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***Abdur Rahim Khan Corner***

**Late Abdur Rahim Khan: A personal narrative**

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I was informed by Prof. Mumtaz Anwar on phone about the sad demise of our mutual friend late Abdur Rahim Khan, the ex-University Librarian of the University of the Punjab. It is with great grief that I am writing this message of condolence.

I have known Mr. Abdur Rahim Khan for over fifty years. My first visit to him was in 1951. At that time, I was a student of the Certificate in Librarianship class and he was an Assistant Registrar in the University. This training course that had begun in 1915 remained suspended for a few years after the partition of India. It was revived in the autumn of 1950.

The classes were held in building of the Panjab University Library (old campus now). There was no full-time faculty and part-time teachers comprised the following:

1. Dr. Syed Mohammad Abdullah, Oriental College
2. Khwaja Nur Elahi, Punjab Public Library
3. Altaf Shaukat, Hailey College of Commerce
4. Three library staff members who conducted practical classes in Classification, Cataloging, and Reference Service.

Dr. Syed Abdullah was also the Honorary Librarian of the Panjab University Library and acted as in-charge of the training class. It may be noted that Dr. Syed Abdullah had himself passed the Certificate course in 1934 and worked as Oriental Assistant in the Panjab University Library before his appointment as a faculty member in the Oriental College. He was appointed as the Honorary Librarian in 1948 because most of the senior library staff, including S. S. Saith, the University Librarian, had left for India in 1947. Dr. Abdullah taught us Theory of Classification.

Towards the end of the academic session (1950-51), the students of the class (probably 15 in numbers) felt that some of the teachers had not fully covered their subjects. They pondered over the issue for some days and finally decided to approach the university officials for extending the dates of their examination. A group of 4/5 students, including myself, was formed to represent the class. We were advised to meet two assistant registrars - Abdur Rahim Khan and Muhammed Afzal (later Dr. and Professor and subsequently the Federal Minister of Education). Their offices were located in the compound of the Panjab University Library. Without any difficulty the group was able to meet them and explained the reason for their visit. They were quite understanding and sympathetic to our demand but did not agree to extend the dates of examination. They explained that the arrangements for the examination had already been finalized and at that stage it could not be delayed. I must say that I was very much impressed by their politeness and soft attitude towards us.

Subsequently, we appeared in the examination on the dates which had been announced by the university. As far as I remember all of the students passed. Later on, I paid frequent visits to the Panjab University Library. During one of these visits, I heard the news that the former Assistant Registrar, Abdur Rahim Khan, had been selected for the post of the University Librarian in the grade of a Reader (later changed to Associate Professor). He received the Colombo Plan scholarship to go to Canada for higher

studies in Library Science. Abdur Rahim Khan, after his return from Canada, was heading the Panjab University Library.

For about a decade, I was out of Pakistan. Hence I could not be part of the activities of the fast growing profession in the country. I returned from England in early 1962 and joined the Peshawar University Library as Assistant Librarian. I got many opportunities to visit Lahore. During one of these visits I went to meet him. His office was in the same place where I had met him in 1951 with a request for postponement of the examination. I went in and introduced myself. He received me very warmly and gave me the feeling as if we had been friends for years. Without observing any formality, he invited me to share the food which had been brought from his residence. Later on, I met him a number of times and he always received me with the same warmth.

After his retirement from the University of the Punjab, he received a contractual appointment to work in the Central Library of King Abdul Aziz University in Jeddah. As I was working in the Umm al-Qura' University Library in Makkah I was able to meet him occasionally. I very much enjoyed his pleasant company and hospitality. While in Jeddah, he became a victim of diabetes. In stead of depending on medicine, he was able to control his disease by observing strict diet and regular exercise. He was used to have a walk of 5/6 miles daily in the morning. Only two years ago, Prof. Mumtaz in a note about senior leaders, wrote that "Perhaps the eldest among them is Mr. Abdur Rahim Khan, now at 90 and in good health" (*Pakistan Library & Information Science Journal*, 40(4), 2009, 4).

Now, when Abdur Rahim Khan is not with us, we can always pray to Almighty Allah to bless him in his eternal life.