

# BEG SAHIB

A life dedicated to empowering the downtrodden



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Khalid Ansari



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*Justice MSA Siddiqui*

## Foreword

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**M**irza Faridul Hasan Beg was a philanthropist, educationist and a successful banker, and above all a fine human being. He was an institution in himself. He realized that our present educational system was accessible and open to the rich and those from the creamy layer, while the underprivileged are priced out of the institutions for want of money. He felt strongly that the Muslim community would be throwing away great opportunities, casting adrift its future, if it does not acquire a strong knowledge and economic base powered by Information Technology, innovation and modern education.

Consequently, Beg Sahib established educational institutions in his native district Azamgarh for spreading education among children who were deprived of modern

education due to poverty, exploitation and religious extremism.

He tried to engender a social conscience for the upliftment of the weaker sections of the society. He, therefore, conceived the concept of micro-financing and established Jamia Cooperative Bank Limited. This venture came as a great beacon of light and hope to the downtrodden segment of society which had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. He had a dream that one day this section of the society, sweltering in the heat of poverty and injustice, will be transformed into an oasis of peace, prosperity and justice. The path he chose was full of hazards but was the most consistent with the character and courage of his community and his commitments around it. Thus, whatever he has left with us, is what he said, and what he did, and what he stood for.

*Chalaa gayaa magar apnaa nishaan chhod gayaa*  
*Wo zindagi bhar ke liye daastan chhod gayaa*

***Justice M.S.A. Siddiqui***

Former Chairman, National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions, Government of India





## Introduction

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*Kisi ko ho na saka uske qad ka andaaza,  
Wo aasmaan tha magar sar jhukaye rahta tha*

If you ask a successful person or a management guru to define success, the predictable answer would be, the achievement of financial freedom for future generations to enjoy long-term benefits.

Unlike this perspective, there is a very distinctive set of people who lay emphasis on character building, good conduct and exhausting themselves to elevate the condition of the lives of the marginalized people and to help them lead a dignified life.

Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg was one such example whose heart always responded to the sufferings of the poor and

who dedicatedly invested all his energies to bring a smile on their innocent faces.

Born on January 10, 1936, to Mirza Raza Beg and Umda Khatoon at Anjanshaheed, Azamgarh, Uttar Pradesh, India, Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg was fondly known as 'Mitthu'. His father left for his heavenly abode when Mitthu was only 5 years old. His elder brother, Mirza Ahsanullah Beg, took him under his wings and let Mitthu complete his education without any constraints.

Mitthu was admitted to Madarsa Islamia Primary Pathshala, Anjanshaheed, Azamgarh, to complete his primary education, followed by his admission to Gandhi High School, Maltari (Azamgarh), from where he passed his matriculation examination. Mitthu was one of the students of its first batch.

Gandhi High School was the brainchild of Mirza Ahsanullah Beg, who contributed to the setting up of the school, right from the concept, to the assemblage of the raw material to building the complete structure.

After completing his matriculation from Gandhi High School, Mitthu went to Shibli Inter College, Azamgarh, where he studied till 12th standard.

As a child, Mitthu observed his compassionate mother engaged in works of charity to the extent that, regardless of all the barriers of caste, creed or religion, she fed her own milk to over a dozen of orphan infants. These infants were primarily from poor Dalit families who were suffering from the massive outbreak of an epidemic.

He also saw his philanthropist father extending a helping hand to all needy people and tirelessly spending time to improve their lives.

These acts of compassion left an indelible impression on Mitthu's mind, making him restless to work for the betterment of the marginalized sections of society.

One day, the Shibli Inter College faculty arranged a documentary film screening for the students. The documentary titled 'Minorities in India' had shown Dr. Zakir Hussain, his vision for the minorities, and the futuristic and progressive role of education in their overall development.

This documentary ignited the desire in Mitthu to meet Dr. Zakir Hussain and with each day passing, he became more eager to meet him in-person.

Towards the end of his studies at Shibli Inter College, Mitthu shared his desire to meet Dr. Zakir Hussain with his elder brother Mirza Ahsanullah Beg, and requested him to make the necessary arrangements for sending him to Delhi.

His elder brother, Mirza Ahsanullah Beg, who himself was a social worker, educationist and philanthropist, didn't take long to understand the great desire of his younger brother. He made all the arrangements, and to facilitate Mitthu's admission to Jamia Millia Islamia, he got a letter of recommendation written by the then Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh C.B. Gupta to the then Vice Chancellor, Jamia Millia Islamia, Professor M. Mujeeb.

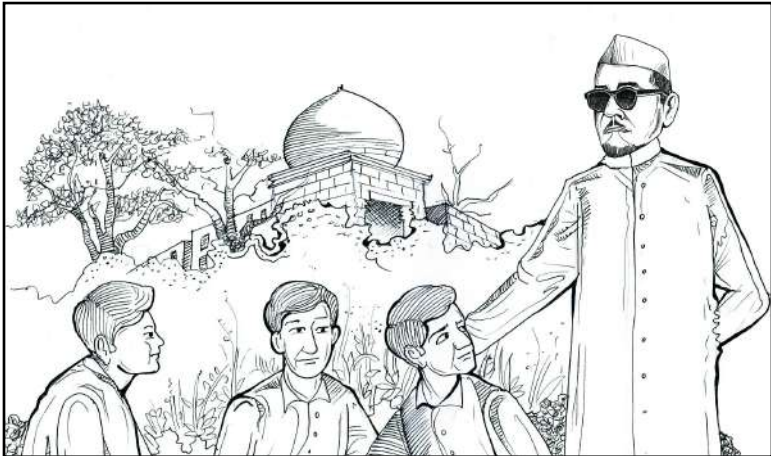
By now, Mitthu had almost concluded that the cooperative movement, advocated by Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru and

empowerment of the marginalized through education by Dr. Zakir Hussain, were the only two most effective methods to bring about a revolution in the society.

He went on to delve deeper into the cooperative movement and social work. On the one hand, he understood that he needed a financial institution to empower the marginalized people, and, on the other, a compassionate heart to help individuals, families, groups and communities to enhance their individual and collective well-being.

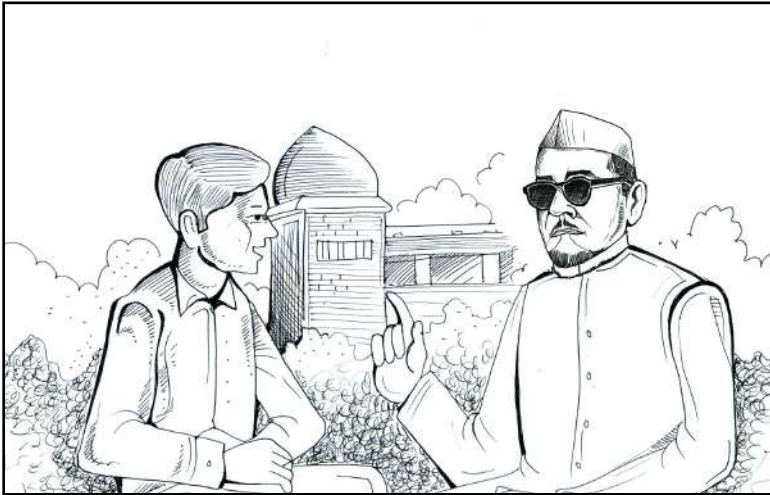
He also comprehended that the core efforts should be invested in helping people develop their skills and ability, to use their own resources to resolve their problems. Mitthu came to Delhi in 1958 and joined Jamia Millia Islamia to study social work.

One evening, while he was chatting with friends and discussing the revolutionary contribution of Dr. Zakir Hussain in nation-building and minority empowerment through education at Tikona Park, Jamia Nagar, someone put his hand on his shoulder, saying, “Khaaksaar ko Zakir Hussain kehte hain.”



Mitthu turned around in complete amazement and was dumb-stuck because the gentleman was none other than Dr. Zakir Hussain himself, whose persona, works and vision had inspired Mitthu the most.

After this meeting, Mitthu remained in touch with Dr. Zakir Hussain and with the passage of time, affinity between the two grew. One day, Mitthu confessed to his muse, “Mujh mein liyaaqat nahi hai, lekin kuchh bada kaam karna chahta hoon” (I have no special talent, but, would like to do something big). Quipped the muse, “Agar liyaaqat nahi hai to khidmat ka jazbaa paida karo, kaamyabi qadam choomegi” (If you have no special talent, adopt the spirit of service to mankind, you will definitely succeed).



These words changed the course of young Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg’s life. He started pondering over the million dollar advice of Dr. Zakir Hussain and was often found in deep contemplation.

During his social work study, Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg made many good friends and developed a sizable network

among the who-is-who of Delhi including social workers, educationists, bureaucrats and political leaders. “Ek din mera Mirza bade bade kaam karega,” said Mr. Madan Lal Sharma, a senior faculty member in the social work department of Jamia Millia Islamia. Mr. Sharma was extremely fond of Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg and took pride in grooming him for a bigger role in life.

With a degree in social work, on the one hand, and an inflamed passion for transforming the lives of the downtrodden, on the other, Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg started close interaction with people living below the poverty line and visited several camps in different localities.

Since Beg Sahib had chosen Jamia and its surroundings to be his area of social work, he took up employment with Jamia Millia Islamia University as Ataliq (tutor). He adopted the formula of ‘One Man Two Missions’ and started devoting his spare time to work for the upliftment of the downtrodden.

Starting with the help of Councillor Chaudhary Narayan Singh, he focused on the provision for basic facilities like electricity, water, sanitation and medical services for in his area. During this time, he also interacted with teachers and people devoted to the cause of education. He learns that a majority of them felt insecure, had a narrow thinking and preferred to live in their ghetto environment.

Beg Sahib realized that it was important for people to get out of their ghettos, mix with other communities and broaden their thinking, to have a better and prosperous future.

This was when the idea of establishing a regularized colony, equipped with all the facilities for quality living, originated

in his mind. Beg Sahib mobilized his close friends, discussed the need for a regularized colony, and Engineer Ahmed Sayeed, a close friend of Beg Sahib, was asked to mobilise more people with similar needs and thoughts.

After this, the society pushed for the allotment of land in South Delhi. Here, late Saiyid Hamid, an eminent educationist who was then working with the Home Ministry as Joint Secretary, walked the extra mile to help this cause. Finally, with the collective efforts of many people, a piece of land measuring 4.25 acres, was allotted in front of New Friends Colony.

For managing and handling the construction, Beg Sahib engaged none other than the reputed architect Raj Rewal who was known for erecting beautiful structures, combining architecture and technology.

The architectural marvel crafted by Raj Rewal was ready in 1984, with 204 units, at a total cost of Rs. 4 crore. Since this residential project was inspired by Dr. Zakir Hussain, the members decided to call it Zakir Bagh, as a tribute to Dr. Zakir Hussain.

Zakir Bagh, a true reflection of a Bagh (garden), with a variety of plants and trees, accommodates people from different walks of life, mainly peons, clerks, educationists, engineers, bureaucrats, advocates, doctors and businessmen. Beg Sahib made an extra effort to bring in families from Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Christian backgrounds to make this human garden represent the ethos and flavour of their cultural richness. This was one of the major achievements of Beg Sahib.

After a sigh of relief on the shelter front, now, Beg Sahib wanted to focus on his core area of social work: helping

and empowering the downtrodden. He took up another project, Jamia Cooperative Bank Ltd. to arrange finance for poor and marginalized people.

Mirza Sahib discussed the project with top-of-the-line experts, developed a functional structure and completed the paperwork with economist Raja Chelliah as its first Chairman at the time of its registration. After some time, Mr. Chelliah handed over to I. Z. Bhattu as the second Chairman of the Bank.

Fighting against all odds, finally, in 1995, Jamia Cooperative Bank Ltd. (JCB) was ready to function and today it can proudly claim to be one of the finest cooperative banks, with a deposit business of Rs. 152 crore and advances of Rs. 84 crore.

Today, a close look at the JCB's achievements, shows a huge number of loans issued to people struggling to make both ends meet, to improve their livelihoods by starting small scale work, empower women to initiate skill development to be able to stand on their own feet, and vehicle loans to start the transportation business, and transform their lives and bring in prosperity.

Besides empowering people through easy loans for starting enterprises, JCB has also supported innumerable students to pursue higher education thereby changing the fate of the entire family. "No child should be deprived of education simply because his parents cannot afford it. It is the responsibility of those who are blessed by God with enough resources and means. Our society must come forward and take the responsibility of supporting education," said Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg to his friend, Engineer Ahmed Sayeed.



While Beg Sahib was busy working for the upliftment of poor people in the capital, he also initiated many educational projects in his hometown Anjanshaheed, Azamgarh, Uttar Pradesh.

One of the educational projects which Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg, with Mirza Mehfooz Beg, Mirza Arif Beg and Mirza Qamarul Hasan Beg, developed, was the Mirza Ahsanullah Beg Girls Degree College in the memory of his elder brother Mirza Ahsanullah Beg. This initiative received active support from other members of the family too. The foundation stone was laid by late Saiyid Hamid, retired IAS officer and former Chancellor, Jamia Hamdard on February 18, 2003.

Amidst all these initiatives of financial as well as educational empowerment, he also realized the need for establishing a mechanism to connect with, and communicate, the issues and concerns of the people of Azamgarh to the administration for understanding governance and for availing of the benefits from the government.

This led to the establishment of a Community Radio - Voice of Azamgarh (VoA). "We run inspirational programmes, which can motivate listeners to develop in life, connect government officers with people of the region to share welfare schemes, and provide an open platform to the poor to raise their issues and concerns," said Seema Srivastav, programme head, Voice of Azamgarh.

In the first quarter of 2015, Beg Sahib shared with his sons his wish to start an English medium school in Delhi too. To fulfill their father's last wish, his sons have started working out the modalities.

On May 06, 2015, Beg Sahib suffered multiple cardiac arrest leading to breathing his last. Perhaps, he was needed somewhere else more than for the people here who continue to relate tales of his charity, to the extent that even he sold off his personal things like his wristwatch, ring, clothes, shoes, etc. to help people in their time of need.

In the afternoon of May 07, 2015, the coffin was brought out of his Ishwar Nagar house and taken to the open ground for funeral prayers. Hazrat Syed Bilal Thanwi led his funeral prayers. The coffin was taken to the graveyard in Jamia, the first site of his struggle, and now a befitting resting place for him.

Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg is no longer with us, but his acts of service to mankind, his good conduct and high character, will continue to live till eternity.



## Understanding Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg

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Understanding Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg is a matter of great research and inspiration for those, who knew him both from his childhood, as *Mitthu*, back in Anjanshaheed, Azamgarh, as well as in Jamia Nagar, New Delhi.

Even those who took pride in being his closest friends in Azamgarh, are in complete amazement to see the results of his acts of selfless contribution in nurturing the downtrodden through education, especially empowerment of the girl child. Those who became the 'best pals' in his 'Jamia days', saw him struggling and fighting for their issues and concerns and, finally, he gave them two finest solutions to manage their residential as well as financial needs in the

form of Zakir Bagh and Jamia Cooperative Bank Ltd.

Putting the pieces together, we reach a conclusion that Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg was undoubtedly a 'God-sent' reward to people, the answer to their prayers for alleviation of their sufferings and miseries.

Mirza Sahib had an extraordinary heart, overflowing with compassion, charity, love and with the welfare of innumerable people uppermost, and till his last breath, he was seen inquiring about the progress of the institutions he had set up to benefit the marginalized lot of our society.

“Our relationship started on a professional note, almost 35 years ago and soon we became a family. I realized that Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg was an embodiment of benevolence, humility, integrity and hospitality. He was extremely fond of both of my children. He visited us frequently and always brought specially cooked food for my children. He was always a part of celebration, be it my daughter’s birthday or some other social occasion,” shared Mrs. Archana Kumar, an eminent lawyer and wife of Justice S. N. Kumar.

According to Justice M.S.A. Siddiqui, former Chairman, National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions, Government of India, Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg, in his spirit and actions was a *Farishta* (angel). “In my lifetime, I have never seen a man whose only mission was to put his best efforts and exhaust his resources to help others, especially the poor, to come out of their miseries. “All his life he tried to empower the deserving and needy to stand on their feet and live life with dignity,” said Justice Siddiqui.

“I was introduced to Beg Sahib by Justice S.N. Kumar and Mrs. Archana Kumar almost 3 decades ago. He was a

thorough gentleman and possessed several good qualities which inspired me a lot. I am indebted to Beg Sahib for offering me the Directorship in the Jamia Cooperative Bank which I gladly accepted. I also had a chance to visit his hometown Anjanshaheed in Azamgarh and laid the foundation stone of the building for Commerce Department of the Mirza Ahsanullah Beg Girls Degree College on February 18, 2012. I wish his Children all the best to take Beg Sahib's legacy forward," shared Sirajuddin Qureshi, President, India Islamic Cultural Centre, New Delhi.

"To me, the biggest contribution of Mirza Sahib is his establishing a financial institution for the underprivileged section of society, especially when most of such initiatives either failed or changed their target audience to the creamy layer. There was no one who cared for the poor lot living in Jamia Nagar area, which had been declared a negative zone by the financial institutions. Jamia Cooperative Bank Ltd. set up by Mirza Sahib, is not a bank but the lifeline for thousands of helpless families who couldn't have thought of availing of loans for their children's education, to start their enterprise to become financially self-sufficient or to get poor girls married," shared poet Iqbal Ashhar, a noted name in the world of Urdu poetry.

In fact, once, when Iqbal Ashhar's condition became critical after a cardiac arrest, Mirza Sahib played an unparalleled role to save his life.

"When I suffered a heart attack and had no one to save my life, it was Mirza Sahib who asked his sons to make all the treatment available for me without any second thought. He said, "I've five sons and Iqbal Ashhar is one of them. Make

sure that he receives the best treatment and do whatever is needed to be done. I was admitted to Escorts Hospital, received open-heart surgery and till I became alright, all the possible care was taken of me by his sons,” said Iqbal Ashhar.

“Once I had recovered, I went to express my gratitude to such a noble soul, and he said, “*Iqbal, aap to bas Urdu adab ki khidmat karte rahiye, baaqi fikr karne ki zaroorat nahi. Uske liye hum hain* (Iqbal, you just keep yourself dedicated to the service of Urdu Literature and leave the rest to us)”. After enquiring about my post-operative health condition, he quietly gave me some more money and said, “*Is paise se kuchh phal khaa lena* (take this money to buy some fruits for yourself).” I salute his humility and compassion which gave me a fresh lease of life. If God had not sent him to me, I would have been resting somewhere else today,” he added.

As per Atul Kumar Anjan, a senior political activist, Mirza Sahib represented the character of being an Indian and a true Muslim. “If the Indian Constitution envisages the people of this country, I think Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg was the unique example of one, who was practicing the Indian Constitution. He represented the character of being an Indian and a true Muslim, who had only love, compassion and patriotic feelings in his heart. He set an example of adopting honesty and still growing without any cheating or malpractices,” said Atul Kumar Anjan.

“He was a religious person but not an orthodox one. While helping the needy, he never bothered about the person’s religion. His human heart was filled with compassion, was always available to help the needy from any caste, creed or religion. With limited resources, he studied in Jamia and made lot of friends. Though he came to Delhi to study and

then go back to his home town, he decided to stay on only because this city gave him better opportunities to carry out his social work in a much more effective way. And more than anything else, Delhi was the place where his ideal Dr. Zakir Hussain lived,” added Atul Kumar Anjan.

According to Shahid Siddiqui, Editor *Nai Duniya* and former Member of Parliament, Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg was a role model for Muslims. “Lots of people came to Delhi from different parts of the country and settled here. Beg Sahib was one of those, who contributed to Delhi instead of taking anything from it. After Hakim Abdul Hameed, he was the one who worked a lot in the field of education. People verbally claim a lot, but do very little in practical life. He made an extraordinary contribution in the field of economic development of the minorities, by setting up Jamia Cooperative Bank,” said Shahid Siddiqui.

“He was concerned about opening a Medical College, Engineering College and high standard English medium schools so that Muslims can educate their children as per modern technology. He shared with me that the age of the sword is over. Today, the weaker sections can fight only with education. Throughout his life, like a silent ant he kept working for betterment. If there were some more people working on a similar ideology and pace, a very big revolution could be ushered in,” added Shahid Siddiqui.

Professor Asad Ali shared his opinion about Mirza Sahib. “Translating his positive thoughts into action was a special quality of Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg. Whether it was Zakir Bagh, Jamia Cooperative Bank or setting up of schools in Azamgarh, he proved to be a man of action unlike others who may have good thoughts but are not able to put them into practice. And to get a specific work done, he knew

exactly how to approach the concerned official. If he had to get the work done in a government office, he would go and befriend the clerk first to understand the process or procedure before approaching the concerned officer.”

Remembering his second meeting with Mirza Sahib, Kunwar Ajay Kumar Singh shared an incident. “On Shri Kamalapati Tripathi’s suggestion, in 1978, when my father, with Mirza Ahsanullah Beg came to Delhi to meet Smt. Indira Gandhi, I also came along with them. In Delhi, we stayed at *Mitthu* Uncle’s house in Batla House. I stayed there for almost seven days. What impressed me was that *Mitthu* Uncle (Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg, would get up at 5am and serve me hot tea made by his own hands,” said Kunwar Ajay Kumar Singh.

“On my return, I told my mother that *Mitthu Chacha* was a very nice person. He talked about my education, development in Azamgarh and how to uplift the poor and downtrodden people. I was impressed to see his passion which was beyond my understanding at that time. I started admiring him very much. Whenever he visited our home, my father always called him by his nickname *Mitthu* and I would laugh because I would remember my first glimpse of *Mitthu Chacha* from behind a curtain and wonder at the use of *Mitthu* in a human reference whereas it is generally used for pet birds, especially the parrot,” added Kunwar Ajay Kumar Singh.

In honour of Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg’s honesty and dedication in the promotion of education and communal harmony, on February 18, 2005, the first Friendship Award was given to Mirza Sahib. This award is given to a spotless and dynamic personality who has dedicated his efforts to



promote education on the occasion of Shri Ram Kunwar Singh's *Janam Shatabdi Samaroh*.

“In my opinion, when I consciously learnt more about Mirza Sahib I found him to be a *fakir* (ascetic). I really appreciated his character for having such a good intention of educating the downtrodden. To save farmers from oppression, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru had considered the cooperative movement to be the road to success. *Mitthu Chacha* adopted Pt. Nehru's ideology intelligently and translated this thought into reality. I remember *Mitthu Chacha* being restless to initiate work for the poor. Despite having no formal training in the cooperative movement, he had developed such an in-depth understanding. It was really remarkable. He never compromised with honesty, and dedication, no matter what circumstances he was facing,” added Kunwar Ajay Kumar Singh.

According to Rameshwar Nath Srivastava, former Chairman, Central Electricity Authority, Mirza Sahib's understanding of talent and human behaviour was par excellence. He never got entangled in useless things. “As an expert chess player, one knows which *mohra* (pawn) is to be placed where to win the match, Beg Sahib also knew the qualities of people and whom to approach to get things done. He was a great net-worker and knew that the best bondings take place over sharing meals. That's why he laid great emphasis on sharing meal with everyone visiting him. He was a man of etiquette and hospitality. His friendly nature helped him in reaching out to people effortlessly,” said RN Srivastava.

“He was a great believer in the cooperative movement. He was convinced that the cooperative movement is such a powerful movement that it can easily deal with a majority

of issues of the downtrodden and help them lead a dignified life. Therefore, he went out to identify people and put them together to benefit themselves,” added RN Srivastava.

“To set up Jamia Cooperative Bank, there were certain prerequisites and conditions and one of them was to have a specific number of people and a sizable corpus of funds. This was a difficult task, but Mirza Sahib took the initiative with great courage. He approached all sorts of people, big or small. He shared his thoughts with them and whatever was offered to him, he collected and saluted his benefactor. He had one condition, that one had to contribute a specific amount. Any contribution, be it small or big, was important for him. He showed a great degree of patience and conviction in his ideology, resulting into the accomplishment of Zakir Bagh, which otherwise was an unthinkable project for even heavyweights of the time,” he further added.

Nizamuddin Azmi, a great poet and a close friend of Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg, shared his sentiments about him. “Mirza Sahib would always clean something or the other and it looked as if he was cleaning his heart. When it came to his affection towards children, he never differentiated between his children and others. In fact, he always walked an extra mile to make other children feel privileged in comparison to his own. To him, all were equal human beings, all deserved respect and dignity, be it a person living in luxury or in *jhuggis*. He was completely free from the feelings of hatred, jealousy, denigration or any other negative sentiment. He only knew how to embrace people as God’s creation and whatever best he could do to help, he did, and gave of it, even if he himself needed it badly,” said Nizamuddin Azmi.

“In continuation of his pursuit for helping the downtrodden, Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg wanted to establish a good quality school in Delhi. He spent time in understanding the nuances of setting up an educational institution but withdrew because this endeavour needed a big amount of money which he didn’t have at that time. Then he decided to establish a Cooperative Bank with the sole purpose of helping the poor meet their financial needs.

“After completion of my studies, I became Chief Pharmacist at Holy Family Hospital. Mirza Sahib called me and inquired about my career plans. I said either I can start a drug manufacturing unit or work with some organization which can offer me good prospects. He promptly said that he could help me in my second choice. Luckily, a delegation from Saudi Arabia came to India requiring Pharmacists. Mirza Sahib went out of the way, used his resources and pushed me to get appointed as Assistant Pharmacist. I spent eight years in Riyadh, earned a good amount as salary and rose to the position of Chief Pharmacist.

“Once, I was worried about the future of my sister-in-law’s daughters who were very talented but due to financial constraints, were unable to pursue their studies. I called them to Delhi and discussed the issue with Mirza Sahib. He promptly took them to Justice SN Kumar where Justice Sahib’s wife Archana Kumar was kind enough to help the girls and got them admitted in Lady Irwin School. As a reciprocal gesture, Mirza Sahib invited Mrs. Archana Kumar over dinner and bore all the expenses. I proposed to pay for the expenses but he didn’t allow me to do so. To me, Mirza Sahib was a gift of God to humanity who selflessly dedicated his life to the service of the needy. I really salute his spirit and feel indebted from the depth of my heart,” said Abu Salem fondly known as Munna bhai.

“While Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg was being taken to China for his treatment, he mentioned to me many times that India too must have high quality medical facilities as China, the US, UK and other European countries have. As a true patriot, he wanted to see his country offering the best medical services to the poor and downtrodden sections of society.

“*Dhatt tera bhalaa ho* was my Daada’s verbal expression, if he ever noticed anyone around him using any foul word or uncultured language. He would also reprimand the person by saying that “*tum Jamia ka naam kharaab kar rahe ho*”. He loved Jamia Millia Islamia so much that he would not tolerate anyone talking badly about it or denigrating the institution.” said Mirza Saqib Beg, one of the grandsons of Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg.

“He further added “Regarding his devotion to God, I found him completely surrendered to his sustainer. At the time of prayers, I helped him in doing ablution through *tayammum* and he offered *namaaz* with punctuality.”

“Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg was my grandfather and the most brilliant guide, I could ever ask for. Right from my childhood till his last breath, he was concerned about me. After completion of my MCA degree, I found it difficult to get a job due to market recession. Daada gave me courage and struggled hard for finding out a solution. He spoke to Dr. M. Hamidullah Bhat, Director, NCPUL, and on his recommendation, I secured a job.

He has a long list of achievements but none of them were to serves his personal interest. Whatever he thought and delivered, it was completely selfless and only for elevating the condition of the lives of the poorer sections of society. I

am more than convinced that he was endowed with God's special blessings which made him do such great works. His conviction in God was so firm that whatever he initiated, he completed it gracefully.

For the people of Azamgarh, my Daada was like a Messiah who would put in his best efforts in solving their problems. He offered them his house to stay, with unmatched hospitality to look after them, and till the time they left his house, he never made them feel unwelcome. In fact, it was his resilience that despite his moderate earnings, he managed to serve people without any sign of discomfort. "I am impressed by his persona, proud of his work and indebted to his affection and care," shared Mirza Rahil Beg, one of the grandsons of Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg.

"Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg was my *Naana* who inspired me a lot to lead a successful life. His compassion and resilience taught me a lot and gave a definite direction to my life. I feel indebted to him for making me what I am today," said Farhan Alvi, Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg's *nawaasa*.

According to Mirza Mansoor Beg, Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg laid emphasis on the spirit of *khidmat*. "People shy away from meeting the poor thinking they would get after them, but Mirza Sahib's case was completely different. His face would glow with compassion on helping a person in trouble. Besides this, he had great love for people of his hometown. Since I travel to Azamgarh every three months, Mirza Sahib relied on me to update him about the happenings of his hometown. Once he fell ill and was admitted in the hospital. In that critical condition too, he asked me about the result of an election that took place in Shibli Inter College. The result got delayed and was declared late at night. I didn't inform him in the night thinking he would

get disturbed. I got a telephonic call early in the morning. I was reprimanded as to why I didn't inform him in the night itself. He had kept himself awake the whole night. This was his love and concern for Azamgarh."

"Mirza Sahib was a great source of inspiration for all of us since he adopted 'service to mankind' as the ideology of his life. He taught us the importance of relationships and advised us not to waste energy on useless things. He never looked at work as big or small, and taught us to be humble and hospitable to fellow beings," said Dr. Atif Beg, Mirza Faridul Hasan's nephew.

"I recall an incident quite vividly. I was studying in 3rd standard and wrote a letter to Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg mentioning about my studies. His compassionate heart responded with affection and within a few days, he got me a large number of interesting books to read. I was in complete amazement and fell short of words to express my gratitude. Later, as time passed by, he remained in touch and always inspired me. He was very affectionate towards my children and encouraged them to pursue studies. I am indebted to him for the love and affection he showered on my family," said Nishat Ara Khurshid Ali, Mirza Faridul Hasan's niece.

"Mirza Sahib has left a big vacuum behind him. When he was with us, I had no hesitation in sharing all my problems and concerns with him, and he would promptly be ready to help me out without any delay. His personality and affectionate behaviour was such a comforting factor that I would pour my heart out to him. He played a great role in sending me to the Gulf countries for a better job, which helped me immensely. He has left a great team of his family members behind him. I am sure they would take his legacy of 'helping others' forward. I pray to God for his *Maghfirat*

(salvation), said Dr. Shakeel Ahmed, a close associate of Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg.

According to Salman Khurshid, a senior political leader, Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg was an institution by himself. “Whenever I think of an example of the Aligarh Movement, bringing different people on one common platform associated with Jamia Millia Islamia, that was Mirza Sahib. He practically taught us how to build an institution and run it successfully. He would often discuss with me how to create the right awareness in the community, to educate and empower the youth for a better tomorrow,” said Salman Khurshid in the condolence meeting for Mirza Sahib at India Islamic Cultural Centre.

“Mirza Sahib used to be the first person to meet me on my *Naana* Dr. Zakir Hussain’s anniversary. In fact, before even meeting the *Imaam Sahib*, Mirza Sahib was there to meet and greet me. If we can take the institutions he built to the next level, it will be the right tribute to him. I pray to God to grant him a place in Paradise. Going by his nature, even in Paradise, he would say, “Let’s do something new here too,” added Salman Khurshid.

Professor Akhtarul Wasey of Jamia Millia Islamia recollects his association with Mirza Sahib. “If I recall correctly, I met Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg Sahib for the first time in 1980. “I always found him concerned about the welfare of the marginalized, oppressed and poor sections of society. He was a living embodiment of Islamic teachings that when your one hand gives something in charity, the other hand should not know about it (*ek haath se do to doosre ko pata na chale*),” said Professor Akhtarul Wasey, National Commissioner for Linguistic Minorities in India and former Director, Zakir Hussain Institute of Islamic Studies.

“Though, he was a religious person, no one can doubt his secular credentials. He always believed in the inclusive approach. His family is excellent in hospitality. His wife was a comrade-in-arms. How a woman can compliment and supplement her husband’s personality, one can see this in Mirza Sahib’s family,” added Professor Akhtarul Wasey.

Professor Akhtarul Wasey further goes on to describe the real Mirza Sahib. “I visited Anjanshaheed once with the educationist late Saiyid Hamid Sahib. I have been an admirer of Mirza Sahib for his special qualities and selfless service to mankind. One needs to see Mirza Sahib in the post 1971 perspective. In 1971, the generation that was born at the time of freedom had become 24 years of age. He came on the forefront in such a time when people were having a feeling of discrimination, communal bias and insecurity and gave people the confidence that with courage, sincerity and vision, you can develop Zakir Bagh and do a lot for the community, in the same city where Muslim settlements in 1947-1948 were devastated”.

“And he didn’t stop here... He went a step ahead to help people translate their dreams into reality through Jamia Cooperative Bank. He enabled people to own their houses, stand on their feet financially, and helped them start their enterprises in an area which was blacklisted by the financial institutions and the banking sector. He got people out of their sufferings and today they are prospering and leading a life with dignity,” added Professor Akhtarul Wasey, National Commissioner for Linguistic Minorities in India and former Director, Zakir Hussain Institute of Islamic Studies.

According to Samreen Fatima, an official with Jamia Cooperative Bank who worked closely with Mirza Sahib, Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg’s focus was to encourage, educate



and empower girls, and for this purpose, whenever or wherever he got an opportunity, he gave his best shot.

“Our bank is for weaker sections only. If a person came to us for availing a loan and had no money to even get the basic papers made to become a member, Mirza Sahib would give money from his own pocket. Once I got an opportunity to travel to Azamgarh with Mirza Sahib, Dr. Shabistan Gaffar, Justice MSA Siddiqui etc. to attend an award function on Friendship Day. During this trip, I found Mirza Sahib was such a reservoir of learning and wisdom. The time just flew. What he taught me, is, if we have to do something tomorrow, let’s do it right away as there may not be a tomorrow. And if we do it now, the work will be finished without any worry carried over for the next day. He always said, ‘*Harkat me barkat hai*,’ said Samreen Fatima.

Shahid Siddiqui, Editor, *Nai Duniya* cites another interesting aspects of Mirza Sahib’s personality to help understand who the actual Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg was. “He loved both me and my newspaper. We shared a very cordial and spiritual relationship. My ideology and Beg Sahib’s ideology were the same. Because I also believe that Muslims, not as Muslims, but as Indians, should develop competence and excellence in every sphere of life and claim their rights based on their merit. You cannot claim your rights by being less competent. You must develop an edge over others to claim your rights,” said Shahid Siddiqui.

“As a member of Parliament, I gave funds to many schools and what I found was that after taking the money, people didn’t show any concern. None had any accounting or a clear-cut plan to use the funds whereas Beg Sahib always showed his concern and remained in touch with me. He shared the progress and development, as and when needed.

Most of my funds were spent on education, without any discrepancy,” added Shahid Siddiqui.

According to Rameshwar Nath Srivastava, Mirza Sahib’s belief in the cooperative movement, sincerity, dedication and strong credibility were the contributing factors to his success. “I remember once someone shared with me that when Madan Mohan Malviya thought of setting up Benaras Hindu University, he went to seek some contribution from G.D. Birla. He went to meet him. While he was waiting for his turn to meet Mr. Birla, he noticed Mr. Birla was having a long argument with his chartered accountant to match the accounting of a very small amount. The chartered accountant wanted to ignore the petty amount whereas Mr. Birla continued arguing with him and didn’t let his accountant go that easily over the missing amount.

“Seeing this, Malviya ji excused himself and left the place. Mr. Bilra saw him going and called him back. Mr. Birla asked him the reason of his leaving. Malviya ji said that he had come for seeking the contribution of a big amount and since he overheard the argument over a petty amount, he thought he had come to the wrong place, where his expectation would not be met.

“Mr. Birla was immensely happy with Malviya ji’s honesty and gave him a blank cheque, asking him to fill an amount of his choice. I think, Mirza Sahib was also of the same temperament. That is why people developed confidence in him which helped Mirza Sahib establish a very strong credibility in his initial project Zakir Bagh. This credibility helped him a lot in getting a large number of people on-board for Jamia Cooperative Bank which otherwise would not have been possible,” said RN Srivastava.

Chaudhary Raghunath Singh, a close friend of Mirza Sahib goes on to share more things about his friend. "After Dr. Zakir Hussain, Professor M. Mujeeb who became the Vice Chancellor, was also equally dedicated to impart quality education. Mirza Sahib took a sigh of relief that Jamia was again in safe hands. Mirza Sahib was emotionally connected to Jamia, so much that he could not see even a small thing going wrong there. He felt the process of education through Jamia should never stop, else the future of the younger generations would be in the dark. After finishing my education, when I joined Delhi Administration as an employee, he also joined it. He would gladly say, 'Wherever you go, I follow you, my dear friend,' said Chaudhary Raghunath Singh.

"When Sahib Singh Varma became the Chief Minister of Delhi, I organized a function at my home. Mirza Sahib came, and there also his focus was to get an opportunity to share his concern for elevating the condition of the downtrodden people. Once when the DDA people came to demolish houses in Batla House, Mirza Sahib did not budge even an inch from there. He used all his connections and finally the demolition squad had to stop and go back.

"In another incident, when Dr. Zakir Sahib passed away, Khurshid Alam Khan was Deputy Director General. We went to him and said Begum Zakir is still there. She should meet Indira Gandhi and request her to make Khurshid Alam Khan a member of Rajya Sabha. The idea worked and Mrs Gandhi agreed to do the needful and made Khurshid Alam Khan a Member of the Rajya Sabha, and later, the Minister for External Affairs.

"Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg and I had a special affinity towards each other. We thought alike and bonded very well. On

his hospitality gesture, he would say, '*Allah deve aur banda khave,*' shared Chaudhary Raghunath Singh.

According to Rahman Elahi, Managing Director, United Pressure Cooker Group, Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg had no 'Tomorrow' in his dictionary when it came to helping others. "Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg was a perfect example of 24x7 readiness for helping others. Once, I approached him, seeking his help for my child's admission to a school. Before I could even complete my sentence, he stood up and said 'Let's go right away and meet the concerned person. He took up the matter as if it was his own and till the work was done, he didn't move from there," said Rahman Elahi who knew Mirza Sahib quite closely and spent time with him discussing issues of the community and how to bring awareness in the youth to prepare them for a better tomorrow.

While he was developing Zakir Bagh, his opponents tried to push for using sub-standard material in the construction but he never compromised with quality and delivered a marvel of architectural beauty, comfort and superb technology. This shows his honesty, sincerity and commitment," added Rahman Elahi who is also the Chairman, Sarvottam Institute of Technology and Management, Sarvottam International School and Mayo School, Noida.

Furqan Hashmi, a close friend of Mirza Sahib's children, has a few memories to share. "The biggest work of the world is to change someone's mind. I give full credit to Mirza Sahib for shaping my mind which changed my entire personality. In fact, he taught me the real art of living, which helped me live with self-respect," said Furqan Hashmi.

Feeling indebted to Mirza Sahib, Furqan Hashmi goes on further to narrate what he felt about, and experienced with,

his mentor. “As a child, I spent time in his neighborhood and noticed that Mirza Sahib was always found engaged in some kind of social work or the other. Either he was cleaning the drainage, helping people to make their ration cards, getting corrections done in someone’s electricity bill or telephone bill, getting someone admitted to a school or taking the aged and helpless people to hospital. These acts of social work left an impression on my tender mind that life is not just about eating food of one’s choice, building a good house, running a profitable business or enjoying life as if there is no tomorrow. It’s about caring for others and helping them to meet their needs. I didn’t know much about social work but slowly began to understand that Mirza Sahib had sown the seeds of ‘service to mankind’ in my mind then,” said Furqan Hashmi.

Mirza Faisal Beg, nephew of Mirza Sahib, disclosed different shades of Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg’s personality. “When my elder son secured a special position in board exam by obtaining hundred percent marks in maths, Mirza Sahib felt very happy. He brought sweets and shared the excitement. He had special feelings for children. He would go the extra mile for the extended family also. Anyone who came for treatment, education or searching for a job, he extended all sorts of support. Once, while he was being treated in Holy Family Hospital, his mind was occupied with curiosity about the result of an election that had taken place in Shibli College in Azamgarh. I spent 2-3 hours with him and promised to let him know as soon as the result was out. He wasn’t bothered about his illness, but his concern for his roots,” said Mirza Faisal Beg.

“What was dominating his mind, was the future of the Jamia Cooperative Bank. In fact, he communicated to me

that the future of the bank should remain intact and to safeguard it, everything should be done in the best possible manner because if there is no Jamia Bank, there would be no future for millions of downtrodden and marginalized people,” Mentioned Mirza Mehfooz Beg, Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg’s younger brother.

Though Mirza Sahib was never daunted by challenges, did the emerging social tension and communalism have any kind of negative impact on his mind? “Some of the emerging incidents disturbing social harmony bothered him very much. He sensed that communal disharmony was coming up very fast and said that we all were passing through a very difficult time. He was worried and strived to retain the social harmony. He was an ardent follower of the *Ganga-Jamni tehzeeb* for which India as a nation held its head high and great personalities of this country always took pride in,” added Mirza Faisal Beg.

In continuation of our efforts to understand Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg, we attempted to trace his lineage, extending to the *Mughals*, spread over Asia, especially parts of Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Iran and Mongolia. He belonged to the great *Mughal* dynasty with stalwarts like Akbar and Babar, who won over the hearts of the masses by their acts of charity, justice and social harmony.

Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg had three brothers. The eldest one was Mirza Ahsanullah Beg who was an educationist and adopted ‘service to mankind’ through education as his ideology, and dedicated his life to awaken people’s mind, and helping the needy to the best of capacity. His children include Mirza Asif Beg, Mirza Arif Beg, Mirza Anwar Beg, Rahat Beg, Tasneem Beg and Zarina Beg. After Mirza Ahsanullah Beg, the second brother was Mirza Sadruddin

Beg who studied at Islamic Seminary Darul Uloom Nadwa, Lucknow, and became an ascetic, after serving in Maulana Azad Inter College as an honorary teacher. He left behind his sons Mirza Mobin Beg, Mirza Jamal Beg, Mirza Irshad Beg, Mirza Naushad Beg and daughter Shaheen Beg. The 3rd brother was Mirza Badruddin Beg who left for his heavenly abode at an early age. He was a great believer in respecting and nurturing relationships. He was so kind-hearted and affectionate towards his relatives that whatever quantity of food grains and other edible items he could arrange, he would go all out to share them with his relatives. His children include Mirza Ziauddin Beg, Farhat Beg, Shafqat Beg, Iffat Beg and Talat Beg.



*Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg*

## Childhood

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*Mitthu* was a sober, kind-hearted, helpful, social and contemplative child. Right from his formative years he felt compassion towards the sufferings and miseries of people he came in contact with. Whenever he came in contact with anyone who was needy or suffering, he would be restless until he had made his best contribution to bring a smile on his face.

During his primary school days, if he had not helped 10 people a day, he would get restless. Helping others would give him peace of mind. He was against communal fights. Inspired by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, he worked tirelessly for the uplift of the scheduled caste people and was completely against untouchability and caste-based discrimination.



According to Haji Mohammad Ameen of Rasoolpur village in Azamgarh, *Mitthu* would visit him quite often to satiate his social thirst. “He valued human relations the most and had great respect for elders. I remember one of his meetings with me during his school days. I fell ill and the news reached him late at night. He showed exemplary courage against all odds and reached me that very night. There was a special expression of satisfaction on his face after enquiring about my well-being. Besides, whenever he could, he always made it a point to see me in-person. He possessed an affectionately social behaviour,” said Haji Ameen who is a maternal Uncle to *Mitthu* and recently crossed 100 years of age.

Shaikh Sallu Pandey of village Mohammedabad, Mau, is *Mitthu’s* sister’s son (*Bhaanja*) and has had an interesting companionship with his Uncle (*Maamu*). He shared an interesting mischievous incident: “Once *Mitthu Maamu* visited my home. It was just a matter of chance that my *foofa ji* (husband of my father’s sister) who was a non-believer in supernatural forces, also came to our home. He boasted of not being fearful of anything and made fun of us for believing in invisible forces.

“As luck would have it, towards evening, *foofa ji’s* stomach got upset and he decided to ease himself in the open fields. We advised him not to go in the dark but he snubbed us. He picked up a metal pot filled with water and went to a far-off spot, close to an old giant *Mahua* tree said to be possessed by ghosts.

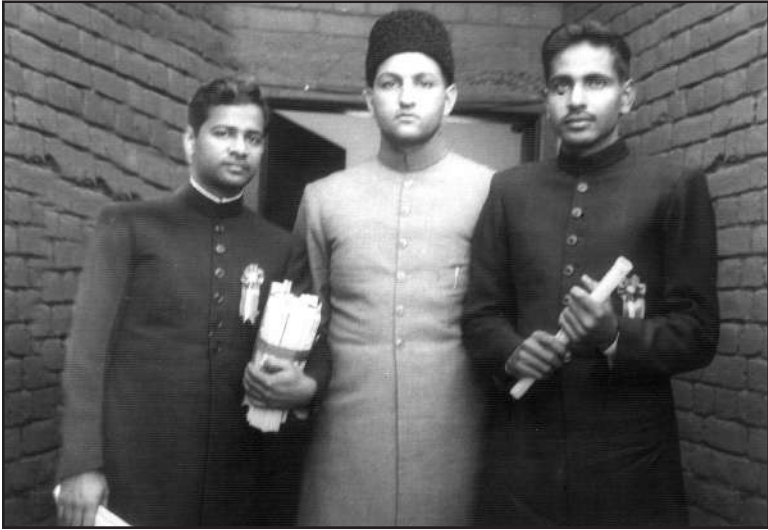
“He was aware of the strange incidents related to the possessed tree but to prove us wrong, he went ahead. Seeing *foofa ji’s* behaviour *Mitthu Maamu* got mischievous and asked me to arrange two big white sheets along with

some thread and a needle, which I did promptly. He quickly sewed them together to make a white apron. We had 3 German shepherd dogs, which also followed us to the location.

“*Maamu* asked me to stand on his shoulders and put on the apron, covering both of us. Visually, we both appeared to be a giant white body slowly moving in a bizarre fashion. And to add some chutzpah to it, we produced howling sounds too.

“As we walked towards *foofa ji*, the dogs also started barking. The site became so terribly horrific that *foofa ji* ran in the middle of his act. He was completely petrified, shrieked, howled, became breathless and fell down several times before reaching home. He shivered terribly for the next few days,” said Sallu Pandey.

According to Mirza Mehfooz Beg, *Kabaddi* and jackal chasing were his two favourite games. “While coming back from school, a group comprising *Mitthu* and four other boys would find a jackal, make it run till it got tired and then catch the animal,” explained Mehfooz Beg who is *Mitthu*’s cousin and a close companion too.



*M.F.H. Beg (Extreme left) with Jamia friends*

## Formal Education

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*Mitthu* was admitted to the Madarsa Islamia Primary Pathshala, Anjanshaheed, Azamgarh, to complete his primary education, followed by his admission to Gandhi High School, Maltari, Azamgarh, from where he passed his matriculation.

Gandhi High School was the brainchild of *Mitthu's* elder brother, Mirza Ahsanullah Beg, who contributed to the setting up of the school right from the concept to the assemblage of the raw material to building of the complete structure.

After completing his matriculation from Gandhi High School, Maltari, *Mitthu* went to Shibli Inter College, Azamgarh where he studied till 12<sup>th</sup> standard.

One day, the Shibli Inter College faculty arranged a documentary film screening for students. The documentary titled 'Minorities in India' had shown Dr. Zakir Hussain, his vision for the minorities and the futuristic and progressive role of education in their development.

This documentary screening ignited the spark in *Mitthu* to meet Dr. Zakir Hussain and each passing day by, he became more restless to meet him in-person.

Towards the end of his studies at Shibli Inter College, Azamgarh, *Mitthu* shared his curiosity to meet Dr. Zakir Hussain with his elder brother Mirza Ahsanullah Beg and requested him to make necessary arrangements for sending him to Delhi.

His elder brother who himself was a social worker, educationist and philanthropist, didn't take long to understand the desire of his younger brother. He made all the arrangements, and to facilitate *Mitthu's* admission to Jamia Millia Islamia, he got a letter of recommendation written by the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh C.B. Gupta to the then Vice Chancellor Jamia Millia Islamia, Professor M. Mujeeb.

Before coming to Delhi, *Mitthu* had read quite extensively about the great personalities who had dedicated their lives for the uplift of the poor at large. Besides Dr. Zakir Hussain, the other personality which touched *Mitthu's* heart was Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru who had laid great emphasis on the cooperative movement to build the strength of the nation through collective efforts and ushering in a revolution through the ideology of Communism.

Jamia served to be the perfect learning ground for *Mitthu*. His close interactions with his teachers, class fellows,

friends and the learning opportunities Delhi as a city provided him, helped *Mitthu* decide the chart of his life. Soon he developed from *Mitthu* to Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg to translate his dreams into reality.

According to Atul Kumar Anjan, a senior political activist and national secretary of the Communist Party of India, Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg went to Delhi in search of knowledge and practical action. “His education at Jamia was not only to earn bread and butter but to develop his mind to interact with new modern traditions and progressive ideas for which Dr. Zakir Hussain had contributed immensely towards making Jamia, the modern temple of light and learning.”

“And in that prestigious University, Beg Sahib not only studied but gave true shape to the ideas of Gandhi ji and Dr. Zakir Hussain,” added Anjan who contested the Lok Sabha election in 2014 as a successor of Jharkhande Rai who represented the aspirations of the toiling masses of the Ghosi constituency, and was elected to the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha in 1967, 1971 and 1980 respectively.



*Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg*

## Search for the purpose of life

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As a child, *Mitthu* witnessed his compassionate mother engaged in works of charity to the extent that casting aside all barriers of caste, creed or religion, feeding her breast milk to over a dozen orphan children. These children were primarily from poor *Dalit* families which couldn't bear the massive outbreak of an epidemic.

He also saw his philanthropist father extending a hand of help to all the needy persons and tirelessly spending time to improve their lives.

These acts of compassion left an indelible impression on *Mitthu's* mind, making him restless to work for the betterment of the marginalized sections of society.

Before coming to Delhi, *Mitthu* had read quite extensively about the great personalities who had dedicated their lives for the uplift of the poor at large. Besides Dr. Zakir Hussain, the other personality who touched *Mitthu's* heart was Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru who had laid great emphasis on the cooperative movement to build the strength of the nation through collective efforts and ushering in a revolution through the ideology of Communism.

By now *Mitthu* had almost concluded that the cooperative movement advocated by Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru and empowerment of the marginalized through education by Dr. Zakir Hussain, were the only two effective methods to bring a revolution in society.

He further went on to delve deeper into the cooperative movement and social work. On the one hand, he understood that he needed a financial institution to empower the marginalized people, and on the other, a compassionate heart to help individuals, families, groups and communities to enhance their individual and collective well-being.

He also comprehended that the core efforts should be invested into helping people develop their skills and ability to use their own resources to solve problems.

In 1958, *Mitthu* came to Delhi, and joined Jamia Millia Islamia to study social work.

During these days, he came across a book titled *The 100*. It was authored by Michael H. Hart, an American astrophysicist.

In his book, of which 500,000 copies were published in 15 languages, Hart had placed Prophet Muhammad in the top position and had chosen him over Jesus and Moses.

Hart attributed this to the fact that Muhammad was "supremely successful" in both the religious and secular

realms. He also accredited Muhammad for his role in the development of faith based on good conduct.

The understanding and wisdom which Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg derived from this book left a lasting impression on his mind. He became more affectionate and kind in his dealings.

In fact, the Prophet's teachings affirm that Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg's understanding was completely in accordance with the Islamic teachings which the Prophet of Islam himself demonstrated in his dealings with fellow human beings.

It is said that in his lifetime, when the Prophet prolonged his prayers to please God, he was commanded to keep them moderate. When out of sheer compassion, he had given everything in charity, God again commanded him to keep the charity moderate.

In the continuation of pleasing God, when the Prophet exhausted his resources and took underwent extreme pains in the service of God, he was once again commanded to keep his approach moderate, but when the Prophet, in his dealings with other human beings, demonstrated the highest degree of good conduct, God not only appreciated it but also congratulated him on this act.

By now, Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg had clearly understood that to lead a successful life in the eyes of both God and man, service to mankind and good conduct were the two important pillars.

Therefore, his rock-solid trust in God and good conduct with people became the guiding principles for him. Though, many times he was faced with difficulties and adversities, he, always stood firm and was helped by the invisible hands of the Almighty in every endeavour he undertook.





*M.F.H. Beg and Prof. M. Mujeeb with Prime Minister Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru*

## My Nation First

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In 1935, God sent a soul to planet earth and nurtured it for carrying out a special mission to help other human beings with a compassionate heart and untiring passion to get them out of their miseries. He endowed this soul with an amazing patriotic feeling. This soul was Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg and fondly known as *Mitthu*. As a child, he never stopped surprising his near and dear ones by his acts of love for the country. He saw his father Mirza Raza Beg having very strong patriotic feelings, and leaning for those who would go to any lengths to defend their country. He had great respect for nationalist leaders, freedom fighters and those who put their nation first in every endeavour they undertook.

His mother was another silent member of the family who not only had a golden heart filled with compassion for the

poor but also told her son many stories of India's great leaders who had dedicated their lives for defending the interest of the country.

Since Mirza Faridul Hasan lost his father when he was only six, he came under the care of his elder brother, Mirza Ahsanullah Beg, who was an educationist, a nationalist, and a great believer in non-violence. He idealized personalities like Mahatma Gandhi, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhash Chandra Bose, Ashfaqullah Khan, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Sir Sayyid and Badruddin Tayyabji etc. Mirza Ahsanullah Beg himself was a freedom fighter and had struggled closely with the nationalist leaders for India's freedom.

On the occasion of its Centenary Celebration of the Indian National Congress (INC), in 1985, the party decided to invite Mirza Ahsanullah Beg to honour him for his contribution in strengthening the party-cadre and motivate people to join the party, in Azamgarh region.

Before holding the Centenary Session in Mumbai, Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi noticed that Mirza Ahsanullah Beg's name was mentioned in the personal diary of his mother Smt. Indira Gandhi. He was mentioned among those who were the well-wishers of INC, served the party selflessly, adopted Gandhian ideology and always put their nation on the top priority. Shri Rajiv Gandhi got curious to know more about Mirza Ahsanullah Beg and learnt about his vital role that he had played in taking the party to the next level.

Besides the acknowledgement of his work and contribution, as a gesture of honour, Mirza Ahsanullah Beg was made the Chairman, District Board of Azamgarh, in 1970-71. Since, Mirza Ahsanullah Beg had a great vision for the development of Azamgarh region, through education, he, in a very short period of time, managed to establish

seventy primary schools for promoting education among the Minorities. He passed away in 1986 and left behind a huge trail of appreciation from the marginalized and poor sections of the society. Today, even after 29 years, Mirza Ahsanullah Beg, is regarded as one, who worked for the development of Azamgarh region and dedicated his life to the upliftment of the downtrodden, especially the members of the Minority communities.

As a keen observer and a great learner, Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg took inspiration from his close family members, especially from his elder brother Mirza Ahsanullah Beg, and developed strong patriotic feelings for his motherland. He was greatly impressed by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi for his non-violent ideology of Ahimsa and whenever he had to choose between the country and any personal interest, he always chose the national interest first.

As a Gandhian, throughout his life, he believed in and adopted the ideology of peace, and kept the interest of the country uppermost. He loved unfurling the tricolour on national occasions and wore *khadi kurta pyjama* with a white Nehru cap as a symbol of respect and prestige of the country.

According to Atul Kumar Anjan, Mirza Sahib was the true representative of the Gandhian philosophy. “If Indian Constitution envisages the people of this country, I think Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg was the unique example who was practicing the Indian Constitution in his day-to-day life. He represented the true character of being an Indian and a devoted Muslim who had only love, compassion and patriotic feelings in his heart,” said Atul Kumar Anjan, National Secretary, CPI (M).

“Once, Mirza Sahib came to see me in my office to get something published related to Jamia in *Nai Duniya*

newspaper. What I noticed, that he was a thoroughly secular person, without an iota of non-Indianness. I would say that, even if there is someone who is an ardent follower of Hindutva and you offer him benefits to settle in America, he would leave the country to fulfill his aspirations. But Mirza Sahib never thought of going to Pakistan or settling his children in America, though he could have afforded it very easily. He wanted his children to be in India and serve the country with their heart and soul,” said Shahid Siddiqui, Editor, *Nai Duniya*.

“He was an Indian at heart and secular in his behaviour. I never heard him saying anything against any religion or faith. He wanted to help everyone, be it a Muslim or from any other faith, to help him settle and lead a dignified life. He was a true humanitarian,” he added.

According to Justice MSA Siddiqui, former Chairman, National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions, Mirza Sahib’s trust in the Indian Judiciary and love for the country helped him deliver a sound judgement in Jamia Millia Islamia’s case. “I was offered a plum post on retirement, a Rajya Sabha seat and several other benefits if I gave a judgment against Jamia and did not declare it a minority institution. The offer came to me from a very senior political leader of the ruling party during that time Mirza Sahib learnt about it and came to me requesting for delivering a just order. I said to him that during my entire tenure, I have been loyal and truthful to my profession. If the facts are in favour of Jamia, I would not hesitate in declaring Jamia a minority institution. I heard the voice of my conscience and keeping the merit of the case in mind declared Jamia Millia Islamia a Minority Institution,” said Justice Siddiqui.



## Understanding the Cooperative Movement

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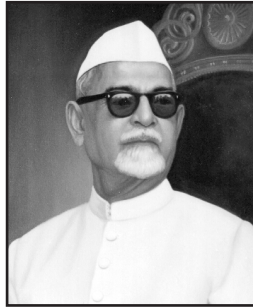
**I**ndia, since its independence from British rule in 1947, has seen a huge growth in cooperative societies serving mainly the farming sector.

For example, most of the sugar production in India takes place at mills owned by local cooperative societies. The members of the society include all farmers, small and large, supplying sugarcane to the mill.

Cooperatives also play a great part in dairy marketing as well as banking. Cooperative banks in India serve both the rural and urban societies. Verghese Kurien in his book “*I too had a Dream*”, details the problems, solutions and experiences he had in setting up and developing the dairy cooperative society now known as *Amul*.

Having closely observed the development of the cooperative movement in India, Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg had concluded that the cooperative movement advocated by Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru and empowerment of the marginalized people through education and social work by Dr. Zakir Hussain were the only two effective methods to bring a revolution in Indian society.

He went on to delve deeper into the cooperative movement and social work. On the one hand, he understood that he needed a financial institution to help the struggling and marginalized people feel empowered and secure, and, on the other, a compassionate heart to help individuals, families, groups and communities to enhance their individual and collective well-being. He also comprehended that the core efforts should be invested into helping people develop their skills and ability to use their own resources to resolve their problems.



## The Unfinished Mission of Dr. Zakir Hussain

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Providing education, shelter and economic empowerment to the downtrodden, especially the struggling minorities was the unfinished mission of Dr. Zakir Hussain. Since Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg shared Dr. Hussain's passion to work for the underprivileged and deprived lot of the society, he decided to take this mission forward.

To provide shelter, he thought of developing a residential colony in South Delhi with all basic amenities that a regularized colony would have. Leveraging the potential of cooperative society provisions, Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg approached the registrar of Residential Cooperative Society for registering a society.

After a lot of consultation with potential members, it was decided to name the society after Dr. Zakir Hussain and the colony would be called Zakir Bagh. It took almost 11 years (1973-1984) to get the first step cleared. Now the second step was to get the land allocated which also was no less than a Herculean task.

The initial response from the government was extremely negative and the land allocation issue was put on the waiting list. With great difficulties and much persuasion, land adjoining Sarai Julena village was identified, but there were hurdles created by the local residents who were the illegal occupants of the government land and had been using it by flexing their muscles whenever they saw it going out of their clutches.

After a long struggle, finally, the land was allocated. Now the task was to prepare an architectural plan so that the process should be as per government norms. And for this purpose, the society needed a reputed architecture to do the needful.

Beg Sahib used his foresight and engaged none other than one of India's best-known architects, Raj Rewal who is recognized internationally for buildings that respond sensitively to the complex demands of rapid urbanization, climate and culture.

In a country that is both developing and industrialized, whose architectural inheritance is both ancient and recent and whose society is both conservative and pluralist, Rewal's work combines sophisticated technology and a sense of history and context, imparted not only by design but by local material such as ochre and rose sandstone, evoking the great historical structures.



One of the reasons why Beg Sahib engaged Raj Rewal was that he was educated in Delhi and London and had worked in Michel Ecochard office in Paris before starting his practice in New Delhi. He had received, among many other honours, the Gold Medal from the Indian Institute of Architects and the Robert Mathew Award from the Commonwealth Associations of Architects.

He undoubtedly deserved these awards because the architectural marvel which he crafted in the form of Zakir Bagh, soon became a buzzword in the creative circles. Engineering and architecture design students from across the country started pouring in to see a perfect combination of architecture and technology.

In 1984, the architectural marvel crafted by Raj Rewal was ready with 204 units at a total cost of Rs. 4 crore. Since this residential project was inspired by Dr. Zakir Hussain, the members decided to call it Zakir Bagh, as tribute to Dr. Zakir Hussain.

Zakir Bagh, a true reflection of a *Bagh* (garden) with a variety of plants and trees, accommodated people from different walks of life, mainly educationists, engineers, bureaucrats, advocates, doctors and businessmen. This was one of the major achievements of Beg Sahib.

Engineer Shabih ul Hasan who retired from the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, shared his opinion. "I met Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg in 1960 while I was working on a project with Jamia Millia Islamia. In Okhla we were facing an acute problem of houses. After Dr. Zakir Hussain's death, this was the only successful cooperative society, whereas others were formed and failed miserably. What drew me closer to Mirza Sahib was his credibility and selfless compassion for the poor. I requested him to

make me a member of the cooperative society which he gladly did. I learnt a lot from him. If Mirza Sahib hadn't been there, I would not have been able to have a house in the heart of South Delhi," said Shabih ul Hasan.

"He was so concerned about the projects which he started to benefit the needy and downtrodden, that three days before he breathed his last, he inquired about the completion certificate of Zakir Bagh. He appreciated my efforts for keeping the paperwork strong and in place regarding the completion certificate of Zakir Bagh," added Shabih ul Hasan.

According to Professor Asad Ali, Mirza Sahib's contribution was about not only making a house for himself but also for 200 people who needed a safe and healthy shelter in the heart of South Delhi. "Actually, Zakir Bagh is a result of a cooperative society set up under the cooperative movement which was started by Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru who was inspired by socialist thought. Generating resources for a residential society, was a difficult task. Keeping that in mind, Mirza Sahib was very far-sighted in the selection of the members. He purposely put some big names and resourceful people among the members," he added.

Devendra Rawat, director NS Associates, shared his opinion. "I was an engineering student in Jamia Millia Islamia when Zakir Bagh was newly constructed. The architecture of Zakir Bagh became the talk-of-the-town due to its unique features. When I met Beg Sahib, he told me that the architecture of Zakir Bagh was developed by none other than the reputed architect Raj Rewal, who was known for his excellence in fusing modern technology with nature. He developed this colony keeping the Muslim tradition of privacy in mind, without compromising with architectural

beauty. One can sit in one's balcony and enjoy the airy and open space in the lap of nature," said Devendra Rawat.

Engineer Ahmed Sayeed, a close friend of Mirza Sahib, narrated how Zakir Bagh came into existence as a residential colony. "Some people bought farmers' land and started building Zakir Nagar. During this time, we also felt the need for a house. Since the government had put a stop to housing societies and the land was available only in unauthorized areas, we all were very sceptical. We discussed this matter with Mirza Sahib and he suggested mobilizing more people who could become the possible members, if a society in the future was to be formed.

"It was October 31, 1971 when some people got together and built a group with a fee of Rs. 10 and a share of Rs. 100. Our first meeting was held in the department of social work in Jamia Millia Islamia. During this time, we read an article in the Evening News, Hindustan Times, related to residential land problems, especially for the minorities in Delhi. This article also carried a statement of Inder Kumar Gujral suggesting that minorities form a cooperative society to avail of the land.

"This came as a big breather for us. There was a gentleman by the name of Mr. Jha who was the Registrar Cooperative Society (RCS). I said to him that there was so much contradiction between his stand and his minister's statement published in the newspaper.

"I also told him that, we were facing the problem because we belonged to the minority community. Mr. Jha suggested that we contact the Ministry and we decided to go and meet Mr. IK Gujral.

“After some time, when we went there and met Mr. Om Mehta who had taken over as Gujral Sahib had been transferred. “We narrated our concern to him and he was sympathetic and opened the registration for societies. We applied, and after a few rounds of formalities, in 1972, we got the society registration certificate.

“We sought the opinion of our teacher of social work AR Sayyed and his wife who too had taught us. After this, we went to meet our area MP Mr. Shashi Bhushan and requested him to recommend our case for land allotment.

“Then we thought of preparing a joint memorandum and got all 7 MPs to sign it. Since I was an engineer, I studied both the master plan as well as zonal plan of Delhi and tried to locate land which would be suitable for our society.

“We gave this letter to the Ministry. Bhola Paswan had become the new Housing Minister. In this scenario we thought of a strategy and took Saeeda *Aapa*, daughter of Dr. Zakir Hussain with us to meet Bhola Paswan. When Dr. Zakir Hussain had served in Bihar as Governor, Bhola Paswan who was Chief Minister of Bihar at that time, had met him quite a few times and was impressed by his personality. Seeing Saeeda *Aapa*, he welcomed us and was sympathetic to our cause. He passed the file and we received a letter allotting the land to the society. After a great struggle to acquire land, finally 4.25 acres of land was allotted near Sarai Julena.

We first approached HT Parikh, the then Chairman of HDFC Bank to finance our project, but at first, the bank refused. On Mirza Sahib’s request, he agreed to pay a visit to see the location of the project and sent his nephew Deepak Parikh, who is heading HDFC bank at the time. When he

visited the location, he was given a warm welcome and offered very personalized hospitality. Deepak Parikh was impressed to see our hospitality, friendly approach and sincerity. He agreed to finance the project. Raj Rewal, a noted architect was engaged for making the architectural plan which he did most efficiently and tastefully and, in due course of time, Zakir Bagh was ready with 204 units.

According to Zarina Bhatti, Mirza Sahib's selfless passion for developing Zakir Bagh and setting up Jamia Cooperative Bank has no parallel in the history. "He was not very well-versed when it came to preparing documentation for the initiatives he took for others but he definitely knew who would be the right person to do the job. He consulted with my husband late I.Z. Bhatti who was an economist and knew how to prepare right documentation. Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg's affectionate behaviour and hospitality won over his heart and the duo got along very well. This way, Mirza Sahib got the best advice to start a Cooperative Bank and help in preparing the right documentation," said Zarina Bhatti.

"When it comes to the Beg family's hospitality, humility and socializing to connect with people, I fall short of words because I have never seen such a high degree of love and affection being showered on guests elsewhere. And to top it all, they are always ready to help others, which not only earns members of the family respect, but this good conduct and charitable act also elevates them in fulfilling the purpose of their lives as well," opined Zarina Bhatti.



**JAMIA CO-OPERATIVE BANK LTD.**  
*Rishta Yaqeen Ka*

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**D**uring one of his visits to Hyderabad, as usual, Mirza Sahib got engaged in a conversation with a vehicle driver. He inquired about his livelihood and how much he earned in a month. The vehicle driver proudly shared with him the fact that he was not just a driver but the owner of the vehicle.

“How did you manage to own a rickshaw?,” inquired Mirza Sahib. “We’ve a cooperative system in the state through which we get easy loans from the cooperative bank and within a few years we pay back the loan and become the proud owners,” said the Vehicle driver.

This conversation ignited an inspiration in Mirza Sahib who had been looking for a solution to empower the downtrodden financially. On his return, he discussed the issue with his close friends who he thought would advise him correctly.

Fighting against all odds, finally in 1995, Jamia Cooperative Bank Limited (JCB) was ready to function and today it can proudly claim to be one of the finest cooperative banks with deposits of Rs. 152 crore and advances of Rs. 84 crore.

Today when we take a close look at the JCB's achievements, it records a whopping number of loans issued to people who had been struggling to make both ends meet, and to increase their income by starting small scale work, to enable women to initiate skill development to stand on their own feet and for vehicle loans to transform the lives of people.

JCB has also supported innumerable students to pursue higher education thereby changing the fate of the entire family. "No child should be deprived of education simply because his parents cannot afford it. It is the responsibility of those who are blessed by God with enough resources and means. Our society must come forward and take the responsibility of supporting education," said Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg to his friend Engineer Ahmed Sayeed.

According to Rehana Mishra, granddaughter of Dr. Zakir Hussain and Director, Jamia Cooperative Bank, by developing a financial lifeline for the downtrodden, especially the Muslims, Mirza Sahib did a commendable job. "Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg was a perfect humanist who worked selflessly for changing the lives of the downtrodden. There are innumerable people who have availed of loans from Jamia Cooperative Bank for starting their own work and today they have become self-dependent. Besides, there are countless people who have taken education loans for their children. After completion of their education, they have either got jobs or started their own enterprise leading to a big change in their lives. They all are happy

and leading a much better life,” said Rehana Mishra. These sentiments were echoed by her sister Nilofer Menon in a joint interaction.

“When Mirza Sahib was making Jamia Cooperative Bank, he would say that we had an advisor who lived in the USA. He knew how to get work from people and how to achieve his goal. He was a man of vision and proved his mettle in the establishment of the bank, setting up of Zakir Bagh and educational institutions back home in Azamgarh. He possessed an excellent quality of understanding human behaviour,” said Zafar Khan, Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg’s brother-in-law (Saala) living in the USA.

Justice MSA Siddiqui, former Chairman, National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions, recollects meeting Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg. “Mirza Sahib came to meet me, and ask me to inaugurate one of the branches of Jamia Cooperative Bank. I was reluctant but when he said that the beneficiaries of this bank are the poor and the marginalized lot of the society, and seeing his unconditional passion for helping the poor, I agreed. With God’s grace, that branch prospered so well and developed a very high volume of account holders,” shared Justice Siddiqui.

“Mirza Qamarul Hasan Beg is a very able and dynamic person. I am confident that he will take not only Jamia Cooperative Bank to greater heights but also think about the unfulfilled dreams of Mirza Sahib soon,” said Mahmood ur Rahman, former Vice-Chancellor, Aligarh Muslim University.





*Statue of Mirza Ghalib at Jamia Millia Islamia*

## Love for Jamia Millia Islamia

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Ever since Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg studied the lives of stalwarts of education, mainly Sir Sayyed and Dr. Zakir Hussain, he became restless and his curiosity to meet Dr. Zakir Hussain increased manifold.

One day, while he was studying in Shibli Inter College, Azamgarh, the faculty arranged a documentary screening for the students. The documentary titled 'Minorities in India' had shown Dr. Zakir Hussain, his vision for minorities and the futuristic and progressive role of education in their development.

Screening of this documentary ignited the spark in Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg to meet Dr. Zakir Hussain and each day passing by increased his desire to meet him in-person.

*Mitthu* came to Delhi in 1958 and joined Jamia Millia Islamia to study social work. He completed his studies and adopted 'Service to Mankind' as the mission of life. Since Jamia Millia Islamia was co-founded by Dr. Zakir Hussain and was known as professor M. Mujeeb's Jamia, Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg developed a very special love and attachment for the university.

Probably, that was why whenever Jamia, as an institution faced any problem, Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg was at the forefront, ready to fight. Jamia's problems became his own and he strived to solve them.

In the case of Jamia getting minority status, Mirza Sahib played a pivotal role in getting competent people on a common platform to take the legal fight to a logical end.

After few years, when the case reached an appropriate stage and was being heard by Justice MSA Siddiqui at NCMAI. Mirza Sahib approached the judge and communicated his concern for justice in the matter. He also requested him not to get influenced by any pressure as it was a matter of the future of innumerable students availing affordable educational facilities at Jamia, if it was declared a minority institution.

"See Judge Sahib, I want justice to be done to Jamia. And if it is not done, I would douse myself with kerosene oil and set myself afire in front of your bungalow. And please do not think that I am saying this just for effect. I will do it openly and in full glare of the media," said Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg in agitation.

According to advocate Tariq Siddiqui, it was an extremely tough case as a similar case in regard to Aziz Baha of Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) was already pending in the court and as per the government stand, AMU wasn't a minority institution.

“We studied the case thoroughly and on behalf of Jamia Millia Islamia, filed 3 petitions. We presented our case in the best possible manner and, finally, after a fight of 6 years, Jamia was declared a minority institution,” said advocate Tariq Siddiqui.

On being declared a minority institution, Jamia Millia Islamia witnessed an unprecedented scale of joy and happiness. “When a rickshaw-puller heard that Jamia was declared a minority institution by Justice MSA Siddiqui, he took out a ten-rupee note in joy and said, “Let me also join the celebration and as a token of my happiness, I contribute ten rupees for buying sweets.”

“Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg was a wonderful person with a heart always ready to help the needy, without any discrimination. He believed in the cooperative movement and handled hostile situations very bravely and managed to keep all the members together,” added advocate Tariq Siddiqui.

J.S. Sangwan, former IAS officer from the Haryana cadre, shared his sentiments about Mirza Sahib. “I studied in Jamia Millia Islamia and met Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg during my college days”. Before meeting Mirza Sahib, I took my father as my ideal but the excellence in Mirza Sahib's character and the compassion in his heart, made me place him with my ideal. My father struggled against odds and so did Mirza Sahib. There is one thing common

between the two – an obsession to do something for society to benefit the coming generations, especially the poor and the marginalized people,” said J.S. Sangwan.

“During my student days, I closely interacted with people from different backgrounds at Jamia. I found no sectarianism, communalism or extremism in Jamia campus. The only ideology that is followed here is Indianism. This campus represents India in its true spirit,” added J.S. Sangwan.

Chaudhary Raghunath Singh shared his experience of the time he was studying at Jamia Millia Islamia. “The government of India through its Ministry of Education, had opened 10 rural development institutes across India. Jamia Millia Islamia was one of them, and I was a student of the first batch of the rural development course there,” said Chaudhary Raghunath Singh.

“After independence, Gandhi ji told Dr. Zakir Hussain Sahib that we must give such education to people which could benefit them on the ground. Since more than 80% India resides in rural areas, just pursuing bachelor of arts or masters is not enough. Education should not only provide employment, but help develop rural India as well. A rural institute was built to meet this objective. This course covered world constitution, sociology, history, geography, Hindi, English and Urdu languages to understand the real problems of India,” added Chaudhary Raghunath Singh.



*Founder's Day celebrations at Maulana Azad Inter College, Anjanshaheed, Azamgarh*

## Concern for the Community

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**H**aving learnt the purpose of life, Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg realized his responsibility towards his own community and revealed faith which guided him to be a compassionate human being.

According to Justice MSA Siddiqui, Mirza Sahib's biggest contribution was to empower people through Jamia Cooperative Bank. "The micro financing initiative which he took up in the form of Jamia Cooperative Bank, was the best way to empower the downtrodden. I salute his vision and administration where he practically showed how to run an institution successfully," said Justice Siddiqui.

"It has been over 60 years since we got freedom. There has been no collective or real work for the community.

There have been various instances of individual works. What Mirza Sahib managed to do in a short time is really commendable. In his home town Anjanshaheed he initiated the process of empowering people through education and here in Delhi he started a financial institution in the form of Jamia Cooperative Bank to help innumerable downtrodden people to pursue education, get their daughters married, start transportation business, build homes and start small scale enterprises to make their lives better. I would like to say a few lines to explain his persona: *Mat sahal hamein jano, firta hai falak barso, Jab khaak ke parde se, insaan nikalte hain,*” added Justice Siddiqui.

*“Wo khamoshi hai ke sab ho gaye hain pathar ke  
Yaqeen na ho to kisi ko pukar kar dekh.”*

“Once I visited his hometown Anjanshaheed. I was in a school function and recited a couplet about him: *Kisi ko ho na saka uske qad ka andaaza, Wo aasmaan hai magar sar jhukaye rakhta hai.* I pray to God that every hundred years our community should have people like Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg who dedicated his life for empowering the downtrodden and worked selflessly for the community,” added Justice Siddiqui.

“I found him quite contemplative and concerned for his own community. He wanted Muslims to come out of their ghettos and educate themselves for a better future. He agreed with me that the future of Muslims in India is dependent on the future of this country. Muslims need to understand that there is something wrong with their approach, be it in their economy or other areas. They will have to build bridges with other communities. They will have to understand that other communities are not their enemy. And if some still think on those lines, they

will have to be changed through education and competence,” shared Shahid Siddiqui, Editor, *Nai Duniya*.

“What impressed me about Mirza Sahib was his concern for the downtrodden, especially the poor Muslims. He shared with me how to develop shelter, economy, education and social reform related platforms and forums. And to top it all, he never took any credit, never approached the government for any award,” added Shahid Siddiqui.

“Mirza Sahib was a secular person to the core, but at the same time, his concern for the Muslim community was amazingly matchless. To me, he was a farmer in the true sense. He wanted to set up a world-class hospital after coming back from China. Though he knew he might not live for long but like a true farmer, he wanted to sow the seed, so that later generations can benefit from it. Generally, people talk about empowerment but to me as well as Mirza Sahib, the real empowerment means to help someone stand on his feet. In this regard, education comes first, which leads to economic wellness. I prefer the word ‘competitive’ which is very much relevant for the Muslims in today’s context. They have to be more competitive, more aware of what is and what will be. I saw this quality in Mirza Sahib who was a futuristic man. He wanted Muslims to develop core competence in education. To understand the pain of the Muslim community is to relieve them of their pain and that will be done only through education and development of competence. I remember, once Mirza Sahib shared with me his concern for his community across the world. And what I told him was that Muslims internationally are facing a very hard time. In the Arab world, people feel that others are conspiring against them, whereas they themselves need to correct their thinking. Arabs have been subjugated during the

last hundred years and they are feeling the impact of that now. The oil money made them feel that they had achieved everything.

“My newspaper *Nai Duniya* is dedicated to reform Muslims, change their thinking pattern and make them aware of the right perspective. If you are dedicated to work for them, you will have to communicate with them in their own language. That’s why I decided to work in Urdu, whereas I could have easily adopted to work in English. And this is what the two geniuses Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg and Hakim Abdul Hameed did. They both loved their country and decided to make this land their action ground. While Mirza Sahib chose to work for the people of Jamia, building Zakir Bagh and Jamia Cooperative Bank, Hakim Abdul Hameed Sahib developed Jamia Hamdard. I applaud their vision and work because with their money they could have easily moved out of India, settled their children in some other country and enjoyed their life but they both decided to remain attached with their roots and served both their community as well as their country,” explained Shahid Siddiqui.

Engineer Ahmed Sayeed shared an incident that reveals Mirza Sahib’s concern for the community and the downtrodden. “I was impressed by Beg Sahib’s passion for social work and many times got associated with him in resolving the issues that we thought would provide succour to the needy. We thought of approaching the government for providing healthcare services to our locality. The government agreed but there was no place to build a dispensary. We approached a gentleman, Rasool Khan, who had retired from the Indian Air Force. He happily agreed to give his house for dispensary services. Once the dispensary became functional, Mirza Sahib was delighted to see that

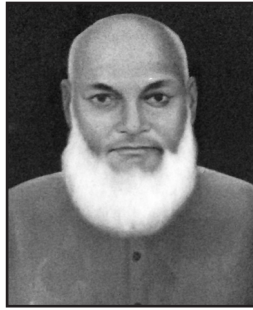


healthcare facilities were being rendered to the poor,” said Engineer Ahmed Sayeed.

According to Mahmood ur Rahman, retired IAS officer and former Vice Chancellor, Aligarh Muslim University, Mirza Sahib was always concerned about the education of Muslims and discussed ways and means to establish institutions to benefit them in the long run. “Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg wanted to make a university, an idea which he shared with me. Unfortunately, he didn’t get enough time to accomplish his dream,” said Mahmood ur Rahman.

“There is a need for international centres on the pattern of IIC and YMCA where Muslim youth can freely interact in an intellectually rich environment. These centres should offer our youth world-class facilities to stay, hold dialogues on social trends, conduct educational workshops and have inter-faith dialogues. Expressing his keen desire, once Mirza Sahib said, ‘*Dil karta hai ke* Muslim boys and girls come forward, interact, avail facilities of modern intellectual environment and stay at such a reasonable price that they get motivated and inspire others too,” said Mahmood ur Rahman.

“Aligarh Muslim University and Jamia Millia Islamia have produced many luminaries but there is a need for more such institutions to produce more geniuses. And this is quite possible if we follow the vision and guidance which Mirza Sahib gave us that a beginning can be a humble one, but with honesty and sincerity. We need to take this quality and character to our Muslim youth through institutions,” added Mahmood ur Rahman.



*Late Mirza Mohd. Raza Beg*

## Raza Zakat Foundation

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To regulate Zakat funds collected from all members of the extended Beg family and close friends, an initiative was taken to use the collected amount for a meaningful purpose. All the members were informed and it was mutually decided to use the fund to support poor, deserving and needy students who, due to financial constraints, are unable to complete their studies.

And, to make it work like a 'well-oiled-machine' the Raza Zakat Foundation (RZF) was registered in 2009. The foundation is functioning under the supervision of Sadaf Beg, one of the daughters-in-law of Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg. "It's an initiative to honour the feelings and sentiments of our patron late Mirza Sahib who always supported poor students and wanted to empower children through education. I was associated with him in many

ways other than just being his daughter-in-law. He taught me to love life and live with a meaningful purpose. Under Raza Zakat Foundation, we wish to support those students who are talented but can't pursue their studies due to lack of money," said Sadaf, recalling Mirza Sahib's contribution to her life, mentoring her for a bigger purpose.

"RZF was registered in 2009 and managed an initial collection of Rs. 4 lakh approximately. Today, the foundation has reached a corpus of a sizable amount supporting the education of innumerable students in various disciplines, including engineering, medical, literature, economics and languages, etc. Seventy five percent of this fund is used for education and the rest for meeting other requirements like emergency medical aid to the helpless and financially deprived individuals of society," said Ayaz Mobin, Treasurer of Raza Zakat Foundation.

In a country with an ever increasing population and with people becoming more aware of the importance of education, there is a long list of students who need financial support to pursue their studies. With such a huge number around, how does the foundation manage to pick up the most deserving ones? "We check the educational track record of an applicant thoroughly and also take into consideration as to who has recommended that person. We also hold personal interaction with the applicant to ascertain the merit and once satisfied, we sponsor the entire course, be it a short term or long one. If we find that the person is genuinely deserving but due to financial constraints, he/she couldn't perform very well but had the potential, we give him a chance, with the condition that he/she would perform well and secure minimum 80% marks." added Sadaf Zafar Beg, Secretary, Raza Zakat Foundation.



M.F.H. Beg at the Mirza Ahsanullah Beg Girls Degree College, Anjanshaheed, Azamgarh

## Affinity to Urdu Language

Mirza Sahib adored Urdu poetry, and was aware of the importance of an Urdu poet (*shaayar*). He wanted to restore the prestige and honour of the *shaayar* in Indian society where an ordinary person enjoyed more respect than a *shaayar* due to the decline of the Urdu language in the country.

What drew Mirza Sahib towards the Urdu language was the fact that it was the language which he first learnt from his mother, the language within which his mind had grown, in which he thought, and from whose intellectual and literary treasures he had derived benefits, according to his capacity.

What was the inspiration of Mirza Sahib's life? The answer would be, the search for unity in diversity, the longing to

build out of destructive and diverse elements, a common culture. It seemed that among the different forms of cultural self-expression in India, the spirit of unity appeared in its purest and clearest form in the Urdu language. That's why he was drawn towards the eternal beauty of the Urdu language.

“Mirza Sahib was so deeply in love with Urdu that if he heard of anyone associated with Urdu facing any kind of trouble, he would go out of his way to support that person so that his service to the language did not stop. In my case too, I was told to continue my service to Urdu and let all the problems be tackled by him,” shared Iqbal Ashhar, an Urdu poet, known for his distinctive dynamism and whom Mirza Sahib always appreciated deeply.

Mirza Saqib Beg, one of the grand sons of Mirza Sahib fondly remembers, “One thing which would comfort Daada's heart, was Urdu poetry. If someone recited a ghazal, a couplet or used some expression with Urdu words, he would feel delighted. In fact, knowing this passion of Daada, I requested my uncles to send me some couplets which I read out to him and he would not only feel happy but appreciate my gesture too.”



*Mirza Mehfooz Beg with other members of the Beg family  
celebrating Independence Day at Jaish Public School, Anjanshaheed, Azamgarh*

## Nurturing Roots

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Even as Beg Sahib was busy working for the uplift of poor people in Jamia Nagar area, he also initiated many educational projects in his hometown Anjanshaheed in Azamgarh, Uttar Pradesh.

Mirza Ahsanullah Beg Girls Degree College was founded by Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg, Mirza Mehfooz Beg, Mirza Arif Beg and Mirza Qamarul Hasan Beg, with active support from other members of the family. The foundation stone was laid by Saiyid Hamid, retired IAS officer and Chancellor, Jamia Hamdard, on February 18, 2003. Other dignitaries who were present on this occasion included Abu Asim Azmi, Member of Parliament, Akhtarul Wasey, National Commissioner for Linguistic

Minorities in India, Munawwar Hazique, Liaison Manager, Emirates Airlines and Shafiqul Hasan of Sky Advtg. & Mktg. on behalf of Shahid Siddiqui, Editor, Nai Duniya.

After a few years, on Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg's insistence to Mirza Mehfooz Beg, a new stream of B.Ed was added to enable students of Azamgarh region to avail of opportunities in the teaching profession. Mirza Arafat Beg, son of Mirza Arif Beg, after some time, walked an extra mile to add more courses, including Basic Teaching Certificate (BTC) and specialized technical and vocational courses, especially to help girls become financially independent.

“My brother Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg's love and concern for his roots was so intense that even while he was in Delhi, his heart would always beat for the people of Azamgarh. On his way from Delhi to his hometown, his face would light up with joy on entering Azamgarh Territory and he would forget all his worries. And, I was so emotionally attached to him that his wish became my command. He had a dream of setting up a high-standard English medium school in Azamgarh, and I dedicated myself to fulfill his dream in the form of Jaish Public School, which at present is flourishing under the dynamic principalship of Ms. Anima Saxena. The foundation stone of JPS was laid on May 7, 2014, by Syed Bilal Thanvi in the presence of Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg, Mirza Mehfooz Beg, Mirza Arif Beg, Mirza Qamarul Hasan Beg, Kunwar Ajay Kumar Singh, Mirza Yasir Beg and other important members of the Beg family. Later, on January 10, 2015, for the first batch students, admission forms were distributed in the presence of Waseyem Ahmed, Education Minister, Uttar Pradesh, and Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg. This was Mirza Sahib's last

visit to his hometown Azamgarh where he celebrated his birthday (10th January) with the girl students of Mirza Ahsanullah Beg Girls Degree College, as a mark of their empowerment,” said Mirza Mehfooz Beg.

While all this was going on, he realized the need for establishing a mechanism to communicate the issues and concerns of the people of Azamgarh to the administration in order to get a sympathetic response and avail of the benefits given by the government.

This led to the establishment of a community radio, Voice of Azamgarh. “We run inspirational programmes which can motivate listeners to succeed in life, connect government officers with people of the region to share welfare schemes, provide an open platform to the poor to raise their issues and concerns,” said Seema Srivastav, programme head, Voice of Azamgarh.

According to Mirza Arif Beg, Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg’s nephew, Mirza Sahib was not only a distinctive social worker but an excellent management guru as well. “My father left for his heavenly abode at the age of sixty eight. He was my hero and a great visionary who wanted to usher in a revolution through education. My Uncle Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg was 18 years younger than my father and had learnt a lot from him. Like my father, he too, had mastered the art of serving people through education. At the time of appointment of the school staff, my Uncle gave me a million dollar advice. He said the appointment period for senior positions, especially the Principal or Head of Department should not be for more than 5 years. If the human resource performs well, renew or extend his/her contract for another term. On contemplation, I found, this was a revolutionary suggestion. When it came to his



connect with people or keeping the place clean, he showed, remarkable zeal, and would pick up the files to remove the dust and clean them without being conscious of status or position. I do not recall even a single incident where he saw a needy person and didn't offer his help. He even went to the extent that he sold his personal belongings and borrowed money to help others. Such a great soul very rarely comes to this world. He has left a big vacuum behind but his direction will continue to guide all of us in his physical absence."

Unlike many people, Mirza Sahib was always keen to nurture his roots. The word 'Azamgarh' would always bring a glow into his eyes and he would look for ways and means to connect with both – the land of Azamgarh as well as its people.

"He had seen poverty, social, political and economic discrimination in the district of Azamgarh. As a child, his tender mind was impacted by all these conditions quite adversely. Since, Mirza Sahib's was a well-to-do family and had a good social status during the British regime, they developed a better understanding of the people of Azamgarh. And not only Mirza Faridul Hassan Beg, his entire family, including his father, Uncles and other, all were available to help the poor. Villagers would narrate their woes and the Beg family would help them with money, food and whatever was needed. Members of the Beg family were considered pious people," said Atul Kumar Anjan, a senior political activist and a social worker.

According to Mirza Yasir Beg, Director, Jaish Public School, Azamgarh, Mirza Sahib laid great emphasis on practical education which could enable and empower a person with a job. "Whenever he met me, he always inquired about

Jaish Public School. I remember once I discussed the prospectus content of Jaish Public School with him. He was very enthusiastic about it. He showed it to various people who would give their meaningful suggestions. He was so concerned about the quality of education that he would go into every minute detail,” said Mirza Yasir Beg, Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg’s nephew.

“Whatever you do, education, job or any other thing must be of high quality. During the appointments of the school staff at Jaish, he always told me to pay attention to quality. Besides, when it came to his general social pattern, he believed in contributing to a situation. If there was a group having a meal, he would pick up the used plates and take them to kitchen. Here too, he would contribute to this activity, not for the sake of others but for his own satisfaction,” added Mirza Yasir Beg.

Nizamuddin Azmi, a close friend of Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg reminiscing, said, “He loved his roots so much that he considered Azamgarh not less than *Khitta-e-Yunaan*. For him, another area of great concern was the education of girls. He would say that girls shouldn’t be crushed and thrown like some buds that have no future and are wasted at an early stage only. He wanted every girl of Azamgarh to hold her head high with respect and dignity and that was possible only after acquiring the right education. Mirza Ahsanullah Beg Girls Degree College is contributing quite significantly to this dream of Mirza Sahib.”

Atul Kumar Anjan, found that the social spark in Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg was amazingly alive. He wanted to do all he could for the place of his roots, especially in education for girls and their empowerment. “Once I suggested that he should get engaged in the working and functioning

of Shibli College, as Mirza Sahib's selfless passion for taking educational institutions forward was matchless. I thought a personality like him would resolve the issues of that institution easily as he was the ideal person to run the institution. He lent a patient ear but declined my offer. I felt offended and for quite some time, we stopped talking to each other. One fine day, he called up and explained that the intricacies of running an institution are very different from what they are perceived to be. And he didn't want to waste his energies in futile activities. The environment in Shibli College during that time was very hostile and his inclusion would have made the members more hostile, resulting in disturbance and loss of students. He didn't want that to happen," said Atul Kumar Anjan.

Since Atul Kumar Anjan is very active in his constituency and has been keen to do whatever may benefit people of that area, Mirza Sahib advised him to maintain the right interface with people of the constituency.

"I thought whatever I was doing was the best but Mirza Sahib showed me a more effective way, by understanding the pain and sufferings of people. I started spending time with people, intermingling with them and looking at life from their perspective to understand their issues and concerns. It really worked and helped me develop a better bond with them. To me, he was a celebrity with a human touch. He admired values and appreciated the Indian culture and ethos. I salute the vision and wisdom of Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg from the core of my heart," added Atul Kumar Anjan.

He recollects multiple interactions between himself and Mirza Sahib. "Once, Mirza Sahib sought my opinion on

the education of Muslim girls. I shared my ideas and he appreciated them very much. In 1981, I visited DCSK PG College in Mau. This college had very few Muslim girl students then. Today, I find hundreds of *burqa* clad girls going in groups to that college.

“I remember, on another occasion, Mirza Sahib discussed with me the effectiveness of skill based education for girls. He had prepared a roadmap and worked towards it. India is talking about skill management for girls now, but Mirza Sahib not only thought of it but implemented this concept 10 years ago.”

“Some of what Mirza Sahib said is yet to see the light of the day but I am very confident that the family members are very worthy, dedicated, pious in heart, honest and people of action. If they do it seriously, it will be the biggest tribute to a man the like of whom will never be born again, but his ideals and works will continue benefiting humanity till this world ends.”

“Since, we both were concerned about Azamgarh and its adjoining area, Mirza Sahib once asked me my opinion on the about changing scenario. As a political activist, and a close observer of social development. I shared with him my belief that the world is facing two very serious issues – one, aggressive imperialism leading to the war in the Middle East, and unrest in other parts of the world, and, the other, which is the main threat from policies of the international finance capital – depriving billions of people. Taking up the resources of the developing and less developing countries by the militarily powerful countries, resulting in the loot of the natural resources, creating disharmony, developing zones of conflict, and so many other evils. He nodded in affirmation and suggested that we continue working for an

educational revolution and there would be a day when evil itself will see no room for such selfish actions.

“In the Indian context, I also shared with him that my top priority was to save the secular character of the Indian Constitution. If religious fundamentalism in an organized manner takes over, it will lead to a holocaust and India will be destroyed. Therefore, fighting against fundamentalism - Hindu or Islamic - would be the right approach. He always preached the concept of coexistence of different communities, with no room for aggression or fundamentalism. And by following this, he was able to mitigate the miseries and sufferings of people. He infused new confidence in them by opening new windows of opportunities through economic empowerment. Kudos to his selfless passion and spirit to uplift the lives of others which in today’s world has become an alien concept,” concluded Atul Kumar Anjan.



*Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg and wife Noor Jahan Khanam with daughters and daughters-in-law on the occasion of their 50th Marriage Anniversary*

## Family Life

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**M**irza Faridul Hasan Beg always showed a remarkable willingness to help the needy. Among those helped by him were his kith and kin as well as total strangers, his seniors and his juniors, his friends and his servants. He felt special joy in sharing his possessions, including money and household items with others. There was no limit to his generosity. However, it added to the difficulties of his family. Even when he had a regular and sufficient income, his wife had to face problems owing to his lavish generosity. As his income increased, his generosity level too went up.

Mirza Sahib's life style was characterized by simplicity, fine taste and cleanliness. During the days when he faced a severe financial crunch, he put on clean, decent clothes.

Nobody could ever find fault with his appearance, or feel sorry for him.

His wife Noor Jahan Khanam, four sons, Mirza Shamsul Hasan Beg, Mirza Qamarul Hasan Beg, Mirza Zafar Beg and Mirza Ahmer Beg, and two daughters, Nishat Beg Gupta and Saba Beg Khan have the same simplicity and charming manners which were the hallmarks of Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg.

His wife transcended worldliness and had a tender heart. Mirza Sahib was indeed fortunate to have got such a virtuous life partner. More importantly, the temperament and conduct of the couple were almost identical. It provided him with domestic bliss which enabled him to devote his heart and soul to his social work, to God-consciousness, and to serving his fellow human beings in an altruistic fashion. Mirza Sahib acknowledged the virtues of his wife often. Once he told his elder son: “Had your mother not been so well-organized, so simple, so virtuous, and so resourceful, I would not have been what I am today.”



*Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg and wife Noor Jahan Khanam  
celebrating their 50th Marriage Anniversary*

## Importance of Human Bonding & Humility

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**I**n Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg's personality, gradual moral and spiritual development is evident. He placed good conduct and unconditional love for the socially and financially deprived people at the top. He never discriminated between a lower class person and a highly ranked one in his dealings. The more he achieved in his social service, the humbler he became. The more he rose in his achievements, the more devoted he became to the ideals of goodness and justice, and all the more conscious of the miserable lot and suffering of the common man, and showed greater sympathy and love for all. His message became truly a message of love for entire humanity. He had imbibed this trait from his study of the spiritual masters who had guided him and invested him with a wealth of feelings for fellow human beings.



“He was my role model in human bonding, humility and compassion. I learnt a lot from him by observing him dealing everything with complete ease. I think these are the qualities of a great man,” said Ateek Ahmad.

According to Mirza Faisal Beg, human relations were the most valuable for Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg. “When I came to Delhi, Mirza Sahib was the one who showed me the path and became my guardian in a city which was unknown to me. With the passage of time, he became fond of me. He provided me the best opportunities to visit important events in Delhi. He would gather the whole family and take us out to embassy celebrations, especially on the occasion of Libyan National Day. Despite lot of financial difficulties, he made sure that whatever little he had was available for me.”

“Once I was bitten by a snake and was quickly shifted to a city hospital. He accompanied us, and in the middle of the night went personally to inform my parent that I was all right. He walked the two kilometer distance in the pitch dark night so that he could comfort my parents,” added Mirza Faisal Beg.

Devendra Rawat, Director, NS Associates, shared an incident. “When I was studying in Jamia Millia Islamia, I had a close interaction with Muslim friends. I learnt a lot about Islam, its tenets and human behaviour with fellow beings. In fact, to show solidarity, I observed the fast during *Ramadaan*. Mirza Sahib learnt about it and organized a special function for *Iftaar*. He shared that happiness with almost 400 people gathered in that function. I was deeply touched by the gesture to make me feel special,” said Devendra Rawat.

Engineer Ahmed Sayeed, a close friend of Mirza Sahib, remembered, "Once, Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg came to me seeking a suggestion. He told me that he had arranged some money and wanted to buy a plot of land. I had a scooter those days. We both got on to it and drove down to a location. He showed me the land and asked about the possibility of building a house. There was an empty matchbox lying on the ground. I picked it up and drew lines showing him a possible architectural map of the building. Some time later, I learnt Mirza Sahib got the construction done exactly according to the map I had suggested to him, without any changes."

"I passed out as a Civil Engineer from Jamia and had the experience of working in the Zakir Bagh project. Mirza Sahib simply introduced me to the key persons, and the rest was my own struggle and ability to perform. Though, I worked there for a short period, I learnt a lot about every aspect related to construction and development of a colony. The biggest achievement of Mirza Sahib is not the setting up of a residential society leading to the formation of Zakir Bagh or the establishment of Jamia Cooperative Bank but his tireless struggle to run these institutions successfully," added Furqan Hashmi.

According to Irshad Beg, a nephew of Mirza Sahib, his family is deeply indebted to Mirza Sahib for the vital role he played in his family's rise in education and prosperity. "I was in primary school when Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg was a student in Jamia and came to Anjaanshaheed. Once, we were going somewhere in a horse buggy. Mirza Sahib saw a man beating a boy on the roadside. It appeared as if an innocent boy was being beaten up by that man. Mirza Sahib could not tolerate the injustice. He jumped off the buggy and asked the

man to stop but he didn't. Mirza Sahib snatched the whip from the buggy man and hit the man who was beating the boy. He continued hitting till he got the boy released," said Irshad Beg.

"After passing out from Aligarh Muslim University in 1974, when I came to Delhi, Mirza Sahib discussed with me the formation of Zakir Hussain Cooperative Society. I also got involved in mobilizing members and fighting for the issues. He was a social reformer with a very high character and credibility. He believed in cherishing God's bounties, but, at the same time, being conscious and not forgetting the rights of the poor as well," added Irshad Beg.

Salma Khanam, wife of Irshad Beg, shared her sentiments. "Mirza Faridul Hasan was a priceless gem who dedicated his life for the poor and the miserable people. His character and conduct were so good that he never differentiated between any one due to his or her social status or position. He taught us that if a guest visits us, we must not insult or denigrate, and offer him/her whatever we have, without any hesitation or complex," said Salma Khanam.

Furqan Hashmi, a close family friend recalled another incident that showed Mirza Sahib's keenness for human bonding and humility. "Once, during the Lok Sabha elections, noted political leader and a member of Indian National Congress, Arjun Singh with his sister and a friend came to Mirza Sahib for canvassing in Jamia area. The group insisted on taking Mirza Sahib along. I was young. Out of curiosity and zeal, I also joined them, with posters in my hand. It was a hot summer day. When they arrived at 3 pm, Mirza Sahib took them to his house. He himself went to the kitchen, picked up bread and a dish made out

of cereal and pulses, and offered it to everyone without any formality. This, to me, was the best hospitality I ever saw in my life. There was no hesitation or reluctance due to what people of Arjun Singh's stature may think. Whatever Mirza Sahib had, he shared with affection and care."



*M.F.H. Beg with his physiotherapist Dr. Vishali Kakkar Mehta*

## Respect & Empowerment of Woman

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One of the endearing dimensions of Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg's character, was holding woman in high esteem. Their prestige, and respect for them was uppermost in his conduct. The women in his family were considered to be special, and he, as a custodian, stood up for them throughout his life. They were treated like princesses and no man could dare address them in a loud voice or show them disrespect. And the degree of respect was personified in the form and acts of Beg Sahib himself making and serving tea to them.

The men of the family at times envied them, but The Man never let them supersede and the envy turned into a beautiful relationship to be cherished forever.

“My *Naana* championed the cause of respecting women the most. That’s why the Beg family has a tradition of not letting its *Bahus* work in the kitchen or otherwise. This practice in the eyes of my *Naana*, was a way to show respect to women. In our family, women are pampered and are put on top in terms of respect, which is really marvelous. Opined Somya Gupta, Mirza Sahib’s granddaughter.

Somya went further to share, “*Naana* always encouraged me to sing and shine as a distinctive female performer. He insisted so many times that I should perform on the stage which I did. Not me alone, he encouraged other girls too. He was an ardent believer of supporting women to come to the forefront and make their presence felt.”

According to Dr. Shabistan Gaffar, Mirza Sahib was always concerned about women’s education and their empowerment. “Mirza Sahib believed in gender equality. In fact, he placed women on top when it comes to respecting them. The Beg family is a fine example of respect for women, where the female members enjoy the highest respect and special privileges are given to them,” said Dr. Shabistan Gaffar, former Chairperson, Committee on Girls’ Education, National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions, Government of India.

“Fifteen years ago when I met him first time after my marriage, he stood up in respect, went to the kitchen and came back with self prepared tea for me. He offered the tea with so much affection that I was touched by his humility and respect. I have never seen a man like him who throughout his lifetime showed unprecedented respect for women,” said Tarannum Furqan Hashmi, a social scientist working at Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi.

“Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg was instrumental in giving society some beautiful values. He himself gave full respect to women and inculcated the same virtues in his children as well. The unique thing that this family can take pride in is putting women on a pedestal, which one never sees elsewhere,” added Tarannum Furqan Hashmi whom Mirza Sahib once affectionately called ‘Priyanka Gandhi’.



*Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg with his wife Noor Jahan Khanam in younger days*

## Support from the Better-Half

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**M**irza Faridul Hasan Beg enjoyed a special place in the lives of his immediate family, his servants, his elders, his friends and his contemporaries. He was dear to everyone. His friends turned to him as their guide whereas his family members took pride in him. His wife Noor Jahan Khanam had made him carefree in domestic affairs. She focused all her attention on domestic matters and showered her love and affection on her husband and children. There was a time when Beg Sahib had only a meagre income. Often, he had no money at all. Yet, he was extremely generous and hospitable. It was part of his nature. His wife managed to support the family even in hard times, by dint of her prudence.



“Whatever he earned from his salary, he would put it in my hand. I would spend it very carefully and save a small amount from it. This helped me in dealing with emergency situations. In fact, whatever clothes I got from my parents I used them in later years and never demanded anything from my husband,” said Noor Jahan Khanam, Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg’s wife to whom he got married on June 10, 1961, and who continued living in financial stress during Mirza Sahib’s long period of struggle but never gave up hope. And, finally, the help came, elevating the entire family, with blessings from God.

Talking about her struggle in detail, Noor Jahan Khanam further shared, “If I ever asked about his work, he would tell me not to object to, or interfere with his work. This behaviour caused lots of problem in our married life but since I came from a well-to-do family, somehow, it got managed. My parents late Badruddin Alam Khan & Late Asghari Khanam made us capable enough to fight all odds. They were highly impressed by Beg Sahib’s charismatic personality.”



*Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg with his wife Noor Jahan Khanam during a trip to Dubai*

## Looking Good & Feeling Great

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**M**irza Faridul Hasan Beg's life style was characterized by simplicity, fine taste and cleanliness. During the days when he faced a severe financial crunch, he put on clean, decent clothes. Nobody could ever find fault with his appearance, or express sympathy for his meagre resources.

"*Daada* was extremely conscious of his appearance and wanted to look attractive. He didn't want wrinkles on his face. Therefore, he would often use Aloe Vera to make his skin soft and shining. He was a cool *Daada*. He wanted not only himself but others too looking smart and impressive," shared Aliza Beg, Mirza Zafar Beg's daughter.

According to Mirza Sahib's daughter in-law Safia Qamarul Hasan Beg, "Daddy was a very smart and well-groomed

man who would catch anybody's attention in no time. Daddy paid great attention to personal hygiene and never compromised with grooming. He liked to apply Aloe vera cream to nourish his skin. Salma *Khaala* (Sadaf's mother) would send him a good quality Aloe vera cream which he called "Salma's magical Aloe vera cream." said Safia Qamarul Hasan Beg.

"I have never seen a husband so caring and taking such keen interest in his wife's grooming as well. To me, he was an amazing man with a superb grooming quotient. He loved to be clean-shaven. "*Hajaamat badi ho to daarhi badaaiye, dono ko fir mila ke Sarahngi bajaaiye,*" he would murmur these lines to make the other person realize that an unclean appearance was not welcomed or appreciated. I use to daily visit Mrs. & Mr. Beg Sahib in the evening for physiotherapy sessions, he was always focussed on active life style," mentioned Dr. Vishali Kakkar Mehta.



*M.F.H. Beg with grandchildren on his return from China after successful cryo surgery*

## The Coolest Grandpa

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On the one hand, Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg displayed the sharpness of his discerning mind in resolving the serious issues of life, and on the other, a remarkable degree of affection to the younger lot in the family. He shared a very special relationship with each one of them.

In fact, the young brigade of the family, including Fizza Beg, Hera Beg, Abrar Beg, Sarah Beg, Ifrah Beg, Hamdi Beg, Aliza Beg, Azhan Beg, Hamza Beg, Tahaa Beg, Somya Gupta, Kavya Gupta, Hayat Khan and Adeeba Khan, all enjoyed his company as he was like their own buddy who would go to any lengths to make them feel very special and privileged. Be it financial, emotional or any kind of support, he was always there as the coolest grandpa.

Resolving their issues and encouraging them for a bright future was Mirza Sahib's utmost priority. He had identified the talent in each one and gave it a special name.

"My *Daada* called me architect *poti* because I wanted to pursue architecture as a career and he was keen to see me becoming one. After college, I would visit *Daada's* place almost every day. If I ever sat with my hands on my head, he would come to me and ask if I needed anything. Many times, even if I didn't reveal my problem, he would know what I needed. I found him living a life only for others," said Sarah Beg, Mirza Sahib's granddaughter born to his eldest son, Mirza Shamsul Hasan Beg.

Hamdi Beg, Sarah Beg's brother has an interesting incident to share. "Once my parents went for *Umra* (spiritual trip) and in their absence, I was missing them and feeling lonely. *Daada* anticipated my state of mind and inquired as to what was bothering me. He gave me an affectionate hug and explained to me that I had to face the situation. His suggestion had magical effect on me and I felt better, within a few minutes.

According to Somya Gupta, if *Naana* (Mirza Sahib) wasn't there in her life, she wouldn't be practicing humility to the extent she does now. "People wish to become Superman, Spiderman or any other iconic figure, but I want to become like my *Naana* who taught me to be a human first. He taught us the difference between being religious and secular. As a religious person, you believe in your religion, but as a secular person, you not only believe in your religion but respect others as well," said Somya Gupta, daughter of Nishat Gupta, Mirza Sahib's elder daughter.

“In today’s world where there is dishonesty and all sorts of problems, how he managed to be righteous is commendable,” she added.

What made Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg the coolest grandpa? “His approach was very modern which made him the coolest grandpa. Instead of rejecting things as a reaction, he would always look at the pros and cons and try to find out a way. He was a cool guy and liked sharing things with us without any reservation,” said Kavya Gupta, Nishat Gupta’s younger daughter.

Another unique aspect of Mirza Sahib’s character was to respect and welcome other faiths too. “He taught us openness of thought. I am also proud of the fact that he got my mom married outside his community and religion which was almost impossible to think of two decades ago,” added Kavya.

As per Fizza Beg, Mirza Sahib was a man born before his time. “He wanted children to be independent so that they would take their own decisions. He didn’t believe in interfering in the lives of other’s and was confident that children could decide a career path on their own. When Dominos, an American fast food giant, was opened, he took the children out to enjoy a pizza. While the children were relishing the pizza, he told them about the benefits and side effects of fast food as well,” said Fizza Beg, elder daughter of Mirza Sahib’s son Mirza Qamarul Hasan Beg.

“*Daada* always supported me in every way. He encouraged me to pursue the medical profession. Once I got annoyed with my mom and banged the door. Mom got irritated and slapped me. My grandmother told *Daada* that *bahu* (my mom) had hit me. *Daada* couldn’t take it and got

very angry. As an immediate remedy, he got me an ice-cream and waited for me to have a smile on my face. He cared for emotions the most,” said Hera Beg, Fizza Beg’s younger sister.

Besides encouraging children to take up progressive careers, Mirza Sahib cared for their happiness too. “There was a birthday celebration going on. Suddenly he noticed two street children peeping through and watching the cake-cutting ceremony. Without getting conscious about the family members and other guests, he silently went out and brought those children inside. They were made a part of the celebration, offered cake and other eatables. Those children felt delighted and their faces were lit up in happiness. I was touched by his compassion and humility that he didn’t even bother about his image and followed his heart to bring a smile on street children’s face,” said Robab Khan, Mirza Sahib’s youngest *saali* (sister-in-law) who is a digital analyst, working for banking clients..

Hayat Khan, son of Mirza Sahib’s younger daughter Saba Khan, has another incident to relate. “I remember an incident where my *Naana* gave me a very wise advice. I was part of a group playing football. Some jealous boys created obstructions by putting a fencing to disturb our football field. I was worried and discussed the issue with *Naana*. He suggested that I meet those boys in-person, explain to them the benefits of maintaining a good football field and how natural greenery should be preserved. I adopted a friendly approach and did what he had suggested. It really worked like magic and those boys removed the hurdles they had created,” said Hayat Khan who is a sports person and played in a state-level match against Haryana which his team won.

Hayat's sister Adeeba Khan remembered. "Once I got a very low grade in my exam. I was scolded by everyone at home, but *Naana* understood me and scolded them. *Naana's* words inspired me so much that I really worked hard and secured good marks the next time," said Adeeba Khan.

According to Hamza Beg, Mirza Sahib always believed in encouraging children even if the task was really challenging or complicated. "Once I had to go for my NCC trip. I was sceptical about cleaning my shoes and doing all sorts of work by myself. I was reluctant and thought of consulting *Daada*. He explained to me the benefits of such trips and suggested how I could manage things on my own. I followed his suggestion. And to my surprise, the result was fantastic. I managed all the work without developing any negative feeling and enjoyed the trip immensely," shared Hamza Beg, son of Mirza Ahmer Beg.

The youngest member among Hamza Beg's cousins is Aliza Beg who thinks her *Daada* was the coolest guy and taught her how to be generous in life. "Once a monkey man came to us to organize a monkey show. All the children were excited to see the acrobatics and drama performed by trained monkeys. At some distance away, there were some poor children who couldn't see the show as they didn't have money to pay to the monkey man. While we children were enjoying the show, we noticed those deprived children. *Daada* took the initiative, gave some money to those children and they too enjoyed the show with us," shared Aliza Beg, daughter of Zafar Beg.

"Hamza, my cousin would carelessly wear his sandals in the wrong feet. I couldn't tolerate his carelessness and always pointed it out and corrected him. *Daada* told Hamza that Lizu being so small can do things right, whereas Hamza



being older can't do things correctly. He felt ashamed and corrected himself," added Aliza.

"Daada always supported me in every way. He was a very modern and open minded man. When I knew my parents would not allow me to do something I wanted to, I would ask him and he would give his permission. After that, I did not need anybody else's permission," remembered Ifrah Beg.

"He was a kind of person who would not hesitate to even pick up garbage from the road and put it in the bin. I remember in the Vatican City; we went to a Church where he found Cigarette butts on the floor of the Church Plaza. Though there was a huge generation gap between us, I never felt it. Daada convinced my parents to allow me to represent my school at NASA, USA. All the trips (India/abroad) we made, we had our *Daada* with us as a buddy," said Mirza Abrar Beg.



*Noor Jahan Khanam with her sons and daughters*

## Guardians of the Legacy

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**M**irza Faridul Hasan Beg had a personality which is rarely seen in the world. As for his conduct, it was exceptional in that one in a million person displays the virtues which he had. He had a remarkably sharp, discerning mind, able to fathom every issue. His heart was so tender that he felt deeply concerned for the whole of humanity. He was concerned about everyone's welfare. Doing harm to anyone was out of his world view. Such a thought did not ever cross his mind. He treated with forbearance and affection even those who had hurt him. He possessed a remarkable ability for charming conversation, which left people spell-bound.

Beg Sahib always looked for perfection and beauty. His constant quest for this ideal was the very crux of his life. His quest for beauty and perfection evoked his interest in

gardens and flowers and an appreciation of art, music and calligraphy.

Beg Sahib's religiosity was not isolationist or particularistic. He believed firmly that God's majesty and mercy are meant for all the worlds. Furthermore, his religiosity was not austere in its approach. The centre of his attention and activity was the individual. An individual is responsible for his deeds both in this life and the next. Nonetheless, Beg Sahib insisted that this world is the site for man's deeds and he can grow morally and spiritually while being part of the larger human society. He therefore, looked upon the mission of social reconstruction and public welfare as a religious duty. He was a Muslim and regarded Quranic teachings and the Prophet's illustrious example as the universal cure for both individual and collective life and for the moral and spiritual well-being of the society.

Having understood such a deeper meaning and purpose of life, he wanted his children (four sons and two daughters) to carry on the legacy he had built in his lifetime so that they may also lead meaningful lives and achieve success and enjoy the blessings of the Almighty in this world and Hereafter.

According to Rameshwar Nath Srivastava, Mirza Sahib was successful in every sphere of life. "Mirza Sahib shared a very healthy equation with his children. He made them stand on their feet in his lifetime. He gave space to his children to work and grow, based on their merit and talent. He taught them '*Harkat me barkat hai.*'



## Mirza Shamsul Hasan Beg

*Studied Civil Engineering at Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi*

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I was fond of keeping domestic birds and animals at home. Therefore, I needed a cage or a pet house for them. Once, I picked up a piece of an iron grill from Jamia campus, clandestinely. Daddy saw it in the evening and inquired about it. I confessed to him that I had picked it up from Jamia Millia Islamia campus. He lost his temper and reprimanded me severely. He also told me to put it back at the same place where I had picked it up from. It was a big lesson which came the hard way, but made me take a resolve not to steal anything in life. Once, I got fed up with the *jhuggi* clusters mushrooming in and around our locality. They were getting erected again and again despite repeated removal. I got angry and said that these *jhuggi* dwellers must be burnt alive. Daddy heard this and said in anger, “It seems your conscience for humanity has gone dead.”

Since I had studied engineering, I went to Libya to work as a Junior Engineer for 5 years. On my return, my mother shared her concern with me that though Daddy was making a bank, the challenges and problems were crippling, and had left him in distress.

I inquired about it and wished to support him in his endeavour. He gave me the responsibility of handling the processing and working formalities, especially getting the sanctions and permission for the project, spending the minimum amount of money.

As a word of caution, he advised me to pay full taxes to the government and never do any tampering with the water, electricity or any other service related system.

Daddy was full of life. Even in the difficult times, he would get small portions of delicacies and do whatever he could for the family. As a food connoisseur, he knew what delicacies were available and where. He proudly shared these with us and took the family for outings on every possible occasion.

A friend of my father, by the name of Razzaul Hasan Khan once gave my mother a master formula for a mutually harmonious relationship between her and her husband. He said that even if you do not offer him food, he will be fine, but if you interfere with his social work, your marital life will be doomed. My mother followed this advice and gave Daddy a completely free hand to pursue his social work.

On my sister Saba's successful speech development, he gave full credit to my mother and said that it was due to her courage and determination that Saba despite being mute, developed good communication skills.

He was concerned about the Muslim community and always said that there is no better place for Muslims than India. You must follow the law of the country you live in. You have the right to fight for changing the law but not for breaking the law, he always said.

Till Daddy was alive, my routine was to get up early in the morning, offer *Fajir Namaaz*, make my parents do some exercises, check their sugar, offer them tea and go back to get ready for the day. Now that he is no longer with us, I still follow the same routine with my mother. Though, he trained his children well to lead a meaningful life, I miss his physical presence a lot.

I pray to God to grant him a comforting place in the eternal world.

Aameen!



## Sadia Shamsul Hasan Beg

*Masters in economics, supported initial phase of  
Jamia Coopertaive Bank*

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**M**y first meeting with Daddy was through my husband's niece. Then through a common family friend, a matrimonial proposal came to us. Both Daddy and Mummy came to see me. After some time, when Daddy was about to leave, he put his hand on my head as a mark of his acceptance.

I got married and came into this family. During my pregnancy when he learnt that I was expecting twins, he was very happy. He would offer me the best of fruits, eatables, juices all the time. On one side, my husband was there to take care and on the other, my father-in-law was always ready to shower me with all that was needed for a pregnant woman. I felt

like a princess who had everything at her disposal. I just had to ask for something, and it would be made available.

After the birth of my children (twins), every morning, I would take both of them to Daddy and he would take such good care of them which was beyond my expectation. Such was my father-in-law, Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg.

I worked very closely with him during the initial phase of Jamia Cooperative Bank. More than academic excellence, he believed in making a person self-sufficient. He believed that one should be able to earn a livelihood and contribute to society meaningfully.

Since, my father was in a transferable job and didn't have enough time for the family, I couldn't be as close to my father as I became to Daddy.

May God reward him for his noble deeds!

Aameen!





**Mirza Qamarul Hasan Beg**  
*Studied Civil Engineering at Jamia Millia Islamia*

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***“Duniya toh mitt na jayegi tere baghair bhi  
Lekin ye kya ki teri zaroorat bhi kam nahi”***

**L**ike any other child, who is keen to satisfy his curiosity, I too, thought of unraveling mysteries of life on my own. Since I had limited understanding of things around me, I felt the need for a guide, a friend, a comforter, and someone who could hold my hand and show me the world through his experienced eyes...

I found my torch-bearer in my Daddy. He took me through various realms of teaching; sometimes through soft-training and sometimes the harder way. But, whatever methodology he adopted, it was always for my highest good.

When I was growing up, twice I was pulled up. The first incident took place when Zakir Bagh's construction had started. A gentleman came to see Daddy, and said, Beg Sahib, you are doing great work. You must be facing problems in commuting. Let me send you a car from my side. Daddy told him that he didn't need one. I was quite young and was listening to the entire conversation. I got tempted by the offer without understanding that the man was making an attempt to get a flat in Zakir Bagh Society. That gentleman thought he would be able to make Daddy compromise with his ethics by bribing him with a car.

I said to Daddy that it was such a nice offer, we would have got a car easily. He got furious because he was already irritated by that man's indecent proposal. I was given a good beating, and Shamsheer Bhai who was like our family member, came to my rescue. This incident taught me a big lesson that without having the right understanding, one should not react or give opinion.

I remember once he shared with me "*Taleem hai toh bada soch sakte ho. Jazba hai toh bada kaam kar sakte ho. Lekin taleem aur jazba dono ho toh bade se bada kaam kar sakte ho.*" Keeping these words in mind, I completed my education and became an engineer. I sought permission from my mother, who spoke to Daddy regarding my intention of doing business. Daddy was unwilling as he felt that in today's world, it is extremely difficult to do business with complete honesty.

He reluctantly allowed me to go ahead with my resolve but told me not to seek work in his name. I promised to keep that in my mind and carry out business dealings with honesty.

We worked hard without compromising with business ethics. Gradually, our work spoke for itself and Daddy got to know about it. He felt happy and developed confidence in me. I had witnessed Daddy always being surrounded by problems but he never let them overtake him. Since he was trained in social work, it was easy for him to manage the situation better.

His mantra was *“Pareshaniyo ko odo mat balki solution dhoondo. Pareshaniyo ko enjoy karna seekho.”*

When he named the residential society Zakir Bagh, he explained it by saying that a *Bagh*, is nothing but a beautiful cluster of various plants and trees all put together to create an aura pleasing to the eyes and beneficial to humans. Like a *Bagh*, he very cautiously and impeccably picked up a variety of people to live there. They included doctors, engineers, scientists, educationists, IPS, IAS, business men, politicians and people from different religions, scheduled caste people from South and North India. He believed that if we continue living in ghettos, with narrow, unhygienic streets, their minds would also get polluted.

Zakir Bagh was a concept of collective and harmonious living. It was like a Mini India representing a variety of people.

Once I visited Hyderabad with my friend Devendra Rawat, Daddy and *Ammi*. As usual, during this trip also, whenever Daddy sat in a taxi, he would enquire from the taxi driver about his profession, and whether he was running a rented taxi or owned it. He spoke to a couple of taxi drivers and both said that they were not just the drivers but the owners of the taxis. Daddy inquired further about how they had he

managed to own a taxi. He was told that there were several Cooperative Banks which would offer loans to them on easy installments. People got their taxi financed by the bank and, after few years, they became the proud owners of those vehicles.

This incident gave birth to a new dimension in Daddy's mind. He started thinking, if all this is possible in Hyderabad, why can't it be done in Delhi?

We returned to Delhi and the very next morning, Daddy went to the Cooperative Society's Office. He requested the concerned clerk to give him a form so that he could start a Bank. He was made to run around for 15 days. On the 15th day, Daddy said, if you cant give me a form, kindly let me know where to get it from. He was told that the office didn't have even a single copy of the form and no application had been submitted to get a new Bank registered for the last 22 years.

After a few more weeks, Daddy was finally given a form. As per the rules for registration, one needed Rs 20 lakh share capital and 1000 members, but when our turn came, after a long time, the rules were changed and we had to arrange Rs 60 lakh share capital and 3000 members .

It took 8-9 months to manage 3000 members and finally the bank was registered in October 1995.

Apart from all his work, he gave full attention to his family too. He could easily read my face and whenever he realized that I was bogged down with some work stress, he would tell me to take it easy. Times of trouble go away, therefore, never get too disappointed and disheartened, and face the challenges, he would say.

He was a very practical man. When he learned about his illness, he started working on his ongoing social projects in a faster phase. Seeing him looking ill and weak, once I was unable to control my tears. He called me and said, “*Is duniya mei koi bhi hamesha ke liye nhi aaya .Ye baat dil me rakho. Allah ki cheez hai Allah ki amanat hai. Agar tum mujhe sach mein kuch dena chate ho toh jo cheeze banai hai unko achhe tareeqe se chalao and jis maqsad se banai gayi hai us maqsad ko poora karo.*”

Today, in his physical absence, his words echo in to my ears and become my guiding force.

I pray to God to comfort him in the best possible way, Aameen!



## Safia Qamarul Hasan Beg

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I got married in 1994, the same year my father passed away, but I never felt his absence as Daddy was always there and treated me like his own daughter. I was called “*choti bahu*” by Daddy. The very first morning at this house, I felt so comfortable and special, and this was all because Daddy himself went into the kitchen and made breakfast for me, and served it with warmth and love the same way, in which a father serves his daughter.

He was such a humble man. He actually believed that a guest is next to God. He was always serving and taking care of all the people who visited our house. And his special way to show his love for them was by making tea for them. Everyone used to relish the special tea made by him.

Not only me, he treated my entire family as a part of his own. When my sister’s marriage was being fixed, he went

there as her father and showed the same compassion and love for my family as he showed for his own. For my younger sister, he was the guiding angel. Because of his direction and advice, she had become an architect. And she became an excellent one because of his constant guidance and efforts. He used to take her to explore new places and tell her about contemporary architecture as well. And he used to lovingly call her architect *saheba*.

Though his social work was very important for him, he didn't neglect his family. He made sure that if anyone of us had any problem, he tried to resolve it and helped us in all our issues.

He was a very kind-hearted person. He had immense love for all his grandchildren and used to always reward, appreciate and congratulate all of them even on their small achievements. The day he was being taken to the hospital, the very last time, he waved to me and with a gesture of his hands, blessed me. At that time I didn't realize that it was the final blessing and the final goodbye!

In my entire life, I have never met a person with such a golden heart. His nature cannot be described in mere words. A man born to serve others. His blessings are always there with us. We all miss the warmth, love, compassion he showered on all of us.

I pray to Allah for his *magfirat* and to grant him the highest place in Jannat.

Aameen!

*“Hazaron saal nargis apni benoori pe roti hai,  
Badi mushkil se hota hai, chaman mein didaavar paida.”*



## Mirza Zafar Beg

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When the construction of Zakir Bagh was going on, a truck loaded with bamboo was parked vertically. One labourer was unloading them and in the process met with an accident, leading to his death. Everybody got petrified thinking that the labourer's death would cause a big problem. When Daddy heard about it, he called labourer's family and took care of everything. The family was satisfied and happy over the settlement.

This style of working where a lost life was respectfully compensated was really commendable. I had never seen such an intelligent solution to such a critical incident.

I recall another such incident. Jagmohan Sahib was the Chairman DDA when Zakir Bagh was allotted this land at such a prime location. Jagmohan Sahib sent a man to visit the location. Daddy was cleaning the sewage outside his neighbour's house.



He gauged the situation and very cleverly dealt with the man who very tactfully wanted to locate him and pick him up to foil his mission.

Though I was very stubborn child and used to give him a tough time, I was his blue-eyed boy who always enjoyed his special favours. He wished during his last phase that I also should become a director in the Jamia Cooperative Bank. His thought was that I could manage the maximum social work. So he wanted me also to be on the forefront.

During our China visit, I noticed how all the doctors and nurses became so friendly with him. A famous cryo surgery expert, the hospital head and Dr. Noon... they all were present during his operation. It was Daddy's affectionate behaviour which got all of them together. Even when he was confined to bed rest in China, he asked for his skin cream so that he could feel fresh. Even in that condition, he didn't forget to listening to the *Mushaira*.

Was adept in solving complicated situations to ease the process of empowerment of the downtrodden. His only aim was to help small timers who were struggling against odds.

His application of faith was a little different. He offered religious prayers but not ritualistically. Instead of getting into the extreme of *Ibaadat*, he chose to extend a helping hand to the helpless. He believed that 'to serve man is to serve God.'

I recently met a gentleman who told me that Daddy would help him by paying rupees eight thousand for his children's fees every month.

His style of working was very different. If anyone was a foodie or cuisine connoisseur, he would get a special dish

prepared. His approach was so affectionate that in most of the cases, no one could ever think of refusing him.

He taught me the importance of social work. If I see any need of social work somewhere, I cannot stop myself from doing that. Social work runs in my blood.

My mother took care of everything – from adjustment in a single room, bearing the vagaries of the rainy season and managing the difficult conditions, visiting the neighborhood for social obligations, going to school to meet teachers, for school admissions and many more things.

Daddy was so passionately dedicated to his work that he needed nothing but the accomplishment of his work. He had a single point agenda – day and night, 24x7 work, work and work, and that too for others. The Statesman, his preferred newspaper since college time, was his stress-buster even in his last days.

I feel that if Daddy had not been such a compassionate human being and sincere social worker, we wouldn't have received the wisdom of his thoughts that we enjoy today. He had a fantastic sense of humour which helped us to sail through the rough times.

We are thankful to him for grooming us so well for both this world as well as the Hereafter.

May God give him space in His neighborhood!

Aameen!



## Sadaf Zafar Beg

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*“Khudi ko kar buland itna ke har taqdeer se pehle  
Khuda bande se khud pooche bata teri raza kya hai”*

Daddy’s achievements were our tea-time topic every day. I remember writing my first essay on him in school. I wondered how someone could do what most people would hesitate to, right from cleaning the poop of a dog, to cleaning sewage, serving tea to the watchmen etc. He had no qualms about it at all. These are some of my childhood memories.

I went to Frank Anthony Public School, studied at Lady Shri Ram College for women, New Delhi. Then I pursued my MBA in HR and International Business from Europe.

I didn’t know how to read Urdu, as I never had any interest in it. When I got married, I saw the Urdu newspaper,

magazines and poetry books. He would read out poetry couplets, which caught my fancy. Slowly, I developed an interest in Urdu and started enjoying it very much. In fact, we have also decided to support students pursuing Urdu.

I was really privileged to share a very close relationship with him. He always treated everyone with parity and integrity. He showed us the path, through his own example, to always be helpful, humble and think ahead, with a positive attitude.

When we started the Raza Zakat Foundation, he was very happy and expressed it by saying, "You've done a wonderful job by opening an *Idaara*."

I learnt from him that it was better to provide a solution rather than cribbing about a problem. He never got offended with any sort of criticism, which was his very unique quality. He encouraged me to speak my mind. As the *daughters-in-laws*, we got special privileges and utmost care from him, which is rare in many families.

He was very conscious of the fact that there should not be any unjustified spending. I suggested a website but he was not comfortable with the idea. I gave him a reason and explained the need for it. Finally, he understood and appreciated it.

He liked to go for an evening walk with his friends and would come back by 9:30pm. After dinner, he would specially prepare tea for Zafar and we all used to join in. He would always share with me the matters of the day.

When I got married, Daddy gladly introduced me to everyone by saying that he was proud to have an foreign educated *bahu*. He always encouraged women to come forward and take the lead. He would say, "Learn to empower yourself, be smart and pay attention to your presentation."

There was a time when his wife was all alone (when he had completely dedicated himself to the construction of Zakir Bagh society). She faced extreme difficulties but managed the situation very well. Her courage and contribution are really commendable.

I am a very open person. I wear my heart on my sleeve. I really feel blessed having married into this family which understands and supports me completely. Without Daddy, I feel so incomplete. He was a very important person in my life and I owe a lot of my success, peace and happiness to him. We all miss him very much as we could just walk up to him and discuss anything under the sun.

I doubt if I will ever come across a gentleman like him who was so generous and empathetic towards people in need. I proudly salute his indomitable spirit and pray to God grant him peace and solace...

Aameen!!!



## Mirza Ahmer Beg

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Daddy's maximum time was invested in social work. He cared for us but never fulfilled our unreasonable desires. Daddy taught us is useful at every step of life. How to deal with people at work, in society, in the family, etiquette, etc., he taught us everything. He taught us how to live life meaningfully. He gave us a purpose and direction, and then allowed us to grow as much as we could based on human qualities.

Just earning money never impressed him at all. What impressed him was how modest, honest and dedicated you were in your dealings with fellow humans. Money, according to him was a by-product and simply a catalyst to facilitate our needs. But beyond basic needs, what we should do to get peace was his prime concern.

To me, he was a thorough secular humanist, a no nonsense person who never had any friction with anyone, and who lived his life only for comforting others. Giving respect, and extending a hand of help to others were the basic principles he taught us.

Initially, I was not very comfortable with these concepts, but my father taught me appreciate them. Slowly, I saw the result of his wisdom and my inner-self became comfortable with, and finally adopted, this policy for my own life as well.

Whatever we are today, it is mainly because of Daddy's good conduct and virtues. His social work, his service to the elderly and his help to the miserable... all put together are the blessings, which are benefiting us today in every possible way. He practiced this policy throughout his life that whatever he ate himself would be fed to others as well. He never differentiated between the poor and the rich. He would inspire, motivate and make us feel content so that when we worked outside, we enjoyed the work thoroughly. He taught us how to be at peace.

We were living in house number 33 in Zakir Bagh. To create more space, I lowered the extended roof so that we could have more covered space. Daddy said those who encroach or think a rented house is their own, or satiate their craving within limited space and do not think big and struggle for

that, remain confined to the small space. After learning this lesson, I shifted out to a rented accommodation. I started thinking big, worked harder and the result was that God increased my *Rizq* and elevated my position socially.

May God give him what pleases his heart!

Aameen!



## Sumbul Ahmer Beg

*House-maker, got married in 1998*

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I come from Aligarh. Daddy was my father-in-law but before that he was my *khalu*. Whenever Daddy visited Aligarh, it was like Eid for us children. He would take us out for good food and sight-seeing. In fact, a few times when he visited the Vice Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University, I also went along with him and enjoyed all the privileges.

What he taught us was to bear and tolerate. This is exactly what Gandhi ji had said, that if someone slaps you on your cheek, offer him the other one too. Generally, people react violently to such a situation, but I believe we should have the strength to forgive the offender. Reacting to offence is simple, but showing tolerance through non-reaction is bravery.

I pray to God to give him the best possible place in the Hereafter.

Aameen!





## Nishat Gupta

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“My first engineer *bitiya*” his proud voice still echoes in my ears, his gentle smile and his enchanting personality still bring a lump to my throat. To the world, my Daddy was a philanthropist, a social worker, but to me, my Daddy was my inspiration, my best friend, my mentor and above all my Hero.

His body, once filled with vitality, and his aura that could once fill up an entire room, now yearned for peace. “*Yeh zindagi key mele duniya mein kam na hongey, aphisos hum na hongey*” his voice so fragile and his mind still strong, and in that moment, my whole world paused. I wanted to do anything in my power to fulfill his wish. But it was too late. And he bid us goodbye for forever.

As a naïve little girl, I just wanted to be like my Daddy.

I remember one Eid-ul-Azha a devastating flood had struck our home in Batla House. Amidst the harsh conditions we faced, Daddy's only concern was to save the official documents of Zakir Bagh, to salvage the residents' possessions before his own. With the help of our neighbour Shamsher Ali Khan, Daddy started collecting all the documents. This ignited a spark in me to help out my family. I sneaked out of my cousin's house in Noor Nagar, where we had shifted temporarily due to the flood, to clean up my home. The task was harder than I had anticipated. I laboured all day to remove the water mixed with clay and dirt and pumped all the water out, to make my home hospitable again. On my way back, I was happy to share this with my Daddy, but when I got back home late, my mother slapped me. This infuriated my Daddy, as he always believed in thinking first and acting later.

My Daddy had always supported me, through every thick and thin.

My being the first female engineer to have graduated from Jamia Millia Islamia, made Daddy extremely proud. When I first approached the admission department, I was denied admission on the basis of my gender. But seeing Daddy provide shelter to so many families in Zakir Bagh had motivated me to become a Civil Engineer. So I was resolute in my decision. It was due to Daddy's relentless support that I got admission. Be it filling out of the forms, standing in long lines and the hardest of all – facing the society, Daddy never doubted my abilities.

My connection with my father is irreplaceable; I don't think words can ever describe my unconditional love for him. It was not due to the fact that he was my father, it was

because every time I was in doubt, every time something went wrong, he was always there.

All of my father's virtues and values, everything about him was simple and genuine, and I feel honoured to be the daughter of Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg.

I know that I will do everything in my power to carry forward his exquisite legacy. I miss my Daddy, I always will.

Explaining Daddy's personality and virtues, I shared with my children the following lines:

सिखाया जिसने हुनर प्यार जमाने से।

मेरा वो रहनुमा उठके गया सिरहाने से।

ना जाने कितने चिरागों को रोशनी देकर।

वो आफताबे आजमी गया जमाने से।

दर्द—ए—दिल में संजोता था वो दर्दमंदों का।

खिलाफ था वो किसी का भी दिल दुखाने से।

वो फरिश्ताए अमन व प्यार सबसे कहता था।

कुछ भी हासिल ना होगा नफरतें बढ़ाने से।

ये उनका ख़ाब था बेटियां हों तालीमशुदा।

कोई भी घर ना छूटे बेटियां पढ़ाने से।

बनेगी डॉक्टर, इंजीनियर अगर बिटियां।

फख्र की बात है वो होगी जिस घराने से।

वो फकीराना तबीयत मलंग जैसा था।

जो दौलतें ही लुटाता रहा खज़ाने से।

नेक लोगों की खुदा को भी ज़रूरत होगी।

तभी तो ले गया नाना को वो बहाने से।



## Shashank Gupta

*Director – NS Associates*

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**W**e used to have a great time spending hours together, cracking jokes, reciting romantic poetic lines and sharing a hearty laugh.

To me, he was my father-in-law, but more than this relationship, he was the finest human being I ever came across.

When I saw the overwhelming turnout of people who came to have the last glimpse of him I could not believe my eyes. I have never seen such an emotionally charged crowd where each person was sobbing and grieving while sharing stories of how Mirza Sahib came into their lives, as if God had sent an angel and how he changed their lives.

While missing his great company, I pray to God for the best of place for Mirza Sahib in the Hereafter!



## Saba Khan

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“I was born with some special qualities. My behaviour, language and expression were challenging for others. Daddy identified this and made me more special. Under Daddy and *Ammi’s* special care and supervision, I was trained to face the world with respect and dignity. Though people say that Daddy was always available more to persons outside our home, as he lived every moment for helping others, he fulfilled all his responsibilities as a father. He was always a society-maker and my mother a home-maker. As a child, I saw him doing all sorts of work, be it cleaning sewage, standing by the side of the struggling poor, treating everyone with equal respect without being conscious of class, status or position. He would greet a child the same way he would greet and respect a Vice Chancellor of a University. Through his varying actions and go-getting

attitude, Daddy taught us to be humble, kind and humorous. He tried throughout his life to bring a smile on the face of the financially deprived and underprivileged people,” expressed Saba Khan, younger daughter of Mirza Fairdul Hasan Beg.



## Shahid Khan

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“I have no words to explain what and who Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg was. But I definitely know that he was a great soul who dedicated his entire life to change the lives of the poor and marginalized people. Besides being compassionate for others, he was an excellent host and loved reaching out to people through good food.

He inspired me in many ways and today I feel quite transformed from an aggressive man to a gentle and caring person who can place others concerns first. I have become humble and more humane now. I am really thankful to Mirza Sahib for making me a better human being,” said Shahid Khan, younger son-in-law of Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg.



*M.F.H. Beg with his wife Noor Jahan Khanam during his last fight at Apollo Hospital*

## The Lost Battle

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**H**aving fought many battles of his life successfully, Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg had mastered the art of fighting for a cause. Like a champion of the chess game, he knew which pawn (*mohra*) would be of his use and when to be played to checkmate (defeat) the opponent. Be it the development of Zakir Bagh colony to accommodate 204 families in the most salubrious environment, with good living amenities, in the heart of South Delhi, Jamia Cooperative Bank to support the downtrodden in their struggle to ease their life and live with dignity, setting up educational institutions in Azamgarh, especially to empower girls for a better future or establishment of a community radio *Voice of Azamgarh* to help poor people from the rural areas of Azamgarh to share their issues and concerns with the government and



become more aware to lead a better life, whatever Mirza Sahib thought was translated into reality.

But, there came a time, when he was faced with another battle which he fought with extraordinary courage and fortitude, yet was unable to come out victorious like before. This time the challenging battle wasn't with adversities or social issues but with an external enemy identified as pancreatic cancer.

When he was combating the disease, his close friends and relatives thought he wasn't aware of it but the fact was that he knew about it very well. His awareness was reflected in his style of work. He became a bit restless. He would ask people to finish the work faster and push things harder, as compared to his regular style of functioning.

“Even when he was being taken to the operation theatre, he was talking about the progress of Jamia Cooperative Bank and mobilizing more resources to provide employment to the marginalized sections of society. Though he was in great discomfort and dealing with pain, he managed to conceal it and focused on finding ways and means to help the needy.” Saqib Beg, one of the grand sons of Mirza Sahib.

“I remember Daddy showing a different pattern in his approach towards work during his treatment. He was in a hurry and wanted others to complete jobs as fast as possible. I believe he knew that his illness might be fatal. Therefore, he wanted the pending works to be completed without any delay,” said Nishat Gupta, Mirza Sahib's elder daughter.

According to Dr. Yugal Mishra, Mirza Sahib was a fighter not only for social issues but also for his illness due to his positive thinking and self-motivating personality. “I've

treated innumerable patients suffering from different heart problems, but Mirza Sahib undoubtedly had a different approach towards his illness. His mind was always preoccupied with his concern for the welfare initiatives he took for the downtrodden people of society. He had a very strong will power and had the courage to defeat any critical problem. It is very rare to come across a person who lives for others,” said Dr. Mishra, a senior heart specialist at Escort Hospital, New Delhi.

“I operated on him for artery blockages. Before going inside the operation theatre, Mirza Sahib held my hand and said, ‘Dr. my case is in your hands now. Please keep this in mind that I have to complete various projects which I have initiated for the poor.’ He was a very jovial person and never let a negative sentiment obstruct his thoughts,” added Dr. Mishra.

“Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg was a spotless personality, an amazing example of determination and dedication. Whatever he thought, he practiced, and whatever he wanted to build, he constructed. He inculcated the same quality in his sons and daughters. I’ve expressed my views to Babloo Bhai and volunteered to be associated with the initiatives and institutions Beg Sahib has developed,” said Atul Kumar Anjan, a senior political activist.

He further added, “Mirza Sahib was a story of all round success – as a student, as a social worker, a visionary, entrepreneur, philanthropist and overall as a good human being. He gave a message of compassion, remained committed to secular values and believed in doing whatever one can do with his resources.”

As per RN Srivastava, Mirza Sahib was really a Messiah for the marginalized section of our society. “On his sad demise, I witnessed so many people talking about Mirza Sahib, how he helped them change their lives. One of them was a pickpocket who approached Mirza Sahib for a bank loan to start some work and lead a life of dignity. Another man shared his story of how he was given a loan to buy a taxi and slowly and gradually he bought several taxis with his earnings. Today, he is the proud owner of 10 taxis and enjoying life with dignity.

Besides preserving Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg’s memoreis alive in the hearts of his family members, friends and well-wishers, the management of Jamia Cooperative Bank Limited and Dr. Zakir Hussain Memorial Cooperative Group Housing Society Limited, recently took two initiatives – chronicling the important events of Mirza Sahib’s life in a biography in multiple languages and naming the road between Zakir Bagh and Ishwar Nagar after him as Mirza Faridul Hasan Beg Road.

# Special Tribute

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Dear Naana,

“I promise, I will take care of your legacy, I love you.”

I kissed my grandfather’s forehead as a final goodbye. I brought myself to say following words, with choking voice and tears rushing down my cheekbones. The man that I loved more than myself, needed to know last time as he laid there pale, unable to move, with life support attached to every inch of his body, the man once so zealous he could light up an entire room, the man who I looked up to for everything, the man who believed in me even when I refused to, needed to know that his hard work of 60 years would be taken care of. He took his last noble breath and took off into oblivion.

Although it was the last I ever saw of him yet it was not the last I felt of him. Even though not physically amidst us, I feel his omnipresence.

My Grandfather left, but he left us with a chronicle to take inspiration from. A chronicle where he did not believe in antagonists, a chronicle where he gave rise to paladins.

This is my Grandfather’s legacy, left for us to read, realize and rethink our actions.

Someday, I hope to become even half the human he was. His personality cannot be encompassed just in words, but this biography is a tribute, an attempt to let people know the essence of Beg Sahib’s persona.”

I know some may believe that I love you because you're my family. But that's not the only reason, I love you because your strength inspires me,

I love you because your hard-work motivates me, I love you because your presence comforts me. Some people are born to do something, to make a change, to remind humanity of its humanness, you have accomplished that too along with so much more.

I am so proud to be related to you and to this day, I vow to always carry forward your philanthropic legacy.

You have given hope to so many people including me, that it only takes one person to change the world. You have made life easier for so many people, with your work and empathy. You have made so many girls believe that they not only deserve education but could excel in it too. You have given people aspirations and hopes when there was none available. Most of all, you have given me values and knowledge which will remain with me forever without fail.

You have made me a better person, and that's why I love you the most.

*By Kavya*