



Lt. Gen. Mahmud-ul-Hassan
HI (M) S.BT. SI (M), TI (M)

Hadees-e-Arzoo Mandi

An autobiography by
Lt. Gen. Mahmud-ul-Hassan

RAWALPINDI: Lt. Gen. (R) Mahmud-ul-Hassan, a highly decorated member of the Army Medical Corps is an accomplished surgeon. He retired as Director General Surgery Pakistan Armed Forces and Head of Surgical Division at Army Medical College with which he is still affiliated as Prof. Emeritus. Apart from being a well-known surgeon, he also got recognition as a noted poet and so far six of his poetry books have been published. He was fond of poetry and got recognition as a poet while he was still in School. Writing about his poetry, eminent poets and literary figures of Pakistan like Syed Zameer Jafary, Parto Roheela, Sultan Rushk, Saroor Ambalvi, Jamil Malik, Raees Amrohvi, Jamil Yousuf, Abdul Mannan Naheed, Shafiqur Rehman, Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi to name a few have paid him rich tributes and commended his contribution to Urdu literature. His poetry consists of Hamad, Naat, and Ghazal almost everything.

Lt. Gen. Mahmud-ul-Hassan has published his autobiography "***Hadees-e-Arzoo Mandi***" for which he was persuaded by Lt-Gen. Mahmud Ahmad Akhtar former Surgeon General of Pakistan Army besides his family members.

Going through this book, I found it highly informative and interesting which I believe should be an essential reading for every healthcare professional in general and medical teachers in particular. It has too many pearls of wisdom on page after page and offers a lot to those who are keen to learn. Apart from his family background and early school days, Lt. Gen. Mahmudul Hassan has discussed his student days at King Edward Medical

College from where he graduated in 1947 six months before the independence of Pakistan. He has also written about working at Mayo Hospital during partition of the sub-continent and managing victims who came from East Punjab and other parts of India, many interesting incidents in his professional life, his professional career in Army besides important patients he had the opportunity to operate upon and all this has many lessons to learn for the reader. Lt. Gen. Mahmud-ul-Hassan does not feel shy while discussing his family background and it also shows that with hard work, sincerity, honesty and devotion, even the son of a Clerk can rise to this coveted position of Lt. Gen. and an accomplished surgeon in the Pakistan Army. This is one of the many miracles which keep on happening in this Islamic Republic of Pakistan which has given us lot but still there are many Pakistanis who are in the habit of always being critical of the Government as well as of the country which is indeed very sad.

The personality of Lt. Gen. Mahmud-ul-Hassan has been perhaps aptly described by poet Saroor Ambalvi in the following couplet:

دیئے آندھی میں روشن کر رہا ہے
تبھی تو اونچا اُس کا سر رہا ہے

Lt. Gen. Mahmud-ul-Hassan was born on July 17th 1925 in Amin Abad in District Gujranwala in a poor family. His father was a Clerk in a civil department but was very intelligent. When his father was transferred to Dikshai Cantonment near Shimla, Mahmudul Hassan was admitted to Middle School there. The Headmaster and his Deputy, Mahmudul Hassan writes were very brilliant teachers. During holidays, the Headmaster asked the students to daily write a letter to him in English. One of the Essays I wrote, he says, was “Walk through Hills” wherein I used some very difficult words with the help of Dictionary. Headmaster Aadat Ram was very pleased after looking at my writings but then said “*Never use difficult words in writing because there will be more chances of mistakes*”. Hence the message for everyone, always use simple words and simple easy

to understand English to minimize the chances of any mistakes. While he was studying in this school, Mahmudul Hassan's father was shifted from civil cadre to Military Cadre with the rank of Subedar Clerk.

My Grand Father, Lt-Gen. Mahmudul Hassan writes used to love me the most. During winter, he bought a cotton jacket for me and did not allow me to take bath for three months so as to avoid Pneumonia. However, when my mother came to see me in December she came to know that I had not taken bath for the last three months and there were too many lice's in my head and on the body. My mother asked me to take off the jacket, put it on Fire. Hair dresser was asked to remove my all hairs from the head and then I was given a bath with new clothes which gave me a feeling as if I had come to Paradise. Both my Grand Father and my mother loved me but they had depicted their love in different ways. Mahmudul Hassan also recalls how Saroon Singh their Headmaster used to punish the students who will come late and asked the late comers to start their journey to school fifteen minutes earlier than the time it usually takes to ensure that they are in School in time. That is how punctuality was taught to the students but today people do not mind even if they are late from their duty by few days what to talk of few minutes.

Financial position of the family, Gen. Mahmud ul Hassan says was not so good and often, there used to be nothing at home to eat. But even in those days we were very contented and never asked for assistance from any one. In order to go to School, I bought an old twenty two inch small bicycle from Rama Mandi which was at about eight to ten miles from Jalandhar Cantonment where we were living for Rupees forty six and a half and I used this small bicycle till I had attained the rank of Major in the Pakistan Army. My love for poetry was such that I had become an established recognized poet while I was a student of 9th Class in the school. Aish Ferozpuri was a well-known poet in Ferozepur and once I decided to ask his opinion about my poetry. Reluctantly I went to see him and after looking at my both the Nazam and Ghazal, he enquired if it was my own poetry. He read

both of them, laughed and said if you are saying honestly that it was your own poetry, then you have a bright future as a Poet and your poetry is of very high standard even at this young age. These few words of appreciation gave me lot of satisfaction and pride. Here are a few couplets from that Ghazal:

دل کی صورت بھی دیکھ لو ان میں
دل کی آئینہ دار ہیں آنکھیں
وہ ہیں آنکھوں کے سامنے پھر بھی
جانے کیوں بے قرار ہیں آنکھیں

My poetry was now being published in various newspapers and periodicals. I passed my Matric Examination from Islamia High School Ferozepur in First Division with very high marks and my parents were extremely happy at my result. I was asked to get admission in Government College Lahore but since I did not had enough Fee, I went to Islamia College as I was told their Fee is much less, hence got admitted there in FSc Pre-medical by paying the Fee of Rupees forty six out of Fifty rupees which were given to me by my parents. Khawaja Dil Mohammad was the Principal here. My Headmaster had advised me to get admission in Arts but my mother wanted me to get into Pre Medical Group. I was finding it difficult to take a decision. It was Dr. Abdul Hameed Bhatti who solved my problem and said since Paradise is under the feet of mother, listen to your mother and that is how I opted for pre-medical subjects.

My father. Gen. Mahmudul Hassan writes, went out of the country to take part in War as Subedar Major. After passing FSc I got admission in King Edward Medical College which had just 25% seats reserved for Muslims out of hundred. KEMC had many eminent professors in various disciplines of medicine in those days. I graduated from King Edward Medical College and only three Muslims and fourteen other students had passed the exam from our class. I also earned Prof. Sutherland Memorial Gold Medal in Medicine. I applied for House Job in Medicine but

looking at my excellent result in Final Year MBBS, Prof. Ramzan Ali Syed said, “You are a stupid person if you have applied for house job in Medicine. What is left in Medicine a few diseases and a few drugs to be used? You should be applying in Surgery. Since I had lot of respect for Prof. Ramzan Ali Syed, I accepted his advice and applied for House Job in Surgery. I had the privilege of working with eminent surgeons of the time like Prof. Amiruddin and Prof. Riaz-e- Qadeer.

Writing about the partition, Gen. Mahmud ul Hassan says that looking at the victims which were brought in trains from Amritsar, it looked as if the human beings had become animals. Trains coming from Amritsar used to be full of dead and seriously wounded people who used to be dumped in Mayo Hospital. Surgeons and House Surgeons used to work for almost twenty four hours. I did lot of surgery and learnt a lot during my posting as CMO. I also earned expertise in anesthesia and had become expert in General as well as Spinal anesthesia. People used to consider me the “*Thanedar of the whole Mayo Hospital*”. House Surgeons enjoyed lot of respect so much so that in those days it was said, “There are only two important jobs in Lahore, The Governor and House Surgeon of Mayo Hospital”.

After House Job, I was not sure what to do. Just like Surgery I never liked Military service but when I came to know that a large number of my class fellows have already reported for Army Service, I also decided to appear for the interview at Rawalpindi. I was interviewed by Gen.W.A.Burki who looking at my final year result and the fact that I had already worked as House Surgeon and CMO at Mayo Hospital, declared me fit. I was offered First Class train ticket to travel to Lahore but I did not use that as I did not want to join Army permanently. I went to Lahore by Bus where I was told that I had wasted lot of precious time. In Army even if you report in the evening instead of morning, your seniority is affected and you become junior.

In Army you cannot question but you are supposed to follow the orders. He recalls that during the training, Subedar Sahib took out an Urdu Pamphlet from his pocket and said, you are all supposed to repeat what I say so that you remember that. So

Subedar Sahib said, “First look at the Target and then said, make its map in your Heart”. At this one of our colleague Dr. Manzoor who was very much annoyed when we were all order to lie on the ground said, “ *Make its Map in your Mind*” at which Subedar Sahib cried that I have said, make the map in your heart. Dr. Manzoor said Sir, how you can make the map in the heart, it is always made in the brain. At this, Subedar Sahib again retorted with an authoritative tone that “*Gentleman as long as you are in “Fauz”, map will be made in the Heart*”. Hence, one can see how the military dictators in Pakistan, Gen.Mahmud ul Hassan says have been trying to make a map in the heart and no one could ever defeat them” so far, This sentence from Lt. Gen. Mahmud ul Hassan is quite meaningful.

It is also quite interesting to read about the “psychological influence” and how people in the Army were taught to dress up and look like Gentleman. Be punctual and take appointment if you wish to go and see somebody, take permission before entering the room and then again take permission when you wish to leave.

He was engaged in January 1953 and got married in October 1956. Went to United States in 1955 and learnt general surgery, plastic surgery at Brook General Army Hospital. He also served in Naval Hospital in Karachi for some time. He is full of praise for Lt. Gen. Shaukat Hassan who was Director of Surgery in Army. Lt. Gen.Mahmud ul Hassan feels that doctors should learn good poetry as it is quite useful in their professional work but not many are interested. Those who are not so intelligent, should speak less, because it exposes people if they are intelligent or fool. It is the light weight of Apricot and Tongue of a fool which bring him bad name. One should always keep away from fools and not so intelligent people and I also do not like running after people in authority, Gen.Mahmud ul Hassan says. He rightly lays emphasis on carefully taken history and thorough physical examination while treating patients to come to correct diagnosis as many a times, even CT, MRI won’t reveal the true picture of human body. Sit with intelligent people and learn from them as much as you can, he maintains.

Gen. Mahmudul Hassan has a lot many suggestions and advice for his professional colleagues. He quotes Gordon Tailor who writes that *“He never operates upon a patient who is writing his Will before going to the Operation Theater”*. He also writes that *“Do not operate upon a Foolish person”*. Once someone asked Gordon Taylor how to treat someone who is mentally retarded to which he is reported to have said, *“Send him to your enemy”* which in fact means that it is extremely difficult to treat those who are mentally retarded.

His advice is work hard as much as you can, see as many patients as you can and spend enough time in physical examination to look at each and every thing. There are no short cuts in examination. Concentrate on thorough physical examination and then come to the conclusions after giving it a serious thought. Doctors, Gen.Mahmud ul Hassan further states should know the names of eminent Muslim physicians and surgeons. He says, once he was invited to be the chief guest at an ophthalmic conference and when he asked two three doctors, did they know some famous scientists, they could not reply. It was sad to learn that they were not aware of Ibnul Hassam. Similarly they did not know the name of an eminent Muslim Surgeon Abul Qasim who used to do surgery in Spain and did Thyroid surgery for the first time in history. It is another thing that Noble Prize for doing this surgery was later given to Kocher. He quotes a famous American Surgeon who had said that *“No mother has given birth to courageous Surgeon like Abul Qasim”*. It is important that we should know medical history. I have often used poetry during my lectures while teaching in medical college and it helps to convey what you wish to say very effectively, Gen. Mahmudul Hassan says.

After the retirement of Gen. Shaukat Hassan, I came to know that my name was proposed as Director of Surgery but when someone else was appointed, I applied for retirement. President Gen. Ziaul Haque called me and said that for some reasons, I have not been appointed Director of Surgery but I should not worry. I am being promoted as Major General immediately. After sometime I was made Director of Surgery and since Principal of

Army Medical College Lt-Gen. Mohammad Ayub had refused to spare me, I continued to work as Director of surgery as well as Head of the Surgical Division which was a prize and no one else have ever held these two coveted positions simultaneously. It must have surprised many.

رند بخشنے گئے قیامت میں
شیخ کہتا رہا حساب حساب

I had the privilege of operating upon President Gen. Ziaul Haque, Prime Minister Mohammad Khan Junejo, his wife and daughter, looked after President Rafiq Tarar, family members of President Field Martial Ayub Khan and a large number of eminent people from different walks of life during my professional career. He also writes that once Gen. Sarwar Khan called me and said though rank of Director of Surgery is Major General but President General Ziaul Haque has decided to promote you as Lt. General as a special case. This had earlier happened just once when Prime Minister Z.A.Bhutto had offered this status to General Malik Shaukat Hassan.

Once Gen. K.M. Arif called me and asked me about the welfare of a few patients including Lt.Gen.Lodhi Governor of Baluchistan who was severely injured in an Air Crash. I looked after him and he improved. When I was about to leave, Gen. Arif said you are going to retire next week but Army needs you. Gen. Ziaul Haque has decided to give you two yeas extension. At this I said, I do not want to block the promotion of another Surgeon. He asked his Military Secretary if there was any Surgeon on the approved list. When his Military Secretary told him, there was none, Gen. Arif said, your extension in service will not hurt anyone. In the evening I received a phone call from Prime Minister's office saying that the PM wishes to see me immediately. I went to see him. Prime Minister Mohammad Khan Junejo said that he was deadly against giving extension to any officer but for the time being, you are indispensable for us, hence you are being given extension for two years. He further added that it will not affect the promotion of any other

officer. However, if the army asks, he will be prepared to give them another post of a Major General, Prime Minister Junejo remarked. I told him that earlier in the morning Gen. Arif had also conveyed him the same message from President General Ziaul Haque. I thanked God almighty and when I narrated the whole story to my wife, she first laughed and then said, “*You do not look so competent from your face to deserve an extension in service*”. Once these two years passed, President General Ziaul Haque gave me extension for yet one more year. During my last year of service I was sent to China by the Military Secretary to observe the functioning of medical colleges there. When this proposal was floated, Defense Secretary told GHQ, this officer is going to retire in the next three weeks. He was told that I was being sent with some purpose. Later I was told that President General Ziaul Haque wanted me to take over as Principal of Army Medical College. Listening this I was a bit frightened as I had no experience of administration and I thought it will only bring bad name to me. Military Secretary said, if I was not interested, I should give it in writing so that it can be shown to President General Ziaul Haque. I gave it in writing and retired on July 1st 1988.

In yet another incident, Gen. Mahmud ul Hassan says that after retirement I used to attend clinical meetings regularly in the auditorium. Thirteen years after retirement, in one of these meetings I recited the following couplet:

مُسیرِ خاک ہوتا زندگی میں لطفِ تنہائی
رہے دو دو فرشتے ہمراہ کابِ اول سے آخر تک

I do now know how and why this annoyed one of the officers who gave some unpleasant remarks about me. This annoyed me so much that I brought it to the notice of Surgeon General and from that day onward stopped going to these Clinical Meetings. I felt sad because I always used to respect even the most junior officers and even ordinary people and why someone had uttered those words about me. I am grateful to the GHQ that it took notice of this incident, ordered an enquiry and the concerned

officer was issued warning. President General Pervez Musharraf himself expressed his annoyance in a personal letter written to me.

Writing about working in the Operation Theater, Lt.Gen. Mahmudul Hassan says that there used to be an anesthetist in the OT who used to wander around the hospital and once in a while would come to the OT as well, peep in and say, is there any problem? Dr. Zafar the Anaesthetist would say, No Sir, everything is OK. One day Dr. Zafar was very much annoyed with this Anaesthetist. When he again came to the OT, Dr. Zafar said, "Sir let me narrate a joke for you." This anesthetist sat down and look how intelligently, Dr.Zafar said, which he wanted to say. The joke Dr.Zafar shared was like this. There was a man who was very fond of Parrots. Once in America, he saw some parrots in a shop. He asked the price of a small beautiful parrot. The shop keeper said One thousand US\$. When asked what was special about that parrot, the shop owner said this parrot speak English as well as French language. Then he asked the price of a big parrot which was US\$ two thousand. When asked how many languages this parrot speaks, the shop owner said none. Then why its cost is so much the customer said to which the shop owner replied "Because it is senior most among all the parrots". Having finished the joke, Dr. Zafar told his officer that "*Sir, being senior has got many advantages*" and said everything which he wanted to say.

Lt. Gen. Mahmud ul Hassan loved his wife Saeeda too much and this he has expressed many times in this book. Saeeda fell sick in May 2010, was hospitalized in CMH Rawalpindi. She had developed some kidney infection. Gen.Mahmud ul Hassan says I went to see her in the hospital in the morning of May 31st and apparently she had no serious problem. I sat beside her. She said, "Mahmud now you will remain alone". I said, I cannot live without you but she said, "*Beshak Kar Lo Pinjaray Band, Totay Urr Jana*". She died the same day and since then I am not the same Mahmud. In the book Lt.Gen.Mahmudul Hassan has also written about his family members, his children and he feels proud at their professional accomplishments.

Some of the compilations of poetry of Lt-Gen Mahmudul Hassan which have been published include the following:

1. Atish-e-NauBahar
2. Sarude Jawidan
3. Dardo Darman
4. Shahd-e-Sim
5. Nawa-e-Daroon
6. Nawa-e-Mahmud

Here are a few selected couplets from Lt. Gen. Mahmud-ul-Hassan's poetry for you to enjoy:

یہ معجزہ بھی اک اُمی لقب کا ہے محمود
کہ علم کے ہیں سمندر رواں مدینے میں
ترے فراق میں دیکھے ہیں یہ کرشمے بھی
چراغِ لاکھ جلیں روشنی نہیں ہوتی
* * * * *
کس وقت مرے لب پہ تیرا نام نہیں ہے
اب اس کے سوا اور کوئی کام نہیں ہے
کاش وہ دیکھ کر مجھے اتنا تو کہہ اٹھیں کبھی
میرا فقیر آگیا، میرا غلام آ گیا
* * * * *
میرے آقا ﷺ نے یہی درس دیا ہے مجھ کو
گالیاں کھا کے بھی دشمن کو دعا دی جائے
* * * * *
ذکر کرنا ہو روشنی کا اگر
کیوں نہ غارِ حرا کی بات کریں

شکستہ پا سہی لیکن ہمیں سے
سُنیں گے لوگ کہساروں کی باتیں
* * * * *

زمانہ چرب زبانی سے کام لیتا ہے
بیان حکایت دل ہم بہ حرف سادہ کریں
جناب شیخ سے ہو فیض یہ نہیں اُمید
یہ کیا بُرا ہے کہ رندوں سے استفادہ کریں
* * * * *

تمام عمر جسے ڈھونڈے رہے محمودؒ
وہ بے حجاب ملا اور دُرون خانہ ملا
* * * * *

اب تو دل ہی نہیں ہے پہلو میں
اب یہاں واردات کیا ہوگی
* * * * *

ہمیں خود قتل کرنے کی اذیت کیوں اٹھاتے ہو
ذرا سا کام ہے یہ بھی کوئی جلا دکر دے گا
کبھی جو راہزن کرتے رہے ہیں قافلے والو
وہ کار خیر خود اب قافلہ سالار کرتے ہیں
* * * * *

اگر چہ جان سے جاتے رہے ہم
 مگر اوروں کے کام آتے رہے ہم
 جو پتھر پھینکتے تھے ہم پر محمود
 انہیں پر پھول برساتے رہے ہم
 * * * * *
 سنی ہیں ہم نے وفا کی کہانیاں کیا کیا
 وہ کون تھے جنہیں محمود اور ایاز ملے
 نہیں ملا تو مجھے میرے زخم کا مرہم
 یہ اور بات کہ لاکھوں کرشمہ ساز ملے
 * * * * *
 وہ دورِ لطف و اخوت بھلا دیا ہم نے
 نظر میں بھائی کے بھائی کا خون ہوا ارزاں

I particularly liked the following Qita which I am sure every one who joins the elderly club will love the most.

تیرا غم ہو تو لطف آتا ہے
 آنکھ نم ہو تو لطف آتا ہے
 اب مجھے قہقہے پسند نہیں
 شور کم ہو تو لطف آتا ہے

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Important Points

1. Our financial position was such that often there used to be nothing at home to eat.
2. I bought a Bicycle to go to school and used it till I became Major in Pakistan Army
3. I had become an established Poet while I was student of 9th class.
4. I graduated from KEMC in 1947 and only seventeen students which included three Muslims passed from our class
5. All these years' military dictators have been trying to make a map in the heart of the people rather than the brain and no one has ever defeated them.
6. Doctors should learn good poetry as it is quite useful in their professional work.
7. Careful history and physical examination will give you correct diagnosis as many a times CT and MRI won't reveal true picture of human body.
8. Never operate on a patient who is writing his will before going to operation theatre and do not operate on a foolish patient as well.
9. No mother has given birth to courageous surgeon like Abul Qasim.
10. I accepted extension in my service only once assured that it will not block the promotion of any other deserving person.
11. Gen. Ziaul Haque wanted to make me Principal of Army Medical College but I refused saying that I had no experience of administration.