



**Dr. Mohammad Mukhtar Ahmad**  
MBBS, FRCS

کتاب شوق کے اہل نصاب ہیں ہم لوگ  
ہمیں پڑھو کہ بے حساب ہیں ہم لوگ

### “Mukhtar Nama”

Dr. Mohammad Mukhtar Ahmad is a well known retina surgeon of Pakistan who has earned a great name and fame for his professional expertise. I have known him since mid 70s when he returned to Pakistan after completing his postgraduate training and joined Retina Clinic established with the help of Adamjee Foundation at Spencer’s Eye Hospital. In fact I first met him there. I am proud of the fact that I am one of his friends. When I went to see him at Al-Ain few weeks ago, he presented me a book entitled “Mukhtar Naama”. He then hastened to add that it is neither superficial, nor artificial but the Real one. Reading through this book has been a fascinating experience. I have no hesitation to admit that I did learn quite a few things. In fact it is full of revelations. I have always tried to convince my doctor friends to write about their life time experiences which could be wealth of information for their colleagues while many others can also benefit from it.

The book is some sort of an autobiography of Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad wherein he has talked about his early life, the problems he had to face, how he got interested in medicine and got admission in Nishtar Medical College. Coming from a modest family from a village in District Toba Tek Singh in Punjab, he earned a great name, was honoured with Civil Awards by the Government of Pakistan. Throughout his life, he had to struggle at every stage but never gave up. He has described at length

the difficulties he had to face. It is a story of unbelievable successes which he earned due to his sincerity, devotion and dedication. Not only that, the book also highlights the ills our society as a whole is suffering from including lack of justice and non-availability of equal opportunities to the common man, at times it is full of humour as well. He has also given his thoughts about democracy and the type of Governance we have had over the years, had the courage to talk about the character of our religious leaders besides poetry related to eyes. Apart from ophthalmology, his interests include music and poetry and he has also made some contributions' in this field of poetry as well.

He was a beneficiary of Anjuman-e-Himate Islam scholarship of Rupees forty per month while studying in Nishtar Medical College besides assistance from Chaudhry Mohammad Tufail, Abdul Wahid and Dr. Capitan Mohammad Shafi from Faisalabad. Many others also helped him during his studies at different stages, he has acknowledged all of them. Even today hundreds of Mukhtars are wandering in Pakistan who if helped, can be a great asset to the country but we lack a system which can identify and help them. Referring to such a situation Dr. Mukhtar makes a passionate plea to the people of Pakistan that let us ensure that if we cannot provide electricity to the villages, at least try to provide glass lamp so that those who wish to study can do so, enlighten their and their families future and become useful productive citizens of Pakistan.

He got inspired to take up medicine as a career when he was treated by one Dr. Anwar Shah for pneumonia at his clinic in Rajana, a small town near Toba Tek Singh. Dr. Anwar Shah, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad writes was always very kind to the patients, used to listen to them very carefully, hence was very popular among the public. Later on it became known that in fact he was not a Doctor but used to practice medicine like many other unqualified people. Though he is no more in this world but the people of the area still remember him with good words because he served them with devotion and dedication. Apart from Dr. Mukhtar, Dr. Anwar Shah's son and daughter

also became doctors through his inspiration. The tragedy with today's physicians is that they are too busy and have no time to listen to the patient though it is a well known fact that careful history taking and physical examination gives you the diagnosis in majority of the patients and one needs only few investigations to confirm it.

At Nishtar Medical College he talks about Prof. Col. Najeeb Khan who was known for being a strict disciplinarian not only for others but himself as well. He also talks about Prof. Mushtaq and Prof. Hayat Zafar and Prof. N.A. Seyal. Prof. Shafi the Professor of Ophthalmology, Dr. Mukhtar writes, was a very simple God fearing physician who would never deny admission to a patient in his ward, those who will pay him for his private consultation, he will accept but those who did not, he never asked them to pay. Dr. Mukhtar quotes Prof. Shafi as saying that those who do not wish to pay doctor's consultation fee could be either very poor who cannot afford, could be your friend whom you have not recognized, could be working in a department where you might need to go so that they can help you at that time or must be working in a department where he can take you to task and has the potential to harm you in many ways. Whosoever worked under Prof. Shafi was so much inspired that he eventually decided to become an eye specialist.

Dr. Mukhtar also narrates the story how he first came to know the corrupt practices in the government departments when he had to grease the palms of someone in the passport office to get the Passport and again oil the palms of emigration staff who was not prepared to stamp his passport at the Airport unless he was offered some money. While in England he came to know Ales with whom he later got engaged in 1967 in Belgium where Dr. Khawaja Iftikhar of Sind lab was also present. He got married on February 24th 1968 and this time Prof. Ali Nawaz Chaudhry who was working in a hospital in London came to attend the marriage ceremony. Though Ales has done Masters in Sociology, Political Science and Philosophy but after marriage she decided to concentrate on family life looking after the children. Dr.

Mukhtar is so impressed with the life in Scotland and rightly so that he feels, if one ever has to live outside the country, Scotland is the best place to live.

An honest, simple, straight forward, “Munafaqat Saay Na-Ashna” Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad had an earnest desire to serve his country. His foreign wife supported him a lot to realize this dream. When he decided to return to Pakistan, he travelled by road, the immense love and affection which he and his brother in law Thew got in Iran and especially Turkey is worth mentioning. Turkey in fact is one of the best friends of Pakistan and every Pakistani visiting Turkey is a witness to the remarkable love and affection which people of Turkey has for Pakistan and Pakistanis. Sardar Yar Mohammad Jamali the chief of Jamali tribe of Baluchistan also helped them ordering his over a dozen personal guards to escort them so that they reach Karachi safely since the journey was not considered safe.

He started his professional career in Pakistan at Adamjee Retina Clinic at Spencer’s Eye Hospital at a monthly remuneration of just one thousand rupees. After sometime, he got fed up and decided to return to Scotland and got a consultant’s job in one of the hospitals. Dr. M.H. Rizvi contacted him again and promised to provide him better working conditions and insisted that he must return to Pakistan, so he decided to come back. Apart from serving at Spencer’s Eye Hospital, he also started private practice and soon became a popular ophthalmic surgeon and it also helped him overcome his financial difficulties. He recalls that one of his patients was so delighted that he paid him Rupees five thousand and a gift of watch instead of paying the operation fee which used to be just two hundred in those days.

Dr. Mukhtar also talks about the indifferent attitude of seniors who seldom allow juniors to work so that they do not become their competitors. This attitude of the seniors affected many young competent and experienced Pakistani physicians who came back to Pakistan after post graduation but were forced

to leave the country. He has written about many VVIP patients whom he had the privilege to examine and treat. One such interesting incident relates to the Cabinet Secretary who came to see him for some eye ailment. An innocent Dr. Mukhtar who was not aware of any protocol and did not know how important a Cabinet Secretary is, talking to him on intercom told him to see his Secretary, follow his instructions and wait for his turn. When the Cabinet Secretary's turn came, he asked Dr. Mukhtar, it appears you have no experience of working in a government institution otherwise he would have known what the status of a Cabinet Secretary is? And when he got a chance to appear in the interview and the Chairman of the Federal Public Service Commission did not turn up in time, he went to Punjab House where the Chairman a retired General was staying. When he tried to see him, he was reprimanded how he dare to come here at which Dr. Mukhtar had the courage to tell the Chairman that it is already 11.00 Clock and you should have been in your office by now, what was he doing here? This was too much for the Chairman FPSC who ordered him to leave the premises immediately before he could order someone to throw him out. In yet another incident the Chief Justice came for consultation to his clinic and sent in his visiting card so that he could get preferential treatment and could be seen immediately. Dr. Mukhtar obliged but when the chief justice was returning, he wanted his visiting card back. At this Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad had the courage to tell him that he wants his visiting card back so that it cannot be misused though he himself had already misused it by availing preferential treatment instead of waiting for his turn. He served as an Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology at JPMC for about three months and had to leave for reasons which he has elaborated in detail which is also an eye opener.

Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad introduced Day Care Surgery for cataract patients in Pakistan who till then used to be hospitalized. Later he established Al-Ain on Shahrah-e-Qaudeen near Nursery. He came to know the real meaning of "Chaey Panni" when he needed completion certificate of his residence in Defense Housing Society. Every one living in Karachi has to face some unpleasant incidents at

the hands of Dacoits and criminals, Dr. Mukhtar was no exception. His wife suffered many injuries during this incident. He took her to the Aga Khan Emergency. The way they were treated here is by now a routine experience of many patients including the eminent healthcare professionals. In protest he decided to take his wife to JPMC and his comments “Khuda Kissee Dushman KO Bhee Aga Khan Ki Emergency Maain Na Lejay” are quite meaningful.

Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad also served at Al-Shifa Eye Hospital Rawalpindi from 1986 to 2004 where he used to go on Friday, Saturday and Sunday in the last week of every month in honorary capacity as desired by Lt. Gen. Jehandad Khan founder of this hospital. Dr. Mukhtar has now built a Farm House in Islamabad where he goes every month regularly and now intends to establish a small eye clinic in Bhurban area. The reader will be delighted to read his comments regarding too many pigs living in Islamabad area.

He had the privilege of treating late Rahmatullah and Layton both founders of Layton Rehamtullah Benevolent Trust (LRBT) Hospital one of the largest chains of eye hospitals and clinics in Pakistan. Late Graham Layton also appointed Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad a member of Board of Trustees of LRBT. He also served at Liaquat National Hospital for some time in honorary capacity. Ophthalmological Society of Pakistan honoured him with Normin Christy Gold Medal in recognition of his services in the field of ophthalmology. He also authored the Code of Ethics for OSP which was presented as Wania Memorial lecture at OSP meeting held at Quetta in 1996. It was later published in a booklet form and Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad is still Chairman of this sub-committee. OSP also decided to institute Mukhtar Ophthalmology Gold Medal in his name which is offered to an ophthalmic surgeon every year who upholds professional ethics in his practice. He got Life Time Achievement Award at an ophthalmic conference in Egypt in 2008 besides being honoured by Asia Pacific Society of Ophthalmology at the World Ophthalmology Conference held in Hong Kong the same year.

Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad introduced flourocene fundus angiography at Spencer's Eye Hospital in 1974. He came up with many innovations, innovative procedures in ophthalmology and thus introduced many treatment modalities in this specialty for the first time in Pakistan which is all discussed in detail in this book. He also had the opportunity to operate upon parents of former President General Pervez Musharraf, Begum Khaleequzaman, Begum Khawaja Nazimuddin and Begum Liaquat Ali Khan to name just a few from the long list of such VVIP patients. English, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad believes can be and should remain a medium of instruction but it does not mean that we should ignore our national language Urdu. He does not agree with the commonly held belief that progress and advancement is not possible by adopting Urdu as a medium of instruction. Had it been so, Nations like Korea, China and Japan would not have progressed so much, he maintains. Every Pakistani, Dr. Mukhtar opines should have equal opportunities to study, progress and prospers. Children of ordinary Pakistanis if intelligent and competent should get the same facilities which are available to the children of bureaucrats and others in the affluent class. Everyone should earn their degrees instead of getting it through "recommendations" and using unfair means.

He talks about rampant corruption in Pakistan and says that "where nothing works, Quaid-e-Azam is of great help but one has to decide about the colour and whether one or two pictures (Notes) will be enough or one would have to present a complete Album" which conveys a lot and is a true reflections of current state of affairs in Pakistan. Alas we have not been able to check corruption which now has been even legalized and institutionalized.

Judiciary and Media is quite independent these days and Dr. Mukhtar prays that both these institution must retain their independence in the days to come which is extremely important for the progress and prosperity of the country and to ensure good Governance. He has also commented on the increasing incidents of terrorism in the country and feels that while no one should enforce his own ideas on others through force but at the same



time the Government also has to give up the slavery of the West and United States of America in particular. This attitude and policies of our rulers are also responsible for manifold increase in terrorist activities in Pakistan. He does not favour immunity to high government functionaries during the tenure they are in office and is also very critical of plea bargain policy adopted by the National Accountability Bureau while dealing with corruption cases. How professional jealousy landed him into trouble and he had to face some court cases also form part of some chapters in this book. How he got an opportunity to meet some most important personalities in Pakistan like late Mr. G.Allana ,Late Mrs.Khawaja Nazimuddin, Begum Riana Liaquat Ali Khan, Nawab of Bahawalpur, Agha Hassan Abidi, famous Singer Mehdi Hassan, Fareeda Khanum, Munni Begum, Shakeela Khorasani, Iqbal Mehdi etc., is quite interesting. Dr. Fareeda also came to know that Dr. Mukhtar is “Very Shareer” and to know about this, you have to read this book to thoroughly enjoy this (page 174).

He has generously used Urdu couplets in the book which also shows his love for poetry.Last chapter in this autobiography consists of some selected couplets related to eyes. One of his friends hosted a reception in his honour and also announced that the main objective of this was to recite a couplet for Dr. Muhammad Mukhtar Ahmad. He then recited the following couplet.

میری تربت جو بنے عین بنے آنکھ کی شکل  
چشم زنگس کا ہوں مارا میری پہچان رہے

It may be of interest to note here that Dr.Mukhtar is an eye specialist and Nargis is Pakistani name of his wife.

When one of his friend said that:

تم میرے پاس ہوتے ہو گویا جب کوئی دوسری نہیں ہوتی

Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad modified it by saying that:

تم میرے پاس ہوتے ہو گویا جب کوئی تیسری نہیں ہوتی

Remember up to four wives are allowed in Islam.

Let me share with you some more selected couplets related to eyes from this autobiography:

رگوں میں دوڑتے پھرنے کے ہم نہیں قائل  
جو آنکھ ہی سے نہ ٹپکے تو وہ لہو کیا ہے  
\* \* \* \* \*  
آنکھ سے دور نہ ہو دل سے اتر جائے گا  
وقت کا کیا ہے گزرتا ہے گزر جائے گا  
\* \* \* \* \*  
اس نے دیکھا ہی نہیں ورنہ یہ آنکھ  
دل کا احوال کہا کرتی ہیں

And now a few couplets from Dr. Muhammad Mukhtar Ahmad as well:

جانا ہے درجاناں پہ تو جا کر ہی رہیں گے  
سنتے ہیں کہ اس راہ میں رسوائی بہت ہے  
\* \* \* \* \*  
سنتے آئے ہیں کہ راہ ہے دل کو دل سے  
وہ تو آئے گا میرے دل کی خبر جس کو ہے

He has modified Urfi's couplet as under saying that if the dogs come to know its meanings they will protest and say:

اے قوم سگاں مندیش زغوغائے انسان  
آوازِ گدا کم نہ کند رزق سگاں را

Dr. Muktar has also expressed his last wish how he should be remembered by his friends and well wishers when he is no more in this world.

میری موت نہ بن جائے کہیں رسوائی تیری  
بعد مرنے کے میرے ہرگز نہ پشیمان ہونا

Here too he has tried to convey a lot criticizing the unending ceremonies after death which becomes a source of great discomfort for the family of the departed soul. If many people helped him while he was getting education and during his early professional career, he has and continues to help a large number of people through different ways including financial assistance to students thus helping a large number of students, poor in the society and patients alike. *(Published in PULSE Int. Feb 15, 2013)*

### **Elza Retina Welfare Organization**

In 2018, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed started a new phase in his life when he decided to establish an NGO for charity work in the field of ophthalmic care. Hence, in 2019 Elza Retina Welfare Organization was established and he decided to set up a Charitable Clinic offering state of the art ophthalmic care in Nawabshah in the interior of Sindh. When asked what motivated him to set up this clinic offering Day Care surgery for ophthalmic diseases in Nawabshah rather than in his own village near Toba Tek Singh in Punjab, Dr. Mukhtar said that except Karachi where there are quite a few hospitals including LRBT offering state of the art ophthalmic care,, no such facility existed in the whole of interior of Sindh in the twenty four districts. Only recently one of the ophthalmic units in a hospital in Hyderabad has started providing these facilities. Retina investigations, he further stated are very expensive. Retinal detachment surgery costs somewhere between 1.5 to 3.5 lac rupees. Anti VEGF injection's cost Rs. 30,000/- per injection and one has to use this every month for two and a half years. As such not many people can afford it in the interior of Sindh.

It was with this background that he looked at the map of Sindh and found Nawabshah was in the centre of the province, hence he decided to set up this facility there. So far none of

the twenty four districts of Sindh had this facility. I went to Nawabshah and talked to the area notables, elders and discussed with them the plan to set up this ophthalmic facility. After detailed discussions, they offered me a piece of land measuring four thousand square yards worth four crore rupees. That is how it started. ELZA is an NGO. In fact Elza was the name of the first patient of retina he saw in 1965 and it inspired him to take up Retina surgery as a specialty. ELZA is also the name of my wife and setting up this project is to pay tribute to this lady who left the comfortable affluent life in Europe and came to Pakistan in 1975 and since then she has been living in Pakistan.

In reply to a question he said that people of his village did get annoyed with me saying I should have established this facility in my home town. I went there and invited all the notables and elders of the village and asked them to identify people in the village who deserve Zakat. They thought over it and then said, none at the moment. Hence, I asked them that look here we have an LRBT outreach hospital located at two Kilometers from the village. Then we have facilities of eye surgery available in Toba Tek Singh. I wanted to create this facility where it did not exist and was needed the most. Hence, I decided for Nawabshah. However, I promised them that anyone in the village who needs ophthalmic care and cannot afford can go to the LRBT and other eye surgeons in the area and I will take care of that. One of my cousins in the village takes care of such cases and so far only a few who deserved, have availed this offer. Moreover, Chaudhry Sarwar has also established a charity hospital in the area and I thought it was futile to duplicate this effort. However, I have organized two eye camps in the village and every time between two to three hundred operations were performed. I plan to have another eye camp in the area once we get rid of this COVID19 pandemic.

My next question to him was about his plans to ensure long term sustainability of this facility? Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed said that we have a Governing Body which consists of some corporate executives, young doctors, and MBAs with average age of forty years. I have some people in mind who will be given the

responsibility to run and manage this after me. However, since rules and regulations governing NGOs demand for elections every two years, I have kept some permanent spots like Chief Executive Officer, Medical Superintendent, Executive Director and Director for foreign Fund Raising. These people are permanent and they do not have to be elected. They will take care of this institution. Ever since the clinic was opened on September 1st 2019, about fifty patients visit daily. It is a basically Day Care facility and so far we have spent about four crore rupees on construction, equipment and instruments. All the facilities for ophthalmic surgery are available here except we do not have a Vitrectomy machine which costs about two crore rupees. Those patients who need it are referred to Karachi at Al-Ain Hospital, they are provided travel facility and are looked after here. The number needing such sophisticated facility is very few, hence it is also cost effective to treat those patients at Karachi. Friends of ERWO (Elza Retina Welfare Organization) is registered in USA where we get some donations to manage this facility for which Dr. Abdul Rashid is doing a commendable job.

God Almighty has given me much more than I deserve and I have no wish which remains unfulfilled. He was full of praise for some of his professional colleagues like late Dr.M.H. Rizvi of Spencer's Eye Hospital, late Dr. Jamshed H. Wania in Karachi, Prof. Saleh Memon currently affiliated with Al- Ibrahim Eye Hospital in Karachi, Prof. Latif Chaudhry in Lahore and Prof. Daud Khan in Peshawar for their untiring efforts to promote the discipline of ophthalmology and ophthalmic care in Pakistan. Late Dr. M.H.Rizvi did a lot for corneal transplantation in Pakistan and prevention of blindness. Dr. Wania's efforts to put Pakistan on the world ophthalmic map are praiseworthy. Prof. Saleh Memon has done a lot holding eye camps all over the Sindh province, prevention of blindness and even after retirement from JPMC, he is now affiliated with Al-Ibrahim Eye Hospital which is providing state of the art ophthalmic care facilities to the poor and needy patients. Prof. Latif Chaudhry before setting up his state of art facility in the private sector, had such a facility established at Ganga Ram Hospital affiliated with Fatima Jinnah

Medical College for Women in Lahore. Prof.Daud Khan did a lot for prevention of blindness in Pakistan and in the field of community ophthalmology in particular. These are the people which should always be remembered. They deserve much more. Ophthalmological Society of Pakistan, he opined, should always have memorial lectures in their name in their conferences.

### Important Points

1. He was beneficiary of Anjuman-e-Himate Islam scholarship for Rs.40/- per month while studying at Nishtar Medical College Multan
2. Others who helped him financially to complete studies include Ch. Mohammad Tufail, Abdul Wahid and Dr. Capitan Mohammad Shafi from Faisalabad
3. When Dr. Anwar Shah treated him for pneumonia, it inspired him to become a doctor. Later it was revealed Anwar Shah was an unqualified practitioner but was very kind to his patients hence he was very popular in public
4. If one ever has to live outside the country, Scotland is the best place to live
5. He started his professional career in Pakistan at Adamjees Retina Clinic at Spencer's Eye Hospital at a monthly remuneration of Rs. 1,000/-
6. He had the privilege of treating Late Rahmatullah and Layton both founders of LRBT Trust Hospital
7. He introduced flourocene fundus angiography at Spencer's Eye Hospital in 1974, came up with many innovations, innovative procedures, started Day Care Surgery for cataract in Karachi
8. Corruption is rampant in Pakistan. Where nothing works, Quaid-e-Azam is of great help but one has to decide about the colour and whether one or two pictures (Notes) will be enough or one would have to present a complete Album.