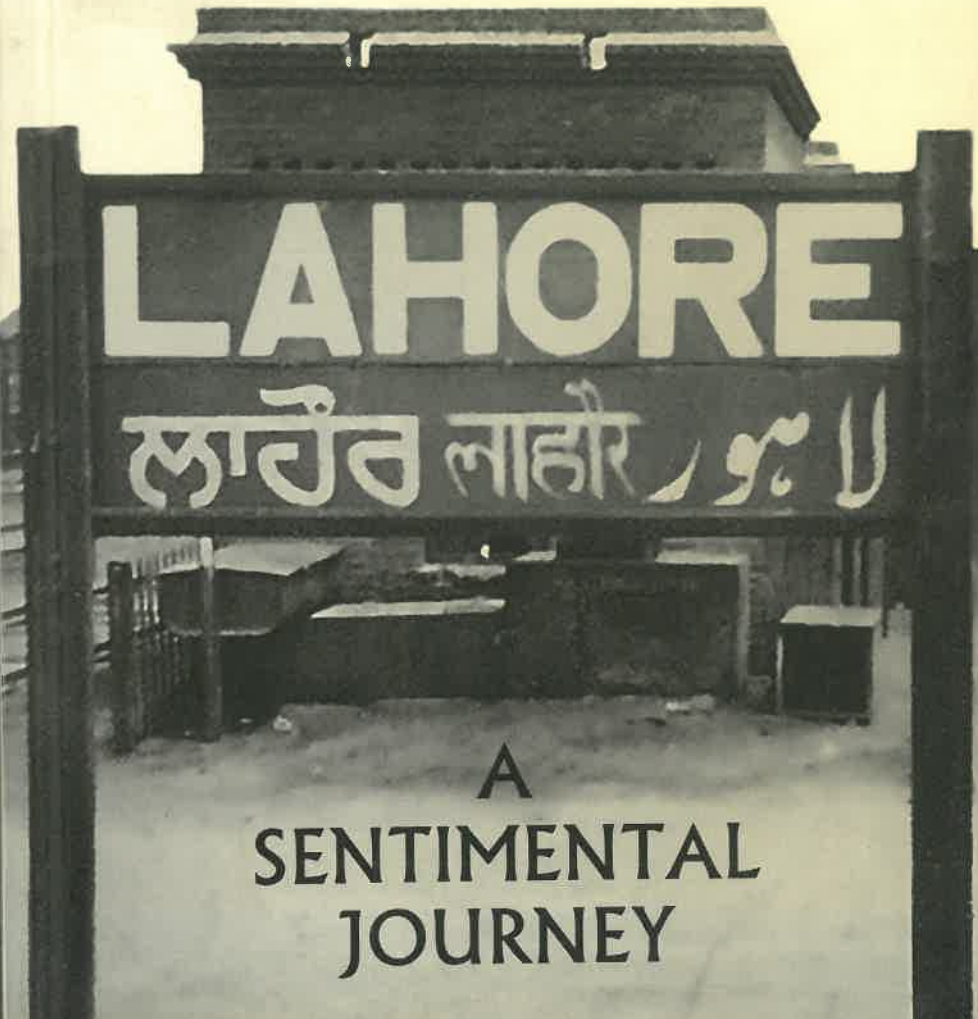


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PRAN NEVILE



LAHORE

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A
SENTIMENTAL
JOURNEY

Sarah M.
Feb 29th 2020

Pran Nevile was born in Lahore from where he obtained a postgraduate degree. After a distinguished career in the Indian Foreign Service and the United Nations he became a freelance writer and has written extensively on Indian art and culture.

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LAHORE

A Sentimental Journey

PRAN NEVILE



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Lahore

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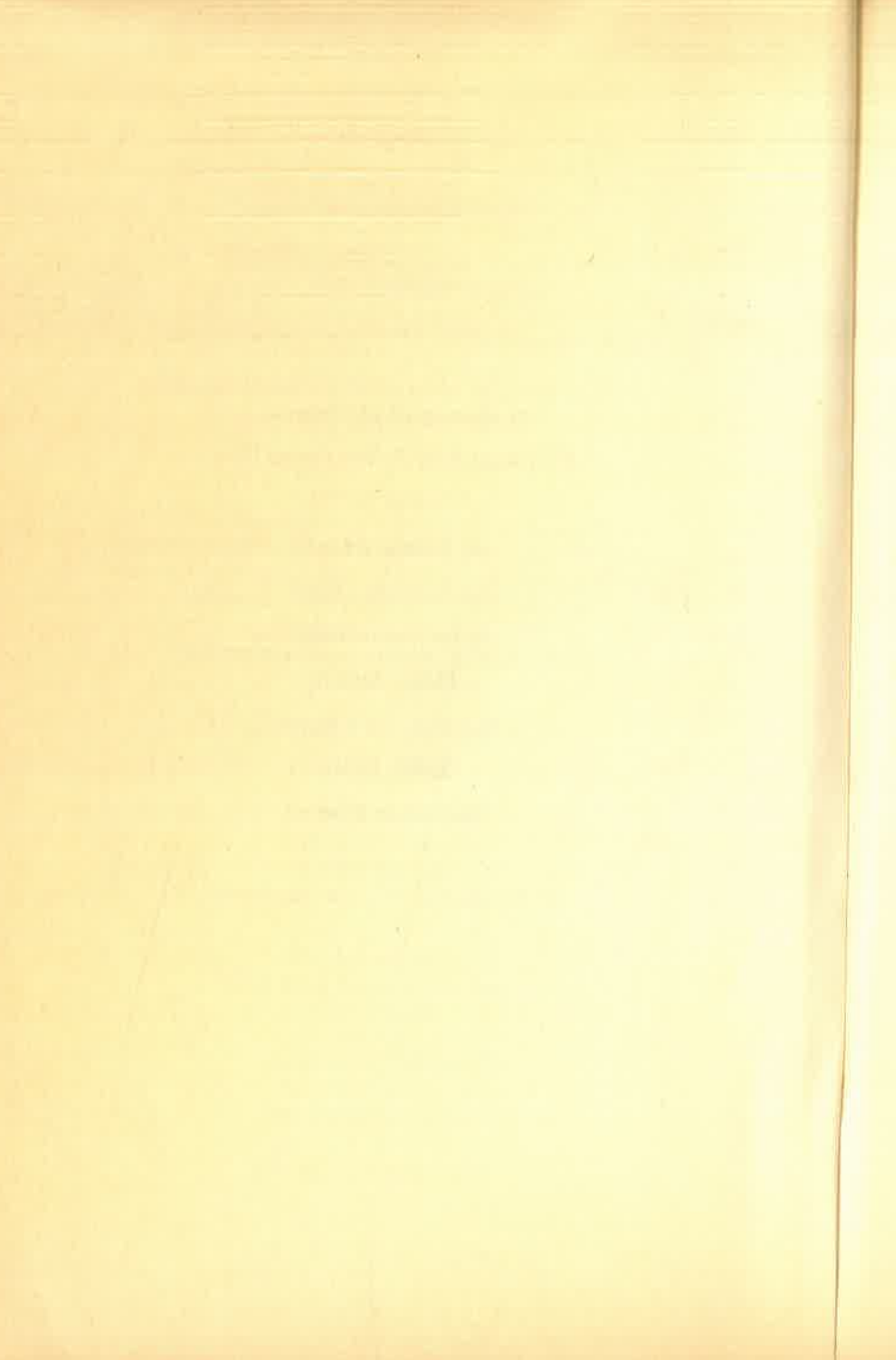
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In Memory of My Parents
Pt. Barkat Ram & Smt. Puran Devi

&

my Lahore friends
Bawa Sundar Singh
Saeed Ahmad Khan
Kulbir Kapur
Manohar Lal Chopra
Balbir Vohra
Sudarshan Khanna



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PREFACE

THIS BOOK ON THE Lahore of my days was conceived in the lonely dining-room of Hotel Astoria in Geneva in November 1963. I was having breakfast when I heard someone calling me in Punjabi, '*Motian aleo, Hindustan de o ke Pakistan de?*' (Prince of Pearls, are you from India or Pakistan?) I looked back, responding promptly, '*Bashao aao baitho, main Lahore da han.*' (Your Royal Highness, please come and sit down, I hail from Lahore.) My companion happened to be a Pakistani from Lahore. In no time we became very friendly, a blend, as it were, of *ghee* and *khichdhi* (clarified butter and curried rice) and talked about our glorious city. The conversation released a flood of memories deeply impressed on my mind for decades. I have tried in these pages to commit them to paper.

I have written about my personal insights into Lahore. Instead of telling the story of my life, which is anything but extraordinary, I have surveyed the overwhelming variety and intensity of experiences that have haunted me all these years, recording my observations of the changing fortunes of the city of my birth. I have tried to reinvent the atmosphere that existed in the first half of this century in that great and much-loved city: a lifestyle, a certain mode of thought and living, now dead and gone.

A city is not merely its bazars and buildings. It is its atmosphere, ambience, moods of joy and sorrow, madness and sadness, fun and excitement and above all its people who constitute its soul. I have made an effort to recapture all these aspects of the city, taking care to avoid commenting on the political and economic events of the times, though here and there I have touched upon them. I am chiefly

concerned with reviving the flavour of Lahore's past in an epoch which the partition of the Punjab brought to an end in 1947.

I have done most of my writing in the congenial atmosphere of the India International Centre Library, and I am grateful to H.K. Kaul and his colleagues for all the assistance they extended to me. I thank the staff of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library for providing me with reproductions of clippings from the *Tribune* and the *Civil and Military Gazette* of Lahore. I am indebted to the India Office Library and Records, London, and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, for their cooperation in helping me to secure slides of old sketches and photographs of Lahore included in the book.

I am grateful to all those who have shared my enthusiasm for writing about Lahore. I am particularly indebted to my old friends, the dwindling tribe of Lahorias, who boosted my confidence and always helped me in recalling incidents and events of our younger days. They include M.S. Judge, Narottam Berry, Raj Seth, Balbir Vohra, Padam Rosha, Y. Krishan, Sudarshan Khanna, Prem Sobti, Shamlal, Baij Varma and R.G. Nayar. Special thanks are due to my old friend and colleague Balraj Bowry, for his abiding interest in monitoring the progress of the book and for his help and guidance in arranging its timely publication.

As I conclude writing the book, I remember most the late M.L. Bhardwaj, my brother-in-law, who was also my friend, philosopher and guide. As a seasoned journalist and pioneer in public relations, he had made a substantial contribution by enabling me to have a correct perspective of pre-Partition Lahore.

Last but not least, a word of appreciation for my wife Savitri who, unmindful of her severe health problems, took the burden of domestic responsibilities off my shoulders, leaving me free to devote all my time and energy to the work in hand.

This revised edition includes a chapter about Government College, an 'Epilogue' and an 'Afterword' with my latest perceptions of the city of Lahore, the heartbeat of Punjab, which I had the pleasure of visiting after a lapse of fifty long years.

INTRODUCTION

FEW CITIES IN THE Indian subcontinent can be said to have had a more chequered history than Lahore, a city ruled by Hindu kings, Moghul emperors, Sikh monarchs and British sovereigns. There was something strikingly unusual about this golden land of dreams and legends. An embodiment of fabulous wealth and splendour, Lahore had captured the imagination of mighty men from far and near. For centuries, the city had attracted trade caravans, plundering hordes and conquerors in search of wealth and power. Scholars, historians and travellers passing through the city were enchanted by its majesty and grandeur. In the heyday of its glory as the imperial capital of the Moghuls, a proverbial saying often heard was that 'Isfahan and Shiraz together would not equal even half of Lahore'.

John Milton (1608-74) mentions Lahore among the cities seen by Adam from the hill of paradise:

His eye might there command wherever stood
City of old or modern fame, the seat
Of mightiest empire, from the destined walls
Of Cambalu, seat of Cathaian Can,
And Samarchand by Oxus, Temir's throne,
To Paquin of Sinaean Kings, and thence
To Agra and Lahore of Great Mogul. . .

(*Paradise Lost*, Bk. XI, 385-9)

Thomas Moore, another celebrated poet (1779-1852), in his classic work *Lalla Rookh: An Oriental Romance*, written in 1817, observed

that 'brilliant displays of life and pageantry among the palaces and domes and gilded minarets of Lahore made the city altogether like a place of enchantment'. Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936), who was brought up in Lahore and played around *Zamzama* in his childhood, has immortalized Lahore in his writings.

Situated on the banks of the river Ravi, famous in history as the camping ground of the early Aryans, Lahore was founded, according to popular tradition, by Lava or Loh, one of the twin sons of Lord Rama, King of Ayodhya, the epic hero of the Ramayana. The other son, Kush, is said to have founded the neighbouring town of Kusawar or Kasur. Lahore means the 'Fort of Loh'. The first syllable perpetuates the Hindu tradition, and the second, *awar*, is derived from the Sanskrit *awarun*, meaning a 'fort' or 'enclosure'. The time when Valmiki composed his celebrated epic, the Ramayana, is unknown. Hindus attribute it to the Satya Yuga or the age of righteousness, which they place several thousand years ago. Western historians, on the other hand, believe the personages in the Ramayana existed between the sixth and the sixteenth century BC. From this it appears that Lahore is one of the oldest cities in the world.

It is not merely in local tradition that the name of Lahore is made illustrious; it is also celebrated in the legends and quasi-historic traditions of other ancient Hindu states associated with the age of chivalry of the Hindus and their ancient civilization. *Raj Tarangini*, the ancient chronicle of Kashmir, mentions Lahore as a dependency of the great Lalitaditya. The 'Deshwa Bhaga', a compilation from the Puranas, gives an account of a battle in which Ban Mal, the Raja of Lahore, a mighty prince with an army of ten thousand horsemen, was defeated by Bhim Sen. The ballads of the region commemorate the 'forest near Lahore', then called Udinagar, as the battlefield where the monster Rakhas was killed in a fight with Rasalu, son of Salvahn, the Raja of Sialkot. Coming to more recent times, the annals of Rajputana refer to Lahore as a Hindu principality. Keneksen, the founder of the Suryavanshi (solar) royal line, is said to have migrated from there. The Solanki tribe of Amukhara Pattan which had the Bhattis of Jaisalmer, whose name is still borne by one of the city gates, point to Lahore as the seat of their earlier settlement.

The first historical reference to the city is found in the journals of the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang, written in AD 630. At the time of the first Muslim invasion in the late seventh century, Lahore was in the possession of a Chauhan prince belonging to a family of Ajmer. For two centuries the Hindu rulers of Lahore gallantly withstood the Muslim onslaught, preventing the invader from advancing further into the country. However, in 1008, Anangpal, the last Rajput king, who was defeated by the superior forces of Mahmud of Ghazni, fled to Ajmer. In 1022, Mahmud seized and plundered Lahore without encountering any opposition. The Hindu principality of Lahore was annihilated forever. The princes and the people of Lahore played a prominent role in the long-drawn struggle between Islam and Hinduism that marked the entry of the former into India. The Ghaznavis, especially the later ones, adopted a conciliatory policy towards their Hindu subjects. In 1241, Lahore was taken and plundered by the hordes of Gengiz Khan and in 1286 Prince Muhammad, son of Gias-ud-din Balban, perished in an encounter with the Mongols on the banks of the Ravi. During the Khilji and Tughlak dynasties Lahore was not a prominent place in the political history of the day. In 1397, Timur the Great, the 'firebrand of the universe', captured Lahore but did not plunder it, probably because the city was not particularly rich then. Looting and killing were commonplace occurrences until the empire of the Moghuls was established, when they became much less frequent. In 1524, Babur took Lahore, which was plundered and burnt by his soldiers. He could not reach Delhi, having been forced to retreat from Sirhind. The following year Babur again launched an invasion of Hindustan. After defeating Ibrahim Lodhi at the historic Battle of Panipat (1526) he captured Delhi and founded the Moghul empire, an empire destined to achieve a dazzling era of splendour.

The reigns of Babur's successors—Humayun, Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb—may be considered the golden period in the history of Lahore as the city rose from semi-obscurity to prominence. It became the city of historical monuments and gardens. It was in Lahore that Humayun, when fleeing before the victorious army of Sher Shah, met and married the fifteen-year-old Hamida Begum,

who gave birth to Akbar, the greatest of the Moghuls. Akbar made Lahore his headquarters from 1584 to 1598, during which period he extended his empire to Kashmir, and elevated the city from a provincial centre to a capital city of the Moghul empire. Thereafter, together with Agra and Delhi, Lahore was an alternative seat of the imperial court. It was at Lahore that Akbar held discussions with learned scholars of different faiths, including Portuguese missionaries, imbibing principles of religious liberality for which he is so renowned. Akbar enclosed the city with a brick wall of considerable height and founded a palace that was later enlarged by his successors. The city became a place of royal residence with gardens, mosques and pavilions. Abul Fazal in his celebrated work *Ain-i-Akbari* (the Mirror of Akbar's times) describes Lahore as, 'a great city in the Bari Doab; in magnificence and populousness it has few equals; in old history it is called Lohawar. In the time of His Majesty the fort has been built of solid bricks and lime and as from time to time, the seat of government was established here, lofty palaces were built, to which additional beauty was lent by luxuriant gardens. It is the resort of people of all nations from every city, and wonderful works have been made here.'

Lahore is also associated with royal romances. It was here that Prince Salim, who ascended the throne as Jahangir, fell in love with the beautiful but unfortunate Anarkali (pomegranate blossom), the title given to Nadira Begum or Sharaf-un-Nisa for her beauty. She was the favourite inmate of Akbar's harem and was by his orders buried alive because he saw her exchanging smiles with his son Salim in the hall of mirrors of his palace. In Lahore, too, Salim first saw Mehr-un-Nisa, a Persian beauty married to one of Akbar's generals. Theirs was as romantic a love tragedy as ever enacted. Mehr-un-Nisa became the celebrated Empress Nur Jahan (Light of the World), one of the most brilliant figures in the colourful history of India. The tombs of Jahangir and Nur Jahan form the chief architectural glories of the city. Jahangir's tomb, with its four tall minarets capped with graceful cupolas of white marble, dominates a vast garden that was once known as Baghe-Dilkusha, the pleasure-garden of his beloved queen. Just outside the tomb is the simple grave of Nur Jahan, which

bears this epitaph written by her:

Upon my grave when I die,
No lamp shall burn nor jasmine be,
No candle with unsteady flame,
No bulbul chanting overhead
Shall tell the world that I am dead.

The Moghuls wanted peaceful and spacious surroundings for their last resting places. Their graves are never found within the confines of a city. Shah Jahan, the most splendid of the great Moghuls, was born in Lahore and was also proclaimed emperor in this great city. The Shalimar Gardens, which were laid out by him in the east of the city, are among the most magnificent gardens in the world.

During the scramble for the imperial throne after Shah Jahan, Lahore espoused the cause of Dara Shikoh, Shah Jahan's eldest son. He had his residence at Lahore and the eminent saint, Mian Mir, was his spiritual adviser. During the reign of Aurangzeb, who emerged as emperor by vanquishing his rivals, Lahore lost some of its wealth and importance, though it was embellished with the construction of the Jama Masjid, or the Badshahi Mosque, near the fort. The majestic domes and minarets of the mosque form a conspicuous feature of the landscape in the north of Lahore. To save the city from encroachments of the river Ravi, which had caused alarm in 1662, Aurangzeb built a massive embankment called Band-i-Alamgiri along the river bank. There are two other famous mosques in the city, one of which Wazir Khan built in 1634 and the other, Sonehri Masjid, or the Golden Mosque, was built in 1753. Both are located near Delhi Gate.

After Aurangzeb's death began the decline of the Moghul empire and during the eighteenth century Lahore was controlled either by weak Moghul governors or by Sikh chiefs and Afghan nobles. Once again Lahore was ravaged by invaders and plunderers. First came the Persian warrior-king Nadir Shah, who took away Delhi's Peacock Throne to Teheran in 1738. Lahore was saved from pillage by the governor surrendering the city and paying the conqueror twenty

lakh rupees and a large number of elephants.

Lahore came under the control of the Sikhs for the first time in 1756. But soon they had to give way to the Marathas, who in turn were overthrown by Ahmad Shah at Panipat in 1761 and driven out of the Punjab. In 1767, Ahmad Shah made his eighth and last invasion but was defeated by the Sikh forces. The last attack on Lahore was made by the Durrani chief, Shah Zaman, who besieged the city. His attack was, however, interrupted by the news of disturbances at Kabul where he returned, but only after exacting a subsidy of thirty lakh rupees from the few remaining wealthy merchants of Lahore. During these periodic invasions, Lahore suffered very much. Ordinary people retired into the walled city for safety while wealthy merchants and traders fled to Jammu, Amritsar and other places.

In 1799, Ranjit Singh became master of Lahore and lord of the Punjab. During the four decades of his rule, he expanded his empire from the Suleiman range to the Sutlej and from Kashmir to Multan and beyond. Lahore regained some of its past glory and pre-eminence. After the death of Ranjit Singh in 1839, his successors engaged in family feuds and were unable to rule the country. The British occupied Lahore in 1846 and annexed it in 1849. As the capital of the British province and centre of a modern system of administration, Lahore regained its old grandeur and dignity. It dominated the whole of Punjab more than ever before and emerged as the fortress of the Indian empire that watched over the troublesome Afghan and Russian borders.

During Sikh rule, very few architectural additions were made to the city. The most notable landmark was the marble pavilion built by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in the centre of Hazuri Bagh, which metamorphosed from a sarai into a pleasure garden. Another prominent Sikh monument was the samadhi of Ranjit Singh, a pleasing mixture of Hindu and Muslim architecture. The Sikh period also witnessed a semblance of Hindu revival marked by the construction of a number of temples, or *shivalas* as they were called in Lahore. Among the notable ones were Bhairon ka Than, the shivala and tank of Rattan Chand and the *chaubara* (a single-storey room) of Chhaju Bhagat.

Bhairon ka Than, situated near the village of Ichhra, was a great

place of worship because of its temple of Ma Devi and Lord Shiva. The temple was embellished and enlarged by the construction of several beautiful chambers by Moran, the mistress of Ranjit Singh. An arched gateway and other edifices were added by Lal Singh, the lover of Maharani Jindan, mother of Dalip Singh. The tank and shivala located outside Shahalmi Gate, named after its builder Rattan Chand, was a large complex with numerous buildings, gardens, shops, a tank and the samadhi of Rattan Chand. The chaubara was used by Chhaju, a Hindu saint during the seventeenth century, as his place of worship. A large temple was built here. Ranjit Singh held the shrine in great respect and visited it every Monday with generous offerings. Chhaju Bhagat lived in Dhall Mohalla, which was also called a chaubara. There was an old well at this place with two water cisterns that were considered sacred. It was said that from one of these water cisterns, Saint Chhaju caused the Ganga to flow. There is an old saying:

*Na balkh na bokhare
Jo sukh Chhaju de chaubare*

(One may go far away, even to Bokhara, but nowhere would one get the peace and contentment that the chaubara of Chhaju Bhagat provides.)

By the turn of the century, the British Raj had brought in its wake an era of unprecedented peace and prosperity. Lahore witnessed great progress in every field—material, social and cultural. The first-ever Punjab exhibition was held in Lahore in 1864. Lahorias of all communities and classes expressed their gratefulness for the countless blessings brought about by the Raj. In 1892, Syed Mohammad Latif, in his book *Lahore: Its History, Architectural Remains and Antiquities*, wrote: ‘After centuries of misrule and anarchy, the British . . . became masters of the country. The real glory of that nation does not lie in the subversion of kingdoms, in the humbling of mighty potentates or in the ravaging of countries but in this that they have sheltered God’s people . . . administered equal

laws to them and made them happy, prosperous, strong and united.'

The most valued gift of the Raj was the freedom it gave to its subjects to practise and preach their own religions. All mosques, including the Badshahi Mosque, which had been taken over by the Sikh rulers and converted into workshops, were restored to the Muslims of Lahore. The shrines and tombs of saints, which had been abandoned for fear of repression by the authorities, regained their importance and patronage. The mausoleum of Data Ganj Bux, the patron saint of Lahore, once again attracted worshippers from all communities who went there to seek blessings for the fulfilment of their wishes. The British Raj was a welcome change after the 'Sikha Shahi', a term denoting arbitrary rule. The older generations praised the '*Angrezi Raj diyan barkatan*' (Blessings of the British rule) with genuine feelings of gratitude.

The British rulers took active steps to safeguard and preserve old monuments and buildings of national interest and historical value. It is amusing to recall that the famous landmark of Lahore, the Anarkali tomb, had served so many purposes. At one time the residence of Kharak Singh, son and successor of Ranjit Singh, it was given to General Ventura, the Italian mercenary serving the Sikhs, for his zenana. In 1851, the tomb became the first parish church of the Protestant community of Lahore, and by the end of the century it became the Punjab government's record room. Shalimar Gardens was such an isolated place that the dak bungalow there was often occupied by honeymooning British couples. By the end of the second decade of the twentieth century Lahore had regained its splendour, with modern buildings coming up on the Mall and picturesque European houses in the Civil Lines. Those parts of the city that once wore a desolate appearance were transformed into pleasant gardens, grassy lawns and metalled roads lined on either side with shady trees. The city wall, dating from the Moghul days, was reduced in height for reasons of sanitation. The moat around the wall was filled and a beautiful garden called Company Bagh laid out. It encircled the city wall on all sides except on the north, which was dominated by the fort and the palace. A metalled road called Circular Road skirted the outer edge of the garden, providing

access to the city through its thirteen gates.

I recall how, as a third-grade student in school, my first lesson in geography included the study of Lahore district. We were expected to memorize the names of all the city gates—Raushnai, Kashmiri, Masti, Khizri or Sheranwala, Yakki, Delhi, Mochi, Akbari, Shahalmi, Lohari, Mori, Bhati and Taxali. These legendary gates were named after emperors and saints, ancient landmarks situated near them or after places to which they led.

By the early 1930s, Lahore, with its growing prosperity and economic activity, had expanded in all directions. New residential areas were developed in different parts of the city, such as Krishan Nagar, Sant Nagar, Ram Nagar, Ram gullies, Krishna gullies, Gowalmandi, Gandhi Square, Nisbet Road, Mozang and Quila Gujar Singh. Palatial modern *kothis* (bungalows) came up on Race Course Road, Jail Road, Lawrence Road, Temple Road, Egerton Road, Davis Road, Montgomery Road, Abbot Road, Empress Road and elsewhere. The most novel experiment made in housing schemes was the development of a modern township named Model Town, about six miles from Lahore. Here, the houses were mostly owned by retired government officials, many of whom had during their service earned titles of Rai Sahib, Khan Sahib, Sardar Sahib, Rai Bahadur, Khan Bahadur and Sardar Bahadur.

The new administrative set-up in the Punjab had opened up many more employment opportunities in civil services, legal, medical and teaching professions, as well as in commerce and industry. The key to unlock these opportunities was provided by education. With its chain of colleges and professional institutions, Lahore emerged as the leading centre of education in north India. The Arya Samaj movement also played a significant role in the spread of education and greatly influenced the social attitudes and outlook of the Hindus, particularly the urban middle classes.

Lahore by now had acquired the reputation of being the Paris of India. Fashion ruled the life of its people whose lifestyles, habits and customs were considered to be most admirable. It had also become the nucleus of commerce and politics.

The hub of Lahore comprised the native quarter or the walled city,

which had grown up during the time of the Moghuls. It influenced the lifestyle of its people without any distinction of caste or creed. It will be true to say that the post-war decades have witnessed more radical changes in lifestyles in the subcontinent than the previous hundred years. Not much had changed in the walled city over the centuries. There lay a cluster of bazars and mohallas (residential quarters) divided into narrow twisting lanes, gullies or *kuchas* (lanes) and dark alleys comprising residential blocks. There were bazars that specialized in metal-work, cloth, jewellery, grocery, footwear, embroidery, printing etc. A bazar called Hira Mandi housed singing girls and courtesans. It came to life at night with reverberating sounds and glittering sights, when fun-loving Lahorias would flock to it for entertainment. The biggest bazar for shopping was the great Anarkali, which served as the centre for the whole of Punjab. People coming from as far as Peshawar and Delhi would talk about the purchases made in Anarkali.

The gullies and alleys were virtually impassable for vehicular traffic. Massive wooden gates fitted with iron spikes guarded their approaches. A mohalla with a honeycomb of lanes and bylanes formed a little world by itself and provided for the residents a sense of togetherness that transcended the barriers of caste and class. The city was more or less divided into Hindu and Muslim neighbourhoods, though there were some pockets where the two communities lived together.

The interplay of historical forces had made the Muslims of the Punjab less fanatic and the Hindus less orthodox and ritual-conscious than elsewhere in the country. The two communities mixed freely and had cordial relations, subscribing as they did to a composite Punjabi culture that blossomed in the early decades of the twentieth century. Muslim domination of nearly a thousand years had left its imprint on the citizens' dress, customs and manners, food and language, and even names. Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs with common first names distinguished themselves by adding a different suffix, such as Ram, Chand, Lal, Nath, etc., by the Hindus; Ali, Khan, Ahmed, Muhammad, Mahmud, etc., by the Muslims; and Singh by the Sikhs. Some of the popular first names were Iqbal, Fakir,

Barkat, Haqumat, Ghulam, Roshan, Aftab, Mehtab, Khushi, Ameer, Mukhtar and Mushtaq. There was a common name for God as well: a Lahoria when invoking God would involuntarily call out 'Oh Rabba'!

People enjoyed living in the homely environment of the gullies. It was not uncommon for lawyers, government servants and school teachers to share a neighbourhood with confectioners, cloth pedlars, jewellers, tailors and others. The gullies were lined on both sides with pucca brick houses, three or four-storeyed with small or large *thurrahs* (extended raised platforms) at the entrance level. There were several lofty houses and havelis dotting different parts of the walled city that dominated the surrounding landscape with their imposing appearance. The bazars, gay, colourful and throbbing with activity, were not just a collection of shops but an intrinsic part of Lahore's life.

Social life in the city was by and large harmonious. The menfolk rose early in the morning and usually went in groups for a walk towards the Ravi river. Some of them took a daily river bath in both summer and winter. After an early meal they went to work. The old and retired also left their homes to spend the day out. Some of them would go to the Company Bagh library and the reading-room outside Mori Gate, where they would go through all the dailies, such as *Milap*, *Partap*, *Veer Bharat*, *Zamindar*, *Tribune*, and pick up spicy news items for discussion. The favourite topics of conversation among them were the falling moral standards of the younger generation, the ailments they suffered from, and the best available cures. There were few clubs in those days but, according to an established custom, some prosperous persons in every quarter of the city would maintain a *baithak* (private sitting-room) where some of them would go to while away their time, enjoy a puff at the hookah or play a game of chess or chaupat or just gossip and exchange notes about the happenings in the city. Others would visit the shops of their friends to give them a helping hand or keep watch over the customers. In order to keep fit, they would always be on the move. This reminds me of a Punjabi saying about old people:

*Chalda phirda lohya,
Baitha te gohya,
Laitya te moya.*

(Walking keeps an old person strong like steel; sitting, he becomes a dung-cake; lying down, he is on his way to heaven!)

The elders of the family were much sought after by the children, who would pester them for stories and tales from the epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. The children were always warned against neglecting their studies through a popular saying:

*Kheloge kudoge hoge gwar,
Padhoge likhoge banoge nawab.*

(If you waste all your time playing, you will be a good-for-nothing. You will become a great man if you devote your time to studies.)

Another piece of advice often doled out was: *Dekh parai chopdhi na tarsayin jee, Rukhi missi khoke te thanda pani pee* (Do not feel jealous of another person's buttered bread. Eat coarse bread and wash it down with cold water.) Coming to puzzles and riddles, I am inclined to recall an interesting puzzle of my school days:

The first is the first of the first of you.
The second and the third are zero two,
The last is the first of the last of you.
Now tell me please who are you?

[Fool]

When the menfolk were away, life in the gullies was dominated by the women, who after attending to their daily chores assembled on the thurrahs of their houses or on the rooftops during winter to relax and gossip. Cloth pedlars and street hawkers also provided them with much fun and recreation. Each mohalla was a world by

itself, with its own mishar (water carrier), dhobi (washerman), mochi (cobbler), tailor and doctor, vaid or hakim. Many mohallas had their own wells and even *janjghars* (houses for lodging marriage parties) built by philanthropists for the community. Some maintained their own *akharas* (wrestling plots) where young and old would gather for physical exercise or wrestling bouts, a popular sport in Lahore.

In the nineteenth century, many mohallas and gullies were inhabited by people belonging to the same caste or calling. The residents were held together by bonds of kinship and behaved like members of extended families. With the passage of time, they lost their exclusive character following the influx of migrants from other parts of the Punjab and the movement of affluent ones from the walled city to the Civil Lines. Some of the famous mohallas of Lahore were Dhall, Sarin, Shahi, Mohlian, Langar Khan. Among the well-known gullies or kuchas were Babean, Balmata, Katian, Kagzian, Telian, Mitiputan, Peshorian, Bhadarkali, Jawaharian, Berian, Laila Majnu.

The economic life of Lahore was dominated by Hindu Khatri and Aroras. They were engaged in commerce and merchandizing. They also occupied important positions in the civil services and liberal professions such as law, medicine and education. Even under the Muslim and Sikh rulers the Khatri had attained high-ranking administrative posts. The British regarded them as one of the most acute, energetic and remarkable communities in the country. The Khatri were the first to go in for English education and to discard Persian, which was replaced by English as the language of administration. Those well versed in Persian lost their positions and status and were forced to look for livelihood in plebeian pursuits as expressed in a contemporary verse:

*Padhe farsi veche tel,
Dekho ai kudrat de khel.*

(Strange are the ways of destiny; well-versed in Persian, he has turned an oil-seller).

The study of Persian was ridiculed, as seen from another verse:

Aab aab kar moyan bachya,

Farsian ghar gale.

Je main jana pani mangya

Bhar bhar dendi pyale.

(Alas, my child, you have died crying for *aab* [water]. This Persian language has ruined us. Had I known you were only asking for water, I would have given you cupfuls of it.)

Words in the Punjabi language had diverse nuances and shades of meaning in different parts of the province. It was easy for Lahorias to discover the origin of people from their accent and typical expressions. Punjabi had no written script of its own and whatever literature we had was in the Persian script. The Gurumukhi script, derived from Sanskrit, was chiefly used by the Sikhs for religious purposes. The British brought Urdu with them from the United Provinces. Hindi in the Devnagari script came later through the influence of the Arya Samaj. Urdu, however, emerged as the principal language of all communities as a means of communication.

While the majority of the city population was Muslim, very few Muslims were engaged in business, civil services and the professions. It was only after the government's job reservation policy came into force that the number of Muslims in the services increased. Muslims constituted the majority of workers and artisans, being either employed in craft industries or in factories owned by Hindus. However, they controlled the fruit and vegetable markets, milk supply, furniture shops, tent manufacture and the tailoring business. There was also a sizeable Muslim landed aristocracy that owed its wealth and status to the British government. The Hindus were known to be frugal by nature. They piled up money but often gave much of it to charities. The Muslims had the reputation of being less charitable but also less miserly. Wealth to them was a passing show to be enjoyed while it lasted but not to be held on to. On the whole, the Lahorias were quite free spenders and liked to lead a good life.

There was a social gulf between the middle classes and the working

classes. The worker or the artisan belonged to a caste that did not enjoy any social status. They were lacking in education and did not have influential patrons. The attitude of the Hindus to manual labour also contributed to their having an inferior status. Caste pride lay not in showing authority but in observing a code of conduct within the framework of the established custom and practice.

The most striking feature of Hindu society in Lahore was that, unlike in other parts of the country, the Punjabi Brahmins did not enjoy any privileges or social status and exerted little or no influence on the community. Most of the Brahmins had settled down in rural areas, eking out a living through priestly functions on ceremonial occasions in the families of their Khatri patrons. This was a part of the Purohit-Yajmani system that had survived for generations. The upkeep of the Brahmin families was the responsibility of the Yajmans, who provided them every day with cooked food called *handa*. The Khatri had a condescending attitude towards the Brahmins, whom they considered inferior owing to their economic dependence on other castes. The Brahmins had generally kept away from the study of Persian, but now economic necessity forced them to study English and acquire educational qualifications in order to improve their social status. By the early 1930s, a number of educated Brahmins had settled down in Lahore, most of them in government service or in the teaching profession. There were also some Brahmin vairs who succeeded in setting up a lucrative practice, the most prominent among them being Pandit Thakar Dutt of Amrit Dhara fame. There were very few affluent Brahmins as they had seldom ventured into business. In the whole of Anarkali there was probably only one shop (Lall Bros., Cloth Merchants) owned by Brahmins. On the Mall, perhaps the first shop to have been opened by a Brahmin was Vasudeva Radios in the late 1930s.

Initially, Lahoris did not take very kindly to the new migrants who had come from the mofussil towns and villages. Within a short period, however, the newcomers adopted the local customs and lifestyles, and were able to win over the confidence of Lahoris with their simple outlook and helpful attitude.

Until the end of the 1920s it was quite easy for educated young

men to secure government jobs in different fields according to their qualifications. But after the great depression of 1930 and reservation of government jobs for Muslims and Sikhs, it became far more difficult for Hindus to secure suitable employment. Moreover, Lahorias were most reluctant to leave the city with a view to seeking employment in other towns. They preferred to hang on in Lahore and wait for suitable openings. The situation in those days is aptly described by Dr Prem Kirpal, the renowned educationist of Lahore, in one of his autobiographical poems:

Problems of work and livelihood,
in economic slump and financial blight,
reservation of jobs and posts,
for communities other than my own,
cast their shadows on my efforts
for choice of congenial and creative work.

With his Oxford degree, Dr Kirpal did receive some offers of appointment in the educational field in mofussil towns, which he declined. He chose to wait for an opening in Lahore, which came his way later on. He followed the old maxim:

Khaiye kanak chaai bhugi howe
Rahiye Lahore bbaven jhuggi howe

(Take wheat even if it is moth eaten. Let it be a hut only but live in Lahore.)

I recall how I followed the same motto when I refused the offer of a lecturer's post in a college at Hoshiarpur soon after taking my MA degree.

A popular saying on the lips of everyone used to be, '*Jine Lahore nahin dekhyā auk jamia ee nahin*' (One who has not seen Lahore cannot be said even to have been born). Here is an enchanting portrayal of Lahore by Dr Prem Kirpal:

Old Lahore was gay and youthful,
 moving easily with the times,
 earning well and spending more,
 receiving joy and shunning gloom,
 it was a city of scholars and lawyers
 and a great high court of justice.
 The city of Lahore reveals itself
 to the eager longing eyes of youth
 its charms of landscape and bazars
 from Central Bank to Ravi river;
 old historic city and new structures
 mingled in vivid spectacles
 of colourful buildings, benign nature,
 warm-hearted and vital people
 of diverse faiths and traditions,
 united in confident resolve
 to enjoy life and reach its peaks.

Until 1919, Lahorias took little interest in the national political movement. After the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy and the Rowlatt Act satyagraha, the freedom struggle made a great impact on Lahore. Lala Lajpat Rai of Lahore, the greatest orator of his time, became a national leader. In Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev, Lahore gave the nation three great revolutionaries who sacrificed their lives for their motherland. It was in Lahore that the Indian National Congress held its historic session in December 1929 where full independence was declared as its goal. It was here, on the banks of the Ravi that the youthful Congress President, Jawaharlal Nehru, proclaimed 26 January as Independence Day. Along with the Congress session, a Swadeshi exhibition was also held to promote and highlight products of national industries. The Swadeshi movement made rapid strides and one could hear loud cries for boycott of foreign goods. There is an amusing episode of those days about an Indian soap producer of Himani brand carrying a newspaper advertisement with a testimonial from the Congress President, Jawaharlal Nehru, recommending the use of this soap. Again, it was in Lahore that the Muslim League

under the leadership of M.A. Jinnah adopted the historic resolution to achieve Pakistan at its session held on 22-24 March 1940.

The venue of all political meetings and public conferences in the city was the famous Mochi Gate, which was to Lahore what Hyde Park Corner was to London. This site was witness to a whole galaxy of political, social and religious leaders rousing their audiences to a pitch of excitement. Almost every other evening, the venue echoed with the thunderous slogans and cries of '*Inquilab Zindabad*' (Long live revolution). It was here that great *mushairas* (poetic symposiums) were also held. Here, the most eminent poet of his time, Mohammad Iqbal, is said to have recited his *Jawab-i-Shikwa*. The place was also a favourite haunt of petty traders, hawkers, magicians, snake charmers, quacks, swindlers and entertainers of all kinds.

By the end of the 1930s, the tempo of the national movement in Lahore had slowed down considerably. For the educated young, government service became the foremost goal. It was important for them to keep away from politics lest their loyalty to the British Government should be questioned. The police kept secret records about young men and their families' political leanings as well as their participation, if any, in anti-government demonstrations or processions. This was a strong enough deterrent for them to keep out of politics. Thus it was that Mahatma Gandhi's 'Quit India' announcement on 9 August 1942, which created an upheaval almost all over the country, had very little impact in Lahore.

After the outbreak of World War II in September 1939, Lahorias, proud of their martial heritage, queued up to join the armed forces. The war years provided new jobs and business opportunities. Lahore came to enjoy much affluence and prosperity. But soon after the end of the war, Lahorias had to pay a heavy price for the freedom of India, which brought about the division of the country and the creation of Pakistan. It was a heart-rending experience to leave our beloved Lahore for good and seek refuge across the border that was created to divide the subcontinent. In the city that had been the home of our near and dear ones for centuries, there was no one left now to look back to. Suddenly, Lahore had become a foreign land.

My beloved city of Lahore
 still standing not far from Delhi,
 within quicker reach by air or train,
 suddenly became a forbidden land
 guarded by a sovereign state
 of new ideologies, loves and hates.
 Homes were lost and hearts were bruised
 in both unhappy parts of Punjab.

Spirit's Musings by Prem Kirpal

Nevertheless, I belong to a generation born and brought up in Lahore. Even after a lapse of over five decades, my emotional attachment to this great city is as deep as ever. My memories of boyhood and youth are still fresh in my mind and are often a subject matter of conversation whenever I sit together with ex-Lahorias of my generation. I would like to pay homage to my beloved city by echoing the words of Dara Shikoh:

Khuda Punjab ra mehmur darad
Ba khaq aulia manzur darad
Bood abad dayam Shahar Lahore
Waba Wa Kahat Z bakha dur darad

(May God keep the Punjab prospering! May He protect the land of the saints! Oh, may Lahore be always full of bliss! May disease and famine never visit it!)

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**Says Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, President,
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SHOPPING IN ANARKALI

LAHORE'S ANARKALI, THE QUEEN of shopping centres in the Punjab, held temptations few people could resist. A shopper's paradise, the famous bazar had an atmosphere of fun, gaiety and laughter which attracted local residents as well as tourists and businessmen.

Stretching from outside Lohari Gate and reaching right up to Nila Gumbad, a distance of nearly one mile, Anarkali dominated a large part of the cityscape. Compared to its broad expanse, other bazars in the walled city looked like narrow, winding alleys. Unlike Anarkali, which offered the shopper almost anything under the sun, these bazars specialized in particular trades and crafts. Sua Bazar was well known for its jewellers and goldsmiths. One could see their highly skilled craftsmen engaged in delicate, artistic work. Gold and silver thread embroidery was a speciality of Kinari Bazar. Bazaz Hatta was the stronghold of cloth merchants, Kasera Bazar of utensil makers, Dabi Bazar of wholesale merchants and Papadmandi of dealers in provisions and spices. Juti Bazar offered various kinds of native footwear. Another bazar of a mean appearance, constructed with bricks removed from ancient buildings, was Landa Bazar, a market for second-hand garments mostly imported as rags from the USA. These bazars were not just shopping centres but formed an intrinsic part of Lahore's life. Though as crowded as Anarkali, they could not be compared to the latter in terms of the variety and quality of goods offered and the class of customers patronizing them.

Anarkali, or 'Pomegranate Blossom', was the title given to Nadira Begum, or Sharaf-un-Nisa, one of the favourite inmates of the harem of emperor Akbar. The emperor, suspecting her of having joined in a

criminal conspiracy with his son Prince Salim, got her buried alive. Prince Salim, on assuming the Moghul throne as Jahangir, built a beautiful mausoleum over the grave of his beloved. The sarcophagus is considered to be one of the finest examples of architecture in the world. On its top are inscribed the ninety-nine attributes of God and on one side is engraved a Persian couplet composed by Jahangir: 'Ah, could I behold the face of my beloved once more, I would give thanks unto my God until the day of resurrection.' Named after her, the bazar sprang up on a piece of land once occupied by British troops after the annexation of the Punjab. It came to bustle with activity in the early years of the twentieth century. After World War I Lahore became more prosperous and Anarkali flourished at such a rapid pace that by the late 1920s it had emerged as the most magnificent bazar in North India.

Visiting Anarkali came to be considered as a status symbol. It was said, to quote the refrain of a contemporary satirical verse, that to know the English language was a passport to enter Anarkali: '*Main hun Angrezi padh gayi an te Anarkali ch wadh gayi an.*' Motor cars were then a rare sight and the well-to-do visited the bazar in their horse-drawn carriages and tongas. Some womenfolk in purdah would do their shopping sitting inside their carriages, where the shop assistants brought their wares for selection. Shopping here did not necessarily mean you had to buy anything. Shopkeepers would spend hours showing you their wares as if it were a matter of pride for them to impress you with their well-stocked shops. The Lahorias also enjoyed haggling and displaying their bargaining skills, a thrilling experience for both the customer and the salesman. Shopping was a way to relax, to entertain oneself and a part of the city's popular culture.

My earliest memory of Anarkali goes back to 1929, when from the balcony of a building I witnessed the historic Congress procession passing through the bazar with Jawaharlal Nehru, the newly elected Congress President, riding a white horse. Flowers were showered on him in the midst of deafening shouts of '*Jawaharlal Nehru Zindabad. Hindostan ke be-taj Badshah, Zindabad*' (Long live Jawaharlal Nehru, the uncrowned king of India). Nehru was given a rousing

reception in front of Bhalla Shoe Co., where its owner, Dhani Ram Bhalla, greeted him with a huge garland of currency notes. It was a red-letter day for Anarkali, which found for itself a permanent place in the pages of history.

With the passage of time, Anarkali grew richer and more captivating. By the late 1930s, it had become the most fashionable shopping centre of the city and bevy of elegantly dressed women also began visiting it. This practice was frowned upon by the older generation who disapproved of women going about in Anarkali, exposing themselves to public gaze. Satirical verses decrying this craze for modernity were written and hawked by street singers going up and down the bazar. These leaflets of poems called *kissas* were sold for two pice each. One of them, penned by Dilbagh, gained popularity all over Lahore. I vividly remember a hawker standing at the crossing of Anarkali and Ganpat Road reciting it in his melodious voice, regaling the audience of young and old that had gathered around him. Wearing a *lacha* and long shirt with a grey turban to match, he had an imposing personality which cast a magnetic effect on his listeners. The poem ran as follows:

*Sharam haya sade desh di,
Yaro sari udh gayi ai,
Rana ne purdah utaraya,
Mardan nu gairat na rahi ai.*

*Poncha khula howe salwar da,
Jinwain hathi kana nu marda.
Gal jumpar rang unabi da,
Salwar da latha chabi da.*

(Friends, modesty has vanished from our land and we have become shameless. Women have discarded the purdah and menfolk lost all sense of modesty. Women wear salwars with wide bottoms that wave like an elephant's ears. They wear purple-coloured shirts and their salwars are made of longcloth of English 'key' trademark.)



Anarkali Bazar Scene, 1997

These street bards were very popular with the country cousins visiting Lahore, who often ridiculed the Lahorias for aping the ways of the sahibs. The chief targets of their scorn and taunts, however, were their own village friends and companions who on joining college in Lahore turned into *pilpili* sahibs and distanced themselves from their rustic comrades. On the other hand, the Lahorias poked fun at the *pilpili* sahibs who could always be spotted going up and down Anarkali. A satirical song recorded by His Master's Voice (HMV) vividly portrays the *pilpili* sahib. The refrain of the song was:

*Put pendu saab kahave,
Padhe wich kalej de.
Roti di than cake oh khave,
Ande biscuit cha udhave,
Wich kamiz de nala pave,
Te button pajame nu lave,
Padhe wich kalej de.*

(A village boy studying in college is called a *pendu* sahib. In place of bread he has started eating cake, biscuits and eggs over cups of tea. He puts on a string [tie] in his shirt and holds his pyjama by buttons [instead of with a cord].)

While developing as a shopping centre, Anarkali had also grown up as a place of recreation with a host of restaurants and bars. Among the famous restaurants were the Standard, Kailash, Sher-e-Punjab and Sindhi. The leading hotels were Central, Imperial and Delhi Muslim, patronized by the landed gentry of Punjab and western UP who came to Lahore on a spending spree. For them, Anarkali was a vast storehouse of merchandise imported from all over the world. The shopkeepers, with their dazzling display of goods, welcomed them with open arms.

The city dwellers usually went to Anarkali via Lohari Gate. On passing out of the gate they were greeted by flower vendors occupying a row of stalls on the left side of the street. Facing them on the right stood a string of splendid fruit shops displaying fruits in a pattern

**WE'D LIKE TO HAVE
OUR PATRONS' BLESSINGS ON
THE OPENING CEREMONY
OF OUR ANARKALI BRANCH**

ON

27TH JANUARY 1947

SALES ON 28TH JANUARY 1947

**WHEN DELIGHTFUL STOCKS WILL BE ON
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USHNAKMALS'

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KANARI BAZAR—LAHORE.

The Tribune, 26 January 1947

that gave them the appearance of a miniature amphitheatre, with decorative fruit baskets rising to a height of about twenty feet. These fruit shops, unmatched anywhere else in the country, reflected the Lahorias' fondness for fruits. The vendors would cry in stentorian tones, vying with one another to draw customers. At the corner of Circular Road stood the famous Delhiwala Halwai Shop of Umrao Singh, known for its high-quality sweets and chaat.

After crossing Circular Road, one set foot on the portals of Anarkali.

I am reminded of a flashy stall displaying a variety of articles, all priced at two annas each. These included cups and saucers, socks and handkerchiefs, pens, books, stationery and pencils, whistles and toys. A little farther ahead, there were a number of shops housed in an old dilapidated building extending up to Ganpat Road which dealt in cotton bedspreads, Sialkot steel trunks, Ludhiana durries, and cotton webbing for cots. Across the street was the renowned lassi shop of Bhagwan Singh, the Kundan Lal Sweet House and a chain of shops dealing in odds and ends, where customers were obliged to sit on the edge of the floor of the shop, which was raised a few feet above the road. Next to it was the famous Kesari Aerated Water Company, whose lemonade, lime juice and other bottled drinks were most sought after by one and all. A few steps away stood the Lahore Stationery Mart, a well-known shop that imported fountain-pens from Germany with its own brand name 'Krishna' to compete with popular English makes like Blackbird and Swan.

The leading cloth merchants of Anarkali were Dunichand and Sons, Raja Bros., Karachi Cloth House, Mohanlal and Sons, Durga Das and Co., and Bombay Cloth House—overstocked with all kinds of Indian, English, Japanese and other imported materials. The prices, compared to today's rates, were ridiculously low. High-quality English woollen suiting material cost seven to ten rupees a yard, while the finest silk shirting, namely Double-horse boski, could be had for twelve annas a yard. Among the sari materials, the famous French georgettes and chiffons sold for a rupee a yard and one of the best English cotton voiles of Tiger brand for six annas a yard. A wide range of cotton shirtings, like poplin, twill, tobralco, aertex, etc., sold from six to eight annas a yard; English longcloth of the famous Key brand for four annas; and fine muslin for turbans from four to six annas.

There were a number of shoe stores, the biggest of them being Bhalla Shoe Co. The shoe trade was a monopoly of the Muslims and Dhani Ram Bhalla was the first Hindu to enter this forbidden field. There were verses composed to publicize Bhalla's shoes, one of which read: '*Boot Bhalley de lai diyo sanoo, roz diyarhi, kavan tuhanoo*' (Buy me Bhalla's shoes, I request you every day). At the



Bhalla Shoe Copmany, a famous landmark of Anarkali Bazar,
now Milli Shoes, 1997

same time, there were his detractors who disapproved Bhalla's entering the shoe trade and ridiculed him in these words: '*Hindu ho ke jutian veche, mat mari gayi dale di, pili hatti Bhalle di*' (Shame on Bhalla that being a Hindu, he is selling shoes at his yellow painted shop). Next to it in importance was Karnal Shop followed by the Chief Boot House. Those days one could pick up an English pair of shoes for about ten to twelve rupees, while the Indian-made Flex and other brands sold for four to six rupees. Much in fashion during summer were sandals and Peshawari chappals, for which Karnal Shop had an edge over the others. Bata Shoe Co. specialized only in canvas and rubber shoes, catering to the needs of common people. Women customers rarely visited these shops personally; they usually bought footwear by sending their feet measurements sketched on a piece of paper.

Among the other famous shops of Anarkali, I would like to single out that of the chemists, Beliram and Sons, the biggest firm of druggists in the Punjab. After Partition in 1947, Pakistan authorities prevailed upon one of the family members to stay on in Lahore to run the establishment, there being no Muslim chemists good enough to meet the demand. The other well-known chemist shop was Narain Dass Bhagwan Dass, the chief stockist of the then famous Calcutta pharmaceutical company, Bengal Chemicals.

Among the general merchants, Jagat Singh Kwatra and Inayatullah, frequented by the gentry, were head and shoulders above the others. Here, one could pick up Van Heusen shirts, Tootal ties, hosiery, toilet goods and even Peek Freans and Huntley Palmers biscuits. For crockery, cutlery and other household appliances, Bija Mal Mela Ram's was the largest showroom. Then there were the famous watch dealers, American Watch Co. and K.C. Raj, who sold a variety of watches, clocks and timepieces. The popular makes of Swiss wristwatches much sought after by the young collegiates were Favre-Leuba, Secondus and Titus in the price range of twenty-five to fifty rupees. The expensive makes were Zenith and Omega. Jaz timepieces from Germany and English-made Smith clocks were much in demand. Another shop which attracted crowds was H.M.V.'s, where gramophones blared out popular hits by Bhai Chhaila Patialawala,

Dulari Begum, Kamala Jharia, and Master Madan. Amusing and hilarious Punjabi songs were recorded by H.M.V. and issued under Twin labels.

Bhaion Ki Dukan was an old shop famous for its oils, perfumes and scents. It was said that it had some ancient recipes dating back to Moghul days for making scents. One of these, it was claimed, could win over the heart of any beau or belle, while another could evoke memories of a lost romance and yet another could efface painful memories and give a new orientation to the heart.

The most famous jewellers in Anarkali were Girdhari Lal and Co., who kept a ready stock of gold ornaments studded with precious stones, pearls, rubies, emeralds and diamonds. They guaranteed the purity of the yellow metal, which some goldsmiths were known to debase by reducing its gold content. A balance for weighing gold and ornaments was kept in a glass case inscribed *Dharam Kanta*, which sought to invoke the fear of God against those who might practise any fraud or deceit in quality or weight. Dhani Ram and Sons were famous hardware merchants. Among the leading booksellers and publishers in the bazar were Uttar Chand Kapur and Sons, Ram Lal Suri and Bros., Raj Pal and Sons, and Atma Ram and Company. Apart from the regular shops with painted signboards, there were itinerant vendors or street traders who hawked all kinds of things from morning till night. They would announce their wares and prices in cries chanted in a sing-song manner. Other interesting characters seen plying their trades on the pavements of Anarkali were *Najumis* or fortune-tellers and vendors of charms and amulets. Some *Najumis* kept parrots or pigeons in cages; when released, these birds would pick up a card from a pack which foretold the future of their clients. One could have amulets and charms for recovery from one's ailments or for winning over one's unresponsive beloved. Many dejected young men flocked to these hawkers of charms to satisfy their hearts' desires.

While returning home from school as a young boy, I used to take a circuitous route so as to pass through Anarkali to enjoy its sights and sounds. I would be quite thrilled with a glimpse of young beauties riding past in tongas or peeping out from their Victoria buggies. I

enjoyed observing groups of men and women with children crying and pulling them in different directions. Sometimes, in the midst of this din, I would suddenly notice a couple of Pathans pushing their way contemptuously through the crowd. I had heard they were moneylenders who went around collecting the exorbitant interests they charged on their loans. One could not help being impressed by their height and swaggering manner, their black bobbed hair under huge floppy turbans, their loose white stylish salwars and dark embroidered waistcoats.

That was Anarkali over fifty years ago, full of life, beckoning one and all to partake of its bountiful gifts.

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12 ANNAS FOR 5



ON THANDI SARAk IN A TONGA

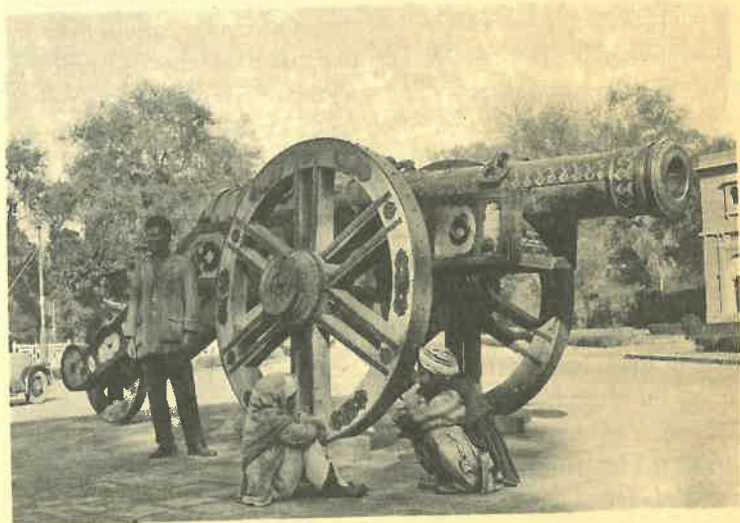
MY COUNTRY COUSINS, ROSHAN and Chaman, have come on a pilgrimage to the city of Lahore. I am asked to take them to *Ajaib Ghar* (the museum) and *Chidhia Ghar* (the zoo), the chief attractions on the itinerary of every visitor, and also show them the sights of the Mall, popularly known as Thandi Sarak. This road had no shady spots and a cool breeze seldom blew across it to justify its name. It was perhaps called *thandi* (cool) because it was sprayed with water every day.

We hire a tonga on an hourly basis: twelve annas for the first hour, ten for the second and eight for the rest of the time. We proceed towards Gol Bagh, making our first stop at the famous museum, which is one of Lahore's proud possessions. Constructed in 1864, it has a vast collection of antiquities, art objects, paintings, etc. As we pass through its galleries, my country cousins are wonderstruck by the size and range of the exhibits.

The adjoining stretch of the Mall up to Anarkali Chowk can compete in beauty and majesty with any other roadway in the world. Close to the museum, there is the renowned Mayo School of Arts, and on the opposite side stands the grand Punjab University Hall, a glorious symbol of Indo-British architecture and witness to a whole pageant of Lahore's academic life. Overlooking this august temple of learning is the statue of A.C. Woolner, one-time vice chancellor of the University, a distinguished scholar of Sanskrit and a patron of Oriental studies. The greatest tourist attraction in its vicinity is the historic *Bhangianwali Tope*, the celebrated *Zamzama* where Kim of Rudyard Kipling played. The word *Zamzama* means a hammer

but is also used for a lion's roar. It is a huge gun cast in 1757 by the order of Ahmad Shah using a brass or copper vessel taken from each Hindu house to provide the metal. He employed it in the Battle of Panipat in 1761. Later, it was captured by the Bhangis and Ranjit Singh took it to Amritsar and used it in his Multan campaign, where it was rendered unfit for further action and brought back to Lahore. It was the biggest gun of its time and its possession was regarded as an emblem of sovereignty. An inscription on it relates how Ahmad Shah ordered the casting of a gun 'terrible as a dragon and huge as a mountain' and describes how 'this wondrous gun, *Zamzama*, a destroyer even of the strongholds of heaven', was finally made. Close by stands the statue of the great freedom fighter, Lala Lajpat Rai, known as the Lion of Punjab, and perhaps the most outstanding orator of his time, who died in 1928 as a result of injuries received during a lathi charge by the police. Another statue adorning the landscape is of another great son of the Punjab, Sir Ganga Ram, a renowned philanthropist who gave Lahore beautiful mansions, modern hospitals and fine schools.

Before reaching Anarkali Chowk, we come across on our right



Zamzama (Bhangianwali Tope), 1920

an old structure known as Municipal (Tollinton) Market, which was built in 1864 to hold the first Punjab Exhibition. The small section of the Mall from Gol Bagh to Anarkali Chowk was once called Exhibition Road in commemoration of the event.

From here onwards the Mall swirls into the most magnificent part of the city. Riding in our slow-moving tonga, I am now acting as a tourist guide, pointing out to my cousins the striking landmarks of the Mall. On our right stands the commercial building with a chain of well-stocked shops. We pass the famous wine shop of Eduljee and in the corner where MacLagan Road branches off to the right, we notice the large hoarding of K.L. Mehra, the celebrated outfitter and cutter who, though dumb, is patronized by the elite of Lahore for his proficiency in tailoring. On our left, there is the large establishment of Cheap John, drapers, tailors, outfitters, milliners and general merchants. Next door is situated the recently opened Coffee House, a favourite haunt of students, teachers and the local intelligentsia, especially of the leftist brand. I am tempted to stop over for a cup of coffee but I drop the idea at once as I feel embarrassed to be seen in the company of my country cousins in their *desi* dress. Moving along, we reach Bank Square with the impressive Sunlight Insurance building on our right facing the YMCA. My cousin Roshan is curious to know something about the YMCA. I try to explain that this institution is a venue of cultural, literary and social gatherings and also runs a typing and shorthand school. We pass by Devichand's shop, Janaki Dass and Co., Llyods Bank, the Telegraph Office, Imperial Bank, and are struck by the imposing structure of the General Post Office built in true imperial style. Across the road stands the Reserve Bank of India, a unique redbrick structure lending a bright halo to the surroundings.

Now we enter the grandest part of the Mall with exquisite buildings on both sides. Here Mcleod Road meets the Mall and at the junction facing the High Court stands a massive bronze statue of Sir John Lawrence holding a sword in one hand and a pen in the other. It carries the inscription, 'I served you with pen and sword.' Sir John was the first Governor of Punjab and later became Governor-General (1864-69). This famous statue was unveiled by Sir Charles Aitchison

in 1887. The road is now wide open, spacious and has neatly kept pavements. On our right stands the extensive High Court building and on our left, the imposing Mason Narsingdas building. We stop here and I take Roshan and Chaman to have a closer look at the High Court, that exalted seat of justice and a symbol of imperial grandeur.

Enchanted by the splendour of the Mall, Roshan asks me who built this road. I tell him that this celebrated road, one of the finest in India and of which every Lahoria is justly proud, was laid in 1851 by Lt Colonel Napier, who described it as 'a direct road leading from Anarkali to Mian Mir'. Towards the end of the century, extensive improvements to it were carried out during the tenure of Sir Ganga Ram as executive engineer of the Lahore Provincial Division. Later, the whole length of the Mall was remodelled under the supervision of the then Lt Governor, Sir Charles Revaz, who took special interest in preserving the trees planted on either side of the road.

After a short stroll on the High Court lawns, we resume our tonga ride along the Mall. On our left we pass the shops of the famous hairdresser A.N. John, the optician Kirpa Ram, father of the well-known eye specialist Dr Daulat Ram, and the chemists E. Plomer & Co. My cousins show surprise that A.N. John, a sahib, should be working as a barber. I explain that A.N. John is not a European. His name is Amar Nath; he learnt the art of hairdressing in England and added John to his name to attract European clients.

As we move on, there is increasing traffic on both sides of the Mall. We see sahibs and memsahibs perched in their motor cars driven by native chauffeurs, their pet dogs lolling their tongues through the windows, an amusing sight indeed. We see horse-drawn carriages and Victorias taking the well-to-do and the famous out for an airing on the Mall. War-time petrol rationing has forced some people to commission their discarded tongas and buggies for going about in the city. My cousins are dazed to see some beautiful young girls riding cycles and overtaking our slow-moving tonga. Then we come across a bus of Fatehchand College for Girls, packed with students rushing past us.

On the right, we face the famous Sir Ganga Ram building, housing the leading chemists, Jagat Singh and Sons. A little farther, we

pass the great Dyal Singh Mansion, which is designed somewhat differently from the rest of the buildings in the Mall. Shaped like a semi-circle, it houses a number of shops, including several leading radio dealers: Vasudeva, Parco and Northern Radios. Like Sir Ganga Ram, Dyal Singh Majithia, a Sikh turned Brahmo Samajist, was a great philanthropist. He founded a school, a college, a library and an English newspaper, *The Tribune*, thus winning the hearts of Lahorias.

A little further, we pass the recently opened Standard Restaurant, a favourite haunt of Lahore's gentry. Here 'Full Tea' can be had for one rupee and four annas. One may eat as much of cake, pastries, sandwiches and patties as one likes at no extra cost. Next door is the Regal Cinema, which shows only English movies. Now we reach a crossing where Hall Road joins the Mall on the left and Temple Road branches off on the right. At the intersection is one of the leading department stores, Kirpa Ram & Bros., well known for its annual sale. On the left, there is Luxmi Building, housing Ranken & Co., a famous English firm of drapers and tailors. We pass by the grand Dingha Singh Building where Beadon Road extending from Mcleod Road joins the Mall, on to the offices of the *Civil and Military Gazette*, K. Shoe Shop, Maira Motors, Elphinstone Hotel, Jenn and Elerton, and Whiteway Laidlaw. Facing them on our right are Kandawala Motors, Stiffles Hotel, Narain Das Motors, Alfred and Co., chemists, and Lorang Restaurant in Shah Din building. In the motor showrooms, one can see the latest models of British and American cars. Those were the days when car salesmen would visit prospective buyers, inviting them to have a test drive so that they could appreciate the new features of the latest models of vehicles they were marketing.

We are now at the Charing Cross. We stop here to see the famous landmark of the Mall—Queen Victoria's statue installed in 1902 after the death of the Queen in 1901. A marvellous piece of art with an exquisite marble canopy, it strikes the viewer with its grandeur. It arouses admiration and even veneration from the fading old generation of Lahorias who seldom fail to recount the great blessings of the *Angrezi Raj*. Behind the Queen's statue is visible the imposing new building of the Punjab Legislative Assembly at the confluence of

Elgin Road and Montgomery Road.

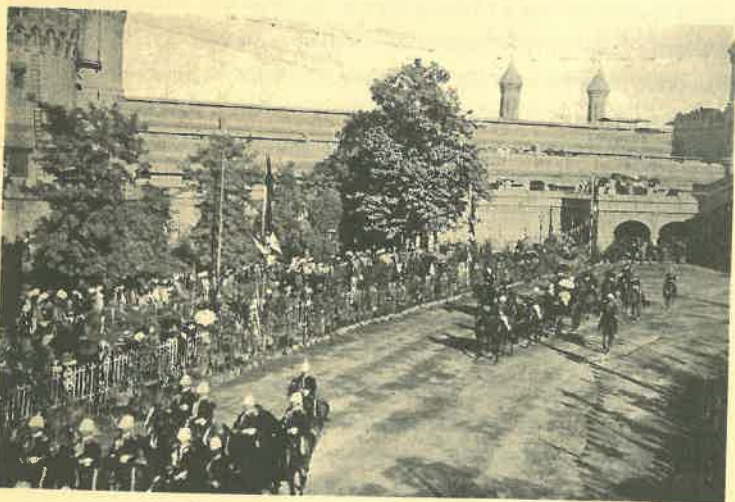
Across the road, some of the leading shops are those of Uberoi Sports and F.H. Pitman, drapers and cutters. Close by is the Plaza Cinema, which too shows only English films. I recall it making an exception when it screened the famous Indian movie, *Sikandar*, starring Prithviraj and Vanmala, produced and directed by Sohrab Modi. Another impressive building in the area is the Freemason Lodge, built in 1916, a place about which we know nothing except that it houses a secret brotherhood that helps its members to rise in their professions and other fields of activity.

On our left is Melaram Building, housing the popular Metro Restaurant, a very gay place in the evenings, where starlets of Lahore's film world and aspiring young actresses with their escorts gather to attract the attention of film personalities who patronize it. Going further, we pass the famous Nedou's Hotel on our left, facing the entrance to the Lahore Zoo, which was established in Lawrence Gardens in 1872. I have little interest in visiting the zoo, having seen it numerous times during my childhood. My country cousins, however, are enchanted by the sight of so many animals and birds of various species moving about behind bars. They are somewhat unnerved on seeing a roaring lion in its spacious enclosure with a towering fence. I tell them of an incident heard in my childhood: a lion once jumped over the fence and ran towards the Mall, where it was overpowered and shot dead. After that the steel railing fence was raised to a height of over twenty feet to prevent mishaps of the kind.

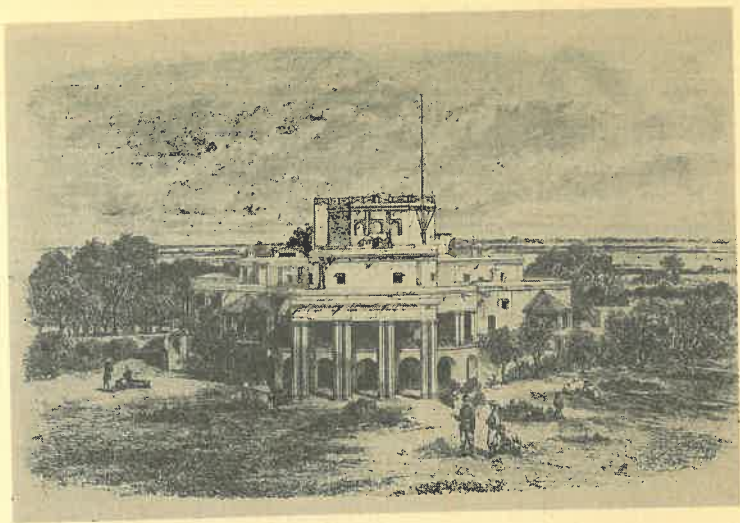
After a tiresome round of the zoo, we settle down at a *halwai* shop near the zoo gate and eat *pedas* and *ladoos* with hot milk. Now I take them to my favourite haunt, the beautifully laid out Lawrence Gardens with their tall majestic trees, some of them brought from England, and rows of colourful sweet-smelling flower-beds. We take a ride round the picturesque cricket grounds, the venue of international Test matches. My cousins are delighted at the sight of a hillock full of flowers, shrubs and plants in the centre of the gardens. Next, I take them to the Open Air Theatre, built in the style of a Roman amphitheatre, where amateur artists hold concerts and plays in its picturesque surroundings. From there, we go around

the hillock and seat ourselves on a bench from where we have a glorious view of the gardens and the Montgomery Hall housing the Gymkhana Club, a symbol of British prestige and an exclusive meeting-place for the sahibs and memsahibs. No natives are permitted to enter this august building. Through the glass-windows of its gaily decorated ball-room, one can occasionally hear the band or catch faint reflections of the dancing couples. Montgomery Hall comprises two buildings, Lawrence Hall and Montgomery Hall, built at different times with contributions from the European community and the native chiefs of the Punjab in memory of two Punjab governors, Sir John Lawrence and Sir Robert Montgomery. The two structures were later integrated into one. Lawrence's name was given to the gardens and Montgomery's to the hall.

In another part of the gardens is located the Cosmopolitan Club, a meeting-place for the upcoming westernized native elite who take pride in aping the rulers and behave like brown sahibs. My country cousins are stunned to see a couple of ladies in saris playing tennis in the club's courts. My cousins wish to stop over and walk around the place but I dissuade them firmly from doing so as I want to avoid being seen in their company by my collegemates whom I am likely



Their Royal Highnesses arrival at Lahore



Government House, Lahore, engraving from the *Illustrated London News*, 27 November 1868



Proclamation Ceremony of King George VI at Government House,
Lahore, 1936

to encounter there. I ask the tongawalla to proceed to the canal bank.

Facing us across the road as we come out of the gardens is the imposing gate of Government House, the residence of the Punjab Governor, Sir H.B. Glancy. Government House is built round the tomb of Muhammad Kasim Khan, a cousin of Akbar's. As the Moghul noble was fond of wrestling, his tomb was known as Gumbaz Kushtiwala. He built it in his lifetime but used it as a house of pleasure until his death when he was buried elsewhere. The present Government House, built in the late nineteenth century, has vast grassy lawns, walkways, stables, kennels, menial quarters, etc., all hidden from common view.

As we move on, we pass Aitchison College, better known as Chiefs' College, surrounded by extensive playgrounds. It is an exclusive institution with mostly European teachers founded for the schooling of princes from native States and sons of the Punjab chiefs comprising the landed aristocracy. The rulers wanted these boys to be brought up in the British image. It was not considered desirable that they should mingle with the commoners. I could have had no opportunity to enter this exalted centre of learning as it was far beyond our means or station in life. However, I did meet some of its elitist students who later joined Government College where I was studying. A little farther away stands the Punjab Club, another exclusive residential and meeting-place of the English elite.

We continue our ride to the canal up to the bridge and then get down from the tonga to walk along the canal bank. The canal forms the south-west boundary of Lahore, with the Ravi marking its boundary on the north-west. After enjoying the cool breeze for a while we ride back to our house on Nisbet Road.

This was a memorable four-hour trip for my country cousins, an exciting pilgrimage of the city of Lahore. For me, it was a boring and tiresome exercise. So, I left the house soon to meet some of my friends, leaving my cousins behind to narrate their impressions of the sights and sounds of Thandi Sarak to my family members.

A TIME FOR FUN AND GAMES

IN THE LAHORE OF my days, there were plenty of games and pastimes, fairs and festivals, recreation and diversions to keep us amused all the year round. We had but to walk into the streets to be entertained by one or the other professional jugglers, *madaris* (magicians), *baazigars* (acrobats), *bhands* (jesters), animal and bird tamers, snake charmers, singers, not to mention the Chinese performers of gymnastic feats who would be out on their daily rounds. The monotony of life was relieved by these joyful diversions and people had enough time to stand and stare. Like a magnet, Lahore had drawn them to its environs and kept them happy by its generous patronage.

As children we, both boys and girls, played together with earthenware toys and wooden *gaird-balla* (ball and bat), shared the *peeng* or *jhula jhulna* (swing) and competed in *kirhi-kahra*, a game in which the participants jump on one leg, pushing a piece of stone through a rectangular area divided into eight sections drawn on the floor with charcoal or chalk. Another favourite game was *lukamchai* or hide and seek, in which the children conceal themselves while one of them singing '*Luk chhip jana, makai da dana, raje di beti aai ai*', pursues them. Up to the age of eight or ten, boys were allowed to play with girls. Thereafter they played different games. The boys moved on to *gulli-danda* and *kanchas* (marbles) and the girls took to playing with dolls, to rope-skipping and *kiklis*. The latter involved jumping round in pairs with clasped hands and joined feet moving in unison. Another girls' game was playing with tiny stonepieces called *gitas*. The boys' *gulli-danda* is a sport demanding a high degree of skill, quick reflexes, exceptional hand-

to-eye coordination, strong wrists and powerful grasp. Similarly, playing with *kanchas* or shooting small marbles involves placing a marble ball against the tip of the left forefinger which is drawn back and quickly released so as to hit the ball against which the blow is intended. The game demands an ability to judge distances and strike the target with precision. Kite flying, an extremely popular sport during winter months, has been dealt with in detail in another chapter. Another popular pastime was spinning a *latoo* or top by pulling a cotton string wound at its bottom. Tops were especially finished by expert craftsmen who would rub its edges with such precision as to make them spin fast for fifteen to twenty minutes.

Girls amused themselves with dolls which, though without the waxy skin and woolly hair of modern makes, were cared for and loved by their young owners. Perhaps the game young girls found most exciting was the marriage of their dolls with those of their playmates. The celebrations included all the traditional ceremonies of *mangni* (engagement) and *shadi* (wedding) they had heard so much about from the women around them. They would collect a dowry for the bride and go through the entire exercise of holding negotiations about the reception of the *barat* and its departure. The game was played in all seriousness, the older girls acting as mothers and aunts, and preparing imitations of special wedding dishes.

Festivals and fairs, which provided a delightful diversion for the people, were also events of social significance. Celebrated with pomp and show, Lohdi, Basant, Holi, Baisakhi, Dussehra, Diwali, Eid, Moharram and Gurburav, were symbols of a composite culture, for all communities participated in them. Religious processions attracted large crowds of people who would line up in bazars and stand on balconies of houses to be able to witness them. The great attraction was the procession of *jhankis* or floats elaborately set up on bullock-carts with a miniature stage where amateur artists would enact incidents from the Ramayana. Some of the *jhankis* depicted colourful scenes from the epic. Seated on them were also singers who entertained the surging crowds. The onlookers used to occupy vantage points in bazars hours before the arrival of the processions and kept a night vigil to witness the full show, which usually concluded

at dawn. People spent lavishly during the festivals, which promoted social intercourse and communal harmony.

The festivals were also occasions for holding *dangals* (wrestling matches) that carried attractive prizes. *Kushti* (wrestling) was a popular sport and a number of *akharas* were run by renowned *pehalwans* (wrestlers) in different parts of the city. It required several years of hard training to become a *pehalwan* and also a special diet of energy-yielding almonds and milk products. The *pehalwans* of Lahore were famous all over the country for their physical strength and ingenious *daos* (holds) to defeat the adversary. Wrestling matches were held in the open air before a large assembly of people. The moment one of the wrestlers succeeded in knocking his adversary flat on his back he was declared victor and loud cries of *wah, wah* (bravo) from the enthusiastic and admiring multitude would fill the air. The victor was lifted and, riding on the shoulders of one of his supporters, he was carried in triumph followed by a band of musicians. The spectators on their part would crown him with wreaths of flowers. The city was proud of its Rustam-e-zaman, the world champion Gama Pehalwan, who defeated Zbysco at Patiala in 1928.

The principal fairs or melas of Lahore were those of Baisakhi, Bhadarkali, Basant, Dussehra, Chiragan, and Kadman. The Baisakhi mela was held in April on the banks of the Ravi where people in thousands took a bath in the river. The great Hindu fair of Bhadarkali was held in Mauza Niaz Beg at Devi Mandar in the month of June. In January-February was organized the Basant mela in the precincts of the mausoleum of Madho Lal Hussain near the Shalimar Gardens. It attracted large crowds belonging to all communities. The Muslims assembled there to pay their homage to the shrine of Lal Hussain and the Hindus to adore the Samadh of Hakikat Rai close by. Chiraghon-ka-mela or the festival of lamps held in the picturesque Shalimar Gardens was by far the gayest of all, attended by people from far and near. Kadman-ka-mela held at the tomb of Sakhi Sarwar in Anarkali in February attracted professional drummers who amused the young and the old with their music and dance. The fair of Dussehra, which lasted eight days, was held at Minto Park, concluding with the burning of the effigies of Ravan and his clan.



Illuminations at Shalimar Gardens, The Royal Tour Souvenir
Album, 1905-06

All these fairs, which were periodically held at appointed places, presented gay scenes. Dressed in colourful costumes, people of all communities assembled there for fun and laughter and enjoyed themselves heartily. We always looked forward to these occasions with excitement and saved money to buy playthings and other novelties. The shopkeepers from the city would set up stalls of sweetmeats, toys, utensils, fruits and eatables of various kinds. There were magicians, jugglers, acrobats, mimics, actors, singers and dancers, who entertained the crowds with their performances, receiving rewards for the display of their skill. Full of mirth and merriment, the fairs were attended in large numbers enthusiastically.

For fun and amusement, one did not have to wait for fairs and festivals. Near at hand were diverse sources of entertainment. There was the *bunderwala* beating his hand-drum to catch the attention of children. He always had two performing monkeys, one dressed up as a man and the other as a woman. Not to be left behind was the *reechhwala* with his tamed bear which would dance to the tune of his drum. One could not miss the snake charmer, who was always

in demand by spectators keen to see a fight between the mongoose and the snake, or the cobra dancing to the tune of the gourd pipe, which could be an awe-inspiring experience. The snake charmer also offered his services for catching serpents that might be hiding in houses. He claimed to do so by playing the pipe. Sometimes he carried around his neck pythons rolling down onto his arms. It seemed there was some kind of affinity between the snake charmer and his snakes who always answered the call of his pipe. The snake charmer also claimed to possess antidotes to snakebite. He sold stones which were supposed to suck out poison from the bitten spot.

Street jugglers or madaris were a class of entertainers who had sleight of hand as their USP. A madari was always accompanied by a young lad called *jamura* who would keep talking to the spectators while the juggler showed his bag of tricks. To the utter amazement of the bystanders, he would take a pinch of dust in his palm and transform it into a silver rupee coin in a jiffy by the use of his magic wand. Holding the audience spellbound, he would suddenly begin 'passing the hat'. He rarely failed to collect enough money. Then he would start performing his other tricks, changing pebbles into birds, birds into eggs, eggs into plants. He would cough out several metal balls from his mouth one after another, as also thread beads with his tongue. The most exciting of the tricks was the 'vanishing' act in which *jamura* would squeeze himself into a round basket two feet high and three feet in circumference. The basket, when opened, would be found empty. Some jugglers could even emit flames from their mouths and pierce their tongues with iron needles.

Baazigars were another class of entertainers who amused people with their feats of skill and daring. One was wonderstruck to witness the agility and pliability of the bodies of these people. I can recall one of them who bore on his shoulders six men standing in twos, one above another. There were others who could walk on a rope suspended over twenty feet above the ground. They even ran upside down on the strength of their palms. A popular entertainment especially for children was the puppet show staged by puppeteers who usually visited Lahore from Rajasthan during the summer season. Expertly manipulated by wires and strings, puppet shows were given at street

corners where children would assemble and listen to ballads and songs narrating the tales of the kings and queens of Rajasthan.

One also came across Chinese groups performing acrobatic feats. One could see trained lads rotating porcelain plates balanced on bamboo sticks held by the toes or placed on the forehead, and turning and twisting the body backwards to pick up straws with the eyelids.

Bhands were yet another group of entertainers who appeared from nowhere whenever there was a festive occasion in a family, such as an engagement, a wedding, or childbirth. They were jesters and mimics who spared neither the young nor the old. They would demand a reward according to the status of the family, employing all kinds of bargaining tactics and usually having their own way. Similarly, a group of eunuchs was a familiar sight on these occasions. They would sing in praise of every member of the family, praying for the long life and prosperity of the newly born or the wedded couple. No one dared to criticize them, for once enraged, they would shower abuses on one and all. When rewarded to their satisfaction, they



Interior of the Exhibition at Lahore

would sing and dance, mimicking professional dancing girls. Their presence on such festive occasions was considered auspicious, the hosts treating them with kindness and generosity.

During winter months, one came across folk dancers from Kangra in their attractive hill costumes. They would sing and dance, rotate large metal plates balanced on sticks, throw them up in the air and catch them again with the sticks still rotating in rapid motion.

Another kind of entertainment was provided by travelling circuses and carnival companies when they visited Lahore. Circus shows were a novelty and attracted people of all ages. Carnivals offered a veritable feast for gamblers until they were banned by the government in the mid-1930s. Carnival companies had an extra attraction of amusement parks with giant wheels, swings, merry-go-rounds. These amusement parks were later merged with the periodic exhibitions held in Lahore. A great novelty that appeared on the scene in 1935 was the dodgem car. It was a mighty attraction at amusement parks with youngsters making a beeline for it. Many a daring feat was shown on these occasions. I recall a couple of them that created a sensation in the city. One was the driving of a motorcycle on the walls of a specially constructed wooden well, called the 'well of death', and the other was a daring jump into a watertank from a height of sixty-five feet by a stuntman after setting himself aflame.

Such was the lighter side of life in Lahore over half a century ago. There was hustle and bustle, merry-making and excitement wherever one looked, with people of all ages standing, staring and amusing themselves. It was easy to lose oneself in amazement at this splendour, tumult and commotion.

BO-KATA (THERE IT IS CUT)

SHOUTS OF *BO-KATA* RENT the air. There was a fresh breeze blowing and thousands of kites, small and large, were sailing in the sky. It was Basant, the kite-flying festival, and the rooftops were crowded with young and old engaged in watching the sport. Kite flying had been a passion with Lahorias who waxed eloquent of their kites and boasted of their accomplishments in this field. It was said that there was no other place in the world where kite flying as a sport had reached such commanding heights as in Lahore.

Kite flying has a long history. Japanese legend tells us of a twelfth-century warrior, Minamoto, who was exiled to the island of Oshima and who had his son escape to the mainland by flying away on a great kite. Another legend recounts that a kite was used to hoist tiles to roof the Zojo-ji temple in 1689. The kite has had an incredible variety of forms and colours in Japan, often carrying symbolic representations of prosperity, long life and fortune. However, its invention, which dates back to about 200 BC, is attributed to China. Marco Polo speaks of kites during his stay in that country. Even today, on the ninth day of the ninth month, the Day of the Kite is celebrated in China with great gusto. It is possible that the kite went to Europe through India.

It is difficult to say exactly when and how Lahore emerged as the principal centre of kite flying in the world. The very mention of kites awakens in me memories of my childhood, transporting me to those distant yet familiar surroundings of the walled city of Lahore. Basant marked the end of the kite-flying season, which began after Diwali in November with the onset of the cold weather. Made of

coloured paper and fine bamboo, our kites were as attractive as huge butterflies and almost as light. There was a large variety of colours, shapes and designs, each with its own appellation. We had *guddis*, *peris*, *guddas*, *Lucknow kats*, *patangs*, *teerahs*, *kups*, etc. The *guddis* had a small paper tassel at the bottom while the male version, the *gudda*, had a *patta*, a triangle cut out of paper in place of the tassel. Even now kites with pattas or tassels are flown all over India. It is said that they were invented in Lucknow.

There were master craftsmen in Lahore who specialized in making different varieties of kites. I can still recall the names of famous kite makers: Pahlwan, Rato and Khushia. Rato was the best known amongst them during the 1930s. He ran his business from his small house in Mohalla Mohlian in Sutar Mandi Bazar. He was a frail-looking man, five feet tall, active and wiry, with a brown skin, regular features and small beady eyes. Clean-shaven and sporting a tiny moustache, he always wore a circular dark brown cap. Ever smiling, he would often dole out instructions to his clients on the art of kite fighting.

Making a good kite is an art. The secret lies in perfect scraping and softening of its fine bamboo rods. One batten is fixed to the centre of the frame and another batten is curved like a bow, linking the two corners on the right and left. In those days a large variety of coloured paper of different thicknesses and qualities was imported from England. The construction of *patang* and its male version *kup* is a complicated task. Rato, the master kite maker, had perfected the art of cutting and scraping of bamboo battens. He would guarantee that his kites would never swing right or left, keeping their upright position in the sky in the face of even strong winds. He was engaged in making kites all the year round and by the time the kite-flying season arrived, his kites were ready for action, the bamboo battens having become free of moisture and thus very light and manoeuvrable. The connoisseurs would buy up a stock of kites from him to last the whole season.

The art of producing the right kind of *dore* (string, cord or twine) was also perfected in Lahore. There were three main types of cotton threads manufactured by M/s Coates of England that were in common

use. These varied in thickness and were marked Nos. 8, 10 and 18. The most popular was No. 10, an all-purpose one suitable for flying practically all types and sizes of kites. No. 8 was thicker and was used only for very large kites, while No. 18 was for kites of smaller sizes. The well-twisted and durable thread was rubbed with a mixture of flour paste and levigated glass until it became armoured. This made the dore so sharp that it caused blood to drip from many a finger holding it. To prevent this, it was necessary to wear finger gloves. The armoured twine was wound on a *pinnah* (ball) with great skill so that there was a smooth flow of twine to raise the kite high or low during a kite battle. Sometimes, boiled egg was also rubbed on the dore to even out its sharpness. The common run of players in Lahore usually bought their dore from the kite sellers who kept it in ready stock. The connoisseurs would buy their raw stock of thread reels, called *gotes*, and get them armoured in their presence by experts who ran this business outside Shahalmi and Mochi Gates as well as in Minto Park.

During the season, our normal routine was to rush to the rooftops immediately on return from school with our guddis and dore. From the rooftops we could have a glimpse of the whole city. I vividly remember the sights of the Gothic towers of Government College against the halo of the setting sun in the west. Near it stood a very tall chimney of an ice factory located in Changarh Mohalla. In the north-west one could see the minarets of the Badshahi Mosque and the high havelis around Gumti Bazar.

I can still recall how one day my teammate held the kite loosely, gave it an upward lift and I pulled the dore quickly and lo! the kite rode up in the sky. After this launch, I sent it higher and higher as my friend held the pinnah in his hand to ensure an uninterrupted flow of the dore. It was after strenuous practice that I could learn the skill of flying the kite and keep it steady in the air. To hold a kite in this way was to hold something alive, something that played in your hand, that jerked and warbled as the dore vibrated in the wind. The kite went higher up until it appeared to mingle with the clouds; it united us with another world, larger, far larger than ours. It also linked us with other flyers whose kites shared the air space with

ours. Indeed, I felt that kites were a symbol of our lives.

I cannot recall anything that thrilled me more than kite flying in my boyhood days. Whenever I observed my kite soaring towards the clouds, I experienced a sense of power and mastery over the elements. Perhaps, in a way, I identified myself with the kite itself flying so free and so high above me, far from the madding crowd, enveloping me in a spirit of freedom and adventure. I felt that kites also signified a hope, a desire for escape, fancy dreams entrusted to a breath of wind and connected to a string and the hand that clasped it.

Those were the days when kite fighting instead of kite flying was in vogue. *Pecha larana*, or to entrap another kite by pouncing upon it from above or below or sideways, depending on its position, was the most exciting part of the sport. The skill lay in crossing dore with an opponent until the vanquished kite, cut loose, floated helplessly over the rooftops. The victor and his teammate would announce the defeat of the rival with loud cries of *Bo-kata* and throw a challenge for a return *pecha*. The defeated rival would accept the challenge and stir up a fresh kite into the sky. The rules of the game did not permit entrapping the kite till it was high above in the sky. It required great manoeuvring to entangle or disentangle one's kite from the clutches of the opponent. Sometimes, we heard a shrill commotion on the rooftops and saw boys running with bamboo poles to catch a drifting kite. A falling kite in a street or bazar also created a stir and passers-by of all ages would run to catch the booty as a prized possession. Some boys who could not afford to buy kites often amused themselves by watching *pechas* and catching the falling kites.

Every mohalla in Lahore had its own acknowledged *khilaris* (expert kite-flyers). As soon as they launched their kites, it was a signal for the small-timers to pull back their kites and leave the field open for them. They dared not venture to disturb the *khilaris*, each of whom had established his sphere of influence. I was also a small *khilari* who after accepting a challenge from a rival would enter the battle only at an agreed time.

There was a style of kite flying called *khaincha* that entailed cutting the twine of the rival kite by dragging and pulling it with a sudden jerk. This was a practice followed by some boys who had

very little twine and were looked upon with contempt by the khilaris who would sometimes even give them a beating for attacking their kites in this fashion.

We always looked forward to Basant, the king of all festivals in Lahore. About two weeks before its arrival, the kite shops were specially decorated and a large variety of kites of different colours, shapes and sizes were displayed along with small and large pinnahs and artistically wound dore in numerous attractive colour combinations. Large stocks of kites were also brought from Lucknow for the occasion. The kite makers and dore producers worked round the clock. The khilaris used to pile up their stocks of kites and dore well in advance to avoid the last-minute rush. Second in importance to Basant was the Lohdi festival held on *Makar Sankranti*, which usually falls on 13 January. On that day we had kite flying on a large scale, a full-dress rehearsal for Basant, which falls usually in the first week of February. Basant signalled the end of the winter season in Lahore and the onset of spring.

The celebrations on Basant day would commence well before daybreak, when specially constructed box kites carrying lighted candles like lanterns were set afloat in the sky. These moving lights



Basant party on a rooftop in the Walled City, 1999

in the sky made an enchanting sight and signified the inauguration of the great kite-flying festival of Lahore, unmatched anywhere else in the world. Rooftops and terraces were crowded with men, women and children of all ages. It was also a custom to wear yellow turbans on Basant day. The women, young and old, also sported yellow chunnis which lent a new charm to the festival atmosphere. By daybreak the sky would be ablaze with thousands of kites of different colours, shapes, sizes and designs. The whole atmosphere of the city also reverberated with the triumphant shouts of *Bo-kata* and the blowing of trumpets to proclaim victories in kite-fighting battles. There were famous khilaris in Said Mitha, Wachhowali, Machhi Hata, Sutar Mandi, Rang Mahal and other areas of Lahore. They challenged one another for paichas. The Basant festival was also held outside near Haqikat Rai's Samadh, where crowds from neighbouring villages joined the city crowds and enjoyed kite flying. There were also renowned khilaris who played for heavy stakes in Minto Park. The winners were admired for their dexterity and skills in gauging the winds as well as for their perfection in the tactics of manoeuvring, surging, shielding and stretching during the kite flying.

A tragic incident that occurred on a Basant day has left a lasting impression on my mind. Shiba was a young khilari in our mohalla. Tall, handsome and ever-smiling, he was a couple of years older than me. Full of humour, he was very popular and friendly with all the boys in the neighbourhood. He was a clever and skilful kite flyer and had emerged as a winner in quite a few kite matches on that day. The winds were quite favourable and the festivities were in full swing. As sundown approached, Shiba was challenged by another khilari, Dwarka, from the next mohalla. In no time, Shiba launched his red kite and was ready for the battle. Many of us pulled back our kites and got ready to witness the fight. After some warming up, we began boosting Shiba's morale by hooting down his rival. Shiba entrapped his opponent's kite and pecha was set up. He released the dore with measured speed and the fighting kites flew higher and farther. The battle dragged on with the approaching evening. We were watching with bated breath and praying for Shiba to come out victorious. The battling kites in the distant horizon now resembled

tiny moving specks. Shiba was standing on a rooftop that had a low parapet around it. After some time, finding himself unable to view the progress of his kite, he stepped onto the parapet wall, which was less than two feet wide and overlooked the lane below. Soon we saw Dwarka's kite cut loose and drift away. Shiba was victorious. He shouted *Bo-kata* and in his excitement he bent forward, overstepped the wall and tumbled down into the lane more than fifty feet below. There were cries from the housetops in the neighbourhood, 'Shiba has fallen down from the roof!' It was a great tragedy for the entire mohalla. All festivities were suspended and everyone rushed down from the rooftops.

Shiba lay dead on the ground—a final *Bo-kata* of his life-span.

ROMANCE ON THE HOUSETOP

IN THE NARROW, CROWDED streets of Lahore, the housetops bustled with a life of their own, distinct from that of the city down below. The joint family was the accepted norm and, true to the socialist ideal of sharing all things together, people enjoyed the pleasures of the housetop in equal measure. Even the neighbours were not excluded from making use of it. They also shared one another's joys and sorrows. Womenfolk exchanged bowls of spicy aromatic curries and other eatables to provide a variety of food for their menfolk. The needs of widows, who usually kept indoors with their children, were the joint responsibility of the menfolk. Families living in a house had a common right to the roof and both young and old used to climb four to five flights of stairs to enjoy fresh air and sunlight. The principal structures on the housetops were the barsati, the bathroom and the chimney, which emitted smoke of burning firewood and cowdung cakes from the kitchen. Every housetop also had a raised platform called *rons* where womenfolk would sit and chat with their neighbours, separated by a gap of four to five feet.

During winter, the women and children had the housetops to themselves after the menfolk left for work. The women got busy with their chores. Some would turn their spinning-wheels, dye muslin chunnis, or do embroidery with silk thread on a piece of cloth held tightly in a circular wooden frame. Some old women could be seen mending quilts or weaving cotton durries on a vertical frame. Some of the younger ones displayed their skill in knitting sweaters or stitching garments for the children on their newly acquired Singer sewing machines. One could also observe women rubbing their

faces with a paste made of wheat flour mixed with ghee or of orange peel powder and oil which brought lustre and glow to their skins. Dentifrice did the job of a non-smear lipstick. Another pleasing sight was of young girls in their teens throwing bread crumbs to the pigeons and crows that would cluster around housetops, flying up and down. Those who were too old to undertake any strenuous task occupied themselves with extracting kernels from melon seeds. Basking in the sun, this community get-together on the housetops was disturbed at times by the cries of hawkers down in the street selling vegetables, fruits, cooked snacks, pots and pans, etc. The womenfolk would strike a bargain from the housetops and take delivery by baskets lowered with twisted strings, a device called *chhika*, very practical and popular in Lahore.

Returning from school, the boys would make their way to the housetops to fly kites—a signal to the womenfolk to retire and go down to attend to their evening chores. As far as I can recall, kite flying was the most delightful amusement for most of us. There was no sight more exciting than of a kite sailing clear and free in the sky. The housetops acquired a new gaiety with the shouts of boys challenging one another for a kite match and occasional cries of *Bo-kata* by the victors who succeeded in cutting their adversaries' kites. As dusk set in, the kites were pulled back and the boys moved down from the housetops, which now bore a deserted look in the dark under the starry skies. It now became a place where young couples would find privacy and solitude away from the ever-vigilant eyes of family members and neighbours. One could at times overhear their amorous soft voices, hushed giggles and passionate declarations.

During summer, the housetops came alive only in the evenings after sunset. The roofs were watered to make them cool and the menfolk sat there after the day's labour with their hookahs, gossiping with their neighbours while the womenfolk got busy with the evening chores in the house below. The air was less stifling up there than indoors or in the streets below. Often, there was a breeze from the north with a whiff of mountain coolness. Now and then, someone would bring his gramophone and delight everyone on the housetops with songs of Bhai Chhaila Patialewala, Dulari Begum, Mushtari Bai

or Indu Bala. This would provoke our neighbour Ramlal to bring his harmonium the next day and sing popular songs which won applause from everyone in the neighbourhood. After dinner, whole families would sit together on rows of string cots, chit-chatting. Many houses were without electricity and the glimmering lights of hurricane lanterns provided an enchanting view of these housetop camps. Daybreak signalled the winding up of the camps and by sunrise all of us descended to the rooms below. Sometimes a thunder shower in the middle of the night dispersed us and there was a great noise of scuffling and running as everyone woke up to take up his bedding and rush to the barsati or down into the house.

As the day advanced and the sun began scorching the roofs with its rays, the housetops were deserted. Occasionally, one would find someone going up to answer the call of nature. All activity was now transferred to the lane level where the womenfolk would sit on *thurrahs* (extended platforms) in front of their houses. At times, we saw hectic bargaining between a prospective woman buyer and the cloth vendor who went from street to street with his wares carried by a Kashmiri coolie. A crowd of children would collect around him as he spread his wares, pleading with the womenfolk to have a look at what he had without obligation to buy anything. There were many hawkers who came regularly to sell summer fruits, spicy chaat and gulgappas, kulche chhole and kulfas and kulfis. Then there were sellers of brass utensils who struck barter deals, exchanging their goods for old clothes and shoes. Another interesting character was the *kalaiwala* who re-tinned brass and copper utensils.

One afternoon towards the end of June, when the housetops were deserted, I went up to pick up a pillow from the barsati where the beddings were kept. I was about to reach the rooftop when I heard some voices coming from the barsati. I was taken aback and stood still. The door at the end of the stairs was ajar. So I quickly moved up and posted myself behind the door from where I could watch and hear what was happening, without being seen by anyone on the housetop. Listening attentively, I made out that the voices were quite familiar. I was surprised to find that Heera, our neighbour, was carrying on a whispered dialogue with Ram Piari, the young second

wife of another neighbour, Lala Khushi Ram. A little while earlier, I had seen her sitting on the thurrah of our house with a group of womenfolk and chatting with my mother. She had obviously slipped from there unnoticed and here she was having a rendezvous with Heera in our barsati.

I feel tempted now to break off here for a moment and say a few words about the duo. Heera had passed his matriculation but like so many others was unable to find any job. An enterprising boy, he learnt some formula for scented hair oil that he would prepare at home. He was able to sell a few bottles of it through hawkers. The main shops would not take it as they dealt only in products made by Bhaion-ki-Dukan, which was famous not only in Lahore but all over the Punjab. However, Heera did make a few annas every day for his pocket money. As he was still dependent on his parents, no marriage proposal had come his way, though he had already crossed the age of twenty-four. Ram Piari was tall, stout and affable, hailing from a village in Maja. Khushi Ram, in his late forties, had married her in order to beget a male offspring. From his first wife, who was alive, he had only a grown-up daughter. It was even said that Khushi Ram was persuaded by his wife to marry Ram Piari, who was related to her. He was a man of means and it was not unusual in those days to take a second wife, especially with a view to having a male progeny, if the first one had passed the child-bearing age. Ram Piari was charming in looks and pleasant to talk to. Two years had already passed since her marriage but there was no sign of any progeny, male or female.

I gazed through the slits in the door of the barsati and was much thrilled to see Heera and Piari in an embrace of ecstasy. Heera was reclining against the pile of beddings which served as a bolster, while Piari sat facing him. Deftly, she removed her thin muslin chunni and in a single practised motion bound it over his eyes.

'Darling, you are exquisite,' muttered Heera.

'But you can't see me.'

'I *can*, through touch and smell.'

'Heera, I love you too much.'

'And I love you, too, my dearest Piari.'

‘At times I feel guilty betraying my husband.’

‘What husband, he is as old as your father. Try to live with the joy we have, forget him.’

She nodded as he squeezed her hand tightly into his own hands. With his other hand he gently rolled up her kameez and groping behind her back managed to untie the cord holding her bodice.

‘Go slow, darling,’ whispered Piari.

‘All right, as you please.’

‘At times I get frightened.’

‘Why?’

‘Supposing we are caught one day?’

‘They will only consider our true love as adultery.’

‘But I will die with shame or throw myself in the well.’

‘Darling, don’t mar these blissful moments with such melancholy thoughts.’

Blindfolded, Heera locked her lips with his own for a long moment before resuming his play with her breasts.

‘Listen, when a man and a woman share their bodies, a heavenly bond is created between them.’ As Piari nodded, her gold earrings gently swayed in the air.

Suddenly, I was disturbed by someone turning on the gramophone downstairs and a popular melody rent the air: ‘*Prem nagar mein banaungi ghar main taj ke sab sansar*’ (Leaving everybody, I will go and build my home in the city of love). This was a duet by Uma Devi and K.L. Saigal from New Theatre’s film *Chandidas*. I was now losing track of the whispered conversation between Heera and Piari. I noticed that they were also listening to the melody and Piari appeared to be repeating the lines as I could see from the movement of her lips.

‘I adore this song,’ said Piari.

‘Because it carries a message for true lovers like us,’ replied Heera.

‘What message?’

‘To leave the world and build a home in the city of love.’

The musical strains from the gramophone appeared to have brought them to a new pitch of frenzy. I now saw her kneeling above Heera and enveloping him between her legs. Then their thighs began to rock

MATRIMONIAL NOTICES.

WANTED—A suitable match for an *Abluwalia* bachelor aged 21 years doing business, and for an *Abluwalia* girl aged 13 years, only those set up in life need apply to L. Dandia Bani, Sub-Divisional Officer, M. W. S., C. R. E. office, Peshawar.

2912

WANTED—A suitable match for a rich graduate Khatri gentleman 25 years old, owning a large landed property irrigated by the Canal in Lyallpur District, and elsewhere, having a monthly income of Rs. 400 per mensem. Good prospects, no caste restrictions.

Dowry not necessary. Please correspond with No. 2847 care of the "Tribune," Lahore.

WANTED—A match for a healthy *Akrawal* Bachelor youth aged 20 years, belonging to a respectable Garg Gota family. He passed his B.A. this year and keeps very bright future prospects. The girl should be beautiful, educated and belonging to a respectable and rich family. Panjabees will be preferred. Please correspond with No. 2779 care of the "Tribune," Lahore.

WANTED SHARP—A suitable match for a respectable and rich Khatri Sarin B. A. O. and Revenue Officer of 34 years, widower. The girl should be well-accomplished and of marriageable age, belonging to any Khatri family. For full particulars or if you are in search of a suitable boy or girl for marriage correspond with Hem Lal Mehra, Secretary, The Hindu Marriage Bureau, Lohari Mandi, Lahore.

O B. 119

Wanted (Matrimonial)

A match for a widower hand-own, belonging to a respectable Arora family. Arya Samaj views, 29 years old and a decent income. Apply to No. 2943 care of the "Tribune," Lahore.

Matrimonial Notice.

WANTED VERY SHARP—A suitable match for a rich and healthy Khatri Engineer, age 35, drawing Rs. 350 monthly, having a large Banking Account and willing to deposit Rs. 10,000 in the name of his new wife. No issue from first wife who is alive and permanently sick. Dowry not necessary. For further particulars communicate with Lala Gardit Singh Krouki, District Ludhiana.

2911

gently, the rhythm rising rapidly. She pulled the silk chunni from his eyes and kissed his eyelashes with the tip of her tongue. Heera, his eyes open, went into action kissing every part of her body with his open mouth, first tasting her lips, her dark nipples, then the arc beneath her smooth arms. He teased her lightly with his blows of breath as she uttered moans of pleasure and swiftly withdrew. Next moment, I saw them ready to part, Piari moving towards the staircase door behind which I had sat watching this spectacle. At the same time, Heera rushed to jump over the wall to get to his house, which was next door. I quietly retreated to my room on the first storey and heard the sound of Piari's steps going down the flights of stairs. In a few moments she was back in the company of the womenfolk.

What I had witnessed made me restless for quite sometime. One day I told my uncle that I had seen Heera and Piari together on our housetop. In a few days, the story got round in the neighbourhood. Before it became a scandal, Heera's family, who lived in a rented house, was quietly persuaded to leave the mohalla and shift to some other part of the city.

As days and months passed by, all talk in the mohalla about this episode stopped. Heera never came again to meet his old pals. When the kite-flying season arrived I missed him because he used to instruct me on how to win a kite match. I developed a secret sympathy for Heera and Piari as I felt that they were true lovers like Heer Ranjha or Laila Majnu, who always suffer because society looks down upon them. I did not have the faintest idea of love apart from what I had gathered from the movies.

Every Tuesday, I used to go with my pals to the Hanuman temple in the evening. It was an enjoyable walk, full of fun, from Sutar Mandi Bazar, where we lived, to Hanuman Gali near Gumti Bazar. On the way there were rows of shops, each specializing in a trade of its own. There were dyers, *pansaris* (dealing in spices, herbs), tailors, general merchants, shoemakers, kite sellers, vegetable or fruit vendors, halwais (sweetmeat-sellers). It was common practice to carry a basket of ladoos to offer at the temple and then distribute prasad to beggars and children who sat in rows on both sides of the lane. It was at this temple that I saw Heera seeking the blessings

of the priest. We were both delighted to meet each other. Then he said, 'Can you do me a favour?'

'What favour?'

'First say yes or no.'

'Yes, by all means.' I was rather nonplussed as I could not imagine what he could possibly expect from me.

'It is a secret between you and me and no one should be told about it.'

'All right, what do you want?'

'You must convey a message to Piari when no one is around.'

'All right.'

'Please whisper into her ear that I will meet her at Sitala Mandir on Monday morning and that she should try to come there in the company of womenfolk of the neighbourhood who go there regularly.'

I readily agreed to do it for Heera. Next day I met Piari as she was going to join the women's gathering on the ground floor of our house and conveyed to her Heera's message in a muffled tone.

By Monday evening, word had spread throughout the mohalla that Piari had disappeared from her home. It was very hard for Khushi Ram and his family to face such a scandal. People came out with different versions of it, all blaming Khushi Ram for marrying a young girl like Piari who was less than half his age. So Khushi Ram also moved out to another part of the city and put up his house for sale. In a couple of days came the news that Heera had also left his parents' house, and no one knew where he had gone. This confirmed that Heera had eloped with Piari.

After a few years, we got the news that someone had met Heera and Piari in Calcutta. They were happily settled there. They had a four-year-old son and Heera was working for a well-known firm of manufacturers of a popular brand of hair oil. So Piari was at last blessed with a male progeny and Heera got into the scented oil business.

گزشت سے مندرجہ

باقیہ

ایمان بخواند

عملی ہدایتیں - راز کی باتیں

کار آمد تصحیحات

فطرت - خاتم النبیین کے ساتھ ہمیشہ رہنی چاہیے۔ یہ کتاب
روحانی کامیابی کے لیے چاروں طرف سے رہنمائی بخاتا ہے

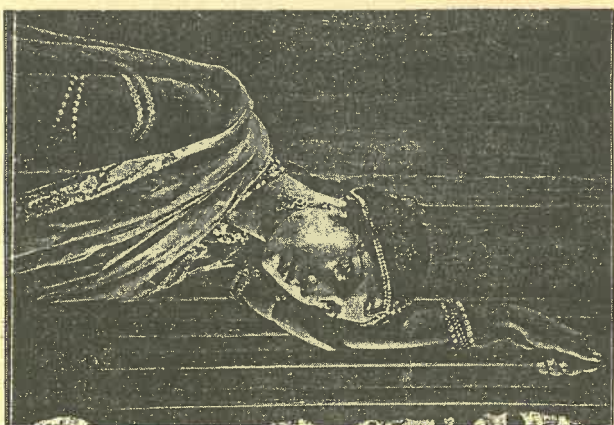
مصنفہ

قیلین ہر نماز اس بی-اے لائبریری

۱۹۴۱ء

جلد ۱۲

مددگار شہسوار



مدن ترنگ - یہ کتاب ہمارے دل کے لیے ہے، ہمیں سکھاتی ہے کہ ہم کیسے اپنی زندگی بسر کریں

FAZAL—THE ACE PIMP OF LAHORE

FAZAL ... FAZAL ... FAZAL. WE heard this name being called but could see no one around except a man wrapped in a shawl walking away from us. Soon he turned around, approached us and enquired, 'Bauji, did you call me?' We were quite surprised, for the cry of Fazal had come from his direction. Apparently, he was shouting his own name. On our replying that we did not call anybody, he at once changed the subject, saying, 'Forget about it. By the way, what are you up to at this time of the evening?'

Leaning against our cycles, we were standing at the crossing of Mcleod Road and Beadon Road. It was the middle of November and past seven. We were feeling rather dejected as we had failed to get tickets for the 6.30 show at Palace Cinema. It was house full, including the royal class where the entry fee was nine annas, inclusive of entertainment tax. On show was Shantaram's *Duniya Na Mane*, which was a great hit in Lahore. Shanta Apte, the top star of those days, was playing the lead role, supported by the renowned character actor Keshav Rao Date and the child artist Vasanti. There was also Shakuntala Pranjpaye, MA, in a side role. We were very curious to see her because we could not imagine a girl with a master's degree agreeing to work in cinema, which most people considered a disreputable profession in those days. The hit song of the film was on and could be heard from where we stood. '*Man saftera hai ya nahin poochh le ji se, phir jo kuchh bhi karna hai tujhe, kar le khushi se*' (Ask your inner self if your mind is clean or not; then do whatever you please).

The stranger then introduced himself to us. His name was Fazal

From Friday 5th Nov.

AT



When old 'locks' mate with young curls the House becomes
a graveyard of

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The Tribune, 5 November 1937

and, according to him, he enjoyed providing entertainment to young men. We now realized that he had attracted our attention by calling his own name, and were greatly impressed by his unique approach. I signalled to my friend Saeed to remain quiet and let me handle the situation.

‘Bauji, I can make your evening unforgettable if you come with me.’

‘Where to?’

‘Not far off.’

‘What for?’

‘You appear to be quite innocent. I know a number of your collegemates. Have you not heard my name from them? I know you are all afraid of going to Tibbi (Hira Mandi, the red light district of Lahore) lest you should be noticed by one of your professors out to catch college boys roaming about in the area. I can assure you there is nothing to fear. I will show you sparkling beauties who have just arrived from Sargodha. If you like, you can spend some time with any of them, otherwise you come back, no hard feelings. In fact, my patrons include the rich and famous of Lahore. I provide my services to judges, doctors, leading advocates and also the visiting landlords from Jhang, Sargodha, Lyallpur. It is only my hobby to meet young pleasure-seekers like you and enlist them as my clients.’

‘Where is this place?’

‘About 200 yards from Prabhat Cinema. You can deposit your cycles at the Palace cycle stand and come with me in a tonga.’

Mcleod Road was a locality famous for its string of cinema houses. On one side of the road were Palace, Majestic and Regent, not far from one another. Facing them were Excelsior and Prabhat.

‘How much will it cost to have one go?’

‘Bauji, it all depends on the grace and charm of the *maal* (girl).’

‘Supposing we don’t like any of the girls?’

‘Then just pay me one rupee, inclusive of tonga hire. This you have to pay me in advance.’

‘Is this place quite safe? I mean, there is no risk of a police raid?’

‘Bauji, have a look at my grey hair. Don’t imagine that they have taken this hue through exposure to the sun.’

‘Anyway, it is better to be cautious. By the way, we hope you will

show us only young things. We are not game for middle-aged stuff.'

'Bauji, all of them are like toys of sugar, with pink cheeks, silken hair and pear-shaped breasts. They are new to the profession but well trained in manners, and the art of making love. You will have a taste of paradise when they cling to you like lizards.'

'One thing more, can you assure us that they are free from VD?'

'Bauji, I give you my word, there is nothing to worry on that account. I wonder if you know Chhaju, the compounder in the chemist's shop on your left. He knows all about VD and is our regular client. If you like, I can introduce him to you. Besides, if you want to be extra-cautious, you can buy condoms through him.'

I had a quiet word with my friend Saeed and decided to go in for this adventure with call girls about whom we had heard so much from our friends in the college, who would often boast of their sexual exploits.

As soon as we sat on the rear seat of the tonga, we felt nervous. Turning our faces away from the gaze of passers-by, we tried to put on a bold face, but could not hide the state of our mind from Fazal, who was quietly watching us from the front seat where he sat with the tonga driver. He tried to divert our attention by telling us about the great deeds of Dr Nihal Chand Sikri while we passed by his palatial house on the left side of the road. This doctor had given new life to a patient who had been declared dead by other doctors. We continued to feel uneasy as the journey seemed to be never-ending. We were now approaching Prabhat Cinema, which was showing an old movie, *Khawabe Hasti* (Dream of Life). Soon we saw the tonga turning into a dark bylane. Our heartbeat quickened sharply. After a few more turns, we stopped in front of a dilapidated house. Fazal asked us to get down from the tonga and wait. We saw him going up a dark unlit staircase. We were now getting somewhat frightened and regretted our decision to come here. We tried to raise each other's spirits. Saeed came out with a saying which our professor of English was fond of repeating every day in the class: 'No risk, no gain.' Soon we were relieved to hear the sound of someone coming down the steps. Fazal was there, all smiles and ready to guide us upstairs.

We followed him nervously and soon found ourselves in a dark

room with a table lamp placed in a corner emitting a glimmer of light through its five-candle-power bulb. There were no tables or chairs, only a webbing cot covered with a black and white *khes* (thick sheet). Fazal asked us to sit down on the cot and feel at home. We were to sit on the right and left corners of the cot leaving its middle part vacant. We were getting tense and jittery. Soon we heard the sound of clinking glass bangles and female voices in the adjoining room. In a moment, Fazal shouted, '*Chheti karo kudiyo*' (hurry up, girls) and there appeared the first of the beauties walking slowly towards us. She sat between us on the cot. She wore a green satin long shirt and salwar with a red chunni half covering her black greasy hair. She wore an oversize nose-pin which diminished her charm instead of enhancing it. Charm in fact was a quality she singularly lacked. In that dim light, her wheatish complexion and very ordinary looks failed to enthuse us.

Fazal had already made it clear that we were not to touch any part of her body. He asked Mahtab (Moonbeam—that was her name) to talk to us. Whereupon, she smiled and as she leaned back her chunni slipped down from her bosom. This provided us with a good view of her breasts but their very sight disappointed us. It was a far cry from the pear-shaped bosom described to us by Fazal. We could well imagine how those shapeless sagging breasts were tightly held together by a bodice tied with a cotton cord at the back. We signalled to Fazal that we would like to go, indicating our disapproval. Fazal asked Moonbeam to retire and send in Shanti (Peace). In a few moments Shanti descended in our midst. We began our physical survey of Shanti while Fazal started narrating, obviously with the aim of influencing our selection, her background and how she had landed in this pleasure nest. Shanti hailed from Pangi Valley in Chamba, famous for its bevy of beauties all over the country. Even Europeans had succumbed to their seductive charms a century ago and many of them settled down in Chamba. The women made very good wives, mistresses and sex partners. Generous and free by temperament, they made excellent playmates and their undulating bodies reflected the glory of the hills and streams which enveloped their abodes. Shanti's sister Phoolan had been picked up by men of

the Maharaja of Patiala and placed in his 'harem'. But Shanti was enamoured of Lahore and that is why she had landed there.

Fair and voluptuous, Shanti wore tight white pyjamas and an orange long shirt. She was quite fleshy, though not at the right places. My friend whispered in my ear that she was too plump. But her rolling eyes were highly seductive and it seemed she could talk through them. She had green dots tattooed on her chin. Her fingertips and the palms of her hands, her toes and the soles of her feet were tinted with henna; her lips were stained brownish red with dentifrice and in the centre of her forehead she bore a little mark in red which served as a sort of beauty spot.

Without waiting for any signal from us, Fazal called out to Gulshan (Garden) to appear. Shanti retired but not without giving us wanton smiles and languishing glances. Her place was now taken by Gulshan.

Fazal suddenly switched over to speaking in Urdu from Punjabi, describing her as a unique 'piece' from Meerut having a Moghul lineage. She wore a pink *garrara* (wide-bottomed pyjamas), a white silk shirt and a red dupatta. Richly oiled, her hair was neatly parted in the middle and a long thick plait dangled over her breasts showing the enormous length of her jet-black locks. Her eyelids and brows were darkened with kohl which accentuated the size of her eyes and gave them a lustrous appearance. Though somewhat dark in complexion, Gulshan had supple limbs and soft skin, which made a favourable impression on us. We now started comparing the merits of the three beauties displayed before us. Fazal signalled Gulshan to depart and enquired about our choice.

'Bauji, I know it is extremely difficult to make a choice because all the three are equally worth enjoying.'

'How much for one go?'

'Bauji, a very special concession for students like you, just make your choice quickly. One of you can make your love nest in this room and the other in the adjoining one while I wait for you downstairs.'

'But, still, how much have we to pay?'

'Bauji, five rupees each and, if fully satisfied, you may give some reward to your humble servant, Fazal. I have not the least doubt you will be more than happy and remember Fazal ever thereafter.'

The price quoted was within our means and while we were gathering enough courage to make our selection known, we were startled by the sound of someone's steps on the staircase. We got panicky, ran out of the room and rushed down to the street. Fazal followed us and soon caught up with us at the street corner.

'Bauji, what is wrong? You appear to be frightened. Why did you leave all of a sudden?'

'That stranger unnerved us.'

'Oh Bauji, you both are too simple. You only know how to talk and not how to act.'

'By the way, who is that stranger?'

'He is Mahtab's cousin and stays in the house. He is a family member and runs the establishment. He has his separate room on the terrace and doesn't disturb anybody. Bauji, have faith in me, there is nothing to worry about. Let us return. You should amuse yourself after all this trouble.'

I realized that we were being timid and lacked the courage to proceed with this sexual adventure. My thumping heart told me to run away from the place. Somehow I made myself bold and said, 'Fazal Mian, *aj rehn de kuch mood nahin banya*' (Leave it today, we are not in a proper mood). We felt guilty that we had wasted so much of Fazal's time. In order to prevent Fazal from carrying a poor impression of us and to cover up our timidity, I gave him two rupees, telling him we were really delighted and would surely use his services next time.

Fazal accepted the money, repeated his suggestion to return, but noting our reluctance bade us goodbye and said, '*Bauji, kuch swad nahin aaya, achha koi gal nahin, agali wari raunak lawange*' (It has been rather disappointing, but doesn't matter; next time there should be a lively celebration).

We heaved a sigh of relief as we hastened to make our way to the main road. In that dark lane we felt as if every passer-by was staring at us. We walked briskly, mustering all our strength. When we reached the turning near Prabhat Cinema and were on McLeod Road, we felt at ease and our nervousness vanished. We passed Dr Nihal Chand Sikri's bungalow and were soon at the crossing of

Nisbet Road. We stopped in front of the Luxmi Insurance building where we spotted two of our classmates, Arshad and Jagdish, eating *Japani samosas* (Punjabi patties) at a famous shop there. Before they could enquire where we were coming from, I told them about our missing the evening show at Palace Cinema where we were now going to pick up our cycles from the stand. At this point Arshad said, '*Yarji* (dear friend) it seems you are on the lookout for some *mashooq* (beloved); I can help you if you want, as I have a very good contact in Qila Gujarsingh, just off Nicholson Road.'

We thanked him and hurried to pick up our cycles from the stand. As we reached Palace Cinema, we could hear Shanta Apte singing Longfellow's 'A Psalm of Life' in *Duniya Na Mane*. This was the first time that an Indian actress sang an English song and it was a great hit. We distinctly heard,

Let us then be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate,
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labour and to wait.

We were very much inclined to go in for the second show but resisted the temptation, knowing our parents would take us to task if we remained out late at night. So we pedalled towards Nisbet Road and settled down at our favourite haunt, Crystal Restaurant, where in addition to tasty snacks one could hear popular film songs played on the gramophone. On the roadside, even youngsters gathered to listen to the songs. As we ordered two plates of potato chips, there came K.L. Saigal's voice, *Ek Bangla Bane Nyara*. Then we started reviewing our adventure and the way it had misfired. Just then a dear pal, Mohini, joined us at our table. He was a happy-go-lucky fellow and always amused his friends. He had just managed to finish his schooling with us but had no intention of pursuing further studies. He was getting training at Alfred Chemists on the Mall with a view to opening his own chemist's shop at Nisbet Road. I told him briefly how we had failed in our adventure. We looked upon him as a very experienced person in the game since he had told us about



Author in front of his Nisbat Road House, 1947



Author in front of his Nisbat Road House, 1997

his numerous exploits with women in both Hira Mandi and other private places. 'There is nothing to feel sad about it,' said Mohini. 'You have been able to acquire a useful experience. I will arrange a really nice programme for you. I can manage to have a small room behind Diwan Chand & Son Chemists on Mcleod Road after the shop is closed and call a couple of nice voluptuous women to join us there. It is no use going to private places to make love to those silly girls who are themselves novices and are usually brought from Hira Mandi to tempt newcomers like you who are afraid of visiting the *kothas* (prostitutes' houses).'

We were very much pleased with Mohini's offer and Saeed jumped up with excitement. 'When do we meet and how much will it cost?' he said.

'Come on Saturday evening around eight thirty. I will meet you in front of the chemist's shop. You should keep at least ten rupees each in your pockets. Also you should bring three or four bottles of Allsops or Gold Ribbon beer. I will provide you with so great a fun that you will remember it throughout your life. You should make an excuse at home that you are going for the second show of a movie.'

We kept dreaming about the forthcoming adventure and when on Saturday I reached the cycle-stand at Palace Cinema, I found Saeed already there waiting for me. It was around eight p.m. and we had still half an hour to loiter about. I removed the canvas bag containing beer bottles from my cycle-carrier and we started walking towards Regent Cinema on Mcleod Road. We kept walking sheepishly on the dusty pavement, avoiding the gaze of every cyclist who went past us on the road. We went up to the crossing of Mall Road and turned back. In a few minutes we were in front of the chemist's shop, and our joy knew no bounds when we saw Mohini standing there.

'Nothing to worry about. I have fixed up everything,' whispered Mohini.

'Where are you taking us to?' I said.

'Keep quiet and just follow me. I have the key to the storeroom behind the shop, which is going to close soon. I have called the girls to join us at nine p.m.'

We were now in the storeroom, which had a high shelf stuffed

with medicine bottles along one of the walls. We sat on small sofa chairs and waited for more news about the girls from Mohini. He opened the beer bottles and we joined. After a little while, he gave us practical hints on how to go about enjoying ourselves while he would wait outside to keep vigil. Soon there was a knock on the door and a voluptuous young woman came in and sat down with Mohini.

'Hello Chameli, how are you? Seeing you after a long time. What about Gulshan who was supposed to come with you?'

'Gulshan is not well and so I came alone. I tried to bring Sheela but she had another engagement.'

Chameli had a fair complexion and an attractive face. There was wantonness in her eyes and her bulging bosom exuded sex appeal. She was dressed in an orange satin salwar and shirt and was carrying a muslin dupatta.

Mohini asked us in English to quickly decide who would take the first turn. I offered the choice to Saeed and walked out with Mohini. We were loitering in front of the shop when an old man wearing a shawl walked up to Mohini and said, 'Bauji, I am sorry I could not arrange to get another girl today. You know there is always a rush during the weekend, but Chameli, as you know, is one of the finest "pieces" I have. I am sure your friends will be delighted to have her.'

I was standing a little away from them but was stunned when Mohini said, 'Fazal Mian, you have always some ready excuse to offer. We have known each other for quite some time now. Do you remember when we first met last year in front of Palace Cinema and you were murmuring "Fazal, Fazal" and came up to me asking, "Bauji, did you call me?"'

And there before my unbelieving eyes stood Fazal, the ace pimp of Lahore.

THE SPLENDOURS OF HIRA MANDI OR TIBBI

*Tibbi mein chal ke Jalwa-i-Parwardigar dekh
Are ye dekhne ki cheez hai ise bar bar dekh*

(Come to Tibbi to watch the splendours of the Almighty.
It's the worthiest of sights, view it over and over again.)

NAMED AFTER A NOBLEMAN fond of wine, women and song, Hira Mandi, or Tibbi in common parlance, situated in the walled city of Lahore, was in its heyday the pleasure-seekers' paradise. It was patronized by the young and the old, the married and the unmarried, the rich and the famous, out for an evening's entertainment in the company of singing and dancing girls. For the young and the unmarried it was an adventure into the forbidden land. Old people frequented it more for mental relaxation than for any sexual stimulation. Married men, bored with their wives and domestic life, sought to experience new delights, intellectual as well as sexual. For the rich and the famous, patronage of Hira Mandi was a status symbol that enabled them to boast of being masters of the most beautiful of courtesans. On their part, the singing and dancing girls, professional to the core, gave all their clients their money's worth. They were at their best when trying to please the affluent among their clients, while the ordinary customers had to be content with a routine performance. It was not always all song and dance, though; greater delights were reserved for the few who could pay for them.

It would be a mistake to take Hira Mandi for a prostitutes' street, which certainly it was not, even though some of its inmates carried

on the world's oldest profession for a living. The courtesan's home was essentially a place of culture, particularly in Moghul times, when some of the singing and dancing girls found their way to the royal court. There they enchanted the nobility, which sometimes included British guests, with their accomplishments in the fine arts: music, poetry and dance. Witty conversationalists, they were engaged to teach etiquette and gentle manners to young men of aristocratic families. The elders visited them to enjoy their amorous company.

With the advent of British rule and disappearance of the old nobility, much of the grandeur of Hira Mandi was lost. But, thanks to the patronage of the new princely states and the emerging landed gentry of Punjab, the pleasure-houses of Hira Mandi continued to thrive. Troupes of singing and dancing girls were engaged to perform before rajas, nawabs and rich landlords. Their presence on the occasion of a wedding was considered a status symbol and an auspicious sign. The art of music had been confined to these families of Hira Mandi for generations. They had produced some of the most famous singers of India.

Theatrical companies during the 1920s provided some openings for the courtesans of Hira Mandi but it was the advent of cinema in the 1930s that came as a real breakthrough for them to display their talents. Later, many of them became leading stars. Broadcasting saw some others take to singing as radio artists. One of them was Umra-zia, who, with her *naghma* (song) *Mera sallam leja taqdeer ke jahan tak*, became a singing star overnight around 1935.

Meanwhile, Hira Mandi continued to cast its spell on Lahorias. In the evenings, the place was transformed into one of gaiety and laughter. Soon after sunset, a row of tongas would line up outside Lohari Gate at the portals of Anarkali, where most of the restaurants and bars were located, to convey the revellers to their destinations. These four-seater shining Peshawari tongas, drawn by sturdy horses, would race towards Bhati Gate, proceeding to Hira Mandi via Ravi Road and Taksali Gate. Some of the merry-makers preferred to walk through the walled city. Passing through Lohari Gate they would go straight to Hira Mandi after crossing Chowk Chakla, Lohari Mandi and Said Mitha Bazar.

Walking through Hira Mandi, one could see the curtained windows behind which the singing and dancing girls entertained their clients. The strains of the sarangi and the beating of the tabla could be heard from outside. One visiting a kotha is received downstairs at the entrance by the agent of the establishment and a flower-seller. He is expected to wear stringed flowers around his wrists before proceeding upstairs. Amidst glittering lights, he takes his seat on the carpeted floor covered with cool white sheets with bolsters to support himself. The singing girls sit in the centre with a team of musicians behind them ready with their instruments to accompany the singer. An elderly woman, acting as impresario, positions herself in a corner holding a silver plate containing betel leaves. After a brief introduction by her, the visitor settles down for an enjoyable evening. On a signal from the matron, one of the singing girls goes around offering betel leaves to the patrons, who are expected to make a token present of a silver rupee coin. The singing girls are dressed in shining silk salwars and shirts embroidered with gold or silver threads with the upper parts of their bodies covered with a fine gauze veil. They wear gold pendants, necklaces, bracelets and anklets.

Soon the stage is set for the evening's entertainment by the musicians playing their instruments. The singer gets into her stride as she sings *thumris*, *dadras* and *ghazals*. She addresses each song to one or the other of the patrons who, enchanted by her sweet smiles and languishing glances, invites her to come closer to him. He rewards her with cash, which she accepts gracefully and flings towards the matron. She responds to the requests of the patrons in turn. The cries of 'Wah wah' 'Bahut khub', 'Marhaba', 'Mukarar' from the patrons encourage her to repeat the couplets with gestures to emphasize the meaning of the words. The musicians in turn get into the spirit of the song animating the whole atmosphere. This establishes a rapport between the singer and the listener. At times, the patrons, in a hilarious mood, ask the singer to dance to the tune of the song. The sound of anklebells in unison with music and the graceful movements of the dancer's supple body, hands and feet enthrall the spectators. The repeated applause encourages her

to display her seductive charms. Visiting a kotha was indeed an enjoyable experience.

An event celebrated with pomp and show in Hira Mandi was the deflowering of a singing or dancing girl known as the nose-ring opening ceremony. The nose-ring, made of gold or silver, was traditionally recognized as a symbol of her virginity. Its removal signified her initiation into her new profession. The performance of the ceremony was considered an honour conferred on the wealthiest of the aspirants. The payment varied according to the charms of the girl. The ceremony was marked by festivities comparable to those of a wedding in which leading professional households of Hira Mandi and their numerous friends and patrons took part. There were lavish feasts lasting two or three days where the choicest of dishes of meat, kababs and aromatic pulaos were served. Beggars and the poor were fed generously to seek their blessings for the initiation ceremony. For the girl, it was a momentous occasion heralding her entry into the profession. This was followed by a series of briefing sessions in which the elder professionals gave her advice and instructions on the secrets of success in her new career.

With the coming of cinema and the film industry taking roots in Lahore, Hira Mandi emerged as a centre for recruiting budding stars: actresses, singers and dancers. Many of them rose to become leading figures in later years. Some others distinguished themselves in singing and acting and attained countrywide fame.

The war days in the 1940s saw the birth of a new class of patrons of Hira Mandi from among contractors, businessmen and merchants who were making big money. These affluent pleasure-seekers set a new trend and the Hira Mandi inmates spread out to other parts of the city to cater to their needs. This expanding clientele marked the beginning of the call girl institution. These girls would visit hotels as well as private houses to entertain their customers. However, Hira Mandi continued to prosper. It was made even more lively by the affluent *lalas* of the nearby town of Amritsar, whose spending power could not be matched by the Lahorias or even by the landed aristocracy of Punjab, who had until then dominated the social scene. Some landlords hailing from West Punjab were members of the



Tamancha Jan, singing star of the 1940s, studio portrait, 1944



Tamancha Jan in her house, 1997

Legislative Assembly. When in Lahore to attend its sessions, they had brought a wave of gaiety to Hira Mandi. But now the Amritsarias surpassed them. Driving to Lahore in their Fords, Chevrolets, Pontiacs, Packards, they would wine and dine at posh restaurants like Stiffles, Elphinstone or Standard on the Mall and then proceed straight to Hira Mandi for an evening of amusement.

With the passage of time, the practice of inviting singing and dancing girls to add glamour at weddings lost its popularity. There was, however, a revival of sorts during the 1940s when the rich began organizing private *mujra* parties chiefly for their male friends. I vividly remember one such gathering where the top gentry and ruling elite of Lahore were present to witness the performance of the famous singing girl, Tamancha Jan. Sporting shimmering silks, shining jewels and gold pendants, she enthralled the audience with her lilting ghazals and provocative gestures.

Encouraged by admirers and patrons, some of the Hira Mandi beauties even began visiting the racecourse and leading restaurants on the Mall, the Metro in particular. The mushrooming film studios of Lahore were always on the lookout for young female artistes. The budding directors, producers and financiers scouting for new talent found these places a happy meeting ground. Some of the girls were lucky enough to be picked up as actresses, while some others ended up as mistresses of affluent pleasure-seekers.

I would like to recall some episodes, romantic as well as tragic, associated with Hira Mandi. One of them is about the murder of Shamshad Bai, a fifteen-year-old courtesan of Lahore. The accused, who was her lover, was one of the wealthiest and most influential landlords of Punjab, Nawab Mohammad Nawaz Khan of Dab Kalan. He was a perfect gentleman liked by his numerous friends, among whom were Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. His hospitality was proverbial. When in Lahore, he would stay at the expensive Falettis Hotel, where he held lavish parties at which the choicest of liquors flowed freely. He spent enormous sums of money on singing girls to entertain his friends. When he entered any restaurant on the Mall, the waiters and barmen rushed to serve him. Generous to a fault, he would invite everyone who happened to be there to join him. He had studied at

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the Chiefs' College where he was popular with the staff and fellow students alike. His marriage to the daughter of Mian Fazal-i-Hussain, then education minister of the Punjab, a memorable event in those days, however, did not curb his high spirits. He continued to seek pleasure in women and wine. To meet his mounting expenses he sold or mortgaged his landed estates. He travelled like a Moghul prince with his retinue of servants, singers and musicians. When he met Shamshad Bai, he was so smitten by her that he took her with him to his family palace in Jhang. It was there that the murder of Shamshad took place. It is said that Shamshad had teased Mohammad Nawaz when, in a drunk state, he wanted to make love to her. Shamshad gave him a push and he fell off the bed. She continued to laugh. In a rage he pulled out his revolver from under his pillow and shot her dead. What followed was indeed unbelievable. According to the evidence produced during the trial, the Nawab continued to lie with the dead body of Shamshad for nearly ten hours.

Mohammad Nawaz was convicted of murder by the Sessions Court. His appeal to the High Court was pending when he died at the young age of thirty-one, the night before Sir Douglas Young, the Chief Justice, returned to Lahore from a holiday in Kashmir to hear the case. This was the tragic end of a young lovable patron who doted on Shamshad, the provocative beauty of Hira Mandi.

This was a crime of passion. Our sympathies go to the singing girl unlike in the story I am now going to narrate. Here the lover, 'K', for the sake of his beloved Zohra Jan willingly reversed his role from patron to pimp. I was told this episode by a noted businessman who ran a motor financing business at Lahore. K was a landowner of district Sargodha who had enough income from his crops to lead a comfortable life. He used to visit Lahore now and then to spend his evenings in Hira Mandi. It was in the mid-thirties that he fell under the spell of the beautiful Zohra Jan. He had known Zohra Jan for years; in fact, she grew up 'in his hands', as a Punjabi proverb goes. He had been a constant patron of her family for a long time and when Zohra Jan came of age K was invited to perform the nose-ring opening ceremony. He was anxious to own a motor car to make a good impression on Zohra by taking her out for joyrides. Having never

saved enough money, he had to raise a loan from a motor finance company to buy the car. He agreed to repay the loan in half-yearly instalments to coincide with his yield from the crops. The loan was to be repaid in three years but after receiving only two instalments the finance company had no news of K or his whereabouts. Letters and telegrams brought no response. The finance company sent their representative to Sargodha and reclaimed the car. It was learnt that K had gone away to Calcutta with a dancing girl from Lahore after selling his lands. He was honest enough to have left the car behind with instruction that it be handed over to the finance company when they came for it. The said businessman forgot all about K until one day in the early 1940s when he took some of his friends to Hira Mandi to entertain them. He was accosted there by K who greeted him warmly and proposed that he should go up to Zohra Jan's kotha to hear her sing. He narrated his adventures in Calcutta, where he had taken Zohra to help her enter films. He told him how he had lost everything in this attempt. Devoted as ever to his fairy queen, he was now helping her settle down in her old profession. The patron had become the pimp.

This reminds me of a couplet I heard from an old jovial pimp about how he had landed in this profession:

Jat ke the neem julae
Us pe ban gae darzi
Lote pote ke ban gae kanjar
Ze khuda ki marzi

(From a semi-skilled weaver, I became a tailor. Then after many ups and downs, by the grace and will of God I rose to the position of a pimp.)

I have not visited Hira Mandi for nearly five decades now, though I long to go once again to that memorable haunt of the young and the old, where everyone went in search of joy, fun and amusement.

A WIDOWER'S DILEMMA

EARLY MARRIAGE WAS THE established custom in Punjab until the 1920s, when the joint family system still held sway. Marriage was regarded as a biological necessity and parents began looking for brides for their sons even before they had completed their studies and started earning a living. It was also common for widowers with means to remarry girls half their age. With the spread of education and Western influence as well as the campaigns for social reform launched by the Arya Samaj during the 1930s, these practices came to be frowned upon by the upcoming generation. The joint family system also showed the first signs of breaking up. Young men began aspiring to an independent source of income before venturing into matrimony. Old widowers marrying young girls came under heavy fire, with the result that a social stigma came to be attached to this practice. Widow remarriage was advocated vociferously by the Samajists but proved of little avail. Lahore had become the centre of activity of these social reformers propagating eradication of such customs. Those days, men in their forties were considered old, as life expectancy in the country was below thirty.

While talking of widowers, the episode of Basti Ram comes to mind. Basti Ram had found his second marriage utterly disappointing but later came to live a life of profound bliss as a result of a most unusual arrangement. A familiar figure and intimate friend of our family, he owned a four-storeyed house in Gumti Bazar and was quite well off. He had a supervisory post in the Punjab government and commanded respect in the neighbourhood. He was of medium height, wheatish complexion, broad-chested, and sported a moustache. He

had an oval face, large eyes set well apart, and a high brow. All the year round he wore a long coat, churidar pyjamas and a sparkling white turban. He was around forty when his wife Basanti died of pneumonia. They had been married for over twenty years. She bore him seven children, of whom only two girls had survived. Both of them were now married. One lived in Amritsar and the other in Ludhiana.

On the day of his wife's cremation in Ramu da Bagh, one of the mourners after the wash at the end of the last rites rinsed his wet dhoti in the presence of the assembled gathering. This was an indication that he was willing to offer his daughter in marriage to the widower. The proposal, if accepted, was to be pursued on the expiry of the mourning period. But it was rejected straightaway because the girl was blind in one eye. Her father had considered her suitable enough for an old man like Basti Ram.

During the mourning period, Basti Ram's daughters came over to stay with him. There were other friends and relations who also turned up now and then to console him and keep him company. In a couple of weeks, it was all over and Basti Ram was face to face with the loneliness of a widower's life. As time passed, he felt dejected and later upset by his sexual urge.

My uncle Pyara and another close friend of our family, Bhaiya Harbans, advised Basti to get married in order to pull himself out of the gloom surrounding him. They arranged a matrimonial offer through another friend, Ram Labhaya, from his village. But there was no response from Basti, who kept brooding all the time. One day they confronted him.

'Well, Basti,' said Bhaiya Harbans, 'what have you decided about the marriage offer brought by Labhaya?'

Basti took a little while to answer. 'I am afraid she is only sixteen, too young for me.'

'So what? They are poor people with no means to give any dowry. You would be doing them a favour if you accept their daughter.'

'No, I cannot do that. Times have changed. My Samaji friends will curse me. You know how they are protesting all over the city on the issue of rich old men marrying girls young enough to be their

daughters. Only the other day it was reported in the *Tribune* that a group of them took out a procession near Gujranwala and prevented such an ill-matched marriage. The old man's barat was disgraced and driven out.'

'Then marry a widow and ask your Samaji friends to find one from their Vidhwa Ashram (Widow's Home).'

Basti was taken aback to hear this suggestion. After all, as an educated, well-to-do person he could not possibly agree to look for a wife from the abode of destitutes.

Uncle Pyara was quick enough to notice his annoyance. Laughingly, he said, 'Basti dear, please don't take it seriously. Bhaiya Harbans was only joking. You know how he dislikes the Samajis.'

'That's all right. As a matter of fact, I am confused and unable to make up my mind. I wish I could enter into a liaison with a courtesan as they used to do in the good old days.'

'Not a bad idea,' said Bhaiya Harbans, 'but things have changed. Our old culture is dying and now even a casual visit to kothas in Hira Mandi is frowned upon.'

'Anyway, I know it is ruled out. But I am much concerned about my daughters, who would oppose the idea of my marrying again at this age. I do not wish to lose their respect and affection. After all, I am also a grandfather now.'

Bhaiya Harbans, at sixty, was a worldly-wise man who had travelled far and wide. During World War I, his job in the field post-office had taken him to Basra and beyond. He had survived his first two wives and was living happily with a third one. He was like a father figure in our family circle. A good Samaritan, he was always accessible to friends and relations. He never tried to force his views on others, yet succeeded in bringing them to his way of thinking through tact and understanding. He told Basti not to worry about his daughters as they were well settled. He said there was no alternative to family life, and, considering his status in society, it would be painful for him to lead a lonely life.

Basti was finally persuaded to take a wife, but he insisted that she must be a mature woman in her late twenties or even be an issueless widow from a respectable family. Bhaiya Harbans then

proposed putting in an advertisement in the matrimonial columns of the *Tribune* as follows:

'Wanted: a suitable match for a handsome Khatri widower around forty, holding a gazetted post. Correspondence invited from parents or guardians of girls or issueless widows with good looks and fair complexion in their twenties. Caste no bar. Matriculates preferred.'

Basti Ram nodded his approval, looking relaxed as if a burden had been taken off his chest.

Uncle Pyara was entrusted with handling the matrimonial correspondence. He was quite a forceful and colourful character and took great delight in match-making, in which he used all his skill as an insurance man. In fact, he used this activity to promote his business. He was in his early forties and though married for over twenty years he had no children of his own. He often threatened my aunt to marry again in order to get a son. It was, however, an empty threat, and we got used to hearing it over the years. He was now much excited with the prospect of finding a bride for his friend Basti.

Within three weeks, a large packet containing letters in response to the advertisement was received from the office of the *Tribune*. So the three of them met one day to sort them out. There were over twenty proposals, a staggering number indeed, of would-be brides for a widower. Their ages varied from eighteen to thirty. There were maidens from respectable families, lady school teachers, issueless widows. Some could read and write English, some could play the harmonium and some others were adept in household work. Some parents even went to the extent of sending photographs (though not asked for) which showed them as tall or short, fair or dark, fat or thin. Each offer was examined carefully and, as suggested by Bhaiya Harbans, classified into three categories: 'A', 'B' and 'C'. Those who had sent photographs were summarily rejected and thrown into the 'C' heap, for according to Bhaiya Harbans it was an indecent approach, contrary to our traditional values. After a lively discussion, they selected three proposals for further action. Basti left the final decision to Bhaiya Harbans. After an exchange of further correspondence and meetings through intermediaries, a beautiful twenty-seven-year-old issueless widow named Shanti, daughter of

a headmaster of a government school in Jalandhar, was chosen as the life partner for Basti.

Days, weeks and months passed by, with Basti basking in the sunshine brought into his life by Shanti. He was visibly happy and seldom missed an occasion to praise her. She was gracious, outgoing and hospitable. Unfortunately for Basti, this state of married bliss was short-lived. It ended with the arrival of Ram Dayal, a distant relation of Shanti, to Lahore in search of a job. His staying with them gave rise to disturbing gossip in the neighbourhood. One day when Basti returned from office earlier than usual, he found Shanti in bed, with Ram Dayal. Gazing through a slit in the bedroom door he could see their mouths held tight in one endless kiss. Lost in supreme pleasure they did not even hear Basti's steps as he walked up the staircase and stood outside the door. Basti could never have imagined that a docile woman like Shanti would turn unfaithful to him. Her skill in sexual love was obviously born of countless such encounters with Ram Dayal.

Basti Ram faced the situation calmly. He sent off Shanti to her parents along with her paramour. To others he explained that he had discovered Shanti to be the mother of an eight-year-old daughter. He had sent her away for hiding this fact from him. However, Basti's old servant Ramu was in the know of things and it was through him that the truth leaked out. But most people believed Basti's version.

Basti was overwhelmed with melancholy after this unsavoury incident. He began doubting his manliness. He was haunted by the sexual encounter he had seen between Shanti and Ram Dayal. In order to test his manhood he made a secret visit to an upper-class brothel in Hira Mandi. He also consulted Kaviraj Pt. Gauri Shankar, a famous vaid, and took a course of his gold compound to regain youthful vigour. In a few weeks Basti Ram recovered from his bout of depression and stopped worrying about his sexual competence. On the advice of Bhaiya Harbans he went to Simla on a short holiday.

The merry atmosphere of Simla brought cheer and joy to Basti. He was staying with his bachelor nephew Kharaiti, an upper-division clerk in the Central Secretariat. Basti enjoyed the young company of Kharaiti and his happy-go-lucky group of friends.

One day, while walking beyond Sanjoli, he saw a group of hill women filling their pitchers with water from a spring. He was fascinated by their beauty and charm. Tall, very fair, with firm cheeks and thin lips, they carried their pitchers on their heads and walked gracefully, swinging their supple figures. Unlike women in the plains, they were not shy while talking to strangers. On the pretext of enquiring about the short track leading to Mashobra, Basti struck up a conversation with one of them.

'Which village do you come from?' Basti Ram asked her.

Pointing to a cluster of huts on her right, she said, 'That is my village, Bauji.'

'What's your name?'

'They call me Keemati.'

'Are you married?'

She laughed. 'Yes, I have four husbands. Some of us have two, others three and a few are so poor that they have only one.'

'But don't your husbands quarrel, and aren't they jealous?'

'No, why should they be? They are all treated alike. Men share the cost of procuring a wife and they share her love too.'

Basti, who had heard about the customs in the hills, was much amused with the woman's frankness. He was reminded of his peon Parsa, who after office hours worked for him for the sake of free board and lodging. The poor fellow was nearing thirty, but still unmarried for want of funds.

Basti also learnt from Kharaiti about an annual Sipi fair held near Sanjoli, where young women were sold freely to prospective buyers. Men came from far and near to buy brides. At times, babus in groups would pool their resources to own a woman for common use, sharing her as well as the cost of her upkeep.

Back in Lahore, Basti was now a cheerful man. The shock of his short-lived married life with Shanti having faded away, he settled down to leading a carefree single life with his old servant Ramu looking after the house and Parsa working as his personal attendant. Promoted to a higher position in office and enjoying the greater prestige that went with it, he had now many more friends and visitors to keep him company. Generous and helpful, Basti became quite a

popular figure in the city.

After dinner, reclining in his bed, Basti would relax smoking his hookah while Parsa pressed his tired limbs and massaged his head. He also acted as a go-between on behalf of those seeking favours from his master. Full of sympathy for Parsa and impressed with his loyalty, Basti asked him one day, 'Well, Parsa, why don't you get married?'

'Bauji, how can I? I have to support my old parents. I can save very little out of my salary of twenty-one rupees. I would need about four to five hundred rupees to procure a wife. That's why I am learning English from Bhaiya Harbansji. He is teaching me English so that I can try for the job of a sorter in Railway Mail. I have passed primary and can read and write Urdu. Once I am able to read names and addresses in English I would beg of you to fix me up as a sorter.'

'We'll see when the time comes. Anyway, how much have you saved so far for your marriage?'

'Two hundred and twenty rupees.'

'All right, I shall give you three hundred. Buy a wife. She can stay here with you. You can continue with your English lessons.'

Parsa was visibly moved. He placed his head on Basti's feet, shedding tears of joy. Basti patted him on the shoulders. Parsa wrote post-haste to his father giving him the happy news about his forthcoming wedding. Within a couple of months he returned to the house with his bride Paro, a beauty from the Kangra hills. She had almond-shaped eyes, gleaming black hair, fat red cheeks and a full bust. Parsa told her to make herself useful in the house and serve Bauji with devotion.

Paro began attending to Bauji's physical well-being. She helped Ramu in the kitchen and prepared the hookah at the appointed hour. Basti Ram was mighty pleased with Paro. And so was Parsa. This arrangement had relieved him of some of his duties. He would often go out for a stroll in the bazar, asking Paro to press Bauji's limbs during his absence.

Dame Fortune smiled on New Year's Day when Basti Ram saw his name in the Honours List. He had been awarded the title of Rai

Sahib. A grand function attended by over two hundred guests was held to celebrate the event. For days there was a stream of visitors coming to congratulate Basti Ram. Bhaiya Harbans and uncle Pyara felt proud on being treated like family members. People started crediting Basti Ram with great qualities of head and heart in order to endear themselves to him. He was now a distinguished personality belonging to the select group of title-holders in Lahore.

The first task Basti Ram took on himself was to fix Parsa as a sorter in the Railway Mail Service. This was accomplished easily within a month of his Rai Sahibship. Overnight, Parsa was transformed into Paras Ram. He fell on Rai Sahib's feet, crying with joy, 'Sahibji, Paro and I are your slaves for lifetime. How can we ever repay what you have done for us?' Basti Ram gave them a smile twirling his moustache.

Paras Ram was now sorting letters in mail trains, which kept him away from home for three to four nights a week. Paro, now a full-fledged housekeeper, served Rai Sahib with greater zeal and devotion. She would light the hookah that Rai Sahib enjoyed puffing after dinner while reclining in bed. She would sit on the edge of the bed as she pressed his legs and arms, massage his head and rub his feet. This became a daily routine.

On a cold January evening when Paras Ram was away on night duty and Rai Sahib was enjoying his hookah while lying in bed wrapped in a blanket, his gaze fell on Paro, who was gently massaging his forehead. Her swaying movements revealed the curves of her shapely body and firm breasts, the nipples pressed hard against her dress. He looked at her longingly, roused by her youthful charm. He inhaled the pleasant warmth of her body. Suddenly, he felt a strange sensation. Paro's right hand had touched his temples. For the first time in more than a year of forced celibacy, he was overwhelmed by desire and could hardly control his mounting excitement. Accidentally, as it were, Basti touched Paro's hand and held it. She did not draw it away. Emboldened, he shifted a little and made Paro sit more comfortably, drawing her to him. His hand tightened involuntarily around her breasts, squeezing the yielding flesh through the material of her shirt. Paro made a feeble show of resistance by turning and twisting her

body, a gesture which Rai Sahib understood as her implied consent. He put his arms around her waist, pressing it hard against his body. His lips descended on hers hesitantly as if he was afraid she would beat a retreat. Though she was not familiar with the preliminaries of love-making, having concentrated on the physical act, her desire to give herself to him seemed to tell her how to return his love. What followed was pure bliss. They lay side by side intensely happy.

As Rai Sahib observed the glow and warmth in Paro's eyes, he knew that this was not an end, but a beginning. He broke the silence: 'Paro, I am mighty pleased with you for you have given me a new lease of life.'

'I'm your slave, Sahibji,' said Paro in a submissive tone, in my heart I have always worshipped you as my husband since it is you who gave the money to Parsa to procure me. He will be glad to know that I am doing my duty. Sahibji, forgive me for my failings.'

From that day onwards, Rai Sahib had a new glow on his face. He always appeared relaxed and jovial. It was whispered in the neighbourhood that Paras Ram was a party to this arrangement that seemed to satisfy the three of them. But no one dared say a word about it, such was the prestige and status of Rai Sahib. His visit to Simla had solved a widower's dilemma.

THE CHANGING WORLD OF WOMEN

IN THE EXTENDED FAMILIES of the 1920s, women enjoyed an extraordinary position, unknown to their counterparts of today. They dominated the household scene, exercising undisputed authority over family affairs. What they lacked in education they more than made up in wisdom, intelligence and shrewdness in coping with all kinds of situations. They acted as the guardians of family property, money and jewels and more often than not had the final say in such matters. Rarely did the men dare to oppose them. Their world was full of activity, liveliness and labour.

As was to be expected from the esteem in which they were held, women occupied centre stage at almost all family functions, which they organized with much skill and great enthusiasm. They were at their best when there was an occasion calling for a celebration, such as a child's birth or a grown-up's wedding. An announcement of expectation of a childbirth was an event for merry-making by female relations and women of the neighbourhood, who would gather to congratulate the family. After the birth of the child, *chilia*, which marked the culmination of the first forty days, was celebrated with the proud mother-in-law inviting female relations and friends to bless the baby. The guests would offer *sagans* (gifts in cash), a custom based on the principle of reciprocity. Next came the *mundan* (head-shaving) ceremony, which was observed when the child was two or three years old. Admission to school was another joyous occasion calling for a celebration with distribution of sweets and singing of songs by the womenfolk.

The most important occasion in the life of a woman was the

marriage of her son or daughter, which she would look forward to and prepare herself for, right from the child's birth. Months before the wedding day, she would start consulting others about the arrangements to be made and the duties to be allocated to members of the family. Festivities would start with daily sessions of singing to the accompaniment of the *dholki* (drum)—an activity which the women enjoyed most—four to five weeks before the wedding. The women attending the session would display their singing talent and repertoire of songs. The men kept away from this exclusive women's affair when they were often the butt of their jokes and somewhat double meaning songs were sung. Some of the popular songs of the time were:

Khedan de din char ni mayen—

Je mera katya mayen nahin lodhe

Auh payian puniyan te auh paye godhe

Charkhe de tote char—ni mayen—

(Oh mother, I have but a few carefree days to play about. If you do not need my spinning, here I throw away the cotton and thread and would smash the spinning wheel into pieces.)

Niki moti suyan re jali ka mora kadna

(I remember toiling with needles making laces.)

Raj bura es dogre da, ni jindiye kedhe vele avan tere kol

(Curse to this rule of Dogra, I know not when to visit you, my darling.)

Bhaidhi bewasai—Shava

Paisa mangan aai—Shava

(The wretched impatient one has come to ask for the pice she had lent me.)

At the conclusion of a singing session *patasas* (sugar candy) were offered to the participants. As the wedding day drew nearer, these musical evenings would become more hilarious with the participation of female relations who would have by then arrived from distant towns and villages. This set the stage for a sort of competition in singing between the Lahorans and the women from the mofussil and countryside.

Sometimes, this urban-rural encounter would lead to quarrels over the observance of certain customs that the urban elite had discarded or simplified. I recall an occasion when a controversy broke out over the *manyan* ceremony, which required the would-be bride to sit in a secluded room. Another issue of urban-rural divide was the utterance of taunting and satirical remarks in songs called *sathnians*, which the mofussil women would address to the members of the *barat*. This was, however, part of the festivities and no one took offence at it. The climax was reached at the time of the departure of the bride, when the women would recite heart-rending songs as the near and dear ones bade her farewell with tears in their eyes. The most touching moment came when the bride took leave of her mother, which has been aptly described by a Punjabi poet thus:

mavan dhiyan milan lagiyan
chare kandhan ne chabare diyan haliyan

(When mother and daughter embrace each other before parting,
 the four walls of the room start trembling.)

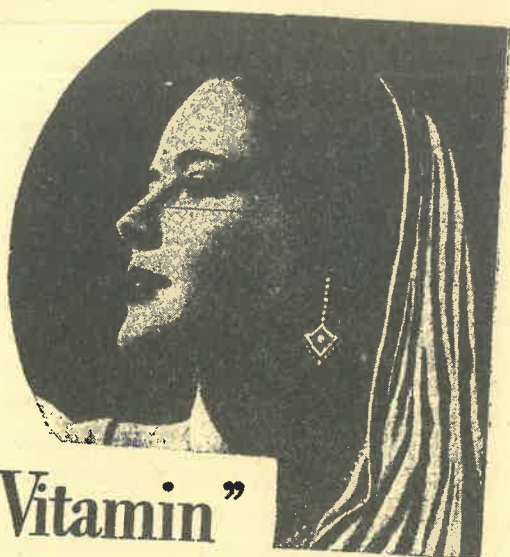
The tearful send-off was usually in sharp contrast to the warm welcome that awaited the bride at the bridegroom's house. The womenfolk there would crowd around to have a glimpse of the shy bride, who had not yet recovered from the shock of having been separated from a swooning mother, weeping elders and sobbing brothers and sisters. Elderly women would strive to divert her mind and amuse her by extolling the virtues of her husband.

Women played an equally significant role on occasions calling for fortitude to bear the loss of a near and dear one and to extend

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sympathy to the bereaved. They shared one another's grief and took pains to console the bereaved. The period of mourning for the deceased lasted over a month, during which women would assemble every day to do *siapa* (bemoaning the loss), a custom widely prevalent in Lahore. Sometimes, a professional mourner would sit in front of them beating her breasts with cries of 'hai-hai'. Addressing them she would shout, 'Oh mothers and sisters, he has left you-hai-hai.' 'Oh God, why have you snatched the young one; you could have taken away any of us-hai-hai.' Close female relations of the deceased would repeat the chorus of lamentation, slap their thighs and beat their breasts with cries of 'hai-hai'. Oddly enough, some of the women sitting at the back would gossip while extracting kernels from melon seeds with their *mochanas* (tweezers). Sporting black *ghagris* and grey *chadars*, the women at this mourning assembly would meet and talk about everything under the sun, even discuss marriage proposals for their children and relations. As the majority of them wore almost identical clothes on these occasions, one could make out their station in society only through the size of the key-bunch they had tucked on one side of their dress in a manner that made it visible to everyone.

Though not quite an angel, the mother-in-law of my days in Lahore was much more accommodating towards her daughter-in-law than her counterpart today. What upset her more than the inadequate dowry the daughter-in-law might have brought was her inability to bear a child. This often made her treat the daughter-in-law harshly. Desperate measures, prayers at temples and charms and amulets were employed. Quacks took advantage of the situation. I recall having heard about one Miroo Maulavi in Kashmiri Bazar who used to prescribe a talisman which when tied round the waist of a woman lying in bed was supposed to work wonders in securing pregnancy. More often than not the talisman failed to achieve the desired result, as it happened in the case of the young wife of a bank clerk, Pyarelal, who in utter frustration committed suicide by jumping from the rooftop of a four-storeyed house. In another case, a woman in my neighbourhood leapt into a well but was fortunately rescued by a pehalwan. There were, however, no cases of bride burning on

account of inadequate dowry.

While evil-minded mothers-in-law were few and far between, there were reportedly some women in Lahore who were reputed to possess the evil eye. Mothers hid their children from these ill-disposed women, for a mere glance from them was believed to cause illness and even untimely death. To ward off the adverse effects of the evil eye, remedies were prescribed by mullahs and pandits. The former would write out certain charms on small pieces of paper that were to be soaked in water and eaten by the victim. The pandits would jot down a mantra on a paper that was burnt and its smoke blown towards the target of the evil eye. They also recommended burning a piece of red chilli after circling it around the victim's head. Another antidote recommended by elders was *Chhaya Patar*, which involved seeing your reflection in a bowl containing liquid ghee or oil and giving it away after adding a copper coin to professional mendicants who made their rounds of the city on Tuesdays and Saturdays.

There were some women who would at times get possessed by the spirit of Durga Mata (mother goddess). I recall one middle-aged woman with grown-up children in our neighbourhood who would go into a trance when so possessed. The family would summon a singer with a drum who would sing songs in praise of the mother goddess. The woman sitting languidly on the ground would start rolling her head to the beat of the drum. Women and children would assemble to watch her play in her trance and seek the blessings of the mother goddess through her for the fulfilment of their wishes. Some women would even prostrate themselves before her to worship the spirit of Durga which had taken hold of the woman. After a couple of hours, the woman was liberated from the spirit and she resumed her normal life.

The social network of women consisted of female companions from their own families or from the neighbourhood. They also established lifelong relationships with some women friends during their visits to Haridwar. These were known as *dharam bhens* (sisters by virtue of religious vow) who had taken a dip together at Har ki Pauri and exchanged dupattas or dhotis.

Until the late 1920s, spinning was a common pursuit of women of



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all ranks, but with the advent of cheap millmade cloth, the *charkha* went out of vogue. The pastime women enjoyed most was shopping. As hawkers and vendors of fruits and vegetables and miscellaneous goods would come to their doorsteps, they had seldom to venture out into the market. Pedlars of textile materials, saris, shawls, etc., would attract groups of women and the bargaining that followed often turned out to be a noisy and lively affair. As the pedlars offered a limited variety of goods, the women were fond of visiting Tota (cutpiece) Bazar, the famous cloth market for womenfolk. This bazar, covered with awnings and tin roofs to keep out the sun, branched off from Wachhowali and extended right up to Gumti Bazar. On colourful display in the bazar were all kinds of textile materials. Crowds of women could be seen moving from shop to shop. Rarely visited by men, the bazar provided full freedom of movement to the women shoppers among whom were Muslim ladies who wore burqas but had their faces uncovered. It must be said to the credit of Lahorias that they showed respect to the women by being careful not to make any unseemly gesture or remark, leave alone any attempt to insult or molest them. The clan of eve-teasers had yet to make its appearance.

The shopkeepers had given humorous names to some of the materials on sale, such as *ankh ka nasha* (alluring glances), *teri-meri-marzi* (mutual consent), *dhoop-chhaon* (sun and shade). These names instantly caught on with the women shoppers who freely used them while asking for the materials to be shown to them. The shopkeepers vied with one another in beckoning customers loudly in a sing-song voice to catch their attention. All day long, they would carry on one-sided conversations irrespective of whether anyone was interested or not. Tough customers, the women were not taken in by the sales pitch of the shopkeepers. Sitting on the extended platforms of the shops, the women shoppers bargained hard to get full value for every paisa they would spend.

An annual event the women of Lahore enjoyed attending was the *Ramayan katha* (story) organized in mohallas, where they heard the Tulsi Ramayan from a pandit and devotional songs from known singers of the city. Most of these professional *katha vachaks* (epic reciters) used to come all the way from Mathura and Benares and

were generously rewarded for their performance by the womenfolk.

In fashion, the women of Lahore were far ahead of their counterparts in other regions of the country. The most popular dress among the pre-war generation comprised of a *ghagri* (skirt) extending up to the ankles, a blouse-cum-shirt with the sleeves reaching the elbow, and a *bhochhan* or dupatta (headcover). The *bhochhan*, the most graceful part of the costume, was made from a large sheet of the choicest of materials edged with lace or embroidery. It was worn in such a manner that its one end partially covered the body while the other end was carelessly thrown over the shoulders. Social propriety demanded that women should move out in streets properly dressed. On ceremonial occasions, women sported ghagris made from velvet and silk materials heavily embroidered with gold thread. In summer, they would carry *pakhis* (wicker handfans) of different designs, some of which were edged with velvet ribbon or embroidered with silk thread. The custom of *jhund* or *ghungat*, that is covering the face with a veil, survived until the 1930s. Women covered their faces in the presence of even their husbands when elderly women of the household were around.

With the emergence of the post-war generation during the 1930s, the ghagri gave way to salwar suits and saris. Young women took to the sari influenced by other regions of India. It came to be considered the most attractive form of dress. Slippers without heels and with pointed toes were replaced by heeled gurgabis (English-style ladies' shoes) and sandals.

Next to clothes, the thing most dear to women was jewellery, which they regarded as their wealth and inheritance. There were ornaments for every part of the body, from head to toe. With the march of modernity, some of them went out of fashion. These were gold *chonk* and *phul*, like shaped domes and minarets for the head, *gulluband* (neck-strap) for the neck, *nant* (armlets), *bankan* (bracelets weighing up to 100 g each), *tadhagi* (girdles) and *lachhe* (anklets). By the mid-1930s, ornaments became lighter in weight and more elegant. Responding to the dictates of fashion, Lahore goldsmiths came out with superb designs and new items of jewellery. The *nath* (gold ring) set with precious stones, worn on the left nostril,

which had since olden times been considered an important piece of adornment and a symbol of a woman's married status, was replaced with a *teeli* (jewel-studded nose-pin). This is again in fashion now after a lapse of over fifty years.

As regards cosmetics, the older generation used *vatna* (kneaded flour mixed with ghee) to add lustre to their skin.

The use of dentifrice served a dual purpose of cleaning the teeth and colouring the lips. For beautifying the eyes, collyrium and kohl were applied. It was only in the mid-1930s that face powder, cream, nail polish and lipsticks came into vogue. Even then, their use was extremely limited. In fact, obvious lip-colouring was unusual until the 1940s. Besides, the use of cosmetics was considered to be the prerogative of married women and even they used them with discretion so that their make-up might not appear too garish.

The budding generation of women of the 1930s, influenced by the wave of social reforms, spread of education and exposure to modern ways, acquired a new lifestyle that marked the beginning of a new era. Sporting fashionable saris or salwar suits, they began moving out of their homes—something the older generation did not approve of. A Bombay movie, *Miss 1933*, starring Miss Gohar, set a new trend in dressing. Some women began to copy the heroine's ultra-modern clothes and took to wearing sunglasses and carrying umbrellas. The anti-tawaif campaign, which was then in full swing, also had its impact on the lifestyle of those days. It dissuaded many a young man from visiting the kothas to enjoy the company of courtesans, thus enhancing the status of women as wives.

Likewise, films like *Saubhagya Sundri* starring Sulochna and *Gun Sundri* with Gauhar glorified the Indian woman in the role of a wife and condemned the tawaif as a destroyer of homes. In this changing social environment, even music, which had been a preserve of houses of ill-fame, came to be patronized in respectable homes. Music schools sprang up in the city where girls were taught to sing and play the harmonium. Soon this came to be regarded as an additional qualification for marriageable girls.

That reminds me of one Gopichand who ran a music school for girls in Sutar Mandi Bazar. His wife used to fetch girls from their

homes and escort them back after the lessons. I could overhear them singing the same songs over and over again. Among the most popular ones were '*Aa gaya baba vaid rogian da*' (Here comes the doctor for the sick and the ailing); '*Tere puja ko bhagwan bana man mandar alishan*' (Oh God, to worship you I have a grand temple in my heart); '*Bas mein hote aye bhagwan bhagat ke*' (God is always at the beck and call of his devotees). The turnover of the pupils was very brisk as most of the girls would quit after a few weeks, anxious to get married as soon as possible. Marriage was necessary even if it was not made in heaven and was practically the only career for a woman. Anyway, harmonium makers had a flourishing business as, along with the Singer sewing machine, this music instrument came to be included in the girls' dowry.

The older generation, aghast at seeing young women crazy about latest fashions, were highly critical of their behaviour. Poets wrote satirical verses about them. To quote some:

Ena fashionan ne sanu mar dita sajna
Ena fashionan ne

Panjian da sona nale painty nun ghadaya
Chauthe din pher tudhaya sajna—Ena fashionan ne

Tin soh da soot nal boot adi wala
Tije din kadya dwala sajna—Ena fashionan ne

Gharhian te ainkan ne zor aj paya
Akhian da ho gaya safaya sajna—Ena fashionan ne

Pinde nu dakhān da chah pya chadhya
Chunian nu sir ton hataya sajana—Ena fashionan ne

(My dear friend, these fashions have ruined us. Gold worth twenty-five rupees is converted into a fashionable ornament at an additional cost of thirty-five rupees and after four days it is again torn apart for reconversion. They wear salwar-suits costing



Last Night's Care—

This Morning's Beauty

As a beauty specialist Miss M. Richards knows that the secret of a lovely "spring morning" complexion depends upon a simple nightly beauty treatment. The fact is that "muddy" and dull complexions are due to minute particles of worn-out, dried-up outer cuticle remaining to clog up the pores and stifle the young skin underneath. Nature needs your help to clear the dried-up skin away, and here is the best way to do it. Just get from your chemist, store or beauty salon some pure Mergolized Wax and gently rub it in with the finger-tips before you go to bed. While you sleep the Mergolized Wax will be softly, imperceptibly dissolving away all those tiny particles of old worn-out skin, leaving the fresh, young skin healthy, clear and beautiful—and several shades lighter.

Even one night will show you how this natural way transcends all artificial means and lotions. But be sure to get Mergolized Wax (containing no animal fat) and follow the instructions on the jar.

Mergolized Wax

114 Ct.

The Tribune, 3 August 1939

three hundred rupees and high-heeled shoes which will drive us to bankruptcy within three days. Watches and sunglasses are a rage and they are fast spoiling their eyesight. They take delight in exposing their bodies, so they have removed veils from their heads and move about bareheaded.)

Padh angrezi rudhian kudian desh diyan
Chhad Chhad kagaz padhan kataban
Adhi wale boot juraban
Hath wich chhatrian phadian—kudian desh diyan

Roti da oh dhang na janan
Kam kaj nun hath na lavan
Ajab udari udhian—kudian desh diyan

(Study of English has ruined the girls of our country. They read books, wear heeled shoes and stockings; and carry umbrellas in their hands—oh the girls of our country. They know not the art of cooking; they shirk doing any household work and are following strange ways—oh the girls of our country.)

While men of the older generation were shocked by the new ways of the modern girls, the younger ones fell for them. What hurt the male ego most was the fact that women had started working for a living, something that only widows, driven by the force of circumstances, had done so far. Now educated girls began to join the ranks of school and college teachers.

Sex without marriage was virtually unknown in those days. An average woman was not expected to have any sexual desires; she would submit to her husband but only to please him. It was also said that illnesses that afflicted unmarried girls could be cured through marriage. Any indiscretion in matters of sex was fraught with grave dangers for a woman. It could even lead to her expulsion from the community. This is not to say that there were no sex scandals. I remember one of them in which a woman was thrown out of her mohalla. The woman, Nikki, was in her late twenties. She had bought

a house in our neighbourhood and was living quietly with her two children, a boy and a girl, aged seven and five, respectively. She told everybody that her husband was away in East Africa on business. Charming and hospitable, she was equally popular with women and children. Now and then, a cousin of hers from Amritsar, Ramditta, visited her and stayed on for a day or two. One day, Kammo, the sweeper woman, while coming down the steps after cleaning the latrine on the rooftop caught a glimpse of Nikki and Ramditta in a compromising situation. Soon the scandal became the talk of the neighbourhood. It was discovered later that Nikki had no husband working in Africa and that Ramditta was her paramour. To avoid further embarrassment, Ramditta quietly took away Nikki and her children to Badami Bagh, a convenient residential quarter on the outskirts of the city, where migrants from other towns and villages had come to settle down.

Among the poorer women who shared the drudgery of outdoor work with men were the *dhoban* (washerwoman), the *churhi* (sweeper woman) and the *bhadpunjan* (baker). The latter was a very interesting character. She plied her trade in every mohalla. In summer, she would bake bread in the evenings in her tandoor when women would assemble with their kneaded flour and wait their turn. By way of wages she would keep a portion of the flour. Every afternoon she lighted a fire in her open hearth, put on it an open iron vessel and heated some sand in it. Children would bring small quantities of wheat, gram or maize and get them parched. This was a popular afternoon meal or snack. She would shake the long handle of the sieve, pour the hot sand back into the pot, and then hand over the parched corn to the customers. She kept her eyes constantly on the sieve but her tongue would be wagging all the time, doling out news about happenings in the neighbourhood that everyone loved to hear.

That was the world of women in Lahore over half a century ago. How different from today! It was full of activity, fun and laughter, free from the stresses and strains of the present times.

GOING TO THE CINEMA

I VIVIDLY RECALL MY maiden visit to a cinema house to watch a silent film, *Chandramukhi*, starring Miss Gohar. That was in 1930. Being a child I wondered what exciting things would appear on the screen. Uncle Pyara, who had secured some complimentary passes, took me inside the long hall of Paris Cinema, outside Bhati Gate, which had a roof of corrugated iron sheets. There was much hustle and bustle, with vendors moving about all over the hall selling cigarettes and eatables—boiled eggs, peanuts, *chilgozas*, sugar-candy, etc. The management rang the bell three times before starting the show. With the final call, the vendors quit the hall and the viewers occupied their seats. Instead of dialogue, there were written titles flashed on the screen that many in the audience read aloud. A few musicians sat near the screen and played their instruments whenever there was a hilarious, sad, or romantic scene, or a sword fight. Their harmonium, tabla and sarangi provided a kind of background music. The cinema was equipped with a single projector and there had to be a break for a few minutes after a reel was shown. During the interlude the lights were put on and the vendors reappeared on the scene. The hall was dense with tobacco smoke. Some among the audience went out to breathe fresh air and came back when the lights were off. These latecomers would push their way across the knees of people already seated. There were shouts of ‘heads down’ from people occupying the back seats whose view was obstructed.

When the show was over at 9 p.m. we came out of the hall. There were crowds waiting outside. There were rows of stalls selling eatables and pedlars displaying paper toys, balloons and other titbits.

I particularly remember one who sold collyrium for the eyes with special tiny ebony sticks to apply it. It was generally believed that film watching was injurious to the eyes and collyrium was not only a good antidote but also helped to improve the eyesight. The pedlar's name was Majid and he hailed from Aligarh. He used to advertise his wares in musical tone: '*Aa gaya nagine ki salai wallah, ye salai us abnus ki hai, jo ke nagina nam pa gaya hai*' (Here comes the one with collyrium sticks for the eyes, made of ebony which is valued as a gem). He had selected a vantage point to attract customers among the cinema-goers.

The advent of talkies in 1931 brought about a revolution in the entertainment world of Lahore. The novelty of sound began attracting larger crowds to the cinema houses which began to install new projection equipment to screen the talkies. Some cinema houses, were remodelled and renovated and new ones opened their doors. Paris Cinema was demolished and Wellington Talkies constructed in its place. There were now three cinema houses in the Bhati Gate area: Crown, Wellington and Diamond. The fourth cinema house, Paramount, facing Crown, was added during the mid-1930s. The other major cinema centre was Mcleod Road, with five cinema houses: Regent (old Capital), Majestic, Palace (old Elphinstone), Ritz (old Excelsior) and Prabhat. The sixth cinema house, Rattan, opened in 1946. A little distance away, on Abbot Road, we had Nishat and Capital (old Shanti). All these picture houses were now showing Urdu/Hindi movies. There were a few lesser-known cinema houses in other parts the city. Plaza and Regal cinemas on the Mall, however, screened only English movies.

The first talkie to hit the screen was *Alam Ara*, starring Miss Zubeida and Master Vithal. Described as an all-talking, singing, dancing picture, it became an instant hit. Haqim Ramparshad made a fortune from showing it at his cinema house, Capital, on Mcleod Road. The first-ever film song, '*Dey dey khuda ke nam pe pyare, himmat hai gar dene ki*' became a rage and one could hear people humming it in the streets of Lahore. Soon followed a string of films from Madan Theatres of Calcutta, such as *Laila Majnu*, *Shirin Farhad*, *Inder Sabha*, featuring the great singing stars of those days,



Regal Cinema on The Mall, 1997



A scene on The Mall at Beadon Road Crossing, 1997

Master Nissar and Miss Kajjan. As children we enjoyed seeing stunt movies from Bombay like *Hunterwali* and *Toofan Mail* starring Miss Nadia. Strangely, kissing scenes were freely permitted by the censors, whose main concern seemed to be keeping out films having political overtones and comments against the Raj.

The first crop of actors and actresses did not enjoy much social status. Sometimes they were even looked down upon. For them it was not easy to get a marriage proposal from middle-class families. Degree qualifications came to be proudly tagged on to the names of the few educated ones among them, such as Surendra, BA, LLB, and Vanmala, MA.

By the mid-1930s, New Theatres of Calcutta, Bombay Talkies of Bombay and Prabhat of Poona had set a new trend with their social themes. Minerva Productions of Sohrab Modi added a new dimension with its historical themes.

As schoolboys, we used to visit the Bhati Gate cinemas for their matinee shows. We got a student concession and by spending four annas could sit in the eight-anna class. Buying a ticket in those days, however, was quite an adventure. The queue system was unknown and the law of the jungle prevailed. It was not uncommon to find one's pocket picked or shirt torn in the melee. The next exercise was to scramble for the seats situated in the centre of the hall and during summer those under the fans as seat numbering was as yet unknown. Among the hit films during the 1930s were *Devdas*, *President*, *Amar Jyoti*, *Street Singer*, *Deccan Queen*, *Achhut Kanya*, *Jailor* and *Pukar*. These outstanding films had songs, dances and other popular elements. The celebrated stars who attained countrywide fame were K.L. Saigal, Prithviraj, P.C. Barua, Ashok Kumar, Chandramohan, Motilal, Surendra, Najmul Hussain, Ghulam Mohammad, Mazhar Khan and the Billimoria brothers. Among the leading actresses were Devika Rani, Durga Khote, Sulochana, Madhuri, Gohar, Mehtab, Shanta Apte, Naseem Bano, Kanan Devi, Leela Chitnis, Jamuna, Leela Desai, Sabita Devi, Bibbo and Gulab.

Once a week, on Wednesday, there used to be zenana shows in the afternoon for women and children. Tongalloads of women would come from all parts of the city to see them. As a child, I witnessed

SHORTS Fall Short of a DRAMA SHORTS Fall Short of a DRAMA

Patrons are Requested to Please Note that the only INDIAN TALKING Complete Drama
so far Produced in India
WILL BE SHOWN AT

THE CAPITOL

COMM. TUESDAY APRIL 14TH.

A Complete Indian Talking Drama
(AND NOT SHORTS)

A L A M - A R A

A Master-Piece in 11 Thrilling Reels with Technicolour Sequences!
It ran Three Weeks in Calcutta, Six weeks in Bombay, Four Weeks in Karachi and
now Showing in Delhi for the Last Four Weeks.



Come and appreciate the skill of the Greatest Indian Stars including Miss Zubeda-Akino
Indian Douglas & Several Others. Also Jagdish B. A. of Sanatan Dharma College, Lahore and
Prithvi Raj, B. A. of F. G. College, Lahore take prominent parts in the picture.

INDIAN SONGS!
INDIAN MUSIC!

INDIAN DANCES!
INDIAN STARS!

WILL GLADDEN **INDIAN HEARTS**

Let Patriotic Indians, Lovers of Indian Art, Promoters of Indian Industry, Patrons of
Indian Adventures, Come **TO SEE AND HEAR** The Indian Talking Complete Drama
depicting an Historic event of their Motherland.

A L A M - A R A

In spite of enormous Sum spent the Management have decided for the pleasure of public not
to make any increase in the prices.

Such Rare Opportunities are not the daily occurrences.
Seize it, Embrace it, if life is really worth living.

the motley crowd of women making noises all the time, with babes in arms crying and disturbing the others. It was not uncommon to shout at women with wailing babies and compel them to leave the hall and return only after quietening the children.

As we grew up, we got more interested in romantic themes and began visiting the cinema houses on Mcleod Road, where tickets for the lowest class used to cost six annas. The middle-class gentry patronized these picture houses, where the general atmosphere was more congenial. There was an orderly display of still photographs of the running movie as also of forthcoming attractions. By now, film music had struck roots in peoples' minds. Film songs were pressed into discs and the gramophone became a familiar feature in many households. Booklets containing film songs were available for one anna each, while those containing full dialogue were sold for two annas each. The first film song that created a sensation was '*Balam ayo baso mere man me*' sung by K.L. Saigal in *Devdas*. But it was the haunting piece from *Street Singer*—'*Babul mora*'—that made Saigal the king of song. Among the popular songs of the day were '*Chal chal re naujawan*' by Ashok Kumar, '*Pahle jo mohabat se inqar kiya hota*' by Khurshid, and '*Ai chand chhup na jana*' by Kanan. The Lahorias were greatly thrilled when Punjabi film songs appeared on the screen. The first popular melodies were '*Kankan diyan faslan pakiyan ne*', '*Shala jawanian mane*' and '*Uchi madhi te dud payi ridhkan*', followed by several others that were soon on the lips of every film-goer.

Before the release of a new film, the cinema managements would organize a special show for the press in the mornings. This was an occasion to gather friends and relatives for a free show. The viewers were expected to praise the movie in their own circles and impress upon them not to miss seeing it.

A memorable event around 1941 was the maiden visit of Ashok Kumar and Leela Chitnis to Lahore after the resounding success of *Kangan*, *Bandhan* and *Jhoola* in quick succession. I recall how thousands of young people crowded the railway station to catch a glimpse of the stars as they alighted from the train. Later, they appeared on the Regent stage during the showing of *Jhoola*.

First Picture in Punjabi
By Punjabis -- For Punjabis

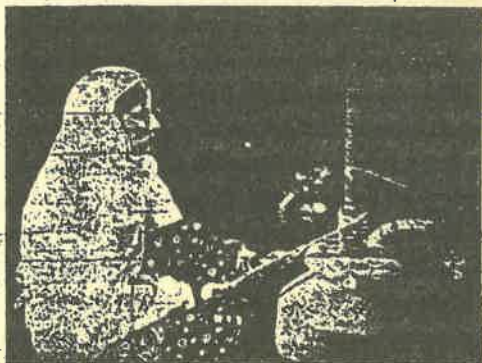
— AT —

PALACE

TODAY 3, 6-45, 9-45 P.M.

SHEILA *alias* **PIND-DI-KURI**

A Mirror of our Rural Society.



Sheila *alias* **Pind-Di-Kuri**

Your Own Picture -- by Yourself

MATINEE SUNDAY, MONDAY 3 P.M.

The first successful Punjabi film, *Sheila*, produced in Calcutta, was released in 1937, but it was only after the resounding triumph at *Heer Syal* in 1939 that studios in Lahore came to life and ventured into the production of Punjabi and Hindi films. During the 1940s, they produced several memorable hits like *Gul Bakawali*, *Sohni Mahiwal*, *Yamla Jat*, *Khazanchi*, *Dassi*, *Khandan* and *Mangti*. The film industry of Lahore owed its success to the contributions made by pioneers like Imtiaz Ali Taj, a reputed writer, Nanak Chand Naz, editor of *Milap*, R.L. Shorey, J.K. Nanda, K.D. Mehra and Dalsukh M. Pancholi. Those were the days when Malka-e-Tarranum, Noor Jehan, won countrywide fame and became a leading star. Other popular stars among the actresses were Ragini, Swaranlata, Munawar Sultana and among the male actors, Ismail, Narang, Karan Dewan, Ghulam Mohammad, Om Prakash, Pran and Majnu. Music directors who rose to fame were Ghulam Haider, Ghulam Mohammad, Amar Nath and Gobind Ram.

As college students we also became interested in seeing English movies at the Regal and Plaza. While some of us wanted to learn more about spoken English, others were keen to view provocative love scenes. Visited by the gentry and the elite, these cinema houses presented a different atmosphere. They had introduced a queue system for buying tickets with numbered seats. In the middle stalls, as they called them, seats were available for one rupee and two annas each, whereas a ticket for the lowest class cost only nine annas.

The cinema houses had found a new source of revenue by projecting slide advertisements. It was quite amusing to see each slide lasting only a second or so during which one could hardly read the full name of the product advertised. The first-ever publicity film to be shown was about Dalda Vanaspati (vegetable ghee) with a tuneful melody extolling its wonderful qualities. As for smoking, we found the dark cinema hall an ideal place to indulge in it without being noticed.

Among the outstanding English films of those days were: *All This and Heaven Too*, *Lady of the Tropics*, *How Green Was My Valley*, *Gone With the Wind*, *Rebecca*, *That Hamilton Woman*, *Gaslight*, *Valley of Decision* and *Spellbound*. It was considered fashionable to talk about English movies and Hollywood actors and actresses.

My favourite actors were Errol Flynn, Robert Taylor, Clark Gable, Ronald Coleman, Spencer Tracy, Bob Hope, Humphrey Bogart, Charles Boyer, Ray Milland, Gregory Peck and Laurence Olivier. Among the leading actresses I would like to mention Olivia de Havilland, Heddy Lamarr, Greta Garbo. Maureen O'Hara, Marlene Dietrich, Vivien Leigh, Greer Garson, Lauren Bacall, Rita Hayworth and Ginger Rogers.

Well, in my days, cinema was the chief source of entertainment. Seeing a film in the company of friends was something to be discussed for weeks. We identified with the heroes and their exploits. When we speak from memory about the films we had seen in our youthful days, our judgement is apt to be coloured by nostalgia. Seeing old films again when we are advanced in age springs pleasant surprises on us. We realize that we never noticed or fully understood many of the nuances because we were too immature to discern them at the time. In retrospect we realize that not all old films were as good as we thought them to be. Memory lends them values that were seldom there.

K.L. SAIGAL VISITS LAHORE



FOR THE MUSIC LOVERS of Lahore who had heard his golden voice in films and on gramophone records, Kundan Lal Saigal's visit to the city in December 1937 was a memorable occasion. It gave them the opportunity of a lifetime to hear him in person. As it happened, Saigal's public performance in Lahore was his first and last. His arrival had been heralded by posters that had appeared all over the city. Saigal was to give a performance at the site of the Indian Exhibition, the largest of its kind to

be held at Lahore in Minto Park, the plain outside Hazoori Bagh between the fort and the Ravi river.

Saigal made his debut in the music world of India in the early 1930s. '*Jhulana Jhulao*' was perhaps his first recording in 1933; it blazed a new trail in the field of music. Then followed his ghazals and other songs. It was, however, his bhajan '*Suno suno re krishan kala*' that enthralled the womenfolk, who also became his ardent fans. By 1937, he had reached the zenith of his fame, his name having become a household word throughout the length and breadth of India. He was hailed as the greatest singer of the century. He developed an inimitable style. Ghazals, geets, bhajans and even classical songs, whatever he happened to sing, acquired a new meaning with his

superb rendering of words. He was music personified and dominated the world of music with his voice, the like of which was never heard before or after his demise in January 1947.

It was B.N. Sircar, the founder of New Theatres, Calcutta, who discovered K.L. Saigal and presented him to Indian audiences. His first two Hindi films, *Muhabbat Ke Ansoo* and *Subah Ka Sitara*, went unnoticed but the release of *Chandidas* in 1934 was a landmark. It was a great box-office hit and set a new trend in Indian film music. Saigal was soon acclaimed as the leading singing star. The haunting melodies like '*Tarpat bite din rain*' and '*Prem nagar mein banaungi ghar main*' he sang in *Chandidas* made him famous all over the country. Never before had we heard such a soul-stirring voice.

After *Chandidas* came *Yahoodi Ki Larki*, *Karwan-e-Hyat*, *Pooran Bhakat*, *Devdas*, *Dhoop Chhaon*, *Dena Paona* and *President*. Saigal's songs in these films are still hummed by lovers of music everywhere. These were melodies that never die, such as '*Nukta-chin hai ghame-dil*', '*Koi preet ki reet bata de*', '*Balam aye baso more man me*', '*Dukh ke ab din bitat nahin*', '*Ek bangla bane nyara*', '*Prem ka hai is jag mein panth nirala*', '*Ek raje ka beta lekar*'. Music was a passion with Saigal. There was music not only in his voice but also in his gestures and innermost thoughts. Outwardly, he was tall, loose-limbed and bald. Full of humility, he was in fact a true mystic, having spent much time in the company of a Sufi saint in his younger days. There was much talk about his addiction to the bottle but it did not affect in any way his faculties and that God-gifted voice.

The great classical singers of the day like Faiyaz Khan, Abdul Karim Khan and Pt. Onkar Nath Thakur marvelled at Saigal's instant response to words and sounds. They wondered how without formal training, Saigal was able to master the intricacies of music. He could sing songs in Persian, Urdu, Bengali, Hindi and Punjabi. The great composers of music at New Theatres like R.C. Boral, Timir Baran, Modhu Bose and Pankaj Mullick marvelled at the depth and range of his voice. Those were the days when there were few opportunities of enjoying music. To own a gramophone was a luxury and radio broadcasting was in its infancy. It was quite usual to find crowds assembled in front of gramophone shops, listening to records being

THE TRIBUNE

Thursday, December 22, 1937.

K. L. SAIGAL

OF

New Theatres Calcutta

YOUR FAVOURITE STAR

Coming in Person

AT

THE ALL INDIA EXHIBITION

VARIETY THEATRE

Minto Park, LAHORE.

OTHER ATTRACTIONS

**Songs by Sidheswari Bai of Benares
and Dalip Chand Bedi**

**25th & 26th December, 1937. Three shows daily at 1-30 p.m.
4.15 p.m. & 7 p.m.**

TWO SHOWS DAILY

27th & 28th December, 1937 at 4 p.m. & 7 p.m.

played there.

Now let us get back to the auditorium at the Minto Park exhibition ground. Large crowds have gathered outside the booking windows to buy tickets for Saigal's performance. The tickets cost from one rupee to five rupees. I make a feeble attempt to get near one of the windows, all the time worried about my new woollen suit lest it should get soiled in the rush. I return empty-handed. My friend accompanying me then makes an attempt, but without success. In the meantime, someone approaches us with an offer to sell us two-rupee tickets for three rupees each. We grab the tickets and rush to the hall. There is a makeshift stage set up in a tin shed hall. But for a few rows of chairs in the front, the seating is arranged on flat wooden benches. The hall is packed to capacity with a large number of people standing on all sides. Sitting on a bench in the middle of the hall, I watch the audience getting restless. They start whistling to attract the attention of the organizers. Then I notice a tall person wearing a black achkan and a sparkling white turban jumping on the stage. With folded hands he begins addressing the audience in a loud, clear voice: 'Brothers and sisters,' (there were, however, no sisters in the hall), 'you are now going to see and hear the greatest singer of our time, K.L. Saigal, who, as you all know, is our Punjabi brother and has come all the way from Calcutta to enchant us with his melodious voice. We are proud that he is without a parallel in India. Now silence, please, and let me go and bring our honoured guest to the stage.' The ambience of homage and honour to Saigal is evident from the loud cries we hear from outside: 'Kundan Lal Saigal zindabad', 'Gaane ka Badshah zindabad.' (Long live, Kundan Lal Saigal, the king of music.)

Escorted by a team of organizers, Saigal, loaded with garlands, walks up to the stage followed by a companion. Young in looks with regular features, he is dressed in a tweed jacket and a polo-neck sweater, with a brown felt hat over his balding head. He takes off his hat and removes the garlands. With his tender and soft appearance he looks romantic. His grey eyes light up as he greets the audience with his winning smile. There is an outburst of applause with clapping and thundering shouts of 'K.L. Saigal zindabad'. Saigal takes charge

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of his harmonium and pindrop silence prevails as his regal voice rends the air with the famous ghazal '*Lag gai chot kalejwa mein*'. He follows it with '*Andhe ki lathi tu hi hai, tu hi jiwan ujiara hai*', a popular song from his film *Dhoop Chhaon*. Scores of requests for singing certain other songs are made from all sides of the hall. Some of Saigal's fans stand up on chairs and benches to catch his attention. There is noise and confusion. Pandemonium prevails. Then someone runs up to the stage and shouts at the top of his voice, 'Please stop making these requests, we should honour our great guest by requesting him to sing songs of his own choice.'

Now Saigal beams at the audience and pours out, from the depth of his soul, ghazals like '*Ze tasruff Allah Allah tere maikhane main hai*', '*Layi hyat aye kaza*', '*Dil se teri nigah jigat tak utar gai*'. There is a standing ovation after every song and cries of once more from all directions. His resonant voice sends the listeners into raptures. The strains and modulations of the melodies fall upon the ears like drops of rain upon a sunbaked soil. Next comes a favourite hit from *Dena Paona*—'*Piye ja aur piye ja, Akbat ki baten jane koi kya*'. Saigal concludes the programme with a soul-stirring melody, '*Panchhi kahe*.' The audience is spellbound by the most exhilarating experience of hearing Saigal in person. The show over, the crowds walk out of the hall, carrying with them a memorable experience that they will talk about for days and months and in the years to come will relate to their children and grandchildren.

Saigal's voice was a gift from the gods! He became a legend in his own lifetime and the idol of countless millions. He captured their adoration in a manner that no other artist before or after him has so far been able to equal.

I was lucky enough to have seen and heard Saigal. He is alive in our hearts even today. His melodies will continue to haunt us. Saigal is immortal.

ZINDA NAACH WA GANA
(LIVE DANCE AND SONG)

'*EK TICKET ME DO maze*' (two entertainments for the price of one), shouted the man standing in the middle of the bazar while his companion whipped his drum to attract a crowd of passers-by. A third teammate, pushing a billboard on wheels, had stationed it nearby. The billboard carried on one side large posters depicting a stunt scene from the film *Bhola Shikar* starring E. Billimoria and Mehtab. The other side of the hoarding displayed a picture of Miss Sarla in an enchanting dance pose. The men publicizing the show were the well-known Dhindora (publicity) team of Jamal and Kamal; they had numerous clients in Lahore. They had selected a vantage point inside Lohari Gate at Chowk Chakla where a number of streets branched off in different directions, one leading to Mati da Chowk, the second to Lohari Mandi and the third to Sutar Mandi Bazar.

While I was returning from school, I saw this roadside show going on. I stood there spellbound, enraptured by the rhythmic beating of the handbell. The announcer with the bell cut a very impressive figure. He wore a silk shirt, a waistcoat, a starched white salwar and sported a spotless white turban. There was magic in his powerful husky voice that attracted both young and old. The announcement of a live performance of dance and song as a double attraction in a cinema house was indeed hot news for cinema-goers.

The novel idea of combining a film show with a live song-dance performance was born over fifty years ago, at a time when money was scarce, unemployment high and prices low. The initial excitement of watching talkies had waned. Public taste was also changing fast and

the old theatrical-dramas-turned-into-movies had almost run their course. The new films from New Theatres, Prabhat and Bombay Talkies were shown by prestigious cinema houses like Palace, Regent, Nishat and Majestic on McLeod Road. The cinema houses in the Bhati Gate area, namely, Wellington, Crown and Diamond, could afford to run only low-grade films or old films for a second run. With their halls half empty, cinema owners were finding it hard to break even. That was the time when exhibitors had to rush to Bombay and Calcutta to book films in advance and compete with one another. So the management of Wellington Cinema hit upon the idea of providing an added attraction in the form of a live dance-and-song performance to attract dwindling cinema audiences. Others followed suit, and soon this practice spread to many other towns and cities of the Punjab.

I enjoyed the privilege of free entry, along with my friends, to the Wellington since it was owned by a close friend of my father. One evening I went there chiefly for the live dance-and-song performance as I had already seen the film (*Bbola Shikar*) that was to go with it. The Wellington bore a new look, with rows of colourful buntings making a canopy over the entrance passage. Two huge placards hanging on either side of the main gate displayed the dancing artist Miss Sarla in extremely lascivious poses. Stills from *Bhola Shikar* appeared in the background while Sarla's pictures stood out prominently. A whispering campaign had been set in motion, namely, that Sarla with her troupe had come all the way from Bombay, India's Hollywood, to entertain the Lahorias. The fact of the matter was that she hailed from Hira Mandi, the red-light district of Lahore, and had been engaged along with her musicians by the cinema owners on a monthly basis.

Professional announcers carrying drums and handbells stood in front of the cinema, crying themselves hoarse and calling upon the passers-by not to miss the great show. Soon I saw a large crowd of men rushing to the booking window; might was right, the queue system being unknown in those days. The beat of the drum grew louder as showtime approached. It was quite a common practice to allow grace time to latecomers, the show invariably starting around 7 instead of at 6.30 p.m. Sometimes it started even later, having

waited for a signal from the booking window that indicated that there were no more takers. I entered the hall on hearing the first bell while the crowds were still hanging on to the booking windows. The gatekeepers who were known to me advised me not to proceed to the gallery where I always used to sit but to occupy seats in the middle rows in order to have a better view of the live dance-and-song performance.

So my friends and I deposited ourselves on seats just behind the six-anna class right in the centre. The seats provided us with a closer view of the stage, allowing us at the same time to see the movie without straining our eyes. In those days, it was generally believed that watching a film sitting close to the screen would harm one's eyesight which, as students, we could ill afford to let happen.

Produced by Chandulal Shah under the banner of Ranjit Film Co., *Bhola Shikar* was quite a hit. Apart from Mehtab and E. Billimoria in the leading roles, it had a popular cast—Ishwarlal as the villain and comedians Ghorī and Dixit who were known as the Indian Laurel and Hardy. But the film, now on a second run, had ceased to attract crowds. Hence Miss Sarla's performances. Cinema-goers in those days were mostly male, especially in the Bhati gate area. There were, however, special shows for ladies only every Wednesday afternoon, when we young boys would stand in groups around the cinemas to catch a glimpse of Lahore beauties in their colourful costumes.

The show was on, but having little interest in the film, I looked forward to the live performance. After a while, many in the crowd started whistling and shouting for Sarla's appearance. Later I learnt that this was a daily routine—the management would interrupt the screening of the film only after the audience grew restive.

As soon as the noise became unbearable, the stage was lit. The musicians seated themselves in a corner and started playing their instruments. A very popular tune rent the air and someone from the audience shouted at the top of his voice—'*Oh Sarla hun tan aaja*' (Oh Sarla, please come now without delay). But it was lost in the din of the drums. The sarangi and the harmonium carried the melody in soft captivating strains and the persistent rhythmic beat of tablas worked us up to a high pitch of expectation as the music

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COMING VERY SHORTLY

The Tribune, 5 December 1934

soared and fell.

All of a sudden there was the deafening beat of a giant drum behind the stage announcing the appearance of the dancing star. Her veiled arm could now be seen from the right end of the stage. In an instant she leapt out with a burst of song, like a flash of lightning from behind a darkening cloud. Such was the dramatic effect created by her appearance and the melodious sound of the *ghungroos* and the strains aired by the musicians that the hall resounded with applause. She had uttered the opening lines of a song that was on the lips of every Punjabi those days, '*Palla mar ke bhuja gayi diwa-ke akh nal gal kar gayi chhai*' (She put out the lamp with a jerk of her veil and conveyed her message through her eyes). Whirling and swaying, Sarla wove her spell on tinkling feet with the rhythmic movement of her arms and hands emphasizing the meaning of the song. Beginning with the fingertips, her whole hand took up the rhythm. It extended to her arms until her entire body was one with the rhythm. She danced with elegance and ease, her movements expressing love, joy, hope, despair or jealousy according to the theme of the song.

Responding to the loud applause of '*Mukarar*' (Say it again) from the audience, Sarla advanced gracefully towards the front of the stage. With the burst of a song she turned around with such vigour that the loose folds of her gown expanded and the heavy embroidered border with which it was trimmed fanned out from her waist, showing for an instant the alluring outline of her lower form. She displayed remarkable muscle control and coordination as she worked herself up to reach the climax of her dance. The music went on in waves of tumultuous sound, with the musicians falling more and more under the hypnotic influence of their instruments, crying out '*Wah Wah-Shabash*' to encourage the dancer. The audience burst out in applause, which manifested itself not only by loud clapping but by the showering of coins onto the stage. The tinkling sound of the coins drove the musicians to a new pitch of enthusiasm just as Miss Sarla made her exit. The repeated requests of 'once more' and another shower of coins from the audience persuaded her to make another appearance to *salaam* and acknowledge the applause.

The lights went out and the screening of *Bhola Shikar* resumed.

After the interval, Miss Sarla made a second appearance to enthrall the audience. This time she wore a gorgeous costume embellished with tiny mirrors that flashed in the light, as if a thousand fireflies had settled on her. She covered her head and face with a brilliant gauze veil that hung in many folds. She performed the kite dance. Her serpent-like arms swung into action, portraying the motions of flying kites, an amusement that was very popular in Lahore. Her veil dropped and the heavenward direction of her eyes enhanced the beauty of her oval face, crowned with black hair neatly parted on the side and adorned with a golden clip. Then she swayed with the rhythm of the music, her climax turned to the progress of the kite match. All of a sudden we heard '*Bo-kata*' and the loud beat of the drum signalled the emergence of the winner. Every part of her body responded to a decrescendo or crescendo in the tempo. Her voluminous skirt stood out stiffly like an open umbrella, revealing her shimmering silk trousers beneath. The audience gave her a standing ovation, throwing another shower of coins, made more generous this time with silver quarter and half rupees flying towards the stage. Some of her admirers left their seats and rushed towards the stage to have a closer look at the superstar Sarla who, with her exquisite beauty and charm, appeared no less than an apsara of paradise. I was mesmerized by her because she reminded me of the heavenly nymphs, Rambha, Menaka, Urvashi and Tillotama, who entertained Lord Indra and the gods with their dance and music.

The live performance over, I left the hall along with my friends as we had no interest in watching the rest of the movie. I saw quite a few others making their way to the exit, showing that the real interest of the public was in the '*Zinda Naach wa Gaana*'.

A couple of weeks later while returning from school, I once again saw Kamal and Jamal in full form at Chowk Chakla announcing a live performance by Miss Sheela at Crown Cinema. It was showing the film *Sulochana* or *Temple Bells*, starring Sulochana and D. Billimoria. Singing her praise, they said Miss Sheela possessed great beauty and grace, the voice of a nightingale and mastery of dance. She was proclaimed to be a reincarnation of the famous Gauhar Jan of Calcutta. The wheeled billboard carried a huge poster of Miss

Sheela in a glamorous dance pose. Kamal and Jamal announced that Sheela had come all the way from Calcutta after a stint with Madan Theatres, where she had played several roles along with the superstars, Master Nissar and Miss Kajjan. She was an actress-cum-dancer and singer. Carefully avoiding to mention the name of Sarla, they harped on Sheela having no rival to match her. A single glimpse of her would convince anyone that she was an outstanding artiste whose performance they would find impossible to resist seeing over and over again.

So one evening we went to Crown Cinema to see Miss Sheela in action. On reaching Bhati Gate Square, we witnessed a shouting match between professional drummers engaged by the rival Wellington and Crown cinemas. This proxy contest between Sarla and Sheela made the onlookers waver. We bought twelve-anna tickets and rushed in to capture seats in the centre of the hall. This time it was really a double attraction as we had not seen the film *Sulochana*, a hit movie made by the Imperial Film Company. The film had been released earlier at Palace Cinema but we had missed it.

Sheela appeared onstage with much fanfare. The light projected on her face and body highlighted her gorgeous dress and shining ornaments. She wore glittering necklaces, bracelets, pendants and anklets. Her nether limbs were fully covered up to her ankles with a red satin ghagra adorned with gold thread embroidery. A zari bodice enveloped her bosom, leaving bare a tiny part of her navel. There was thunderous applause as she burst into the song '*Gwandi Akhan mar de main mardi javan ve*' (My neighbours are winking at me and I die of shame). No, doubt Sheela had a sweet and resonant voice, but her dancing lacked vigour and agility. Besides, her longish face and rather irregular features did not contribute much to her sex appeal. Anyway, her second number artistically portrayed the burning desire of a beloved to meet her lover. It was a hit song, '*Chhitiye ni dard firaq Walie ni laiya laiya Sunehrha mere yar da*'. There was of course the usual loud applause accompanied by a showering of coins onto the stage. I enjoyed the show, although it was not much to speak of. It failed to match the thrill and excitement of Sarla's performance.

I went once again, this time alone, to see Sarla at a matinee show. I

had an intense desire to see my heavenly beauty from close quarters. Of course I knew the management and staff of the Wellington, but shyness stood in the way of my approaching them with a request to meet her. I was only a young lad and was afraid that such a request might lead them to stop my free entry to the cinema under instructions from my father. During the interval, while I was loitering about, I was met by Jagat Ram, the peon who used to visit our house regularly for odd jobs. I thought he would be the right person to be taken into confidence, but I still could not express my wish. He took me to one of the cinema-house shops and treated me to a Kesari lime juice. Then all of a sudden he said, 'Would you like to meet Miss Sarla?' My joy knew no bounds. Jagat Ram took me behind the stage, where she was lodged with her troupe. As we entered, he said, 'Bai ji, I would like you to meet Panditji's son who is your young admirer.' Miss Sarla got up at once and almost lifting me up with her hands, put me in her lap and kissed my cheeks. I was so thrilled by her touch that for a moment I was speechless and felt as if I were face to face with an apsara or a heavenly nymph. Then I looked up towards her oval face and lustrous eyes and merely said that I had very much liked her singing and the kite dance. She showed great affection towards me and asked me about my fondness for films and my favourite stars. I was engrossed in observing her gorgeous dress and the glittering ornaments adorning her neck and other limbs. She patted me when I parted and asked me to meet her whenever I came that way.

It was like a sweet dream. The angel of paradise had become a reality before me on that never-to-be-forgotten evening. Apart from her peerless beauty and golden voice, she was the queen of the art of movement. During the past fifty years I have been witness to numerous dance performances, but never have I come across another Sarla; never such well-chiselled features as hers such winsome slumberous eyes and so dainty a form, never such heart-throbbing singing and alluring movements of limbs expressive of meaningful emotions.

MAFIA DONS, MINSTRELS, MALANGS AND MENDICANTS

AMONG THE CHARACTERS OF Lahore who have left an indelible impression on my mind are men who led extraordinary lifestyles. Some of them lived in the very midst of society, often holding it to ransom, some thrived on the fringes of society, having discarded its values, and some others lived beyond society in a world of their own imagination. All of them adopted means of livelihood that could be called questionable but required unusual skills for their successful execution.

Having spent quite a few years in the American gangster town of Chicago as a diplomat, I am reminded of Lahore's mini mafia dons. They held sway in certain localities of the city that they had declared their *ilaqas* (territories). While some of them were ex-pehalwans, others had acquired this status by virtue of their deeds of daredevilry. They were patronized by the rich and the famous to act as their musclemen as well as by moneylenders to deal with their recalcitrant clients. Some of them held gambling sessions at their *baithaks* (drawing-rooms) where the idle affluent would flock to while away their time, usually ending up losers. Whatever the stakes and whoever won or lost, the don would get a substantial share from the pool. In exchange, he ensured full protection for the gamblers through his influential contacts in the police. Sometimes, drinking parties were also organized at these *baithaks* for patrons who dared not indulge in this pastime at their own homes. The social stigma attached to drinking would drive those addicted to it to the safety of such pleasure-houses.

The mafia don commanded respect from his ilaqa's miscreants, who looked upon him as their godfather and approached him for settlement of their disputes. In the event of any criminal act taking place in the locality, the police would seek his help in providing prosecution witnesses. The don would not hesitate to render the same service, of course for a price, to the defendants. At times, even ordinary people in the neighbourhood sought his assistance in sorting out their differences. The dons had their own code of conduct that called for kindness towards the wretched of society.

I recall an incident in which a don got a man arrested on a false charge for having made derogatory remarks about him. The don, Dwarka Dass, who was nicknamed Jhato because of a squint in his right eye, was a known figure of Sutar Mandi Bazar. In personal appearance Khalifa Jhato, as he was addressed, was tall and well-built with clear-cut features. His facial expression marked him as an open-hearted, fearless person. He sported a moustache worn in a rakish manner. Immaculately dressed in a buttoned coat, starched pyjamas and white turban, he used to go about accompanied by two or three of his cronies, proudly acknowledging the greetings of the shopkeepers and vendors in the bazar. It was said he always carried a Rampuri knife in his pocket to deal with any ruffians who might cross his path. He was friendly with the owners of Wellington Cinema at Bhati Gate, at times helping them control unruly mobs who might create rowdy scenes in the cinema hall. One day, Khalifa Jhato had an altercation with Sukhdev, the manager of the cinema house. Sorely offended at some of Sukhdev's remarks he threatened to get him behind bars. Sukhdev ignored the threat, confident that nothing could happen to him, enjoying as he did a good reputation and having influential contacts in the police. For days and weeks, Khalifa Jhato nursed his grudge, until he hit upon a foolproof scheme. Sukhdev used to return home late at night from the cinema after the second show. Leaving Bhati Gate, he would enter the city at Mori Gate and passing through Lohari Mandi, Gandhi Gully and Sutar Mandi proceed to his house in Kucha Pashorian. This route was known to Jhato. One day around midnight Jhato hid himself in Gandhi Gully and soon after Sukhdev had passed it, he stabbed his

own left thigh with a knife. He fell in the street shouting for help, alleging that Sukhdev had attacked him. Some people came out of their houses, picked up Jhato and got him medical aid. Others ran to catch Sukhdev. A little later the police arrived on the scene, arrested Sukhdev and took him to the police station. He was kept there until the next day when he was released on bail. Having won his bet, Jhato withdrew the case after Sukhdev tendered an apology. Getting Sukhdev behind bars, albeit only for a few hours, was a feather in Khalifa Jhato's cap.

Vagrants formed an interesting group. It was easy to spot them from their ragged attire as they roamed about the city. They were paupers but not beggars. They did not ask for alms but accepted gifts of food and cast-off clothes from the charitably minded. They frequented the shivalas, as the Hindu temples were called in Lahore, and collected prasad of sweets from the devotees. The vagrants would follow bridal processions and when coins were tossed upon the *doli*, they picked them up even before they touched the ground. The vagrants were at times engaged for a few annas by bandmasters to inflate the number of their musicians. The Lahorias liked to show off their status by engaging band troupes, often comprising fifty, sixty and sometimes even a hundred members, at marriages. The vagrants, dressed up in scarlet coats with shining brass buttons and blue trousers with golden stripes, were instructed to hold bugles or clarionets in such a manner as to give the impression that they were playing these instruments. In the din created by the drums, flutes, bagpipes, gongs, trumpets, etc., it was not easy to spot these fake members of the band party, popularly called 'shamal vajas'. They were unemployed and unemployable: to have an opportunity to act as 'shamal vajas' was a matter of triumph for them. But the sight and sound of coins showered over the *doli* as the band led the procession was a torture for them, as they had to play the role they had been paid for and, as such, were unable to take part in the loot. I remember an occasion when at the marriage of one of my cousins, the bandmaster let us down and came with a party of only five members instead of forty as he had been asked to. He explained that there were so many marriages taking place on that day that his teammates were

lured away by rival bandmasters who offered them more money. He, however, assured us that he would manage to assemble at least twenty musicians by engaging 'shamal vajas' from the marriage processions passing through the bazars. He eventually succeeded in doing so, thanks to the help of his colleagues in the profession. Such occasions provided great thrill and excitement to the vagrants.

In those days in Lahore, *mirasis* or minstrels were a unique class of entertainers who never missed an opportunity to collect *lag* (tips) from their patrons on festive occasions. They would entertain the guests with their mirthful songs and anecdotes, trace the genealogical trees of their patrons and narrate witty stories about their ancestors to establish their long-standing relations with the family. Along with the priest and the barber, the mirasi had his assigned role to play at wedding festivities. They would freely make anyone the butt of their jokes. I remember our village mirasi who turned up in Lahore to attend my uncle's wedding. Dinoo, as they called him, was accompanied by his fourteen-year-old son who carried a drum. Dinoo was about fifty and wore a beard that shone with grease because he would use it to wipe his hands after meals to provide it with necessary nourishment. A tiny piece of cloth wrapped over his head served as a turban. He wore dirty clothes that had obviously seen better days, belonging as they once did to his well-to-do patrons. He was wearing a pair of *jootis* embellished with golden embroidery but their heels were pressed down flat. Dinoo had wrapped a cloth round his waist to support the base of his sarangi, whose sound came nearest to the human voice. It was customary for him to start singing after reciting a couplet composed by a famous poet, which in fact comprised his entire stock of Urdu poetry. After repeating it over a dozen times, he would switch over to a song in Punjabi taken usually from popular ballads like Heer Ranja, Roop Basant, Sohni-Mahiwal, Balo, etc., interspersed with anecdotes and jokes that would evoke roaring laughter from the audience. The mirasis as a class lived from hand to mouth, but they brought joy and laughter to the humdrum life of the common people.

Another group of unforgettable characters were the *malangs*, who made their abode in dilapidated structures or ruins of old monuments.

Though treated as social outcasts, they evoked sympathy and admiration for their renunciation of worldly life and attachments. They had left their homes and given up their possessions to lead a carefree life. Their meagre needs were met by their relations and friends. The greed for wealth and worldly possessions had failed to ensnare them. In a sense they could be called the hippies of yesteryears—immune from the pangs of sorrow and the joys of life. Content with their lot, they lived in harmony with their environment and bore no ill-will towards anyone.

There were different types of malangs. Some were known as *mast*, 'lost in themselves'. They spoke very little, usually conveying their thoughts through gestures. They considered their bright thoughts too precious for conversation. Then there were *shudais* (nutty) and *neem-shudais* (half-nutty) who could not converse coherently. A couplet which aptly describes such characters ran:

*Hum zamin ki poochte bain, aasman kahte hain woh,
Jab samajh mein kuchh nahin aata to han kahte hain woh.*

(When we ask them something of the earth, they talk about sky. They answer in the affirmative when they don't understand anything.)

Most of them were addicted to *bhang*, *ganja*, *charas*, *sulfa* and opium. A single puff of these intoxicants would bring a shine to their eyes and a sip of *bhang* or *booti* would lift them to a higher world of make-believe with its enchanting visions. Depending on the type of intoxicant used, they were named *bhangis*, *postis*, *sulfais*, *afimchis*, etc. In the thick white smoke jutting out of their chillum (a short clay pipe) they would see visions of fairies in paradise. A *sulfai* described his vision thus: '*Gori nah ke chhapdh chon nikli, ke sulfe di lat vargi*' (Coming out of the pond after a bath, the maiden seemed like a strand of white smoke rising from a smouldering chillum).

Once I had an opportunity to visit, with a friend of mine, the *dera* (abode) of malangs on Ravi Road close to Sir Ganga Ram's samadh. Entering it, we saw three malangs sitting apart from each

other in the dusty courtyard of a dilapidated structure. The oldest among them, called Pali, sporting a pepper-and-salt beard, was perched on a tattered *durri* (carpet) striking a pose as if ready to take off in a running competition. The second one, Miroo, with a shaven head, was grinding bhang or booti in a stone bowl with a thick wooden rod. Lachhu, the third malang, with dishevelled hair and unshaven face, was smoking sulfa from a long chillum held in his hand with a piece of rag. After each puff, he would wave his hand in the direction of the rising white streak of smoke. He was saying something in inaudible tones but it seemed he was conversing with someone during his blissful inhalations. Miroo now began rotating his rod vigorously in the bowl and burst into a song, '*Zalim loki ni Shirin tere shahar de oh*' (Oh dear Shirin, how cruel are the people of your town). He kept on repeating this verse over and over again, changing the tempo.

My friend who knew Pali had brought a small packet for him. Pali jumped off the ground and, beaming with joy, opened the packet to find a small quantity of opium in it. No one took notice of our presence there as we watched the malangs engaged in their pursuits. In a little while I saw a *mashqi* (water-carrier) coming in with a goatskin bag full of water slung on his left shoulder. He filled the earthen pitcher lying in the corner and went away without exchanging a word with anyone. Then came in another of their company, Mangu, humming '*Suna de suna de, suna de Kishna tun bansari di tan suna de Kishna*' (Oh Lord Krishna, I am pleading with you to let me hear the melody of your flute). Patting Miroo on the back, he said, '*Oh Shirin dya ashqa* (lover of Shirin), look here what I have brought for you.' Miroo ignored him and kept on grinding and crooning, '*Zalim loki ni Shirin tere shahar de oh*.' Mangu now walked towards Lachhu and shouted, '*Pyareyo* (dear ones), I have brought fresh fruits for all of you from Ramu da Bagh (cremation ground of Lahore).' There was no response. Then he saw us standing and offered us berries that he was carrying in his cupped shirt. I was amused as well as puzzled by this strange atmosphere. I had vaguely heard of malangs but never had any encounter with them.

My friend now hailed Pali and said, '*Pali Chacha*, I have come.'

There was no response but the moment he said he had brought a packet for him, Pali jumped off the ground and, beaming with joy, opened the packet to find a small quantity of opium in it. Those were the days when opium was freely available for four annas a tola at licensed shops all over the city. We were asked to have a seat on a bare tattered string cot with a half-broken leg. Miroo, who had continued grinding, was now pouring the newly arrived fresh water into the mixture. He interrupted his singing to congratulate Pali for the timely gift of opium. This disturbed Lachhu who muttered in a mellow tone, 'What is all this noise about? Tell me also what has overtaken our dera.' This prompted Pali to recite a poem for our amusement.

*Dere malangan de chor aa gaye,
Te gal base di sunan sunan wali,
Chare kone je ohnan ne phol mare,
Chiz labhi na koi laiyan wali,
Douri bhan gaye ne jhajar todh gaye je,
Durri lai gaye hethan vachhan wali,
Pali yar di pat oh la gaye je,
Chillum lami lai gaye soota lan wali.*

(It so happened that once the dera of malangs was visited by thieves. It is an amusing tale worth listening to and narrating to others. They searched the four corners of the place. They found nothing worth taking away. Then they smashed the stone bowl and the earthen water pitcher. They carried away the durri used for spreading under us. They humiliated Pali and even took away the long chillum used for puffing.)

As we came out and picked up our cycles to ride back home, we came across a young-looking fellow with a trimmed beard and moustache proceeding slowly towards the dera, holding a sugarcane piece as his walking stick. He was humming in a melodious voice, 'Laila, Laila pukarun main ban mein, Laila pyari basi more man mein' (I am calling for Laila in the forest when my dearest Laila

resides in my heart). This was Fato, another member of the group. He entered the dera without even bothering to cast a glance at us.

There also prospered a class of tricksters nicknamed *pattebaz* or 420s. They were clever enough to deceive simple-minded people, but had to find new victims every time while roaming about in different parts of the city.

Usually well-dressed, they would engage strangers in polite conversation to gain their trust and then swindle them. One could see the likes of them operating at the railway station, near the main block from where second-class and inter-class passengers made their exit on arrival. They would approach affluent-looking visitors and narrate to them concocted stories of having lost everything, including their purses, and ask for only a couple of rupees to be able to return to their home towns. I know of a trickster who would visit temples and while prostrating himself before the idols quietly remove with his waxed palms the coins offered by the devotees at the altar. Some others went to the extent of arranging matches for girls with non-existent boys with a view to extracting money from gullible parents by way of travel expenses. Of course, no journey was ever undertaken. Even more ingenious was a trickster who on the death of his father and in compliance with his mother's wishes gave away five hundred rupees in charity to an orphanage on the understanding that half of the amount would be refunded to him after the ceremony. Hard to beat in the fine art of trickery, however, was one Mr M. Ram who once went to the kotha of the famous singer Tamancha Jan and after enjoying the *mehfil* gave a cheque that bounced. He had even taken five rupees in cash from her on the pretext of having lost his purse.

I would like here to mention the counterfeit cranks. There were amusing as well as grim examples of their skills and tricks. Some presented themselves as deaf and dumb, some indulged in sham blindness, while others faked insanity in order to arouse the pity of the citizens and collect donations. The most amusing and conspicuous among this lot was a highly skilled faker—a professional fit-thrower. He was a decent-looking fellow who, at a time and place of his choosing, would collapse on the ground, go into convulsions and

foam at the mouth. On coming round he would confide something of his tragic state to those who were helping to revive him by waving a shoe near his nose as was the custom. He would produce a paper signed by some doctor which usually described the bearer as a man of good moral character, honest and hard-working, but prone to fits that had reduced him to undeserved penury. A collection would be made on the spot and the bogus epileptic would march off with his earnings.

Another interesting lot were the mendicants, sadhus and faqirs who roamed about and had their headquarters near dargahs, temples, mosques and gurdwaras. People gave them food and money in response to their refrain of blessing everyone passing by, '*Jo de uska bhala, jo na de uska bhi bhala*' (Blessed be the givers; blessed be the non-givers). There were some wandering mendicants who travelled from town to town. They would engage an agent to spread the word about their miraculous powers of granting wishes. After exploiting the gullible victims they would disappear and march off to their next destination. There were also mullahs and priests who promised to help people through their prayers to the Almighty. Innocent women in the family way would come to them for their good offices in persuading the Almighty to bless them with a male offspring. If a boy was born, naturally the credit went to them. If it was a girl, they attributed it to their destiny. The mullah or the priest in any case always stood a 50-50 chance of success. There were also sadhus with long hair and flowing beards who declared that, responding to the call from heaven, they had descended from their mountain abodes in the Himalayas after decades of penance, ordered by the Almighty to eradicate human misery and sorrow. I recall one such mendicant who parked himself on a tree in Minto Park and claimed to sustain himself by eating grass and leaves. Day after day, simple folk would gather there to have his darshan and make their offerings. He even managed to induce some men and women to become his disciples. And having become his disciples, they would speak of their guru as a great sage with supernatural powers. One Lajwanti, wife of Nant Ram, who was issueless after being married for over ten years, also came under his spell. She

would visit him every morning to seek his blessings. Then one day the news spread that the great sage had vanished along with Lajwanti and her gold ornaments and jewellery.

A class of mendicants who inspired awe in the hearts of simple folk for the efficacy of their curse were *Daule Shah de chuhe*, or rats of Shah Daula, a Muslim saint associated with madness. In their childhood, these mendicants were fitted with iron skull caps and as a result they grew up as freaks of nature with miniature conical heads, ears like those of rats, but with full-grown bodies. These 'human rats' were considered by the people to possess superhuman powers and their incoherent and imbecile utterings were accepted, as proof of their living in a spiritual trance. I recall that whenever we saw these human rats begging in the bazar, we ran out of their way lest they should curse us for not giving them alms. They were of all ages, young and old. The young ones with their little heads closely shaven in order to make their deformity more prominent were carried by their guardians on shoulders. It was said that once a boy running in the bazar had unintentionally hit a human rat who cursed him. It so happened that this young boy was later gored to death by one of the *sarkari sandhs* (stallion bulls belonging to the municipal committee) kept for covering the cows free of charge. It was believed that these 'human rats' were really mouthpieces of God Almighty and whatever they uttered would always come true.

A MIRACLE MEDICINE AND SEX MANUALS

MEDICINE IN LAHORE WAS not the kind of profession it has become in the metropolitan cities of India today. It used to be a noble profession. The physicians of those days were unlike the present-day private practitioners who take undue advantage of the inadequate health services to make a quick buck at the cost of the patients. It is true that some of them had amassed fortunes, but they did so from their roaring practice, not through any unfair means. They owed their reputation to their professional skill. No wonder they were highly respected members of society.

Patients from far and near came to Lahore because it had the best and most modern medical facilities for treatment. There were renowned practitioners of all systems of medicine: allopaths, homoeopaths, hakims, vairs, naturopaths and faith healers. Mayo hospital, equipped with the latest instruments and apparatus, offered medical services few hospitals in the country could match. It was manned by a galaxy of surgeons, physicians and specialists like Col. Mirajkar, G.D. Kapur, Khan Bahadur Yar Mohammad Khan, M. Bashir, Bawa Harnam Singh, Jiwanlal Grover, and Col. Amir Chand. There were other renowned doctors, too: R.L. Khera, Nihal Chand Sikri, Raghbir Singh, Gopal Singh Chawla, Kishori Lal and E. Barucha. A legendary figure during the 1920s was Dr Beliram, who could diagnose any ailment by a single glance at the patient. Unfortunately he met a premature death in a car accident on the Kalka-Simla road.

Among the dental surgeons, I can recall the names of Dr Ram Nath of Nisbet Road and Dr Thakur Das of Lohe Da Telah, near Gumti

Bazar. Dr Mathura Dass Pahwa of Moga was an eye surgeon famous all over the Punjab. He would set up camps in rural areas and perform over a hundred cataract operations in a single day. Among other renowned eye specialists were Daulat Ram, H.N. Kaul and Sohan Singh of Amritsar, who used to drive up to Lahore thrice a week to attend to his patients. In those days, conjunctivitis and trachoma were common eye ailments, especially during summer months.

Homoeopathy had yet to make its mark in Lahore. Ordinary people could not understand how a pinch of sweet powder prescribed by a homoeopath could cure a disease. Patients who did go to a homoeopath were generally those who had failed to obtain any relief from other systems of medicine. The most successful homoeopaths were Vaishno Dass Kashyap and Diwan Jai Chand.

Practising alongside the allopaths were many *kavirajs*, vairs and hakims dispensing Ayurvedic and Yunani medicines. Many of them were widely known not only in Lahore but also in many other parts of north India. Topping the list was Pandit Thakur Dutt, who had developed Amritdhara (literally, the current of nectar), a medicine kept in practically every household in the city. It provided instant relief in almost all kinds of common ailments. It was equally effective in treating cholera, pneumonia, aches and pains, minor injuries and sprains; it was indeed a panacea for all diseases. It was said that a holy man, pleased with Thakur Dutt for his services, had given him the secret formula for making Amritdhara. It came to be widely known as an all-purpose medicine and made Thakur Dutt a highly prosperous man. He built an imposing building named after Amritdhara in Gowalmandi near Barfkhana Chowk. Attached to it was a post office from where Amritdhara was dispatched all over the country and abroad.

A well-known vaid among others was Kaviraj Thakur Dutt Multani who invented Kuka, a medicine that could cure tonsils without an operation. Lahore had several outstanding practitioners of the Unani system of medicine—Mohammad Hussain of Phullanwali Gali and Faqir Mohammad of Lohari Mandi, to name only two of them, who could locate the source of any disease by feeling the pulse. The older generation by and large had greater faith in indigenous cures than



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in Western medicine.

Faith healers were a class by themselves. They would recite some kind of verses and prescribe amulets made of stone and metal to be worn around one's arm or neck to effect a cure. There was Firoz, a dyer at Sutar Mandi Bazar, who claimed to bring instant relief from toothache by murmuring some meaningless words and tying a thread on the patient's middle finger.

Lahore had expert pehalwans who could treat bone fractures and dislocations. For relief from pain, they prescribed oil preparations. Then there were jarahs (experts in skin diseases) who treated all kinds of boils, blisters, sores and wounds with a variety of ointments. Fazil was one such jarah who made a name for himself in Lahore. It is said that he was sought even by British officers, who had given him testimonials for his ability to treat deep-rooted sores and burns.

Smallpox was a common disease in those days, especially among children. Even vaccination did not help. Since there was no specific cure for it, the patient had to undergo great suffering during the two-week course of the disease. Hindus believed that the disease could be cured only through the blessings of the Mother Goddess. Singers were engaged to sing special songs in praise of the goddess. This had a soothing effect on the suffering patients. The afflicted children were also taken to the Sitala Mata temple to seek the Mother's blessings. Situated on the left side of Circular Road outside the walled city, between the Shahalmi and Lohari Gates, it was a leading place of worship for Hindus. After recovery, certain pastes and lotions were applied on the affected parts of the body to remove any scars that might have been let: by smallpox. For girls this was very important since smallpox marks on their faces could mar their prospects of marriage.

Tuberculosis (TB) was a deadly infectious disease that took a heavy toll, for no cure was known for it. There was some chance of recovery for patients sent to the sanatorium in Simla hills, but very few could afford to do so. Sometimes two or three members of a family struck by the disease died in quick succession.

For the poor there were a number of charitable dispensaries and also a hospital built by the great Punjabi philanthropist, Sir Ganga

Ram. Some benevolent families distributed indigenous medicines for certain ailments for which prescriptions had been left behind by their forefathers, with strict instructions against deriving any pecuniary benefit from the patients. For, if sold, the medicines would lose their potency. They were told that they would be rewarded by the blessings of those cured through the medication. It is said that one family, succumbing to greed, broke the tradition by selling the medicine. It came to grief. Among the medicines distributed free of cost were preparations for ailments such as piles, kidney stones, sciatica, arthritis and epilepsy.

We had street hawkers vending tooth powders to cure pyorrhoea, collyrium to improve the eyesight and *churans* (ground herbs) to treat indigestion, dysentery and stomach disorders. There were also roadside dentists who, for a nominal fee of four annas, could pull out an aching tooth with their fingers without causing pain. Then there were pavement medicos specializing in the cure of certain maladies. They thrived on their ability to win over customers by their sales talk. As boys we would mingle with crowds to listen to their utterances interspersed with amusing anecdotes that kept us spellbound.

Lahore was famous for its sexologists, mostly vairs and hakims. They promised sexual prowess to all those who could afford their expensive formulations, which had ingredients like gold, silver, pearls and rare herbs. They were usually patronized by maharajas, nawabs, the high and the mighty. Some of them proudly displayed testimonials received from the court of the Maharaja of Patiala. Kaivraj Pt. Gauri Shankar of Nisbet Road earned a reputation for his unique 'gold compound' which, it was claimed, lent instant youth to old men. Impressed by the efficacy of gold compound, one luminary of the Unionist Party introduced Gauri Shankar to members of the high society of Lahore, who immediately became his clients. For the less affluent, these vairs and hakims offered *taqat ki goli* (potency pills) at more reasonable prices. The educated class, however, preferred 'Okasa', a German medicine for replenishing sexual vigour.

Those were the days when sexual indulgence was considered to

**GLANDS MAKE YOU
WHAT YOU ARE
OLD OR YOUNG!**

SEX-TROUBLES AND THEIR TREATMENT

The most important advance in Medical Science made during recent years is the discovery of the inner glands. (See figure) of the body and their importance to life. It has been proved that the glands control our entire life, energy, mental and physical activity. The Sex-Glands are the most important because they have a two-fold action—firstly they control Sex-Vitality and Procreation on which depends the continuity of the human race. Secondly the Hormones of the Sex-Glands control our appearance, intelligence, bodily development and are responsible for all the characteristic differences between men and women, such as the temper, the voice, growth of hair, mental and physical capacity, formation of body, etc. The treatment of sex disorders is therefore, of utmost importance for the enjoyment of life's pleasures and for the preservation of health and vitality.

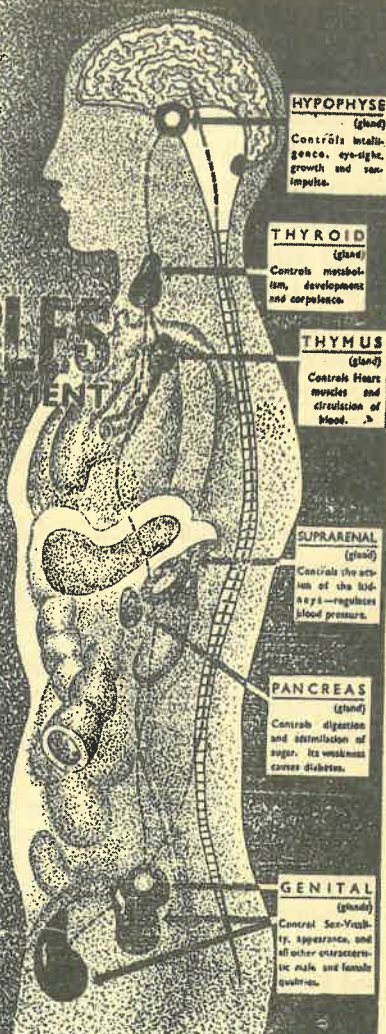
This important discovery and the far-reaching influence of glands on our whole life, specially on Sex-Vitality, has led to the discovery of the marvellous and only correct treatment of all forms of sex troubles, nerve weakness, premature old age and constant ill-health. The treatment consists of regenerating the activity of the glands by supplying them proper nourishment by means of Hormones which are active fluids produced by the glands themselves. The treatment by means of the Gland-Hormones is, however, not so simple because the majority of preparations—specially the cheap ones—sold on the market are unreliable and often do not contain any Hormones at all.

Professor Dr. Lahusen after years of scientific research has discovered the remarkable Gland-Hormone Compound OKASA which on account of its untailing efficacy is recognized at present as the best known Gland treatment for all forms of sex troubles and preservation of health, vigour and activity. By the use of OKASA every form of deficiency in men such as Sex-Debility, bad memory, neurasthenia, nerve weakness, early old age and all the functional troubles of women, such as sterility, monthly disorders and old appearance, are treated with absolute certainty.

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be a debilitating practice, for one drop of semen lost was believed to be equal to a hundred drops of blood. The Victorian concept of sex as the original sin propagated by the missionaries and the mistaken nineteenth-century Western notions regarding sexual activity had greatly influenced the educated classes. It was believed that masturbation, an ignoble vice practised in solitude, could turn backbones into jelly, induce impotency and even cause blindness and premature death.

The city had a number of hakims and vairs specializing in the treatment of venereal diseases such as *atshaq* (syphilis) and *sozaq* (gonorrhoea). One came across hoardings posted at prominent places advertising instant cures with money-back guarantees. We had some famous hakims in Shahu di Garhi, beyond Mozang area, who thrived on treating country folk who would visit the brothels in Hira Mandi and contract VD. There was also a widely held belief that VD could be cured by sleeping with a virgin.

The late 1920s saw the emergence of an Indian Havelock Ellis in the person of Kaviraj Harnam Dass, BA, who within a short time attained countrywide fame with his comprehensive treatises on the subject of sex entitled *Hidayatnama Khawind* (Sex Manual for Husbands) and *Hidayatnama Bivi* (Sex Manual for Wives). These were the first sex manuals of their kind for the guidance of prospective brides and bridegrooms. Published in Hindi and Urdu, they ran into several editions during the 1930s and 1940s. They were often given away as wedding presents. They contained detailed instructions on how to attain married bliss, understand female moods and amorous signals, and how to arouse and gratify sexual desire. As husbands and wives were usually utter strangers to each other, the *Hidayatnamas* gave them valuable suggestions on the art and practice of communication, ways of winning each other's affection, and procedures and techniques of sexual coupling. The brides, usually ignorant of the mysteries of sex, were told how to overcome their shyness in matters of sex, look attractive and charm their husbands.

The *Hidayatnamas* took over the role of *dais* and *nains*, the female escorts of brides who in earlier days were entrusted with the responsibility of imparting knowledge of sex to them. The dai

would accompany the bride to her husband's home. The bride, a stranger in her new abode and suffering the pangs of separation from her near and dear ones, found much solace in the company of her family dai, who instructed her how to behave on the wedding night. These dais and nains were highly experienced and would prepare the bride both physically and emotionally to face the husband's advances. With the spread of literacy among women and raising of the age for marriage, this practice gradually died out.

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FOR
SEXUAL WEAKNESS

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The Tribune, 23 January 1930

dispelled doubts and fears about this natural phenomenon.

Kaviraj Harnam Dass, who had a flourishing practice in Lahore, offered sound advice and treatment for imaginary as well as real sexual deficiencies. Well aware of men's quest for remedies and techniques to derive maximum pleasure from the sexual act by prolonging its duration, he gave confidential hints and medicines, if required, to overcome any inadequacy they might have in performing intercourse. This had been a fertile field for quacks who operated in the streets and bazars of Lahore. They used to station themselves at vantage points on Hospital Road, outside the main city gates or Company Bagh, to attract customers with their eloquent sermons and tall claims about the efficacy of their remedies. They offered

Any talk about sex being taboo and young boys and girls being totally ignorant of the subject, the *Hidayatnamas* were also much sought after by the unmarried in order to learn the secrets of sex life. It may now sound strange that night discharge or seminal emission during adolescence, a harmless natural occurrence, was then dubbed a malady. This kind of seminal emission was termed *aitlam* or *swapan-dosh* and the hakims and v aids offered specific cures for it. The *Hidayatnamas* imparted correct information on the subject and

پشتِ خاک و شہرِ اویںدو آمرت دہرا کی ایک مفید و محبِ تصنیف

کامِ رتی اشاتر (حصہ اول)

اس میں ۲۴۵ دستی تصاویر اور ۵۰ فوٹو بلاک تصاویر ہیں
 قلمی یا چھپرے تقریباً نصف ایک چکی ہے جلدی نگہ الیں دگر نہ چوتھے ایڈیشن کا انتظار کرنا ہوگا
 قیمت اردو پانچ روپیہ (حصہ) تہندی چھ روپیہ (تے) طالب علم درخواست کریں
 کام کو کتابوں کے نام پر روشنی ہے اس ضروری مضمون کو باطل غلط واوٹ پناہک پیش کیا جاتا ہے
 تیز سائیکل کے متعلق کے بعد صحیح طور پر اس علم سے پاک و اف کر کے بولے علم اطلاق ہے حصہ اول نگارترین
 چھپکا ہے جس دم کھاجا رہا ہے حصہ اول میں روزِ موت کی جوانی کا مکمل بیان ہے اس کے اقسام پر فصل بحث ہے اور انسانی
 جسم کے سوچ پر مکمل روشنی ڈالی گئی ہے کتاب دیکھنے سے تعلق کرتی ہے زیادہ تعریف میل رکھنے کی ضرورت نہیں جبکہ

ناپسند ہونے پر واپسی

کی شہ ہے پس کتاب پہنچنے پر اگر ناپسند ہو تو دو دن اندر جہت شری کر کے واپس کر دیں تصاویر وغیرہ دیکھ کر
 ہم اس کی قیمت آپ کو مئی آرڈر کر دیں گے اور کیا چاہئے ؟
 نیتِ مصلحت کے دیگر ترین وجہ کتاب کی فہرست طلب کرنے پر مفت بل سکتی ہے۔

بیمبرِ حردیش ایکاک بک ٹو آمرت دہرا بکس آمرت دہرا ڈاک خانہ لاہور

aphrodisiacs containing herbs obtained from remote corners of the Himalayas, oils and pastes extracted from animals, and potions and powders reputed to enhance one's sexual prowess to the highest possible pitch. In order to impress the audience, they would take a customer aside and whisper in his ears some secret advice in matters of sex.

Another feature of the time was the emergence of lady doctors to treat female patients who would hesitate to consult male doctors. These lady doctors were, however, not trusted with delivery cases. Most women had greater faith in experienced dais or midwives known to their families. Someone spread a story that a certain lady doctor had messed up a delivery, resulting in the tragic death of both mother and child. By and large the midwives of Lahore held sway until the 1940s. The lady doctors usually treated women for miscarriages or other female problems. There were also Lady Kavirajs practising Ayurvedic medicine. They advertised sure remedies for women who could not conceive and even for those who wanted male progeny. Means and medicines for preventing conception and terminating pregnancy were also prescribed.

Thus doctors, hakims, vairs, surgeons, physicians, faith healers, naturopaths, homoeopaths and even quacks attended to the physical well-being of Lahore's citizens, each in his own way and according to his capacity. The people were quite satisfied and content with their services.

FOOD AND DRINK

THE LAHORIAS HAVE ALWAYS attributed their good health to the intake of milk products in large quantities. They were not worried, as most of us are today, about the fat content of their diets, for modern medicine had yet to pronounce upon the health hazards of consuming fatty foods. The value of vitamins, minerals and proteins and the dangers of cholesterol-producing food items were unheard of. The Lahorias thrived on such products as milk, cream, butter and ghee, unmindful of the risks of gaining bulk and the ill-effects they might have on their physiques. They regarded ghee as the supreme source of energy and not as a probable cause of heart attacks. They believed in the saying that '*jo kare gheo, na kare ma te na kare peo*' (no mother or father can do for you what ghee can).

In summer, lassi (buttermilk) was a staple drink at both breakfast and lunch. One could have full-cream lassi made from curd or the fat-free variety from which butter had been extracted. In every bazar there were a class of *halwais* who specialized in the preparation of a variety of milk products such as *pedas*, *barfi*, *kalakand*, *rabdhi* and *lassi*. At the crack of dawn, young and old would make a beeline for these shops, for the lassi at home could never taste quiet as delicious.

Bhagwan Singh's at Anarkali was the most sought-after lassi shop in town. The lassi served there was something out of this world: thick, rich curd churned with a *madhani* (wooden churner), in a unique manner that had made it famous all over the Punjab. Of the several varieties of lassi prepared, the most popular was the one containing *pedas*, which produced thick layers of cream floating at the top of the wide-mouthed tumblers in which it was served. Visitors

to Lahore were always taken there by their hosts for a treat of lassi.

With lassi at breakfast, the Lahorias loved to eat puris, *kachoris*, *kadha* and *purah* with a filling of spicy curried alu, chhole and pickles. These delicious preparations, all made in pure ghee, were the specialities of halwais, who did a roaring business. The most renowned halwai for puris, kadha, etc., was Nikoo Shah, who had his establishment in Said Mitha Bazar near Dyal Singh High School in the walled city. People came from distant parts of Lahore to taste the delicacies prepared by him. While returning home after their morning walk by the river Ravi, city-dwellers would usually stop at Nikoo Shah's shop to purchase puris, kadha, etc., for the children, who would eat them with gusto before going to school. Next to him in popularity was halwai Bhan Shah in Chowk Chakla inside Lohari Gate. His impressive personality and winsome ways endeared him to his customers. Another celebrated halwai was Nanta in Wachhowali Bazar. There were also two eminent *Dilliwale halwais*—Umrao Singh outside Lohari Gate on Circular Road and Kundan Lal in Anarkali—who offered a different variety of preparations. Smaller in size and made of whole wheat flour, their puris were eaten with curried vegetables and pickles, which were very hot and spicy, but very tasty too. The kadha, somewhat yellow, exuded an aroma of saffron while the purha consisted of small circular pieces with browned edges. These shops were patronized by the elite and visitors to Lahore out to taste something not available elsewhere. Kundan Lal's shop being close to Bhagwan Singh Lassiwalah's, its customers after relishing puris would wash them down with a glass of lassi.

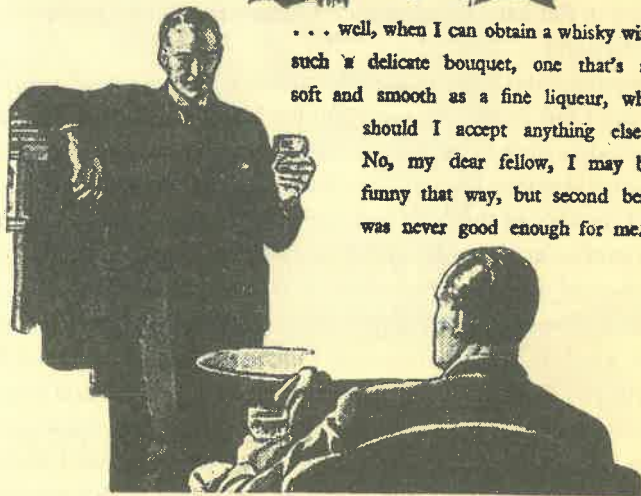
In the afternoon around 4 p.m., the halwais would get ready with their other preparations, which included hot and crisp *moongi de laddoo* studded with black pepper wholes, *moongra*, samosas, *badana* and jalebis. These were snacks eagerly bought by people returning from work. Talking of samosas, no Lahoria could forget the seven-layered delicacy which went by the name of *japani samosa*. It was in the late 1920s that an expert from Multan introduced this novelty in Lahore. He opened his establishment inside Lohari Gate at the entrance of Kucha Chidhimaran. Later, one of his family members set up a shop at Nisbet Road next to Luxmi Insurance building. Boys

**"I may be
fussy...**

Some people might call me difficult. I prefer to call myself—particular. I would rather have a little and have that little good. You have probably heard me insisting on White Horse Whisky



... well, when I can obtain a whisky with such a delicate bouquet, one that's as soft and smooth as a fine liqueur, why should I accept anything else? No, my dear fellow, I may be funny that way, but second best was never good enough for me."



WHITE HORSE

You can tell it blindfold! **WHISKY**

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Civil and Military Gazette, 19 November 1938

from the nearby Dayal Singh College would flock to it to eat Japanese samosas served with spicy curried chhole.

With the approach of evening, the halwai shops wore a new appearance with a glittering display of sweetmeats covered with silver leaves to tempt passers-by. Among the popular varieties were *mesus*, *pinnis*, *balushahi*, *imrati*, *moti-choor laddoo*, *khajur*, *patisa*, *andrasa*, etc. Punjabi halwais had not yet learnt the art of making rasgullas and their preparations were no match for those of the Bengali sweetmeat shop in Anarkali, close to Bhalla Shoe Co. Connoisseurs of sweets would go there to relish rasgulla, rasmalai, *rajbhog*, *sandesh*, etc. The halwais did brisk business during the festivals, especially during Diwali, when they decorated their shops with glittering lights and buntings. Terraced displays of sweets arranged in flat pans rising to the ceilings of the shops presented a colourful sight.

To quench their thirst in summer months, the Lahorias turned to a variety of soft drinks, the most popular being *sharbat*s of all kinds and flavours, such as sandal, *keorah*, *khas*, almond, pomegranate, *phalse* and *shahtoot*. Gobind Ram Kahan Chand, the most renowned sharbat makers of the city, had their main shop in Kasera Bazar and branches at Anarkali and Nisbet Road. They also prepared *marabbas* of mangoes and other fruits and *arags* distilled from herbs that were often used as medicines. With the onset of the rainy season, *shakanjvi* or *nimboo-pani* (fresh lime juice) replaced the sharbats. For those fond of aerated water, there were several brands available in the market, led by Kesari's lime juice, lemonade, rose, banana and ginger filled in thick green bottles. Other well-known bottlers were Kailash and Sher-e-Punjab, who along with Kesari had their establishments at Anarkali. All of them had a well-organized distribution network covering the entire city. Teplitz, situated on the Mall, was famous for its Vimto, which was served in leading restaurants patronized by the sahibs and the elite. Milk shakes were almost unknown until the late 1930s, when the first milk bar was opened by Nahar Singh in Government College. This was soon followed by another venture in the municipal market building on the Mall opposite the Punjab University Hall. At the same time,

BE^{ER} WISE



and drink
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Civil and Military Gazette, 2 November 1938

shops selling fresh juice of oranges and pomegranates also gained much popularity, although it was only a seasonal business. At home, a favourite drink during summer was *shardai*. Made from ground almond paste, it was considered to be a tonic for both mind and body, as was a hot cup of milk taken at night before going to bed. Although tea had by this time made its appearance on the beverage scene, it had yet to gain a foothold. It was usually taken in place of milk during illness on medical advice. During the 1930s, the Indian Tea Market Expansion Board launched a vigorous campaign to popularize tea drinking in the Punjab. Mobile tea stalls were stationed at vantage points in the bazars and streets of Lahore to give demonstrations of how tea was to be brewed. Cups of hot tea were then distributed free. This was followed by the introduction of a tiny packet of tea costing a pice in the market. Soon it became quite fashionable for the younger generation to drink tea in porcelain cups. Then came the turn of the Coffee Board to launch a campaign for the promotion of coffee drinking. However, coffee could not acquire the widespread appeal of tea. Its patronage remained confined to students, teachers and intellectuals frequenting the Coffee House on the Mall, which was opened around 1940.

Until the 1930s, going to restaurants was frowned upon in middle-class homes. It was assumed that those who visited restaurants did so to have alcoholic drinks and eat meat and fish. They were called *sharabi-kababis* (drunkards and meat eaters). Restaurants on the Mall, such as Lorang and Stiffles, had elegant bars and were chiefly patronized by the elite. They served only Western dishes. The leading restaurants at Anarkali were Kailash, Sher-e-Punjab, Imperial and Standard, which had rows of cubicles with drawn curtains to enable the patrons to enjoy their drinks in privacy. At a farther point at Anarkali there was a Sindhi restaurant that specialized in meat preparations. Among the popular dishes were curries of partridge, chicken and mutton. No women were ever seen in these places. Those were the days when a bottle of Tennant's, Alsopps' or Japanese Ashahi beer cost less than a rupee and a chhota peg of Scotch and soda, ten annas. Around 1939, Standard Restaurant opened its establishment on the Mall and ushered in a tea-time revolution. There, for the princely

sum of one rupee and four annas, one could drink as much tea as one liked and eat any number of pastries, patties, sandwiches and cakes. It was also the first restaurant on the Mall to serve Indian dishes and chapatis. Later, we had another Indian-style restaurant in Elphinstone Hotel when it opened its doors around 1940.

The Mall and Anarkali restaurants were beyond the reach of Lahoris of average means. For them there were inexpensive cafeterias. The cafeteria most popular with the student community was the Crystal on Nisbet Road. Here one could enjoy ice-cream, cold drinks, tea, pastries, cream rolls and a variety of other snacks. In the evening, the place used to be crowded with tables and chairs laid out in the open space in front of the main building. One could see groups of boys chatting or listening to popular film songs that were played all the time to attract customers. For the affluent pleasure-seekers there was Mansarovar Hotel and Restaurant, located on McLeod Road, which was rumoured to arrange to supply girls for its clients. On Beadon Road, the small Kapai Restaurant once went out of its way to engage a singing girl to attract customers but without much success. Close by stood Carry-Home, the only ice-cream parlour in Lahore, which introduced ice-cream in the shape of slabs as a novelty. Coming towards Hall Road, one could walk into the notorious Clifton Bar to have a glass of draught beer for 4 annas. Anglo-Indian girls who frequented this place were an added attraction.

Not to be left behind in matters gastronomic were some individual entrepreneurs who specialized in making certain eats. They were celebrities in their own right. In this class stood Lala Bhaiya inside Shahlmi Gate for pakodas, Ram Labhaya for *khatais* in Gumti Bazar, Masita at Bhati Gate for seekh kababs, Bhura outside Lohari Gate for fried fish, Amarsaria in Anarkali for his tikkas and *kaleji*, Madan in Machhi hata for his kulfis, Chaman in Sutar Mandi for his *phirni* and *falooda*, and Dr Prem Nath for his bakery products, especially sweet buns filled with raisins. Another man whose fame spread as far as Calcutta and Bombay was the famous pickle maker, Wadhawa Singh of Gumti Bazar. His *shalgam ka achar* (turnip pickle) with its unique aroma and taste was sought after by connoisseurs everywhere.

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one could buy delicious eats at one's doorstep. We had *chatwallahs* hailing from UP who offered delectable *golgappas*, *papadis*, etc. Then there were *kulche chhole* wallahs from Kangra who served this delicacy from tins they carried on their shoulders. Other hawkers sold sprouted lentils, yellow boiled rice with curried gram, papads, and a variety of sweets and *kulfas*.

At home, the variety of food and the number of dishes prepared at a meal varied according to one's rank and class. In middle-class households, especially of Hindus, vegetarian food was the rule. *Makki di roti* and *sarson da sag*, rich with butter or ghee, has always been a typical meal for Punjabis in the winter months. Dal was an essential item at all meals, for one could always afford it. As the saying goes, '*khao dal jedi nibhe nal*'. At feasts and parties as well as marriage functions, Kashmiri cooks were engaged to prepare special pulao and other delicacies. In most homes the *chownka* (kitchen) and dining-room were combined into one. It was always kept scrupulously clean and no one was allowed to enter it with shoes on. Families used to sit on *moodahs* and eat their meals in thalis placed in front of them on wooden or brass stools.

People also relished eating fresh seasonal fruits. Cold storage facilities were yet unheard of. There was a flourishing fruit market in Lahore where fruits were brought by rail and road from all over the country. We had grapes and melons from Chaman, oranges from Nagpur, bananas from Bombay, mangoes from Benares and Lucknow, dates from Kabul, pomegranates from Kandahar, and apples, pears and cherries from Kashmir. Plying their trade by the roadside were vendors and hawkers of fruits who sang to attract customers.

The Lahorias loved food. They did not believe in 'eating to live'. They would go to any length to gratify the cravings of their palates as much as the demands of their stomachs, and often much beyond.

CLOTHES AND CLASS

'*KHAIYE MAN BHONDA TE paiye jag bhonda*' (Eat what appeals to you and wear what appeals to the people) is an old Punjabi saying. The mode of dress in Lahore, as elsewhere, varied from class to class and from one age group to another. English attire had made much headway after the beginning of World War I, but the earlier generation had stuck to the local dresses and style.

Among the common folk, Muslims wore the *tahmat* and Hindus the *dhoti* with a loin cloth serving as underwear. Both were unstitched pieces of cotton material tied at the waist stretching down to the ankles. The difference lay in the ways they were fastened. The *tahmat* was wound round and tied at the waist and the *dhoti*, though worn in different ways, had always one end tucked at the back and the other sometimes kept around the stomach and hung down in front in folds. Along with the *tahmat* or the *dhoti* were worn long and loose collarless shirts with sleeves without cuffs and buttons. During winter, people used to wrap a woollen *loee* (shawl) or wear a quilted *phatui* (jacket). The better-off would wear a long coat with a tiny collar kept in position by the border hem. The knee-length coat was open from top to bottom and was fastened with buttons. This mode of dress was common with the shopkeepers of Lahore and those belonging to the working classes.

The white-collar class—office-goers, teachers and professionals—usually wore white starched pyjamas or salwars and long coats, which the younger ones among them gradually gave up in favour of English-style shortcoats. The more affluent wore *achkans* and *sherwanis* made of fine silk materials during summer and English

woollen worsteds in winter. Notwithstanding the mode of dress, one's rank and class could be determined by the kind of material used for one's dress. The more fashionable ones would wear only *doria* (silk) shirts with gold buttons and matching waistcoats arched with thick gold chains hooked to the pocket watches. The *achkan* with a few alterations gradually developed into the *sherwani*, the former patronized by the Hindus and the latter by the Muslims.

The traditional head-dress was the *pagri* (turban) made of fine muslin; it was regarded as the most significant item of clothing in Lahore. A symbol of honour, it is worn by bridegrooms even to this day. Some wore it on the top of *kulahs* (caps) of which there were scores of designs, plain as well as heavily embroidered with gold thread. *Pagri* styles varied with rank and class. Among the lower classes the *pagri* consisted of a piece of cloth called a *patka*. The *pagri* continued to flourish even as a part of the Western dress comprising coat and trousers until the early 1940s. There was a marked difference in the style and colour of the *pagri* among Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. The Arya Samajis wore the *pagri* in a plain style with its one end tucked at the back instead of letting it hang down the neck or twisting it over the shoulder so as to fall majestically over the chest. Some wore their *pagris* high with a *turrah* (fanned-out end) jutting out from the top so that they looked taller than their height. The *pagri* style was indicative of one's personality, rank and status. The most striking and impressive *pagri* style was the one sported by the illustrious Tiwana family, to which belonged the last premier of Punjab, the famous Sir Khizar Hyat Khan Tiwana.

By the early 1930s, the *pagri* as a headgear was losing out to caps of various types and designs. *Pagris* were found to be both cumbersome and expensive. The popular material for a *pagri* was fine English muslin costing about six annas a yard. A *pagri* of five yards would cost about two rupees and required additional dyeing and starching expenses. The fashionable ones would change their *pagris* every day, matching them with their clothes. The upcoming generation began wearing caps that cost only six annas to a rupee. We had *dopalri* (two-flap) caps, circular and conical caps with a cardboard foundation, imported Christy topis or babu caps. The

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Muslims began wearing the Fez, a skull cap of crimson colour with a black tassel. The Congress-wallahs as freedom fighters adopted the Gandhi cap of *khaddar* costing an anna or so.

The spread of education and Western ideas transformed the sartorial scene in Lahore. Long coats and pyjamas gradually gave way to short English coats, collared shirts, ties and trousers. Sola hats invaded Lahore from Calcutta, where they were worn along with dhotis as a protection against sunstroke. By the end of the 1930s, young men going to college had changed over more or less completely to the English mode of dress. This was a very interesting period of transition. It was an amusing sight to see schoolboys, some sporting shorts and shirts with sola hats, others in pyjamas or salwars with caps and some in oversize trousers discarded by their elders. It was not uncommon to come across a person wearing a turban, tie, short coat with pyjamas or salwar. The old custom of sporting a dainty walking stick or a hunter with a leather flap also vanished and if someone was seen with it, he was identified as someone hailing from a mofussil town.

The collegiates dominated the world of fashion in Lahore and those from Government College, influenced by their Anglicized teachers and Hollywood movies, took the lead in setting the trend. Popular tailors in Anarkali like Siraj, M.R. Yarma, Ghulam Nabi and B.R. Mehta kept the latest English fashion booklets displaying the various styles from which their clients would make their choices. Only the very rich could afford to go to the drapers and tailors on the Mall like Rankin, Pitman, Cheap John, Devichands, etc. The normal cost of tailoring a suit in Anarkali used to be between twelve and fifteen rupees. A Tootal silk tie could be had for a rupee and the famous Pyramid handkerchiefs made of the finest cotton were available for four to five rupees a dozen. With new fashion trends, starched white collars used for wearing ties were discarded in favour of attached collars. Even during summer we wore silk, *karandi* (mixed silk) or cotton suits with ties. It became a fashion to wear a shirt and tie of the same material. The stitching charges for a shirt ranged from six to eight annas. The leading and most expensive shirt maker in Lahore, Rup Ram, charged a rupee for a shirt. Bush-shirts were as yet

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unknown. The most fashionable summer wear was a double-horse Chinese boski shirt and R-52 brand white *makhan jeen* (velvet-finish drill) and sparkling white Peshawari chappals. The days witnessed the disappearance of braces to hold the trousers, replacement of belts with old ties worn around the waist, conversion of felt hats into shoes, coat lengths alternately going up and down, trouser bottoms becoming narrow and wide, shirt collars getting long and short, coat shoulder pads rising high and low, felt hats turning from brown to grey and green with feathers tucked into the ribbon band on the side, shoe toes changing from pointed to broad and square shapes. It was considered highly important to keep abreast with the fast-changing modes in order to be counted among the fashionable elite.

The fashion conscious chose to buy British products, there being no proper Indian substitutes for English worsteds, suiting materials, tweeds, fine poplins, woollen knitwear of Jaeger and Morley brands and readymade shirts. As for cosmetics, Mercolized wax, Hazeline snow, Pears soap, Atkinson hair-oil, Brylcream, Yardley talcum powder, 4711 Eau-de-Cologne, and the like, had no indigenous products to match them in quality. English shoes such as 'K', Lotus, Barrat and other brands were easily available. One could pick up a good pair for twelve to fifteen rupees. High-quality English suiting material cost seven to ten rupees a yard and Harris tweed in single width, about four rupees. Indian woollen materials from Dhariwal, Lal Imli and other mills, though not as fine, were much cheaper. With the onset of spring, the fashion bugs would change over from woollen suits to those made of sunproof material, gaberdine, panama and tropical fabrics before moving on to summer wear.

Dandies anxious to attract attention, particularly of girls, sported outlandish clothes of unusual colours and cuts. I recall some of them wearing brown coats, coronation blue trousers, and green felt hats with checked mufflers thrown over the shoulders and silk handkerchiefs dangling from top pockets.

Hair styles; however, did not show the same exciting variation as clothes. The older generation wore their hair long and beards trimmed and rounded. After World War I, beard shaving gained much popularity, but the moustache retained its hold, changing only

its style of sporting. While some men opted for thick moustaches twirled at the ends, others kept them trimmed. Also in vogue were moustaches in the style of Curzon and later of Hitler. In the late 1930s when we were at college, the popular moustache styles were known after the American actors Clarke Gable and Errol Flynn. However, more and more people chose to be clean shaven. Until the 1920s most people went to a barber for a shave but with the advent of the safety razor they took to the habit of shaving themselves. Until the mid-1940s, there still remained a class who continued to depend on barbers.

Clothes maketh a man, it is said. This was far more true in those days in Lahore than it is nowadays.

STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

WE ALL HAVE NOSTALGIC memories of our student days, when we played truant, enjoyed the company of our friends, eating, drinking and making merry—doing everything under the sun except perhaps reading books! The world looked rosy. We counted the seasons as they came and went, each with its own charm and attractions. Life seemed a wonderful adventure and any prospect of seeing new sights and hearing new sounds fired our enthusiasm. Holidays out of Lahore were full of excitement—much more than those I had in my later life in different parts of the world. As we pass from boyhood to manhood, we exchange a world of joyful sensations and impressions for a world of duties and responsibilities. Lucky are those who can manage to have a boy's heart and man's head.

The first watershed in a child's career is his admission to school. This would call for a celebration by way of distribution of sweets among relations and friends. An auspicious day was chosen by the family priest after studying the child's horoscope. There also existed an institution of *Pandhas* in Lahore who took charge of the boy, teaching him *Landays*, an indigenous script for accounts-keeping. The *Pandhas* ran their one-man establishments in different parts of the city and commanded much respect. After studying for one or two years under the *Pandhas* most boys joined proper school. I recall one famous *Pandha*, Sant Ram, who won a municipal election on a Congress ticket during the 1930s.

It was in the mid-1920s that I entered Sanatan Dharam Middle School, housed in a large haveli in Wachhowali Bazar. Within the school premises there stood a temple in the courtyard where people

went to worship the deities in the evenings. A section of the building was set apart for a Sanskrit Pathshala (teaching house) where the vidyarthi, as the students were called, undertook the study of Sanskrit and prepared themselves for Pragya, Visharad, and Shastri examinations. The morning prayer led by one of the teachers and some senior schoolboys was the first activity of the day. The boys standing in rows repeated 'Jai Jagadish Hare' after the teacher. We greeted the teachers with 'Jai Sita Ram' and repeated it at the time of roll-call. First-grade classes were held in the open courtyard and the boys sat on reed mats spread on the floor. During winter they were shifted to the terrace on the third floor in warm sunshine.

In the event of occasional rain, the classes were dismissed and the boys were only too happy to go home. It normally took two years to pass the first grade, which was divided into two parts called *kachi* (preliminary) and *pucki* (secondary). The most important equipment the boys of primary classes had to carry to school was the *takhti* or *patti*, a rectangular wooden board with a small triangular handle,



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a reed pen and an earthen inkpot containing a rag piece soaked in black ink. The takhti, which served as a writing board, had to be washed daily and coated with *gachi* (earthen paste). It was an amusing sight to watch small boys drying the takhtis at the furnaces of halwais. After the fourth grade, takhtis were replaced with slates and exercise books. Great stress was laid on the study of mathematics and the English language, which was taught from the fourth grade onwards. Schoolboys would recite multiplication tables in a sing-song manner to memorize them. To improve English handwriting special exercise books were used with dotted alphabets and words to practise with nibbed pens. For good writing, the use of 'G' nibs was recommended.

During the recess, boys would rush out of the school and gather around vendors selling eatables. One could have a wide choice of eats—rice and curried gram, *kulcha* and *chane*, baked sweet potato, corn sticks, potato chops, sprouted lentils, etc. For two pice one could have a hearty treat.

The headmaster of the school, Lala Panju Mal, and his team of teachers like Kirpa Ram, Hari Ram, Mitra Nand, Megh Raj, Ram Nath, Jeewan Lal and Ram Bharosa were a devoted lot who not only imparted knowledge to their pupils but also built up their moral fibre. Lapses in studies and behaviour were punished. 'Spare the rod and spoil the child' was the accepted principle and it was applied without exception. The children were expected to hold their teachers and parents in deep respect and even if spared for any lapses at home they were bound to be punished at school.

After passing middle school, I joined the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic (D.A.V.) High School founded in memory of Swami Dayanand Saraswati, the founder of the Arya Samaj. In those days seeking admission to any school of one's own choice was no problem. The oldest educational institution in the city was the Rang Mahal Mission School situated inside Shahalmi Gate in the city. Founded in 1852, it was housed in a historic building known as Rang Mahal constructed during the reign of Emperor Shah Jahan. There were also a number of other well-known schools: Central Model, Sanatan Dharam, Dyal Singh, Islamia, Dev Samaj, etc. It was, however, the

D.A.V. School which had attained fame all over the Punjab, with its students winning top positions in the matriculation examination year after year. Situated not far from the District Courts, the school covered a vast expanse of land and boasted a gymnasium, a swimming pool and up-to-date laboratories equipped with burners fed with piped gas. Headed by Lala Suraj Bhan, the school had a team of distinguished teachers, including Kharaiti Lal, Lal Chand, Jagan Nath and others. Special classes were conducted for a select group of students appearing for the matriculation examination; these students were served with milk and eatables at school expense. The most important event at the school was the annual prize distribution, over which some dignitary of the city was invited to preside and give away the prizes. Another interesting event was the annual *jalsa* (session) of Arya Samaj held in packed shamianas where Arya Samaj leaders lectured on the Vedic religion and the country's glorious heritage while indirectly decrying other faiths, particularly Islam and Christianity. Some singers also took part in the programme and entertained the audience, the most famous among them being Kanwar Sukh Lal who, with his melodious voice, attracted huge crowds.

An interesting feature of Arya Samaj teaching was the stress it laid on Brahmacharya (celibacy) and moral character. Prominently displayed on the billboards hung on the walls of the school hall were such dicta as:

When wealth is lost, nothing is lost.

When health is lost, something is lost.

When character is lost, everything is lost.

We were told by the teachers that loss of character resulted from sexual indulgence, which should be regarded as a criminal violation of Brahmacharya, and that we should suppress sinful thoughts and urges in order to preserve our *virya* (semen), which was the ultimate source of all human energy, both physical and mental. Most of us, however, were not influenced by these sermons and did not act upon them. Those guilty of self-abuse dreaded the medical test where we

were told to take off our clothes and expose our genitals.

The education system, which had been designed to make us good citizens of the Empire, laid stress on the study of English life and letters. 'The blessings of British rule' was the favourite subject with the examiners. I recall how we had mugged up an ideal answer. It began like this: 'What a marvellous change has the comparatively short period of British rule brought about! An age of violence and rapine has given place to one of peace and harmony, an age of ignorance has been followed by one of enlightenment.'

The announcement of matriculation results in the first week of May every year used to be a memorable occasion. The results were published in the English daily *Tribune*. Successful candidates would distribute sweets to friends and relations. Lahore, being the principal centre of education in north India, attracted students from all over the Punjab, NWFP, Jammu and Kashmir and even Delhi. The city had many colleges that granted admission to freshers. But in Government College there was stiff competition and only highly meritorious students could hope to join it. Preference was



Students working and relaxing inside the National College of Arts, 1999



Government College, Lahore, 1940



(Left to Right): Author, Bawa Sunder Singh, and Saeed Ahmed Khan
at the Convocation, December, 1941

given to the scions of the elitist groups of landlords, title-holders and high government officials. The other leading colleges were the Forman Christian, the D.A.V, the Sanatan Dharam, the Dyal Singh and the Islamia.

With the exception of the Forman Christian College, where a few girls were admitted, co-education was non-existent. The leading girls' colleges were the Kinnaird College established in 1913, Lahore College for Women, and Fatehchand College. Among the professional institutions were the Law College, Hailey College of Commerce, Maclagan Engineering College and King Edward Medical College. Another prominent establishment was the Oriental College, which specialized in Oriental studies and classical Indian languages.

Looking back I can say that the years spent in college were the most glorious period of my life. I often recall the fun and excitement of those carefree days. Meeting collegemates even after half a century is an unforgettable experience.

GOVERNMENT COLLEGE: THOSE WERE THE DAYS

THE MAGNIFICENT GOTHIC EDIFICE of Government College, Lahore, occupying a commanding site, could be seen from practically every housetop in the walled city where I lived until my adolescence. I still recall how, as a child, I was overawed by its majestic grandeur. It was designed by W. Purdon, C.E., and constructed by Rai Kanhya Lal, C.E., in 1877 at a cost of Rs.320,000. The college opened in January 1864 and was originally housed in Dhian Singh's haveli in Hira Mandi inside the Taxali gate of the city. Later, in my school days, I found the Gothic spires of the building somewhat similar to those of the Houses of Parliament in London as illustrated in our English textbook, *Simple Chapters on English Life*. I also remember when our science teacher, in his lesson on the production of natural electricity in thunder clouds, cited the example of the college's spire topped with a conductor as protection against a lightening strike. Then studying in the D.A.V. High School (now Government Muslim School No. 2) in the vicinity of Government College, I often cycled home past the college gate facing the courts. I always dreamt about studying in this college which had by now attained pre-eminent status throughout the country, surpassing the older presidency colleges of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras.

While preparing for the matriculation examination I told my father about my keen desire to join this college. A modest official, he smiled and said, 'Government College is meant for the sons of rich titleholders like Khan, Rai, Sardar, Sahibs and Bahadurs, plus students from Chiefs' College and the Government Central Model School. Of course, they do take a few bright students on merit and

if you win a university scholarship you may get a chance.' I took this as a challenge and, though good in studies, made a resolution to achieve my goal. Thus, in May 1937 when the results were announced, I had not only won a scholarship but also achieved a high rank in the Punjab University securing 703 marks out of 850. This boosted my confidence in fulfilling my wish. Incidentally, in those days the university offered forty scholarships strictly on merit. Each scholarship carried a monthly stipend of Rs.18.

So the day of reckoning arrived. I think it was around the 20th of May 1937 that I was summoned for an interview for admission to Government College. In school we seldom spoke English and though quite adept in reading and writing, I was not very fluent in speaking. Here my uncle, a post-graduate and an Anglophile, came to my rescue and tutored me enough to allay my apprehensions. Nearly seventy years have lapsed but I vividly remember how nervously I faced the selection committee chaired by the principal, H.B. Dunnicliff, along with other distinguished professors including the vice-principal, G.D. Sondhi, J.B. Seth and Eric Dickinson. When asked why I wanted to join the college I promptly replied, 'Sir, as it is the best in India.' In fact I had already prepared the answer to this anticipated question. When asked about my favourite subject I spoke the truth and mentioned Sanskrit. I had little interest in sports but had occasionally handled a hockey stick, so when asked to name my chosen sport, I timidly answered 'Hockey'. Thereupon I was told to be at the Oval at 4:30 p.m. for the test. I did not fare well but Professor A.R. Khanna, who was evaluating the performance, was kind enough to overlook my shortcomings in consideration of my academic record. Additionally one of Professor Khanna's favourite senior students, C.L. Bhardwaj, had requested him to help me out. All this drill finally enabled me to enter the portals of this great institution and earn the label of a Ravian. Incidentally, only six other boys out of nearly a hundred applicants from my school succeeded in obtaining admission to Government College.

For the Intermediate I opted for an Inter-arts course which covered the study of physics, mathematics and one classical language besides the compulsory subject of English. Whatever the elected course, each

student was allotted a roll number strictly according to merit based on the marks secured in matriculation. This numbering system was the easiest way to form an assessment of every student's degree of interest in books and other activities. The very first thing that struck me was the cosmopolitan atmosphere in the college and the friendly intermingling of boys from different communities. Government College was known for having the most elegantly dressed students anywhere in the country; hence the most important thing for freshers was to observe carefully the fashionable attire of their seniors. Even during the summer months we would wear a cotton or silk suit with matching tie. The bush shirt was still unknown, waiting to make its appearance during World War II. I remember having a new silk suit stitched by our family tailor Ghulam Nabi in Anarkali for the admission interview. Soon enough I discovered that it was not up to the current style and I was advised to patronise other tailors like Siraj or Verma who were familiar with the latest fashions. There were quite a few dandies who set the fashion trends and others followed suit. As the winter set in we wore our red blazers with the college badge adorning the top pocket. Each college had its own distinctive colour earmarked for its blazer. I recall that F.C. College had dark blue, while Dyal Singh had chosen black. We were briefed by our seniors that in the evenings we were to step out wearing our blazers.

Although many students hailed from wealthy families, there was no class distinction in the college. What mattered was how smartly one was dressed and one's academic and sporting achievements. As freshers it took us time to form groups with like-minded classmates. Given my academic record I did not want to be dubbed a *padhaku* (bookworm) so I went out of my way to make friends with smart-looking boys who were average in studies but extroverts. I was able to impress quite a few of them with my singing talent: we often held these enjoyable sessions in the oval. It was also fashionable to talk about the latest movies, especially the English ones, and the sex appeal and seductive charms of the leading actresses of those days such as Greta Garbo, Norma Shearer, Heddy Lamar and others.

I soon realised that one could learn much more from the seniors and thus tried to cultivate friendships with them. Among the prominent

senior all-rounders who made their mark in practically every field and served as role models, I only remember the names of Qamrul-Islam (later of the Indian Civil Service) and Ashwini Kumar (who became a leading figure in the Indian Police). I recall my very good friend Mallik Riaz Hussain, three years my senior, whom I made a kind of *guru* in spite of being ridiculed by some of my classmates including Saeed Ahmad, my life-long friend who is mentioned elsewhere in the book.

The faculty boasted of a galaxy of professors and lecturers educated at Oxford or Cambridge, such as Eric Dickinson, Richardson, Siraj-ud-Din, I.M. Varma, A.R. Khanna, J.B. Seth, Imdad Hussain, Malik Ahmad Hussain, Ghulam Mustafa 'Tabbasum', Abdul Hamid, Gauri Shankar, and Harnam Singh. Attired in black gowns they would majestically enter the classrooms to deliver their lectures. Some would dictate from worn-out notebooks while others encouraged a dialogue with students and enlivened their lectures with spicy anecdotes.

We were amused to find three professors teaching us English: Baldoon Dhingra, Harish Kathpalia and Eric Dickinson. One of them lectured on poetry, another on prose, and the third taught us grammar and composition. They encouraged us to be independent and pursue our studies diligently. Physics was taught by professors, J.B. Seth and Kichlu. Our mathematics teacher, Professor S.A. Hamid, was a quiet, serious man, and extremely helpful to students.

The college professors and lecturers were fairly well off. They were all elegantly dressed and invariably entered the classroom with a black gown covering their shoulders. In matters of dress, Professor Siraj-ud-Din impressed me the most with his corduroy jacket studded with leather patches on the elbows. Those belonging to the Indian Education Service were like the ruling Indian Civil Service elite and others held different grades of the Provincial Education Service comparable to the Provincial Civil Service of those days. Some of them drove their own cars while the senior professors were chauffeur-driven. This reminds me of a special order issued by the College authorities sometime in 1939-40 forbidding students to bring their personal cars inside the college campus. It was rumoured

at the time that a parent had complained to the principal that his son used to take away his car to impress his classmates, leaving his father high and dry.

In 1939 I passed my intermediate with a high first division but missed the scholarship by a few marks. Though my roll number dropped from 12 to 19, I considered myself more accomplished in many respects with scores of friends ranging from *padhakus* to the mischievous ones. I was now a B.A. (Hons) student determined to specialise in economics; hence I began interacting more seriously with my teachers. The appointment of Professor G.D. Sondhi, as the first Indian college principal in 1939, was not only a matter of jubilation but also created an awareness of brighter career prospects for the upcoming generation. G.D. Sondhi took several steps to encourage much greater interaction between the students and teachers. I fondly remember the animated lectures of Professor L.R. Sethi on political science which we never wanted to miss. He took pains to remember the name of each of his students as well as his performance in the terminal tests. It was a welcome change to see Principal Sondhi engaging in conversation with students during his daily rounds of the campus gardens. He was followed by the *malis* who were instructed by him on not only the arrangement of flowerpots but also the selection of plants. Among other teachers I was disappointed with Professor Harnam Singh who wasted our time by dictating his ancient notes. Nevertheless, I had to mark my attendance since I could not afford to pay the four-*anna* fine for each absence. Among the teachers of English, Professor Siraj-ud-Din, a colourful personality, was easily the most popular; we also had Dr. Imdad Hussain and I.M. Varma, both competent and pleasant teachers.

Besides studies it was the extracurricular activities such as sports, debating, acting and the University Training Corps' camping expeditions which provided excitement. Having little interest in sports, I had to do something to enrich my qualifications, so I asked the *gatka* instructor to enrol me as a player. Having learnt a little in my school I managed to pass as a player. We were also required to choose an optional subject and mine was Hindi. The alternative to this was the U.T.C. (University Training Corps.) which sports-

mind students joined in those days. This required attending regular parades in uniforms, provided, of course, free of cost by the college. There were annual U.T.C. camps and it was interesting to hear the tales of their exploits and fun. Later, during the war, the U.T.C. qualification proved useful in securing emergency commissions in the army. The only sporting activity I pursued was swimming, having picked it up during my school days. The D.A.V. School was unique in having its own swimming tank in Lahore. (The use of the word 'pool' had not yet come into vogue in place of tank.) Of course, our college held the distinction of having a covered tank, the best of its kind in Lahore until around 1940 when the K.E. Medical College came up with its larger, more modern tank with underwater lighting. The only other sporting activity that attracted me was boating. We would row upstream across the river on sunny winter afternoons and set up camp near the Baradari monument. In the summer we would enjoy moonlit picnics. My school friend Prem Sobti, who was the captain of the College rowing team, allowed me to try my hand with the oars whenever I went there. However I had little patience or inclination to go to the Ravi regularly and qualify myself for joining the College crew. Occasionally I would go to the college gymnasium and practice on swing bars, vaulting horses and lift weights. I remember Feroze-ud-Din, the muscular instructor. He would flex his biceps and advise us to take regular physical exercise and consume plenty of milk and butter.

Another traditional form of entertainment was the dramatic-club; we looked forward to the annual plays performed in the college hall. I still remember the famous names associated with the Government College Dramatics Club such as Balraj Sahni (later renowned film actor), A.S. Bokhari, Imtiaz Ali Taj, Kalyani Gupta and of course G.D. Sondhi, the founding father of the open air theatre in Lawrence Gardens. Eminent citizens and senior government officials came to see the plays at the college. We also had some budding poets and listened to their recitations at special gatherings in the oval. I vividly remember my classmate, Masud, who wrote under the pen name of Mushtaq, and Arshad Mahmud who would display his knowledge of *tarranum* and classical music which he claimed to have learnt from

the famous contemporary composer, Rafiq Ghaznavi. This reminds me of another class fellow, Ved Parkash Jauhar, who entertained us by delivering a dialogue from the super hit film *Pukar* starring Sohrab Modi, Chandar Mohan and Naseem. He had memorised this famous dialogue having seen the film a dozen times. On my part I would display my erudition by quoting the couplets of Mirza Ghalib most appropriate to the occasion. I would also recite Omar Khayam's verses immortalised in English by Fitzgerald. For fun and laughter I entertained friends with my humorous Punjabi *tuk-bandis* (ditties), one of which, *Char-sau-wee*, is included in the annexure.

There was no tea or coffee shop, only a milk bar that offered flavoured milkshakes with banana-splits soaked in cream. Owned by Nahar Singh, it was located near the chemistry block but later moved to a covered place near the cycle stand. This was a favourite spot for ragging, teasing and making fun of the freshers, the little we had in those days to amuse ourselves. A typical joke was to snatch the solar hat from the head, use it as a handball and make the newcomer run after it. Another favourite joint was Jalal's tuck shop just across the road from the college gate. Even after nearly seven decades I can well recall the delicious almond *sharbat* and sweet limewater he offered for one *anna* a glass. During the winter months he used to sell fresh orange and pomegranate juice for two annas a glass. Jalal was himself an institution and entertained the students with his amusing anecdotes and enriched our knowledge of carnal pleasures. He offered liberal credit to his student customers but they dared not default on monthly payments.

There was practically no social interaction with girls. However, it was always a delightful experience to see a few, well-groomed Punjabi girls walking on the campus. Some of us would loiter outside the girls' college trying to attract the attention of pretty faces. It was an innocent pleasure, unspoilt by eve-teasing. There were a few who would pen Urdu verses in praise of girls they silently admired never having exchanged a word. They would study the art of writing letters to their imaginary beloveds, the most popular opening sentence being, 'Sorry to upset your mind, which is bound to be perplexed at the sight of this letter, which bears a hand quite

foreign to your eyes.'

Some of the boys could be considered homosexuals. My classmate Masud wrote a beautiful poem addressed to another friend of ours, Sundar, who had captivated his heart. More than fifty years have passed but I still remember the poem. Here are a few couplets:

*Thirakata Thirtharata, muskrata kaun aata hai,
Meri Khwabon ki duniya jagmagata kaun aata hai,
Meri Kalej ki dilchaspi teri marhune minnat hai,
Vagarna falsfa padhna to yunhi ik bahana hai,
Mere ujade hue dil me koi mandar bana jao,
Meri 'Mushtaq' ankhon me mere Sundar sama jao.*

(Who is it that comes swaying and swinging and smiling,
Who is that comes illuminating my dream world?
You are the centre and source of all my interest in college,
Otherwise the study of philosophy is a mere excuse.
Dear Sunder, come and build a temple in my forlorn heart
And let my eyes absorb your image.)

While in the third year, Arts students had free periods and thus began visiting the university union common room not far away on the university campus. It was equipped with a gramophone as well as card tables. Here I learned to play Bridge, first auction and then contract, for a stake of one *anna* a point. Great fun it was playing cards and listening to favourite film songs. Oh what carefree happy days! No wonder we often heard elders telling us that college days epitomize the happiest period of one's life. That reminds me of the lines of Noor Jehan's hit song, *Malika-e-Tarranum: Wo din jab yaad aate hain, kaleja munh ko aata hai* (The memory of those days pierces the heart and brings tears to the eyes).

There was no religious teaching whatsoever and we never talked about our individual faith. The college campus was a totally secular environment, so much so, that it was considered unfashionable to talk about prayers of any kind or religious rituals which were considered to be the pursuits of backward and orthodox people. We were keen

to look modern, act modern and imbibe modern ideas in general, which, in other words, meant that we gladly welcomed western influences. I recall stirring debates on the subject of co-education in those days with the majority of participants in its favour.

As regards political activities and the freedom movement, by and large the students' involvement was rather limited up until my graduation in 1941. There were active student leaders like my senior, Mazhar Ali, and Romesh Chandra of the Students' Federation, who subscribed to leftist ideology emanating from the Soviet Union. The Pakistan movement was still in embryonic form since the Punjab was very much dominated by the Unionist Party and its illustrious leader, Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, the architect of total communal harmony and the prevailing peace and prosperity of the province.

Coming to hostel life, both the Quadrangle and the New Hostel provided excellent facilities. There were active student mess committees who enjoyed lording it over the cooks and sometimes treated their friends to free lunches. The superintendents of the hostels kept a watchful eye on the activities of students and their behaviour towards the ancillary staff. The studious ones often complained about the noisy and boisterous colleagues who disturbed them. One common feature was that practically all hostel students became deeply attached to the glorious city of Lahore.

The onset of spring heralded the approach of the annual examinations and a dramatic change in our life pattern. All frivolous activities were immediately discontinued and we glued ourselves to books. We would cycle down to Mohanlal Road, the book centre of Lahore. Among the famous shops were the Punjab Kitab Ghar, Malhotra Bros., Doaba House, and Bharti Bhavan. We would look for the latest guides and 'guess-papers' to prepare for the examinations. A number of students used to go and park themselves in shady and forlorn spots in Lawrence Gardens to pursue their studies. Private coaching institutions such as S.N. Dass Gupta College and Baikunth Academy did roaring business during this time.

Graduation marked the finale of college life. Only a handful of students stayed on for postgraduate studies which were conducted through University classes. The annual convocation at which the

degrees were awarded to the new graduates was a momentous occasion. Wearing black gowns and caps hired from the university tailors, we walked up to the dais in a line and received the degrees presented by His Excellency the Governor of Punjab. The convocation address was generally a kind of sermon highlighting the responsibilities and duties of a good citizen of the Empire. We were advised to uphold moral values, to be an asset to society, to work hard in our chosen walk of life without yielding to temptations and to adhere to the ideals and principles taught by our distinguished teachers.

I wish to mention some of my contemporaries in college who distinguished themselves in their chosen fields. I can still recall the names of a few who attained eminence in Pakistan. The first name that strikes me is that of Iftikhar whom I met in Moscow in 1980 while he was Pakistan's ambassador there. It was a memorable meeting after a lapse of nearly forty years, thanks to another Ravian, Saeed Ahmad, the Pakistani commercial counsellor who had invited us for dinner at his residence. Others include Nazim Qutab, press officer of the Pakistan mission in Delhi in the 1950s, Amanulla Sardar, who became P.I.O in the Information Ministry, Aslam Hyat, reportedly the economic advisor in the Ministry of Commerce during the 1970s, and Ijaz Batalwi, an eminent legal personality of Lahore. Those on the Indian side included Dr. Prem Sobti, I.P. Gupta, B.B. Vohra, P.A. Rosha, Y.P. Sethi, J. Mahajan and Moni Sabarwal.

Finally the day arrived to bid farewell to my Alma Mater. It was in late 1943 when, having obtained the degree of M.A. (Economics), I paid my last visit to the college to collect an important document, the character certificate, signed by Principal G.D. Sondhi. It was in the shape of a standard form listing a student's academic performance and his participation in sports and other extra-mural activities, followed by general remarks. These were considered to be of great relevance, especially for government service, which was, in those days, the ultimate goal of many of us from middle class families.

I merited the following remarks:

'Mr Pran Nath has had a brilliant academic career and is an all-round first class man. He has a pleasing personality and is

thoroughly suitable for any government service for which his academic qualifications fit him.'

Wandering down memory lane, I recalled how, on occasions, I had exchanged notes with my classmates about our future plans. Sitting on a bench near the entrance to the 'Oval', gazing at the majestic college building, we were overwhelmed by the memories of the joys and thrills of games and sports; the cultural and academic activities; the threats and punishments doled out by professors for our disorderly behaviour and the mischief we indulged in, and our vague promises and pleadings to be excused for those lapses.

This occasion, marking the end of the most exciting and happy chapter of our lives, reminded me of Jalal's customary comment as we laughed our way to his tuck-shop in front of the college gate — '*Mundyo mapean sir tey maujan mar low ai din pher nayin aane.*' (Enjoy yourselves. Thank your parents; these days will not come again.) What we felt for our Alma Mater, more than nostalgia, was an abiding attachment to an institution where we had grown from boyhood to an impressionable youth. We were now on the threshold of learning and following a new set of rules and principles in order to pursue the business of life. Fortunately, we had learnt from our teachers that there was no short cut to success and that it was imperative to work hard to attain power, position and privilege.

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PASSENGERS AND DRIVERS

TRAFFIC JAMS WERE SOMETHING unheard of in my Lahore days. Taxi cabs, public buses, trams, auto-rickshaws and cycle-rickshaws had not yet appeared on the scene. Air pollution was not a subject of everyday talk as it is today, there being no such nuisance on the roads. Tongas and bicycles were the principal means of conveyance. Gorgeous buggies, Victorias and phaetons, whenever they appeared on the streets, provided a delightful sight for the passers-by. Occasionally, a motor car with a collapsible hood would rush past with continuous blaring of the horn. Also visible in the narrow alleys and lanes were *dolis* (palanquins) transporting womenfolk in the city.

Tongas were of two types: the Peshwari and the *desi*. The former, fitted with a straight draw-bar yoke, was higher than the latter, which had a draw-bar curved at the end. Both had two large wheels covered with rubber rims. Lahori tongas were reputed all over north India for their attractive outfit, which included a polished yoke, shining brass lamps fixed on either side, as well as for their comfortable upholstered leather seats and their speed. Drawn by sturdy horses trotting in majestic style, they presented a splendid sight as they raced along Circular Road. Perched on one side in a half-standing posture, the driver would keep addressing his horse in pleading or angry tones embellished with a most original vocabulary of abuses and occasional shouts of warning to the people who crossed his path. At times, space permitting, one could witness a thrilling race between two tongas trying to overtake each other.

There were a number of tonga-stands in different parts of the city; the more prominent ones were located outside Lohari Gate at

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The Tribune, 19 March 1937

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the portals of Anarkali and at the railway station. It was obligatory for a tonga owner to keep his vehicle spick and span and carry out repairs and renovations regularly for the annual inspection for road worthiness by the municipal authorities.

Parked at vantage points, the drivers would call out for customers bound for specific destinations, the most common being the railway station, Hira Mandi, Mozang and Malka Da But (Queen's statue). It was amusing to watch them shouting '*Chal taishon te anna swari*' (to the railway station for one anna a passenger). No sooner would a fourth passenger board them than they would rush towards the station. The scene at the other end was even more exciting. Coming out of the station, it was not unusual to see a tussle between the tonga drivers as one of them would snatch away your trunk or suitcase from the coolie and another your bedding. Heated arguments would follow as to who was the first one to pick up your baggage. Finally, with the arrival of more passengers there would be a compromise and the more talkative of the two would bring you home.

Special consideration was shown to women passengers in purdah. The tonga drivers kept a cloth sheet to screen off the back seat that would be occupied by the zenana (women) while their male companions, if any, or the children, would take the front seat. They also kept some grass under the seats to feed the animals during the journey. The Municipal Committee maintained roadside chabachas (water receptacles) to provide drinking water for animals. Here the horses would stop suddenly if they felt thirsty. The chabachas were filled every day by *mashqis* (water-carriers) engaged by the committee. At the junction of Circular Road and Mohanlal Road was situated the grass market, where fresh supplies were bought by the tonga drivers. There were also a number of *tabelas* (stables) where the horses, when unyoked, were kept and fed in the care of syces, who were called Purbias as they usually hailed from eastern UP.

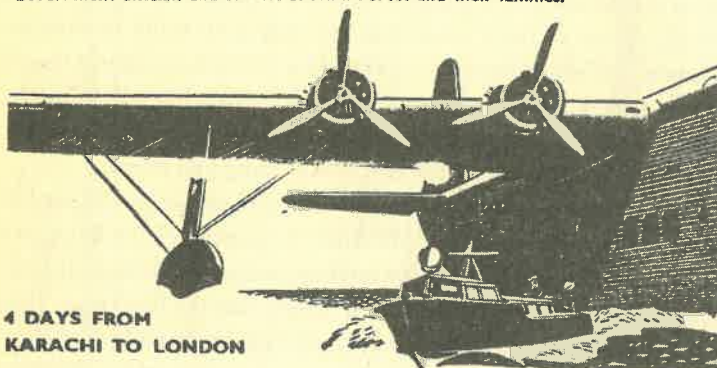
The poor brother of the tonga was the *ekka*, which plied between the city and neighbouring villages. It was also called *tam-tam* or *bambookat*—a goods-cum-passenger carrier rolled into one. It had two seats at the back facing each other, while one more passenger could sit in front with the driver. The city-dwellers looked down

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Civil and Military Gazette, 12 October 1938

upon this rustic transport. At times, one could see a rickety ekka sitting down like a hen, one of its wheels having flown out of the axle, and blocking the traffic on the road.

Before motor cars became popular, many well-to-do Lashoris kept luxurious private tongas fitted with attractive seat covers and bright brass trimmings. The more affluent went in for bugies or

Victorias, four-wheeled carriages having a collapsible hood with seats for four and an elevated seat in front for the driver. Some of them were drawn by a pair of horses. A variation of the buggy was the phaeton, which was a box-type carriage with a door and a window. Some wealthy owners of these carriages even kept a footman who would stand on a pedal behind the vehicle.

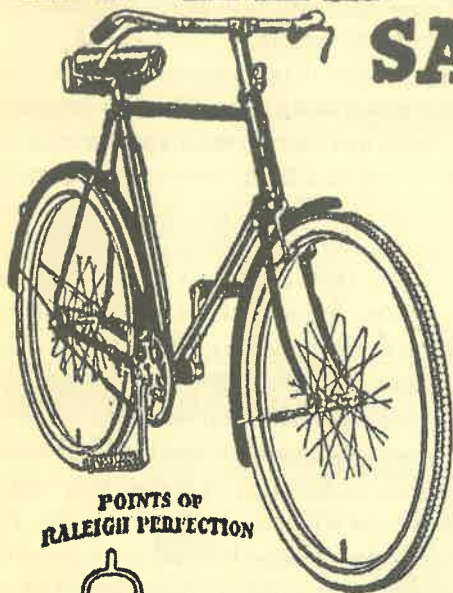
By the mid-1930s many of these luxury coaches began to fade out, yielding place to motor cars. To own a motor car now became a fashion. They provided a much more speedy means of conveyance, and were less troublesome to maintain. It may come as a big surprise to the present generation that an American eight-cylinder Ford cost less than Rs 5000, a Morris about Rs 1800, a Baby Austin, Rs 2500, an Opel, Rs 2200, and a Fiat, Rs 1800. Petrol was available for one rupee and four annas a gallon. However, only a few Lahorias belonging to the rich class could afford to buy these cars. The moneyed class living in the walled city continued to maintain their tongas and Victorias as they felt more at home with them.

Next to the motor cars came motorcycles, but very few adventurous and affluent young men went in for them. A motorcycle with a side-car attachment was popular with Anglo-Indian couples. The police sergeants, who were mostly Anglo-Indians, were provided with powerful English motorcycles with the brand name 'Indian' and one could see them racing on the Mall. They supervised the functions of native police.

Another age-old transport that remained in vogue with the womenfolk in the walled city until the late 1920s was the *palki* or *doli* carried by two bearers. The winding narrow alleys in the kuchas and mohallas branching off from the main bazars were inaccessible to tongas. Dolis were the most convenient means of conveyance because the womenfolk could step into them at their doorsteps and reach their destinations within the city without setting foot on the ground and without being exposed to public gaze. They are still in use in small towns and villages for carrying brides after the wedding ceremony.

The bazars and streets in the city were so narrow that two vehicles coming from opposite directions could not pass each other easily.

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THE ALL-STEEL BICYCLE

8 November 1938

One of them had to retreat to a more open spot in order to let the other cross. On these occasions a most repulsive spectacle often witnessed was that of a tonga horse unmindful of the locale, emptying its bladder and compelling the passers-by to run for shelter. A traffic jam would occur in the city bazars around 4 p.m. when a flock of cows and buffaloes would monopolize the bazar on returning from the fields near the Ravi where they had been taken for grazing. Fond of pure milk and butter, many Lahorias kept their own cows and buffaloes, which were taken out in the morning by the *gwalas* (caretakers) and brought back in the evening for a nominal monthly charge of two rupees.

Lahore in those days was not a city of distances. With Circular Road outside Lohari Gate as its centre, one could reach any point in the city or civil lines within half an hour by tonga. The farthest residential area of the city was Model Town, where the residents had formed a society that operated a regular bus service to the centre of the city. In order to move about in the city, many commuters from Model Town brought with them their bicycles loaded on the roof of the bus.

The most common means of conveyance for both the young and the old was the bicycle. By the mid-1930s, bicycle prices had fallen, bringing them within the reach of a large number of people. Topping the makes was the Raleigh. Fitted with a dynamo light and number lock, it cost sixty rupees. Other popular brands like B.S.A., Hercules, Philips and Eastern Star were priced at forty to fifty rupees. In 1935, the Japanese introduced in the Indian market a cycle costing only nineteen rupees. While it was easy for youngsters to learn riding a bicycle, for grown-ups it was a tough task. It was common practice in those days to hire a bicycle and go to Minto Park and learn cycling from friends who knew it. Pillion riding was not permitted. Offenders were challaned and had to appear before a court to pay a fine of two rupees. Riding a bicycle without a lamp at night was also punishable with a fine. Often, students found guilty gave false names and addresses and seldom appeared in court.

There was no city transport service until 1945, when the Omnibus made its appearance. In 1934, a private operator ventured into the

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field. He ran a bus service along Circular Road that plied from the railway station to the Ravi with stops at the main gates of the city. As this enterprise was not found profitable, it was wound up. The inter-city bus service, however, was a big success. The launching of Nanda Bus Service was a great boon to the travelling public. It introduced for the first time schedules of arrival and departure. Buses would leave at the fixed time whether or not there was a full load, unlike the earlier practice. The service covered many leading towns in the province and was even extended to Srinagar via Rawalpindi and Jammu. Being less expensive than rail, people preferred to travel by these comfortable buses. This attracted the attention of the authorities, making the subject of railroad competition a lively issue.

For transport of goods, bullock-carts drawn by one or two oxen dominated the scene. These were employed to carry heavy loads of foodgrains, fruits and vegetables from the surrounding villages to Lahore. For light transport, donkeys were the beasts of burden. It was a common sight to see a row of donkeys carrying bricks, building materials and other sundry items, including dung-cakes, accompanied by their owner.

PUNTERS, BOOKIES AND JOCKEYS

'DIVE BOMBER WINS THE race,' shouted a cheering crowd of punters as they rushed towards the bookmakers' stalls and the totalizator counters. It was the Punjab Governor's Cup race, the biggest event of the season at Lahore. 'Dive Bomber', with Roxie in the saddle, had beaten its nearest rival, 'Robinson Crusoe' with rider Andley, by over three lengths. 'Dive Bomber' being the hot favourite, the bookmakers had, to begin with, offered odds of two to one for the win, lowering them to evens after a few minutes and finally closing at half to one just before ringing of the bell announcing commencement of the race. I had bought two tote tickets of five rupees each betting on 'Dive Bomber' winning the race. Small punters like me stood gazing at the billboard of the totalizator for the announcement of the amounts of money they had made. In the meantime, I saw the race horses returning to the pavilion. The last to come was the winner, who was hailed with loud clapping and cries of 'Well done, Roxie'.

It was a bright sunny Saturday afternoon that had attracted an unusually large crowd of the city's gentry and officialdom to witness the event in the presence of the Governor. As usual on such occasions, those of exalted rank would be seated at the Grand Stand to watch the races from a vantage position. Some of them would make their bets through attendants, keeping a discreet distance from the surging multitude. For some, it was more of a social gathering—a status symbol to be seen among the elite. They would be most elegantly dressed, as if they had come for a fashion parade. One could catch a glimpse of the leading socialite women of Lahore in their glamorous saris, sporting dark glasses and chatting with horse owners and

leading punters. At times, one could see one of them puffing at a cigarette held in a long holder.

Horse-racing is one of the oldest of sports, with a known history of nearly 3000 years. It was associated with English kings and was introduced in India during the Raj. Its existence may be dated to the origin of the Bengal Jockey Club and the Bombay Turf Club established around the year 1800. Races in the early days were held in the mornings with a view to avoiding exposure to the sun. With their increasing popularity over the years, they began to be run in the evenings. By the beginning of the twentieth century, turf clubs had come into existence in all metropolitan cities, with Calcutta occupying pride of place, followed by Bombay.

In horse-racing, betting is made through bookmakers or the totalizator. The entrance fee to the Lahore racecourse when I first visited it in 1943 was a princely sum of eight rupees—well beyond the means of those belonging to the middle class. However, once you became a punter and got addicted to this exciting gambling sport, the entrance fee ceased to be a deterrent. There were quite a few renowned punters in my days who had lost a fortune but could not give up gambling, always hoping against hope to recover their losses. Others kept their bets within limits but never missed a race during the season, which commenced in December and lasted till April every year. There were casual visitors too who went to have some fun but ended up as confirmed punters.

The *Saturday Civil and Military Gazette* was a big draw as it carried announcements of forthcoming racing events with names of horses, their trainers and jockeys. There were also forecasts of likely winners and tips for the punters. It was a common practice for punters to meet and exchange notes about prospective winners and discuss 'systems' to make a killing. Some of them would study the racing history of the horses. Others would even go to the extent of visiting the racecourse early in the morning to watch the horses being taken out for trotting. The exhibition of horses at the paddock before the race was another occasion to examine their build, fitness and agility. There were old, experienced punters who played a subdued game and doled out advice to young newcomers.

I am reminded of a popular meeting place of punters at the shop of Seth Bros. Cutters and Outfitters, on Nisbet Road. The owner, Mohinder Seth, was a seasoned punter known to most of the bookmakers, horse trainers and owners. He initiated many of us into this sport. Every Saturday morning he would hold court at his shop with a view to selecting favourites for the day's races. He would advise the newcomers to lay place-bets instead of win in order to improve their chances of success. He would take them to task when they ignored his advice and got carried away by listening to gossip at the racecourse at the cost of losing their bets. Generous by temperament, he would extend credit to his customers, who on becoming punters would also receive cash advances to continue with the sport after losing their bets.

Excitement at the racecourse would reach its peak before the commencement of an event. The bookmakers would declare the odds at which they would accept bets for different horses, shouting aloud in a sing-song manner to attract the punters. They would scribble them on a blackboard with a piece of chalk and continue the process of erasing previous odds and rewriting new ones while judging the fancy of the punters. It was a fascinating sight to watch the punters rushing from one bookmaker to another to place their bets with those offering the best rates. In the midst of this din and clamour, a small punter like me would not be able to make a choice. I recall how after a little experience I decided to make my bets not on the basis of performance of horses but that of my favourite jockeys.

There were instances when a hot favourite would lag behind and a rank outsider win a race. This would give rise to a whispering campaign that the bookmakers ganging together had bribed the jockeys to pull their mounts to avoid a win. The punters would cry out 'shame, shame' as the jockey rode back to the stable after the race. There were also occasions when objections raised by the rivals were investigated by the Stewards Committee, whose judgement was accepted by the parties concerned. After the conclusion of races, the punters usually met together to celebrate or mourn their winnings or losses and conduct a postmortem of the game in order to work out new strategies for the following Saturday.

During the past four decades or so, I have rarely visited a racecourse, since nowhere could I find those familiar sights and sounds, that gaiety and laughter, ambience and atmosphere, and above all those glamorous women—all this still remain embedded in my memory.

PICNICS AND OUTINGS

ONE OF THE PET topics given to students for composition in school examinations used to be 'Going on a Picnic'. There were readymade essays in books that many students would mug up and reproduce in their answers. The more imaginative among us would, however, try to compose essays based on personal experience.

I recall how as young schoolchildren we looked forward to the day when our teachers would take us out for a picnic to Minto Park from the congested walled city where our school was located. During the summer, whenever the sky was overcast with clouds, we used to plead with the teacher to give us a day off for sports. Walking through narrow lanes and bazars in rows of twos, we would march towards the Fort area. As we reached Huzoori Bagh, the sight of green trees and flowers and overflowing fountains would inspire us to recite in a sing-song manner a famous poem from our Urdu book that we had learnt by heart. It ran as follows:

*Subah ka tha waqt aur thandi hawa,
Parindon ka tha har taraf chaicheha,
Yehi jee mein ayee ke ghar se nikal
Tahelta tabelta zara bagh chal,
Chhadi hath mein leke ghar se chala,
Aur ek bagh ke seedha rasta liya,
wahan ja ke dekhi kuch aur hi bahar
Parindon ki thi har taraf ek katar
Kahin aam thai aur kahin thai anar
Kahin khate mithai thai dete bahar.*

(It was dawn and a cool breeze was blowing. All round could be heard the chirping of birds. I was inspired to go out from the house and loiter towards the garden. I picked up my stick and made my way straight to the garden. On reaching there, I was struck by the pleasant scenery. On all sides there were rows of birds perched on trees. Then there were plants and trees in full bloom loaded with mangoes, pomegranates, oranges and lemons, lending charm to the glorious environment.)

Once in the park, the sports teacher divided us to form different teams to play cricket, football and rope-pulling. There were boys who enjoyed playing *kabadi*, a popular Punjabi game that involves a great deal of jumping, running and yelling. Some of us amused ourselves with a light game of *guli danda*. The teachers, holding whistles under their teeth, acted as guides and referees; strict discipline was enforced and the defaulters punished by ousting them from the games.

The sports over, the teachers entertained us by narrating historical tales. For some of us, who were not much interested in sports, the story session was the best part of the picnic. I remember how we went into peals of laughter on hearing episodes of Birbal's wit and wisdom in the court of Akbar the Great. By now it was time to go on an eating spree for a number of hawkers with a variety of delicacies, particularly *chhole-kulche*, gathered there. The outing concluded, there was a roll-call followed by the trek back to the school. For days, the outing was a subject of conversation. We recalled all the fun and excitement we had had, looking forward anxiously to the next opportunity for a picnic.

Lahore was a city dotted with historical monuments and gardens of as many as four great Mughal emperors. There were numerous spots ideal for picnics. As we grew up, we cycled up and down and selected picturesque spots in Shalimar Gardens, Jahangir's tomb, Baradari and the canal bank. We also found a few attractive locations on the river front as we went boating.

Come winter and the picnic season would be in full swing during the Christmas vacations. The in-thing to do those days was to experiment with cooking, especially a curry of meat or chicken. The job of

cooking was parcelled out among the participants. One of us would peel the onions, another slice the tomatoes and a third beat the curd and mix the spices, and a fourth collect twigs to light the fire. The chef was of course the one who sat near the fire and monitored the cooking. While at work, we kept munching radishes and carrots. It was after many a trial and error and frequent tasting of meat pieces that the curry was ready to be served with nan. A simpler and less cumbersome picnic involved bringing puris, alus and halwa from the famous halwai, Niku Shah of Said Mitha, Lahore.

I am reminded of a frightful experience during one such picnic when I narrowly escaped being drowned in the Ravi. We were boating upstream when all of a sudden the boat got stuck in shallow waters, obstructed by an underwater mound of sand. Two of our group, Saeed and Rajinder, who knew how to swim, jumped into the river to push the boat towards the mainstream. I did not know how to swim but seeing that the water was not deep at that spot, I was tempted to jump into the river to push the boat. I had hardly moved a few feet when I found the riverbed slipping under my feet. There was a deep depression and I began sinking down. I vividly remember those terrible moments when, hovering between life and death, I struggled to remain above water while crying for help. Rajinder rushed to save me from drowning only to find himself held in my grasp. Both of us were going down, caught in a whirlpool. In the meantime, our friends Saeed and Narottam shouted at the top of their voices for help to save us. As luck would have it, a wrestler on the river bank took a boat and rushed to pull us out and brought us safely to the bank. It was a close encounter with death and I get the creeps whenever that ghastly scene comes before my eyes. Later, I did learn swimming but never had the courage to enter the Ravi waters again.

As we grew older, we went for moonlight picnics, usually to the canal bank, carrying baskets of mangoes. It was great fun dipping the baskets in the cool waters of the canal while we swam along its gentle flow. By the time we got back, the mangoes would be cool and fresh, ready to be sucked. With the passage of time, mangoes came to be replaced with bottles of beer and picnics became a more

serious affair.

There were occasions when picnics were combined with sightseeing of the historical monuments of Lahore, especially when there were outstation guests to be treated with the sights and sounds of the famous city. The usual practice was to hire tongas for the day and follow an itinerary that usually included a visit to Badshahi Mosque, Hazuri Bagh, the Old Fort and Ranjit Singh's Samadh, ending up at Jahangir's tomb at Shahdara, which was the ideal spot for picnics.



General view of Lahore from Badshahi Masjid, Lahore, 1920

Coming to outings, I am reminded of a funny incident when one of our senior colleagues, Malik Riaz Hussain, who was a King's Commissioned Officer, took us in his car for an outing in the countryside. We pestered him to take us far away to some village for a glimpse of village belles as shown in the movies. The love affairs of village girls with city boys were a common theme in films. Starved of female company, we had no opportunity of ever talking to girls of our age. We had keenly watched lovely Punjabi girls, with clear-cut features and rosy cheeks, riding cycles with their salwars ballooning out and chunnis flyings. We very much wanted to observe from close quarters the village beauties who were reputed to have

soul as well as feelings, sturdy figures, firm cheeks and fresh lips as depicted in the movies.

Riaz drove us beyond Gujranwala towards Hafizabad and finally landed us at a canal dak bungalow. He parked the car there and led us on a village road about a foot deep in dust. On the way we encountered a bullock cart moving in the heart of a rolling cloud of dust several feet high. At length, all of us covered with dust, we reached a village, but there was no sight of any young beauties around. Then we were led to a nearby well to wash our faces. It was here that we met two old women drawing water from the well to fill their brass pitchers. Next, we were told to march towards the fields in the hope of catching a glimpse of the promised belles working there, but still without luck. We were rather puzzled why there were no young girls playing around the village. Riaz came up with the explanation that most of the young folk had gone to a mela being held in a village about three miles away. We had no strength to walk any further on the dusty boulevard and so decided to return to the dak bungalow. Meanwhile, Riaz left us to answer the call of nature, telling us that he would meet us at the dak bungalow. After an hour's march when we reached there, we could see neither Riaz nor his car. After waiting anxiously for more than an hour, we became restless and confused. Then we saw the chowkidar heading towards us. He told us that the saab had driven off towards the Trunk road. So we began trudging in the direction of Hafizabad, hoping to catch a bus there for Lahore. Just as we reached the bus stop, we saw Riaz sucking red blood *malas* and smiling at us. We heaved a sigh of relief.

As we drove back towards Lahore, he said, 'How do you compare those village beauties with our blooming girls of Lahore?' There was shamefaced silence on our part.

POLITICIANS, PEOPLE AND THE OFFICIALS

WHO JOINED POLITICS IN the Punjab of my day? The foremost entrants to this field were the landowners and the Pirs with their captive followers. Alongwith the peasant proprietors, they kept up the rural political tradition of loyalty to the British colonial regime. Known as a martial race, Punjabis were the favourite recruits for the British Indian Army. Apart from offering generous grants of land to veterans of the World War I and to other loyal families, the British rulers had won general support of the people by ushering an era of peace and rule of law.

The principal political players in the towns and cities were affluent men from the legal and medical professions who had independent sources of income. For them to join politics was a means to serve the people and part of their national duty. From the early 1920s to the mid-1940s, Punjab politics was dominated by the Unionist Party, which represented an inter-communal alliance of landowners. It was launched by Mian Fazal-i-Hussain and Chhotu Ram. The leading political personalities of my day in Lahore were Sikander Hayat Khan, Khizar Hayat Khan Tiwana, Firoz Khan Noon, Ahmad Yar Khan Daultana, Mian Abdul Haye, Begum Shah Nawaz, Manohar Lal, Gokal Chand Narang, Raja Narinder Nath, Sunder Singh Majithia, Baldev Singh and Joginder Singh. The Congress leaders included Dr Gopi Chand Bhargava, Dr Satyapal, Dr S. Kichlu, Dr Alam, Mian Iftikharuddin, Bhim Sen Sachar, Duni Chand, Chaudhary Krishan Gopal Dutt, Prof. Abdul Majid and Kedar Nath. Whether in the ruling party or in the opposition, all of them belonged to a generation that commanded great respect in society. They were men of dedication,

integrity and honesty. The evils of corruption, self-aggrandizement and opportunism were still decades away.

The Punjabis have always been fond of good living, and economic considerations have determined their attitude to life. There was little political consciousness amongst the common people. The national freedom movement had a small following in rural Punjab and made only a marginal impact in urban areas. For the educated middle classes, the primary goal in life was to find a footing in government service, with the Municipal Committee at the bottom of the ladder and the *Lat Sahib da dafter* or Punjab Government Secretariat, at the top. Punjab was the darling of top bureaucrats as many a sahib preferred to be posted there rather than in any other province of India.

I vividly remember the Punjab elections in 1937, when Jawaharlal Nehru paid a flying visit to Lahore and addressed a large public meeting outside Mori Gate. The Unionist Party, however, was swept to power and Sikander Hayat Khan became the first premier following the introduction of provincial autonomy under the 1935 Government of India Act. The Cabinet ministers had an aristocratic background and they seldom thought of using their patronage for personal gain or party funds. There was a general consensus among the people of all classes and creeds that political power should be entrusted only to men of sufficient means with independent sources of income who alone would resist the temptation to acquire wealth through unfair practices. Nor were there any instances of members of the legislature indulging in corruption of any kind with the connivance of ministers. They were, however, keen to be awarded titles in order to enhance their social status. These ranged from the rank of Khan Bahadur to that of Knight. Within two years of his tenure as premier, Sikander Hayat was able to decorate over a third of his MLAs with such titles.

The MLAs were a colourful lot and lived in style in their private mansions or in hotels in Lahore. I recall watching the proceedings of the Assembly from the visitors' gallery. I was excited to see those glittering personalities, elegantly dressed, sporting impressive turbans tied up in individual styles. The Congress members, wearing Gandhi caps and handloom apparel, lent their own dignity and grace to the distinguished gathering. I remember how the eminent speaker,

Chaudhri Sir Shahabuddin, conducted the business of the House in a most dignified manner. The standard of debates revealed the knowledge and study of the issues under discussion by the participants. Of course, there were some MLAs who only knew when to raise their hands in support of the government. The most exciting event in the Assembly was the presentation of the annual budget by the finance minister, Sir Manohar Lal. On this day the galleries used to be overcrowded with the press and visitors. The following day, daily newspapers carried a commentary on the budget by Dr L.C. Jain, head of the economics department, Punjab University. He would explain those elements of the budget that had relevance for the people at large.

Coming to *sarkari afsars* or bureaucrats, as they are called now, it must be said to their credit that they maintained high standards of honesty and efficiency as laid down by the sahibs. Also, the officers and staff were very well paid, enabling them to live in comfort and even luxury in those days of stable prices. They were a closely knit group and did not ordinarily socialize with the commercial classes. At times, they mixed with the professionals and the landed gentry. This class system was a replica of the British practice. The sahibs had established a caste system of their own similar to that of the Hindus, with the difference that it was based on a person's calling rather than on his birth. The members of the Indian Civil Service led their hierarchy, followed by the King's Commissioned Officers. The third place was occupied by the professionals and the last one by the boxwallahs or the businessmen. The rich of Lahore went out of their way to invite government dignitaries to garden parties. Sometimes they would even mention on the invitation cards the name of the dignitary attending the occasion.

It was during festivals like Christmas, Diwali and Eid that businessmen visited the officials to convey their greetings with *dalis* (baskets) filled with fruits, sweetmeats and other gifts. For the sahibs, bottles of Scotch whisky, cognac and champagne were kept hidden in the dalis. These gifts were invariably accepted by the officials in absentia and were treated not as bribes but as a *nazrana* (customary offerings).

World War II brought a sea change in the social and economic scenario of Lahore. There was now a new source of government patronage in the form of lucrative civil and military supplies contracts. For the enterprising ones, it was a grand opportunity to make quick money. Lahore businessmen became major suppliers of army stores, making enormous profits. Within a couple of years, a new rich class emerged on the scene who flaunted their wealth and went out of their way to buy influence and titles. It is interesting to note that even after they were awarded titles for their contribution to the war effort, the prewar Rai Bahadurs and Khan Bahadurs did not readily welcome them in their select circle.

As the war continued, it brought hardships for the common people, such as rising prices and shortage of goods. Then followed rationing and price control, which for the first time brought about the great institution of the black market, which has continued to dominate the economic scene in the subcontinent to this day. This brought forth bribery and corruption, essential elements for the black market to flourish. Government officials, appointed on a purely temporary basis for wartime duration, were entrusted with powers to grant licences and quotas to deserving businessmen. Some officials were tempted to abuse their authority for personal gain. In the course of time, this virus began spreading to other official circles, but it has to be mentioned to the credit of senior civilians and politicians that they maintained their clean image right up to the end of the Raj.

Among the officials who had direct contact with the public were those from the police and the judiciary. More lawsuits were filed in Punjab than in any other province of India. There was a saying that three Z's were responsible for all murders—*zar* (money), *zamin* (land) and *zan* (woman). Disputes over land and water were common and there were many cases of abduction and murder over women.

The Lahore district courts located near Government College looked like a mela every day. There were scores of litigants and lawyers to be seen in every nook and corner of the premises. Then there were professional witnesses essential for every case under the British judicial system. They were always available for hire by the litigants. The witnesses were tutored by the learned counsels before

appearing in court. While the judiciary was not easily influenced and was considered to be above board, police officials responsible for registering criminal cases were at times alleged to accept bribes.

The Lahore police was reputed for its efficiency in catching criminals. There were very few cases of theft and dacoity. Every police station maintained a list of *dusnumbris* (persons with criminal records) in its area and in the event of any crime they were the first to be rounded up for investigation. The *thanedar* (police inspector) in charge of the police station was considered to be the most important government official of his area. It was quite a sight to watch him strutting through the bazars in the walled city, followed by his large retinue of hangers-on. Such was the fear of the Raj that no one could ever dare to physically assault any government servant on duty, not even the ordinary constable, postman or peon. They represented the *sarkar* and even criminals were scared of insulting them.

Those were the days of peace and harmony; fear of and respect for the authority ensured establishment of the rule of law. It is a pity that as soon as the British rulers announced their decision to transfer power to us, chaos and lawlessness prevailed all over the country.

WAR YEARS

THE OUTBREAK OF WORLD War II in September 1939 marked the beginning of a new era in the lifestyle of the people of Lahore. The decade of the 1930s which had brought about considerable economic depression accompanied by widespread unemployment among the educated, was now over. A redeeming feature of this otherwise gloomy period was the pursuit of higher education by young men for want of any suitable employment. The first year of the war did not have any perceptible impact in India, but by the end of 1940, as the fighting continued, it set in motion a nationwide campaign to bolster the war effort. Indian troops were despatched to the war theatres to strengthen the Allied positions in the Middle East and Europe. A countrywide drive was launched for recruitment to the armed forces—the army, navy and the air force. Gigantic hoardings inviting people to build a career in the armed forces with monetary temptations were put up in rural and urban centres. Young men who had been waiting a long time for employment queued up at the recruitment centres in thousands. Clerical jobs in the military establishments could be had for the asking by those who had qualified themselves as graduates.

A rare opportunity for self-advancement came the way of young men by the end of 1940 with the announcement of the creation of the Emergency King's Commission in the armed forces. The King's Commission, an honour next only to membership in the Indian Civil Service, was granted to a few cadets on completion of training at the Indian Military Academy, Dehradun, where one got admission on the basis of a stiff competitive examination and only about twenty

candidates were selected every year. Prior to the establishment of the Academy, training was imparted at Sandhurst in England. For an Emergency Commission recruit, the minimum age prescribed was twenty-one but it was later reduced to eighteen and the training period cut down from four years to eighteen months. In the beginning, preference was given to boys hailing from the elitist families. Later, as the war theatre opened up in the East with the entry of Japan, there was a great spurt in recruitment and hundreds of young men from Lahore succeeded in securing Emergency Commissions. A number of them even gave up their studies to join the emergency elite. For the never-do-well students it was a golden opportunity. Recommendations from the British ruling class were hotly sought by candidates and their parents. On the other hand, doctors and engineers were in such great demand by the army that students in their final year were awarded degrees without appearing for examination once they signed up for service in the army. Those not found fit for the King's Commission were offered the Viceroy's Commission and joined as VCOs, as they were called, with a starting pay of 150 rupees compared to 400 rupees for a King's Commissioned Officer.

I recall how one of my collegemates who had failed to pass the Intermediate examination even after two attempts was selected for an Emergency Commission. The son of a title holder, he was a good sportsman. After completion of his training at Bangalore he was posted as second lieutenant at Ambala Cantonment from where he came to Lahore for a short holiday. Immaculately dressed in an elegantly tailored double-breasted suit and sporting a tin of 555 State Express cigarettes in his hand, he took me out for a treat at Standard Restaurant on the Mall. He told me about his life in the regimental mess and daring escapades with nurses at the military hospital at Bangalore. After enjoying a sumptuous fare, we went out for a stroll on the Mall. Later in the evening, he took me to the Clifton Bar at Hall Road, a favourite haunt of Anglo-Indians. I had occasionally had a glass of beer but this was the first time that I tasted whisky and soda on his persuasion. By now it was getting late but before I could take leave of him, he said, 'My dear, don't remain a *padhaku* (studious fellow), the night is young, let us have some fun.' As we

came out of the bar, he hailed a tonga ordering the driver to take us straight to Hira Mandi, the famous entertainment centre of Lahore. There a pimp escorted us to the kotha of Shamshad Alipurwali. My friend thrust a wad of one-rupee notes in my pocket for tipping the singing girl. It was almost midnight when he dropped me back home. The evening must have cost him more than fifty rupees, a princely sum indeed.

Dazzled by the affluence of Emergency Commission Wallahs, I was very much tempted to apply for this prized position. I even filled up the complicated application form but gave up the attempt when I witnessed the horrible war scenes shown in the British newsreels screened in cinemas before the regular movies. I realized that temperamentally I was not cut out for an army career. So I continued with my postgraduate studies.

By early 1943, very many boys belonging to well-connected families had joined the Armed Forces and disappeared from Lahore. The less fortunate ones who either lacked the right contacts to secure Emergency Commissions or preferred civilian careers flocked to Delhi and Simla to find suitable jobs. The lucky ones joined as Rationing and Civil Supplies officers or inspectors, others as assistants or clerks in the Central Secretariat and General Headquarters of the Armed Forces. The clerks were nicknamed 'fifty-nine fifteen' since they were given a starting pay of sixty rupees out of which one anna was deducted towards the cost of the revenue stamp affixed to the salary sheet.

As the war extended to South-East Asia, India emerged as a major centre of operations. There was a phenomenal rise in the business of supplying various goods for consumption by the military and in the construction of army barracks. The expanding chain of ordnance depots and stores opened up new avenues of employment for graduates and postgraduates as 'Civilian Gazetted Officers' or CGOs, as they were called. A number of qualified young men from Lahore were selected for these posts. Fond of fun and good living, the Lahorias took little interest in the political developments of the day and the freedom movement at large. For those belonging to the educated middle classes, a government job was the highest ambition

and ultimate goal in life.

There were visible signs of affluence almost everywhere in Lahore. A few enterprising young men joined the ranks of army contractors who emerged as a new rich class. They were, however, no match to the Lalas of Amritsar who from traders turned into industrialists, setting up textile mills, chemical plants, steel foundries, etc. Driving to Lahore in their huge American cars, the Lalas could be seen playing for high stakes at the Race Course and wining and dining at the leading bars and restaurants on the Mall and Anarkali. As big spenders, they became the chief patrons of the leading beauties of Hira Mandi. There was a noticeable change in social values. Drinking became popular and the old stigma attached to it gradually lost its hold.

In the marriage market, there was an unprecedented boom. The custom of early marriages having faded away by the mid-1950s, parents were now on the lookout for self-supporting young men with secure jobs. The Emergency Commission Wallahs with their imposing uniforms and fat salaries emerged as most desirable grooms. The matrimonial columns of the *Tribune* were now increasingly patronized by prospective brides and grooms. The budding Army Officer wanted a suitable match from well-connected families who 'should be good-looking, fair complexioned, well educated, fluent in speaking English and have a cosmopolitan outlook'. It became customary to arrange tea parties at homes where prospective grooms could personally make an assessment of the physical charms of the would-be brides. This was indeed a departure from the old established practice of only the womenfolk of the prospective grooms' families viewing the girls. It was taken for granted that the final choice would rest with the boys, the girls meekly agreeing to the decisions of their parents. But for the Emergency Commissions, many young men would have remained single all their lives. Several eligible girls were no doubt attracted by these young men sporting flashy uniforms adorned with shining stars. The parents in some cases even broke previous engagements in order to grab a willing uniform wallah. Thus a wind of change was blowing fast to sweep away the old concepts that had reigned supreme in matters of matrimony.

The Emergency wallahs came to be known as brown sahibs in uniform. It was amusing to watch them talking in an accent to their orderlies. But it must be said to their credit that they were among the first, barring of course the elite, to take their spouses to cinemas, restaurants and mixed social gatherings. This healthy trend was soon followed by others. Their demand for educated brides set a new trend and contributed to an ever increasing number of girls going in for college education. Lahore College for Women, the counterpart of Government College, and other women's colleges registered a two-fold increase in admission during the war years. This brought in its train a new freedom for girls, who could now be seen in groups cycling on the Mall with bare heads and veils dropped on the shoulders. They even began visiting cinemas showing English movies at the matinee shows on Saturdays and Sundays.

The trade boom was also reflected in the cinema business. Old movie houses were renovated and new ones opened. Film producers who had struggled hard without success were now encouraged by upcoming financiers and Lahore soon won a place on the film map of India. The first Hindi movie from Lahore, *Khazanchi*, starring Ramola, Narang and Janki Dass, was an instant success. Then followed a series of hit movies and by 1946 Lahore had become one of the leading centres of the film industry. There was no dearth of talent and in fact a galaxy of Lahore artists were to dominate the Bombay studios after 1947.

The nouveau rich class of Lahore now began to struggle to enter the portals of the titled elite class of Rai Bahadurs, Khan Bahadurs, Sardar Bahadurs and Rai Sahibs. The grant of a title by the British meant a recognition of one's status in society. The newly rich left no stone unturned to win such honours. They missed no festive occasion to send dalis loaded with fruits embedded with bottles of whisky and brandy to the ruling sahibs, both white and brown. They organized lavish garden parties for the sahibs as chief guests and contributed generously to the war funds while taking care to get themselves photographed with the receiving government dignitary. This provided a roaring business for the catering establishments of Lahore as well as profitable work to the emerging bunch of press

photographers.

Another elitist class that appeared on the Lahore scene comprised the scions of Punjab aristocracy and landed gentry who had to return from England after the outbreak of the war. For some time they lived in Lahore, hoping that their temporary exile in the city would soon be over and they would be back in their English paradise. But when this did not happen and the war continued, they reconciled themselves to settling down in Lahore. They imparted a new dimension to its lifestyle and were most welcome at mixed social gatherings of high society. Some of them were lured into matrimony by the upcoming emancipated city girls who were now venturing out to the tennis courts of Cosmopolitan Club. Some of them even took to ballroom dancing to win over affluent members of this exclusive class. There were also others who had come back from England with an LL.D. degree—an appellation for bringing the landlady's daughter as a spouse. The Lahore Gymkhana Club, the exclusive preserve of the British and a handful of high-ranking Indian officials, now opened its doors to this select group. Cocktail parties became a new circuit gradually replacing the once popular garden tea-parties. Holding gimlet glasses in their hands at these jovial parties, the sari-clad Lahore ladies signalled the beginning of a new era in the elitist social life of the city. This new elite also dispensed with chauffeurs and took pleasure in driving their limousines in the company of their female companions, who were also seen sometimes taking driving lessons from their partners.

Those were exciting times indeed. We could hardly imagine that soon after the end of the war we would be leaving our beloved city for ever.

EPILOGUE: LAHORE REVISITED

MY VISIT TO LAHORE, the city of my birth and upbringing, in December 1997 was a pilgrimage to the past. It was my first visit since Partition, after a lapse of fifty years. I belong to the fading pre-Partition generation who were forced to leave their homeland but carried it in their hearts like the memory of a first love. We still recall the days when Lahore was feted as the 'Paris of the east', where people of different communities lived in harmony on account of their common heritage, historic legacy and Punjabi culture. Even after fifty years and numerous social adjustments, the love that we have acquired for our new places of abode cannot quell the acute sense of loss and longing that accompanies thoughts of our native land. Most of us grapple daily with feelings of rootlessness and are constantly seeking our identity. My emotional attachment to Lahore has found expression in this book, first published along with a Pakistani edition in 1993. This brought in its wake a number of people writing to me from Lahore. Incidentally, at the request of one of them, Dr Ajaz Anwar of the Lahore Conservation Society, I sent an appeal to the Pakistani authorities not to demolish Tollinton Market, one of the old landmarks of Lahore. A fundamental reason for not visiting Lahore earlier was my desire to preserve the images of the graceful city, as I had known it, and reproduce them in my book.

I landed at Lahore on 19 December 1997. The PIA flight was three hours late due to bad weather both at Delhi and Lahore. The first glimpse of the city from the plane presented a delightful sight of a metropolis with a vast expanse of glittering lights, a stunning contrast to the old Lahore that had haunted me all these years.

FRIENDS FOR LIFE

The most thrilling part of my visit was meeting my old friend and classmate Saeed Ahmad Khan, particularly as I had been misinformed that he was no more. So much so that while dedicating my book on Lahore to the memory of my old friends, I had included his name as well. I tore off the dedication page before giving him a copy of my book. He noticed it and when I told him the reason behind it, he was vastly amused. It was a touching encounter that released the floodgates of memories. Though meeting after an interval of half a century it felt as if we had separated only the day before. I vividly recall my first day in Government College in 1937 when I had met Saeed and struck up a friendship with him. And now we sat down to celebrate the diamond jubilee of this friendship after missing both the silver and the golden ones. After exchanging the details of our present lives and information about the welfare of our children and grandchildren, we launched into a series of reminiscences about our student days and recreated images of carefree joy and laughter. Supplemented by a bottle of excellent Scotch, our jubilee celebrations carried on till dawn. We recalled the exciting visits to Hira Mandi where we went to hear music from the accomplished professional singing girls of the times who also performed on Lahore Radio. This brought up the subject of Tamancha Jan, the famous singer of Lahore. I was delighted to learn that she was still alive and leading a retired life. The next day Saeed took me to her place, a tiny tenement near the Model Town area of Lahore.

TAMANCHA JAN, SINGING STAR OF THE 1940s

Meeting Tamancha Jan after over fifty years was a moving and memorable experience. A singer nonpareil, now forgotten, she was the reigning queen of song during the 40s at Hira Mandi. Tamancha Jan hailed from a family of performing artists. The daughter of Sarder Begum, an accomplished performer of her time, her real name was Gulzar. Tutored by Ustad Fida Hussain from the age



(Left to Right): Author and Bawa Sundar Singh, 1937



(Left to Right): Author and Saeed Ahmed Khan, 1997

of seven, Gulzar emerged as Tamancha Jan after several years of intensive training in music. Even after making her debut in her salon at Hira Mandi, she continued with her lessons and riyaz. It was in the early 1940s that I heard her for the first time, when she sang at the marriage reception of my friend's brother at their palatial mansion on Race Course Road. By then, she had achieved name and fame and was an eminent radio singer as well. Among the contemporary radio artists popular in those days, mention may be made of Umra Zia Begum who became an overnight sensation with her *naghma* '*Mera salaam le ja, taqdir ke jahan taq*' and married the renowned music director Ghulam Haider. Then there was Shamshad Begum, who later became a leading playback singer in Bombay. Tamancha Jan's salon at Hira Mandi attracted many connoisseurs of music. My first visit to her salon, sometime in 1945, was an unforgettable experience. She sang exquisite melodies with exotic themes, which aroused romantic feelings and amorous desires in our young minds. Her display of human emotions through the rolling of eyes, facial gestures and motion of hands served to enhance the appeal of her singing.

I had preserved the image of Tamancha Jan's youth and was somewhat shocked to see her ailing, shrunken frame, but as we began talking of the good old times, the twinkle in her eyes returned and she began narrating her experiences when she was a famous artiste in Lahore and an object of envy. She recalled the Lahore of pre-Partition days. She recounted an amusing anecdote: an acquaintance visited her salon and after the performance gave her a cheque for one hundred rupees that bounced. As if that were not enough, he had also taken five rupees off Tamancha to pay his tonga fare! Then she related another incident when she had declined to sing because she was indisposed. She laughed and said how she had to yield to the request of one Biharilal who threatened to commit suicide if she did not sing. She told us that one of her admirers, who had moved to England after Partition, visited Lahore sometime in the 1970s and came especially to meet her with his grown-up daughter from an English wife.

In the end, Tamancha Jan said in a disconsolate voice, 'Practically

all my patrons left Lahore after Partition and so I stopped singing and shut down my salon.' Her educated daughter, who had in the meanwhile dropped in with her husband, confirmed this and praised her mother. She emphasized that not only was she proud of her mother for all she had done to bring up her children, but that unlike others of her calling, she had absolutely no hesitation in acknowledging her antecedents. I was pleasantly surprised and mightily pleased by the young lady's courageous and fearless statement. Tamancha Jan was visibly moved and gave a broad smile before bidding us farewell. '*Khuda Hafiz*,' she said and asked me to come and see her again on my next visit to Lahore.

SELF-GUIDED CITY TOUR

The first landmark of the city to be visited was the shrine of Data Ganj Bakhsh, the patron saint of Lahore. I was immensely impressed by the magnificent and awe-inspiring new edifice that encompassed the old mausoleum. I recalled days when people from all communities came to worship there and seek the saint's blessings for fulfilment of their wishes. As students, we also flocked there to pray for success in our examinations. The tourist in me could not but admire the city's new landscape that has emerged during the past fifty years—modern buildings, five-star hotels, shopping plazas, broad avenues and boulevards in the elegant residential quarters of Gulberg and Defense. But I was more anxious to see the familiar sites on The Mall, Anarkali Bazar and in the Walled City. It was heartening to observe that The Mall, despite its harrowing traffic, still preserved its old grandeur. Practically all the principal buildings that adorned the road from Charing Cross up to Tollinton Market fifty years ago were still intact, though quite a few of them were in a neglected state, perhaps due to multiple or disputed ownership. Most of them also retained their old names, like Dinga Singh Building, Dyal Singh Mansions, Luxmi Mansions, Regal Cinema, etc. The High Court and the GPO buildings continue to exhibit the majestic aura associated with the Raj. Going to the Anarkali Bazar was an exhilarating experience. The street, however, appeared narrower. I could easily spot some

non-Lahorias gazing at the shop windows, obviously visitors from the mofussil, come to do their shopping in the historic Bazar. I had to jostle through the crowd to reach the end of the Bazar, where it meets the Circular Road. The once famous Bhalla Shoe Co., the dominant landmark of Anarkali, continues to be a shoe shop under the banner of 'Milli Shoes'. The other familiar name I noted was that of Sheikh Inayatullah & Co., a department store dating back to pre-Partition days. I was surprised to see the maze of traffic at the Circular Road. I was reminded of the old scene at the meeting point of Anarkali and the Circular Road, where elegant shining tongas with sturdy horses stood at the two corners, one set shouting for passengers to the railway station, the other to Taxali Gate, a euphemism for Hira Mandi or Tibbi, which was the actual destination.

As I stepped towards Lahori Gate, I noticed that little had changed. I saw the florists and other vendors calling to prospective customers. When I passed through the Gate, I remembered how as a schoolboy I cycled my way towards Chowk Chakla and Sutar Mandi, where we used to live before moving to Nisbet Road in the 1930s. I found the street rather cramped with the extensions of shops on both sides. To my delight I found the halwai shops with milk bowls filled with jalebis. I could not resist the temptation to taste this concoction reputed to be a panacea for colds and coughs. The next attraction was the dry fruit shop, where I stopped to buy chilgozas, pistachios and almonds and found them cheaper than at the Beadon Road shops. Incidentally, I was struck by the generous gesture of the shopkeeper who offered me a special discount on learning that I was from India. I made a round of all those familiar places— Simla Pahari, Abbott Road, and finally Nisbet Road, the place where I lived during the formative years of my life. There are still a number of old structures on both sides of the road, with Dayal Singh Library as the most prominent surviving landmark. I did manage to locate the site of my house, but a new building had come up there. Another unforgettable incident was my spotting the famous ice-cream parlour Carryhome dating from the 1930s, at Beadon Road. It is now a restaurant but still retains the old name. My friend Dr Ajaz Anwar, who took me there for a cup of tea, introduced me to the owner who was nostalgic about Jalandhar

and Hoshiarpur. We enjoyed hot pakoras and steaming tea, courtesy of the owner who refused to accept payment from an Indian guest.

The visit to my school, DAV (Dayanand Anglo-Vedic), now Government Muslim High School No. 2, was a memorable experience. It was amusing to find that the school building stood exactly as it had over fifty years earlier. The same is the case with the DAV College, now Islamia College, on the opposite side of the road. The entire area, strangely enough, still remains spacious and quiet, unlike other parts of the city that have become noisy and congested.

As I was recalling my student days, I was reminded of the famous Bradlaugh Hall, where we used to gather for all kinds of meetings, especially those of a political nature connected with the national freedom movement. I still remember student leaders like Rajbans Krishan, Promod Chandra, Yash Pal, I.K. Gujral and Mazhar Ali addressing the student crowd at Bradlaugh Hall. For many students, the greatest attraction of gatherings at Bradlaugh Hall was an opportunity to meet the girl students at close quarters and hopefully try to strike an acquaintance with some of them. So, I went to visit this historic hall which held the pride of place among the leading halls of Lahore such as Lajpat Rai Hall, Barkat Ali Mohammedan Hall, Victoria Jubilee Town Hall, Burt Hall, and Lawrence and Montgomery Halls. I found Bradlaugh Hall in a dilapidated condition apparently uncared for and neglected since Partition. However, I found the marble slab on the side of the main gate carrying the inscription about the laying of the foundation stone by the veteran Congress leader Surendra Nath Banerjee on 30 October 1900 still intact. The building was named after Charles Bradlaugh, a friend of India in the British Parliament, and it was built with public donations.

AT THE ALMA MATER

Another unforgettable experience was the visit to my alma mater, the Government College, now a university. Walking around the Oval and gazing at the Gothic structure set upon a raised level, easily one of the most prominent landmarks in the city, I was struck by a wave of nostalgia for the remarkable six years I had spent there. The

faces of my teachers and classmates appeared before my eyes. I was transported back to those carefree student days when the world had looked rosy and life a wonderful adventure, free from the humdrum struggle of existence. I went around to see the imposing classrooms, where I had entered as a shy boy more than sixty years earlier. It was a late winter afternoon and the college was closed. Someone who saw me loitering there came up to me and asked: 'Would you like to meet the principal? He is in his office.' I welcomed the idea and met the principal, Dr Khalid Aftab, an impressive personality with charming manners. We exchanged notes about college activities then and now. The only notable addition in the college complex is the mosque, near the old milk bar and cycle-stand of my days.

I also went to our favourite haunt, the beautifully laid-out Lawrence Gardens, now Jinnah Gardens, with tall majestic trees and rows of colourful flower beds. It was just the same. The only new thing that I noticed was an artificial waterfall on the hillock in the centre of the garden. The Montgomery Hall, which once housed the Gymkhana Club, is now the Quaid-I-Azam Library.

MAIDEN VISIT TO GOVERNMENT HOUSE

Yet another highlight of my pilgrimage was my maiden visit to the Government House, one of the palaces of the Raj whose doors were rarely open to natives in those days. I still recall the sight of the elegant sentries who guarded the main gate on The Mall. We could hardly see anything as the main building lay hidden among the trees in its enormous compound behind a high, fortress-like wall topped with broken glass. The only thing visible of this forbidden, mysterious world was the Union Jack hoisted in the octagonal tower. It was, therefore, a rare treat to join a luncheon party given by the Governor, Mr Shahid Hamid, and Mrs Sarwat Hamid. I was also delighted to meet some of the old Ravians among the gathering there. I admired the way the Government House is being maintained, retaining its former magnificence and magic. I enjoyed the tantalizing vision of the lawns and flowering trees and the chirping of birds over the gorgeous man-made lake near the mini-zoo.

FROM MAYO SCHOOL TO NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART

As part of the imperial civilizing mission, art schools were established in the Presidency capitals of Madras, Calcutta and Bombay in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The Mayo School of Art at Lahore was founded in 1875 and had the good fortune of having J.L. Kipling as its principal (1875-1893). He showed the world that Punjab had some of the finest craftsmen in India. A premier institution of north India, many a leading painter and sculptor of the subcontinent received his education and training in this school of art. It was upgraded to the present status of National College of Art in 1958 and has won international acclaim for its high standards of education. As an art historian, I found my visit here not only a delightful experience but also a most rewarding one. Thanks to my friend Dr Ajaz Anwar, a professor there and an eminent artist, I spent the whole day there interacting with the principal, teachers and students. I was both amazed and impressed by the ambience and environment of the college and the friendly atmosphere created by the students. I was indeed very happy to see young girls and boys listening to music and sketching and sculpting. A youngster told me that this was the most prominent location of the vanished veils in the city of Lahore. Another highlight of this visit was my meeting with the famous Pakistani artist Iqbal Hussain, renowned all over the world, who also teaches in the college. His rise from street punk to painter has been splashed by the *Time* magazine and other notable print media, and his works are auctioned at Sotheby's and Christie's. This extraordinary artist proudly proclaims his heritage of belonging to the courtesans' family of Hira Mandi. Another remarkable achievement of this famous artist is his renowned restaurant Cooco's Café.

Cooco's CAFÉ

Established by Iqbal Hussain in his ancestral house, this restaurant has emerged as a greater tourist attraction than the dancing girls

of Hira Mandi, especially for the elite, both native and foreign. Personally, I found my visit there exceedingly enjoyable not only for its delightful cuisine but also its fantastic ambience. The place offers an atmosphere of a medieval tavern; there is an exquisite rare collection of antiques put together in an artistic fashion displaying the master painter's aesthetic flair. One finds wooden balconies retrieved from old dwellings and havelis, marble *jharokas*, redstone slabs that had once supported the projections and now serve as bases of dining tables. Then there are old wooden doors with beautiful carvings by master craftsmen of the early nineteenth century that adorned the now extinct mansions of the nobility. These doors embellish the transit from one room to the other in the restaurant. This is not all—the high walls are decorated with superb paintings by the artist himself. They display the stark reality of life in the historic entertainment quarters of the Walled City—the votaries of pleasure and their patrons who have ensured the survival of the world's oldest profession through the ages.

THE TWO PUNJABS

I was overwhelmed by the generous hospitality extended by one and all. I was particularly delighted to meet Lahorias of the younger generation who had heard accounts of city life in the pre-1947 days. I enjoyed conversing with them in the typical Lahori parlance laced with a torrent of spicy invectives. I notice that people of the older generation invariably extol the values and quality of life in the 'good old days' and often ignore or disapprove of new attitudes, outlook and lifestyle of the modern generation. But I make it a point not to bore the young with anecdotes of the past and try to learn and appreciate their viewpoints and ideas about the life they like to lead. As the old saying goes,

Time changes mountains
 Time changes rivers
 Time changes when it is spring
 Time changes everything, they say.

After this visit to my beloved Lahore, I realized that the politics of the two countries has practically nothing to do with the people who would love to meet those across the border, bound together as they are by a common language, culture and history. It is the Punjabis on both sides who suffered the most and paid the heaviest price at the time of the British withdrawal from the subcontinent. Historians on both sides have chosen to ignore the Punjabis' supreme contribution to the attainment of Independence. A major factor that forced the British to leave so soon after the end of World War II was their loss of trust in the loyalty of the two-million-strong Indian army, of whom nearly fifty per cent were Punjabis. This loss of trust stemmed from the emergence of the Indian National Army under Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, which again was dominated by Punjabis. In fact, the three officers of the INA who were sent on trial at the Red Fort and turned into national heroes—Saigal, Dhillon and Shah Nawaz—also hailed from the Punjab.

Though there are practically no divided families in the two Punjabs, there is a burning desire among the ageing generations of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims to visit the land of their birth across the border. For decades, the post-Partition generations have been fed tales and anecdotes by their elders about the towns and villages from where they were forced to flee. So, even the young Punjabis are keen to visit these places, not only to satisfy their curiosity but also to interact with their ethnic counterparts on the other side. For many Indian Punjabis, the city of Lahore continues to exert its charm more than any other metropolis of the world. I wish the governments of India and Pakistan would give due consideration to this issue, especially from a humanitarian angle and initiate suitable steps to facilitate such visits on either side. Let them make a beginning by allowing all those aged sixty-five and above to travel across the border without visas. Which two countries in the world caused more destruction through wars in Europe than Germany and France? And yet today they are part of the European Union with free movement of people and no customs barriers. I think here the Punjabis on both sides of the border can play a very significant role. Within the framework of

Indo-Pakistan cultural exchanges, let us encourage and sponsor the visits of Punjabi artists, writers and theatre groups from both sides as the first step towards bridging this enforced divide.

BASANT FESTIVAL

Having heard so much about the famous Basant Festival of Lahore, I paid my next visit there in February 1999 to witness the celebrations and compare them to those of over fifty years ago. What I saw was indeed beyond my expectation or imagination. Heralding the departure of winter and the advent of spring, the ancient Basant Festival has now emerged as the biggest secular festival in the country. An ardent kite-flier myself in my younger days, I was thrilled to see millions of colourful kites in the sky. The Walled City remains the main hub of the celebrations, with nearly all rooftops crowded with men and women of all ages. They hold parties with music, dance, food and of course kite matches. A major novelty of the extravagant festivities was the popularity of night kite flying, unheard of in my days. The kites with luminous strings floating in the starry skies presented a wonderful sight. There were shouts of '*Bo-kata*' with fireworks and rockets lighting up the sky and sparks coming down in arcs. I even noticed some enthusiasts of the sport firing guns in the air to proclaim their victory in the kite matches. As the night advanced, I saw more people coming to the rooftops with glaring floodlights, adding further charm to the merriment and gaiety around. These colourful festivities lingered on until dawn. Another exciting scene which delighted me was the Bhangra to the rhythm of film music in full blast, along with the beats of the double drums by professional drummers specially engaged for the occasion. The female participants in this mirth and hilarity were an added attraction, with their colourful costumes predominantly in hues of yellow and mustard. This enchanting spectacle is possibly the only one of its kind in the entire world. No wonder that thousands of people from far and wide descend upon Lahore to participate in this glorious celebration.

SPOTLIGHT ON WAGAH BORDER

The Wagah Border attained worldwide publicity in February 1999 when the Indian prime minister took a bus ride to Lahore. The famous Lahore Declaration signed on 21 February by the then prime ministers, A.B. Vajpayee and Nawaz Sharif, was pronounced as a defining moment in history, heralding the dawn of a new era in Indo-Pak relations at the turn of the century. It was easily the greatest media event in the subcontinent and over 500 journalists assembled in Lahore to cover it. The border, hitherto bristling with fear and distrust, echoed with the friendly slogans by jubilant crowds on both sides. It was transformed into a site of a big mela, a far cry from the symbol of hostility highlighted by the ceremonies of flag-raising and flag-lowering that marked the day from night. The two flags were now seen fluttering in the wind as if they were holding a conversation whose tenor depended on the force of the winds. The Wagah Border was now getting ready to receive Delhi-Lahore-Delhi buses from either side emblazoned with the banner of *Sada-e-Sarhad* (Call of the Border). Rarely had a bus ride created such excitement at the Wagah Border. It is a pity that all the euphoria and enthusiasm soon vanished into the pages of history.

The Wagah Border is the same site which many of my generation had crossed after Partition in 1947. It was a two-way traffic: Muslims heading towards Lahore and Hindus and Sikhs towards Amritsar, without exchanging a word, with pain and suffering writ large on their grim faces—a strange kinship of ordeal, agony and anguish. Shattered by the torrents of history, they were now refugees. However, time is a great healer. The writers and poets of both sides have produced many a poignant work of prose and poetry on the common woe and torment of the Punjabis, victims of the greatest migration in the history of mankind. I recall a press report about a poster carried by someone from the Pakistani side which said, '*Akhiyan di lali dasdi hei, roye tusee wi ho, roye asi wi han*' (Our red eyes reveal that you have wept and so have we).

This also brings back memories of the early 1950s, when the Wagah Border was opened for free movement to Lahore to watch a

cricket match. Thousands of people from the Indian side had crossed over and rushed to Lahore not so much for the match but to enjoy sights and sounds of their beloved city.

The no-man's land created by the Radcliffe line in 1947 has been a witness to some interesting happenings. One of these was a *nikah* ceremony of Anwar Saeed of the Pakistan Navy with the sister of Agha Muzaffar Ali, the transport controller (later Chief Secretary) in Jammu and Kashmir. Due to the prevailing travel restrictions, it was very difficult for either of the families to go to the other country. So this *nikah* was organized by my friend P.A. Rosha, then SP (Border) (1950-52) for the sake of the bridegroom who happened to be our classmate in Government College, Lahore. A colourful gathering of both families was arranged by Rosha in the narrow stretch between the two gates and the bride went over to the Pakistan side with her in-laws after the brief ceremony. On another occasion, Rosha arranged Lata Mangeshkar's meeting with Noor Jehan between the borders, where they spent a few hours together along with their companions who were treated to the lavish eats that both sides had brought for the occasion.

The resumption of the Delhi-Lahore-Delhi bus service in 2003 and recent developments directed towards establishing stronger ties of friendship, harmony and peace between the two neighbours augur well for the Wagah Border. There is a talk of converting it into a tourist spot, but one of the most laudable suggestions has been put forward by Professor Ishtiaq Ahmed of Stockholm University. He has proposed the building of a memorial in the no-man's land as a permanent symbol of the common suffering of the victims of Partition.

AFTERWORD

LAHORE CALLING

THERE IS AN OLD saying, 'to every bird its nest is best'. This explains why most people love the place where they were born or brought up. I belong to the vanishing generation of pre-partition days who were forced to leave their homeland but carried 'Lahore' in their hearts like the memory of a first love. Overpowered by nostalgia, we still recall the days when Lahore had attained the reputation of being the 'Paris of the East' where people of different communities lived in harmony in the sunshine of their common heritage, historic bonds and flamboyant Punjabi culture.

Lahorias have extraordinary attachment to their city and evince immense pride in belonging to it. So much so, the obituary columns of Indian newspapers until the 1980s carried the announcement reporting the deceased as so and so formerly of Lahore. No wonder, every Punjabi would proclaim 'Jine Lahore Nahin Dekhya, oh Jamaya hi Nahin. Scripted by Dr. Asghar Wajahat, a noted Hindi writer, the Play with the same title — 'Jine Lahore' was first staged at Delhi in 1990. Its unprecedented popularity took the play to Pakistan, UK, USA and all over India. The number of shows has exceeded one thousand in different languages. The play communicates an omnipresent fact — human emotions are the same everywhere and across all territorial cultural and national boundaries.

A classic case of someone's incredible devotion to his hometown pertains to the saga of 'Lahore in America'. It is a village in Orange County Virginia with a Post Office cum general store and gas station.

With a population of twenty-five family homes, 'Lahore' is listed in the US Postal Directory. Any letter mailed to Lahore without inscribing Pakistan is delivered to Lahore, Virginia. Until the middle of the 19th century this area had no name. Then a resident Phillip Marshall Jackson while through a book about India, came upon the name 'Lahore' and liked it so much that he gave this name to his village with the approval of the federal government. Till recently none of the Pakistanis living in Washington had ever heard of it. A Pakistani Lahoria Mr. Noor Naghmi, a financial services professional, brought the American Lahore in news in 2007 when he bought 235 acres of this township for \$3 million. He wanted to turn American Lahore into a regional tourist attraction for South Asians and others. His Project envisaged the establishment of a banquet hall fashioned after Lahore's famous Shalimar Gardens, and also a museum cum library with a guest house for tourists. He wanted to turn it into an attractive tourist hub with reflections of his hometown Lahore's panorama.

The first call to visit Lahore was in 2005 when I was invited to attend the annual function of the Government College 'Old Students' Union'. Later in the year I was asked by Dr. Khalid Aftab, Vice Chancellor, G.C. University to participate in the first 'International History Conference' on 'Punjab and the Raj'. I attended the two-day conference held at Lahore in January 2006 and presented a paper 'Imperial Lahore in the Raj'. Other participants included learned historians from Pakistan and abroad including my friend Prof. Ian Talbot who had now moved over from Coventry to Southampton University.

By this time I had developed close friendly relations with M.P. Bhandara, the owner of the famous Murree Brewery and also a senator. He made frequent visits to Delhi and spent a lot of time with me at the India International Centre. A perfect gentleman, full of life, he turned into an additional attraction for my visiting Lahore, more so when he insisted that I should stay at his Lahore guest house. Whenever I went, he would join me from Rawalpindi and organized

splendid gatherings which enlarged my circle of friends at Lahore.

After the publication of the Pakistani edition of my book 'Lahore — A Sentimental Journey' in 2007 my visits to Lahore became more frequent. In 2010, I was invited to the 'International Conference on Sufism and Peace' at Islamabad. The three-day conference attended by writers, poets and intellectuals from 35 countries resolved to promote peace interfaith harmony, pluralism and re-conciliation to counter terrorism. On my return I broke my journey and spent a few days in Lahore.

Government College University began inviting me every year on the Annual Founders' Day as their guest of honour. The Ajoka Theatre with whom I had a long association made me Chairman of the 'Theatre for Peace Committee' with members from both Pakistan and India. Incidentally, I am reminded of an amusing episode about Ajoka Theatre's special showing of one of their Punjabi plays for the then Indian P.M. Shri I.K. Gujral. After the play the P.M. just held Madeeha Gauhar and patted her appreciatively for producing a great play. The photograph showing both of them led to a controversy in Pakistan and Madeeha Gauhar was taken to court by lawyers in Lahore for appearing in a photograph where she seems to be embracing Indian Prime Minister. Interestingly, a Lahore judge instead of dismissing the case as frivolous decided to serve notice to Madeeha Gauhar. This was followed by another crackpot in Karachi who went to court accusing her of dancing with the Indian P.M.

Later in 2010, I came into the limelight when my late friend Saeed Ahmed's grand-daughter Zulekha, a freelance journalist, who had met me at Islamabad, wrote a long piece titled 'Saeed and Pran — Friends for Life.' This was published by Pakistan's paper 'The News' in 'Aman Ki Asha - Destination Peace' series launched by the Times of India and Jung Group of Pakistan. By now quite a few media persons who came to know of me and every time I was in Lahore, someone would come up to interview me, usually about my days in Lahore and Indo-Pak common heritage in art and culture. I

appeared quite a few times on the Lahore local T.V. channel as well. Invariably they would ask me about my attachment to Lahore. My answer was simple i.e. 'Lahore, Lahore hai — it defies description, it can only be felt and experienced'.

The popularity of literary festivals in the sub-continent inspired a bright young entrepreneur Razi Ahmed, to ensure that Lahore does not lag behind in this field. I was invited to the inaugural Lahore Literary Festival held in February 2013. I took part in the Panel discussion on "Lahore in Literature" along with other eminent writers, Bapsi Sidhwa and Intizar Husain. The Festival was very well organized and a great success. Later, in response to an invitation I participated in the International Peace Conference organised by the World Punjabi Congress and International Sufi Council held at Lahore in December, 2013. The Conference highlighted the role of participating scholars, intellectuals and writers for the establishment of peaceful relations among countries. As nearly half the participants were from India, the emphasis was on greater peace, harmony and friendship between India and Pakistan and strengthening of trade and economic relations. I too spoke about our common heritage in art and literature and received a standing ovation when the Chairman Mr. Fakhar Zaman announced that I was 90 plus with roots in Lahore.

The following year opened with my visit to Lahore in January for chairing the 'Theatre for Peace' meeting there. It was also an occasion for the celebration of Ajoka Theatre's 30th anniversary when they launched their new play 'Lo Phir Basant Ayee'. It is a powerful satire clamouring for social justice and challenging the extremism and tolerance bigotry that led to the banning of Basant celebration and kite flying. Citing my memories of Basant in Lahore culled from my book on Lahore, the play 'Lo Phir Basant Ayee' has been dedicated to me.

I was again invited to participate in the Lahore Literary festival 2014. In addition to the regular Lahore session, I joined the Panel discussion on 'Amrita Shergill — Lahore's Lost Daughter'. Further there was an

interesting interaction with Tehmina Durrani, the celebrated author of the classic 'My Feudal Lord'. She presented me an autographed copy of her latest book 'Happy Things in Sorrow Times'.

Later in the year, I was invited to take part in the Thap (Trust for History Art and Culture, Pakistan) Conference held at Lahore in November 2014. A non-profit Trust established in 2006 by Prof. Pervaiz Vandal, Architect and his wife Sajida Vandal, former Principal, National College of Art, Thap is a forum of academics and professionals dedicated to improving the state of education, particularly in the field of Art and Culture. Their acclaimed book on 'Bhai Ram Singh', the first Indian Principal of Mayo School of Art, was released by me at Delhi in 2007. This year the Conference theme was 'Culture, Art and Architecture of the Marginalised and the Poor'. Both Pakistani and foreign scholars contributed to the deliberations of the conference.

I hope Lahore will continue calling me.

ANNEXURE 1

SONGS OF A BYGONE ERA

1. Chithiye Dard Firaq Waliye

*Chithiye, dard firaq waliye,
Ni laiya laiya sunehraha merey yar da
Chan chadbya kul aalam vekhe,
Main vin tan vekhan mukh yar da
Chithiye, dard firaq....*

*Rat haneri, badal vasda,
Nazar na avey kanda par da
Chithiye, dard firaq....*

*Likh likh chithiyan main yar wal paiyan
Pata na lage merey yar da
Chithiye, dard firaq....*

My wailing letter, symbol of my pangs of separation, shall take this message to my beloved. Everyone is having a glimpse of the rising moon. I would also love to see the face of my sweetheart. In this dark night with pouring clouds, nothing is visible, not even the opposite bank across the river. I have sent so many letters to my love but to no avail.

2. Dildar Kamandan Wala

Dildar kamandan wala ni

*La seene teer nishang janda
Tut jandey ni man huseenan dey
Jis rab di sona lang janda
Dildar kamandan wala ni....*

*Jinun zulf mashooq di dasdi ai
Ohdi aqal vajudon nasdi ai
Jinun nag zulf da das janda
Dildar kamandan wala ni....*

*Is ishaq di aiho gal adhya
Sasi mar ditti vich thal adhya
Shamas di la diti khal adhya
Mansur suli te tang janda
Dildar kamandan wala ni....*

Wherever the majestic lover passes, hearts of the sweet beauties are pierced with arrows of his glances and everyone is captivated. When he is bitten by the serpent-like curling locks of hair of the beloved, he loses his sanity and the whole world laughs at him. Love is blind and desperate, we know how Sassi met her end and Shamas and Mansur gave their lives for the sake of their loved ones.

3. Husan Da Garur

*Aida husan da garur nahin hazur chahida
Rakhna aashqan da dil wee zarur chaida
Jedha aas karke aawe
Shaida aap da kahave
Dilan tutean te rhaim zarur chaida
Aida husan*

*Jide nal akhiyan laiya
Obun dar dar na rulaiye
Ai nahin aashqan de nal dastur chahida
Aida husan....*

*Jedha dar te dige aan
 Ohda todhiye na maan
 Karna aashqan te rhaim zarur chahida
 Aida husan....*

Do not be too proud of your beauty and charm. You must show some consideration to your admirers and wooers. You should take pity on the broken hearts who live in hope and pine for you. Having given your word, do not forsake him. Adhere to the rules of love and do not disregard the one who has totally surrendered himself to you. All love-lorn suitors deserve pity.

4. Zalim Lokin Shirin Tere Shair De Oh

*Zalim lokin shirin tere shair de oh
 Dadhe guse bhare dil kahair de oh
 Hoya huqam Farhad nu ja tun
 Pahadh cheer ke nahar leya tun
 Sunke aashaq zara nahin thair de oh: Zalim lokin....*

*Tesa pakdh Farhad uth cbalya
 Ohnu Shirin de ishq ne ghalya
 Tur peya si waqt dopahar de oh: Zalim lokin....*

*Katan geya pahadh nu sher si
 Kiti koi na ohs ne der si
 Maze chakhe su ishq wali lehar de oh: Zalim lokin....*

Oh, Shirin, how cruel are the people of your town! They are full of rage and heartless. Lovers are not afraid and would risk their all for their sweethearts. Lost in his love for Shirin, Farhad heard the command and like a lion instantly picked up his axe and went forward to pierce the mountain and make way for the water canal to pass through. That was the joy and thrill of love.

5. Chhai Baba Dang Walya

*Pala mar ke bujha gayi diwa
Ke akh nal gal kar gayi—Chhai....
Chhai jind gayi basre nu gayi
Ki modhi baba dang walya sardara
Main teriyan bhuawan gudian—Chhai....*

*Ranan walian de pakan paronthe ni Gubindiya
Ke chhadyan di ag na bale—Chhai....
Kedhe yar da tata dhudh pita ni Gubindiye
Ke sadh gayin lal bulian—Chhai....*

*Tere dar te bhichheya mang de Gubindiye
Sajna nu khair pa dayin—Chhai....*

With a wave of her veil, she put off the light and conveyed a message through her glances. Oh hear Gobindi, the married ones are enjoying the taste of buttered bread while the bachelors sit by the hearths gone cold. Who is that lucky recipient of your favours whose hot milk has singed your lips. Oh Gobindi, I am seeking alms at your doorway, please disappoint me not.

6. Maje Di Mastani Jatti

*Maje di mastani jatti
Amarsar Nawan Chali,*

*Amarsar jaiye te ki kuj liyaiai,
Mouli dandasa kanghi patti,
Patti oh maiya—Maje di Mastani jatti....*

*Amarsar jaiye te ki kuj khaiiai,
Puri chhole te thandi lassi,
Lassi oh maiya—Maje di Mastani jatti....*

*Amarsar jaiye te kithe dera laiai,
Mule de baithak hethan hutti
Hutti oh maiya—Maje di Mastani jatti....*

The cheerful Jatti of the Maja region of Punjab is on her way to Amritsar to take a dip in the sacred tank of the Golden Temple. There, she will do her shopping also and buy dentifrice, combs, ribbons, etc. For her meals she will taste fried pancakes and curried gram and chase these with buttermilk. For lodgings, she has chosen the *baithak* above the shop of Mula.

7. Gawandi Akhan Marde

*Gawandi akhan marde,
Main mardi jawan wai,
Aundi jandi nu ghangure marde,
Main lambu lawan wai — Gwandi akhan....*

*Chhaje te banerean ton luk luk jhakde
Mape ainan luchyan nu kush wi na akhde
Jad surma pawan we — Gwandi akhan....*

*Bude te jawan aithe sabe badmasb ne
Kudiyan nu dekhde ee karde mazak ne
Hai kithe jawan we — Gwandi akhan....*

I am embarrassed and die of shame when my neighbours wink at me. I wish I could burn them alive as they come up with sounds and sighs while I walk up and down the street. Hiding themselves behind parapet walls and balconies, they direct their gaze at me when I put collyrium in my eyes. Their parents teach no manners to these loafers. Both old and young are immoral and make remarks at the sight of young girls. Where can I find an escape?

8. Dil Sohniaan Nu Dena

*Dil Sohniaan nu dena ai nadani hundi ai
 Karni jan ke barbad zindgani hundi ai
 Pahle chayin chayin lende
 Pichon nahin je todh nabhande
 Eho aashqan nu nit parshani hundi ai
 Dil Sohniaan nu....*

*Uton disde bhole bhale
 Wichon dil de dhadey kale
 Aashaq mar jan ena bhane kurbani hundi ai
 Dil Sohniaan nu....*

*Pahle teer nainan de maran
 Seena bijar frakon sadhan
 Ajkal de mashooqan di nishani hundi ai
 Dil Sohniaan nu....*

It is childish to lose your heart to the fair ones, as this is a sure way to self-destruction. To begin with they will encourage you but only to let you down in the long run. That is always a dilemma for the lovers. Outwardly they seem so simple and straight but in fact they can never be trusted and they will laugh at your sacrifices. After luring you, they will forsake you and make you pine for them. These are the peculiar traits of today's sweethearts.

9. Char Sau Wee

*Kinu kainde char sau wee
 Bhai enu kainde char sau wee
 Ik munde da vyah rachaya
 Sau rupaya sagan dharaya
 Vyah vele munda nazar na aya*

*Kise da munda kisi di dhee
Bhai enu kainde char sau wee*

*Panjan rupaian di layi mithiai
Mithiai apne yar nu phadbai
Halwai nu kaina de mithiai
Mainu ki pata eh kaun si
Bhai enu kainde char sau wee*

*Vauti nal kapat paya
Aape ja saurai chhad aaya
Pichhon aa ke raula paya
Yaro oh tan natth gai si
Bhai enu kainde char sau wee*

*Bhabo moyi te mal hath aaya
Lokan de kaiye kuj dan karaya
Dan apne yar nu dwaya
Pichhon ja ke wapas lyaya
Bolo yar oh kaun si
Bhai enu kainde char sau wee*

Who is a four-twenty (cheat)? Here is he. He arranged a marriage of a boy and received a hundred rupees as a token gift. On the wedding day, there was no trace of the boy and his parents! Once he brought five rupees' worth of sweets from a halwai and passed on the sweets basket to his friend who went away. Later, he demanded sweets from the halwai on the plea that he had merely passed on the first basket to his customer as he thought it was intended for him. At another time, after a quarrel with his wife, the four-twenty took her away and left her with her parents. On his return he announced that she had run away. On the death of his mother he inherited a small fortune. On the advice of elders, he doled out a portion of it in charity but only to a friend of his from whom he recovered it the next day. That was our friend four-twenty, the master trickster.

10. Galan Kar Kar Hasde Ne

*Galan kar kar hasde ne
Zalim lok bhaidhe methon mahi khasde ne*

*Sun kudhiye Punjab diye—ohye
Dukh tainu kis gal da
Hai, hai soniye-sun kaliye gulab diye*

*Galan kar kar....
Sun mundya Baloch dya—ohye
Niki jeyi jindhdi nu
Hai, hai chanwe—dukhan dardan daboch leya
Galan kar kar....*

*Wai main dil nu bhula baithi—ohye
Yarian laiyan ne
Hai, hai chanwe-hun todh nibhawange
Galan kar kar....*

The cruel onlookers make me a butt of their jokes and snatch my beloved from me. Oh my darling of Punjab, looking like a rose petal, what makes you sad? Oh my Baloch boy, at my tender age I am burdened with so much sorrow and heartache. Having fallen in love, I am determined to go ahead with it, come what may.

11. Ik Daya Daya

*Ik daya daya
Has khel gawaya,
Do daya wee
Sheran wangan jee!
Tin daya tee
Ghar jam paiyi dheer!
Char daya chali*

Gal paiyi panjali!
Panj daya panja
Hun nahin koyi cha!
Chhe daya sath
Hath ch phad layi lath!
Sat daya satar
bundh gaiyi behatar
Ath daya assi
Gal na kise dusee!
Nau daya nabe
Gal na kise nu phabe!
Das daya sau
Na koi dar te na koi bhau!

The first few years of childhood are spent laughing and playing about. On reaching twenty a man is full of youth and a daredevil like a lion. At thirty he fathers a daughter and as he reaches forty, he is overwhelmed by the burden of family problems. At fifty he forsakes all desires. When sixty, he picks up a stick for a support. As he reaches seventy, he goes bonkers. On attaining eighty, no one tells him anything and at ninety there is no listener around. Finally at one hundred, nobody takes any notice of his existence.

12. Hukah Huqam Khuda Da

Hukah huqam Khuda da
Chillum hukai di dhee
Jithe hukah dekhiye
Othe laiyai pee!

Hukah huqam Khuda da
Chillum hukai di run
Jithe hukah dekhiye
Othe daiyai bhun

Hubble bubble is the command of God and the *chillum* is its daughter.

Wherever we catch sight of it, we promptly take a puff. Hubble bubble is the command of God and the *chillum* is its wife. Wherever we see a hukah, we smash it into bits.

13. Suhag Raat (Honeymoon Night)

*Aji din dubya tarkalan paiyan
Te gharon gharin sub sakhian gaiyan
Il chidhiyan sub alan malai
Te il kavan sub jungle chale*

*Aji rahi pende hun sub labhan thekane
Te chor uchakyan mil badle pane
Faqir ginan tasbih de manke
Te beswa baith gayi ban than ke
Aji raat sir te aayi ah
Te taryan jhal mal layi ah*

*Aji ik vowti ai maklavai aayi
Te ki kuj usne shan banayi
Rata palang te sej manbhani
Te late gayi hai ghar di rani*

*Aji aidar phul to odhar kaliyan
Te do tin kol nananan khaliyan
Navin bhabi diyan latkan dekhani
Te rang roop te matken dekhani*

*Aji nuk wich nathni to bahin chudha
Te bulan da rang gudha gudha
Te ghadhi mudhi bawan phalawe
Te ramzan nal payi ai samjhawe*

*Jao ni bheno kawela hoye
Son jao son da wela hoye*

*Wai heera kukdha aj navin bolin
Te din chadh jan da raz na kholin*

*Dakre ho jayain oh ghadyala
Tun ai raat katavan wala
Aji raat khushi di ayi ah
Te taryan jhal mal layi ah*

The sun having set, darkness descends.
A time for playmates to return home,
for birds, kites, crows and sparrows
to fly back to their nests in the woods.

Travellers look for night shelters as
robbers set out on their prowl.
A time for mendicants to count their beads,
for bedecked courtesans their patrons to receive.

The bride has arrived at her husband's abode,
Bejewelled and attired, the queen of the house
is lolling on the auspicious bed.
She lies amidst blossoms and buds
as sisters-in-law stand close by,
captivated by the charms and gestures
of their brother's wife.

Sporting a shining nosering and bangles bright
the bride has her lips coloured crimson.
Time and again she stretches her arms,
conveys with gestures her heart's desire.

Dear sisters, it is getting late,
time to sleep, better go to bed.
O dear clock, for a change
do not announce the morn.

Let the time clock be shattered,
nothing should disturb us.
There's blissful night before us,
the glittering stars keep our company.

14. Pagdhi Sambhal, O Jatta!

*Pagdhi sambhal O Jatta, Pagdhi sambhal oye
Lut gaya mal oye.*

*Faslan nu kha gaye keerhe, tan te nahin tere lirhe
Bhukh ne khub nichorhe, rondai ne bal oye
Pagdhi sambhal O Jatta....*

*Ban de ne tere leader, raje te khan Bahadur
Tenou ne khawan khatar, bichh dai nai jal oye
Pagdhi sambhal O Jatta....*

*Hind hai tera mandir, ohda pujari tu
Jhallega kadon tak, apni khavari tu,
Ladhne te marne di karlai tayari tu,
Pagdhi sambhal O Jatta....*

*Seenay te khave teer, Ranjha tu, desh hai Heer,
Sambhal ke chal tu Veer,
Pagdhi sambhal O Jatta....*

*Tussi kyon dabde, veero ohdi pukar oye
Hoke ekathe Veero, maro lalkar oye
Tarhi do hathon vajje, chhatiyan nu tan oye
Pagdhi sambhal Jatta, Pagdhi sambhal oye....*

(Revolutionary song by Banke Dayal, 1907)

**Safeguard Your Turban,
Oh Jatta! (*Son of the soil*)**

Watch over your turban (symbol of honour), Oh Jatta,

Your crops have been swallowed by insects (foreign rulers)
Your body is devoid of clothing,
Hunger has drained your energy,
Your children are wailing —
Watch over your turban, Oh Jatta.

Exploiters, Rajahs and Khan Bahadurs claim to be your leaders,
The three have thrown their nets to trap and destroy you, Watch
over your turban, Oh Jatta.

India is your temple and you are its priest,
How long will you put up with this insult and humiliation,
Get ready for the fight and martyrdom,
Watch over your turban, Oh Jatta.

Bare your chest to receive the arrows,
You are Ranjah (wooer),
And your country is Heer (sweetheart),
Oh brother march on carefully—
Watch over your turban, Oh Jatta.

Why are you frightened, my brave people,
Get united and answer the call by challenging the aggressor
It takes two hands to clap,
Raise your heads and faces,
Watch over your turban, Oh Jatta.

ANNEXURE 2

GOVERNMENT COLLEGE, LAHORE¹*

THE COLLEGE WAS OPENED on the 1st of January, 1864. The present building was begun in 1872 and completed in 1877. It is affiliated to the Panjab University and provides instruction as follows:—

For the M.A. Examination in English, Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, History, Economics, Philosophy, Psychology, Mathematics and Political Science.

Students are admitted to the Honours Schools (B.Sc. and M.Sc.) in Physics, Chemistry, Botany and Zoology and the M.Sc. Honours School in Technical Chemistry.

For the B.A. Examination in English, Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, History, Economics, Philosophy, A and B Courses of Mathematics, Political Science, Geography, French, Urdu, Hindi and Punjabi, including Honours Classes in English, Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, History, Economics, Geography, Philosophy, Psychology and Mathematics.

For the B.A. Examination in English, Sanskrit, Arabic, Botany and Zoology and additional subjects as above.

For the Intermediate Examination the College is affiliated in English, Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, History, Geography, Philosophy, Mathematics, Biology, Physics, Chemistry, French, Urdu, Hindi and Panjabi.

There is an Army Class for special tuition of candidates who wish to enter the Indian Military Academy, Dehra Dun or the Royal Indian Navy.

¹ * Source: *The Calendar of the University of Punjab* for the year 1939-40.

The College buildings comprise the Main Building in which are situated the College Hall, Lecture rooms, the office, sports centre, and the Fazl-i-Husain Library which has been constructed at a total cost of about Rs. 1,30,000, the Chemistry Laboratory; the Biological Laboratories with Natural History and Botanical Museums and the Physics Laboratories.

There is a Laboratory for Experimental Psychology in the Physics Building and a Weather Observatory within the College premises for Geography students.

The University Honours Schools of Botany, Zoology and Physics are located in the Government College.

There is a Gymnasium fully fitted and a covered Swimming Bath.

The College Compound includes playing grounds for Hockey, Football, Volley-ball, Basket-ball, Wrestling, Gatka, Badminton and Boxing. In addition, there are two more grounds and a cricket ground held jointly with the University, at the Chauburji. There is a Boat-Club with 17 boats on the river Ravi and a miniature range for rifle practice.

The Principal and five members of the teaching staff reside within the College precincts.

The Quadrangle or the Old Hostel has 100 cubicles and 14 dormitories, a common room, 6 kitchens and 6 dining-rooms and accommodates 156 boarders.

The New Hostel has 11 special suites of 2 rooms, 72 cubicles and 38 dormitories, accommodating 195 boarders, and a common room. There are 6 bath rooms and 6 lavatories with modern sanitation and 3 dining-rooms. Two tube-wells provide water for the hostels and playing fields.

Each hostel is under the supervision of a Warden and a resident Superintendent. The Medical Officer attends the College daily and medical attendance is free.

A full time Assistant Medical Officer is in attendance to supervise the physical examination of the students and advise on sanitation and general health.

The tuition fees payable are given below:

FEES

TUITION FEES

	<i>Per mensem</i>		
	Rs.	as.	p.
Intermediate Classes (24 months)	12	4	0
B.A. and B.Sc. (Pass) Classes (24 months)	15	8	0
M.A. and M.Sc. (Physics old type), (24 months)	20	12	0
B.Sc. Honours Schools, I and II Years (24 months)	16	8	0
B.Sc. Honours Schools, III Year (12 months)	20	12	0
M.Sc. Honours Schools, IV Year (12 months)	25	12	0

Students reading for Honours in the Arts Honours Classes will pay an additional fee of Rs. 2 per mensem. Students reading French in the Intermediate and B.A. Classes will pay an additional fee of Rs. 3 per mensem.

Students reading Geography in the Intermediate and B.A. Classes will pay an additional fee of Annas twelve per mensem.

In addition, each student is required to pay the following:

	Rs.	as.	p.	
Admission Fee	10	0	0	
University Registration Fee	5	0	0	on registration.
University Special Fee	3	0	0	per annum in subsequent years.
Union Club Subscription	2	4	0	per mensem.
College Magazine	2	0	0	per annum.
Library Deposit	10	0	0	on admission.

For Boarders:

Hostel fee (according to accommodation)

	Rs.	as.	p.	
Electric Light Fee	2	0	0	per mensem.*
Hostel and Mess Deposit	15	0	0	on admission to a hostel.

A fresh admission fee (including University re-admission fee) of Rs. 11 will be charged from a student who leaves the College and re-joins. No fresh entrance fee will be levied from students of the Government College, Lahore, who re-join the College after success

or failure in a University Examination.

Fees from Students attending University Classes

Rates of fees charged by the College and the University separately from the Government College students attending the University Classes

Class	Subject	Prescribed rate of fee to the university	Payable to the College
-------	---------	--	------------------------

Breakage Fee

<i>Honours School:</i>		(Annual)		
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
I Year	Chemistry and one other science subject.	42		42
	Physics	21	20	1
	Chemistry and one other science subject.	42	20	22
II Year	Physics	21	20	1
	Chemistry	30	20	10
III Year	Physics	30	20	10
	Chemistry	42	30	12
IV Year	Physics	42	30	12

Class	Subject	Prescribed rate of fee to the university	Payable to the College
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Tuition Fee

<i>Honours School:</i>		(Annual)		
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
I Year	Chemistry	16-8-0	2	14-8-0
	Botany	16-8-0	2	14-8-0
	Zoology	16-8-0	2	14-8-0
	Physics	16-8-0	6	10-8-0
	History	16-8-0	6	10-8-0
	Chemistry	16-8-0	..	16-8-0
II Year	Physics	16-8-0	8	8-8-0
	History	16-8-0	8	8-8-0

III Year	Chemistry	20-12-0	..	20-12-0
	Physics	20-12-0	15	5-12-0
	History	20-12-0	10	10-12-0
IV Year	Chemistry	25-12-0	20	5-12-0
	Physics	25-12-0	15	10-12-0
	History	20-12-0	10	10-12-0

B.A. Classes:

III Year	Astronomy	15-8-0	3	12-8-0
III Year		15-8-0	3	12-8-0

M.A. Classes:

1. Mathematics	20-12-0	4	16-12-0
2. History	20-12-0	4	16-12-0
3. Economics	20-12-0	4	16-12-0
4. Political Science	20-12-0	4	16-12-0
5. Arabic	20-12-0	3	17-12-0
6. Persian	20-12-0	3	17-12-0
7. Sanskrit	20-12-0	3	17-12-0

**Breakage Fee from Science Students towards Cost of Science
Material and Breakages**

*Per mensem**Intermediate Classes:*

	Rs.	as.	p.
Physics	0	12	0
Chemistry	0	12	0
Biology	1	0	0

B.A and B.Sc. Classes:

	Rs.	as.	p.
Experimental Psychology	1	0	0
Any other Science subject	1	12	0

M.A and M.Sc. Classes:

	Rs.	as.	p.
Experimental Psychology	1	0	0
Any other Science subject—			
I Year	2	8	0
II Year	3	8	0

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Lecturer in Chemistry.

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GLOSSARY

- aaja* — come
achkan — long coat
ai — this
aj — today
akh, akhian — eye, eyes
akhara — wrestling plot
bacha — child
baithak — meeting room
banana — make
barat — marriage party
bhochhan — dupatta, veil
bhand — jester
bhan — break
chabacha — water trough
chadar — sheet of cloth
chalda — walking
char — four
charkha — spinning wheel
chaubara — one storey room
chheti — quick, hurry
chhika — a metal or wicker basket tied to a string
chopdhi — buttered
chhapdh — pond
chhole — curried gram
dai — midwife
darzi — tailor

- dekhna* — see
dekho — look
dekhana — show
dena — give
desi — indigenous
din — day
dhiyan — daughters
dhobi — washerman
dore — cord, twine
Farsi — Persian
gairat — discretion, modesty
ghagri — a kind of skirt
ghar — home
gohya — dung cake
guddis — she-dolls, kites
guddas — he-dolls, a type of kite
gwala — cowherd
gwar — peasant, good-for-nothing
halwai — sweetmeat seller
hath — hand
haveli — mansion
haya — prestige, respect
hun — now
jalsa — function, gathering
jat — caste
jee — mind
janjghar — house for a marriage party to stay
jhuggi — hut
julae — weavers
juraban — socks
katna — spin
kalaiwala — one who tins metal utensils
kanak — wheat
kandan — walls
khana — eat
khedna — play

- khilari* — expert in any game or sport
- kitab* — book
- kucha* — bye-lane
- kudhi* — girl
- kulcha* — wheat pancake
- kulfa, kulfi* — indigenous ice-cream
- labna* — find
- laitya* — lying
- lassi* — buttermilk
- latoo* — spinning top
- luk-chhip jana* — hide-and-seek game
- ma* — mother
- madari* — juggler
- main* — I
- malang* — hippy, free from worldly cares and worries
- malta* — orange
- makai da dana* — corn grain
- marad* — male, He-man
- mangna* — beg
- marzi* — wish
- mashqi* — water carrier
- mera* — mine
- milna* — meet
- mirasi* — minstrel
- mishar* — water carrier
- mochi* — cobbler
- mohalla* — residential quarters
- moya* — dead
- munda* — boy
- nain* — barber's wife
- nahana* — take bath
- neem* — half, semi
- nun* — daughter-in-law
- pani* — water
- parai* — belonging to others
- padhna* — study

- pehalwan* — wrestler
phirda — moving
pyara — dear (M)
pyari — dear (F)
puri — fried pancake
put — son
pan — woman
sadah — ours
sharam — shame
shudai — loony, nutty
sukh — contentment, happiness
thanda — cold
utarna — take off
vechna — sell
vohti — wife
zamin — land
zan — woman
zar — wealth

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