



Maj. Gen. Kh. Mohammad Mohsin Pal  
Sitara-e-Basalat, Hilal-e-Imtiaz (Military)

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(Feb.19, 1929-25<sup>th</sup> November 1993)

Maj. Gen. Khawja Mohammad Mohsin Pal, Sitara-e-Basalt, Hilal-e-Imtiaz (Military) was one of the finest AMC officers who during his thirty four years distinguished service achieved numerous accomplishments. God Almighty had blessed him with lot of qualities of head and heart and he was loved by everyone who came in contact with him. His tall physical stature and towering personality also made him unique and no one could miss him. One of his greatest qualities was that he guarded and protected the interests of everyone under his command which earned him lot of respect. He was born in Gilgit on February 19<sup>th</sup> 1929 where his father Khan Bahadar Khawja Mohammad Maseeh Pal Ameen Hazeen Sialkoti was stationed during his government service. Out of ten brothers and sisters, Mohsin Pal was fifth in number and the third son.

He got his early education at Mission School Sialkot and later went to famous Murray College in Sialkot. He did BSc. Hons from Government College Sialkot and later earned the degree of MBBS from King Edward Medical College Lahore in 1955. During his college days he was known as one of the most intelligent students who apart from his educational activities actively participated in extracurricular activities as well. He was fond of Cricket, Tennis, and Chess and was also interested in poetry for which he was well known in college circles. His poetry used to be published in college magazine regularly but unfortunately he never compiled and published his Kalam in a book.

Dr. Mohsin Pal joined Pakistan Army as a Capitan on October 1<sup>st</sup> 1955 and remained with different units and in 1958 he was transferred to Pakistan Naval Hospital Shifa at Karachi. Here first he served in the department of surgery and later served as Medical Officer at various Ships i.e. PNS Dhaka, PNS Shah Jahan, PNS Baber and PNS Alamgir. It was during those days that he was sent for higher training to America at SANDIAGO. He also served at PNS Karsaz as Senior Medical Officer and later he was posted in the Pakistan Army in Field Ambulance-47 and then Divison-14 in East Pakistan Headquarters. Once again he was sent for higher training to Forte Saum Houston in United States for a course in Senior Officer Administration. He earned First Positon and his teachers acknowledged his intelligence and competence in the following words:

**“He has been Superior most in a group of Superiors”.**

On return from America, Dr.Mohsin Pal served as instructor in Army Medical Core Training Centers at Multan, Quetta and later Abbottabad where he worked with devotion and dedication. During the 1971 Indo Pak War he was commanding Field Ambulance 120 in Rajasthan Sector. It was under his command that this Ambulance performed exceptionally well during this War. During his posting at Abbottabad Dr.Mohsin Pal authored two books for training of Army Nursing Field Service. This was for the first time that in the Pakistan Army a Pakistani had authored a book for Nursing Service which was received very well. The government of Pakistan recognized this by awarding him Sitara-e-Basalt. Dr. Mohsin Pal also played a vital role at GHQ Rawalpindi in lady doctors career planning. His foresight and Vision, decision making power was always respected and honoured even by his seniors and juniors alike. That is one of the reasons that he played an important role in numerous important decisions in Army Medical Core in those days.

Dr. Mohsin Pal’s next appointment was at PNS Shifa Karachi. It was his wonderful administration that PNS Shifa emerged as one of the most important healthcare facility not known in the past. Those days are still considered as “Golden Period” in PNS

Shifa even today. He was affectionate to everyone working at PNS Shifa and took care of them starting from the Sweepers to senior consultants. He was very sympathetic to them, listened to their complaints and grievances if any and tried to resolve them immediately. In return everyone serving at PNS gave their best with the result that every patient coming to PNS Shifa on being cured felt better and left the hospital with good memories. During his stay at PNS Shifa Dr. Mohsin Pal delivered numerous lectures on Command and Administration of Hospital. In order to recognize the dedicated services of the staff, he introduced an "Efficiency Shield" which used to be presented by the administration to those employees who served with exceptional dedication and devotion. This Shield used to be presented to one Department regularly keeping in view their performance by the Inspection Team which consisted of a Senior Doctor, Nursing Matron and a member of the hospital administration. This encouraged each and every employee of the hospital to put in their best which went a long way in improving the service and efficiency of the hospital as a whole. Dr. Mohsin Pal himself also used to go on surprise inspection of different wards; this kept him fully abreast of the problems and difficulties faced by the staff which used to be resolved within no time.

During his entire professional career he never harmed anyone under his command with his pen. On the contrary he considered it his responsibility to train every one under his command and also proved it on many occasions. He had the capability to solve the problems of his junior staff as well as senior officers with God gifted qualities. He always tried his best to help everyone, improve their personality to the best of his ability which is recognized even today.

During his service he had an opportunity to be close contact with Presidents and other highly placed dignitaries of the Government but he never used those for his personal gains but never hesitated to use those contacts to help others. As he progressed in service, he also had a chance to observe the intrigues in power corridors very closely. In 1989, Dr. Mohsin Pal was appointed as Director Medical Services Navy and later he was

appointed Director General of Health in Federal Government. It was in those days that he finally shifted to Islamabad though his family and children continued to live in Karachi to continue their education. This period is spread over six years during which he travelled a lot all over the world. He served as DG Health for four years after which he was appointed as Commandant of Armed Forces Medical College a postgraduate medical institution of Pakistan Army. In recognition of his meritorious services he was presented Hilal-e-Imtiaz Military in August 1988. He retired in March 1989 after attaining the age of sixty years and permanently shifted to Karachi.

Dr. Mohsin Pal was a rare personality who had been blessed with competence, ability, administrative qualities, dedication and devotion, selfless service imbued with the spirit of service to mankind. He belonged to a rare tribe of healthcare professionals who believe in helping others even at the cost of some personal discomfort and difficulties. However, the entire life of Dr. Mohsin Pal is full of such stories where he accepted every responsibility entrusted to him happily in such a way that no one even had an impression that he did not like the new job. Whatever responsibilities were given to him, he performed them exceptionally well at times at great personal sufferings but never spoke about it. This is one of the reasons that everyone who came in contact with him remembers him with good words till today. Such people are never born every day but it is said they do leave behind their legacy.

Dr. Mohsin Pal was also lucky to have found his life partner in Dr. Jahan Ara Pal who herself became an eminent Obstetrician & Gynaecologist of Pakistan. He met her during their service and they started their family life together on October 31<sup>st</sup> 1958. Dr. Jahan Ara Pal recalls that during their married life, they went through difficult situations which come in everyone's life but on every occasion Mohsin Pal proved to be a trustworthy and dependable partner who helped and encouraged me to overcome such difficult times. Throughout our life we have been good friend's life partner in real sense. Mohsin is neither very much known in literary circles nor he ever claimed to be a

literary figure but he was interested in Urdu literature from his childhood. It was also his right because his father Ameen Hazeen Sialkoti was a well known literary figure of India in those days. One would see him all the time in a positive frame of mind and he never knew about hopelessness or helplessness. His poetry often reflected his feelings but he never shared it with anyone. The following couplet expresses his feelings:

یہ جہاں خواب ہے اوہام ہے اور کچھ بھی نہیں  
 خود نظر تیری تیرا دام ہے اور کچھ بھی نہیں  
 اپنے ٹوٹے ہوئے ساغر کی قسم ہے مجھ کو  
 زندگی تلخی ایام ہے اور کچھ بھی نہیں  
 محسن

Dr. Jahan Ara Pal writes that with his consent she sent this couplet to his father Ameen Hazeen Sialkoti who commented that a healthy, competent, in service, lucky person should not have such feelings. Instead he should look at the life with a different angle and he also conveyed his comments on Mohsin Pal's poetry in the following couplet:

زندگی نام ہے ماحول پہ چھا جانے کا  
 بزم کو بادۂ کردار سے گرمائی کا  
 ظرف عالی ہے تو اے رندِ خرابات عمل  
 خم بہ آغوش ہے قطرہ تیرے پیمانے کا  
 امین حزیں

It had its impact and Mohsin Pal throughout his life not only followed his father's advice but also urged all others to follow the same spirit. Mohsin Pal was a gifted teacher as well and teaching and training his juniors was very close to his heart

because he believed that the future generation of Pakistan should be equipped with best administrative qualities.

Dr. Mohsin Pal along with Dr. Jahan Ara Pal went to London to join the graduation ceremony of his younger son Shakil Pal on November 21<sup>st</sup> 1993. Our other children Inam Pal and Lubna Pal, Dr. Jahan Ara Pal says also joined us in London to be together on this happy occasion but we never knew that this might be the last time for us to be together. Four days later, Mohsin Pal left this world on November 25<sup>th</sup> 1993 in the presence of us all. Mohsin Pal was interested in Urdu, English and Persian literature. He was a practical Muslim and he also urged others to follow the teachings of Islam. His following couplet reflects all this:

شیخ سے اجتناب کرتا ہوں  
زاہدوں سے میں دُور رہتا ہوں  
میں بشر ہوں خدا کا بندہ ہوں  
میں خدا کے حضور رہتا ہوں  
محسن

Yet another couplet form Mohsen's Kalam:

خرد اُلجھی ہوئی ہے آسماں سے  
جنوں لپٹا ہوا ہے آستاں سے  
خداوندا تجھے منظور کیا ہے  
نگار آرزو کے اس جہاں سے  
محسن

We were sincere and loved each other immensely says Dr Jahan Ara Pal. It took couple of days for his dead body to be brought to Pakistan. His Nimaze Jinaza was offered in PNS Shifa Ground which was largely attended by his friends, well wishers and a large number of healthcare professionals including staff of

PNS Shifa. It is customary for most of the army officers to opt for some other service after retirement but Mohsin Pal was again a rare exception. Despite lot of insistence, he never accepted the idea of another service but spent most of his post retirement time in reading and writing. Here are a few more couplets from Mohsin Pal's poetry for the readers to enjoy:

کیا جانے اس بزم میں کیا ڈھونڈ رہا ہوں  
 بُت خانے میں ہوں اور خدا ڈھونڈ رہا ہوں  
 رہزن کے تبسم میں اشارہ تھا غضب کا  
 رہبر کی قیادت میں پناہ ڈھونڈ رہا ہوں  
 محسن

بربط دل کا تار ٹوٹ گیا  
 اک سہارا تھا وہ بھی چھوٹ گیا  
 راہزن دنواز تھا یارو  
 آشنا بن کے مجھ کو لوٹ گیا  
 محسن

### حق دوستی

یوں نہ توڑو کہ کچھ بھی کر نہ سکوں  
 یوں نہ چھوڑو مجھے کہ مر نہ سکوں  
 دوست ہوں میں تو مجھ سے پیار کرو  
 میری باتوں کا اعتبار کرو  
 گر سمجھتے ہو تم کہ جھوٹا ہوں  
 آؤ ملِ جُل کہ سنکسار کرو  
 محسن



I knew his interest in music as I often saw him at the Mahfelle-Ghazal organized by the KEMCOLIAN Group at Karachi but never knew his interest in poetry until his death and came to know about it only when Dr. Jahan Ara Pal published her book “*Yadoon Kay Sangrezey*” which also contains his Kalam which consists of Hamad, Naat, Ghazal and numerous other couplets which he said at different occasions. Dr. Jahan Ara Pal was kind enough to present me a personal signed copy of this book on May 14<sup>th</sup> 1995 which is an added treasure in my personal library.

Major General Mohsin Pal was a great believer in interaction between the military physicians and healthcare professionals serving in public sector and civil institutions as he felt it will be to the mutual benefit of both. It will not only bring them closer but also provide them opportunities to share and learn from each other’s experience. Even in the past there had been many specialists from public sector who had been serving at PNS Shifa as visiting physicians and surgeons. Hence, he encouraged and asked the consultants at PNS Shifa to organize joint clinical meetings at Shifa. It was at one such meeting that I met Dr. Mohsin Pal for the first time. When I reported the proceedings of that clinical meeting, it had certain inaccuracies as not knowing the difference between Cdr and Cdre I had mixed up both at many places. He rang me up and I went to see him. He was very kind, affectionate and explained to me in detail what it meant by Cdr which stands for Commander while Cdre was used for Commodore which is a senior rank. As I was not aware of these ranks, hence this was the first time that I came to know about it. The way he entertained me and educated me left everlasting impressions on me and we became friends. The rest is history. I must admit that late Major Gen. Mohsin Pal was one of the physicians from whom I have learnt a lot in my professional career. In every meeting I had with him either at PNS Shifa or while he was Director Medical Services Navy, or Director General of Health and later Commandant Armed Forces Medical College, every meeting proved to be a great learning experience. He did a lot to improve the functioning and service at PNS Shifa and he was a very popular commandant. I also had the opportunity

to attend the farewell dinner hosted in his honour when he left for Islamabad after being appointed as DMS Navy. The dinner reception was very well attended by eminent healthcare professionals from different institutions of Karachi besides staff of PNS Shifa. During his stay at PNS Shifa he encouraged the consultants to do research and publish their findings and often requested me to accommodate their manuscripts in our journal. He in fact helped many consultants to get their papers published in “Specialist” a peer reviewed journal which we were publishing apart from the medical newspaper. The title of this journal was later changed to “Pakistan Journal of Medical Sciences” with effect from January 1<sup>st</sup> 2000.

After finishing his tenure as DMS Navy he was appointed as DG Health in Federal Health Ministry. I rang him up to congratulate him but was surprised to listen when he said that “he was not at all interested in this job. Perhaps some people wanted to sideline me but I being in uniform obeyed the orders and took over the new responsibilities”. Soon after his taking over, I had a lead story in my newspaper on JPMC Karachi and highlighted the fact that a large number of posts in teaching as well as administrative cadre including nursing were lying vacant since long. JPMC being a federal institution had quota for different provinces but many people from other provinces did not want to come to Karachi hence these posts remained vacant. The next week when he came to Karachi and we met at a function at JPMC he referred to that report and said they were looking into it. I had also reported that there is a general complaint that JPMC was being run from Islamabad through remote control and the academic council believe that if it was given autonomy or some more administrative powers, its function can be much better. However, later on this proved wrong as when after the 18<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendment health became a provincial subject and JPMC along with NICVD and NICH came under the administrative control of Sindh Government some staff members including faculty members went to the court and challenged that decision.

Once I went to see him in his office in Federal Health Ministry. While I was sitting there, a professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology from Nishtar Medical College Multan came to see him and started narrating the importance of this specialty. She further stated that many a times they have to be on emergency call and it was a very difficult specialty. She wanted some scholarship to go overseas for some training. When she was explaining about the obstetrics and gynaecology, Gen. Mohsin Pal was listening to her very patiently and also smiling. She could not understand the body language of Pal Sahib and kept on talking. Then I intervened and said, “Dr. Sahiba the man you are talking to is living with obstetrics and gynaecology for the last many years”. She could not understand it either; hence I then explained to her that he was husband of one of the most eminent Obstetricians & Gynaecologist of Pakistan Brig. Jahan Ara Pal. She said I never knew about it and then did not take much time to leave. Prof. Jahan Ara Pal was in fact a regular contributor in our Journal and one of the best Reviewers we had. On my request she would often almost rewrite the whole paper if need be and encouraged a large number of obstetricians and gynecologists. She continued to review papers for Pakistan Journal of Medical Sciences until a few years ago when she became sick and these days she is not keeping good health. Apart from serving at PNS Shifa she also served at Army Medical College and when she was denied promotion to the rank of Major General during the days of President General Ziaul Haque as till then there was no tradition of female AMC specialists to have been promoted as Major General, she resigned in protest and sought retirement. It had its effect and later doors for promotion of lady doctors being promoted as Major General opened and now there have been quite a few female specialists who have earned the rank of Major General in AMC before retirement.

While I was sitting in his office in Federal Health Ministry, I also noticed that he wrote the code word “TMP” on one of the files. Earlier Prof. Naseer B. Sheikh another DG Health in Z.A. Bhutto’s government, who was also a very dear friend had told me of some code words which the bureaucrats use

and two of them he mentioned were “cc” and “LC”. On enquiry he had explained that the cc means *chota chakkar* i.e this file should come back after about six months time and the LC meant *Lamba Chakar* meaning that this file should be dumped for a much longer time or forever. Hence I was a bit curious to know what does “TMP” stands for. When I asked him its meaning, Dr. Mohsin Pal said, forget about it. However, my close association with him encouraged me to insist on asking its meaning. When despite best efforts, he could not convince me to keep quiet, he said, when you go out, see Deputy DG Health Dr. Naubahar and he will explain you its meanings. I followed his advice and when asked Dr. Naubahar what this “TMP” stands for, he was also first reluctant and when I insisted, he did tell me its meaning which I cannot explain here. But suffice to say that it means, the job cannot be done and forget about it.

There was yet another interesting incident during the days when Major Gen. Mohsin Pal had just taken over as DG Health. I went to United States to attend the meeting of APPNA which I used to attend every second year. During my stay I was invited to visit Henry Ford Hospital by Dr. Ghaus Malik a noted Pakistani Neurosurgeon on the staff of Henry Ford Hospital. He took me on a guided tour of the hospital. When we went to his department and in the imaging section, he told me that this is the new CT Scan which Technicare company has donated to the hospital. On my enquiry he further stated that since the company has stopped production of CT Scans, they just wanted to get rid of some of the units in their stock. Hence some they sold to developing countries and a few they donated here to various hospitals. It was in those days that on special instructions of President General Ziaul Haque Government of Paksitan was planning to purchase five CT Scans for different cities in Pakistan. There were strong lobbies, the agents of Technicare was pushing for its sale while General Electric from United States was also interested to sell some of their CT Scans which of course were a bit more expensive. I was working on that story. A representative of GE also met me

and he did provide me some information as well. I prepared the report and published it questioning the wisdom behind purchasing CT Scans from a company which had wound up its business and there was no guarantee of smooth supply of spare parts when needed which meant that after a few years these machines may not be in functioning order. During my stay in United States I also had a chance meeting with a member of Pakistan Embassy in USA during an internal flight. When I introduced him myself as a medical journalist he just smiled and then told me the story of purchase of CT Scans in which one of the senior officials of AMC, he alleged, had played a key role for reasons not difficult to understand. I had referred to that as well in the report which annoyed Major Gen. Mohsin Pal and he felt as if that report was specially published at a time when he had just taken over as DG Health to malign him and the Federal Health Ministry though the decision to purchase these CT Scans was taken much before his joining the FHM as DG Health. Representatives of GE in Paksitan had also been meeting him frequently pursuing to atleast purchase two to three GE CT Scanners out of the five Paksitan wanted to purchase but to no avail. When Gen. Pal came to Karachi I met him at Director office in JPMC. Also present were Prof. M. Younis Director JPMC and Prof. S.H.Manzoor Zaidi. We had some heated arguments so much so that Prof. Younis got frightened and left his office saying that I leave you to sort it out. Gen. Pal asked me that if I have not been fed by someone and this is not a planted story, I must have the courage to disclose the name of the AMC officials involved in this deal. I insisted that we as journalist are not supposed to disclose our source otherwise in future no one will trust us. When he kept on insisting, I said, OK, if he could give me an assurance that the case against me will be tried in a civil court and not Military Court; I will disclose the name in the next issue. Listening this, Major Gen. Mohsin Pal realized that I must be true and might have some authentic information. Prof. Manzoor Zaidi was listening all that. Eventually I left the Director JPMC office and Major Gen. Mohsin Pal was very much furious at all this. My apprehensions

became true when the Technicare CT Scanner Pakistan had purchased went out of order after a few months, one after the other and there were also problems with the supply of the needed spare parts.

As DG Health he was also invited to be the chief guest at the inauguration ceremony of the newly established drug manufacturing facility of Squibb Pharmaceuticals in Korangi where I was also present. He looked at a bottle of mineral water as asked me that look at the price. It is more expensive than the bottle of Dextrose saline which is life saving. If we do not give reasonable prices, how the pharmaceutical industry in Pakistan can develop and flourish.

Once he along with the Advisor on Health to the President Gen.Ziaul Haque went to Geneva to attend the World Health Assembly in the Pakistani delegation. In Geneva the Health Advisor misbehaved with the other members of the delegation. They complained to Major Gen.Mohsin Pal who living upto his reputation of safeguarding and protecting the interests of people under his command, gave a good verbal treatment to the Health Advisor who was shocked at this development. He asked Dr.Naubahar Deputy DG Health who was also a part of the delegation to be a witness to all what has happened as he is going to report it to the President on return to Pakistan. Dr.Naubahar refused to be a witness to anything. On return to Pakistan he must have complained to the President and Major Gen.Mohsin Pal might have also sent his report to the President through proper channel, hence nothing happened. Annoyed at this, the Health Advisor addressed a press conference and stated that "There are many black sheep in the Federal Health Ministry and they will be taken to task in the coming few days. It was published prominently in the local press and particularly Daily Muslim. Officials of the FHM got annoyed and all assembled in the office of Major Gen.Mohsin Pal to record their protest on the utterances of the Health Advisor. Major Gen. Mohsin Pal listened to them patiently and then said, just go, relax and do your job, he will handle the situation. The next day Major Gen. Mohsin Pal issued a press release from the office of DG Health which

stated that “There are no black sheep in the FHM but there is a White Elephant which needs to be managed and treated”. This was a perfect rebuttal which was also published prominently by the media hence it did console the sentiments of the officials of the FHM.

On another occasion the Government had announced that August 14<sup>th</sup> the Independence Day will be celebrated with great fanfare and all hospitals should also participate in it and the best ward in the hospital should be given prizes. Gen. Mohsin Pal came to inspect the wards in JPMC, knowing his arrival I also reached the JPMC. He started the inspection from Ward-5 headed by Prof. S.M. Rab. Everybody was shocked and surprised when Gen. Mohsin Pal said that he would like to first see the Side Room Laboratory and then the Washrooms and will visit the ward later. He wanted to convey an important message that these were some of the places including the nursing station which must be kept neat and clean in addition to the general appearance of the Ward. This just showed how minute inspection he had and conveyed a message to the hospital administration to look at these areas which are often neglected.

Yet another interesting incident I remember took place while he was serving as commandant of Armed Forces Medical College, Rawalpindi. One of the eminent and senior most faculty members from Rawalpindi General Hospital which was affiliated with Rawalpindi Medical College used to come and give lectures on regular basis at the AFMC. He used to do this to earn some credit which he could use to get himself promoted as Professor directly by completing the teaching experience using this assignment. While delivering lectures, though he was from the civil side, he often behaved as a senior army official and would not hesitate to use stick to show off which is usually carried by the army officials. One day he used that stick to touch the uniform of a young trainee who objected to it. This physician was most often in a very aggressive mood to impress upon the trainees to get respect, did not like it. Soon after the lecture he reported this matter to the Commandant Maj. Gen. Mohsin Pal. The trainee who was involved in this incident was called for his

explanation. This trainee who later retired as a Brig. asked Gen. Mohsin Pal that “Sir I would like to explain my position but first this Physician must be asked to leave this room.” Gen. Mohsin Pal ordered the physician to wait in the side room. Then this trainee explained that “Sir, we are told to protect the dignity and honour of this Uniform. Once I am not in uniform I do not mind but when I am wearing this Army Uniform I cannot allow him to ridicule me like this which he had done.” Gen. Mohsin Pak called in the physician and confirmed that it was exactly what had happened. Then he ordered that from now onward, that physician will never come to the AFMC and won’t be allowed to speak to the trainees. This incident was narrated to me personally by that trainee. The physician in question who was a very well known and had lot of contacts in power corridors even among the Army officers tried his best to get this decision revoked but never succeeded and that was his last lecture at the AFMC. This also shows how seriously Gen. Mohsin Pal guarded and protected every one under his command.

I wrote my first book on “Medical Writing” in 1993 which was compilations of presentations made by various speakers at the first seminar on Medical Writing I had organized at King Edward Medical College, Mayo Hospital Lahore on 21<sup>st</sup> September 1992. I was very much excited and decided to have its formal inauguration. I requested Gen. Mohsin Pal to be the Chief Guest but at first he declined saying that he was now a retired person, I better invite some Minister. I insisted that I was interested to have an intellectual like him to grace the occasion and was least interested in inviting any Minister. He then agreed and attended this formal inauguration ceremony along with Dr Jahan Ara Pal held at CPSP Campus Karachi. This function which was followed by a dinner reception was largely attended by a select group of eminent physicians & surgeons besides councilors of CPSP present in Karachi. I still remember the speech he delivered on this occasion. After reading the Foreword in the book written by Dr. Ali Mohammad Chaudhry FRCP, FCPS a distinguished cardiologist from Hyderabad who was also a very dear friend, Gen. Mohsin Pal said that this foreword was a comprehensive



write-up and one does not need to add anything else. But then after congratulating me he concluded his speech with the following which conveys a lot and I often use this as a quotation in my workshops on Medical Writing and Peer Review:

**“Knowledge flows to those who are capable of receiving it, respecting it, protecting it, preserving it and promoting it”.**

Such pearls of wisdom could have only come from an intellectual like Major Gen.Mohsin Pal and not any Minister. I am immensely indebted to late Maj.Gen. Mohsin Pal, Prof. Brig. Jahan Ara Pal for the love and affection which they always showed towards me and I remember those sweet memories of meeting this wonderful couple which I will cherish for the rest of my life. I was indeed lucky to have friends and well wishers like them. Coming from a lower middle class family I could have never imagined that I will be so lucky to have friendship with such distinguished medical personalities.

Late Gen.Mohsin Pal was a multifaceted personality. There are certain moral values like truthfulness, courage, honesty, humility and professional ethics which travel in the families. His elder son Dr. Inam Pal who is a noted surgeon on the faculty of Aga Khan University Hospital has also inherited all these qualities. He is a very quiet person, a man of few words. Once I remember he was making a presentation at a surgical conference at Liaquat University of Medical and Health Sciences Hyderabad and he showed his results. One of the participants remarked that he had a very high mortality. At this Dr. Inam Pal remarked that “these were very serious high risk cases and this was his actual mortality, He does not believe in changing the figures to reduce the mortality. I have to be honest with my presentation and these are my results”.

It was Dr. Mohsin Pal who also introduced me to his class fellow and Brig. Mahmud Ahmad Akhtar at one of the medical conferences at Karachi. Dr.Mahmoud Ahmad Akhtar later became Lt.Gen and retired as Surgeon General of Pakistan Army. Since that day he also became a friend and till today he is a regular

contributor in my Publications. Lt.Gen. Mahmud Ahmad Akhtar was very keen in academics and as Principal of Army Medical College he introduced many innovations in teaching and training, trained a large number of Fellows and enjoys tremendous respect in the AMC. I never thought one day I will have to write about Maj.Gen. Mohsin Pal but it has been a privilege to write these few words to highlight some important facets in his personal and professional life. I am immensely indebted to Dr. Jahan Ara Pal and Mr. Khawar Jameel as I have benefitted a lot from the Book "*Yadoon kay Sangrezy*" which they have authored and lot of information about Gen.Mohsin Pal has been taken from that book.

Dr. Jahan Ara Pal is currently living in Karachi with her children. Their daughter Lubna Pal is Prof. of Obstetrics & Gynaecology at Yale University, in United States while their other son Shakeel Pal who did MA from London is doing his consultancy in Human Resource at Karachi.

According to Lt. Gen. Mahmud Ahmad Akhtar former Surgeon General of Pakistan Army, Major Gen. Mohsin Pal's father was known to be one of the most handsome person. He belonged to the Kashmiri Pal family, settled in Sialkot. Major Gen. Mohsin Pal's mother was a relative of Allama Iqbal. Mohsin Pal's father Ameen Hazeen Sialkoti was also a well-known poet. Mohsin Pal had his education at Government College Lahore which has produced some of the best known personalities of Pakistan like Allama Mohammad Iqbal, Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Dr. Abdus Salam, Sufi Tabbsum and many others.

Major Gen. Mohsin Pal himself was a handsome, charismatic, athletic level tall imposing personality. He was the most well-dressed student in the college donning well cut tuxedo suits, matching shirt, neck-ties and equally impressive calf leather shoes. He was well groomed having bright tastes. He was equally impressive immaculate to military uniform (Army, Navy). He carried himself with grace and style and outstanding gait. When General Ziaul Haque introduced Pakistani dress for the civil official's duties, he kept his high style. He had deep

interest in Urdu and English languages prose and poetry. While at the King Edward Medical College, he would go to Government College to attend classes of the famous Urdu, Persian teachers like Sufi Tabbsum and also the English academic sessions. He was an orator par excellence.

After graduation from KEMC in 1955, he joined the Army Medical Services and I had also joined AMC at the same time. We were the military training course mates for about six months. He underwent tough military training; route marches field exercises and also had training in Military Medicine. Mohsin Pal excelled in physical training events. He also served at Combined Military Hospital Jhelum. At that time this hospital was commanded by Lt.Col. Ghazanvi who had experience of World War-II in Italy. The Germans were putting up last ditch resistance. Like Mohsin Pal, Col. Ghazanvi was extra ordinary good looking, handsome with athletic built. He was also an orator par excellence. Mohsin Pal had good knowledge and experience of hospital administration and professional learning in medical disciplines. He had interest in human psychology. Mohsin Pal had good grooming under Col. Ghazanvi.

In those days only ninety students were admitted to KEMC, seventy from Punjab on merit and the rest from other provinces of Paksitan while a few seats were reserved for foreign countries as well. MBBS Punjab had very high standard. The AMC officers used to have further education and training in medical professional subjects and administration from the Field Medical Units and Military Hospitals. The Commanding Officer had a very good military medicine knowledge. The senior army officers also had professional training courses in London. Doctors used to get into AMC after getting medical degrees from medical institutions. In Armed Forces there are also Judges Advocates, Teachers, and Psychologists in Uniform. Doctors also do medical professional administration. Ideally there should not be any confusion about the GDMOs and Specialists. Mohsin Pal had liking for the Naval Service. Hence he was also posted at PNS Shifa Hospital at Karachi where he met Dr. Jahan Ara Pal a brilliant lady doctor

who was also deeply interested in Urdu poetry and prose, later they got married.

A Naval Officer commanding a Ship travelled to USA St. Deigo port. Commander Mohsin Pal accompanied him and one day they went out on an outing. On the way, they spotted a university hall having a function. They went inside in the university, listened to a lecturer. That Naval Commanding Officer later became C-in-C of Navy, who told me that Mohsin Pal after the end of the lecture, got up and delivered an extempore speech, an impressive oratory for which he got tremendous applause from those present. On being promoted as Brig. he was posted as the DG Health in the Federal Health Ministry. At that time I was a member of the Drug Registration Board representing the Armed Forces. Brig. Mohsin Pal was the Chairman of the Board. He followed the strict and honest policy and ensured that all decisions were taken on merit.

Mohsin Pal was also looking after the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences, Children Hospital and other health projects as DG Health. He did not have good relationship with the Health Advisor to the President at that time as he did not allow any irregularities which did create some tension and problems. On getting back to the Army, he was posted at Armed Forces Medical College and was promoted as Major General. He had some difficult times, went through lot of stress. At that time I was Director General Medicine. Despite brilliant career, Brig. Jahan Ara Pal was not promoted, got superseded; at this she got herself released from Army and joined Aga Khan University Hospital at Karachi. Major Gen. Mohsin Pal was head and shoulders above the other aspirant Major General who had strong political connections; hence he got promoted to the rank of Lt.Gen. and became the Surgeon General in Pakistan Army. Mohsin Pal then retired from Service. It is sad that Major Gen. Mohsin Pal did not become the Surgeon General. He would not have allowed the creation of deep fissures in the AMC in the GDMO and the Specialists Groups. It is a pity and misfortune of the country that Pakistan suffers from lack of meritocracy. As

long as decisions used to be taken on merit in Paksitan in various institutions, we saw excellent performance of these institutions.

Maj. Gen. Mohsin Pal had a strong humour. Once an acquaintance came across him after a long time. Mohsin said “Long Time No See”. The acquaintance replied “Liver under your feet” in Urdu. Mohsin said “I did not feel any kick”. He was very helpful, always rendered very valuable advice. He was a very sincere and dependable friend. He used to earn spectacular annual confidential reports. Always provided protection to the subordinate officers and ranks. Pal was a strong Public Health Believer who advocated ‘Prevention of Diseases and Promotion of Health’.

Dr. Mohsin Pal had gone to London to attend the graduation ceremony of his son where he suddenly developed severe abdominal pain and died due to rupture of abdominal aortic aneurysm. His body was brought to Pakistan for burial and his Nimaze-Jinaza was held at PNS Shifa, Karachi.

***Acknowledgement: “Yadoon Kay Sangrezey”*** by Jahan Ara Pal and Mohammad Khawar Jameel, Pakistan National Academy, Karachi. Published by Elite Publishers. 1995.- **SAJ**

## Important Points

1. When he was posted as Commandant of PNS Shifa at Karachi, it is known as the Golden Period in that institution.
2. He played a vital role at GHQ Rawalpindi in lady doctors career planning.
3. During his entire professional career he never harmed anyone under his command with his pen.
4. He had the capability to solve problems of his junior staff and senior officers with God gifted qualities.
5. He was great believer of interaction between military physicians and doctors working in civilian institutions which was to their mutual benefit.
6. He could not become Surgeon General because other aspirant had strong connections. Had he become Surgeon General he would not have allowed the creation of deep fissures in the AMC in the GDMO and Specialist Groups.