

April, 2002. Rita and I were invited to Farida's house, and these are the stories she told us..

First story

Farida has two daughters and a son. Also, another son, who is in a school in C. MO. Farida's husband was with the intelligence section of the communist government under Najib (1986-1992). When Najib was killed by the Taliban (April, 1992), 25 days later they came to their house and took her husband out and killed him. They hid the children in the bedrooms and he told her not to resist because they would come in anyway. She eventually insisted on finding him and went around to some places to ask but got no help. Eventually someone whom he had known in the communist party called her and told her where to go. His body was in a certain hospital. She went there, got there early and insisted on opening the gate, was very upset and angry, and when she opened the gate someone hit her arm and broke it. They had refused entry to her but eventually after her arm was broken they let her in. But when she saw her husband's body his face was so mangled and blue that she could not recognize him. She said she would not take the body home, and anyway her arm was broken. So she never was able to give him a burial.

Farida said she took her family about two weeks later to Pakistan. She went to the UN and asked for them to protect her. They said they would try to protect her for two weeks but she would then be on her own, because they had no power. She had saved wealth in the form of jewels and also had money in both banks [Da Afghanistan Bank, Bank-iMilli] but so far has not recovered any of that. She sold some of her goods and then left by car to a point in Jaji-Manqal, eventually walked across the mountains to get into Pakistan. She had enough wealth to keep her family going and they lived in Pindi, after staying with a relative in Islamabad for two weeks. She also returned, under a burka with her son to Ghazni, the home of her husband, and sold his land, which she had inherited. The money kept them alive in Pakistan for three years.

Her husband had been a Parchami Communist for many years and so had been active in the party and apparently had some clout in the communist regime. He was Qizilbash, a Shi'a, and her family was Sunni. The difference didn't seem to matter much because he named his children alternately Sunni and Shia names. Qizilbash were considered desirable for

marriage because they were tall and considered handsome, and, as she put it, they were rich. Although Shi`a they were not looked down on. She expressed regret at the way the Hazaras (other Shi`as) had to live; they could not be in schools and they could not get good jobs.

Second story

Farida's mother was married to her father as part of a peace transaction between two estranged Pushtun lineages. Her grandfather was killed in a fight over land and after negotiations it was decided that the killer, rather than being killed, should hand over a girl to the deceased person's family. But the killer didn't have a child, so they took the daughter of his brother and gave her as a promised marital partner for the son of the deceased who was about 5 years old, the girl being barely a month old. So the girl was taken from her mother and given to the other family and raised in that family. When she was old enough she was then given to the son of the deceased. She had her first child at 14. This was Farida's mother. The killer was her mother's uncle and the victim was her grandfather.