Sayed Mujtaba Ali was born in 1904. Though some doubt was raised in some aspects about the year of his birth, now that element of doubt has been removed; ¹ nevertheless, some doubt is still noticed to be present about the date of birth of Alisaheb. Sayed Murtaja, the second elder brother of Alisaheb, wrote:

"সৈয়দ মুজতাবা আলীর জন্ম ১৯০৪ সালের ১৪ ই সেপ্টেম্বর করিমগঞ্জ শহরে।" ²

Apart from that, here and there the 14th September does get a mention in a few occasions, ³ but, on the other hand, it is clearly stated in his research paper entitled ‘THE ORIGIN OF THE KHOJAS AND THEIR RELIGIOUS LIFE TODAY’ conferred upon by the University of Bonn, Germany, that he was born on 13th September, 1904. It is mentioned there in Alisaheb’s own words:

"I was born on the 13th September in 1904 at Karimganj, Sylhet in Bangladesh." ⁴

There is reference of 13th September in his service record also, and moreover, even at the time of his release from the government job under ‘Visva-Bharati’ the very date was accepted as authentic. ⁵ It is the 13th September which was directed at in a profile published in the ‘Des’ after the demise of Alisaheb. ⁶ ‘Samsad Bangali Caritabhidhan’ also declared this very date as his birth-date.

However, Natikhal area in the town of Karimganj belonging to the district of Sylhet of undivided India was the birth-place of Mujtaba Ali. Karimganj
was in the district of Sylhet before partition and upto that time Sylhet was in
the province of Assam; but Karimganj at present belongs to Assam. Alisaheb’s
father Sayed Sikandar Ali used to work in the Department of Registration in
Karimganj and afterwards he was transferred to the headquarters of Sylhet.
His second elder brother Murtaja Ali wrote about the forefathers of
Alisaheb:

“মুজতবা আলীর পূর্বপুরুষ ছিলেন তরকের সৈয়দ। এরা উত্তরের সৈয়দ আহমেদ
মহতুরাকালীর বংশধর! ...এ বংশের খ্যাতি ছিল ধর্মপ্রাণীর জন্য। এদের ছিল না বিশ্বেভর।
শোনা যায় চিন্তাচ্যুত বন্দোবস্তের সময়ে এদের গোষ্ঠীগতি ইরাজ রাজপুরুষের দরবারে ভূমির
জন্য দরখাস্ত দিতে রাজী হননি। মুজতবা আলীর বংশ পরিচয় এইরূপ:

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খান বাহাদুর সৈয়দ সিকাদর আলী (১৭৬৫-১৯৩৯)

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মুজতবা আলীর আন্দার আয়তুল মাহান খারুন (১৮৭৯-১৯৪২) ছিলেন বাহাদুর পরগণার
রাগজভূমি প্রামের প্রতিষ্ঠা জমিদার মোহুনেন চৌধুরীর কন্যা।”

His eldest brother Sayed Mustafa Ali wrote about the family data of
Mujtaba Ali that Alisaheb and his brothers and sisters were nine. First it was
Mustafa, then Murtaja and then follows Mujtaba. Of the sisters, first it was
Habibunnessa, then Hifjunnessa, Najibunnessa, Jebunnessa, and Lutfunnessa re­
spectively. The youngest brother, who was born after three consecutive broth­
ers and five consecutive sisters, died at the age of one or two. Alisaheb was of very tender age at the time of the death of this brother. They then used to live in the bungalow of Mr. Richie (Richie Saheb). Mujtaba Ali scribbled in this regard in his book called ‘Jale-Dāngāy’:

"আমার বয়স তেরো, তখন আমার সবচেয়ে ছোট্ট ভাই বছর দু'মাসে মারা যায়। ভাই সুদর ছেলে ছিল সে। আমার কেলার সময়ে বছর ভালোবাসত। ঐ দু'বছর বয়সে সে আমার সাইকেলের রঙে বয়সে হ্যাবেল আঁকে ধরে থাকত আর আমি বাড়ির লাগে পাক লাগাতুম। মাকে মাছে সে খল-খল করে হেসে উঠত আর মা বারান্দায় দাড়িয়ে ঝুশু হয়ে আমাদের দিকে চাকাতেন কিন্তু মাঝে মাঝে বলতেন, 'থাক, হয়েছে। এখন ওকে তুই নামিয়ে যে।'

একবিন সে চলে গেল।

আমি বছর কষে পেয়েছিলাম।" 9

On the strength of the family tradition, Mujtaba was brought up from his childhood in the atmosphere of education as well as of the cultivation of literature. All the seven except Habibunnesa got scholarship in the L P standard. In the light of that period, it was no mean feat. Of the sisters, first it was Habibunnesa who got married at a very early age of her life and so naturally she was unable to go on with her studies regularly after her marriage, yet she had keen interest in the cultivation of poetry. An anthology of poems named ‘Jibaner Sāthi’ by her was also published. Murtaja and Mujtaba got scholarships from Maulavi Bazar Boys’ School, Hifjunnesa from Maulavi Bazar Girls’ School. Najibunnesa got the scholarship from ‘Zenānā Class’ belonging to one Jitu Mia Saheb’s residence; and moreover, Jebunnesa and Lutfunnesa got scholarships from Kishori Mohan School of Sylhet. Hifjunnesa read upto seventh standard, Najibunnesa up to sixth standard and Jebunnesa and Lutfunnesa read up to seventh standard. So, in such family environment both childhood and adolescence of Mujtaba Ali ticked away.

If we want to know and understand Mujtaba Ali, it is necessary on our
part to keep abreast of contemporary current of events and his family background, side by side. Mujtaba was born in 1904—that period happened to be a transition period of political and social phenomena of greater Bengal. The formation of the provinces of East Bengal and Assam partitioning Bengal during the time of Lord Curzon was indeed a remarkable incident and consequently Dhaka was declared as the Capital of this newly partitioned province. As Mujtaba Ali’s father Sayed Sikandar Ali was an employee under the British Government, so naturally all the impacts of political affairs directly deluged the domestic atmosphere of Alisaheb. Mujtaba’s father had to move especially with his family to different places including the province of Assam under the obligation of transferable job, so, the period of transition between childhood and adolescence of Alisaheb was spent in various environments.

Then the huge waves of Swadesi Movement and Bandemataram dashed the thoughts and consciousness of the people of all classes of entire Bengal, and even it left a remarkable impact on the Muslim community of Bengal leading to the formation of Muslim League in Dhaka in 1906. Simultaneously, constant battle went on in the Turkish battlefield over the Khalipha empire and what was ultimately a prelude to the First world war in 1914. The Khilafat Movement covering the period from 1914 to 1919 brought about a lot of excitements amongst the Indian Muslim community. Subsequently, this course of events heavily swayed the adolescence of Mujtaba.

The formal education life of Mujtaba began in 1908. One of the incidents out of the series of incidents of his early childhood is very noteworthy and what was cited by the two elder brothers of Alisaheb— Sayed Mustafa Ali and Sayed Murtaja Ali respectively, in their memories, and besides this,
here and there the elaborate presentation of this particular incident is found.

Such is the incident in the words of Sayed Mustafa Ali himself:

“তার [মুজত্বার] বয়স যখন পাঁচ—তখন Inspector General of Registration মি. হেজলেট I.C.S. (পরবর্তীকালে স্থায়ী জনতিয় ডি.সি., সুব্রমা উপত্যকার কমিশনার ও বোধয়ে কিছুটাই আসামের চীফ সেক্রেটারী) চাড়াভাজা সাব রেজিষ্ট্রি অফিস পরিদর্শনে আসেন। সেকালের অজ-পাড়া গাঁথায় অবহিত অফিসে হৈ-হে পড়ে গেলো। সাহেব Inspection Form পুরণ করছেন, আর বরাবর ও বাইরে কৌতুকহলী লোক সমাবেশ। সকলের দৃষ্টি ডিড়ে একটি ছোট ছেলে সাহেবের যুব হাতের কর্তন বাংলা গ্রিটিওয়াচে হাত রাখলে। সাহেব অম্যাকিয় সজ্জন।

একটি মহলে খবর নিলেন... ছেলটি কার। বাবা কাছেই ছিলেন—বললেন, ‘আমার পুত্তঁ’ ও পুরুষের আচরণে একটি লজিত হওয়ার ভাব দেখালেন। সাহেব বললেন, Never mind. He will be a genius—কোন চিন্তা করে না—ঢেলটি উত্তরকালে একটি প্রতিভা হবে।’

The student life pertaining to childhood days of Sayed Mujtaba ebbed away in greater sylhet and where he was admitted into an LP School of Sunamganj, and through it began his formal education life. The reflection of many a memory and incident associated with the period of his study in this LP School was cast in his literature. Moreover, his brother Murtaja Ali had cited a small but interesting incident:

“প্রথম বছর বার্ষিক পরীক্ষায় তাকে একটি কঠিন বাণান জিজ্ঞাসা করা হয়। সে বলে

‘আমি বাণান করতে পারব না কিন্তু শব্দটি ভরকে লেখে লিখে দিতে পারব।’ তার এই চটপটে জবাবে পরীক্ষকের চমক লাগে।’

Winding up everything, Mujtaba had to leave Sunamganj in 1915 and thereafter, he was admitted into Maulavi Bazar Government High School in eighth standard. Alisaheb was always fortunate in having good classmates and enjoyed true friendship right from his study life. In the subsequent stage of his life, every atom of his student life had been scattered in every nook and corner of his literature, for example, his ‘Tuni Mem’ (Sayed Mujtaba Ali Racañabali, Vol. III, p.3)—in this story the delineation of the character of an SP named ‘Khan’. That character was portrayed by Alisaheb keeping in his
mind the memory of a classmate of Maulavi Bazar School, whose name was Rafiqur Rahman Khan and who in his latter life became Superintendent of Police. We also get the name of another classmate of Mujtaba from that particular school—Dr. Harendra Kumar Dey Choudhury. On the whole, his student life in Maulavi Bazar School was confined to the period from 1915 to December 1917 and Alisaheb read up to fifth standard in Maulavi Bazar Government School, but for the sake of his father’s transferable job, his name was again enrolled in a new school.

His father Sayed Sikandar Ali in capacity as special Sub-Register was transferred to Sylhet in 1917, and so under unavoidable circumstances, Mujtaba was admitted into Sylhet Government High School in Class VI (Sixth Standard).

Mujtaba’s lifelong friend-cum-classmate Sayful Alam Khan jotted down in this respect:

“সৈয়দ মুক্তত্বা আলীর সঙ্গে আমার প্রথম পরিচয় ১৯১৮ ইংরেজীর জানুয়ারী মাসের প্রথম ভাগে। সে মৌলিক বাজার সরকারী উচ্চ বিদ্যালয়ের পঞ্চম শ্রেণীর বার্ষিক পরীক্ষায় প্রথম হয়ে উত্তীর্ণ হয়। এবং তার বাবা সিলেট বাজার হওয়ায় সমস্ত সিলেট চলে আসেন। আমি তখন সিলেট সরকারী স্কুলের ষষ্ঠ শ্রেণীর সেরা ছাত্র। একসময় সিলেট সরকারী বিদ্যালয়ে অধ্যায় করলে আমাদের মধ্যে প্রাচুর্যক বন্ধুত্঵ স্থাপিত হয়। এবং সে বন্ধুত্ব তার জীবনের শেষ মুহূর্ত পর্যন্ত বজায় থাকে।”

Name and glory always blessed that renowned school of Sylhet. Bipin Chandra Paul (1858-1932) who goes by ‘Lal-Bal-Pal’ read in this particular school which was set up in 1869, moreover, patriot Gurusaday Datta, ICS (1882-1949) and educationist Abdul Karim (1863-1943) etc. also belonged to this particular school.

Leading personalities such as Sayful Alam Khan, Ahmed Ali, Sayed Maksud of this school of Sylhet who happened to be man of distinction in
their respective field of work were the classmates of Mujtaba. Infact, their companionship and new environment opened a new chapter in the life of Alisaheb. Sunirmal Kumar Deb Meen, a specialist in Mujtaba, from Bangladesh remarked:

"১৯১৫ সালে মৌলিকরাজার হাইস্কুলে ভর্তি হয়ে যিনি কেবলমাত্র পাঠপুস্তকে নিজেরের ব্যাপ্ত রাখলেন, সেই মুহূর্তে ১৯১৮ সালে সিলেট সরকারী স্কুলে এসে যেন নতুন দিকের এশারায় তথ্য হয়ে গেলেন। পাঠপুস্তকের বাইরের পরিবেশকে জনার অদৃশ্য ইচ্ছাতে তিনি তুলে ধরেন রতনমণি টাউন হলের (বর্ধমান পৌর পাঠাগার) \textit{'প্রাইজ মেমোরিয়েল'} লাইব্রেরীর রীতিতে রুমে।"  

This primary chapter of Mujtaba’s life upto 1918 may be considered as the foundation of his reflections on life and it was for the first time that the door of stupendous stock of books was opened before him, as well as the first seed of the cultivation of learning began shooting forth. His classmate Sayful Alam Khan wrote in a recollected mood:

"আমি বস্ত্রার শ্রীরূপ ছবির মধ্যে পড়লা নয়। আমি \textit{'ব'} শাখায় এবং মুহূর্ত আররী ভর্তির সময় \textit{'ক'} শাখায় ছাড়ি ছিল।} আরবীক্রান্ত আমাদের উভয়ের দেখা হয়। মৌলিকরাজার আরবী পড়াচ্ছিলে—হাইস্কুলের মধ্যে পড়ার সময় আলাপ নিষিদ্ধ—কিন্তু মুহূর্তে একটা খাতায় লিখে আমার প্রথ করছিলেন, আমি আমিও সেই খাতায় উত্তর দিচ্ছি।

কোন কোনো লেখকের লেখা আমার ভালো লাগে,— ওমর খাযামের কবিতা পড়েছি কি না,—তাহেনাথ দত্তের \textit{‘হীরাবালিনি’}—রক্ষায়তের আমার কেননা লেখায়,—কোন কোনো লাইব্রেরী থেকে বই পাওয়া যায়,— এমন কি, প্রচলিত ধর্মনীতিতে বিভার করি কি না ইত্যাদি ছিল ঐ প্রথম মণিম মধ্যে এবং সব শেষে ঐ দিন রিকেলে \textit{'প্রাইজ লাইব্রেরী'}তে তার সাথে দেখা করার অনুরোধ।"  

It is a wonder to think, how the chequered images of the world and life through the game of letter-writing were by degrees coming to the realisation of a mere boy of thirteen or fourteen of Class-VI ! On the one hand, mind was inclining towards literature and learning, and on the other hand, his adolescent-self was approaching towards a host of question marks. It is remarkable to note here, Mujtaba penned a letter to Rabindranath the very following year—
it was just immediately after the trip of Kabiguru to Sylhet;— whose subject matter was: What one should do to make one’s ambition lofty! We will elaborately spotlight the correspondence between Mujtaba and Rabindranath afterwards.

It is clearly inferred from that an invisible self this time gradually got unfolded and active in Mujtaba. The urge of this very self releasing Mujtaba from the girdle of Sylhet made him known to Santiniketan and then throughout the world.

Two exceptional incidents took place in the life of Mujtaba after his promotion to seventh standard in Sylhet Government High School. First, he opted for Sanskrit against Arabic and Persian in class VIII. 19 Mujtaba subsequently immortalized his learning of Sanskrit and that specific moments of his school life in his story called ‘Padotikā’ (‘Sayed Mujtaba Ali Racañabali’, Vol.X, p. 105) the Sanskrit-Pandit appearing in the story “Padatikā” was actually created the likeness of his own teacher and the classroom portrayed in this particular story is certainly the replica of the classroom of Sylhet Government School ornamented with memories to him.

It was noticed right from his childhood that he had love and inclination towards different languages. But to adopt Sanskrit with keen interest keeping aside Arabic and Persian does proclaim the mentality of his going against the current.

Secondly, the notable incident that happened that time was that Urdu speaking pupil Abu Syed Ayub became the classmate of Mujtaba in seventh standard, 20 and who knew that both Abu Syed Ayub and Mujtaba Ali would have to while away many a year under the same roof in close association and
in a bond of true friendship! In this regard, Gauri Ayub, wife of Ayub, note down:

"आप सहीद आइयूब से बालक बयसैसिय लिमेंट मुज़तबा साहेब का सतीक थिया थिया से कथा ुने ध्वाकलें आमर मन थिया थिया। स्मरः स्वीड देवों उत्स्वीयी सम्पादित 'सयस मुज़तबा आलीर पत्र' ग्रंथित में ऐसी थिया पेशे खुर डाला लागल। गैह समय सियूडिस्न का सन्न आइयूब म अपित उसका तैयाक करका थिया दूरे सरिये दिते बाध्य हो मिया थिया। ...तैयाक एंब ठार ् दादा आसाद गुलिक कल्याकता थिया सरिये बघर दूरे का का सन्न सिलेंट पृथियादे देखता है। ओबर तौर पर तौरीपवति आबु सहीद आबुदुल्लाह सिलेंट आलीरा मानवसार रिपोर्ट थिया। समूह श्रीलीते भर्तिव हुयार समय मुज़तबा साहेब आइयूब का साहित्य हो मिया थिया।" 21

The year 1919 remained immemorable in the life of Sayed Mujtaba. Rabindranath along with his son Rathindranath and daughter-in-law Pratima Devi and others stayed at Sylhet on 5th, 6th and 7th November and made a speech about 'Bāṅgalīr Sādhanā' in Ratanmani Loknath Town Hall (now Sarada Hall) and at noon of 7th November, Friday, the poet, addressing the students, delivered lecture on 'Ambition' at the premises of the Hindu Hostel (now Sylhet Medical College intersection). The poet went on speaking at a stretch for an hour outside the hostel in a meeting jammed up with several thousand audience. The 14-years-old Situ alias Mujtaba from amongst the crowd of the students went on listening the poet's speech bewitchingly. 22

Here follows an excerpt from the speech of the poet delivered that very day:

"এই যে ছাড়েরা এখানে আমাকে আশ্চর্য করেছে এটা আমার আন্দের কথা। হাতের মধ্যে আমার আসন আমি সহজে প্রাণ করতে পারি। সে কিন্তু শুরুরপো নয়, তাদের কাছে এসে, তাদের মাধ্যমে বলসে।

বেঁচে সে আমি উপবেশন দিয়ে চাইনে। আমি কেবলমাত্র তোমাদের এই কথা স্মরণ করিয়ে দিতে চাই যে তোমারা নবীন। তোমারা যে বর্তা বহন করে এনেছ সেই বর্তা তোমারা ভুললে চলার না। এই পৃথিবী থেকে সকল প্রকার জীবনে তোমারা সরিয়ে দিতে এসেছ, কেন না জীবনে আবর্জনা, জীবনের যারা পথের বাধা। ...কিন্তু তোমরা নবীন, তোমাদের হাতেই পৃথিবীর ভার নৃতন করে পড়েছে, তোমাদের ভবিষ্যতে আশ্চর্য হতে দিয়া না, পথ পরিক্ষার কর।"
To see Rabindranath from a close distance and to listen to his speech, especially the speech relating to ‘Ambition’ life a far-reaching impression in the mind of the 14-years-old Mujtaba. Mujtaba penned a letter to Rabindranath without informing anything to his family and then Rabindranath was joint from Sylhet to Agartala to accept the hospitality as a guest. Such is the succeeding event in the words of Mujtaba’s elder brother Sayed Mustafa Ali:

“রবীন্দ্রনাথের সৌরাষ্ট্র যাত্রার ৪/৫ দিন পরেই আসামী রজনী খাঁর মধ্যে আসামী রজনীর মূল্যবান প্যাজের কাজে মুহূর্তবা আলীর নামে তার উত্তর আসলো। আমাদের বাড়িতে একটা ছড়াছড়ি পড়ে গেলো। রবীন্দ্রনাথ আগরতলা হতে উত্তর দিয়েছেন।”

Sayed Murtaja also wrote:

“রবীন্দ্রনাথ সিলেট থেকে আগরতলা গিয়েছিলেন। সিলেট ছাড়ার সপ্তাহার্গে পরে আসামী রজনীর ও আসামী রজনীর চিঠির কাগজে মুহূর্তবার কাজে কবির নিজে হাতে লেখে বলেন এল। দশ বারা লাইনের এই চিঠির মর্ম ছিল—
‘আসামী রজনীর মুহূর্তে হতে হবে এই কথার মোটামুটি অর্থ, আর যখন মানুষের কামান না হয় যখন মাস্তক ও চিন্তাবাঁধার জন্য জরিমুখুর্ত উদ্যোগ করানাই মানুষের কেলানের পথে নিয়ে যায়। তোমার কি করা উচিত তা এতদুর থেকে বলে...”
Afterwards Alisaheb’s fourth sister Jebunnesa took away that extraordinarily treasured letter and framing the letter, she hung it in the house of her husband (Pargana : Dinarpur . Mauza : Bongaon.Sub-division : Habiganj).

Alisaheb wrote regarding this sister in the twenty ninth chapter of his unparalleled book named ‘Desè-Bidesè’. ‘Sanātan Pathak’ commented on this letter by Rabindranath to Mujtaba in the ‘Des’:

“তার মেটাবারে শাস্তিনিকেতনে ভর্তি হওয়ার ঘটনাটির চমকপ্রদ। রবীন্দ্রনাথ একবার সিলেটে গিয়েছিলেন সফরে—একটি সহায় কিশোরের মুভ্যবা অভিপ্রেত হয়ে পুনর্নিয়েছিলেন রবীন্দ্রনাথের বন্ধুত্ব। যুগ্ম হয়েছিলেন। তাঁরপর রবীন্দ্রনাথ শাস্তিনিকেতনে ফিরে যাবার পর মুভ্যবার তাঁর কাছে একটি চিঠি লিখে জানতে চান, জীবনের সার্থকতা কি? রবীন্দ্রনাথ কি উত্তর দিয়েছিলেন তা আমি জানা যায় না—”

It is humbly informed that the fact presented by ‘Sanatan Pathak’ was not authentic.

The fit-bits of fact regarding the student life that intervened after the close contact between Mujtaba and Rabindranath are found in the writings of Mujtaba’s elder brother Sayed Murtaja. He wrote:

“If we take into consideration the special moments of Sayed Mujtaba Ali’s student life beginning from 1909, minus the first five year of his life, then we have to direct our attention also to contemporaneous events. Some re-
markable events of the post-Bengal Partition era were happening in a parallel way in the pre-adolescent part of Mujtaba’s life.

1. The annulment of Bengal Partition in 1911 and the issuance of directive to form an undivided Bengal.

2. The winning of Novel Prize by Rabindranath in 1913.

3. The beginning of the First World War in 1914.

4. The Khilafat Movement from 1914 to 1919 and tremendous agitation amongst the Indian Muslims.

5. The barbaric and heinous massacre at Jalianwala Bagh in 1919 and in protest the renunciation of Knighthood by Rabindranath.

This entire course of events also led to intense excitement in the contemporary students community. By this time the waves of Non-co-operation Movement started in 1921 throughout the country under the leadership and call of Gandhiji returned from South-Africa. Adolescent Mujtaba under the violent impulse of those waves directly went to Santiniketan.

The Sylhet-Chapter of Mujtaba through a small but far-reaching incident is over for the time being. The incident is as follows: Mujtaba was then first boy of class IX in Sylhet Government School and it was the time of Saraswati Puja. The bungalow of the then DC was adjacent to Government School and some students stealthily took away flower for Saraswati Puja from Deputy Commissioners garden. The following day the Deputy Commissioner J. A. Dawson, ICS summoned the guilty boys; and without giving serious thought, the European gentleman asked his chaprasi to punish the boys flogging them a few strokes. So far as it is understood, he took the matter very lightly. Mujtaba’s elder brother Sayed Mustafa Ali let us know that Mr. Dawson as a Deputy commissioner was very popular, but that flogging produced deep-seated resentment among the students. Even the boys from distinguished
families reading in that government school were involved in this incident. Mahendra Dam’s EAC, and Krishna Sundar Dam’s nephew Ashu Dam from Sadhuhati, and Dr. Prasanna Kumar Chakraborty’s adopted son Khirad Chakraborty were foremost among the students. It is said that, it was Ashu Dam who was probably flogged. On the other hand, the political situation of the country then hotted up and the course of Non-co-operation Movement at the call of Gandhiji was getting intense and what was also seriously swaying the students community. So, at the same time the incident of flogging naturally fuelled the excitement amongst the students. The boys called a strike for an indefinite period. Sayed Mujtaba himself as well as all the Schools and Colleges joined that strike and the authorities apprehended danger. So, the authorities at last adopted the policy of tackling the opponent without losing the fackler— pressure was exerted on those government employees whose sons took part in the strike, so that they could bring their children under control. Mr Deputy commissioner ordered Mujtaba’s father Khan Bahadur Sikandhar Ali to send Mujtaba to School without further delay, but all the scoldings, warnings and orders of Mujtaba’s father turned to be abortive in derailing Mujtaba from his path. Though most of the students returned to attend School, Mujtaba remained unbowed. Consequently, his father was compelled to decide to shift him somewhere else at least to eschew the wrath of the administration.

A brief innings of new life started for Mujtaba. Kazi Maulavi Azad Uddin Choudhury of Dhaka Dakshin, Sylhet had a sock-knitting machine and where anyone could earn rupees 1.50 or 2.00 working in one’s leisure hours. On the recommendation of Sikandar Ali, Mujtaba joined that very job. The tempo-
rary arrangement for Mujtaba’s food and lodging was made in the residence of one retired police superintendent Khan Bahadur Abdunnur belonging to the village of Purbabhag, Bhadeswar. Subsequently, a relationship was knitted between the families of Abdunnur and Alisaheb on matrimonial ground. However, daily early in the morning gobbling a few handfuls of rice, Mujtaba used to cycle to Dhaka-Dakshin, three miles away from Purbabhag, in order to do the works of sock-knitting; and he used to return in the afternoon to his shalter on bicycle. A few months elapsed in this way, but Mujtaba could not set his mind to such work and something was beckoning his mind from the remote part of the world. The thrills and excitements that developed in the mind of tenderaged Mujtaba from seeing Nobel-winning Rabindranath, listening to his speech as well as from the receipt of letter written by Rabindranath himself now got their outward revelations. Now Mujtaba persisted doggedly in his demand for studying in the holyland of Santiniketan. Mujtaba’s elder brother Sayed Mustafa Ali was studying then in Dhaka. Though Sikandar Saheb was, no doubt, abit taxed with the thought of how that would be possible to support the education of another son keeping him away from home, yet he made up his mind at last of sending Mujtaba to Santiniketan.

It was for the first time that ‘Beduin’ Mujtaba got the clearance of enjoying and realising the world in his own way: “থাকব নাকো বদ্ধ ঘরে / দেখব এবার জগ্টাটাকে / কেমন করে ঘুরেছ মানুষ / যুগান্তের ঘুরিপাকে” This incantation had already cast a spell over him. The pythonic push of desire to become a wandering man came to light quite before his very journey to Santiniketan. Mujtaba’s close friend and a celebrated lawyer of Sylhet Sayful Alam Khan (1901-90) B. A. Medalist, 1927, Calcutta University, B.L. Kolkata) wrote:
Mujtaba set out for Santiniketan on 25th July 1921. Some persons consider 21st June 1921 as the date of his journey to Santiniketan. In this regard such is the comment from the pen of Prof. Bhismadev Choudhury, Department of Bengali, Dakha University:

"যাবার প্রকাও সহপাঠী সরাস্রাস্রাস্র আলাম খান-এর একখানা বাণ্য যিনি মাইকেল মুহম্মদ চৌধুরীর স্মৃতির মধ্যে 'I sigh for Albion’s distant shore (Poems 8:1) কবিতার জ্যোতিরিন্ধনাত্ম ঠাকুর অনুলক লিখে দিয়ে যান:

‘দূরে স্বচ্ছন্ধে তবে মোর
আকুল নিদ্রাস
থেকা শায়াম উপাত্তকা, উঠে গিরি
ভোগিয়া আকাশ,
নাহি সেখা আমাজন, তবু লজ্জ
আমার জলধি,
সাধ যায় লক্ষ্যবাহে যশ কিচো
অ-নামা সমাহি !’ "

One more record regarding the date of Mujtaba’s journey to Santiniketan is found from Sunirmal Kumar Dev, Meen. He jotted down:

“ডঃ আলী ১৯২১ সালের ‘২১ শে জুন’ নয় ‘২৫ শে জুলাই’ শাত্তিনিকেতনের উক্তিগুলো সিলেট ত্যাগ করেছেন। তথ্যটি পেয়েছি ডঃ আলীর সহপাঠী এক বন্ধুর ভাষ্যের পাতায়। ডঃ আলীর বহু লিখে লেখা অংশটি পাড়েন:

অনুশোচনার সীত পরিধান
ফাওন-আমুন দখন করে,
আয়ু বিহৃত উড়ে চলে যায়
হে সাক্ষী, পেয়ালা অধরে ধরো।

সুত্ত—২১-৭-২১

এর ঠিক নীচেই তার বন্ধুর লিখেছেন:

২৫ তারিখ শাত্তিনিকেতন রওনা!”
Sunirmal’s comments read however, the source of the given fact is not explicitly sufficient.

Mujtaba’s journey to Santiniketan certainly appeared to be as another name of going against contemporaneous train of thoughts. Rabindranath dedicated ‘Visva-Bharati’ to public on the Paus Festival, 23 December 1921 (8 Paus, 1328 BS). All the liabilities and responsibilities of Santiniketan ashram rested with Rabindranath himself at the time of Mujtaba’s admission to school in Santiniketan. It is learnt from Prasanta Kumar Paul, author of ‘Rabijibani’, that even defying the presence of the poet, he walls of religious confinement stood impregnably on the soil of Santiniketan in some degree.

“এর আগেও একটি মুসলিম ছাত্রকে ভর্তি করতে চেয়েছে রবীন্দ্রনাথ অন্যদের বাধায় তা
পারেননি, এবারেও কিছু অসুবিধা যে দেখা দেয়নি তা নয়। গুজরাটি ছাত্রদের হাওয়া-লাওয়া
সংস্কার নিয়ে আমাদের উদ্যোগ ছিল, এই কারণেই কিছু অভিভাবক তাদের সমানদের অত্যন্ত
থেকে নিয়ে যান।” 31

Even this time, that is, at the time of Mujtaba’s admission that a little problem erupted over the entrance of Muslim students is distinctly understood from the above quoted statement. Regarding the previous situation Prabhat Kumar Mukhopadhyay, biographer of Rabindranath, wrote:

“শাস্তিনিকেতনে এবার অনেকগুলি গুজরাটি ছাত্র এসেছে। এর পূর্বেও নেপালি মারা
রাজস্থানি মালয়ালি ছাত্র এসেছিল; কিন্তু অন্য একটি প্রেক্ষাপটে একই ভাষার একগুলি ছাত্র ইতিপূর্বে
কখনো হয় নি। নূরজন ছাত্রদের দেখে ও অভিভাবকদের সঙ্গে কথা বলে কবির মনে নূরজন চিঠির
উদয় হয়েছে—শাস্তিনিকেতনের বিদ্যালয়কে সর্বভারতীয় শিক্ষকের করতে হবে। ...৭ ই সৌষ্ঠব
উৎসবের পরবর্তী (৮ সৌষ্ঠব ১৩২৫) মহাসামারোহে বিশ্বভারতীর তিনটিপ্পন হল; এজন্য গুজরাটিদের
কাছ থেকে কয়েকটি হাজার টাকা পাওয়া যায়।” 32

Meanwhile, due to the arrival of a group of students from Gujarat and their financial contributions, no doubt, helped the poet to some extent in the establishment works of ‘Visva-Bharati’, but since the upholder of untouch-
ability and conservative natives of Gujarat could not manage to compromise on the admission of the Muslim students, despite the poet’s strong yearnings for, the first obscure Muslim student had been cursed with the denial of admission in Santiniketan. Of course, in the second case, the wish of the poet was translated into practice by Sayed Mujtaba Ali who hailed from the remotest part of Sylhet.

Lines from Prasanta Kumar Paul’s ‘Rabijiban’ keep us informed in the following way:

“পৌষ সংখ্যা শাস্ত্রীকর্তন-এ একটি উল্লেখযোগ্য সংবাদ আছে, ‘বৎসরের প্রায় অনেক নূরনী ছাত্র আসিতেছে। ইহার মধ্যে একটি শুভ্রান্ত ও একটি মুসলমান বালক ভর্তি হইয়াছে।’ উভয় মুসলমান ছাত্রী হচ্ছেं বিশিষ্ট সাহিত্যিক শৈল্ড মুজতোবা আলী [1904-74]। …অন্য শাস্ত্রীকর্তনে তিনি প্রথম মুসলিম ছাত্র নন, তবে আগেই জাফর আলী নামক একটি পূর্বে আফ্রিকার ছাত্র এখানে ভর্তি হয়েছিলেন।”

The write-up of Dewan Md. Ajraf drops a hint that a lot of agitations and commotions surfaced in the erstwhile Sylhet over the issue of admission of a boy from an Islamic family to a school run by Rabindranath.

“একে তো বেলপুরের শুলে ছিল ব্রহ্মচর্যাবস্থা, আর্য্দের জীবনের আদর্শে প্রজতা আদর্শ বিদ্যালয়—তার উপর সৈয়দ সিকন্দার আলী ছিলেন একেবারে বাস হযহত মোহাম্মদের (দঃ) বসধার—হযরত ফজেন ও হযরত আলীর (রাজ) খাদানের লোক। সৈয়দ মুজতোবা আলীর বেলপুর গমন ও ব্রহ্মচর্যাবস্থা ভর্তির ব্যাপার তখনকার দিনের সিমেটের মুসলিম অধিজাত-মহলে ভীষণ প্রতিক্রিয়া সৃষ্টি করেছিল।”

Alisaheb himself wrote: “তখনকার দিনে আর কেটি মুসলমান ছেলেই সকলে যেত?”

However, Mujtaba came to Santiniketan to go on with his studies. No college level of education was introduced so far in ‘Visva-Bharati’. It was after six months or so college level of education was introduced in ‘Visva-Bharati’ on 23rd December, 1921 under the chairmanship of Acarya Brajendranath Sil. There were as many as ten students enrolled in the opening
year. All these students were promoted to and admitted into college of Santiniketan from the very school of its own. It was Mujtaba Ali who as a first outsider was admitted into the college of ‘Visva-Bharati’.

The journey from Sylhet to Santiniketan was a bit trouble some for Mujtaba. He wrote in a letter: he had to face a lot of problems from Kulaura to Kolkata. Mujtaba thrust out his head through the window of the compartment before three miles to Kustiya Railway station, then the wallet with the key of the basket which contained the ticket of rupees eight and Umar Khaiyam’s small-sized ‘Rubayaat’ slipped out of his hand and fell outside the railway compartment. Though in those days it was the rule that if anything fell outside of the compartment, one was to pull the chain with a view to stopping the train, but the said rule was declared to be effective only if the value of the lost article was rupees fifty or above. Having no other course left open, Mujtaba pulling a long face, remained mute. He had just started his journey for a remote corner of the world, but such incident at the initial stage of his journey naturally made him non-plussed. No sooner had the train touched at Kustiya, than perplexed Mujtaba alighted from with his belongings, and keeping the luggage under the care of the station master, Mujtaba began striding in full speed along the railway track to get the spot where his money was fallen. Alas! By that time the money being a lively bird was supposed to have already flown away and perched on somebody’s hand. Dejected Mujtaba came back. What to do now? Santiniketan was still far away. At last, the loan of rupees thirty from a wealthy but benevolent Muslim gentleman of Kustiya enabled Mujtaba to reach Kolkata (Mujtaba wrote in this regard: “ডিনিয়ে কিনা পরিচয়ে কেন টাকা দিলেন ছুঁকিতে পারলাম না”) he had to take a plethora of troubles to find out
Mumit Mia’s hotel; anyway, after tiding over all the critical situations, Mujtaba stayed at Mia’s hotel. Then to reach Sanitniketan.

Mujtaba was admitted into Santiniketan. He had got quite a good number of room mates. Two were from Mysore, they did not know how to speak Bengali. Mujtaba exchanged his views with them in English. One of them was professor of English and the other was Mr. Tribankur. Besides them, there were two Cylonese Buddhist mendicants. One of them knew Bengali, but the other mendicant used to communicate in broken Bengali. One of the roommates was from Dhaka, but as he was full of conceit, so Mujtaba could not pull on well within him; there was another cylonese roommate who was an idol of coyness and, moreover, there stayed a robust artist who was himself a taciturn. But yes, all sorts of deliberations were with the professor of History who hailed from Italy, since he was a professor, too much hobnobbing was not always possible.

Initially, Mujtaba, a boy from marshland of Sylhet, got asphyxiated in such congested atmosphere. Mujtaba remembered that even in Sylhet his nature of life did never permit him to stay huddling up with students and professors. Mujtaba penned a letter to his friend Sayful, dear as life to him, and whom he then left behind at Sylhet:

“...গর্জনকরিরার মত লোক এখানে কোম...চাপায় পড়ি আমিও কোম কথা বলি,”

But Mujtaba had a reserved disposition? Right from his childhood he was a boy with an untrammelled mind and a facile tongue? He had an instinct for intimate interpersonal gossiping open hearted conversation, mixing easily with others. Mujtaba from his childhood did not have the nature of a snail that encloses its body with the shell. This multi-hued hostel life of Santiniketan
peeped into his life subsequently at different times and consequently he gathered multi-faceted experiences. He wrote in a particular letter:

“এখন রাত সাড়ে নয়টা। বৈঠাকী হইয়া গিয়াছে—আলো নিভিয়া আঁধাষটা বাকি। কাজেই ঠিক বড় করিব না। আমার একজন কনেজন আয়িট। সে খুব ভাল বই বাঁচিয়ে পারে। আমি তাহাকে বলিলাম, “আমাকে একখানা বই বাঁধিয়া দেও, আমি কাগজ দিতেছি।” সে গষ্টিরভাবে cut করিয়া দিল“No, I am sorry”। ভারি কঠোরভাবেই পুঞ্জ করিল, শাপিনিকেতন শ্রীহট্ট নয়।” 38

Now Mujtaba stood face to face with Rabindranath. Let us please our ears with the description of that peerless memorable moments put into words by Mujtaba himself:

“প্রথম সাক্ষাতে গুরুদেবের জিজ্ঞাসা করলেন, কি পড়িতে চাও? আমি বললুম, তা ঠিক জানিনে তবে কেন একটা জিনিস খুব ভাল করে শিখতে চাই তিনি বলিলেন, নানা জিনিস শিখতে আগ্রহ কি? আমি বললুম, মনে চারদিকে ছড়িয়ে কোনও জিনিস বেধে ভাল করে শেখা যায় না। গুরুদেব আমার দিকে গম্ভীরভাবে তাকিয়ে বললেন, একথা কে বলেছ? আমার বয়স তখন সত্তরো—— ধতমত থেকে বললুম, কন্নান তড়িল।

গুরুদেব বললেন, ইংরেজের পক্ষে ও বলা আশ্চর্য নয়।” 39

To first meeting with the poet was over somehow. Now he got that Pole-Star close at hand whose dazzling light dragged him at Santiniketan. Blessed is Mujtaba in receiving Rabindranath as a teacher!

Mujtaba Ali read at ‘Visva-Bharati’ from 1921 to 1926. These five years in fact laid the foundation of his life. We want to mark this part of his life as the most important period of his life.

He has come far away from his home for the first time in his life, his heart used to weep for his home, particularly for his mother, classmates and for his native land. Initially he did not have interest in anything. The pictures and memories of Sylhet repeatedly peeped into his mind; and hence he often was depressed. We can realise the condition of his mind of this particular period
through his various letters written to his classmate Sayful-Alam.

“মাঝে মাঝে সদৃশ দিকগুলির দিকে চেয়ে মনটা কেমন ধরে উদাস হয়ে যায়...।

“আজ আমার মনটা তারিত থেকেছে।...এতক্ষণ বাইরে টাঁদের আলোক বেড়িয়ে এখান ঘরে ফিরলুম। মনটা তারিত বিষয়। এরপ্রার্থু দু’একবার ছাড়া অনুভব করলে করিনি।...” ৪১

He faced habit difficulties the initial stage to adjust himself with the environment of Santiniketan. Mujtaba himself wrote in this regard:

একে সাফ্যাসঝালা?—পাজাজ সাফ্যাসঝালা—তপুরি বাচাল, সর্বোপরি সহজ মেলামেশায় অভ্যন্তর মহিলা মিশ্রিত ব্রাঞ্চসামাজ বেঁধা তৎকালীন শাস্ত্রীয়তাতেন্ত্র ব্রাঞ্চচর্চার ওর্চে আবহাওয়া বাড়া সম্পূর্ণ অনন্তিয়, বয়স যোগ বহন হয়–ভর্নাঘাট, চক্ষু প্রকৃতির মুল নানা ছেলের পক্ষে সে বাতাবরে নিজেকে খাপ খাইয়ে নেওয়ার উৎকট সংকট...” ৪১

But the crisis was gradually over. Mujtaba very shortly became popular amongst the students of Santiniketan. Most of the students of the then Santiniketan became well known personalities in their later life; such as Pramatha Nath Bishi, Anil Kumar Chanda, Bachu Bhai Sukla, Chitra Birbhadra Rao, Parimal Goswami, Anadi Dastidar, Binode Bihari Mukhopadhyay and many others. Parimal Goswami wrote in his memories:

“আমি যে ঘরে ছিলাম সেখানে আজকের স্বর্গীয়দের মধ্যে আমার নিকটম শায়ান রাত কাটাতেন সৈয়দ মুজতবা আলী ও অনিলকুমার চন্দ। মুজতবায় আজ কথাশিক্ষার প্রসিদ্ধ। তখনও তাই ছিলেন। স্বামঘর কথা বলে আসর জমিয়ে রাখতেন।

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সৈয়দ মুজতবা আলী (তবে ছিলেন মুজতবায়) ও অনিলকুমার চন্দ অবিযাচিত কথা বলতে পারতেন এবং তাদের সঙ্গে প্রায় পাশাপাশি রাত কাটাতে হত বলে তাদের সঙ্গে দূর্দায় দুঃখ গিয়েছিল। আলী হিসেব ও উর্দু বুঝতে পারতেন। সোজা দিক থেকে এবং বিপরীত দিক থেকে। আমার একখানা খাটা তার হাতে আমার নাম ইংরেজী, বাংলা, নাগরী এবং উর্দুতে সোজা ও উল্টে করে কথা এখনও রয়ে গেছে।” ৪২

It became clear from Parimal Goswami that Mujtaba Ali from that very time became interested in different languages, and during his stay at Santiniketan Mujtaba started to learn different languages. His elder brother Sayed Murtaja Ali let us know that at that time Mujtaba began to learn a bunch of languages
He learnt Sanskrit from Italian Scholar Forsiki, and from German Scholar Collins he learnt Sankhya and Vedanta philosophy, the French and German languages from the French Scholar Benoit, Mujtaba was taught Arabic and Persian by the Russian scholar Prof. Bogdanov and Italian by Mr. Tuchhi-a professor from Italy. During this time he also began to learn Hindi and the language of Gujarat including many other Indian languages.  

‘Visva-Bharati’ of that particular period was studded with a galaxy of men of parts. Mujtaba himself wrote in this regard:

"শান্তিনিকেতনে তখন কহ্তর পাঠিত ছিলেন। শ্রীযুত বিদ্যুত সাহিত্য শাস্ত্রী, শ্রীযুত কবি মোহন সেন শাস্ত্রী, শ্রীযুত হিংসান বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, সর্বীশ এক্সন্ডার এবং পিয়ানোনি, শ্রীযুত নিতাইবিনোদ গোস্বামী, অধ্যাপক কলিনস, বগদান বেনেওয়া, ক্রামিরিস, শ্রীযুত মিশ্রভক্তি, শ্রীযুত হিউটনবা মরিস, শ্রীচন্দ্র প্রভাত মুখোপাধ্যায় ও আরে বহ ক্যানামালা লোক তখন শান্তিনিকেতনে অধ্যায়ন অব্যাহার করতেন।

সকলে ছিলেন প্রাক্তন শিক্ষক দ্বিতীয় বিদ্বেষের ধাতু ধাতু। অপেক্ষাকৃষ্ট অলক্ষ শিক্ষকের ভিতর ছিলেন শ্রীযুত অমিতচন্দ্র ও শ্রীযুত প্রথমনাথ বিশিষ্ট।"  

It was Rabindranath himself who used to teach in ‘Visva-Bharati’ then Mujtaba was fortunate enough to read with the poet the matters like ‘Balaka’, ‘Gora’, Shelley and Keats.

Mujtaba adjusted himself completely with the environment of Santiniketan. The environment of Ashram helped to bloom up his dormant talents and possibilities. There were varied self-exposing activities amongst the students of Santiniketan which included culture of literature, sports, music etc. Pramatha Nath Bishi has beautifully described all such things in his ‘Rabindranath O Santiniketan’; and Mujtaba was also gradually involved in all such activities become clear from his letter. His irresistible desire for literary culture started from that particular time. He wrote to his friend Sayful Alam:

“দিন কয়েক থেকে যেন কিছু একটা লিখনায় বড় ইচ্ছে হচ্ছে। কিছু সোয়াত কলম লিখে
The inspiration for doing some writing seemed to develop amongst the student of the ashram naturally and it was the aim of education of the ashram too. Functions of various tastes were often held and where Rabindranath himself read out his own writings. Besides this, ‘Visva-Bharati’ had its own practice of holding conferences. Mujtaba had to spend the whole with tight schedules. In one of his letters (15/1/1923) he wrote about his daily routine:

“আজকালকার রূপটি যদি শুন ত দৃষ্ট মত থাকবে যাবে। অবশ্য আমার রূপটি। সকলের এক্ষেত্রে নয়। সকলে গ্রহণ করে পর ক্লাস শুরু। প্রথম ও দ্বিতীয় ঘটনার অর্থ আমার সমস্ত দিনের সুন্দর। তৃতীয় ঘটনায় হয়মেলুটে নতুন রূপনিক। চূড়ান্ত ঘটনায় ফাস্টি, পাখিয়ে বাঙলা। তারপর স্নান তারপর আহার। তারপর কিছু জন্য প্রাত্ম, কের স্থল ঘটনা জানুন, সম্পূর্ণ ঘটনায় ফাস্টি।

The reference of Mujtaba is almost nil in ‘Rabindra-Jibani’ by the distinguished biographer of Rabindranath named Prabhat Kumar Mukhopadhyay. But recently the renowned biographer of Rabindranath and a great scholar Prasanta Kumar Paul has mentioned in his book ‘Rabijiban’ many an incident of Mujtaba’s student life at ‘Visva-Bharti’ within a few months of his arrival (25 July 1921/31 Bhadra 1328 BS the date of his journey for Santiniketan) at Santiniketan he appeared as a brilliant student. The ninth session of ‘Santiniketan Visva-Bharti Sammelani’ took place on 16th September, 1921 (Friday) and which was presided over by Rabindranath himself. In this function Mujtaba Ali read out an article on Ed festival. 47 On the other hand, Mujtaba read his another article titled “Sisū Mārī” (child mortality) in another function held on 13th Magh, 1328 BS at 4 PM at Amra Kunja (Mango-grove)
chaired by Bidhusekhar Shastri. The biographer of ‘Rabi-Jiban’ also gave us
the information of another session and that was held on 2nd Caitra, 1328 BS
under the presidentship of Surendranath Bhattacharya:

“সৈয়দ মুজতবা আলি ওমর খ্যাত সম্পর্কে পাতিব্যপূর্ণ একটি প্রবন্ধ পড়ে শোনায়।
বৈশাখ-সংখ্যা শাজিনিকেন-এ বক্তব্যের সারাংশ বর্ণিত হয়েছে। «প্রবন্ধে তিনি Fitzgerald-এর
অনুবাদ হিন্দীতে বাংলা অনন্য করতে কবির উপরে যে অবিচার করা হয়েছে তাহার উল্লেখ করেন।
তাহার মতে Fitzgerald ওমরের কবিতার প্রকৃত অনুবাদ করেন নাই।” 48

At the beginning of the second year (1922) of his student life at Santiniketan
Mujtaba was absorbed more and more in the activities and culture of literature. Under his presidency on 15th January, 1922, 1st Magh, Prabhat Kumar
Mukhopadhyay recited his self-composed poem “Rājā” and Ramchandra
read out an essay named “The little I know of Islam.” 49

The ninth general session of ‘Visva-Bharati Sammelani’ (conference)
was held on 26th July, 1923 (Thursday) in the Arts Building of Santiniketan
under the presidency of Mujtaba Ali and where Pramatha Nath Bishi read
out his self-composed drama “Ratha Yātrā”. 50

That Mujtaba during his student life at Santiniketan gradually achieved
the important position has its information in ‘Rabijiban’. Mujtaba was also
elected secretary of the Executive Body for the third year in the annual of the
‘Visva-Bharati Sammelani’ held on 21st December 1923 under the presidency
of Pramatha Nath Bishi 51 and he, too, was relected for the same office in the
following year. 52

The student life Mujtaba at Santiniketan (1921-26) is remarkable from
many angles. The shadow of Rabindranath that we find on the life and litera-
ture of Mujtaba had its germination during this particular period of Mujtaba’s
life. Mujtaba got Rabindranath as a teacher and also observed him closely.
Tagore’s towering personality deeply charmed and influenced young Mujtaba. Mujtaba got the chance of observing and pursuing the daily life, artistic-self, the culture of literature and the extremely active personality of Rabindranath. The versatile creative faculty of Rabindranath also came to Mujtaba’s notice and knowledge. He wrote:

“শাস্ত্রীয় কেন্দ্রের আদর্শ সময়ে কাঠালগ তৈরী করতুম। তখন প্রতিদিন দেখতুম পাঠাঙ্গে নৃত্য পুরাতন বই তিনি [রবীন্দ্রনাথ] লাইব্রেরীতে ফেরৎ পাঠাতেন। রসায়ন, পদার্থবিদ্যা, নৃত্য, সমাজকল্যাণ, দর্শন, কাব্য, কল বলব। এমন বিষয় নেই যাতে তার অনুসন্ধান ছিল না।”

The quest for many corners that we get in Mujtaba’s life has its background from his close association with Rabindranath. Mujtaba was heavily impressed and inspired by the daily life of a relentless worker named Rabindranath. Mujtaba began to realise gradually the salient feature of the philosophy of Rabindranath right from his young age. In the word of Mujtaba himself:

“চিরজীবন তিনি বছর ভোতারে একের সমগ্র করেছিলেন। তাঁর সে সাধনা আমি প্রত্যাশ দেখেছি। লেখাগুলো প্রায় এক বৎসর শাস্ত্রীয় কেন্দ্রে আমি ছিলুম এক ঘণ্টের নীচের তলায় সেখান থেকে জানালা দিয়ে মুখ বাড়িয়ে দেখতে পেতুম, ওরদের তাঁর জনালার পাশে দেখে লেখাপড়া করেছেন।”

Young Mujtaba used to notice how Rabindranath from 4 A.M. to 11 P.M. was lost in his works and meditation. Rabindranath daily got up from bed at 4 A.M. Water was stored for him every proceeding evening. Bathing in water stored overnight, he sat for meditation, and it is regular way of life for every season. Rabindranath read like school children from 6 o’clock and what continued upto 9 o’clock with a ten minute break in this course of time. Having had his breakfast, he started his daily works and activities. And it continued from 10 o’clock to 12 and then came his lunch time followed by
half an hour rest. Again his works and works. Through out the after noon session his studies went on. The poet used to teach the children how to sing from 5 o’clock. Dinendranath listened the songs and whiled away his time gossiping with children. His studies continued even after supper. He used to croon off and on. Such was his daily routine from 4 AM to 11 PM.

These things hypnotised Mujtaba. At that time Mujtaba enjoyed another philosopher very closely. He was Dwijendranath, the eldest brother of Rabindranath, Mujtaba expressed his regards for this person in his writings. The ardent obedience to rules and systems of the personal life of ‘Barababu’ also influence Mujtaba. Different meetings and functions were bit by bit boosting the mind of Mujtaba for becoming great in life. He learnt in classroom Shelly, Keats and ‘Balakā’ from Rabindranath and moreover, he listened the readings of the new compositions of the poet. Tagore used to teach Shelley’s “Hymn to Intellectual Beauty”, “Ode to West wind,” and Keats’ “Ode to Autumn”, “Ode on Melancholy”. The wonderful magical power of teaching of Tagore even charmed Mujtaba. We get the mention of all these things in his writings.

Rabindranath was then composing ‘Rakta-Karabi’. One day he even read out it before the teachers and students. What Mujtaba wrote then to his friend Sayful is significant in deed:

“This is probably the first criticism on ‘Rakta Karabī’. Mujtaba at that age of his life understood hearing the reading of ‘Rakta Karabī’ that it is really complex one. Mujtaba earned the distinction of the being the first graduate in
1926 from 'Visva-Bharati' after studying for five years at Santiniketan. The second one along with him was Bachu Bhai Sukla. In the first convocation of 'Visva-Bharati' in the year 1927 Rabindranath himself ceremonially handed over to them their academic certificates. The planning and painting of that very certificates were of Nandalal Basu himself.

It is to be mentioned here, that it was only Germany which at that time formally recognised 'Visva-Bharati'. India was under then the British rule. Therefore, on the strength of the certificates issued by 'Visva-Bharati' there was no hope of getting any sort of employment. Taking into consideration the future of students, an arrangement for the students to appear the Matriculation Examination from Santiniketan was made under Calcutta University. Mujtaba had Sanskrit as his second language in his Matriculation Examination. He passed in first division with letter mark in Bengali.  

Mujtaba was to appear the Matriculation Examination 1923 in consideration to his age and other factors. His childhood friends passed the said examination in that very year. But Mujtaba required three more additional years for studying different courses of learning at Santiniketan. When it pained him to think that his classmates would read in higher classes but he himself would be in lower class, he made up his mind to go to Aligarh to appear I.A. examination.  

But the environment of Aligarh could not attract Mujtaba. He was there popular among the students and was elected Vice-President of the intermediate student’s union.  

Mujtaba could not stay at Aligarh for a long time. His mind was then wandering in some other place. His besottedness for travelling and acquiring
of knowledge began to be prominent within him. Mujtaba thought of going abroad as world traveller Rabindranath mesmerized his total self. Then only Oxford and Cambridge were considered as the main centres of learning,— but Mujtaba was an exception to this trend; as because Mujtaba nurtured an anti-British feeling in his mind right from his childhood, and he even did not try to keep back this mentality. We get the evidence of this kind of mentality of Mujtaba in his autobiographical travelogue 'Desē-Bidesē'. He wrote in 'Musāphir':

"বহ চেষ্টা করেও লড়নের সঙে দোতী জমাতে পারলুম না। পুরবেও পারিনি। ...রেখতে ইংরেজ এ দেশে রাজ্য করেছে বলে। রেখতে বহুকাল ইংরেজের গোলামী করেছি বলে তার প্রতি রাগটি দেন যেতে চায় না!" 60

So his mind moved towards Germany. Mujtaba regarded Germany throughout his life as his "second native land". Its reason may be cited briefly in his own word,"মাত্র একটি দেশ ভারতবর্ষ সমূহে কখনও তার ভা পরিয়ন। ...সে দেশ জমানি।". Secondly, when the entire world did not recognise the value of certificates by 'Visva-Bharati', it was but Germany which recognised.

But what about money? Mujtaba's dream would not be materialised without sufficient amount of money.

But golden opportunity arrived even at the time of crisis.

Amir Amanullah Khan was then inclined towards large scale reformation. New reformatory measures were being taken in different fields including education. Prof. Benoit and Prof Bogdanov from Santiniketan had already joined the education department of Kabul. Mujbata got a job in the education department of Kabul under their recommendation. Mujtaba was entrusted there with the charge of teaching English and German in the Agricultural College. 61
We get the lucid description of how Mujtaba joined this job in Kabul, how he spent those days and he saved himself from the political unrest of Kabul in his book ‘Dese-Bidesee’.

After enjoying one year of his service in Kabul, Mujtaba came to Sylhet on winter vacation. After the expiry of his leave period, he went back to Kabul and after sometime he was promoted. Initially his salary was rupees 200/- and later on it was enhanced amounting rupees 300/- . Professional jealousy is everywhere. The Punjabi professors could not accept this enhancement of salary and promotion of Mujtaba in an easy way. They in a body raised the objection and protest that Mujtaba was a graduate from ‘Visva-Bharati’ and it was not a recognised University. The Education Minister of Afghanistan knew Rabindranath and he was an admirer and devotee of Rabindranath. He had a desire to invite the poet to Kabul. Let us hear from Mujtaba himself what the Education Minister replied:

“তোমাদের ভিতরে স্নেহ করতে হয়েছে পাঙ্গালের লাট-সাহেবের। তোকে আমরা চিনি না।
...কিছুমুজ্জনেত্ব আলীর সনদে আছে রবীন্দ্রনাথের সনদ্ধ, সেই রবীন্দ্রনাথ বিনি সমগ্র প্রাচীর
মুখ উজ্জ্বল করেছে।” 62

During his stay at Kabul, Mujtaba kept his link with German Legation. This relation stood in good stead at last when the political instability was at its climax in Kabul. Mujtaba actually came to Kabul to earn some money as his passage money for Germany; and he kept his money with an Indian businessman. But the plan of Mujtaba’s going to Germany was smashed when that very businessman was killed by gang of dacoits of Kabul. 63 Prof. Benoit knew all these things, and he even said all these matters to an employee of German Legation. As a result that employee consoled Mujtaba with hope and assurance. At that time the Government of Germany used to give scholar-
ships every year to a few Indians for higher education in Germany. Mujtaba won that scholarship and it was to any single Indian. Mujtaba's friend and classmate Basudev Vishwanath Gokhle got that scholarship in 1925, and Mujtaba got after four years. He got rupees 150/- monthly as scholarship from a German educational institution called Alexander Von Humboldt, but that amount was not enough for him to continue his studies in Germany. So, his elder brother Sayed Murtaja sent rupees 100/- monthly for him.  

Somehow sustaining himself, Mujtaba came back to his native land from Kabul in the middle of 1929. In the month of September of the very same year he set out for Europe from Mumbai (then Bombay) by a French ship called 'Messagerie Maritimes'. All the interesting incidents of this journey has been narrated in his book 'Jale-Dangay'. He reached Berlin from France by Train. Berlin was then the capital of undivided Germany. Mujtaba wrote about this part of his student life in Biography of his thesis papers:

"In Kabul I came in touch with the Minister of German Legation and through his recommendation obtained the Alexander Von Humboldt scholarship. I came over to Berlin in September 1929 and after having obtained the necessary certificate ... testifying that I know enough German to follow the university lectures, had myself admitted into the University of Berlin. I studied for one term (winter 1929-30) there, and from April 1930 to the end of the Summer term 1931 I studied in the University of Bonn."  

At first he was admitted in the Berlin University. He studied there during the winter term of 1929. He learnt German for five years at Santiniketan. Even then he faced at bit problems. Its witty description is given in his 'Musaphir'. There was a rule for the foreigners to pass a six-month course in just three
weeks. Mujtaba very easily passed that course. The humorous description of Prof Smith from whom he took lessons that time is found in “Darsanāṅti” of the Second chapter of ‘Pancatantra’.

However, when Mujtaba was the student of Berlin University, the world famous scientist Enstein (1879-1955), economist Sambart, Sanskrit Scholar Lobhars were there teachers; and Prof Vagnar used to teach Bengali.

Mujtaba wanted to keep himself away from the din and bustle of Berlin; hence he read at the University of Bonn, Rainland from April, 1930 up to the Summer term of 1931.

His elder brother Murtaja wrote in this regard:

“The excellent description of his stay at Rain is there is his ‘Pancatantra’, ‘Cācā Kahinī’, ‘Mayurkanthī’, ‘Musāphir’ etc.

Rabindranath delivered speech on religion in 1930 at Murrburgh University, Germany. Mujtaba wrote:

Both master and disciple were face to face after long four years. The poet asked, “Why have you grown so thinner?” Mujtaba stood keeping his head down and his mind was filled with thoughts of the poet. Rabindranath went on delivering his speech for an hour. That hall of Germany was com-
Boarding M.V. Vitaria of Loyd Tristino Company at Zenowar in February, 1931, Mujtaba returned to his native land. Spending sometime in Kolkata (then Calcutta) he was afterwards with his parents at Maulavi Bazar, Sylhet and killed the year 1933 at Maulavi Bazar. We learn three different facts from the writing of his elder brother Murtaja: (a) At that time he went to Dhaka (then Dacca) for a job in Dacca University (b) he delivered a speech at Muslim Hall of Sylhet (c) He also delivered a speech in Shillong—the capital of undivided Assam. The then Vice-Chancellor Sir Hassan Surawardi of Calcutta University presided over that meeting. The details of this speech were not available.

The chance of journey for Europe again came for him in 1934. Well-known radiologist Dr. Ajit Basu was ready to go to Europe for his personal work. He took Mujtaba with him as his interpreter. Travelling with Dr. Basu for four months, Mujtaba saw nearly twenty sanatoriums in France, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Checoslovakia. Dr. Basu came back to native land, but Mujtaba remained there for six months.

On his way back, he stayed at Cairo and got admitted in the famous Al-Azhar University. He was in Egypt for eleven months. He studied Islamic Scriptures for some months in that University. During his stay over in Cairo, he observed the condition of Palestine from Jerusalem. His experience of the period from 1934 to 35 are ever green in his different writings.

At that time His Excellency the Maharaj of Baroda Sawaji Rao Gaekwad who has devotion for learning after completing his tour to Europe went to visit Al-Azhar. The Maharaj wanted to know whether there were any Indian
students. The only Indian student Mujtaba was produced before the Maharaja. The Maharaja gave him some more financial aids for his study at Al-Azhar and told—If you are interested for any employment after the completion of your academic course, please drop a few lines to me. Mujtaba wrote in “Rahasya Lahari” of ‘Kato-Nā Asrual’.

‘১৯৩৪-এ আমি যখন কাইরোতে শাস্ত্র অধ্যয়ন করছি তখন ঐ সময় আমাকে ‘পাকড়ুকে বরোদায় নিয়ে এসে একটি অভ্যাজ কর্ম দেন।’”

Mujtaba was employed in Baroda to study the comparative principles of religion in 1936. At the invitation of His Excellency the Maharaja of Baroda the distinguished Scholars like Ramesh Chandra Datta, Satyabrata Mukhopadhyay (son-in-law of Lakshminath Bezbaruah), Rabindranath’s grandson Suprakash Gangopadhyay, Binoytosh Bhattacharjee (son of Hara Prasad Shastri) assembled in Baroda. Joining with them, Mujtaba at a stretch for eight years studied at Baroda. This chapter of Mujtaba’s life is remarkable as because he never remained anywhere so long at job.

The young Mujtaba spent these eight years in Baroda without any anxiety. He used to stay in a guest house which was well decorated in a royal way. The Maharaja loved Mujtaba so deeply that whenever any foreign tourist came there, the Maharaja himself introduced him to Mujtaba.

Meanwhile, he began to develop his attachment gradually to literature and culture. It is learnt as per the source available that Mujtaba took the responsibility of translating and editing of ‘Mirate Ahmedi’ written in the Arabic language on the history of Gujarat. But the work was not completed for many a reason. It is also learnt from “BAR” (Baroda Administration Report) that Mujtaba made eleven speeches on religion during the year 1935-36.
ries of speeches also poured in the succeeding year. The “BAR” also lets us know that he took up a project of carrying out a research on the saints and their followers belonging to Gujarat, Hindi, Mathili, Marathi and Bengali sects.

The third Maharaja Sawaji Rao passed away on 6th February 1939. His grandson became the Maharaja of Baroda. Then the number of students of comparative principles of religion decreased. The new Maharaja asked Mujtaba to accept the post of Postmaster General. On the other hand, the Dewan V.T. Krishnamachari did not like Mujtaba. However, considering all these things, Mujtaba did not like to stay there. He resigned from the post.

There are some remarkable incidents in this Baroda-chapter. Firstly, the death of his mother (1938). Second, the demise of his father. He came to his native land in 1939 on leave and that was the last meeting with his father. Third, Mujtaba had his last meeting with Rabindranath 1939; and the excellent description of that very meeting is found in his writing named “Gurudev”. Fourth, he presided over the second annual session of Muslim Sahitya Sansad (Muslim Literary Council) at Sylhet on 14th May, 1939. This speech was his first notable public speech and it was published ‘Masik Mohammadi’ in 1336 BS. But during this period he delivered another speech on Rabindranath in Mumbai organised by Tagore Society. It was presided over by Sarojini Naidu.

Resigning the job at Baroda, Mujtaba again went to Germany in the summer of 1944. Returning from Germany, he settled in Kolkata. He was out of employment. His life took a new turn when he was totally perplexed what to do or not. He took up pen as the means of his living. Mujtaba himself wrote that incident in this way:

"১৯৪৪-এর কাছকাছি আমি বে- (কার) তা বটেই, এবং নিজস্ব বেকার। ... রাঙ্গার কল"
When he fell on evil days very badly, he met Kanai Sarkar suddenly. Kanai was an ex-student of Santiniketan. Kanai was a school student then while Mujtaba belonged to college level. That Kanai Sarkar took Mujtaba to the then editor Suresh Muzumdar of ‘Ananda Bazar Patrika’. Mujtaba turned over a new leaf. Mujtaba began to write after edit twice in a week under the pen name of ‘Satyapir’. The ‘Satyapir’ column began to appear from 18th July, 1945. During this time a few of his writings were also published in ‘Des’ and simultaneously, he started to write for ‘Hindusthan Standard’ under the pen name of ‘Rapirthaurā’. In addition to these, he also began contributing to ‘Kālāntar’, ‘Basumati’, ‘Satyayog’, ‘Matribhūmi’ etc.

Mujtaba admitted in many occasions that being compelled by pressing circumstances he undertook the profession of writing. He called a spade a spade as is evident from his following words:

“কুক্ষর করে মানুষ কেনে যায়। অমিও কুমদলব নিয়ে লেখক হয়েছিলাম। ...লেখকের কর্তব্য যদি পাঠককে মহত্ত্ব করে তোলাই হয়, তবে নিঃসন্দেহে কুমদলব নিয়েই আমি সাহিত্য প্রবেশ করেছিলাম। আমার উদ্দেশ্য ছিল অর্থলাভ।”

As per the source available so far, his story “Nere” can be identified as the first published writing of Mujtaba (‘Muktadhārā’, 1st issue, 1931). We have already given the information that Mujtaba had developed the habit of writing this or that from his student life. Rabindranath himself encouraged Mujtaba at Santiniketan of grow the habit of writing:

“আমার বয়সে যখন উনিশটাক তখন গুরুদেব রবীন্দ্রনাথ আমাকে একদিন বললেন, ‘এবার থেকে তুই লেখা ছাপের আর করতে। ...১৯৩৮-এ গুরুদেবকে প্রণাম করতে এলে তিনি জানতে চাইলেন, আমি কেনে লেখা ছাপায় না কেন? উভয়ে কি বলেছিলুম সেটা আর এখানে বলে কাজ নেই।’”
We can of course guess the “answer”. It is learnt from the writing of Mujtaba’s childhood friend Sayful Alam Khan :

“‘হুলদেব জীবিত অবস্থায় প্রত্যাহারে কিছু লিখিও না’—এটা ছিল তাঁর জীবনের পরিত্রাত্ম ইচ্ছা।”

Mujtaba turned to be a professional writer after the death of the poet. Circumstances compelled him to write, and this crisis was not over even in the last phase of his life. He joined and resigned from job one after another. He had to maintain his livelihood as he was out of employment. Mujtaba wrote in this regard in an interesting fashion:

“...আমি দেখলুম, ঐ এক বই লেখা ছাড়া অন্য কোন উপায়ে পয়সা কামাতে মত বিদে 
আমার ক্রেতাদের দেন। আমার তাঁরপর একটা চাকরি পেয়ে গেলুম। কাজেই লেখা বজ্র করে 
দিলুম। চাকরি ইত্যাদি দিলুম। ফের কলম ধরতে হল। ফের চাকরি। ফের কলম। ফের চাকরি। 
ফের ইত্যাদি।”

By this time Mujtaba took shelter at the residence, 5, Pearl Road, Kolkata, of his childhood friend and classmate and famous Rabindra-specialist Abu Syed Ayub. Mujtaba kept his contact with this residence upto the last breath of his life.

Ayub was down with phthisis. Mujtaba took him to Bangalore. Though Ayub came back after his recovery from illness, but Mujtaba did not. He was there almost for a year. Then Mujtaba began to visit Raman Muharashi’s Arunachal Ashram. What he wrote in this regard to his constant companion of last life Gulam Mustakim can be presented here:

“১৯৪৬ সাল। আমি তখন ব্যাংকলোরে। ...থাকতাম সমুদ্রের পারে এক হোটেলে। হাতে 
অ্যাডেল সহযোগী। বিকেলে এক বছর জুয়েলারীর লোকান্তরে যেতাম আর মাঝে মাঝে সমুদ্রের পারে 
ইটিতাম। ...তখনই আমি দেখে-বিদেখে বইটা লেখা শুরু করি। ...এক বছরের মধ্যে আমি বইটা 
লেখা শেষ করি।”

Though Mujtaba started his writing career mere unwillingly, but it is learnt
from his candid admittance that he began writing 'Desē-Bidesē' at the urge and call of his heart. The eldest daughter Jahanara of Mujtaba's eldest brother Sayed Mustafa used to say often: "ছেট চা যদি এতই জানে তাহলে নিজে একটি বই লিখলেই পারেন।" (If youngest uncle, knows so much, he can easily write a book). Jahanara along with her husband and children died in a shipwreck. Mujtaba kept in his mind the memory of his beloved brother's daughter at the very background of 'Desē-Bidesē', so he dedicated this very book published in 1949 to departed Jahanara.

Abu Syed Ayub as well as another talented young guy called Fazlul Hoque was the first reader of the manuscripts of 'Desē-Bidesē'. Mujtaba's popularity did not spread so much till then. Kanailal Sarkar and Sagarmay Ghose made the arrangements to publish it in 'Des'. Sagarmay Ghose mentioned this matter in his 'Sampādaker Baithake'. It began to be published serially in 'Des' from 13th March, 1948. Mujtaba reached the peak of name and fame within a very short time. It led to a loud uproar in the world of Bengali literature.

However, when his light of fame began spreading far and wide, he delivered a substantial speech as a president in the annual literary conference of Azizul Hoque college, Bagura (12th December, 1948). The topic in the morning—The gradual development of Bengali language and literature. The topic in the evening—The history and culture of Islam.

The audience were spell bound at the knowledge, eloquence, and pervasiveness of Mujtaba. He also addressed the students the following day with an extra ordinary speech. The students of the college were so pleased that they were up and doing to make him the principal of the college. The post of
the principal was lying then vacant, and which was earlier occupied by Dr. Sahidullah (1885-1969). He joined Dhaka University. It is learnt that Sahidullah recommended the name of Mujtaba for principalship before his departure from Bagura. Mujtaba’s eldest brother Sayed Murtaja, the then District Magistrate, Bagura, was the president of the Governing Body of the college. He was not initially interested in doing a job in a mofussil town. It was also proposed by Apuraba Chanda, the then DPI, to appoint Mujtaba as the principal of a Madrasa at Kolkata. Mujtaba at last agreed to go the Bagura. Firstly, being a bachelor, he had a keen desire to spend his days with the family of his elder brother, and second, the pressing demand from the students of Bagura.

Mujtaba joined Bagura College as a principal in January 1949. But here, too, he could not stay for a long time. Quite a few problem came before him at a time. Firstly, the student-party, which was supported by the Muslim League, being defeated in the college election, raised the demand of rescinding the elections. But Mujtaba did not agree to this demand. As a result, these students, going to Dhaka, through the powerful student leaders, placed their allegation to the Chief Minister. Secondly, the annual magazine of that college published in 1949 carried criticisms on the contemporary ministers. The principal Mujtaba wrote the introduction to the magazine. So, he also became the target. Third, then is East Pakistan the government was run by Muslim League, moreover, it was an age of the rise of fundamentalism. Mujtaba was invited as a chief speaker in meeting held at Edward Hall, Bagura to speak on the literature of Rabindranath. It was presided over by his elder brother, a good writer and district Magistrate Murtaja Ali. The fundamentalist government did not have a favourable look for such function. Fourth, Mujtaba’s famous writing
“Pūrba Pakistāner Rastrabhāṣā” (the state language of East-Pakistan) was published in ‘Caturanga’ (August, 1949) during his stay at Bagura. Here in a straight forward way he presented the arguments in favour of the Bengali language. But the government, supported by the Muslim fundamentalists, was in favour of Urdu. So, the government cast a red eye at the writer. Fifth, Mujtaba gave importance of strict discipline in the college administration; but it led to a conspiracy in different circles. Sixth, Mujtaba remarked that Rabindranath was greater than Iqbal, he was in comparable. The fundamentalist-students were in a frenzy. The D M was called in Dhaka. When the chief secretary Aziz Ahmed just began addressing Murtaja haughtily, Murtaja let him know in clear-cut word:

“My brother took Ph.D. degree from Bonn University fifteen years ago. He didnot come seeking a job in an outlying place like Bogra. He can give up this job without hesitation.”

Mujtaba gave up the job and came to Kolkata taking the Indian citizenship. For sometime he taught in Calcutta University in 1950. His ‘Dese-Bidese’ was published in the form of a book during his stay at Bagura.

The country was just free. All the departments were set in new order. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was then the president of Indian Council of Cultural Relations. He was in search of an able secretary for this department. Getting the information from some source or other, he invited Mujtaba. Murtaja Ali wrote:

The arrangements for his food and lodging were made in the Constitution House, Delhi. It is learnt from Murtaja Ali, during this job, Mujtaba edited a trimonthly Arabic newspaper entitled ‘Sakartul Hind’ (Indian Culture). Though the commutator on the basis of a letter written to Pranatos Ghatak, has let us know the name of newspaper as ‘Ekafat-ul-Hind’.

This time the members of Mujtaba’s family took initiative for his marriage, especially the sisters of Mujtaba were keenly interested. This man, who had a bohemian and wandering nature, did hardly think of himself. Hence, it was a late marriage for him at the age 46. The bride was Rabeya Khatun—a learned and highly qualified. She completed her BT course with training from England before the partition of the country. She was the headmistress of Sylhet Government Girl’s School when the marriage proposal was on. During this time while Mujtaba came to Sylhet he had his introduction with her through his sisters. Both Mujtaba and Rabeya were engaged in weddinglock on 11th March 1951 and it was solemnised in the quarter of the superintendent of Meetford Hospital, Dhaka. Though their conjugal lasted nearly 23 years, but they could not enjoy the said years living with one another. They did not citizenship of same country. Apart from that, the post-marriage life of Mujtaba was full of anxieties and problems. Mujtaba always moved from place to place like a migratory bird. Even then, both husband and wife had their meeting in Rajsahi, Kolkata or Dhaka. This sort of isolation slowly but surely grieved him very much. That’s why, by the by he often told:

“জীবনে আমি কয়েকটা ভুল করেছি। প্রথম হলো: বিয়ে করে, দ্বিতীয়ত, কেঁশী বয়সে বিয়ে করে, তৃতীয়ত, বৌ-ছেলেদের সঙ্গে না-থেকে।”

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Mujtaba had no doubt a bantering nature in his personal life, but his personality was not without a strong sense of self-respect. When even any blow came to his self dignity and respect, he gave up the job then and there without thinking anything seriously. He was a man of strong confidence; and for which he did never repent. So, he had to stand against many odd circumstances of life from 1950 till his death. It was not in his nature to stick to any job just flattering anybody servilely. Since he was ever lively in his heart of hearts, he felt suffocated among any type of stereotyped life.

Even holding such a high post in Delhi, he failed to check his wandering mind. So, he wrote in a letter:

“এখানে আসা অবধি অন্য কোনো দীর্ঘতর লেখা এ-রূপ-আড়াই বৎসরের ভিতর লিখে উঠতে পারিনি। আপনিও আপিস করেন তাই কিছুটা অনুমান করতে পারবেন, দশটা পাঁচটা করার পর-বন্ধু কারে কয়।

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নিম্নতে এসে

‘আশার জন্যে তুলি কি ফল লভিনু হায়, তাই ভাবি মনে।’

It is to be kept in mind, Mujtaba has by this time already introduced a new tradition in Bengali literature. He was honoured with Narasingh Das Award for his ‘Deśe-Bidesê’ in 1949 by Delhi University. Many of his short writings were also published this time in ‘Basumati’, ‘Ananda Bāzār Patrikā’, and ‘Deś’ etc. Amid the sky-kissing popularity for ‘Deśe-Bidesê’, his excellent and attractive writings were published under ‘Pancatantra’ column. That is to say, the culture of literature became his sole absorption.

He marked that some of the employees of Indian Council for Cultural Relations almost remained absent from their duties. Mujtaba saw their face only on the payment day. Mujtaba informed Maulana Azad of the matter; but the latter did not pay any heed it, as a result, the disappointed Mujtaba ten-
dered his resignation and went to Kolkata. It happened in December, 1952.

The first son of Mujtaba was born in 1952. His good name was Sayed Musaraf Ali, and the nick name was Firoz.

Mujtaba was again out of employment for the first few months of 1953. At that time, he introduced ‘Saptaparani’ column in ‘Ananda Bāzār Patrikā’ under the pen-name of ‘Raypithaurā’ and another new pseudonym was ‘Golam Maula’ and during this time his famous writings of ‘Caca Kahini’ were published.

It is learnt from the source available that Mujtaba was successfully ranked among the first four out of 600 candidates that faced Union Public Commission. The given fact was not mentioned earlier in any kind of informative writings related to Mujtaba.

However, he consequently joined New Delhi Radio Station as an OSD on 29th April 1953. Almost within three months (11 July, 1953) he joined Kolkata Radio Station as an OSD; and again after a few months, that is on 7th December, 1953, he was transferred to Cuttack Radio Station as station Director.

Mujtaba happily spent his days in Cuttack. The ex-student of ‘Visva-Bharti’ Mr. Naba Kumar Choudhury was then the Chief Minister of Orissa. Both sea and solitary environment tantalised him very much; and his first novel ‘Abisvasya’ was published while he was staying in Cuttack.

This period happened to a delightful one for Mujtaba’s life. The first child was born with smiles and joys in the family. Now and then he crossed over to East Pakistan and Rabeya Ali too came in this country and stayed with Mujbata. He completed his unfinished travelogue for the children at the
request of his wife. It is named 'Jale-Dāngay' and was dedicated to his son. He wrote letter after letter loaded with emotions for the little children. They would read one day in their grown-up stage.

He was again transferred to Patna Radio Station on 24th January, 1955 at the address of 4, Mangles Road, Patna. It is learnt from a letter written to his friend Pranatos Ghatak in the beginning of the eight month from the date of his joining at Patna that crucial time descended in his service life. He wrote

"পাটনা
5/9/55
আমার শরীর এখন অভ্যন্ত কাটে। কিন্তু শরীরিক কারণে নয়। আজ ইতিহাস রেডিয়ার
ঠাইরা আমার সঙ্গে একাধিকবার এমনই নীচ ব্যবহার করেছেন যে আমি স্পষ্ট রুখতে পারছি তারা
আমাকে চান না। তবুও আমি টিকে থাকতে পারতুম। আমি তাদের দয়াতে চাকরী পাইনি।... আমি
শায়ারী।

একারা বছরে চাকরী ছাড়া কি সহজ কর্ম?" 90

We also know of his anxieties and disturbances that he faced in his service life from other letters written during this time. He wrote on 31/12/55:

"আমাকে চাকরী ছাড়তেই হবে।" He wrote in another letter dated 06/3/56: "পাঁচ মিনিট পূর্বে
kর্তরা বিদ্বেষী থেকে ফেলে জিনিষেন, আমি মন পরিপাত বিদ্বেষী রওয়ানা হই, সেখানকার Delhi Staff
Training School-এর চার্জ নিতে, Principal রূপে। আমি উল্লভ প্রতিবাদ জানিয়েছি। কিন্তু যেহেতু এক
মাসের বিনোদনের চাকরী ছাড়া যায় না, অতঃপর আমাকে যেতেই হবে।" He wrote from Delhi in
his another letter of 06/4/56: "আমি অন্যতম মনকষ্টে আছি। চাকরী resign দেবার চেষ্টা প্রাপ্তকর
করছি কিন্তু পেরে উঠছিনা। এরা আমাকে গেলেন না, ছাড়েনও না।" 91

He seemed to have said good bye to government job at the end of 1956. We know from his twin letters of 13 November 1956 and 3rd January 1957 respectively that he had decided to stay at Bolpur permanently. We get the mention of this crucial period of Mujtaba’s life in the editorial comment of ‘Masik Basumatti’, Agrahayan 1360 BS, p.336-37:
Then Tarasankar himself and many other appreciating personalities of Mujtaba tried to get him transferred to Kolkata; and even the heep of Dr. Bidhan Roy was sought. But “two gentlemen” from various ways poisoned the ears of Dr. Roy, that is, the roots of conspiracy against Mujtaba by this time got very very firm. Though Mujtaba was shattered in the battle of his life, but he was able to win the hearts of lacs of readers by means of his ‘Deše-Bideše’, ‘Pancatantra’, ‘Cācā Kahini’, ‘Jale-Dāngay’, ‘Abisvasya’ etc. There was no dearth of his well wishers even in this country. Still he had to spend someday friendlessly. It was not always possible for him to enjoy the company of his wife and two sons. (the second son Sayed Jaglul Ali was born in 1955). He enjoyed his days with his cook and the pet dog ‘master’. The conflict of life, the hypocrisy and conspiracy by men, isolation from family, home and shelterless conditions probably led him towards finer depression and dejection. So, he tried to get his solace of mind in booziness.

Mujtaba began to stay at Santiniketan during the first part of 1957. He wrote: “পরম শান্তিতে ও আনন্দে আছি”. His present set up consisted of a cook and three rooms; but he was out of employment. He could not even manage a job in Santiniketan too. Mujtaba passed through unspeakable financial crisis from 1957 to 1961. We have recovered some of his letters written during this period. We get the picture of those awful days from his letters:
Even during these terrific days of his life, he kept his readers charmed by means of his ‘Pancatantra’ suppressing the agonies and griefs of his life. ‘Sabnam’ was composed at this particular period. It is assumed from the last letter quoted above that if he got the money from the sale of ‘Sabnam’, he expected to stand on his feet again. Redundant description of something is marked in the writings of Mujtaba. It is understood, as he was lost in writing for the sake of money only, so he preferred the importance of money to that of writing. So, we get many unwanted descriptions in many of his writings including ‘Sabnam’. Another point is to be remembered here, this particular aspect of his like reminds us the life of poet Michel Madhusudhan Datta.

However, during that particular period the ex-student of Santiniketan Sudhi Ramjan Das was appointed as the Vice-Chancellor of ‘Visva-Bharati’. The post of reader in the department Islamic History in ‘Visva-Bharati’ was lying then vacant due to death of Nirode Bihari Ray. Practically due to back-up of Sudhi Ranjan, Mujtaba joined against that vacant post on adhoc basis on 18th August, 1961. He ventured for four and a half years to live just on the strength of pen.

During this time his ‘Dhūp Chāya’, ‘Caturanga’, ‘Sabnam’, ‘Srestha
Galpa' etc. were published.

Everybody knows that the year 1961 was observed as the Birth Anniversary of Rabindranath throughout the world including India. Though Mujtaba was in Santiniketan in April/May of 1961, but he did not participate in any event. He joined on 18th August— and prior to that he suffered from mental agonies due to his jobless condition. Moreover, he could not adjust himself with the total atmosphere of Santiniketan. He wrote in a letter (16/5/61) to Rajsekhar Basu’s grand daughter’s son Dipankar Basu:

‘এখানে যা হয়েছে তা অবশ্যই। বাঙালী কবি রবীন্দ্রনাথকে কেউ খ্রিয় করেনি। করেছে পোস্ট টিগোরকে। প্রধান পুরোহিত ছিলেন পশ্চিমজী ও রাধাকৃষ্ণ। এঁরা তে ‘সোনার বাতার কবি রসিকচক্রকে চেনেন না; এঁরা চেনেন গীদাসালি, চিট্টা, সাহাত্র (সাধনা) লেখক মিস্তার টিগোরকে। আর তবৎ কার্যক্রম ইন্ফরটাইত। আমি অবশ্য কোনো পরবে যাইনি—’”

Mujtaba was to practically teach German, as in reality the department of ‘Islamic Studies’ did have no students at all. Besides this, he was to look after side by side some higher research works also. An advertisement was displayed in 1962 for the post of a Reader in ‘Visva-Bharati’; and where Mujtaba was himself a candidate. Though his post was permanent, but he failed to enjoy the justice in term of the service-related facilities. The Santiniketan where he came in his childhood with a dream has then taken a new turn with the changes of time. One of the verbal conditions of the job was that since his department practically did have no students, so, Mujtaba had to engage himself in research-making works. Giving his consent, Mujtaba wrote, “Bange Muslim Sanskriti” (Muslim Culture in Bengal) in ‘Visva-Bharati Patrika’, (Sraban/Asvin,1370 BS). He did no other research type works except this. So, the authorities were displeased with him. Second, then his addiction to wine grew more and more. But he did never create an indecent and unpleasant
situation under the impact of drinks. Mujtaba was appointed during the term of Sudhi Ranjan Das; and Kalidas Bhattacharya became Vice-Chancellor after Mr. Das. The conflict between Mujtaba and Kalidas Bhattacharya reached its climax over these matters; nevertheless, Mujtaba didn’t leave Santiniketan. He got his first son Firoz admitted in Santiniketan. His wife Rebeya also came there to pass the holidays. Even then he gradually became friendless. The condition of this period is available in the reminiscences jotted down by Annadasankar Roy:

"তখন একদিন আমার থাকলেন, যতদিন আমার চাকরি ছিল না সকল আমার বন্ধ ছিল, এখন সকলের আমি ইর্ষার পাত্র। তখন কেউ আর তার সঙ্গে আম্বা মারে না। একটি আলাপের পাত্তে পুরোটাই। সেইমোট তার সাথী বলতে কেউ নেই, পরিবারের লোকেরা অনেক দুরে। তখন তার সঙ্গী খোঁ দামী বিদেশী মাদ।" 95

Mujtaba did never think of leaving Santiniketan even struck by deep depression and dejection. He was very much shocked to learn through a letter, 30 June, 1965, that he would be released from his job. 96 He then left Santiniketan in no time and went to Bolpur. It is learnt from the reminiscences of Annada Sankar and writings of Gauri Ayub that then Mujtaba was suspected to be a Pakistani spy and it cut him to the quick very much. Gauri Ayub wrote in this regard:

"সে সময়ে বোলপুরে তার বাড়িতে গোয়েন্দা সম্প্রতি থেকে পুলিশ গিয়ে পাকিস্তানের সঙ্গে তার সম্পর্ক বিষয়ে প্রশ্ন করেছিল। কোন সংবাদপত্রে এ সমস্ত সে সময়ে বিকৃত হয়ে আরেকতে দেখা যায় আমাদের মন অত্যন্ত ধারাপ হওয়া সঙ্গেই কিছু করার ছিল না, যখন শুনলে আমার একজন শ্রদ্ধার পার প্রবীন গাজীবাদী এই কারণে মুজতবাল আলী সম্পর্কে কিছু সংশয় প্রকাশ করেছেন, তখন আর সহ্য করতে পারেনি।" 97

Mujtaba left Santiniketan with grief and with an offended state of mind and took shelter in a rented house at Nicapatti in Bolpur. These days were horrific for him. On one hand, there was war-breaking atmosphere in East
Pakistan, and on the other hand, he was discharged from his job. He passed his days most anxiously for his wife and children and relations living in East Pakistan, and that Mujtaba who once gave up one job after another quite easily, today the irony of fate made him jobless at his old age. Then it was a rule in ‘Visva-Bharati’ that the service term could be extended up to 65 years, but Mujtaba received his release letter at the age of 60. It was indeed a heart-breaking condition. He could go neither to East Pakistan nor to Kolkata. Gauri Ayub wrote that the residence of 5, Pearl Road, where Mujtaba usually came to stay had now gone under the care and control of some other person for some special reasons. So, it was not possible for Mujtaba to return to Kolkata after his departure from Santiniketan.

He came to rented house at Nicapatti, Bolpur in the middle of 1965. Mujtaba’s life experienced a lot of hardships from 1957 to 1965. His days passed in anxieties and financial crisis minus his service life at Santiniketan. We get some hints of this period in his novel ‘Sahar-iar’. One hand, he met with deception, hypocrisy and conspiracy from men, and on the other hand, he received honour and fame from a few places. He was given “Suresh Chandra Mazumdar Award” from ‘Ananda Bāzār’ in 1961. He took the seat of Acharya (scriptural teacher) in 1962 in the ‘Paus Utsav’ of Santiniketan and he had to recite the mantras (incantations) and hymn.

He built a house at his own expense at the upper storey of the building at Nicapatti in which he stayed. Paints were brought from Guwahati. Riten Gangopadhyay of Tezpur was then the leading dealer in Guwahati of a famous paints company. Mujtaba had all sorts of correspondence with Sri Gangopadhyay sent paints for painting the house of Nicapatti. From two
preserved personal letters we come to know that Mujtaba decided to pass the rest of his life by means of writing staying in the decorated house.98

But what is proposed can not be always materialised. He was within a limit in Santiniketan, but coming to Nicapatti he was much over topped with depression and anxieties that his addiction to drinks crossed all limits. The mercury of his anxieties began rising up as soon as the Indo-Pak war broke out in 1965.

Mujtaba returned to Kolkata at the end of 1968. As per one of his unpublished letters preserved at our at present, it is known that by that time his intimacy developed with the family of Justice Masud of Park Circus, Nasiruddin Road. He used to stay there then. Probably he stayed a few months at Nasiruddin Road. Afterwards he again came to Abu Syed Ayub’s 5, Pearl Road, He came to kill the remaining years of his life to that house which he left in 1956.

During his days at Nicapatti, he had a correspondence with ‘Des’ for a particular purpose. He wrote Riten Gangopadhyay from Nicapatti on 31st July, 1967 :

"Dangaria
Reten C. Ganguli,
Jenson & Nicholson Ltd.
G.N. Bordoli Road
Ambon,
Guwahati-1

My dear Riten,
"DESH" insists that I should continue on Israel. After all I lived there for two months in 1935, know the history of the Jews...." 99

He received a little financial help due to this letter. Gauri Ayub described
It is learnt from the writing of Gauri Ayub then people from Bangladesh disturbed in many ways. For all such circumstances he was out of hearts. Sometimes this ever pleasant man lost temper. He lived in a room of the second floor. The room was full of books. War for liberation of Bangladesh was going on then. A young boy called Golam Mostakim fleeing from Bangladesh took shelter in Kolkata. He was the shadow of Mujtaba for the last phase of his life. We come to know from the book for Mostakim that nearly three months—from August, 1971 to September 21, Mujtaba was under treatment in a nursing Home at Goriahat Road. Mujtaba left for Jasidi on 22nd September with Dwarikanath Mitra for change. Dwarikanath bore the expenses of Mujtaba’s treatment. They returned from Jasidi on 2nd November.

It is learnt from the writing of Samarendra Sen Gupta that both loneliness and depression had already over taken Mujtaba and what is known as alcoholic polyneuritis in medical literature—that affect had already started. He used to be under the spell of drinks right from the morning with sips after
sips. The wine glass in his right grip and the left grip held the strange books. He slept on a low cot. He spent the whole day in this way except the evening meeting. His health gradually deteriorated due to irregularities and depression. His follower Dwarik Mitra got him recovered from illness many times by sending him to Nursing Home. 102 Mujtaba then actually lost all the optimistic and positive thoughts regarding life. He wrote to his friend Sayful Alam on 08/11/66: “মৃত্যু আসছে। কোনো জিনিস কিনতে পেলেই তাবি, আর করিনই বাচবো, কি দরকার?” This thought slowly condemned and smashed his life.

Nevertheless, he had to write for his livelihood. Sometimes his hand trembled. The disease from which he suffered was soraisis. He was unable to write, still then he had to write for money. The sale of books came down. Or, it might be that profit monger publishers deprived him of his due royalty. Samarendra Sen Gupta took down the dictation of last few instalments of ‘Pancatantra’. Samarendra went on taking down what was dictated by Mujtaba.

Samarendra wrote:

“শেষের দিকে মেধা, মনন বা তাঁর অতি বিখ্যাত লেখনশৈলী——কোনোটাই তেমন কাজ করছিল না।...তার বিশ্ব ওগোলা নিতে সংকোচ হতো। নিদারুণ অর্থভাবই তাকে কথা করত ঐ অ-মুজ্জিতীয়স্তা লেখাগোলা লিখতে।” 103

Thus came down the end of the famous writings belonging to ‘Pancatantra’ of Bengali literature. What is more staggering shock than this! Many people pass comment the talent and creativity of Mujtaba were not so displayed in other books keeping aside ‘Desè-Bidesè’, ‘Cācā Kāhinī’, ‘Pancatantra’ etc. But if we look into the life of Mujaba, the veracity can be realised from some other angle. Besides his ‘Desè-Bidesè’ and ‘Sabnam’ written at a stretch, all other writings were under the pressing need of money. The distinguished writer wrote in ‘Des’ (2nd February 2004) as we could not
provide relief and leisure for Mujtaba, so, there was the premature death of his
talent and calibre. The comment is perfectly right. The period when he could
have created something for Bengali literature, he experienced then inexpressible
miseries in his life. Yet some of his books were published from 1965 till
his death. ‘Barababu’, ‘Du-harā’, ‘Pancatantra’ (Part II) and ‘Hasya-madhur’
were published in 1966, and ‘Pachandasai’, ‘Raja Ujir’ in 1967, ‘Sahar iar’ in
1969, and ‘Hitler’ in 1970 and ‘Kato-nā Asrujal’ in 1971. He wrote it at Jasidi
after his recovery from illness. ‘Musāphir’ was also published in that very
year and it was the last book published in his life time. The last book and
novel ‘Tulanāhīna’ was published posthumously. The plot of the novel which
is based on the background of war for liberation of Bangladesh mirrors his
mental oscillation to some extent. Most probably he completed the book
hurriedly for money under the pressure of the publisher.

Mujtaba went to Dhaka from Kolkata in January, 1972. He got the com­
pany of his wife and sons after a long time. The war stopped. East Pakistan is
now independent Bangladesh.

Initially Mujtaba’s mind was happy and joyful after coming in contact of
his wife and sons. Rabeya too nursed her husband as best as she could. But
Mujtaba had a grief-stricken heart as his sons did not mix with him so freely
as he wanted. Mujtaba wanted to enjoy his own self in his sons. Keeping the
memory of his childhood in his mind, he got the first son Firoz admitted in
Santiniketan. The unkind political event called the partition massacred the life
of Mujtaba. A wall of distance was built up between him and his children
remaining away from then year after year.

Nevertheless, he keenly longed heart and boul to come back to the rhythm
of life. He took up his pen again in 1973 to describe the contemporary political situations of Afghanistan. He began contributing "Paribartane Aparibartaniya" to 'Purbades' of Dhaka. Moreover, he also wrote some short writings for 'Bicitra', 'Betar Bangla' etc.

He celebrated Id festival along with his family and kith and kin at the residence named 'Prantik' in October, 1973 situated at the dead end of Road No. I, Dhanmandi. He returned to Kolkata on 29th October; and here he had a mind to write a book on Sherlock Homes but that desire was not fulfilled.

Mujtaba returned to Kolkata probably for two reasons. Firstly, he no longer liked to kill the liberty of his wondering life. As he considered it a sin to live a life leaving away his wife and sons, so he thought that marriage was not applicable for a bohemian person like him. He faced another problem in Dhaka. His wife's various diseases were detected. Besides diabetes, she suffered from 'chronic digestive ailment'. She had started losing eyesight. Rabeya came to Kolkata for treatment. Both her own illness and the miserable condition of her husband disgusted her very much. Mujtaba still then continued his habit of taking alcohol, but Rabeya prevented him reminding him the career of his sons. Mujtaba answered: "আমার ড্রিংক করা দেখে ওরা শিখবে?" -তা আমি তো বাইশটা ভাষা জানি—ওরা সেখান থেকে দুঘাটা শিখুক না। However, Mujtaba wanted Kolkata to have as his shelter place. But Dhaka was never his favourite place. He wrote to his childhood friend: "আমার ডালোবাসা সিলেট, মৌলীবাজার এবং কিছুটা শাঙ্কিনিরকেনের প্রতি".

Mujtaba once replied while Gajendra Kumar Mitra asked he did live in East Bengal permanently: "তুমি কেফেছেহারার। ওখানে বিভ্রাতর্থী কি নাশনাল লাইব্রেরীর মতো লাইব্রেরী আছে?" Therefore, it is understood from all those things that Dhaka was not his choiceful place.
His disease was diagnosed after few days of his return to Kolkata—it was ‘Cerebral thrombosis’. Rabeya was not informed of it at first at the advice of Mujtaba. We know from the writings of Golam Mostakim that Pasupati Khan afterwards informed Rabeya in toto over telephone. Then Ghantu Bagci (Retin Bagci) and Nilima Das Gupta always stood by Mujtaba. It was also not possible for Mujtaba to reach Dhaka immediately for the loss of passport. Any way, after the recovery of the passport, Mujtaba, who was seriously ill, was brought to Dhaka by air on 13th December, 1973. His right side of the body was totally benumbed by paralysis. He could not even utter a word. The man who charmed everybody throughout his life by means of flawless talking had totally become dumb today. He had then a bristly (bearded) face and dull eyesight. But who hasn’t appreciated his physical beauty.

Sayed Mujtaba Ali was admitted to Dhaka Medical College on 18th December 1973. According to doctor’s assumption, Mujtaba would need a few weeks for his recovery. Mujtaba was in hospital up to 4th January, 1973. General Osmani visited him and the Indian High Commissioner Subimal Dutta in Bangladesh also came to see him. His condition slowly improved to some extent. He could even utter a word gradually. Small humorous talks began coming out from his mouth in the hospital.

Though Mujtaba returned from hospital with little improvement, but his right hand became totally useless. This is that hand by dint of which he wrote many a priceless book of Bengali literature — it is now paralysed for ever, and for which his repentance knew no bound. Whenever he thought of it, he seemed to be emotional and as a result tears glistened in the corners of his eyes. He was to move and put on clothes with the help of other people. He
was taken regularly to Dr. Gastor, an American physician in Sere Bangla Hospital, for electric heat in his right hand. He was to take exercise for his hand.

Though his hand was paralysed, but Mujtaba, who had gift of the gab, continued with his excellently learned talks, such as, he advised Golam Mostakim on 29th January—say, ten days before his death:

"তুমি যদি লেখক হতে চাও তাহলে তোমার পাঁচটা জিনিস থাকতে হবে। সেগুলো হলেঃ"

a. *Wide Travelling*
b. *Depth of Travelling*
c. *Characterisation*
d. *Sense of Lyricism*

*and e. Imagination*" 109

Mujtaba was attacked with stroke in the night of 8th February. He was admitted to P.G. Hospital on 10th February. Then he was in coma.

Breathing was not even normal. His relatives, and friends crowded the hospital complex at the turn of his condition critical. Some people began wiping their tears, while others went on reciting the holy Koran both in the cabin of the hospital and on the verandah of the cabin. The face of the patient turned pale at about 10 o’clock in the morning followed by rapid deterioration. Sayed Mujtaba Ali, a best artist of Bengali literature of all ages, breathed his last at 11.50.
Notes


5. Ibid.


B. Ibid. p. 8.


13. Ibid. p. 8.


16. Ibid. 107.


18. Ibid. p. 29.
23. Ibid. p.40.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid. p.39
40. Sayed Mujtaba Alir Patraguccha, ed. by Bhismadev Choudhury, 1st edn, 1993, p.49
42. Parimal Goswami, Smyiticitrān, p.130-32.
46. Ibid. p.58.
48. Ibid. p.197.
49. Ibid. p.283.
51. Ibid. p.84.
52. Ibid. p.209.
54. Ibid. p.12.
56. Ibid. p.59.
58. Ibid, p.3.
59. Ibid. p.11.


76. Ibid. Vol. IV, p. 69.


82. Ibid. p. 17.

83. Ibid. p. 17.


88. **Bangiya Sahitya Parisat Patrika**, 109 Barsa, 1-2 issue, p.188.
99. Ibid.
103. Ibid. p.56.
105. Ibid. p.126.
109. Ibid. p.139.

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