



Dr. Ali Muhammad Chaudhry  
FCPS, FRCP, FACC, FACP  
(1929-2016)

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A Physician par Excellence

Dr. Ali Muhammad Chaudhry FRCP, FCPS, FACC an eminent cardiac physician who was one of the founder members of Pakistan Cardiac Society passed away peacefully at his residence in Lahore on April 20<sup>th</sup> 2016 at the age of eighty seven years. Late Dr. Ali Muhammad was a multifaceted personality whom God Almighty had blessed with innumerable qualities of head and heart. He was a good human being, honest, hardworking, kind hearted physician, practical Muslim, an excellent teacher and was not at all infected with the materialistic virus which is so common among a vast majority of the healthcare professionals of today. He enjoyed a unique identity among the cardiac physicians of Pakistan having tall physical and academic stature.

Dr. Ali Muhammad was a very contented person and belonged to a rare breed of physicians who believed, practiced and gave too much emphasis to clinical skills rather than being slave of the modern gadgetry for diagnosis. He believed in age old dictum of careful history and complete physical examination. He believed that if one listens to the patients carefully, it is not very difficult to make correct diagnosis which can later be confirmed through various investigations and tests etc. He spent most of his professional life in Hyderabad before shifting to Lahore a few years ago.

He graduated from King Edward Medical College Lahore and went overseas to complete his postgraduate training. He then returned back to Pakistan to serve his motherland after doing MRCP. Later he also earned the Fellowship of the Royal College of Physicians. He also earned Fellowship of American College of Cardiology as well as American College of Chest Physicians.

He was a founder member of Pakistan Cardiac Society and on the advice of late Col. M.H.Shah he accepted to be the General Secretary of the Society. He was also appointed as Editor of Pakistan Heart Journal the official journal of the Pakistan Cardiac Society and throughout his Editorship; it maintained a very high standard. Later on when he gave up the Editorship of the Journal, despite the fact that we have too many distinguished cardiologists, the society failed to publish the journal regularly which saddened him a lot. He was particularly very much upset when due to the shortage of manuscripts being submitted to Pakistan Heart Journal, it started re-publishing manuscripts published earlier as pearls from the past. Since the journal was not being published on time and regularly, authors were reluctant to submit their manuscripts to the journal. Only when Prof. Hafeezullah took over the journal as its Chief Editor ensured its regular publication. Since the journal is owned by Pakistan Cardiac Society, it has now come back to Karachi for publication after the change in its office bearers.

In order to promote academic medicine when some senior physicians formed another platform i.e. Pakistan Academy of Medicine, Dr. Ali Mohammad was also invited to join it. This distinguished group had among its fold eminent medical personalities like late Col.M.H.Shah, Prof. M.A.Shah, Prof. Mushtaq Hassan, Col.Najib Khan just to name a few. They used to meet regularly and discuss various issues confronting the medical profession. Dr.Ali Muhammad also served as President of Pakistan Cardiac Society and used to be one of the regular speakers at cardiac society meetings held all over the country. Professional conspiracies and intrigues ended his academic career very early and later when Dr. M.H. Toosy the West Pakistan Health Secretary conducted an enquiry, he found him innocent. Dr. Toosy confirmed to me personally when I went to interview him when he was Project Director of Punjab Medical College Faisalabad much later. According to Dr. M.H. Toosy he wrote letter to the Governor of West Pakistan for his re-instatement at Liaquat Medical College Hyderabad but before he could sign it, Governor Malik Amir Mohammad Khan of Kalabagh who had developed some differences with the Government was called

to Islamabad where President Ayub Khan asked him to tender resignation. He resigned and it also proved to be an end to Dr. Ali Muhammad's academic career as he never pursued the case.

He was particularly very kind to me and my visit to Hyderabad was never complete without visiting him to pay my respects and if time was short, I would always ring him up to seek his blessings. He always greeted me by asking "*Shaukat Kaisy Ho*" and there was lot of love and affection in these words, alas I won't hear these words again. Once when due to differences on editorial policy matters I decided to resign from the paper in which I was affiliated with and decided to join the pharmaceutical industry as a Public Relations Manager in 1978, I rang him up to inform him of my decision. He was very much upset and rushed to Karachi the very next day and called me for a meeting. We met in the office of late Col. M.H. Shah at Naveed Clinic. I remember both of them who were always very kind to me, impressed upon me to change my decision. If that was not possible, they asked me to start my own medical newspaper and they promised to help me. I still remember their words "We need you, medical profession needs you. You have a great future in the field of medical journalism and were capable of doing a lot". Dr. Ali Muhammad Chaudhry offered me financial assistance to start my own paper while Col. Shah promised to provide me office space with telephone connection. The meeting lasted for over two hours and I promised to give their suggestion a serious thought. Later I had a meeting with another very dear friend Prof. Ejaz Ahmad Vohra who also persuaded me not to join the Pharma industry but start my own medical newspaper. Hence it was their insistence that I accepted their advice and started my own medical newspaper in 1978 with the name of "Doctor" International which was later renamed as "Pulse International" in the Year 2000. I have already documented this fact by dedicating my latest book "Plight of a Medical Editor: an autobiography" to all these three distinguished medical personalities. Their sincere advice was an important turning point in my professional career and I always pray for all of them.

When I decided to start my second publication, a scientific journal by the name of "Specialist" in 1984 which was also later

renamed as Pakistan Journal of Medical Sciences in the Year 2000, I requested Dr. Ali Muhammad Chaudhry to be the Guest Editor of the first issue which was devoted to Cardiovascular Diseases. He gladly accepted that responsibility and spared lot of his precious time to edit that special issue which proved to be an important contribution to the medical literature on cardiovascular diseases.

When I wrote my first book on “Medical Writing” published in May 1993, I requested him to write the Foreword and he was kind enough once again to accept my request. His Forward was so comprehensive that at the formal launching ceremony of the book organized at the College of Physicians & Surgeons Pakistan Karachi Campus the Chief Guest, Maj. Gen. Mohsin Pal the former DG Health remarked that “After reading Foreword to the book by Dr. Ali Muhammad Chaudhry, I feel there is hardly anything which I could add as a comment”. This was a great tribute to his wisdom and intelligence. He upheld professional ethics throughout his professional career and did not mince his words when he wanted to criticize those who indulged in unethical medical practice. He could afford to do that because his own professional and intellectual integrity was unquestionable. Once he told me that a vast majority of doctors in Pakistan doing coronary angiography and angioplasty have had little formal training or exposure in this double-edged invasive procedures. He was of the view that guidelines for invasive procedures are determined by each country’s socio economic conditions and healthcare needs.

God Almighty had blessed him with four daughters and two sons who all became doctors. His three daughters are in United States, one son is a pulmonologist, critical care physician in United States while the other son is a cardiologist in Saudi Arabia. His youngest daughter who was also a class fellow of my younger daughter in Dow Medical College, is currently living at Lahore and working at Sheikh Zayed Hospital.

It was in 2012 that his wife became seriously ill, was hospitalized but could not survive. I was in Lahore and rang him up saying that I want to come and see him. When I went to his residence, I came to know that his wife had passed away a day before and he was completely upset. He was looking very

much shattered and told me that after the death of his wife, he no more wished to live. He loved his wife too much. At this old age, one needs the life partner but she has left me. “God was very kind and I did try to take care of her and tried to do whatever was possible but perhaps her time had come” Dr. Ali Muhammad remarked. I spent about two hours with him but it was not the same Dr. Ali Muhammad as he could not forget this tragedy. Later whenever I rang him up to enquire about his health, he would often say “*Abb jeenay Ko Dil Naheen Karta*”.

He had shifted to Lahore a few years ago and was living with his youngest daughter. He had Coronary Artery Bypass Graft Surgery in 2008 and this had restricted his movements to a great extent. About a month ago he developed some chest infection. Despite treatment, it could not be managed effectively and his health further deteriorated. About two weeks before his death, I am told, he stopped taking food, became very weak and told his family members that he has seen everything, now let him go peacefully. Eventually he left this world peacefully while at home and his children, family members were with him. I wish and pray that his soul rests in eternal peace. Ameen. He leaves behind four daughters, two sons and a large number of well-wishers and friends in the medical profession as well as other segments of society to mourn his death. One of his daughters Dr. Shehla Ali Mirza is Hafiz-e- Quran and house wife who currently lives at Houston USA. His son Dr. Arif Ali Muhammad is a Consultant Cardiologist at Lahore. Another daughter Dr. Salma Ali Tabrez is a Consultant Family Physician running her own clinic at Florida, USA. His other son Dr. Asif Ali Muhammad is a Consultant Pulmonologist and Critical Care Specialist at Dallas, USA. The other two daughters Dr. Aisha Ali Anwar has done Masters in Hospital Management and lives at Dallas, USA while Dr. Alia Ali is a Consultant Physician, Assistant Professor at Shaikh Zayed Hospital, Lahore.

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