Preface

I feel greatly honoured to edit this publication which attempts to present the multi-faceted-life of the late Dr. Zakir Husain, through the eyes of those who had the privilege of knowing him.

It was very lucky that I came in contact with him when he was Vice-Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University. My first meeting with him took place at the official residence of the Vice-Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University, in connection with forming an association in Aligarh to bring the University and City elite together on a common platform to bridge the then existing gulf between the two which was the cause of many misgivings. Zakir Saheb, as usual, was hesitant in the beginning but agreed to become its Patron, when I told him of the promised support of Prof. Hadi Hasan, Prof. Mohd. Habib, Prof. A. Bose and others. The Association, unfortunately, proved a short-lived affair, but my contacts with Zakir Saheb, as the years rolled by became close—so much so that I often sought his valuable guidance even in my personal matters.

Unassuming and generous to a fault, I found him always ready to help the needy and espouse the genuine cause. President V. V. Giri has aptly described Zakir Saheb, his immediate predecessor in office as “Ajathasathru”. Zakir Saheb had made life into a form of grace and mastered the gentle words that turneth away wrath. His most creative period were the years he spent giving concrete shape to Gandhiji’s dream of “Nai Talim”. Even these, however, constituted only one side of his versatile personality which, as Dr. Karan Singh points out in this collection of memories about him, exuded a form of fragrance of life.
The recollections about Zakir Saheb, a life-sketch and his selected works brought together in this volume are meant not just as a memorial to the great man. They should give us an insight and an intimate glimpse of one of the most graceful and creative minds that the struggle of independence produced. In that respect this volume is both a homage and an inspiration.

The Zakir Husain Educational and Cultural Foundation of which Dr. G. S. Dhillon, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha is the President, intends to pursue the creative work that the late President had started in educational and cultural fields. To this intended effort, we hope this volume would form a curtain raiser too.

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Radhey Mohan