

## **A Tribute to Mansoor Ali, Dominion Traders, Karachi, Pakistan.**

On Monday, September 12 we were deeply saddened to learn that Mansoor Ali, Executive Director for Dominion Traders in Pakistan, unexpectedly died of heart failure. Along with the Ali family, staff and workshop artisans at Dominion Traders we grieve the loss of Mansoor.

Mansoor was a pioneer in the practice of fair trade in Pakistan. His family moved to Pakistan in 1947 when India gained independence and Pakistan was formed as a new country. Mansoor's father was a college professor in Delhi, India and hoped to continue his career after he and his family established a new home in Karachi, Pakistan.

Unfortunately, he never did find a job as a professor in Pakistan. Eventually, he learned the trade of making decorative products out of onyx and marble stone and his young son, Mansoor, learned the trade in the family workshop that became known as Dominion Traders.

In 1983, Paul Leatherman, director of SELFHELP Crafts at the time, met Mansoor in Karachi and placed the first order for onyx products from Dominion Traders. As orders grew, Mansoor recruited workers from families who were moving into Karachi in search of work. Many of these were families who had fallen on hard times, had to give up their rural farm life and moved to the big city in order to find work to survive.

Mansoor gave people jobs, trained them to become highly skilled stone workers and then set them up in their own workshops so they could be self-employed business owners. Today Dominion Traders includes more than 20 family-owned workshops employing family members and neighbors.

Mansoor was a fine Muslim man who believed that he had a responsibility to share some of his good fortune with people who were less fortunate than himself. By employing people who were in desperate need of work and enabling them to become workshop owners, he found an effective way to share his resources and to help people to re-establish themselves and build a hopeful future for their families. A notable feature of Dominion Traders is that people of different religions and creeds work together in friendly and cordial relationships. Much of this is a credit to Mansoor and how he accepted people into Dominion Traders regardless of religious or ethnic background.

Mansoor's family, his work colleagues, the stone artisans in Dominion Traders workshops and Ten Thousand Villages will miss Mansoor dearly. Our thoughts and prayers are with Mansoor's family and the larger Dominion Traders family. We wish them all the best as they recover from this loss and hope and pray that Dominion Traders will continue to be a strong source of employment for the families who depend on this work.

*--Doug Dirks, Ten Thousand Villages Marketing Director*