

MUHAMMAD ASAD AND POLA HAMIDA ASAD:
TWENTY-TWO UNPUBLISHED LETTERS

Collected and Introduced by Muhammad Arshad

This second installment of hitherto unpublished letters of Muhammad Asad and his fourth wife, Pola Hamida Asad, shed new light on the life and intellectual activities of Muhammad Asad over an extended period of time (1946-1992). The first letter, written shortly after Asad's release after six years of internment during World War II, expounds on his future plans and provides details of little-known aspects of his family life. The last letter, written by Pola Hamida shortly after Asad's death in 1992, is an abrupt rejoinder to "a most insensitive request. After all, I was his constant companion for almost forty years and my loss is very great; it is too painful for me to write these details at the request of a curious journalist—even if you were really an old friend." Taken together, these letters provide a rare insight into making of Asad's intellectual and personal life, his relationships with family and friends and they will also be valuable for a future biography of Asad. The letters are being published as they were written, without any changes to the text.

Keywords: Muhammad Asad; Pola Hamida Asad; Munira Asad; Talal Asad; Islamic intellectual history; Pakistan; English translations of the Qur'an; Formative currents in twentieth century Islamic thought; politics and culture of the colonial era; British Raj; Islam, Muslims and the challenge of modernity; The Road to Pakistan.

Letters 1-2

To Malik Muhammad Ashraf (Gujrat, Pakistan, 1946)

Malik Muhammad Ashraf (1915-1981) was a devoted friend of Iqbal who met Asad during his visits to Iqbal. Two letters of Asad to Ashraf were published in the previous installment of Asad's letters in the winter 2016 issue of this journal. The first of the two letters

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included in this issue was written on January 24, 1946, five weeks after his release from internment (1939-December 1945), indicating his future plans: the establishment of an Islamic Research Institute, starting a monthly journal (*Arafat*), resuming the publication of his English translation of *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, work on a revised edition of *Islam at the Crossroads* and another book on Islamic law. The second letter was written in April 1946 when Asad is already “overworked”; he is fully immersed in his one-man journal, he works 8-10 hours per day; he has no time for writing letters. Musa Jarullah (1875-1949) was a Tatari Muslim scholar, who was then living in Bhopal.¹

(1)

C/o Sh. Muhammad Ashraf,
Bookseller & Publisher,
Kashmiri Bazar, Lahore
January 24, 1946

Dear Mr. Ashraf,

I have to apologize for not having earlier answered your kind letters. My last few weeks were spent in a very restless way; there is so much to settle and to do after more than six years of absence that I could hardly call an hour my own. At present I am at Lahore, trying to find a house—a terrific problem here. As soon as this is arranged (I do not know when it will be) I hope to settle to work, both in connection with the Islamic Research Institute, of which I am to be the Director, and with my translation of “*Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*”. This latter publication will have to wait for some time because of the present paper shortage. But in the meantime I shall, insha-Allah, publish a book on which I had been working for some time past and which will be completed within three months or so. Also, a completely revised edition of “*Islam at the Crossroads*” is in preparation and will come out soon together with its Urdu translation.

I am really grateful to you for your kind appreciation of my work, and I shall be very glad to make your personal acquaintance. Please accept my sincere thanks for the congratulations on my release.

Shaikh Musa Jarullah is well known to me. Kindly convey my best regards to him.

Hoping to meet you some day,
Yours sincerely,
Muhammad Asad

1. For life and career of Musa Jarullah, see Muhammad Arshad, “Iqbal aur Musa Jarullah”, *Mabahith* (Lahore), No. 2 (July-December 2012), pp. 239-270.



(2)

“Fairview,”
Dalhousie,
June 17, 1946

My dear Ashraf Sahib,

Your letter of the 12th instant reached me yesterday. I am sorry you have been disappointed with me as a letter writer, but I am so overworked that I cannot possibly attend to my correspondence regularly. At present I am preparing a monthly journal “Arafat”, which is scheduled to appear by the 1st August. As it is, in principle, a “one man’s show” (I do not accept contributions from outside and write the whole of it myself), you can well imagine that it occupies most of my time. The rest of it is devoted to my work on Bukhari, which was so long delayed owing to my internment. I am working daily 8-10 hours and am in the evenings so exhausted that I can hardly even speak to my family. For this reason, I do not think I will be in a position to write an introduction to your book. Moreover, my knowledge of Urdu and Persian is merely colloquial, and so I really could not say anything about Iqbal as a poet. I knew him well, but almost all our conversations were concerned with Islamic theology and jurisprudence.

I have no doubt your book will be interesting, but you will find many other people who are far better qualified to write an introduction to it. At present, in any case it is quite impossible for me to accept any task beyond those, which I have mentioned above. I am simply physically unable to do more than I am doing at present.

With the best wishes for the success of your book,
Yours sincerely,
Muhammad Asad

P.S. Enclosed the opinions of Sh. Musa Jaruallah and Maulana Abu'l-A'la Maududi, which I have read with pleasure. You might wish to utilize them otherwise, and so I am returning them to you.

Muhammad Asad



Letter 3

To Maulana Muhammad Ali President, Anjuman-i Ishaat-i Islam (1950)

In this rare and surprising letter to Maulana Muhammad Ali

(1874-1951), the amir of the Anjuman-i Ahmadiya Ishā‘at-i Islam, Lahore, Asad introduces “very old and very dear friend” Mr. Muhammad Husain to Maulana Muhammad and asks for a favorable response.

Maulana Mohd. Ali Sahib,
President, Anjuman Ishaat-i Islam,
Muslim Town,
Lahore.
6.11.50

My dear Maulana Sahib,

This is to introduce to you a very old and very dear friend of mine, Mr. Mohd. Husain. I shall be extremely grateful if you will kindly assist him—any help rendered to him will be considered as rendered to me... I have heard that your health was not very good recently, but I do hope that with the grace of God you have improved by now. I pray to Almighty that He may give you the strength and vigour so necessary for the work you are doing.

With the best wishes and regards,
Yours sincerely,
M. Asad



Letter 4

To Head of the Department of Journalism, University of Punjab, Lahore.

Written in August 1949 on the letterhead of the Department of Islamic Reconstruction, of which Asad was then the Director, this letter requests the remission of tuition fee of Mr. Iftikhar Ahmad Chishti, a member of his staff at the Department of Islamic Reconstruction. Five months later, Asad also issued a certification in favor of Iftikhar Ahmad Chishti, which stated: “This is to certify that Mr. Iftikhar Ahmad Chishti, B.A., is well known to me for many years. He belongs to a very good family, which has always been prominent in literary pursuits. His father was for many years the editor and publisher of various magazines, and Mr. Iftikhar Ahmad received practical training in journalism since his early youth. During my tenure of office as Director of Islamic Reconstruction, West Punjab, I found him very willing and able, and of a particularly pleasant disposition. I can fully recommend him for any job requiring journalistic ability and a sense of responsibility and integrity.”

Karachi, 31st March 1949 (M. Asad)

GOVERNMENT OF THE WEST PUNJAB
DEPARTMENT OF ISLAMIC RECONSTRUCTION
Office of the Director,
Lahore.
October 11, 1948

The Head of the Deptt. of Journalism,
University of the Punjab,
Lahore

Dear Sir:

I take the greatest pleasure in endorsing and strongly recommending the application for remission of fees submitted by Mr. Iftikhar Ahmad Chishti, B.A. He fully deserves this concession, being very intelligent, industrious and deeply interested in Journalism. I know him and his family for many years, and so I can make this recommendation with full assurance. His father, who was himself a writer and journalist in earlier years, has no means what so ever. I am sure that by granting Mr. Iftikhar Ahmad's request the University will be helping a most deserving case.

Yours truly,
Muhammad Asad.
Director of Islamic Reconstruction



Letter 5

To Saleem (Model Town, Lahore, 1956)

Saleem was a Lahore-based businessman who befriended Asad. This letter also includes a post-script by Pola Hamida Asad. The letter indicates warm friendship ("We have shared very nice and interesting times"). It also indicates that after the publication of *The Road to Mecca* in 1954, Asad moved to Beirut where he was preparing to write a sequel, *The Road to Pakistan*, which never appeared. This is a rare letter in the sense that it provides details of a private relationship with a businessman and includes his fond memories of Pakistan years ("There are too many remembrances of Lahore").

Hannover,
Ostermannstrasse 12,
West Germany.
July 28, 1956.

My dear Mr. Saleem,

We have just returned from a holiday trip to Austria, Switzerland and Italy and now there shall be no more delay in sending you the photos I promised you on my departure from Lahore. Please, my dear Mr. Saleem, never think that I have forgotten you and the really very good time which we have had together first at Karachi and then of course at your own place Lahore. If I did not write you for such a long time it was because I had really extremely much to work all the time and I did never want to write you just a few lines but extensively although it would have been much better if I had written you in brief. As regard the photos as such they had first been with my family at Hamburg and were spare from me with all my luggage, since I had just a single room at Hannover which reminds me of your style of living when you were at Karachi near Bunder Road and the cloth market which I remember very well.

Now dear Mr. Saleem, how are you going? I hope you are doing well and are having much success with Burhan in selling centrifugal pumps and also complete plants and big machinery. Only yesterday night we were showing our beautiful film to friends and everybody was enjoying the old town of Lahore, Shalimar Garden, Jehangir's Tomb, Faletti's Hotel and in between all these beauties also our dear old Skoda Car. What is she doing? Liedke of course was always thinking that she was not so good but I am still convinced of her performance in spite of the trouble she gave us on our wonderful trip from Karachi to Lahore. In fact even Germany, which has such a big car industry, is importing Skoda cars. But of course I should first ask about your family. The children will have grown in the meantime since we took the photos; I hope you will still like to have the pictures of your family even now. One reason of course for the delay of having the photos made was that it was difficult to find a shop where there are women employed since I did not care to give the negatives of Mrs. Saleem to a shop where a man could see her, since she preferred to remain under purdah. So this business had to be done by my wife at a special shop. Are you still staying at your own house near the canal bank where also our friends Sayed Hameed used to have his important business? There are too many remembrances of Lahore. What about that gentleman from the railway? Please, Mr. Saleem, do write me a little of your family and of Lahore. I am now better settled with my family at Hannover and it will be a great pleasure to have news from you and your place.

I must also beg your pardon that I had transferred some money to you a long time ago without telling you what to do with it. In fact I had to exchange my foreign account in Germany into German Marks, which would have made it difficult to make any payments to Pakistan, I therefore applied for the transfer of Rs. 200/- which was granted for the purpose of paying old bills

or for the purpose of small purchases such as perhaps books or small gifts etc. now in fact we do have still to pay two bills to doctors, one at Karachi, one at Lahore. (You might remember that we both failed in paying a bill to Dr. Seltzer because there was some trouble with a cheque, which I think was returned and cancelled). Dear Mr. Saleem, if the money should have reached you in order and is still with you, please do transfer it to my account with Massers Netherlands Trading Society, Bunder Road Karachi, with which bank I have still an account. Their Post Box is 4096 Karachi-2. Of course there is absolutely no hurry. I just wanted to let you know my ideas in this regard. Whenever the bank should write me that they have received money, I shall ask them to transfer money to the doctor and keep the rest till demand. Whenever you should settle the matter I shall be very thankful to you for having the amount with you for such a long time.

Some time ago I wrote a letter to Mr. Tayebjee and asked him what had happened to our deep well turbine pumps. He said he did not know and perhaps also the Government does not know. Have they been installed? Mr. Speck must have been with you for the installation of the first ones, he wrote me before his departure, but I never received any news from Mr. Speck after his return. I hope you have not kept him with you! He had such a nice house at Hilpoltstein, a place which unexpectedly developed after they had received our order. Indeed, dear Mr. Saleem, we have shared very nice and interesting times and I shall never forget them. In fact, at least as regards human relations I was much happier in Pakistan and particularly at Lahore than I am now in Germany, although this is my homeland. I shall never forget how nice you and many other people also have been to my family and me during our stay and particularly of course we feel thankful for your friendship from the first meeting at Karachi till our departure from Lahore airport. Our feelings are true in spite that we did not write for such a long time.

Please, Mr. Saleem do write me and let us know how you are and your family and your business.

And never forget your's sincerely,
Muhammad Asad

P.S. I forgot to write you above that Mr. Asad has in the meantime written a very beautiful book "The Road to Mecca" which was published in USA and UK and then in Germany and other European countries. Mr. Asad has also been with us at Hannover and he arrived here with the proprietor of Ferozsons bookshop, The Mall, where I also have bought many books, as you will remember. We have together made a couple of broadcasts on Islam with good success and many people seem to have learned through us for the first time the real contents of Islam. Now Mr. Asad is living at Beyrouth, Lebanon. He is

preparing a new book “The Road to Pakistan”, which will show the enthusiasm with which Pakistan was created. My love also to Pakistan.

Please excuse my bad typing. I am missing for this purpose Mr. Jamal. Still I am missing of course also his company. Are you sometimes meeting him? Please give him my best regards. We heard that he left Burhan’s services since he could no more use his time.

Yours sincerely,
Pola Hamida Asad



Letter 6

To Vice-Chancellor, University of the Punjab, Lahore, 1957

This letter provides a rare insight into reasons for Asad’s resignation from the position of Director of International Islamic Colloquium, which was planned by the University of Punjab in 1956 and for which Asad was especially requested to come to Pakistan from Beirut. The Colloquium was conceived to be an important gathering of Muslim scholars to discuss a wide range of topics including: the concept of Islamic state, Islamic law and *ijtihād*, Islamic culture and civilization, Economic doctrines of Islam. Asad was appointed Director of the International Islamic Colloquium and he moved to Pakistan on March 8, 1957. His disappointment with the procedures and lack of real enthusiasm for the Colloquium prompted his resignation on November 30, 1957. The Colloquium was, however, held as scheduled (December 29, 1957—January 8, 1958).

“Al-Salim”
Model Town,
Lahore, Pakistan.
December 4, 1957

Dear Sir,

On November 30 I addressed a letter to you from my office. As I have reason to believe that following my resignation on the same day my instructions were countermanded and my official letter was not dispatched, I am herewith repeating its contents:

“This is to inform you that I am resigning from my assignment as Director of the International Islamic Colloquium. As a matter of fact, I have been considering this step for over a month, but have so far yielded to the persuasion of well-wishers of the Colloquium who have urged me to bring my work to its conclusion. However, I now find it impossible to continue to bear

responsibility for this very important conference.

“The sole reason for my resignation is the irreconcilable difference between the views of the Vice-Chancellor, University of the Punjab, and myself concerning a number of essential points, namely: (1) the provision of adequate staff for my office (for eight months, my wife—who was acting as Executive Secretary in a purely honorary capacity—and myself carried on the whole work or organization with one stenographer who constituted my entire clerical staff); (2) Appropriate and timely arrangements for the translation into Arabic of the English papers to be read at the Colloquium, and Vice-versa, as well as for trained interpreters during the Colloquium; and (3) unnecessary delays in various administrative and organizational matters, especially with regard to finalizing the programme of the Colloquium.

“Since I was called from the Middle East to Pakistan to assume Directorship of the Colloquium (in March last), I have spent all my energies on making this conference a real success. In spite of my resignation, I still hope it will be successful on the basis of those arrangements which I have been allowed to make”.

With the best wishes, I remain,
Yours sincerely,
Muhammad Asad



Letters 7-9

To Chaudhry Niaz Ali Khan, 1964, 1970

Chaudhry Niaz Ali Khan (June 28, 1880-February 24, 1976) was the founder of the Dār al-Islam Movement and Dār al-Islam Trust. A graduate of the Thompson College of Civil Engineering, Roorkee, India, he served (1900-1935) as civil engineer under the British Government. He owned considerable land in Jamalpur near Pathankot and was an outstanding fruit-grower, interested in the revival of Islamic thought. Inspired by Muhammad Iqbal, he envisaged a plan to establish an institute for Islamic learning at Jamalpur and established Dār al-Islam Trust in 1936. He invited Sayed Abu al-'Ala Mawdudi (1903-1979) to be the head of the institution. In 1940, he launched a monthly journal (*Dār al-Islam*) devoted to the dissemination of the message of the Qur'ān. Shortly after the emergence of Pakistan on 14th August 1947, he migrated to Pakistan and settled in Jauharabad (Khushab District, Punjab), where he revived Dār al-Islam institute. Asad accepted the invitation to become a member of the Dār al-Islam Institute in 1936, visited its

campus several times, and remained a close friend of Niaz Ali until his death in 1976. During the years of Asad's internment (1939-1945), Niaz Ali Khan took care of his wife Munira and son Talal. Later, Munira and Talal joined Asad in Poona. When Asad was released on December 14, 1945, he took a "train from Poona to Bombay and thence to the Punjab, straight to Chaudhry Niaz Ali's estate at Jamalpur. There I learned that immediately after my arrest at the outbreak of the war that good old friend had shifted all the contents of my 'Arafat Press' as well as my library and my manuscripts for safe-keeping against my return. I was home once again."²

Of the three letters being published here, only the first is written by Asad; the other two are by Pola Hamida.³ Asad's letter—written on May 5, 1964, from Commugny, a municipality in the Nyon district in the canton of Vaud, Switzerland—informs Niaz Ali that the first volume of translation of the Qur'ān has been typeset and "I am convinced that I have produced a work, which will show the Qur'an in its proper light and will make it understandable to many readers who were hitherto somewhat confused by the existing translations." In her first letter (July 1964), written while Asad was away, Pola Hamida asks Niaz Ali to "kindly present [the Qur'ān translation] to President Ayub."

(7)

Commugny (Vaud),
Switzerland.
May 5, 1964

My dear Chaudhri Sahib,

Many, many thanks for your letter of April 25th. As regards the health of Hamida and myself, there is no cause for any anxiety on your part since we are both perfectly all right, thanks to God. The reason for our long silence was the extreme rush of work in connection with the publication of the first volume of

2. Muhammad Asad, *Home-Coming of the Heart*, p. 113. For more details, see Muhammad Arshad, "Islāmī Riyāsat ki tashkīl-i jadīd: Muhammad Asad kay afkār ka tanqīdī muḥālī'a" (Lahore: *Al-Faisal*, 2011), pp. 147-154; Idem, "Dār al-Islām (Pathankot) ka ta'limī Maṣūba", *Jihāat al-Islām*, 5:2 (January-June 2012), pp. 105-140; Sayyid Asad Gilani, *Iqbal, Dār al-Islām aur Mawdūdī* (Lahore: Islami Ikadmi, 1978), chaps. 6 and 7; Safir Akhtar, *Bayaad-i Sayyid Mawdudi* (Lohsar Sharfo, Wah Cantt: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1998), pp. 79-82.

3. Chaudhry is spelled Chaudhri in all three letters.

my Qur'an translation and commentary. This first volume—comprising one-third of the Qur'an—has now been entirely composed and it is expected that the printing will be completed and the book bound within two months. Insha-Allah. As soon as it is out of the press, I shall send you a few copies, and I am sure that you will like it. You know well that I am not given to boasting; but this time I am convinced that I have produced a work, which will show the Qur'an in its proper light and will make it understandable to many readers who were hitherto somewhat confused by the existing translations.

It was very gratifying to read that you intend to invest Rs. 4000 in purchasing copies of this work for distribution to libraries, colleges, etc. As regards your request that the Dar ul-Islam Trust should be appointed distributor of my work in Pakistan, I shall submit this request with my recommendation to the Muslim World League, Mecca, and I hope that they will agree to it. As soon as I receive their answer, I shall let you know the result.

I am not very much surprised that Jamila has not received any answer from Munira. Her behavior with old friends has led me to expect this. As a matter of fact, for some months now I have known that she has spoiled even her relations with Talal! He has complained to me in great distress that she formed an unreasonable hatred of Talal's wife Tanya, which eventually forced them (i.e., Talal and Tanya) to move out of their own house and to stay with friends. According to Talal, Munira does not want to realize that Talal is a married man now, and only wants to boss him and his wife in a most primitive way. Frankly speaking, I cannot understand this psychology any more. After all, Talal is her only child and by ruining her relations with him she is brining unhappiness not only to him but also to herself. But she seems to be so unreasonable that the only hope for the future seems to lie in her temporary separation from Talal and his wife. He has advised her to go to Pakistan for some time, but I very much doubt whether she will accept his—or anybody else's—advice. Of course I am continuing to send her allowance to her, but that is about all that I can do in this matter. Her address is as follows: Mrs. Munira Asad, P.O. Box 1668, Khartoum, Sudan. Perhaps she will react to you if you write to her directly. Try to persuade her to go to Pakistan, where perhaps she could stay with her friend Mrs. Saida (daughter of Shaikh Rahmatullah) in Lahore. As far as I know, Saida has been urging her in the past to live with her.

Talal's address is the same as before; I have not heard from him for some time, but this is nothing unusual.

With all love from Hamida and myself to you
and all members of your dear family,
Yours as always,
Asad

(8)

Pola Hamida to Niaz Ali Khan, 1964

Commugny, (Vaud)
Switzerland.
July 21, 1964

Dearest Chaudhri Sahib,

When Asad left for Morocco two days ago, he made me promise to write to you as soon as possible—a promise which it is pleasure to fulfill. He wanted to write to you himself, but the last few days before his departure were unexpectedly busy, and he was unable to. He will be away about three weeks—which will be more like three months to me. He had been planning to go over a month ago, but about six weeks ago he stepped into a deep, unexpected hole while walking in the evening, and broke two metatarsal bones on his foot. It has taken a long time for him to recover, but now he can walk about with a slight limp without getting too tired. Otherwise, his health is good—as is mine and I hope the change of place and climate will give him some well-deserved rest. He had been working without pause for many months preparing and seeing his book through the press. It has already been printed and is now being bound; we are promised the ready copies by the end of August. Of course we shall send you several by air, one of which you will kindly present to President Ayub on Asad's behalf, I hope.

Two days before Asad's departure, when it was impossible to postpone it once again, we had a sudden phone-call from Talal in London. He proposed to visit us for a few days starting the 20th, on his way back to the Sudan, but decided against it in view of his father's departure the day before. Apparently his wife is staying on in London for a month or so longer, and will then join him in Khartoum. His mother is apparently still there, and we shall see what happens on his return. We have told Talal that you have written to his mother and received no answer, more than once, and he has promised to write to you himself immediately. I cannot tell you how good you have been to all of us, taking an interest in Talal and his mother as if they were your own family—which, in a sense, they are—and Asad and I, at least, appreciate your goodness of heart more than we can express. May God bless you always?

I'm felling very lazy and the heat here for the past two weeks has been extremely high—not quite like Pakistan but pretty bad. I have deliberately left myself a number of tasks to accomplish during Asad's absence, to make the lonely time pass more quickly, but have not yet got started.

We shall write you very soon after his return from Morocco. If all goes well and he finds that country agreeable and inexpensive, we are thinking of

shifting there in the autumn. Another long winter in Switzerland will make us both entirely rheumatic, and in the long as well as short run, this affects Asad's work, which is the foremost thing in both our lives, as it should be.

And now I shall close, sending you my and Asad's love. We never forget you and always pray for your health and happiness.

With loves,
Yours most affectionately,
Hamida



(9)

Pola Hamida to Niaz Ali Khan, 1970

Villa Asadiyaa,
Jamaa al-Mokra,
Tangier, Morocco
August 14, 1970

Dearest Chaudhri Sahib,

It is such a long time since either of us has written, but Asad and I are always thinking about you, in spite of our silence. I, who used to be the letter writer of the family, have become very bad in this respect over the last few years. So much has happened, and yet so little, and time passes...

At the moment Asad is away in Algeria attending an Islamic seminar at the invitation of the Algerian Government. I am expecting him back tomorrow, insha-Allah. Now he will have seen the whole of the Maghreb, because as you know we visited Tunisia as guests of the President three years ago. From the one letter that he was able to write from Algeria, it is very much like Morocco, except poorer and less beautiful. Morocco is really a very rich country, or would be if the people were prepared to do a little work because, really, they are very lazy. God has been good to them by giving them a fertile land and a moderate climate, and perhaps because of that they are very easy-going. However, if they want to enjoy the dubious pleasures and "benefits" of modern industrial civilization—and they do—they are going to have to work, or go hungry, in the coming years. But in the meantime, they are a pleasant people to live amongst.

And what of Pakistan and the coming election? Do you have any hope for the future? And what about the poor Palestinian!

Actually, I have come to the conclusion that one shouldn't concern oneself

about the fate of nations or even societies, but only about one's family and friends. The world as we know it is apparently heading for the ultimate disaster, and there's nothing to do but water and wonder—and pray.

We would very much like to hear from you. What is the state of your health—and of Aslam's. Talal is well. He visited us here a year ago and we are hoping to be able to meet in Saudi Arabia in September or October, insha-Allah. We will probably be going there in connection with the Rabitah and finishing the matter of publication of Asad's Qur'an translation—and Talal, who is now in the Sudan on some university assignments, has written that he plans to visit his mother from there before returning to England. If all goes well and our timetables cooperate, we will see him again soon. Is there no possibility of meeting you there as well? How we both would love to see your dear face again, but a visit to Pakistan is no within our practical possibilities, I'm afraid.

Do, please, give us the pleasure and do us the honor of writing to us soon. Meanwhile, we (Asad from Algeria, and I from Morocco) send you all our warmest love and wishes.

Yours as ever,
Hamida



Letters 10-12

To Chaudhri Nazir Ahmad Khan (1966, 1980)

Chaurdhri Nazir Ahmad Khan was a Lahore-based lawyer, Minister for Industry, and Attorney General of Pakistan. Author of eight books, including *Commonwealth of Muslim States: a Plea for Pan-Islamism*, for which Asad wrote a "Foreword" (See *Islamic Sciences*, vol. 14, no. 1, p. 31, fn. 16, and letter no. 25, pp. 63-64). From these letters, it appears that Asad and Pola had a familial relationship with Nazir Ahmad Khan's family.

(10)

"Al-Asadiyya"
Jamaa al-Mokra,
TANGIER, Morocco.
July 14, 1966

My dear Chaudhri Sahib,

Many thanks for your letter of June 26th. I am extremely sorry that you

have apparently not received several of my letters. Nevertheless, I am not surprised because other friends in Pakistan, particularly Chaudhri Niaz Ali Khan, have made the same complaint. It seems that the postal connection between Morocco and Pakistan is particularly bad because our friends in the Middle East and in Europe seem to be receiving all our letters. I should therefore like to make it clear that although I have always been a very lazy correspondent, I have not neglected you.

Regarding your plan to write a book “Towards a Commonwealth of Muslim States”, I have no doubt that it would be very worthwhile, especially at this juncture. I have also no doubt that you are fully able to do it if you put your mind to it. It goes without saying that I shall be only too glad to write a foreword to it, especially since the subject of your work has been a shared interest between us for so many years.

Is there any chance of your and Begum Sahiba’s coming to this part of the world within the foreseeable future? If so, it would give Hamida and me great happiness.

Kindly convey our best regards to Begum Sahiba.

With affectionate regards and wishes as well to you from us both,

Yours as always,
Muhammad Asad



(11)

“Al-Asadiyya”
Jamaa al-Mokra,
TANGIER, Morocco.
August 21, 1966

My dear Begum Hamida and Chaudhri Sahib,

I don’t know whether this will find you in the hills or in Lahore, but I do not want to lose time in writing to you, on my own behalf as well as Asad’s. It is a very hot Sunday afternoon, good only for writing letters, and I thought that if I leave it to him, he will certainly procrastinate, not from lack of thought but because he is so frightfully absorbed in his work on his Qur’an translation, working the whole day long, that in the evening he is too exhausted to write to anyone. While he is in such a train of “inspiration”, on the other hand, I don’t like to act as his conscience vis-à-vis letters. Therefore, I shall read this out to him before I mail it and perhaps he shall affix his name to it together with mine.

I am afraid you are at present under a terrible strain because of your nephew’s serious illness. Is there any hope for him at all? That is, besides faith in God, to whom we shall both pray for his recovery. I know how you are

feeling. My favorite sister, who was just over forty and apparently healthy, died last year, and frankly I still haven't gotten over it. One doesn't. The best one can do is accept with resignation and believe that there must be a reason.

It must be terribly hot now in Lahore. Even here in Tangier we are having an unusually hot summer, but of course nights are never hot. One can rarely sleep without at least a light blanket, except during these hot August nights. New York, for example, is much hotter in summer. I wonder if you have ever been here; I have the impression that you have not—yet. We are both looking forward to your visiting with us and we have a room and bath at your disposal—that and a great deal of affection. Let's hope that God wills it that we meet soon.

Meantime, we must be in touch with one another. One has so many acquaintances and so few real friends in life that they must be cherished.

With warmest regards and wishes from both of us,

Yours as always,

Hamida

And all the best from we as well,

Asad

P.S. You might be interested to know that Asad's son, Talal, and his wife are still in Khartoum (he has been teaching in the University there for the past few years), but will be returning, more or less permanently, to England at the end of the term. His mother is again in Saudi Arabia. She tried living with Talal and his wife in Khartoum for some time, but apparently it didn't work and after one or two preliminary visits to Saudi Arabia, she decided to return there to live with her family. Since she didn't want to go to Pakistan, it is probably the best for her. We certainly hope so, and Talal has written that he plans to visit her from time to time. As is often the case, the two women—both “strong” ones—could not co-exist and apparently Talal is happy with his wife, so... May God help them all.

PHA



(12)

Pola Hamida to Hamida, the wife of Chaurdhri Nazir Ahmad Khan

Villa Asadiyya,
La Montagne,
Tangier, Morocco.

August 31, 1980

My dear sister Hamida,

We are both thinking of you deeply during these months of fresh sorrow—and we do realize how sorrowful they are for you, in particular, since we were witness to the many years of happiness and deep companionship you shared with Chaudhri Sahib, whom we all loved so much. But, as you have said, we must all depart this earth sooner or later, and his was a good end after an exemplary life. But we shall miss him very much, and it is good to hear from you in his stead. One has so very few real friends in this world and Chaudhri Sahib was a really loyal one to us. Of course, we pray for his soul and for you to have patience in adversity, which we know that you have.

A few days ago, Asad also received a letter from Brigadier Muhammad Afzal Khan, inquiring on your behalf about the address of Mr. Omar Baha al-Amiri, an old friend of both your husband's and mine. As a matter of fact, he has been living for many years in Morocco. His address is:

Prof. Omar Baha al-Amiri,
5 rue Ajaccio,
Rabat, Morocco

And please convey to Brigadier Afzal Khan my husband's best regards and thanks for his remembering him. If anything occurs to him in connection with Al-Ahibba, he will certainly be glad to be of help.

Do please keep in touch with us. It is a pity that you never managed to come out to visit us here. Pakistan is so very far away, but not in our hearts.

With warmest love to you from both of us,

Yours,
Hamida



Letters 13-16

To Nasim Hasan, Advocate, 1982, 1983

(13)

Villa Asadiyya,
La Montagne,
Tangier, Morocco.
October 11, 1982

Mr. Nasim Hasan,
Senior Advocate,
Al-Hasan 81,

Shadman 2,
LAHORE

My dear Nasim Hasan,

Many, many thanks for your telegram. Although I never doubted for a minute that you would respond to my request for help, I am deeply grateful for your prompt, most efficient reaction. May God bless you!

Enclosed is a general power of attorney. The primary signatory is my wife, who—as I mentioned in my previous letter—holds the copyright of all my books, not only as regards the English-language editions but also all foreign rights (translations, excerpts, etc.). We are living exclusively on the income derived from my writings, and this is the only “insurance” which I can leave to her. I am now 82 years old and we have not been able to accumulate any savings.

I am also enclosing the jacket of the pirated edition of “The Road to Mecca” which was sent to me by a well-wisher in Pakistan.

Hoping that this letter finds you and yours in good health and spirits, both of us send you our most affectionate regards.

Yours as ever,
Muhammad Asad



(14)

Al-Asadiyya,
La Montagne,
Tangier (Morocco).
January 9, 1983

Mr. Nasim Hasan,
Senoir Advocate,
Al-Hasan 81,
Shadman 2,
LAHORE, Pakistan.

Dear Nasim Hasan,

Please accept our deeply heartfelt thanks for all your endeavours on our behalf. My wife and I fully agree, of course, to all the arrangements, which you have made. But the most important thing is the question of your health—we had no idea that you were ill. Would you please let us know how you are now, and whether your ill health was serious? It goes without saying that both of us

are very much concerned about the health of our best friend in Pakistan, and we pray to God that He may restore you to full health.

As regards the compensation payment, which you have accepted on our behalf, it is most satisfactory, although our main object has been to stop the piracy and not to make money. Also, your suggestion that the 375 remaining copies of the pirated “Road to Mecca” should be sold to any bookseller or publisher of your choice is welcome. If all the books are taken over in bulk, we shall gladly accord to him a discount of 50% on the sales price stipulated by the pirates. The resulting amount may please be remitted together with the Rs. 15,000 already paid by Islamic book Service, to our account in Gibraltar: in Pound Sterling or US dollars):

A/C 38925067

Account of Dar al-Andalus Limited

Barclays Bank International Ltd.

84/90 Main Street,

GIBRALTAR

The costs of replacement of the two pages as well as the dust jacket should, of course, be deducted from this amount. The publishers’ identification should be: Dar AL-ANDALUS LIMITED, Gibraltar. I am enclosing the text of the verso of the title page, which should be used in the replacement.

A further deduction should be made for all the expenses which you have incurred on our behalf—not to speak of the time which you have spent in this matter. I am deeply touched by your refusal to accept any remuneration for all that you have done and are doing, but at least you should not be obliged to spend a single rupee of your own in this connection.

The copy given to Mr. Sadiq Quraishi should, of course, be regarded as a gift copy. And please do thank him and all our other friends for their sympathetic assistance.

Kindly keep positives of the book with you until we decide whether or not a further edition will be feasible or necessary.

I am also enclosing a copy of my last letter to Simon & Schuster. You may please hand it over to Mr. Ghulam Mohyuddin so that he may recover the \$100 paid by him to Simon & Schuster.

Once again, with our gratitude, our prayers for your health
and the warmest regards from both of us,

Yours as always,

Muhammad Asad.



(15)

Villa Asadiyya,
La Montagne,
Tangier, Morocco.
May 2, 1983

Mr. Nasim Hasan,
Senior Advocate,
Supreme Court of Pakistan,
Al-Hasan 81, Shadman 11,
LAHORE, Pakistan

My dear Nasim Hasan,

First of all, I would like to know what is the state of your health at present. I have been informed that you have, or had, not been well for some time, but you have never given me any indication as to the cause. Please do write. I am praying to God that He may restore you to full health and keep you with us for many, many years.

As for myself, I will be—insha-Allah—83 years old in July. In spite of my broken and twice repaired hipbone, I am in extraordinarily good health for my age. God has been good to me.

Could you let me know what has happened to the amount paid by Islamic Book Service as well as by the new distributor of the pirated “Road to Mecca”? I have heard nothing from my bankers in Gibraltar in this respect. If the money has not yet been remitted, I shall be most grateful if it is remitted as soon as possible to:

A/C 38925067
Account of Dar al-Andalus Limited
Barclays Bank International Limited
84/90 Main Street
GIBRALTAR

You may be aware of the “campaign” which our friend Sadiq Quraishi has launched through his newspaper articles to get me to come back to Pakistan. God knows I would have responded to it only a few years ago, but in the meantime a house has been purchased in Portugal for me and my wife

by an extremely generous and dear Malaysian friend, and I cannot at this stage reject such a gift from God through him. The place is really beautiful and we are hoping that, God willing, I will be able to produce more writings there in peace and quiet. As I have written to Mr. Sadiq Quraishi, it is simply impossible for me at this stage to return to Pakistan for good, although I have the intention, if God wills it, to visit my country next year. I cannot describe the contents of the many scores of letters, which I have been and am receiving from unknown friends in Pakistan, asking me to come home and help republic of Pakistan. But, frankly speaking, Pakistan has been doing without me for more than three decades, so that I cannot understand why they should not be able to do without me now! But, still, I am deeply touched.

Please do write to us about your health and general well being. You are among my oldest friends left in Pakistan, although, judging by the mail, which I am receiving, I have many new ones!

With warm affection and regards from both of us,

Yours,

Muhammad Asad



(16)

Villa Asadiyya,
La Montagne,
Tangier, Morocco
October 11, 1982

I, the undersigned, Managing Director of the publishing company DAR AL-ANDALUS LIMITED, 3 Library Ramp, Gibraltar, and sole owner of the copyright of all books by Muhammad Asad, hereby give full power of attorney to Mr. Nasim Hasan, Senior Advocate, High Court, Lahore, to institute and pursue any civil and criminal cases on behalf of myself and of Dar al-Andalus Limited, as well as to act for and on behalf of myself and of the aforesaid company in any way which he considers necessary.

(Mrs.) Pola Hamida Asad
Managing Director,
Dar al- Andalus Limited

I, the undersigned, associate myself fully and unreservedly with the above grant of general power of attorney to Mr. Nasim Hasan.

Muhammad Asad



Letter 17

To Simon & Schuster, New York, 1982, 1983

Villa Asadiyya,
La Montagne,
Tangier, Morocco.
December 28, 1982

Ms. Marcella Berger,
Vice President,
Director of Foreign Rights,
Simon & Schuster Building,
1230 Avenue of the Americas,
New York, N.Y. 10020

Dear Ms. Berger,

To my great surprise I have received today your “royalty account” with a pay order for \$ 100.

As you must be aware from our earlier correspondence, my agreement with Simon & Schuster has been terminated a long time ago and I have no “royalty” or any other account with you. I am therefore returning enclosed any agreements on my behalf, as I have already stated.

Would you kindly acknowledge receipt of this letter as well as that of December 10, 1982, to which I have received no reply?

Yours truly,
Muhammad Asad.
Enc. Pay order



Letters 18-22

To Muhammad Sadiq Quraishi (1982, 1983, 1992)

Muhammad Sadiq Quraishi (1917-1996) was editor of a monthly journal *Jadeed Zara'at*. During 1981-1983 he used to write an im-

pressionistic column, “Silāni ki Diary”, in the *Nawa-i Waqt* Magazine. He “discovered” Asad around 1981 and corresponded with him. He also wrote letters to people who were well acquainted with Asad. When he found a published pirated edition of *The Road to Mecca*, he informed Asad and the publisher paid a royalty to Asad and stopped further printing of the book. Asad visited Pakistan during 1983 when he was invited by the Ansari Commission. Sadiq Quraishi interviewed him; the interview was published in the *Nawa-i Waqt* Magazine. Asad’s letters shed light on a turbulent period of his life when false allegations were made against him. Pola Hamida, on the other hand, is abrupt with the “curious journalist”, but after her impatient tone in the first paragraph, she tells him a lot more than one would have expected from her tone.

(18)

“Al-Asadiyya”
La Montagne,
TANGIER, Morocco.
September 23, 1982

Mr. M. Sadiq Quraishi,
28-B, New Muslim Town,
Lahore, Pakistan

My dear brother,

Many thanks for your letter of September 5 and the enclosed Photostat of my talks entitled “Calling all Muslims”.

As regards your specific questions about the past, I would like to inform you that:

With reference to my discussions with the Government of Saudi Arabia, in 1951, I cannot tell you anything at present—for not only have I not kept any record or documents relating to that mission, but also I would not like to speak about matters which might still be regarded as “official secret”, although there is no particular reason for regarding them as such. I can only say that the then Foreign Minister and Crown Prince (later King) Faysal, who was an old and beloved friend already at that time and remained so until his tragic death, had a great love for Pakistan; it was not difficult, therefore, to remove whatever “misunderstandings” may have existed.

Regarding the “smear campaign” against me when I left the Pakistan Foreign Service in 1952—I do know the names of a few of the people responsible for it, but I do not want a vengeful controversy, the more so as some of the persons concerned are still alive, whereas others are dead and cannot speak for themselves. But I can mention a few of the people who came

to my defense when I was accused of having “abandoned Islam” (while I was still in New York, writing “The Road to Mecca” and unable to defend myself from such a distance). One person who steadfastly supported me and my reputation was the late Maulana Abu’l-Ala Maududi, although I was never one of his Jama‘at nor did he subscribe to all of my views. However, intellectual differences aside, I gladly acknowledge that he was a most honorable man and had a strong sense of justice. Another of my defenders—also deceased in the meantime—was Dr. Abdul Wahhab Azzam, then Ambassador to Pakistan, who was one of my closest friends until his death. When he heard of my alleged “apostasy”, he remarked that he knew me too well to believe than “an intelligent man like Asad would be so idiotic as to forsake the religion of Islam for the sake of a “return” to Judaism! And how right he was! And then there were, of course, other good friends—all now in Paradise, insha-Allah—such as Mumtaz Hasan, Chaudhri Nazir Ahmad among others, among them the then-Editor of “Nawa-i-Waqt”.

Contrary to what I have heard from several fellow-Pakistanis, I have not given up my Pakistani citizenship and never for a moment have contemplated doing so. Pakistan is and will always remain my country, and I love it today as much as before, although many things that have happened there make one sad. But generally speaking, this relates to other Muslim countries as well, not to speak of the entire world.

Enclosed I am sending you copies of (1) an article about me which appeared in the first issue of the magazine “Arabia” and (2) Some clarifications by me in the following issue. By the way, the publishers of “Arabia”, the Islamic Press Agency, are also the distributors for Dar al-Andalus Limited, the publishers of my books. The exact address has been given in my letter to you of August 6.

And, speaking of my books, I have a request to make of you. I have very recently been informed that the original English language edition of “The Road to Mecca” is being or has been already stolen outright by a “publisher” in Lahore, namely: Islamic book Service, 40-A Urdu Bazar, Lahore. I have even received the printed jacket of this pirated edition and have, of course, immediately written to a lawyer friend, Mr. Nasim Hasan, to start legal proceedings on my behalf against the thieves. The only authorized publisher is Dar al-Andalus Limited, Gibraltar, and the copyright-holder of all my books is my wife. I may mention, by the way, that both of us are living exclusively from revenues deriving from the sale of my books and, consequently, a theft like the above-mentioned one is a very grave blow to us. All my books are in print and are readily available.

Would it be possible for you to do something about this by spreading the news of this outright theft through your newspaper and your many friends? Also, would you please contact Nasim Hasan, whom you undoubtedly know, and take his advice in this matter? My wife and I will be grateful beyond words

if you can help us to stop this theft.

It is wonderful to be in touch with a friend like you. Almost all of my older friends and contemporaries in Pakistan have passed away!

With the best wishes from my wife and myself to you and your family for a happy 'Id al-Adha, I remain,

Yours as always,
Muhammad Asad

P.S. As far as I know, my Qur'an translation and commentary has not been banned in Saudi Arabia; many of my friends there have copies. This may be, again, one of the rumours meant to blacken my name and my work.

Muhammad Asad



(19)

Al-Asadiyya,
La Montagne,
TANGIER, Morocco
December 10, 1982

Mr. M. Sadiq Quraishi,
Sadiq House,
28-B, New Muslim Town,
Lahore, Pakistan

My dear brother,

Subsequent to your articles about me in "Nawa-i-Waqt", I have received innumerable letters from friends and well-wishers in Pakistan. It is impossible for me to answer all these letters individually, but I shall be grateful to you if you will express, on my behalf, my thanks to all those brothers and sisters in Pakistan who have written to me in so warm and beautiful a way. I am deeply touched by these expressions of love, and I wish to convey to them my gratitude for thus remembering me. My heart is always with them, our faith and our country, and as long as God gives me life, I shall never cease to work for our common cause.

Yours brotherly,
Muhammad Asad

P.S. kindly translate this letter into Urdu and reproduce it in "Nawa-i-Waqt".
Many thanks and regards.

Muhammad Asad



(20)

Al-Asadiyya
La Montagne,
TANGIER, Morocco
February 28, 1983

Mr. Sadiq Quraishi,
28-B New Muslim Town,
Lahore, Pakistan

My dear brother Sadiq Quraishi,

I was very pleased to receive your letter of February 16 enclosing the latest article on poor me. I am deeply touched by your interest and appreciation of my efforts. The result of your series of articles has been apparently tremendous. Almost daily I am receiving letters from mostly young people in Pakistan, often students, expressing great love and gratitude for my work. Some of these letters have brought my wife to tears because in almost every case the writer is in distress and searching for guidance, which apparently is not available to him through the conventional “possessors of wisdom”.

I want to thank you for all that you have done for me and I hope and pray that one day God will allow me to meet you in person.

Mr. Nasim Hasan has already informed me of his—and your—success with the pirate publishers. Many, many thanks once again. It was really not a matter of money but of principle, and for a change principle has won.

With very warm regards from my wife Hamida and myself to you and yours, I am,

Yours very sincerely,
Muhammad Asad



(21)

Villa Asadiyya
La Montagne,
TANGIER, Morocco
May 2, 1983

Mr. Sadiq Quraishi,
Sadiq House,
28-B New Muslim Town,
Lahore, Pakistan

My dear brother,

Both before and since I last wrote to you I have been literally deluged by letters from innumerable, to me unknown, of my brothers and sisters in Pakistan begging me to come back and settle there, specifically Abbottabad, and not to settle in Portugal. This “campaign” has obviously been “orchestrate-d” by you and I do appreciate the thought that lies behind it. However, it is unfortunately too late for me to establish my permanent residence once again in Pakistan, although only a few years ago I would have been able and extremely willing to do so. In the meantime, a most generous and very beloved friend from Malaysia has purchased a house for me and my wife in Portugal for the express purpose of allowing me to sit down in peace and devote the rest of my life to my Islamic writings. This plan cannot be changed now. It would be churlish, indeed, to reject that most generous gift, quite apart from the fact that my wife and I have already made the necessary preparations for our final shift to Portugal. People ask me, “Why Portugal”? The answer is very simple: like Spain, Portugal has many historical associations with Islam and a Muslim feels at home there. Apart from this, the people are extremely kind and gentle, and have neither racial nor religious prejudices. This creates a climate in which, with God’s help, I can suitably work with concentration, insha-Allah. In addition, the house bought for us has been selected with a view to its position; it is in the country and yet close to the capital, Lisbon, and therefore in touch with the larger world.

In a number of the letters, which I have received, people have asked me why I have “forsaken” Pakistan. My answer is that I have never forsaken Pakistan, but for almost thirty years the successive Government and the so-called “elite” of the country have completely ignored my existence, to the extent that I have not even once been invited to attend a single conference or seminar on Islamic subjects. This is fantastic in view of the fact that during all these years I have been frequently invited to conferences, etc. In Europe and America as well as in many Muslim countries. Of course I do not bear a “grudge” of any kind against the various government of the past nor certainly

against my people, but the fact remains that, contrary to what people write me—“Pakistan needs you”—it has apparently not needed me for over thirty years, and I have been in contact with only a handful of old personal friends, some of whom have since died.

I have already made it clear to you that it is absolutely impossible for me to answer all the individual letters, which contain most beautiful and sincere sentiments and even offers of land. Therefore, I would repeat my request that you thank your readers in my name, communicating to them that my heart is and always will be in Pakistan. It is simply too late for me to go back for good. On the other hand, if God wills it I will try to visit Pakistan next year. I am really touched beyond words by the many, many letters, which show that, thanks to you, I am not completely forgotten. May God bless you.

Believe me, my dear brother, I am not an arrogant man and that I bear no grudge even against those people who have separated me physically from Pakistan. Very few people realize how I was treated at the time of my removal from the Pakistan Foreign Service, but it was an extraordinarily bitter experience. But that was long ago, and since God has been good to me.

Once again, my thanks go to you, who have “re-instated” me as a real person in my country.

With warm personal regards from my wife and myself, I remain,

Yours,
Muhammad Asad



(22)

Pola Hamidan to Muhammad Sadiq Quraishi

Rancho de la Luz,
Buzon No. 17,
MIJAS (Malaga)
SPAIN
June 20, 1992

Mr. M. Sadiq Quraishi,
28.B, New Muslim Town,
Lahore, Pakistan

Dear Mr. Quraishi,

I am answering your letter of May 9 only because you have said that you were an old friend of Muhammad Asad. I cannot tell you about “his last days,

last writings, illness and death”; this is a most insensitive request. After all, I was his constant companion for almost forty years and my loss is very great; it is too painful for me to write these details at the request of a curious journalist—even if you were really an old friend...

All the details of Muhammad Asad’s great and long life will be available in the second book of memories—the first being his world-famous “Road to Mecca”. I have completed these memoirs, which cover the period from 1932, when he first arrived in the Indian sub-Continent, until his death in Spain in 1992. What he had written himself covers the period from 1932 to 1952, when he was “eased out” of the Pakistan Foreign Service and thus out of Pakistan itself—and the year when he met and married me in New York. The period from 1952 to 1992 has been written entirely by me and will contain much information, which he would not have been able to write himself anyway—he was too modest. I hope that you will like it. It has already gone to my printers in England and should be available in a few months’ time. It will cause quite a stir in Pakistan—the Pakistan which he loved so much and so sadly betrayed his love.

I myself plan to go to Pakistan in the spring of 1993 and I would be happy to make your acquaintance there. I will be in Pakistan for about a month, staying with friends in Karachi—H.E. Birjis Hassan Khan and his wife; and in Islamabad with Nawabzada and Bagum Malik Muhammad Asad Khan, who are very close friends of mine. If you are able to call on me in either of these two cities I shall, I repeat, be happy to make your acquaintance. But I am wondering how, if you were such a good friend of my husband’s, I did not meet you when we both were in Lahore in 1959, when my late husband was “eased out” of Pakistan for the last time. He always remained a Pakistani citizen—literally the first Pakistani citizen to the end of his days, when it was not easy to travel about on a Pakistani passport, as you may know. The Saudi Arabian royal family who buried him offered him full citizenship and passport—but it was not to be. As you probably know, Pakistan was the country of his head, but Arabia the country of his heart; he never really left it, and I can understand why because I also consider Saudi Arabia, with its great royal family, the country of my heart as well.

Yours sincerely,
Pola Hamida Asad