PREFACE

We Indians take up an assignment with the blessings of our parents, teachers and elders; on completing it, we again seek their blessings and express our earnest gratitude. I am no exception. However, during the course of my work, I met some people who turned out to be well-wishers, friends and even angels in disguise. From the vantage point of achievement, when I look back nostalgically, I miss many "familiar faces", and reminiscence with Charles Lamb:

How some they have died, and some they have
left me,
And some are taken from me; all are departed;
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

On the other hand, I also cherish those who are by my side, and I thank God Almighty for their companionship. My mother, brother, sister, husband, children and family members gave me all the co-operation and encouragement needed; they couldn't have done more. The irony is that I can't thank them; for how does one thank ones very one? I can just say that my achievement is actually theirs; they deserve the laurels.
I am extremely fortunate that even twenty-five years after my Masters, I have the benediction of two Professors that taught me way back in 1970, and in 1994 brought me from darkness to light. I refer to Professor Azizuddin Tariq and Professor Maqbool Hasan Khan. Professor Azizuddin Tariq, former Chairman, Department of English, was also my Supervisor for M.Phil., and, during the course of my Ph.D., he retired, but inspite of that he continued to give me as much time as before. His guidance, encouragement and co-operation are invaluable. I will not even attempt to express my gratitude because no words are there that can convey my feelings. He has lived upto the adage that a 'guru' is a friend, philosopher and guide. Professor Maqbool Hasan Khan, Chairman, Department of English, gave me unflinching support; he was like a ballast during hours of uncertainty and doubt. I can never forget the help and encouragement extended not only by him but by Afsar Apa also. If one is lucky to have such teachers as Professor Azizuddin Tariq and Professor Maqbool Hasan Khan, one's faith in the profession remains unshaken. They are role models, and I am proud to simply state that I have been their student.

There are some other teachers that I must also mention because on every occasion they have found opportunities to boost my morale. I remember with respect and affection Professor Jafar Zaki, former Chairman, Department of
English, and Ms Shahnaz Hashmi. Professor Zakia Siddiqui, Principal, Women's College, has been a source of strength and inspiration; her faith and confidence have made a world of difference.

In the Slough of Despondency, one of the helping hands was Mrs Najma Akhtar, former Controller of Admissions and Examinations. Her support and encouragement, by word and deed, opened 'magic casements' for me. Words would be a mere apology for my sentiments.

Had it not been for ASRC, Hyderabad and The American Centre, Delhi, I could not have achieved anything. Their cooperation and efficiency have helped me sign off in time. I am obliged and grateful to them. I remain indebted to Mr. Moinuddin Alvi, Blessing Computer Centre, who so patiently and deligently transcribed my scrawl onto the Computer.

An American student of mine once gave me a plaque with the following words inscribed on it:

Thanks is such a little word ______
no bigger than a minute,
But there's a world of meaning and appreciation in it.
On this momentous occasion I extend the same to all the aforementioned "personalities" and "personages" with a simple word coming from the deepest recesses of my heart --- --- THANKS. I hope it will not seem presumptuous to say that I can offer nothing except a prayer for each and everyone ---- May God bless them all with His choicest blessings.

Tennyson rightly said:

Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world,
whose margin fades
Forever and forever when I move.

Completion of Ph.D. is just stepping into the sea of knowledge; its just the beginning. Had my father been in our midst today, he would have quoted Robert Frost:

The woods are lovely, dark and deep;
But I have promises to keep;
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.