

## ***Tribute to Uncle Abdulrasul Bhalloo (Dachoo) 25.12.1937 – 3 June 2020***

Two things Uncle Dachoo will always be remembered will be his passion for the game of Cricket and his recitation of marthias and Nawhas for Imam Hussain(AS) and the Ahlul Bayt(AS). He always encouraged and promoted young men to play the game of Cricket. He nurtured the untapped talent of many who all remain indebted to him. The moment you say Dachoo and the guy will tell you he taught me how to play Cricket.

After he had passed his peak as a Cricketer and a sportsman, Uncle Dachoo used to organise friendly Cricket games on Sundays and public holidays at the Dar-e-Salaam Kinondoni Cricket ground. It was in 1986, that Uncle Dachoo had a conversation with my grandfather Marhum Abbas Tejani about the friendly games he was arranging and he was planning one for 5th February which is CCM day in Tanzania and a public holiday. My grandfather said and that is my grandson's birthday. Uncle Dachoo said well, tell the young man he is playing in my team. He needs to put on his whites and come to my house. I will take care of the rest. It so happened that there was one additional match before that and I remember how nervous I was with my first experience of playing with the actual Cricket ball. Prior to that, it was cricket with a tennis ball in school, street cricket or at the most catching practice during the Union Sports Club bi-weekly nets. Sometimes when we were early at the nets, we occasionally managed to bowl for a few minutes until the full practice session commenced.

Uncle Dachoo encouraged so many youngsters and gave us the opportunity to play the game and enjoy it at the same time. He would arrange friendly games whenever there was a Cricket ground free on Sundays and on Public holidays. The opposition on most occasions would be Mighty Cricket Club which comprised of the Memon community. The whole purpose of organising the Friendly games was to promote the youngsters who would normally not get a chance to play in any of the teams due to their inexperience. Due to the team being young it was agreed that his side would always Bat first. Him, and Marhum Hussein Dato would open the innings and someone more senior to bat at number three. So the typical scoreboard would read 70 for two and then the youngsters would start coming in. Not surprisingly soon the whole team would be bowled out for 80. When asked what happened, someone jokingly commented it was like "Tum Jawo mein Aata Huun". "You go and I will join you soon". This was when all the wickets tumbled as we were all young and didn't manage to bat for long.

However, Uncle Dachoo never complained of the performance. He would tell us to learn from our mistakes and there is always a next time. He gave us many opportunities to build our confidence. He also added humour to the game and his phrases still ring in our ears until today. His favourite stroke was the cover drive off his back foot. Once he hit the ball through the covers and the person batting opposite came running and shouting to him to run. He responded confidently by stopping him and saying "Stay where you are, that is a bloody boundary". On another occasion when we couldn't get wickets, he would say "Sasa hivi tam tupia paa ratal na tamtoa" It is difficult to translate it but those who heard him knew what he meant that I will flight my leg spinner and get his wicket. Lo and behold he did get the wicket though it meant buying it by suffering being hit

initially. He would then joke with us when he was ready to bat before us. He would ask me “Tejani, utawahi? Ntazi tafuna zote” Will you make it? I will bat and finish all the overs. Another phrase we fondly remember is his strategy of setting up the batting line up. “One fast, one slow” When we asked him what he meant, he said due to our young team, one batsman will be sent who scores fast and one who is slow and stays at the wicket.

On 5th February matches for the next few years, Tea was organised by my Dad. Then during tea time would come the embarrassing moment when Uncle Dachoo would ask everyone to sing Happy Birthday for me. In 1992 he changed the normal English Happy Birthday to the famous “Baar Baar din ye Aaye, Tum Jiyo Hazaaro Saal .....

He was also a very generous man. Whenever, anyone of us got the highest score in the game, took a number of wickets or catches, he would reward us with cash gifts. I noticed it didn't have to be when he was playing. Even when he was not playing, if someone played well, he would be the first to reward him. Additionally, he with the help of some well-wishers would pay for the cost of organising the Cricket matches, Lunch and Tea. Not only on the Cricket field but off the field as well, he was always generous in giving cash gifts to anybody he met who had achieved some milestone in their life or recited a marthia/Nawha well etc.

After I migrated to the UK, I always wished to spend some quality time with him. Two such occasions came as a surprise to me and when I think about it I cherish every moment. I was in Makkah for Hajj in 2017 and during lunch time, I suddenly saw Uncle Dachoo joining us for Lunch. He was with the Dar-es-Salaam group in the same building as us. Whenever I met him after a long time, he would ask me two questions. Are you still playing Cricket? And secondly, have you heard my latest Nawha? In Makkah he also took the opportunity to recite Nawhas during the wafat of the 5th Imam(AS) and on many other occasions.

The last meeting I had with him was in Orlando, USA. He had just celebrated his 82nd birthday on Christmas Day, and we met at the Al Hayy Mosque on new year's eve(31st December 2019) coinciding with the Wiladat of Bibi Zainab (AS). I was attending the wedding of my cousins and couldn't have asked for a better gift than meeting him. He saw my son Muhammad Jawad for the first time and as generous as always he immediately pulled out a 20 Dollar bill from his pocket and gave it to him. He said to me make sure he becomes a Cricketer. His generosity did not have any boundaries whether he was in Tanzania or outside Tanzania.



Besides Cricket, he never missed an opportunity to recite Nawhas of Imam Hussein (AS). When Matam started he would be every ready swinging his arms high beating his chest without any hesitation replying to the chorus or reciting himself. At the same time he encouraged all to join him, especially the young ones telling them not to feel shy. One of his favourite Nawhas was “Raaj Dulara Zahra Ka, Zakhmi he aur pyasa he”. He would recite different Nawhas but he must include Raaj Dulara during his turn. He left a legacy in first training his son Hozaiph and then his talented grandson Ejaz to recite Marthias and Nawhas. I am sure he will be reaping the benefits of it in his grave and in the hereafter.

He will be dearly missed by one and all. Whilst we would have loved him to be around for long, we have to surrender to the Will of the Almighty and thank him for giving us a wonderful man like Uncle Dachoo. He loved his Master Hussein (AS) for whom he spent his whole life reciting eulogies. I am sure when he meets him he will say to him, “You left this World wounded, I, in my small and humble way, also left this world wounded.”

Lastly, we pray that all his sins are forgiven and that he is granted the highest of positions in Jannah within the vicinity of the 14 Masomeen(AS). Please join me in blessing his soul with a Suratul Fateha and three Suratul Ikhlas.

AL WIDA UNCLE DACHOO.

Sajjad Tejani  
7th June 2020

