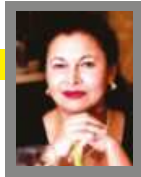


THOUGHT CRAFTBY NASRIN SOBHAN
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Diary of a Homemaker

There is little to do these days. The virus has struck fear into the stoutest hearts, and most of us have changed our lifestyles to suit the times.

Nature, unaware of our concerns, continues her work of the seasons. I wake each morning to another glorious day, the room filled with sunshine and the trees outside my window glowing with health and beauty. I go up to admire the pots on my roof. The flowers are dazzling in the morning light. The lilies and hydrangea, red roses and petunias, and myriad other beautiful plants blossom on, ever constant in their beauty.

I cut lilies of different colours for my vases, although we get no visitors nowadays. The green chillies are so abundant that I return to the kitchen each

day with my little basket laden with them, along with sprigs of basil for the pesto, rosemary for the lamb, and mint for my tea and lemonade.

I have a pile of books on every table in the house; a book to suit every mood. Murder, politics, history, and occasionally, romance. Romance in particular, seems hard to relate to at a time when people are fighting to survive.

There is much time for introspection now. I wonder, fruitlessly, why the world is so beset with disasters. Everyone has brilliant theories: Malthus, Darwin, Jared Diamond, and conspiracy theorists. In "Silent Spring" by Rachel Carson, we were warned, many years ago, that this world would not survive the ravages wrought upon it by humanity.

For some, the bounty of this world is meaningless; their only priority being how to exploit nature, its trees and its resources, oil, minerals, and water for money. For others, the same bounty is ignored, lost as they are in dreams of the Paradise to come. For me personally, this world is a gift; the reward of the Almighty to us, if only we can appreciate it, and to live and work in a spirit of gratitude and sincere intentions, accepting what each day brings.

Illness, poverty, hardship, and death are random, not selective. We have been given something of inestimable value, the gift of life, but everything comes with a price.

Sitting in my home as a homemaker, I observe the antics of powerful people all over the world, people who can change

things for the better, but are not inclined to for their own gains. I see each day how many of them compromise common moral standards in order to gain wealth, and yet more wealth, even in the face of this virus that threatens death, worldwide recession, and other tragedies; most of the burden of which will be suffered by the poor, the innocent, and the powerless.

In the end, six yards of cloth will be all people can take with them: not the profits from the stock market, nor the riches from their hotels and golf courses, nor the pleasure of seats in important governing bodies.

God's gifts to us were intelligence and free will. What we do with these gifts will be our responsibility and only ours.

READER'S CHIT

Love for a father, a national hero

May 28, 2020 – the longest, darkest, scariest night of my life! My beloved father M Ishaque Bhuiyan, lost his life in an excruciating final battle against the cruel COVID-19 virus. Abba was like a steadfast tree to the family, while the rest of us were his branches, all under the wings of his care. The saddest part of this story is that I was unable to tend to his final days, being stuck in the U.K. for my PhD.

I couldn't visit! Yes! I couldn't even...

All the comfort I can give myself at the moment is that it was the ultimate will of a Higher Power (Allah SWT) and no matter what we tried; this was destined for our family.

So, I have calmed my mind, assuming he is definitely in a better place, one where there are no vices and no pandemics to fight against.

Abba, a freedom fighter and a key commander in the Mujib Bahini, was also a 1973 BCS graduate, dedicating the majority of his life to government services. With various work stints like being the District Commissioner of Natore (1996-99), to holding a key role in the Election Commission Committee (Sylhet), to tirelessly volunteering for 15 years in Special Olympics of Bangladesh (SOBD) and holding a special position in the committee, to being the director of Bangladesh Development Bank Ltd (BDBL), he was a truly dedicated patriot, completing his work life gloriously as a reputable Joint Secretary of the Bangladesh Government.

Yes, all of us who have been associated to him are proud. We are proud that he taught us to ceaselessly love our country and no matter what, to always dedicate our lives for the betterment of the nation.

Here's the saddest part. When I joined Dhaka University as a faculty back in 2009, he was the proudest and often asked



me to publish write-ups in the leading newspapers of the nation. Having time constraints, I always found an excuse to avoid publishing. My best excuse till date was not being a good writer. Still, abba kept on pursuing me.

Today, after so many years, when abba has already left us, I have taken up the pen to scribble a few words to him.

Alas, abba – such is life! – I am really sorry.

This write-up is a token of love and

appreciation from a doting daughter to a father.

Wherever you are today, you are missed by many, including friends, family, and hundreds from your birth place Talshahar, Brahmanbaria. You left us all in deep mourning. We salute you for being a steadfast supporter of our beloved Bangladesh.

We love you back for being the warm human being that you were. Your blessings are showering down upon us from heaven.

I hope you will still help me walk the path you had etched for me. You have always been my inspiration and you will continue to be for years to come. I have always loved you, my hero, and always will.

Your beloved daughter,
Nusrat Jahan (Rojoni)

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Photo courtesy: Nusrat Jahan (Rojoni)