

Bangabandhu and Nelson Mandela

Their decisions regarding amnesty and Truth Commission

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AFTER a long bloody war of nine months Bangladesh became independent throwing the yoke of Pakistani colonialism in 1971. After independence the most pertinent question cropped up: How could, and/or should, a nation deal with war criminals and their collaborators? There can be two options—(1) holding a trial for all criminals and collaborators or (2) letting the small fish go but holding a trial for the policy makers, and others, directly involved in the heinous crimes of rape, arson and premeditated killings. The government, led by Bangabandhu, opted for the latter.

With the advantage of hindsight many a decision that the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman made, and/or had to make, have been analyzed, questioned and often criticized. It is understandable that not all the decisions of a leader, even a great leader such as Bangabandhu, can be made without being scrutinised, criticised or questioned. But perhaps the most misinterpreted, and misunderstood, political decision that Bangabandhu had ever made has never been questioned so much as his decision of granting "amnesty" to the collaborators of the 1971 war.

The importance of understanding the nature, background and purpose of the said amnesty lies in the fact that it is considered to be one of the most misunderstood, and misinterpreted, decisions that created confusion even among Bangabandhu's own bona fide followers, let alone the general mass. Even many of the followers of Bangabandhu who think, and very rightly so, that Bangabandhu was right in deciding in favour of the amnesty, are not clear in this regard. Many of them support or, at least, try to understand that the action of Bangabandhu, though true in spirit, cannot be detrimental to the interest of the nation, but without knowing the reason why. But a vast majority of the supporters and general public seem to buy the propaganda theory. And thus, we have been committing an historical injustice to the political acumen, and philosophical spirit, behind the decision of the great leader.

This article will clarify what that amnesty declaration really meant, who were covered by the said declaration and who were not. How did the misconception spread, and for whose benefit; and what was the purpose of such a propaganda campaign. Also, this article will defend the decision Bangabandhu took in the light of present day achievements in different countries, particularly in South Africa by its great leader, Nelson Mandela. The comparison will shed light on the depth, and far-sightedness, of the decision Bangabandhu took even before many others had done, or could comprehend.

This writing will try to dispel the doubt so successfully, and intentionally, created by the anti-

liberation forces, and maybe unintentionally, but sincerely, subscribed to by many of pro-liberation camp. This writing is meant to clarify the matter for the followers of Bangabandhu, and for the next generation, who have the right to know the unfabricated, and undistorted, history of the nation, and the politics and policies of its founding father.

The promulgation of amnesty

The so-called general amnesty was promulgated on November 30, 1973. The amnesty declared by the administration of Bangabandhu exempted all who were accused, and/or sentenced, under the Collaborators' Act except those who were accused, and/or sentenced, for committing rape, arson and premeditated murders. Thus, the declaration of amnesty exempted, very categorically, the persons accused, and/or sentenced, under the sections 302 (murder), 304 (attempt to murder), 376 (rape), 4435 (arson), 436 (arson to destroy homestead) and 438 (arson in the ship or vessels). This article mentions it as "so-called general amnesty" to press home the argument that the nature of the amnesty was not that general in character; rather it was a qualified amnesty with significant reservations. The language of the amnesty is very clear; that the master minds of rape, arson and premeditated murder, and the actual executors would not be spared from being tried, while the "foot-soldiers," and mere supporters, would be pardoned. Now that it is clear who was supposed to be tried, and who was not, this article intends to find out why the decision was misinterpreted, and how.

Objective, modalities and effect of the propaganda

The misinterpretation of the amnesty, and its language, was done in a way that gives the impression that it was Bangabandhu who was to blame for pardoning the collaborators; and had he not done so the perpetrators of war crimes would not have been able to come to the forefront of political life. The propagandists, often in the guise of pro-liberation forces, tried to sell the idea that it was Bangabandhu who sowed the seed of anti-liberation forces through the decision of granting amnesty.

This is a double-edged criticism. First, it succeeded in creating confusion. It even created confusion among many bonafide followers of Bangabandhu. And secondly, it has been used to justify the steps taken by the subsequent regimes in rehabilitating those war criminals, and in downplaying the criminal intentions, and actual motivations, of those regimes by passing the buck on to Bangabandhu.

In this way the propagandists have been trying to establish an historical untruth that granting amnesty was a political blunder made by Bangabandhu, and that the

Bangabandhu's decision survives the acid test of history. Therefore, it is time to bring those unrepentant, and ungrateful, souls to trial who professedly have chosen not to be covered by that amnesty. It is so because amnesty is for those who could not recognise the gravity of their actions at the time of committing those crimes. But a person takes himself, or herself, out of that when he, or she, recognises the fact that he or she, was not out of his, or her, mind at the time of

subsequent regimes, valid or invalid, merely continued that process. But that was not, is not and will not be true. A pardon is a pardon. It does not absolve one of his guilt, or criminal liability, but only reduces, or condones, the punishment. Those who have been granted amnesty are still criminals, and other than spending time in prison, or being executed, they can only live their lives but they cannot take part in the political life of the country, or its policy-making.

The motives of this propaganda are—first, to cover up, and gloss over, the different steps taken by subsequent regimes who successfully rehabilitated those raskars, and secondly, this propaganda, at least, served the purpose of apportioning the sin equally between Bangabandhu, and those subsequent rulers, in rehabilitating those raskars. Thus, this theory imposed the burden of original sin on Bangabandhu, successfully creating the confusion that the subsequent usurpers of power only followed the suit of Bangabandhu. But all these theories are blatantly untrue. Bangabandhu did what he, as a great politician and philosopher, like Nelson Mandela, could ever do to lead a nation towards prosperity, and to heal the wounds of the millions.

The subsequent part of the writing will attempt to find out the historical significance and impact on the society of Bangladesh.

Reason behind the decision of amnesty

We can begin with the question, what could Bangabandhu do? In other words, what alternatives and options were there after a war that left a nation divided—both nationally and internationally, and devastated—both infrastructurally and emotionally. I venture to answer this question first with a view to using the process of elimination to reach a conclusion.

Practical aspect of the decision of amnesty: First, after the war, when the barbaric army of Pakistan surrendered, all the prisoners of war (POWs) were in the hands of India. Though it is not relevant to this writing this opportunity can be used to remind the readers that even a leader like Indira Gandhi could not set up a war crime tribunal to try the war criminals of Pakistan. With the benefit of hindsight, this international political dimension might help to answer some of the questions that might cross one's mind. But that factor does not come within the purview of this writing, and the author will mostly



keep himself confined only to the national aspect of the granting of amnesty. A comparison with South Africa, under the great leader Nelson Mandela, can be of some use.

South Africa did not suffer from economic and infrastructural incapacity as did Bangladesh. The end of apartheid came with the end of the cold war, whereas the birth of Bangladesh was right at the worst moment of the cold war. Moreover, years of international condemnation, and resolutions against apartheid were favourable for the blacks of South Africa. The events of Bangladesh did not come to the forefront in the international media until the outbreak of total war, in other words, until it was nearer to the end than the beginning. When the national internal conditions, and international human rights and political situation, both, could have played a greater role in holding trial of the perpetrators of the apartheid regime in South Africa, the national, and international, conditions were against the holding of such a trial in Bangladesh. Even South Africa did not go for a straightforward trial—but chose a more passive way, through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

This argument does not answer whether, in case of favourable conditions—both national and international—the holding of a trial was justifiable, and/or feasible. A

hasty answer to this question might mean that the decision of amnesty was only a pragmatic one rather than being the result of philosophical far-sightedness. If so, a danger of making a mistake lurks here. How? Being a charismatic leader, and having such a command over the populace, it was not at all impossible for Bangabandhu to hold a trial of the collaborators, even ignoring the sentiments of some of the countries supporting Pakistan—communist China, dictatorial Arab states and, to some extent, Nixon's USA (when I say Nixon's USA I mean only the attitude Nixon had personally, having no bearing on the attitudes of the American people and the administration).

While those external situations could influence the decision up to a certain point they were not the sole basis of the decision. This way we can ask the question finally. Under those circumstances—setting aside international situations—could we hold a credible trial without taking the perilous risk of travesty of justice? Was it possible to get over emotion, and the taking of the opportunity, by some quarters, to get even with their enemies at the cost of national integrity?

Let us take an example of the recent trial of war criminals in Rwanda. The trial of the Rwandan perpetrators took so much time and money, and yet so little has been

done, that the future of such trials seems very bleak; and alternatives are being sought.

The challenge for post-genocidal Rwanda has been how to cope with this mass atrocity, and the huge numbers of perpetrators, in order to achieve some measure of justice, reconciliation and peace for Rwandans. Yet, seven years later, the two retributive responses adopted have made very little progress towards achieving these objectives. The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) has secured fewer than nine convictions in five-and-half years of operation, despite an annual budget of approximately \$80 million (in US currency) and over 800 staff members. While the domestic genocide trials have made greater progress with their dockets, having cleared an estimated 5,000 cases since 1996, this pace has occurred at the expense of due process granted to the accused. But even if this pace were maintained, it would still take upwards of 120 years to prosecute the estimated 110,000 to 130,000 alleged genocidaires who continue to be held in overcrowded prisons and community lock-up cells throughout the country.

We did have lack of prisons, lack of judicial infrastructure and so on so forth—with so many lags how can it be possible to hold a fair trial? Did we have enough instrumentalities to sift through the genuine allegations from

locally biased ones? When one could be killed for being a mere Muslim Leaguer, or Jammal supporter, during wartime could we, or should we, try anyone only for his belief in the absence of evidence of criminal activity? We did not have the judicial mechanism to hold such a huge trial, without risking a great historical miscarriage of justice.

The case of Bangladesh can be considered in the light of this scenario. We did not have money, but we did have very influential enemies. We did not have any infrastructure. It was the time for the leader of the nation to set the priorities—building the nation from the ashes of war and devastation.

Did this practical impossibility of holding a trial propel, and/or compel, the great leader to decide for an amnesty? Perhaps, concluding that would only mean injustice done to the Father of the Nation. We should not shy away from the philosophical perspective of the decision of the amnesty.

Philosophical aspect of the decision: Should these practical impediments mean that the real culprits can go with impunity, and the victims, and their families, must go without a remedy? This should be a very logical and relevant question. According to legal principles, if there is a right there is a remedy for its breach. And a wrong should not go unpunished. If that be true then what remedy the nation, those families and the victims are getting by an amnesty.

South Africa, under Nelson Mandela, did not take a direct confrontation strategy after the end of apartheid. Was it not possible, particularly in view of the fact of duration of discrimination, gravity of atrocity and international support, to bring the oppressors to justice, directly, without adopting other mechanism? It was more likely in comparison with the situation Bangladesh faced at that time. By this time the international human rights monitoring mechanism had developed to a great extent. South Africa had more international political support, a sine qua non for such a trial, in comparison with Bangladesh during 1971, so that it was not impossible to hold a trial.

But Nelson Mandela, a philosopher and a statesman much like Bangabandhu, knew the true interest of the nation, the practical possibility, and impossibility, of the things and viewed them from a perspective of the future, not being overpowered by emotion of the happenings of the time, and in the broader perspective of history. Let me cite great leader Nelson Mandela from his address to the Interfaith Commissioning Service for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Cape Town on 13 February, 1996:

"All South Africans face the challenge of coming to terms with the past in ways which will enable us to face the future as a united nation at peace with itself. To you has been entrusted the particular task of dealing with gross violations of human rights in a manner that

ensures that the painful truth is laid bare and that justice is done to the victims within the capacity of our society and within the framework of the constitution and the law. By doing so, and by means of amnesty, your goal is to ensure lasting reconciliation."

Conclusion: What should the nation do now?

Bangabandhu was far ahead of his time and history. He ventured to do something his contemporaries would not have dared to do. This was obviously an unpopular, but courageous, decision. Only a leader with heart full of love for his/her nation and the confidence of doing the right thing can decide so. That goes beyond pragmatism. So did great Nelson Mandela.

History will prove the correctness of his decision. Socrates was punished for thinking ahead of his time, and so was Galileo, then why not Bangabandhu? Most of the great personalities had to suffer for being ahead of their time. And history would recognise that Bangabandhu was one of the victims of history, and one who would be rewarded by history ultimately. Now it depends on us, and how soon we can understand that.

Thus, Bangabandhu's decision survives the acid test of history. Therefore, it is time to bring those unrepentant, and ungrateful, souls to trial who professedly have chosen not to be covered by that amnesty. It is so because amnesty is for those who could not recognise the gravity of their actions at the time of committing those crimes. But a person takes himself, or herself, out of that when he, or she, recognises the fact that he or she, was not out of his, or her, mind at the time of committing those heinous crimes. Someone's ungrateful attitude, and the defending of past actions are proof of their intention. And, thus, they voluntarily take themselves out of the amnesty. Therefore, those who are boasting of their past criminal activities have virtually broken the implied conditions of the terms of their probation and, thus, are liable to be tried.

If we read between the lines of the decision of amnesty, it was subject to an implied condition that placed the wrongdoers on probationary terms of good behaviour; not to repeat their past activities. But as they failed to comply with those terms they are now liable to enhanced punishments. But those who complied with those terms still should benefit from the decision of our great leader, real statesman and political philosopher Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

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US primary polls: Majority against Iraq war

MOHAMMAD AMJAD HOSSAIN

THE illegal war in Iraq by President Bush seems to have become the single most important issue that will determine the results of the mid-term elections of Congress in November this year. This has been reflected in the primary elections of the Democratic Party in Connecticut State on August 8. Joe Lieberman, a three-term incumbent Senator from the Democratic Party, has lost the primary race against his opponent Ned Lamont, a novice politician and founder of a cable company, believably because of his (Lieberman's) support for the war in Iraq and for being too close to the Republicans and President Bush. Perhaps realising his mistakes, Joe Lieberman, in his last minute bid on the eve of the election on August 6, said that he opposed the White House's domestic agenda and its handling of the Iraq war. But that message, may be being to late, did not help him to win the race.

It was really amazing to note the amount of publicity given to this particular event by the American media, both print and electronic. Prominent dailies, like the New York Times, the Washington Post and Washington Times accorded front page coverage on August 9. This stance of Lieberman's puts him at odds with the mainstream Democratic Congressional leaders who recently publicly urged President Bush to begin withdrawing troops from Iraq, and to move on to a more limited mission. On the other hand, Dick Cheney, the Vice-President, who began his political career during the Nixon administration, suggested that Lamont's victory might encourage the al-Qaida types who want to break the will of the American people in terms of "our ability to stay in the fight and complete the task." The Vice-President possibly did not follow the polls which show that, now, 60 percent of Americans want to end the mission in Iraq. Massachusetts Senator, Kennedy, blasted Dick Cheney by calling the attack "ugly and frightening."

The message of the election was loud and clear to other hawkish Democrats that the Americans have

Ned Lamont's stunning victory over Joe Lieberman sends a clear message to American politicians that there is a progressive, and level-headed, new generation coming into politics. And many view these primary elections as a

awakened. The people have become deeply disappointed and frustrated about the on-going war in Iraq and are going to hold them (Democrats) accountable at the polls. Hillary Clinton, Democratic Senator from New York, is one of the hawkish Democrats who also wanted to stay the course in Iraq, in line with President Bush. Hillary Clinton is on record saying that the United States should not set a deadline for troop withdrawal, and characterised Representative (Democrat) John Murtha's call for the immediate withdrawal of US troops as a big mistake. Hillary, and her husband Bill Clinton, went to Connecticut to campaign for Joe Lieberman. Polls show that as a majority of Iraqis want the US troops to leave, so do the majority of US voters, including 62 percent of the women interviewed. On August 8, Democrat members in the Senate declared support for Ned Lamont, an anti-war activist.

Joe Lieberman, however, is not a lone case in point. Other hawkish Representatives, Cynthia, Democrat, and Joe Schwarz, Republican lost in the primary race. Although Novak, a columnist, suggests that "the primary election defeat of Rep. Cynthia McKinney, and Rep. Joe Schwarz should not be over-interpreted as omens of a wholesale slaughter of the Republican Party", but the handling of the Middle East crisis, apart from the unprovoked war in Iraq, might have caused serious misgiving in the minds of the voters, irrespective of party affiliation, to change the course in the

administration in America. It may be noted that President Bush and Senator John McCain (Republican) backed Joe Schwarz. The results of the primary elections made Hillary Clinton nervous, and she began calling for the resignation of Defense Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, for his failure in the handling of the war in Iraq.

Americans are also annoyed with the Bush administration's one-sided attitude towards Israel at the cost of the American taxpayers' money. The biggest ever demonstration in Washington DC, on August 12, blaming both, Bush and the Israeli administration in Tel Aviv, for waging war against Lebanon speaks of the awareness of the Americans about the war in Iraq, and Lebanon as well.

The primary elections of the Democratic, and the Republican parties, reflect the general feeling of the voters that they are no longer prepared to support the war in Iraq, or for that matter in Lebanon, with their hard earned money. The war needs a huge amount of money, and the taxpayers are forced to bear. It has already cost over \$3 billion and claimed 2601 American troops while 41 thousand have been injured in the battle field in Iraq.

On seeing the results, Vice-President Dick Cheney, and other Republican leaders, criticised the Democrats as being too liberal about the defence of the country from the threat of terrorists. But Democrat leaders are expected to win at least 15 seats in the House of Representatives as Connecticut represents strong anti-Bush sentiments. It is likely that the Democratic Party may gain a majority in the House of Representatives, but it is still doubtful whether they gain majority seats in the Senate.

Ned Lamont's stunning victory over Joe Lieberman sends a clear message to American politicians that there is a progressive, and level-headed, new generation coming into politics. And many view these primary elections as a referendum on Iraq and President Bush's handling of the war.

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IN MEMORIAM

Journey of a father and a son

SYED MUNIR KHASRU

My father Syed Amir Khasru, retired Secretary, Government of Bangladesh, passed away silently and peacefully on July 9, 2006. Death of any parent is one of the most difficult things to deal with and I am no exception. The reasons I chose to take up the pen and paper are two. My father was suffering from Alzheimer disease and being the closest to him with my mother, I have the first hand knowledge and experience of this illness which I felt is important to share as I still find many people either ignorant or poorly informed on the different dimensions of this unique form of illness. Secondly, many of my cousins, relatives, friends, well-wishers and particularly my mother Najma Khasru wanted me to write on my father who has been so close to me spanning over decades.

My father came to attend the graduation ceremony for the conferral of my MBA degree from one of the leading business schools of the US. He always has been a person of boundless warmth, vigor and stamina. From the day he landed in Philadelphia till the day he left US for home, his infinite excitement on my limited achievement was telling. Starting from the suit he will wear on the graduation day, there was no end to his discussions and suggestions. He knew that this most probably was my terminal degree and hence this feeling of seeing the completion of a son's academic journey and being there to help me anchor the ship till it moves to the next voyage was making his emotion surge in volcanic proportions. I and my mother had a difficult time putting a lid on an exuberant father's hyperactive zeal to do "something more". Little did I know then that the next journey would see both the father and the son walk hand in hand in what would become as the late US President Ronald Reagan aptly said, "Journey to the sunset of life." Reagan was one of the most famous patients of Alzheimer disease.

With aging, everyone's memory

is on gradual slide and people tend to forget things - my father was no exception. His senses were agile and alert and he was very much in full awareness and control of whatever was happening around him. The only noticeable change was his tendency to repeat things which again is nothing unusual to happen when someone has crossed sixty. Before my parents came to Philadelphia, they were visiting one of our very close family friends in Tennessee, Zahed Bhai. Zahed Bhai and I had set up an appointment for my father with an Indian born US Doctor Dr. Abdul Gori Khan who is a well respected expert on illness related to old age and aging process. Dr. Khan advised us that there was a possibility that my father may be showing early symptoms of Alzheimer disease.

Alzheimer is a slow degeneration of brain whereby people gradually lose their ability to learn, adopt, and reflect. It starts with forgetfulness and repetitiveness and gradually moves to a very advanced stage where people need help in everything from feeding and clothing to bathing and walking. In other words, it is a kind of de-learning process which is opposite to the learning process a child goes through as s/he grows up with time and starts asserting independence in his/her activities. The available medicine even in the most advanced country of the world can only slow down the process but a complete cure is yet to be found for Alzheimer. The ongoing debate in US on the stem cell research has lot to do with the expectation that such research may lead to the development of drugs which will hopefully someday provide a cure against illnesses like Alzheimer and Parkinson's disease.

For such patients, the first and foremost remedy is the constant attention, love, affection and most importantly patience from the family and loved ones. The degree of patience required is so much that there is a book on this illness titled "36 Hours a Day". For me and my mother at times it even sounded like 48 hours a day but God is kind and we persevered. When my father used to ask the same question repeatedly, at times it was difficult

not to feel tired but then again one has to look at the helplessness at one's own childhood and the patience our parents had to put up to bring us up. Unless one makes the emotional connection, it is difficult to effectively perform such responsibilities. It is also important that one has sufficient room for personal relaxation to balance the exhaustion caused due to such demanding attention and care.

My father then at some point became little allergic towards crowding. The reason is that such patients can start getting anxious about their lapses being exposed to others with whom they have always held their head in high esteem. For example, my father always used to look forward to the Juma prayers on Fridays where he went to the Dhaka University Mosque with me. He would prefer to be on his own and not let me extend any assistance. Also he would get jittery if there were too many people visiting us at home and at times we had to intervene to make him feel comfortable with the crowd. One should never try to isolate the person in fear of social embarrassment, rather making him part of the crowd gives him that sense of assurance that he needs so badly but can't express properly.

My father taught me how to value, respect, and uphold friendship. He also taught me how to stand up against injustice no matter in which form and in what manner they happened. For example, once our family and cousins were returning to Dhaka from a trip to Chittagong. My father's car crossed the ferry earlier and moved ahead but our car was left behind in the ferry and there was this senior army officer who came and slapped our chauffeur just because our car was parked too close to his. We managed to chase our father's car and informed him of what had happened during the ferry crossing. He stood in the middle of the Dhaka-Chittagong highway and stopped the car of the army officer at a time when there was martial law in the country in the early eighties. Later the army officer had no option but to apologize and when he came to my father's office my father told him, "You have to apologize to my driver and not me" and so did the army officer.

I used to take out my father for

dinners and teas as the US doctor had advised me that one of the best treatments for such patient is to give quality company. When we went out together, he loved talking about his work and life. One can hardly imagine to what extent the morale of such a person can be boosted just through patient listening and active interest coming from the loved ones. From his initiative in starting Food for Work to his going for voluntary retirement because of his refusal to serve a corrupt autocrat, these were lessons of life to be embedded forever in the mind of a son whose restless wings were set to embark into the flight to ambitions and dreams. During these outings, he always used to tell me, "I never accepted even a cup of tea from a subordinate and on questions of principles I never bowed to any pressure from anybody, no matter how mighty and powerful they may have been. He always amazed me by his unquestioned honesty, integrity, courage, and conviction which I have come to value much in my life.

I took a challenge when I decided to take my father to perform Hajj in late nineties. Those who have performed Hajj know that it is quite a demanding exercise even for those who are physically and mentally fit. The circumstances were quite contrary to what would happen on the regular schedule of the daily life of a person mostly staying at home. Mashallah, my father managed it well although I was next to him all through. His physique was strong due to years of disciplined life that had regular exercise and a controlled diet. This to some extent helped offset the mental frailty.

It is important that such patients are constantly given opportunities to have positive emotional experience. Compared to others, they need it more as it activates their mind and stimulates their responsiveness. For example, my father always was proud of my career as a teacher. Although I am engaged in the consulting industry, he would hardly recognise that and would introduce me everywhere as a "teacher". Seeing his pride and joy, once I brought him to one of my classes at IBA and he was so elated to be in the middle of my students that he sat in the class and we had a picture taken which he used to show everyone.

Among the things that can result in Alzheimer is the risk that one entails if there is any severe mental setback or shock to people at their old age. Sometimes such shocks can trigger a negative emotional surge which can be quite overwhelming for many, particularly if the person concerned is someone like my father who was very emotional with a strong sense of self-respect. Hence when on grounds of principles he voluntarily gave up five years of prime position of that of a Secretary to the government when he wanted to contribute more to the country through his dedicated services, it was quite a setback for him. The other was a deep sense of hurt caused by some events which he had difficulty coming into terms with. The US doctor who treated my father helped us understand these complexities and for those whose parents are alive and embarking into elderly state, my humble advice is to be careful so that they are not exposed to anything that is emotionally distressing and hurtful as the resiliency of mind tends to weaken faster than that of the body.

The foremost thing one must have is an unconditional love strong commitment to stand by parents when they need us most. My father's illness effected almost every decision I had to take starting from settling in Bangladesh to where should I reside, from how long can I afford to take a trip abroad to how can I ensure that the medicines from US arrive in time - it encompassed my horizon of thoughts and activities in a way only second to my mother. As the body of my father was slowly put into eternal rest, it signified the end of an era. It was an era that saw victory of life and love, it was an experience of father and son sailing together in the sea of storms and sunshine. In the end, it was a journey of a father and a son who treaded the path of uncertainty with the same commitment to each other.

The journey of a father and son can never be complete without each other. May God give peace to the one who moved ahead.

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