

**GUEST OF HONOR  
SYED AHMED  
MASOOD  
GREAT GREAT-  
GRANDSON OF SIR  
SYED AHMED KHAN**



**SPEECH AT THE SIR SYED TALEEM CONFERENCE**

**BISMILLAH IR RAHMAN IR RAHIM**

**MR. MINISTER, MR. PETER JACOB, DR. JAFFAR, DR. SYEDA ARIFA, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, ASSALAM-O-ALAIKUM.**

- 1- MY NAME IS SYED AHMED MASOOD AND I AM THE ONLY LIVING DIRECT DESCENDENT OF SIR SYED AHMED KHAN IN PAKISTAN.
  
- 2- I WAS BORN IN DELHI PRIOR TO PARTITION, (WHICH RATHER GIVES MY AGE AWAY!) WHEN QUAID-E-AZAM MUHAMMAD ALI JINNAH HELD ME IN HIS ARMS IN 1946 AND SAID TO MY FATHER:

***QUOTE"AKBAR, I WILL GIVE YOU PAKISTAN WITH THE AID OF MY STENOGRAPHER, IT IS UPTO HIS GENERATION TO SUSTAIN IT"  
UNQUOTE***

I WAS OF COURSE ON THAT OCCASION TOO YOUNG TO UNDERSTAND WHAT WAS BEING SAID. WHEN I WAS OLDER AND MY FATHER RECOUNTED THIS INCIDENT TO ME, I UNDERSTOOD THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE QUAID'S WORDS FOR THE QUAID WAS NOT CALLING FOR STREET PROTESTS, DHARNAS OR VIOLENCE TO ACHIEVE HIS GOAL, WHICH APPEARS TO BE THE PREFERRED WAY TO GO THESE DAYS. INSTEAD, HE WAS TOTALLY CONFIDENT IN HIS ABILITY TO GAIN SUCCESS THROUGH HIS PERSISTENT ADVOCACY AND THE WRITTEN AND SPOKEN WORD, PROVING AGAIN THAT "THE POWER OF THE PEN IS MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD". WE WOULD DO WELL TO ABIDE BY THIS MAXIM TODAY.

3- ACCORDINGLY, PAKISTAN BECAME AN INDEPENDENT NATION ON THE 14<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST, 1947 AND MY FATHER, MY MOTHER AND I MIGRATED TO KARACHI WITH WHATEVER WE COULD CARRY IN EARLY 1948. I SHOULD ADD THAT I WAS BEING CARRIED AS WELL.

4- SIR SYED HAD ONLY TWO SONS, SYED HAMID AND SYED MAHMOOD. SYED HAMID HAD ONLY ONE DAUGHTER, AHMADI BEGUM. SYED MAHMOOD HAD ONLY ONE SON, SIR SYED ROSS MASOOD.

SIR ROSS HAD ONLY TWO SONS, MY LATE UNCLE SYED ENVER MASOOD AND MY LATE FATHER SYED AKBAR MASOOD. MY UNCLE HAD ONLY TWO DAUGHTERS, SCHEHERZADE MASOOD AND SHAHERNAZ MASOOD, BOTH NOW RESIDING IN INDIA.

MY FATHER HAD ONLY TWO SONS, MYSELF AND MY YOUNGER BROTHER SYED MAHMOOD MASOOD WHO LIVES WITH HIS FAMILY OUTSIDE PAKISTAN. IT WAS MUSHARRAF JEHAN BEGUM, MY GREAT GRANDMOTHER'S WISH THAT MY UNCLE OR MY FATHER'S FIRST BORN

SON BE NAMED SYED AHMED AND THE YOUNGER SON SYED MAHMOOD. MASOOD WAS KEPT IN RECOGNITION OF MY GRANDFATHER, SIR SYED ROSS MASOOD.

MY WIFE, SHAHIN AND I HAVE ONLY TWO CHILDREN, OUR DAUGHTER ALIYA MASOOD AND OUR SON SYED AAMIR MASOOD, BOTH OF WHOM ALSO NOW FIND THEMSELVES LIVING OUTSIDE PAKISTAN WITH THEIR RESPECTIVE FAMILIES.

- 5- SIR SYED WAS BORN IN DELHI ON 17<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER, 1817 TO A SOCIALLY PROMINENT AND INTELLECTUALLY DISTINGUISHED FAMILY WHICH HAD CONSIDERABLE INFLUENCE IN THE COURT OF BAHADUR SHAH ZAFAR, THE LAST MUGHAL EMPEROR.

HIS ANCESTORS CAME FROM ARABIA THROUGH WHAT WAS THEN PERSIA (NOW IRAN) TO BOKHARA IN CENTRAL ASIA AND FROM BOKHARA TO DELHI DURING THE REIGN OF THE MUGHAL EMPEROR HUMAYUN IN THE 1500S. HIS PATERNAL GRANDFATHER SYED MUHAMMAD HADI WAS A GENERAL ON WHOM THE THEN MUGHAL EMPEROR BAHADUR SHAH ZAFAR HAD BESTOWED MANY TITLES AND HIS MATERNAL GRANDFATHER KHAWAJA FARIDUDDIN WAS CONSIDERED THE EMPEROR BAHADUR SHAH ZAFAR'S DE FACTO PRIME MINISTER.

KHAWAJA FARIDUDDIN WAS A MAN OF MANY TALENTS AND HAD A GREAT INFLUENCE ON SIR SYED. HE WAS HIGHLY RESPECTED AND HAD MANY SENIOR ENGLISH OFFICIALS OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY AS HIS STUDENTS WHOM HE TAUGHT SUBJECTS AS VARIED AS PHILOSOPHY, ASTROLOGY AND ALSO ARCHERY. ONE SUCH STUDENT

WAS SIR DAVID OCHTERLONY WHO WAS THE HEAD OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY IN DELHI, A VERY POWERFUL INDIVIDUAL IN HIS TIME.

SIR SYED'S FATHER, SYED MUHAMMAD MUTTAQI, WAS A SCHOLAR OF STANDING AND A DEEPLY PIOUS MAN. HE SUPPORTED HIS FAMILY ON INHERITED COURT PENSIONS AND SIR SYED'S FORMAL EDUCATION WAS, THEREFORE, LIMITED TO THE TRADITIONAL TRAINING OF A LOCAL ARABIC MADRASSA. AFTER HIS FATHER'S DEATH IN 1838 AND THE COURT PENSION CEASED, SIR SYED REFUSED A COMFORTABLE SINECURE OR POSITION IN THE EMPEROR'S COURT AND TOOK A JUNIOR POSITION IN THE OFFICES OF THE BRITISH EAST INDIA COMPANY MUCH TO HIS FAMILY'S ANNOYANCE. THROUGH HIS ABILITY AND HARD-WORK, HOWEVER, HE WENT ON TO BECOME THE SADR AMIN OR SUB-JUDGE AT BIJNOR IN 1855.

INTERESTINGLY, SIR SYED'S CHARACTER WAS FORGED NOT SO MUCH BY HIS FATHER, BUT BY HIS MOTHER WHO WAS A VERY CARING WOMAN PERFORMING MANY CHARITABLE WORKS, GOING OUT OF HER WAY TO HELP OTHERS LESS FORTUNATE. FOR WHICH SHE ALWAYS RESERVED 5% OF HER INCOME. AS ALTAF HUSSAIN HALI WRITES IN HIS MEMORABLE BIOGRAPHY OF SIR SYED AHMED KHAN "ONCE WHEN SIR SYED WAS ASKED ABOUT HIS CHILDHOOD, HE ANSWERED THAT ALL HIS EARLY LIFE COULD BE SUMMED UP BY THE FOLLOWING WORDS:

**A MOTHER'S CARE MAKES CHILDHOOD SEEM LIKE  
PARADISE EACH DAY**

**BUT WHEN WE FACE THE WORLD ALONE HOW SOON WE LOSE  
THE WAY".**

HOWEVER, SIR SYED'S MOTHER HAD STRICT PRINCIPLES. THERE IS A STORY ABOUT SIR SYED WHEN HE WAS 12 YEARS OLD, HE LOST HIS TEMPER WITH AN OLD SERVANT OF THE FAMILY AND SLAPPED HIM. BUT HIS MOTHER HEARD THIS INCIDENT SHE WAS SO ANGRY AND SHE TOLD HIM TO LEAVE THE HOUSE IMMEDIATELY WHICH HE DID. HE WAS ONLY ABLE TO RETURN A WEEK LATER AFTER HE HAD PROFUSELY APOLOGIZED TO THE OLD SERVANT.

ALTAF HUSSAIN HALI GOES ON TO WRITE THAT "SIR SYED SPENT HIS EARLY YOUTH IN A VERY LIVELY AND COLOURFUL MANNER. HE WOULD TAKE PART IN MUSICAL RECITALS, GO ON PICNICS WITH HIS FRIENDS AND WAS SEEN AT MOST SOCIETY FUNCTIONS. HE WAS ALSO AN ACCOMPLISHED ARCHER AND SWIMMER, BOTH SPORTS AT WHICH HE EXCELLED. HOWEVER, HIS LIFE CHANGED DRAMATICALLY AFTER THE DEATH OF HIS ELDER BROTHER SYED MUHAMMAD TO WHOM HE WAS VERY CLOSE AND IT WAS THEN THAT HE CHANGED HIS MANNERS, PUT ASIDE HIS FASHIONABLE CLOTHS, SHAVED HIS HEAD, GREW A BEARD AND DRESSED IN A MORE ORTHODOX WAY".

- 6- FOR A CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNT OF HIS PHYSICAL APPEARANCE, HIS ENGLISH BIOGRAPHER COL. GRAHAM RECORDS;

***QUOTE "HE IS OF MIDDLE HEIGHT AND OF MASSIVE BUILD, WEIGHING UPWARDS OF NINETEEN STONE (ROUGHLY EQUAL TO 266 POUNDS). HIS FACE IS LEONINE (SHER JAISA)—A RUGGED WITNESS TO HIS DETERMINATION AND ENERGY. IF, HOWEVER, RATHER STERN AND FOBIDDING WHEN AT REST, IT LIGHTS UP GENIALLY WHEN SPEAKING, REFLECTING THE WARMTH OF HEART WHICH HE SO LARGELY POSSESSES" UNQUOTE.***

INTERESTINGLY IN ALL OF HIS PICTURES, SIR SYED IS DEPICTED WITH A RATHER LARGE WHITE BEARD. WHAT IS PERHAPS NOT WIDELY KNOWN IS THAT SIR SYED KEPT A FULL BEARD TO HIDE THE GOITER OR GROWTH THAT HAD DEVELOPED ON HIS THROAT WHICH IN THOSE DAYS COULD NOT BE SURGICALLY REMOVED.

WHAT IS ALSO NOT COMMONLY KNOWN IS THAT THE KHAN AT THE END OF SIR SYED'S NAME DID NOT DENOTE FAMILY ORIGINS. IT WAS A PART OF THE KHITAB THAT SIR SYED WAS AWARDED "KHAN BAHADAR" WHICH IS WHY NONE OF US HAVE A KHAN AT THE END OF OUR NAMES.

7- SIR SYED WAS A MAN OF MANY FACETS, HE WAS A PIONEER OF THE RENAISSANCE AND REFORM MOVEMENT AMONG THE MUSLIMS OF INDIA, INDEED OF THE ISLAMIC UMMAH. SYED SAEED JAFRI SAHAB, AN M.SC FROM ALIGARH, CONTENDS THAT "SIR SYED'S TOWERING PERSONALITY AS A COLLOSUS DOMINATED THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF MUSLIMS OF THE SOUTH ASIAN SUB-CONTINENT IN A MANNER THAT IS UNPARALLELED. HE WAS A SELFLESS LEADER, A REMARKABLE STATESMAN, AN UNEQUALED ORGANIZER OF INSTITUTIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS, A LAWYER, AN ARCHEOLOGIST, THE FOUNDER OF A NEW PROSE STYLE IN URDU, AN AUTHOR OF SEVERAL BOOKS, A JOURNALIST EDITING SEVERAL PAPERS AND JOURNALS, AN OUTSTANDING EDUCATIONIST, A RATIONALIST WITH A

DEEP FAITH IN HIS RELIGION, OFFERING A TAFSEER (COMMENTARY), A MORAL REFORMER WHO, THROUGH HIS JOURNAL TEHZEEB-UL-AKHLAQ TRIED TO UPLIFT A MORIBUND SOCIETY AND, ABOVE ALL, A LEADER WHOSE ASPIRATIONS HAVE SERVED TO INSPIRE COUNTLESS GENERATIONS". SUFFICE IT TO SAY, HE WAS A VERY VERSTYLE PERSONALITY WHO LEFT NO SPHERE OF LIFE UNTOUCHED.

HOWEVER, SIR SYED'S CROWING ACHIEVEMENT REMAINS THE MOHAMMADAN ANGLO ORIENTAL (MAO) COLLEGE THE FOUNDATION STONE OF WHICH WAS LAID IN JANUARY, 1877 BY SIR SYED AND LORD ROBERT LYTTON THE THEN BRITISH VICE ROY OF INDIA. THE COLLEGE WAS AWARDED A UNIVERSITY CHARTER THROUGH AN ACT OF THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT IN DECEMBER, 1920 ALMOST EXACTLY A 100 YEARS AGO.

I AM PROUD TO SAY I HAVE THE ORIGINAL SILVER KKHURPI, HAMMER AND ANGLE IRON USED FOR LAYING THE FOUNDATION STONE TOGETHER WITH MANY OTHER OF SIR SYED'S MEMORABLIA. IF ANYONE IS INTERESTED, I WOULD BE HAPPY TO SHOW THESE TO YOU WHENEVER YOU ARE IN ISLAMABAD.

8- SIR SYED'S MISSION IN ESTABLISHING THE MAO COLLEGE WAS TO PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH NOT ONLY A MODERN EDUCATION OF THE BEST AND HIGHEST QUALITY, BUT ALSO MORAL AND SOCIAL TRAINING COMBINED WITH CHARACTER BUILDING AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT. INDEED ONE OF THE THREE STATED OBJECTIVES OF THE MAO COLLEGE WAS QUOTE TO GIVE AN EDUCATION WHICH, WHILE DEVELOPING INTELLECT, WOULD PROVIDE PHYSICAL TRAINING, FOSTER GOOD MANNERS AND IMPROVE THE MORAL CHARACTER UNQUOTE IN SIR SYED'S OWN WORDS TO CREATE AN 'INSAAN' AND LATER A QUOM.

THESE ESSENTIAL CRITERIA REMAINED THE ESSENCE OF THE EDUCATION IMPARTED BY THE ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY (AMU). THE MAO COLLEGE WAS THEREFORE, THE GENESIS FOR THE ALIGARH MOVEMENT WHICH LED TO THE FOUNDING OF THE ALL INDIA MUSLIM EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE, THE ALL INDIA MUSLIM LEAGUE, THE ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY AND ULTIMATELY, IN 1947, TO THE CREATION OF THE NATION STATE OF PAKISTAN.

FOR SIR SYED FIRMLY HELD TO THE BELIEF THAT;



**QUOTE HUM KO MUSALMANO KAY LEYE TAALEEM SEY ZIYADA  
WOH CHEEZ KARNI HEY JIS KO HUM TARBIYAT KEHTEY HAIN AUR  
JO QUOM KO QUOM BAN NAY KEY LEYE AISI HAY JAISI JAAN BADAN  
KAY LEYE.**

**AE DOSTO MUJ KO YEH BAAT KUCH ZIYADA KHUSH KARNAY WALI  
NAHEEN KEH KISI MUSALMAN NAY B.A YA M.A. KI DEGREE HASIL  
KAR LEE HAY, MERI KHUSHI QUOM KO QUOM BANANAY KEE HAY  
UNQUOTE**

8A BOTH SIR SYED'S LETTER TO LORD CANNING AND HIS PUBLICATION OF *ASBAB-E-BAGHAWAT-E-HIND* CLEARLY REJECT THE OFTEN REPEATED ALLEGATION THAT SIR SYED WAS A SYCOPHANT OF THE BRITISH. THIS IS THE BELIEF I WANT TO FORCEFULLY REJECT AS NOTHING COULD BE FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH.

THE REAL SPIRIT OF SIR SYED CAN BE JUDGED FROM ONE OF HIS LETTERS WHEN HE WROTE:

***QUOTE "I AM A MUSLIM, LIVING IN INDIA. I BELONG TO THE ARAB RACE. FROM THESE TWO POINTS YOU MAY NOTE THAT BY MY RELIGION AND BY MY BLOOD I AM A RADICAL. ARABS CANNOT TOLERATE A FOREIGN RULE. THEY LIVE AND DIE FOR THEIR FREEDOM. MY RELIGION ISLAM ALSO TEACHES RADICAL PRINCIPLES. IT DOES NOT FAVOUR MONARCHY OR HEREDITARY KINGSHIP. ISLAM APPROVES OF HEAD OF STATE DULY ELECTED BY THE PEOPLE" UNQUOTE***

SIR SYED WENT ON TO SAY:

***QUOTE “WHAT SHOULD BE OUR LINE OF ACTION? THE ANSWER IS SELF-DETERMINATION, RESOLUTION AND A WILL TO FIGHT. WE DO NOT BOTHER ABOUT GOVERNMENT POLITICS. GOVERNMENT MUST BE MADE TO REALIZE THAT THEY MAY HAVE CONTROL OVER OUR LIVES BUT NOT ON OUR VIEWS” UNQUOTE*** PROPHETIC WORDS INDEED PARTICULARLY APPLICABLE TODAY.

- 9- SIR SYED WAS ALSO CRITICIZED AND TERMED A BRITISH PUPPET FOR NOT SUPPORTING THE INDIAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE OR THE INDIAN MUTINY AS THE BRITISH REFERRED TO IT AND URGING HIS FRIENDS NOT TO DO SO AS WELL, FOR NO OTHER REASON THAN HE REALIZED THAT THE MUSLIM AND HINDU FORCES WERE NO MATCH FOR THE BRITISH WHO WERE FAR BETTER ORGANIZED, EQUIPPED AND LED. SIR SYED ALWAYS MAINTAINED THAT THE “PEN IS MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD” AND THE ONLY WAY FOR THE MUSLIMS TO DEAL WITH THE BRITISH WAS BY EDUCATING THEMSELVES TO TAKE THEM ON AT THEIR OWN LEVEL. SIR SYED’S FEARS WERE FULLY REALIZED AT THE END OF THE MUTINY BY THE MASSCRE OF MAINLY MUSLIMS, INCLUDING THE RAISING OF THE ENTIRE CITY OF DELHI BY THE BRITISH KILLING EVERY MAN, WOMAN AND CHILD.

IN A SPEECH AT JULLANDHUR IN 1884, SIR SYED ALSO SHOWED AMAZING PRE-SCIENCE WHEN HE EMPHASIZED THAT IN THE NEAR FUTURE INDIAN MUSLIMS WILL BE MASTERS OF THEIR DESTINY. HE SAID “WE WOULD BE FREE FROM THE SHACKLES IF PHILOGOPHY IS IN OUR RIGHT HAND, NATURAL SCIENCE IN OUR LEFT AND THE CROWN OF ‘KALMA’ ON OUR FOREHEAD”.

IN THE SAME YEAR, WHILE TALKING TO MR. SHAKSPEARE WHO WAS THE COMMISSIONER OF THE BANARAS DIVISION, SIR SYED SAID “NOW I AM CONVNICED THAT THE TWO PEOPLE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO COOPERATE SINCERELY IN ANY VENTURE. THIS IS ONLY THE BEGINNING. LATER, BECAUSE OF THE EDUCATED CLASSES, THIS HOSTILITY WILL INCREASE AND THOSE WHO LIVE LONG ENOUGH WILL SEE IT GROW”.

10 IT CAN BE SAID THAT IN MODERN CORPORATE PARLANCE THE CREATION OF AN ‘INSAAN’ AND A ‘QUOM’ WERE BOTH SIR SYED’S MISSION AND VISION ROLED INTO ONE.

INDEED, JINNAH’S BIOGRAPHER, HECTOR BOLITHO, COMMENTED THUS, QUOTE, SYED AHMED KHAN WAS THE FATHER OF ALL THAT

WAS TO HAPPEN ULTIMATELY IN MOHAMMAD ALI JINNAH'S MIND UNQUOTE. THE QUAID ALSO MAINTAINED THAT THE ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY WAS THE ARMOURY OF THE PAKISTAN MOVEMENT AND SAID THAT IF IT HAD NOT BEEN FOR THE STUDENTS OF THE AMU THE CREATION OF PAKISTAN COULD WELL HAVE BEEN DELAYED IF NOT DENIED.

11 WHAT IS NOT FULLY UNDERSTOOD OR APPRECIATED, HOWEVER, IS THAT SIR SYED'S MANY ACHIEVEMENTS WERE MADE IN THE FACE OF STRONG OPPOSITION NOT ONLY BY THE BRITISH (WHOSE FOREIGN SECRETARY CECIL BEADON HAD RECOMMENDED SIR SYED SHOULD BE ARRESTED AND IMPRISONED FOR HIS PAMPHLET '**ASBAB-E-BAGHAWAT-E-HIND**' OR '**CAUSES OF THE INDIAN REVOLT**' IN WHICH HE LAID THE BLAME SQUARELY ON THE BRITISH AND HAD THE PAMPHELET CIRCULATED TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT AT HIS OWN EXPENSE AS WELL AS FOR SPURNING THE VICE ROY'S GRANT OF A HUGELY VALUABLE JAGEER IN RETURN FOR HIS SAVING THE LIVES OF OVER 50 ENGLISH WOMEN AND CHILDREN), THE HINDUS, WHO NOT ONLY ACCEPTED BRITISH SUPREMACY BUT WELCOMED IT AND MOST OF ALL FROM THE ORTHODOX MUSLIM

CLERGY WHO ISSUED MANY FATWAAS AGAINST SIR SYED'S LIFE FOR HIS BELIEF IN INTERPRETING THE QURAN IN THE LIGHT OF REASON.

HE WAS DUBBED A NICHARI OR A FOLLOWER OF NATURE FOR ADVOCATING THAT THE RELIGION OF ISLAM WAS IN ACCORDANCE WITH NATURE. AND THIS INSPITE OF THE FACT THAT HE SOLD HIS PROPERTY IN DELHI TO WRITE, PRINT AND DISTRIBUTE A FORCEFUL REPLY TO SIR WILLIAM MUIR'S BOOK "LIFE OF MUHAMMAD" FOR BEING OPENLY PREJUDICIAL TO THE PROPHET (PBUH).

12 FINALLY, IN 1888 IN ONE OF HIS SPEECHES SIR SYED SAID "INSPITE OF THE FACT THAT HINDUS AND MUSLIMS DRAW WATER FROM THE SAME WELL, BREATH IN THE SAME ATMOSPHERE AND HAVE DEALING WITH EACH OTHER, THE FACT REMAINS THAT HINDUS AND MUSLIMS ARE TWO DIFFERENT NATIONS".

TRULY AS MAULVI ABDUL HAQ SAID "A MINUTE STUDY OF THE LIFE HISTORY OF SIR SYED WILL REVEAL THAT THE FOUNDATION STONE OF THE BUILDING OF PAKISTAN WAS LAID BY SIR SYED".

SIR SYED DIED PEACEFULLY ON 27<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 1898 LEAVING ALL HIS WORLDLY POSSESSIONS TO THE ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY AND HAVING WILLED HIS TWO SONS, SYED HAMID AND SYED MAHMOOD RS. FIVE EACH, THERE WAS NO MONEY LEFT FOR HIS BURIAL WHICH WAS PAID FOR BY THE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS VOLUNTARILY UNDERTAKING A COLLECTION TO RAISE THE REQUIRED FUNDS.

13 I AM PROUD AND DEEPLY HUMBLED TO STATE THAT OUR FAMILY SHIJRA WHICH IS INSCRIBED ON SIR SYED AHMED KHAN'S GRAVE AT THE ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY, DATES BACK TO THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PEACE BE UPON HIM) MENTIONING EVERY SINGLE GENERATION OVER A PERIOD OF SOME 1400 YEARS.

HERE I WOULD IF I AM GIVEN TIME LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU SOME FACTS ABOUT THE LIVES OF SYED MAHMOOD AND HIS SON SIR SYED ROSS MASOOD.

ON HIS RETURN FROM ENGLAND WHERE HE ATTENDED THE CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY AND WAS CALLED TO THE BAR, SYED MAHMOOD SO IMPRESSED LORD ROBERT LYTTON, THE BRITISH VICEROY IN INDIA AT THAT TIME, THAT HE APPOINTED HIM A DISTRICT AND SESSIONS JUDGE IN SEETAPUR. SYED MAHMOOD MADE A NAME FOR HIMSELF WHEN IN SEVERAL OF HIS JUDGEMENTS HE REFUTED AND REJECTED THE PRECEDENTS SET BY ENGLISH HIGH COURT JUDGES WHO THEN OVERTURNED HIS DECISIONS.

ON APPEAL TO THE PRIVY COUNCIL IN LONDON, BRITAIN'S SUPREME JUDICIAL BODY, JUSTICE MAHMOOD'S ORDERS WERE NOT ONLY UPHOLD IN EVERY CASE, BUT THE COUNCIL REMARKED THAT HE WAS THE ONLY JUDGE IN INDIA WHO PASSED THE RIGHT JUDGEMENT AND KNEW THE ART OF JUDGEMENT WRITING! THE PRIVY COUNCIL, THEREFORE, RECOMMENDED HE BE ELEVATED AS A JUDGE OF THE HIGH COURT. HE WAS ACCORDINGLY APPOINTED TO THE ALLAHABAD HIGH COURT AT THE AGE OF 32, THE FIRST INDIAN JUDGE TO BE SO APPOINTED AND THAT TOO A MUSLIM.

WHEN AT THE ALLAHABAD HIGH COURT, PANDIT MOTI LAL NEHRU THE FATHER OF JAWAHAR LAL NEHRU AND GRANDFATHER OF MRS. INDRA GANDHI AMONGST OTHERS USED TO APPEAR BEFORE HIM AS JUNIOR ADVOCATES AND CONSIDERED HIM AS THEIR GURU.

14 INTERESTINGLY ALSO, AS A PRACTICING BARRISTER IN A MURDER CASE, HIS CLIENT WAS ORDERED TO BE HANGED. SYED MAHMOOD ATTENDED THE HANGING AND AS SOON AS THE NOOSE WAS TIGHTENED AROUND THE CONVICT'S NECK SYED MAHMOOD DEMANDED THAT HIS CLIENT BE FREED AT ONCE AS THE ORDER OF THE COURT HAD BEEN CARRIED OUT. HE THREATENED THAT IF HIS CLIENT DIED, HE WOULD FILE A SUIT OF HOMICIDE AGAINST THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS DEATH. HIS CLIENT WAS, THEREFORE, SET FREE AND IT WAS ONLY THEREAFTER THAT THE WORDS "SHALL BE HUNG BY THE NECK UNTIL DEAD" BECAME A PART OF ENGLISH CRIMINAL LAW. JUSTICE MAHMOOD'S JUDGEMENTS ARE STILL TAUGHT IN INDIAN LAW SCHOOLS.

SYED MAHMOOD WAS SIR SYED'S FAVOURITE SON AND A PILLAR OF HIS SUPPORT. HAVING STUDIED AT CAMBRIDGE, HE WAS THE INSPIRATION BEHIND THE DESIGN AND ORGANIZATION OF THE M.A.O. COLLEGE HELPING TO APPOINT AND EVEN IN SOME CASES TO PAY FOR, THE BEST INDIAN AND ENGLISH FACULTY HE COULD BRING ON BOARD. INDEED, SIR SYED IN HIS LETTER TO NAWAB VAQAR-UL-MUL DATED 1<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER, 1889 STATES "IF TODAY, SYED MAHMOOD WITHDRAWS HIS HELPING HAND FROM THE COLLEGE, IT CANNOT CONTINUE TO RUN EVEN DURING MY LIFE-TIME".

HERE ALSO A QUICK WORD ABOUT SYED MAHMOOD'S WIFE, MY PARDADI, MUSHARRAF JEHAN BEGUM, WHO WAS ALSO SIR SYED'S NEICE. SHE IS KNOWN IN OUR FAMILY AS 'GORI DADI'. IT WAS SAID THAT HER SKIN WAS SO FAIR AND TRANSLUCENT THAT WHEN SHE HAD A PAAN, YOU COULD SEE IT MAKING ITS WAY DOWN HER THROAT!

15 SHE WAS A WOMAN OF GREAT SUBSTANCE AND ENJOYED THE COMPANY OF COLLEGE STUDENTS WHOM SHE WOULD WELCOME TO HER HOME EVEN AFTER SYED MAHMOOD'S DEATH IN 1904, WITH THE WORDS "ACHHA MIAN SAHAB, TOU AAP CHACHA HAZRAT (WHICH IS WHAT SHE CALLED SIR SYED), KAY MADRASAY MAIN PARHTAY HONGAY" REFERRING TO THE M.A.O COLLEGE!

SHE WOULD ALSO CAUTION THEM BY SAYING "MIAN, YAAD RAKHO AURTAIN MARDON SAY KOUI KUM NAHEEN. AMMA HAWWA THEEN JINHON NAY HAZRAT ADAM KO JANNAT SAY NIKLWAYA"!



SIR SYED ROSS MASOOD WAS BORN IN 1889. HE WAS GIVEN THE NAME OF HIS FATHER SYED MAHMOOD'S DEAREST ENGLISH FRIEND GEORGE ROSS WHO WAS ALSO A PRACTICING BARRISTER IN INDIA AT THAT TIME.

SIR ROSS WAS ALSO KNIGHTED BY THE BRITISH FOR HIS CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROMOTION OF EDUCATION IN BRITISH INDIA HAVING HELD THE POSITIONS OF DIRECTOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION IN HYDERABAD STATE AT THE PERSONAL REQUEST AND INSISTENCE OF NAWAB USMAN ALI PASHA ASIF JAH, THE LAST NIZAM OF HYDERABAD, VICE CHANCELLOR OF THE ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY FROM WHERE HE WAS AGAIN PERSUADED TO LEAVE BY NAWAB HAMEEDULLAH KHAN TO BECOME MINISTER OF EDUCATION IN THE PRINCELY STATE OF BHOPAL WHERE HE REMAINED TILL HIS DEATH IN 1937.

SIR ROSS WAS A GREAT CONVERSATIONALIST. HE COULD EQUALLY WELL KEEP AN EIGHT YEAR OLD TO AN EIGHTY YEAR OLD ENTHRALLED WITH HIS STORIES. ALLAMA IQBAL WAS ONE OF HIS MANY ADMIRERS AND USED TO SPEND MONTHS LIVING WITH SIR ROSS ON WHOSE DEATH HE INSISTED ON INSCRIBING THE SHER THAT HE HAD WRITTEN FOR HIS OWN GRAVE, ON SIR ROSS'S GRAVE.

16 FINALLY, HOWEVER, ABOVE ALL IT IS SIR SYED HIMSELF WHO REMAINS VERY CLOSE TO US. THE OUTLOOK AND VALUES WHICH HE ESPOUSED ARE MORE RELEVANT THAN EVER — THE SPIRIT OF ENQUIRY, MEANING NOT TAKING EVERYTHING WE ARE TOLD OR READ FOR GRANTED, PURE MORALITY, RATIONALISM AND TOLERANCE FOR OTHERS. EVEN TODAY, HOWEVER, SIR SYED'S MISSION IS FAR FROM

COMPLETE. MANY OF THE EVILS WHICH HE FOUGHT AGAINST ARE, ALAS, ALIVE AND WELL AND VERY MUCH WITH US. AMONGST THESE ARE PREJUDICE, INTOLERANCE, GREED, SELFISHNESS, A LACK OF INTEGRITY AND A RITUALISTIC ADHERENCE TO FORM RATHER THAN SUBSTANCE. TO FACE CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES WE WILL HAVE TO FACILITATE AND ENCOURAGE THE PROCESS OF ADJUSTMENT, ENLIGHTENMENT, EMPOWERMENT, DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE.

THE MOHAMMADAN ANGLO ORIENTAL (“MAO”) COLLEGE WAS CONCEIVED AS A MEANS OF INTEGRATION, SYNTHESIS AND RECONCILIATION IN ORDER TO FACE AND SURMOUNT THE DIFFICULTIES OF THOSE TIMES. TO OUR RESTLESS AGE, FULL OF INSECURITY CONFUSION, DOUBT, POLLUTION, INSTANT COMMUNICATION AND THE SOUND BYTE, SIR SYED’S LEGACY IS RELEVANT AND SUSTAINING. HIS PERSONALITY AND HIS WORKS WILL CONTINUE TO INSPIRE GENERATIONS TO COME.

17 MAULANA HALI’S MOVING AND DEEPLY FELT TRIBUTE TO SIR SYED IS AS TRUE TODAY AS WHEN IT WAS WRITTEN ON SIR SYED’S DEATH IN 1898.

**“TUMHE KEHTA HAI MURDA KAUN, TUM ZINDON-SE-ZINDA HO  
TUMHARI NAIKIAN ZINDA, TUMHARI KHOOBIAN BAQI.”**

WE COULD ALSO AGREE WITH THE POET WHO SAID THAT IF IT WERE NOT FOR SIR SYED:

**“HUM KAHAN HOTAY, TUM KAHAN HOTAY”**