

Special Supplement

The Glorious Victory Day

Wednesday, 16 December 2020

Ballad of Victory

Mohammad Nurul Huda

Bangla is my mom's idiom, my mother's country
Bangla is my father's mystic mingling, his strolling free.
In the silt and water and currents of her numerous rivers
Free people of this free land voyage by boats as sailors.
Father of the Nation Sheikh is the charismatic boatman here,
O the sons and daughters of the Nation, keep vigil with care.

The final call came on March Seven, 1971, from Mujibor,
And the victory crowned us all exactly on 16 December.
Since that day all homes of brave Bengalees are liberated,
In a free land everyone is free, none as another is treated.
We are prepared for this victory for centuries together,
For time eternal the glow of this victory shall glitter.

Marking his birth centenary, the free father of the free land
Mujib is blessed with multiplying births without any end.
His forefinger is the scepter of justice, freedom of winners,
Humans are born-free, the essence of all mundane creatures.
Nationality, Democracy, Equality, Individuality, Nation,
Fraternity and Justice are protected in our Constitution.

Mother Bengal gave us all her milk and gifts affectionate,
Human-birds are all flying on their mind's wings enchanted.
The years shall pass, and the decades, and the countless centuries,
People of Bengal shall live happily with their parents, without worries.
In a free universe Bengal is free, victory shall continue here as well,
Bengalees are now world-people, daring and fearless they do dwell
Daring and fearless they do dwell, daring and fearless they do dwell.

Translation: Poet himself

Arms Surrender

Helal Hafiz

Killing weapon, remember the love between two of us.
Nine months I have known you as a friend, just a friend.
Killing the enemy many a day with no reason
I have entered the tent to look at you, again and again.

Remember I well, as my heart burning ceaselessly
Touched your bosom, you burst into shouts,
Your explosion reverberating the sky, our love
In no moment captured the tyrant enemy's sighs.

Remember I well, placing my drowsy forehead
On your hard barrel, hands folded on my chest,
Many a dark night of ours passed inside the forest!
I remember it, so you keep in your mind too,
History of all these love-makings of ours.

True, today I am going back; yes,
I am going back home surrendering you
In the prison, since I love humans.

If ever comes bad time in the days to come,
When love shall end, or if no love grows among humans,
I shall surely break that black prison,
And shall make love again with you, O killing weapon.

Translation: Mohammad Nurul Huda

Bangabandhu Prepared Us for Victory

Ajoy Dasgupta

The renowned litterateur Ananda Shankar Ray had written in an essay titled 'Indrapati', which was included in the book 'Great Hero of History: Bangabandhu', about meeting the Father of the Nation of Bangladesh Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman - "I wanted to know from him after the program of Ekushey



Final Victory: Surrender of the Pakistani Forces (Race Course Maidan, 16 December 1971) Photo: Collected

February in 1974 - "When did the idea of Bangladesh come to your head for the first time?" His prompt response was - "From the year 1947".

Bangabandhu wrote in his book 'The Unfinished Memoirs' - "I was in Kolkata City on the day of Pakistan's founding on 14 August 1947. The central leadership of Muslim League had unfairly removed Husayn Shaheed Suhrawardy from the position of Bengal's prime minister and put in his place Khwaja Nazimuddin. The latter declared without consulting with anyone that Dhaka would be the capital of East Bengal. Due to this announcement, we no longer had any claim on Kolkata. But the British Government had not yet decided then whether Kolkata would remain in India or Pakistan. Even if Kolkata remained with India, there was a possibility that Shealdaha (territory extending from Jashore and Khulna to Bongaon-Barasat-Ranaghat-Krishnanagar-Bashirhat-24Pargana) would fall in Pakistan. The Kolkata that was built with the money coming from East Bengal, we gave up that city voluntarily. If Kolkata was in Pakistan, then Pakistan would have been forced to make the city its capital" (pages 76-78).

Bangabandhu was then only 26 years old. He was participating actively in the programs of Chhatra Federation and Muslim League while continuing his studies. He was elected unopposed the general secretary of the renowned Islamia College students' council. He also ran gruel-kitchens in the famine-ravaged and riot-affected areas. He wrote in 'The Unfinished Memoirs' - "I do whatever task I decide to carry out after due contemplation. I correct myself if there is any mistake" (page 80).

Bangabandhu had visualised his future ever since his student days. The people trying to exert authoritarian control over Pakistan had decided to corner East Bengal politically, economically and culturally. Their power-base would be centred in Karachi and Lahore. Although East Bengal did not get the city of Kolkata or its adjoining areas, it was ahead in terms of population among the two wings of Pakistan. The British East India Company had captured the territory of Bengal first because of its economic affluence. Bangabandhu was not ready to accept fresh deprivations and negligence in this region. When the Bangla language came under attack immediately after the establishment of Pakistan, he realized that more such dangers were ahead. He then took three steps - generate public opinion in favour of making Bangla the principal state language of Pakistan; strengthen the movement in its favour; and establish an appropriate organization for the purpose.

The establishment of East Pakistan Muslim Chhatra League was an important stage in this process. We often say, 'From language movement to the great struggle for independence'. The Chhatra League was a vital and essential weapon for achieving Bangabandhu's objective. The first formal conference of Chhatra League took place on 16-17 September 1949. In his presidential address, Bangabandhu had advised the Chhatra League workers to form reading circles and debating societies, and become active in eradicating illiteracy alongside studying their text-books. At the same time, he put forward the demand that all adult citizens should be provided arms and imparted military training, so that the people of East Bengal could confront the enemy in case of foreign aggression. But the Pakistani regime did not accept this demand. They continued to treat us like a colony for over two decades. Bangabandhu then united the masses for our liberation. The Pakistani rulers wanted to subjugate this land through the arrogance of their military superiority. But the

valiant Bangalis could take up arms in time and force the enemy troops to surrender unconditionally at the Dhaka Racecourse Ground on 16 December 1971 due to the well-planned and phase-wise steps taken by Bangabandhu.

The people of Bangladesh had taken up arms just at the right time. Within two weeks of the start of the genocide perpetrated by the Pakistani invading forces, the elected people's representatives of Bangladesh formed a Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh with Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as the president and Tajuddin Ahmad as the prime minister despite living in a death-valley. At that juncture, the government sent hundreds of thousands of students and youths to the warfront after imparting training to them on guerrilla and direct warfare within the quickest possible time. Side by side, the government made arrangements for the food and lodging of 10 million refugees who had taken shelter in India. While the liberation war was in progress, the government performed numerous tasks including running a full-fledged 'Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra' (Radio Station of Independent Bangla), constituting a Planning Cell for preparing an outline of future socioeconomic development, pressing for the release of Bangabandhu imprisoned in Pakistani jail, and conducting a vigorous diplomatic campaign for generating world opinion in favour of Bangladesh.

The members of the allied forces went back home by leaving Bangladesh territory within three months of the liberation of Bangladesh from enemy clutches because of the grooming of Bangladesh for that great victory by Bangabandhu. Those who had raised questions about the preparedness of Bangladesh and tried to make fun by terming the country as a 'basket case' or 'bottomless basket' observed in amazement that the preliminary reconstruction of the war-ravaged land was completed within a short time; the constitution was formulated by incorporating the main state principles of nationalism, democracy, secularism and socialism. It also did not require much time to frame policies on education, energy and maritime resources. Bangabandhu called for a second revolution before completion of the fourth year of independence, which was aimed at eliminating the garbage of colonial rule like corruption and irregularities as well as attaining self-reliance. He said while visiting the USA that self-reliance was not anything imaginary, as we have that raw-material for achieving it.

After obtaining membership of the United Nations, Bangabandhu went to the General Assembly of the United Nations in September 1974 for delivering his speech. After delivering that speech in Bangla language on the global podium, he went to Washington DC where he held talks with the then president Gerald Ford. Prior to that, the US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and two senior economists of the World Bank had contemptuously termed Bangladesh as a 'basket case'. They held the view that 'if Bangladesh could develop, then any other country of the world could also develop'. This could have been spelt out in a simpler manner - if that boy could pass SSC exam, then even a banana tree could also pass.

Bangabandhu chose Washington for giving a fitting reply to the scornful comments made by Henry Kissinger and the World Bank economists. In his book 'Some Incidents Surrounding Bangabandhu and Bangladesh', Dr. M A Wajed Mia had written - "Bangabandhu had said during a press conference in Washington - "Some people mock Bangladesh by terming her an International Basket Case. But Bangladesh is not a Basket Case. Bangladesh had been plundered for two centuries. The riches of Bangladesh were used for beautifying London, Dundee, Manchester, Karachi, and Islamabad. ...Bangladesh still has infinite riches. We shall certainly see Bangladesh standing on its feet one day".

Bangabandhu was brutally assassinated on 15 August 1975 immediately after he made the call for a second revolution. After that, not only the war-cry 'Joy Bangla' of the liberation war and the ideals of the Father of the Nation, even the articulation of his name was banned.

Finally, the daughter of Bangabandhu Sheikh Hasina took up the responsibility of the Prime Minister after being blessed with a huge support of the masses. Bangladesh has now risen to the rank of a middle-income country by shedding the blight of a least developed nation because of her pragmatism, farsightedness and leadership quality. The country is taking resolute steps for occupying a place in the rank of developed countries of the world. Bangladesh is now self-sufficient in food. Despite being a country that was dependent on foreign assistance for implementation of



Photo: Collected

even culverts and rural road projects over many years, the country is now able to construct a unique infrastructure project like the Padma Bridge by ignoring the threats of World Bank. It could also demonstrate an independent outlook by providing food and shelter to over one million Rohingya refugees year after year alongside shifting a segment of these distressed people to the Bhashanchar Island.

Just as Bangabandhu had prepared Bangladesh for freedom and victory, similarly he inspired the populace for making sacrifices in order to achieve those noble objectives. Responding to his call for freedom, millions of people 'confronted the enemy with whatever they possessed'. Not only did he groom the public for making sacrifices, he believed in individual freedom in the practice of religion. He spent over half of the 24 years of Pakistan's existence in the darkness of prison-cells. His two sons Sheikh Kamal and Sheikh Jamal had fought against the Pakistani invading forces as members of the Mukti Bahini. His wife Bangamata Begum Fazlatunnesa was defiant even while under agonizing house-arrest supervised by Pakistani military.

Bangabandhu had written to Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy on 14 June 1952 - 'Please don't think for me. I was born to suffer' [Intelligence report, second volume, page 239].

He had smilingly embraced this sorrow and pain for Bangladesh and its people. His sacrifices as well as those of the Bangalis did not prove to be futile. Bangladesh is the name of a proud country on the global podium. Bangabandhu's daughter and leader of the masses Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is holding a torch of luminosity on the path shown by the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. We shall certainly achieve our noble goal. □

Author: Freedom Fighter and Journalist; Translation: Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed

Dream of Victory...

(Continued from previous page)

towards the dark alleyways of hopeless, dreamless religious bigotry. The war criminals kept in jails for trying on charges of crimes against humanity came out of prisons en-masse on 31 December. The country became a safe haven for war criminals.

Then many things happened, and that history was blighted. At one juncture, Bangladesh once again got back that lost path under the leadership of Bangabandhu's worthy daughter Sheikh Hasina. The country has been rid of blemishes by trying the killers of Bangabandhu. The nation got back its lost sense of honour by trying the war-criminals. The children are once again able to know about Bangabandhu, they are learning to take pride in the liberation war. The economic capacity of the country is flourishing with jumps and leaps. Who would now dare to term the country as a 'bottomless basket'?

But has our dream of 1971 been fulfilled? We all know that the real dreams touch the sky, but they never materialise. We continue our work by merely looking at those dreams throughout our lives. But apprehensions develop when we find those dreams absent from our eyes.

We still have many challenges before us. These challenges relate to nature, the environment, economic disparities, education and healthcare. But the biggest challenge is to build a non-communal country. Bangabandhu's lifelong dream was a non-communal Bangladesh. We have not yet achieved that Bangladesh. We still have to listen to the bragging of religious fanatics and fundamentalist groups.

Let our dream be a genuinely non-communal Bangladesh as dreamt by Bangabandhu during this Victory Day of the Mujib-Year. □

Author: Educationist, Writer
Translation: Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed

Photo: Collected

Bangabandhu's Independent...

(Continued from previous page)

bottom of the hill, opposite to the Foy's Lake, there were only young girls' dead bodies. Almost all of them were pregnant. One thousand 82 dead bodies were there. Thousands of such brutal incidents occurred throughout the nine months of 1971.

Following the directives of Bangabandhu's historic 7 March Speech, the Bangalis built up forts at every house. The Bangali nation launched the War of Independence literally after 25 March. That war eventually took a look of the mass people's war. Each and every Bangali other than the sycophants of Pakistanis turned into a warrior. For the independence of the country, responding to the call of Bangabandhu, the Bangalis encountered the enemies with whatever they had.

The Pakistani army occupied Kustia. In the dawn at 4 am on 30 March, the valiant Bangali soldiers, police and ansar along with students and mass people attacked on every military camp in Kustia. Thousands of mass people with sticks, spears joined



Photo: Collected

the Bangali soldiers, police and ansar. Within the afternoon of that day, the freedom fighters captured all the Pakistani camps. The camp in Kustia Zila School was left only. After two days of such a battle, the Pakistani military started fleeing leaving their camp. The mass people of the area and the freedom fighters cut the roads. They put bamboo mat on the road-trenches and poured tar on those in such a way that nobody could understand the trenching. Plunging into the trenches, the trucks and jeeps of the Pakistani Army remained overturned on road. The freedom fighters continued to open fire and kill the Pakistanis. Those who survived the attacks scattered over the surrounding villages. Not a single Pakistani soldier could return alive from there. The masses vanished them.

The Pakistanis planned to supply arms and ammunition from the Chattogram Port to various regions of the country through Feni. The freedom fighters built up a huge resistance in this region. Due to their hindrance, the Pakistani forces got vanquished. The valiant freedom fighters freed Belonia, Feni on 6 December. The war strategies adopted by the freedom fighters are now being studied at different military colleges all over the world.

Our seven 'Bishreshthos', highest gallantry award winners, sacrificing their lives rendered unparalleled contribution to the Independence of Bangladesh. The Great Liberation War is marked by so many heroic stories. The indomitable boys along with the mass people of Bangla fought for the independence from their respective positions. As per Bangabandhu's directives, each and every Bangali except some traitors was a freedom fighter.

As stated by the Pakistanis, nothing happened in the East Pakistan. And to prove it, journalists from the powerful countries were brought. They were accommodated in the Intercontinental Hotel in Dhaka. They were to show peaceful(!) Dhaka city in the following morning. The Bangali guerrilla fighters crumbled walls of the



Photo: Collected

Intercontinental Hotel through continuous grenade attacks. The news of the attacks spread across the world instantly. And the world came to know what happened in the East Pakistan! And thus Bangabandhu's Bangladesh was steadily heading towards independence.

It was 9 August. Seven Pakistani Ships anchored on the bank of Dhaleshwari river in the Tangail region. The arms loaded ships would be unloaded at the Fulchari Ghat of Bogura. From there, the arms would be carried to Rangpur and Syedpur cantonments. The freedom fighters led by Major Habib took control over the ships. Thus, the freedom fighters acquired a plenty of arms.

Another massive drive of the valiant freedom fighters was "Operation Jackpot". A number of large ships loaded with arms were anchored in the Karnaphuli Jetty. In the mid August, our 60 naval commandos splitted into 3 groups, silently swimming in the dark night, reached near the ships. Diving, they attached limpet mines to the vessels. They backed as silently as they came. Explosions started at 1.40 and continued one after another. The large ships, loaded with arms brought for the Pakistani soldiers, started to sink one by one in the Karnaphuli. And thus we earned our independence.

To create an intellectual void in the Bangali nation, the evil Pakistanis in collaboration with the Razakars, Al-Badars made the last attack two days ahead of 16 December and killed uncountable intellectuals. After that, on 16 December, 93 thousand Pakistani soldiers led by Niazi surrendered with bowing heads. The beloved Bangladesh became independent.

In that very climactic moment of excitement, the Bangali nation had only one aspiration, when would our beloved leader come back in his liberated Bangladesh? The sky of Bangla, the soil of Bangla awaited the return of Bangabandhu. On 10 January, 1972, Bangabandhu returned to his Independent Bangladesh. The whole nation got illuminated in a moment. The standstill river started flowing in its own rhythm. The birds started chirping. Flowers bloomed. Crops fields became full to the brim. The lovely breeze of the free country began to flow. And the heart of Bangladesh started singing, "Amar sonar Bangla, Ami tomayhalobashi"----"My Bengal of gold, I love you". □

Author: Novelist and Editor, The Kalerkantha
Translation Md. Saifulah

Photo: Collected