

Short Story

Perhaps here — yes, here. Right exactly here. There was shadow of tree, and there was sunlight of Chaitra. No, yet *krishnachura* didn't bloom then. But it was the season of *krishnachura*. He laughed like a fool looking at my eyes.

"What's it?"

"Oh, nothing."

"Then what makes you laugh?"

"Well, there's no reason. Just for nothing."

After brooding within himself for a while, he again asked: "Are you going then?"

"Yes. What's the use of staying here? Father himself has come to take me along with him."

"When will you come back again?"

"When? The very issue made me a bit thoughtful. When will I return? Yes, when am I coming back? I couldn't reply to his question. In fact, I'd no answer to that question at that time. Said I, "No, I'll not return."

"What do you mean?" He got angry with me at that time. He was quite childish. He would get angry on very trivial matters. His eyes would become reddish then. And his swarthy complexion would become more swarthy. It would seem then, as if he was coming to beat me. But his anger was shortlived. I called him:

"Hey, have you got angry, my sweet-heart?"

"No."

"What do you mean by 'no'? I'm sure you've got angry with me."

"Does it matter to someone whether I get angry or not?"

"Is that?" I was caught by laughter. "Why are you taking me wrong?"

"Do you suppose, I've lied to you?"

"Isn't that a lie?"

"No, of course, that's not a lie. Can anyone predict what will happen after two days? The situation is very tense all around. If the situation remains so, do you think, father will let me come here?"

Meanwhile, slogans kept floating from far-off. I said, "Will you walk a bit?"

We walked. We did walk side by side. I'll have to go leaving the city. Who knows when the university will reopen! The government has assumed a stiff stance. It fires upon processions whenever it wishes. It has not the slightest sympathy. Further, it's been heard that the military is coming from West Pakistan by planes. Only God knows what's going to happen!

"Aey," I called him again, "Will you tell me what will happen? Sometimes I get very scared. It seems something terrible will take place. Please, tell me what will happen, my sweet-heart."

"Who knows," he cast a doubtful glance at the far end. Said, "Perhaps something horrifying will take place."

"But there's news in the air that there will be a compromise."

"Who knows" — he gave an evasive reply. His eyebrows went a bit curly. It seemed he wanted to say something. I did wait. And then called: "What're you thinking?"

But he didn't utter a single

word. I kept gazing into his face. I felt like planting a kiss on his forehead. He kept staring into my two eyes. His two eyes were so black that I didn't get the end of it.

"Listen," I called him. Then I said: "You, too, go away to your village. What's the use of staying here? You need not

Gopa will go and will see that both you and me are not in the cinema hall. They'll have to watch that tommy rot film then sitting in the cinema hall. What a poor fellow! For nothing they'll have to spend money."

That's my plan. Nowadays they've become very naughty girls. They always keep spying

He would say: 'Why should I tell you, if the time of telling comes, I'll tell your father.'

I would feel strongly within me that he would talk about his mother. At times he would talk about his mother very artistically. He would say how his mother would spend time at school as well as in the verandah of his house where she would sit alone. Her mother had a special fascination for the works of Curush. Yes, his mother was very much fond of reading books. She would read only Hardy, Hardy and Saratchandra. Yes, sometimes she would even sing.

I'd no mother like his. She had no match for other mothers. A strong desire to see his mother would always ring in my mind. I felt to know more about his mother. I would ask: 'Has the letter of mother come?' His mother would write nice letters. She would write in an elaborate detail about her loneliness. Many issues would come up in her letter — from the trees of home to the reason why the black print hadn't bloomed, to birds, nightmares and at times books. Much of the space of all letters would contain her idea about how she would depict the picture of child Mahamud, the boy Mahamud or young Mahamud. I'd feel very good. At boyhood he fell down from the staircase and received an injury on his chin. I've seen he still bears that scar on his chin. The fact that at the left side of his chest there was a red scar — that too, I came to know from readings. I didn't see that in my own eyes. Those letters would portray Mahamud in full. That's why I would get so much pleasure from the readings of his mother's letters.

This is that very road; yes, this is that very path — we'd walk through this path. He would walk straightening his head. His hair would ruffle in the air. His hair was very much unkempt. It would never remain tidy. For many days together I'd say him to apply cream into hair. But he would turn a deaf ear to my request.

We would walk everyday through this path. The road was desolated. One day I saw a squirrel. Picking up a stone from the middle of the path, he threw it at the squirrel. One day, perhaps, that's the day when a procession was passing by us for which we had to stand under the tree. He was talking about our affair then. He was saying: 'Always I feel to stay close to you. I feel quite bad when I stay away from you for a minute even.'

He would say everything very directly. When I would become alone I would become marvelled thinking this. He had no sense of hesitation. No sense of coyness. He would talk straight. He wouldn't care about the right or wrong of the place. One day we quarrelled in this road. It was a lousy brawl between us. That day the passers-by crammed the road heavily. Yet he didn't give a damn to it. He reproved me like anything that very day. Even after that incident we would go to the university through this road. We would come across each other on our way. But we wouldn't talk. The quarrel lasted for a long time.

Yes, this is that particular ground where we would sit in a moonlit night fleeing from our halls. We would chat at

sixes and sevens. Dews would fall on grass. On our way back to halls we would see how both our legs and sandals would get soaked. The border of saree would become filled with *chorkanta*. Oh God! Everyday the guard would threaten that he would lodge a complaint. But he never did so. That guard has come back but nowadays he doesn't look at me any longer.

Wherever I searched Mahamud I found him nowhere. Nobody could say about his whereabouts. Ahasan said: 'Last time he was seen in bare body wearing a black pant. With a rifle in his hand, he was found to take position beside the Iqbal Hall.'

No, none had seen his dead body.

Haripath said: 'No, I haven't seen him when I buried other

dead bodies. But I saw him in the evening on the campus of Jagannath Hall.'

Zaheed informed: 'At dark night he went away outside dangling a rifle on his shoulder. At the time of going, he merely said: "No, it doesn't make any sense to embrace death in this way."

The guard said: 'Yes, I knew Mahamud Shaheb. That very day he was in the hall. I vividly recall what he had said to me: "Don't delay further, flee from here". And instantly I left the hall. I don't know what happened next.'

But what shall I do now? At one time it seems to me that they've pulled his dead body through this road. The next moment it seems that it is beneath through this tree that they've pulled away his dead body. Again, at times, it seems

perhaps he is still here beside this ground. Now and then I come and stand beside the ground. Again, at one time, I softly tread through this path. And again, sometimes, I stand quietly under the shadow of the *jarul* tree. At times, it seems, someone will call me. It seems, my sweetheart will call me from behind. It seems to me that my life will once again get back its lost rhythm suddenly by surmounting this sunlight, this lonely noon, and the broken world.

When our heartbeats cease we are simply dead then. And when the dead bodies get rotten as leftovers there remain bones only. But what remains even when bones get lost? What remains? Oh! Nothing. Nothing. Then why do I keep visiting this place over and over again???

Oh! My Lost Sweetheart!

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word. He's that type. Again, at certain moment, he would start telling many things at his own will.

We kept walking and crossed the gate of the Art College. After that, we reached Shahbag. And exactly at that moment an army van crossed us. Inside the van the soldiers, with helmet fixed on their heads, were seated aiming their rifles at outside.

No sooner had that van passed away than two more vans followed it successively. Suddenly, who knows from where, a rickshaw came and stopped beside us. The rickshawpuller let us know: "Shab, go home, they've opened fire on the processions. Curfew may be clamped down once again." This time he became restless. Said, "Oh! No more, let's go back. I'll drop you at your place."

But, I didn't get in the rickshaw. Rather decided to go on foot so that I could get a bit more time to converse with him. Besides, I would get him close to mine for a while more.

We, however, didn't converse on our way back. On reaching the nearby gate, he said, "I go then." Now I caught hold of his hand. The guard was standing close to the gate — but I didn't feel any hesita-

worry. As soon as the examination is over, I'll tell my mother about our affairs. Be careful and stay alert. And keep well."

His pair of eyes had become more expressive at that time. He was laughing mildly then — perhaps he had a desire to plant a kiss at that time. Meanwhile, I'd come close to the gate freeing his hand. He parted from me and took the route of New Market. He gave several glances back at me. I kept gazing at my sweetheart till he was seen. I was, in fact, getting pleasure within me while I was staring at him.

Yes, this is that very place. Here under this tree we both stood. What's the name of this tree? *Jarul*? Or something else? Who knows! Here my sweetheart and me stood.

We sat there. On that bench. In that afternoon. He was laughing heartily. The very sound of his laughter made two children come near us to see by themselves as to who laughs in this manner. On seeing the two children he broke into peals of laughter.

I shouted, "Why are you laughing like a mad?"

"Well, will I not laugh," said he, pausing in between his laughter. "If I don't laugh even after such an incident, then, when will I laugh? Bilkis and

on me. They think that we spend our noons in the bed of hotels. We do dating in the cinema halls and kiss each other inside the cabin of restaurants. Since then they keep constant eyes on me. They also search where I hide the cinema tickets. At the time of going outside, ask me, where I'm going. When I return, ask: 'How did you spend the noon, go, take a shower and you'll feel fresh.' — all these rubbish and caddish things.

At last at the advice of Mahmud I bought two tickets. That's a lousy movie. On seeing the tickets in my drawer they too merrily went to the cinema hall and bought tickets for themselves. Then, the day, when I went out to watch the movie, they, too, followed us. We reached the cinema hall and stood beside it. And they, too, reached there exactly in time. When we faced one another, they behaved in such a way as if they didn't know us. They very hurriedly entered the hall to watch the movie. Since that incident, Mahmud kept laughing merrily. We came then to the park having sold our tickets. We thought that during the scorching sunlight of noon the park would certainly be deserted. Yes, it was so; but like a mad Mahmud only kept laughing. The whole noon got spoiled this way.

Yes, he ceased laughing. After that he wore a grave, thoughtful expression in his face. He then started explaining the complexity of politics. No, he didn't talk about himself. He would never say anything about himself. He would even drift away if there would come up the issue of his home.

Eid-ul-Fitr—the Spirit of Self-Purification

by Habib Sadat Chaudhury

EID-UL-FITR is one of the two most important festivals of the Muslims. It is celebrated on the first of Shawal at the end of fasting during the month of Ramadan.

Fasting during Ramadan is one of the five pillars of Islam. "Ramadan" means burning. The implication is that by keeping fast one's body and soul is chastened by burning of all that is undestrable. Fasting is primarily a spiritual discipline and as a consequence it imbues moral discipline. Through fasting man learns the great lesson that he should be willing to suffer greatest privation and hardship. He also learns to conquer physical desires. Besides one has to perform special prayers at night — Taravth prayers.

At the end of Ramadan and before performing Eid-prayer one has to give in charity a certain amount of money, called 'Fitra'.

The joy of Eid-ul-Fitr (named after 'Sadaqatul Fitr') is heightened due to proper observance of fasting and giving away in charity. On this occasion friends, relations and neighbours meet and greet each other. They also exchange sweets and share good food arranged for the festival. All these go a long way in improving community life and fellow-feeling.

It is also customary to arrange new clothes for family members and relations wherever possible.

The importance of Eid-ul-Fitr lies not so much in the festivities, good clothes and food, but in having purified

one's body and soul through fasting and leading a good life with compassion and understanding for the fellow men, particularly those not in material well-being.

Congregation for Eid-prayer is the most significant ritual of the day.

1. A true Muslim above all has to be concerned and dutiful about the "Haqqullah" (the obligations to Allah), but also about the "Haqqul-ebad" (the obligations to the creation fellow beings).
2. Most of the joy of celebrating the Eid comes from the contentment of having observed the fast, prayers and good deeds and thereby earning the blessings of Allah.
3. The following quotation from the Holy Quran may be our guiding light: "There is no piety in turning your faces towards the East or the West, but he is pious who believeth in Allah and the Last Day, and the Angels, the Scriptures and the Prophet; who for the love of Allah give away wealth to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the way-farer and the beggars and for (the emancipation of) the captives and keep-up prayer and pay the poor-rate; and the performers of their promise when they make a promise, and the patient in distress and affliction and in time of conflict — these are they who are true (to themselves) and these are they who guard (against evil).

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বাংলাদেশের সকল লুব গ্রাহকের কাছে মেঘনার পণ্য জনপ্রিয়তার শীর্ষে—

তার কারণঃ

- বিশ্ব বিখ্যাত ব্রিটিশ পেট্রোলিয়াম-এর ফর্মুলেশনে প্রস্তুতকৃত আন্তর্জাতিক মান সম্পন্ন লুব্রিক্যান্টস বাজারজাতকরণের অধিকার একমাত্র মেঘনারই রয়েছে।
- গ্রাহকদের উন্নতমানের পণ্য সরবরাহের পাশাপাশি বিক্রয়োত্তর সেবার নিশ্চয়তা মেঘনা পেট্রোলিয়াম দিয়ে থাকে।
- সুদৃক বন্টন ব্যবস্থা সমৃদ্ধ মেঘনায় রয়েছে সারাদেশব্যাপী ডিপো, বিস্তৃত এজেন্ট, ডিলার ও ফিলিং স্টেশন নিয়ে বিস্তৃত নেটওয়ার্ক।
- মেঘনা গ্রাহকদের প্রয়োজনানুযায়ী সঠিক গ্রেডের লুব্রিক্যান্টস সহ সঠিক ব্যবহার পদ্ধতির উপর কারিশায়ী পরামর্শ ছাড়াও বিভিন্ন শিল্প প্রতিষ্ঠানে সেবামূলক লুব্রিক্যান্টস সার্ভিস করে থাকে।
- মেঘনা গ্রাহকদের যন্ত্রপাতির কর্মক্ষমতা তথা উৎপাদন বৃদ্ধির সহযোগিতাকল্পে অতীব উন্নতমানের লুব্রিক্যান্টস বাজারজাত করে থাকে।

আর তাই মেঘনার পণ্য ব্যবহার করুন ও নিজে লাভবান হউন আর দেশলোয়ানে সহায়তা করুন।

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