence and attainment of independence. The 1857 war of independence was definitely an epoch in Indian history and *Aazmaish* and *Ordeal* by Mohammad Mujeeb was a novel way of commemorating the national struggle.

Mohammad Mujeeb wrote the dramas with deep understanding of historical and contemporary developments and deserves to be subject of greater serious academic research, discussion and study. The dramas bear deep influence of Mohammad Mujeeb's personality and his understanding of sentiments and situations and always carried some important social and historical message. He exposed the weaknesses and malaise of the society yet was always suggestive of the goodness that can be achieved. Women characters gradually become strong in his dramas. The dramas were educative and reformist meant to sensitize society and keep the audience informed.

## Select Urdu Articles of Mohammad Mujeeb

Mohammad Mujeeb wrote extensively in Urdu and reflected on diverse issues that necessitates a more indepth study of his compositions for larger research and analysis. It has been observed that many of his articles in Urdu are still unexplored and a select list of his articles is collated for facilitating future researches.

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