# When Memories Are All that Is Left ...

# Dr. Azhar Returned to the Hospital — a Shaheed

By Syeda Salma Huq

Translated from original Bengali by Raffat binte Rashid

E returned to our, 22 Free School Street, Hakim House, on the 24th of May 1971. My husband Dr Azhar used to practice in the evenings in " Shamim Brothers' at Kazi Allauddin Road, before the liberation war had started.

During the war period he switched over to Syeda Pharmacy' which was near our house. During those practise hours he used to return very late in the night, which became a headache for me. And because of the country's unusual situation my worries triggered and I always used to think that maybe the military has captured the doctor. I still cannot find any explanation to this thought

As days passed by I found myself facing the cursed 15th

morning and asked my servant Shahadat to bring the doctor's apron from the laun-

Few moments later he returned saying "Begum Shahib I could not bring the apron, whole of Hatirpool, central Road and Hakim House area are surrounded by soldiers and they have declared curfew. They asked me to raise up my hands and at gun point asked me where I was going, and where I work?"

I asked him " what was the language they used." He replied "Bangla."

"You became frightened just by seeing few 'Razakars,' asked him to calm down. Then my 'maid' brought tea for Azhar, he had the habit of having bed tea and that was over last tea together.

I became very restless thinking that nothing could stop Azahar from going to the hospital. He was so punctual and particular about his responsibilities.

He had his last breakfast around 7 that morning. It was the month of Ramzan and we were not fasting.

I said "We are not going to celebrate Eid this year. In this situation God knows who is going to die and who is going

said "You don't have to go to the hospital today."

"I am not going to leave you alone anyway and go, I will ring the hospital for an ambulance and go only if the ambulance comes," he replied

With the stetho in his hands he went to the landlord's house to make the phone call.

I kept waiting for him to return but instead he was standing at the main gate, waiting for the ambulance to come.

Momtaz, the younger sister I woke up around 5:45 that of Dr Humayun Kabir, who used to live on the second floor of the same building, asked "Bhabi, did Doctor Bhai,

"No he went to make a phone call from Hakim Shahib's place. He will go only if the ambulance can pick him

Hearing this Dr Humayun Kabir, who was to begin his internship that day, got dressed and joined Azhar. There was no chance of going, one step forward because the Al-Badr was guarding the whole area.

May be he thought that, if the ambulance could make it to the gate, then they would

Later on I came to know, from many eyewitnesses that the Al-Badrs stopped the ambulance from coming.

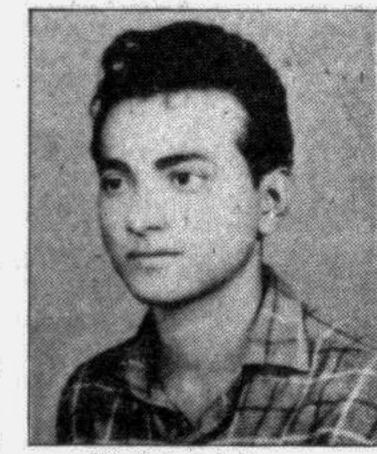
Suddenly five men, four of them wearing dark olive coloured uniform, caps and rifles with bayonet, and one, without any arms but wearing

black sunglasses, entered my veranda. My brother, Syed Rafikus Salehin, was staying with us then, we rushed to the balcony

Then the one in the civilian dress greeted us, pointing the gun at us they inquired 'Do you know Dr Humayun Kabir?"

To save him I said 'No, I don't know him.' What is your husband's name? What is his profession?'

Hearing that he is a doctor



Dr Azharul Hug

they inquired about his department, the room he usually occupies, and I, without realizing the effect, I answered them correctly.

At last they asked 'where is he now?'

I said "Hospital." The men with guns looked at each other and smiled. They went into the rooms, checked few things and left saying 'Don't mind.'

Ours was the only place they searched and minutes later the curfew was with-

I ran upstairs and asked Humayun Kabir's sister to be alert and not to let Kabir in for the night.

Meanwhile Majila Javins mother, our next door neigh-

bour informed "Bhabe, every one is saying that they have picked up our Doctor Bhat."

Within a split second, lightning flashed through my body, was speechless, I rushed downstairs and informed my brother.

Mannan, a peon from the hospital came and informed that Dr Azhar did not go to the hospital. My whole world was spinning and I was totally blacked out, my brother tried to console me saying, have patience.

The entire building came to know about the news within seconds. My brother informed my other relatives. The scarch, for my husband has be-

My elder brother and brother-in-law went to the hospital. Strangely the place for Azahar in the register was marked 'P' which stands for present. The hospital administration was informed and the supervisor himself scratched off the mark.

In the meantime the neighbours and shops nearby volunteered information and facts.

The gentleman in the opposite flat saw that Al-Badrs were talking to Azhar and Humayun, standing in front the tamarind tree near our gate. The shopkeepers could also see this from inside the covered shops, due to the distance they could not make out the conversation.

But at a certain point when Azhar was standing, with his hands pushed against the tree, the men with guns, struck his arm. Suddenly armed men surrounded them the doctor was taken aback, he became pale. They were made to walk at gun point from the spot they were standing, to Hatirpool turn. There they were taken in a jeep, which belonged to a

Pakistani Khan, who was then acting as a 'Dalal' ( collaborator). He was also the owner of Aziz workshop in Hatirpool.

Friends, relatives, everyone started looking for him, and in the meantime my engineer brother took me to his Paribagh house.

Time passed by quickly, I sat up, with everyone else, the entire night, waiting for my husband to return.

An unknown fear and anticipation, engulfed me, I kept thinking he was going to return any time. Finally it was early morning 16th November 1971, my waiting was in vain. Whatever was to happen had already occurred, everyone came to know about the ultimate news except for me.

Their hands and eyes were tied, underwears were their only garments, the young corpses of Dr Azhar and Dr Humayun Kabir were recovered from under the culvert in front of Notre Dame College. The dead bodies were sent to their very own favourite workplace, and educational institute the Dhaka Medical college in push carts.

Many people, relatives. friends already came to our place and were all struck dumb with horror. The elderly persons asked me to have patience, everyone was somehow avoiding me. I was sitting helpless with terrifying hope in my mind. I was the only one not to know what had already befallen me slowly I was collapsing, I was totally lost.

It was the evening of 27th Ramzan, Shab-e-Kader, and before Iftar my eldest sisterin-law Mano Apu ( Mrs Monowara Islam) broke the cruel but very true news, that their brother had passed into martyrdom. He became a

## The Day Sirajuddin Went Away Forever

By Tauhid Razanur

Translated from original Bengali by Raffat binte Rashid

enth December, 1971 A cold moonless night. There is curfew in the city, and the order for 'Black out' makes more ghostly. But the sound of bombs and bullets constantly disturbs this quiet, lifeless city. People in their house are alive only for the sake of living, their lights off, counting the hours away. waiting anxiously for dawn. But everyone was not

asleep in Dhaka city's 5 Chameli Bagh house, Sirajuddin Hossain and his brother-in-law Jalaluddin were awake, they went to their bed rooms around 12 'O' clock.

Only half an hour later, after Sirajuddin went to sleep, he could hear someone banging their main door. He became worried who could it be in this hour of the night?

He knows how difficult it is for him to work, his delivering different sorts of messages to our Mukti Jodhas. Avoiding the censors he is writing the targeted news one after another.

In those writing of his he is not sparing any one. He is writing news after news, analvsis of the inside situation. And no one knows better than him, that his life is in danger.

Few days ago his friend Towhidul Alam, a detective officer, showed him a list of names, saying the men on the list will be kidnapped Sirajuddin Hossain was on the top of the list.

There was no way he could disbelieve his friend. But he just could not leave his big family aside and save his own life, selfishly. This was the only reason why he couldn't leave for India, at the suggestion of his neighbour Tajuddin Ahmed. He used to afterwards say

that people of Bangladesh had seen the war from two angles, some from outside !

HAHEED

Rashidul Hassan was

miraculously saved

the barbarous attack of

Zahurul Haq hall).

Pakistani force on the black

night of, March 25, 1971. He

was then living in the house

23/C, adjoining, then Iqbal hall

Because of its horrifying cruel

memory it was no longer pos-

sible for him to stay there, he

moved to his relatives house

for sometime and then to his

friend's place until he was al-

located the house 28/D in Easa

Kha Road. He was living in this

He was arrested by

house during the liberation

Pakistani Army detectives on

September 20, 1/971, and

stayed captured in the jail for

12 days. He was released on

October 1. His charges were

helping, advising and recogniz-

ing the Freedom Fighters dur-

dom was almost there, the

Pakistanis along with our

Razakaars, Al-Badr, Al-Shams,

started the savage killings of

our intellectuals. During this

awful time every one left the

university area, except for

him. He spent the nights at his

colleague Anwarul Pasha's

30/E house, with all his family

aware of this man, who spoke

for a free country, and thus

they came looking for him on

December 14 at 8:30 am in the

him, was having their breakfast

and listening to the news from

Akash Bani, they were dis-

cussing the latest situation of

the war, when those shameless

Razakaars knocked at their

came in, took everyone out of

the house, and asked for

Rashidul Hassan and Anwarul

stood against lies, and even for

to inside the house and blind

folded their eyes with their

shawls. They were asked to get

into a muddy bus which be-

when the family members

started running after the bus.

screaming, they could go no

They fired blank shots

longed to the then EPRTC.

further.

the last time they did not lie.

The door was opened, they

They were teachers, always

They ordered everyone to

Almost everyone along with

morning.

But the Al-Badr, was always

In December, when free-

ing the liberation war.

war period.



Sirajuddin Hossain

and some from inside. And he thought that his sole job was to inspire the freedom-fighters from inside. In the evening of the same

day, 10th December, Towhidul Alam came again to warn his friend. And this time Strajuddin thought of going undercover for some time. But his cousin sister Hena came to him for shelter with her young daughters. And thus he changed his plans without a second thought.

Every one came to the sitting room and Sirajuddin Hossain was smoking cigarettes one after another. After waiting for sometime

he opened the door and saw a white dog crying in a low tone. He could see no one in his portico in the light of the

It was 3 at night, everyone was sleeping, someone was at the door again and Shaheen, the second son could sleep no more, he could hear the landlord saying 'Shaheen open the Shaheen thought that the

landlord being a doctor had come to make some important phone call to some patient. Sirajuddin's phone was almost a public phone booth Shaheen without thinking

opened the door and saw four

guns pointed at him. He could only see in the dim light few unknown youths wearing masks. He could see the landlord Dr Shamsul Huda, his brother-in-law, and two sons Khoka and Bholu standing with nothing on. Then the incident took

place within seconds. The unknown miscreants entered the house. Fahim the third son, was calling him father loudly. Hearing their sons Sirajuddin and his wife were wide awake, he was about to get his Panjabi, when the men shouted 'Hands up'. He could not wear his Panjabi.

Their broken Bangla and Urdu introduced them as the faithful members of Al-Badr and Al-Shams. Every one was horrified. They asked his name and profession.

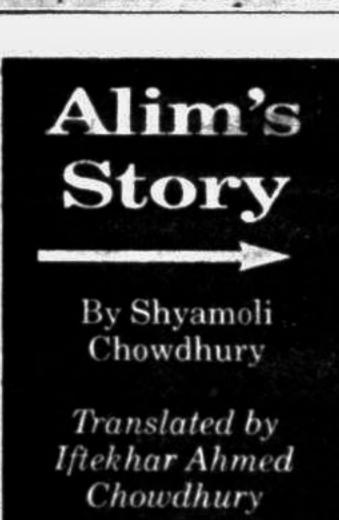
With a confident voice he answered them. The men eyed each other as if saying 'we've got one, this was not unnoticed by Mrs Strajuddin. Next order was 'Bahar

Aao!' wearing only a vest and lungi, Sirajuddin came out, every one followed them. They again asked him, his name and profession. Mr Hossain answered them again. They shouted 'Andar Jao'

or else they would fire. One of them shouted for a towel. Mrs Hossain ran into the house to fetch his towel and gave it to them. Sirajuddin Hossain handed over the torch to the landlords sons.

He was saying nothing. He was totally speeches. He could say nothing to his dear wife, who was crying, to console her. He followed the road, shown by those wretches, and walked into the dark night.

He never returned to print the news for his country folks. There was no trace of his dead body in the middle of those millions dead in Rayer Bazar, Katasur, Shiyal Bari. Sirajuddin Hossain was



IGHT from the morning on December 15, 1971, I started packing a few clothes and food for my pay heed to anyone's request.

things ready.

'How Could We Harm Our Teacher?'

By Shumon Haider Chowdhury

made his comments while

watching those planes. The

time was around 1.30 in the

afternoon. Lunch had been

served. Babbi was about to go

for a shower. Just at that

moment there was a knock on

the door. Uncle went and

A group of men, aged per

haps between 20-25 with

their faces covered, walked

where Babbi was. When uncle

asked why they wanted to

know that, the masked man

said his commander was

waiting in the car outside to

have a chat with Prof.

35 masked, armed men had

surrounded the house.

Mother was frightened and

started to cry and so did I.

Only my younger brother

Shovon and cousin Imon

hadn't quite figured out what

was going on. Shovon was

By that time, some 30 to

One of them asked uncle

opened the door.

in, rifles in hand

make accommodation for us at

the hospital. He told Alim to stay back at home tonight, because he may be called to attend to his duties at the hospi-It was then four-thirty. Alim

sat on a chair in the first-floor verandah. I and my mother were witnessing the bombardments, Alim said from the other side that Indian air force had taken control over Pakistani bases. There is now no way that Pakistan forces can sustain. Yet Maulana Mannan, the man staying in the room downstairs, claims that the United States will save Pakistan from the inevitable catastrophe. Alim had a good laugh at the expense of the stupidity of the Maulana.

heard a car come by. We stood cro-bus parked at the Maulana's gate, below our house. Such suspicious looking automobiles frequented Maulana's residence every once in a while. So we were not so much worried. Yet Alim warned us not to steal any glances at them and went off to the bathroom. I went inside mother. utes after this the bell rang at our main entrance. We saw from above that two Al-badrs were pointing their guns upward and ordered to open the

asked Alim what we should do. He told me to let them in and started his way to the Maulana down stairs. I asked him where he was going. He said that he was going to the Maulana. He had told Alim to go to him whenever he ,

Depending upon that Alim quickly went down the stairs and began to knock violently at Maulana's door. But his door never 'opened, instead he asked Alim from inside, not to be afraid and that he is always there to help him. Alim was running his way up the stairs. But by then the Al-badrs had entered the house. The servant of the house had opened the door for them after Alim told

Alim asked, why? They said, there's need. Alim wanted to change, but they told him that he won't need any other clothes.

were taking him, they answered that he will find out as soon as he goes. Alim accompanied the

Maulana Mannan. As soon as they walked out of the door, badrs had taken Alim away.

I went with great haste to Mannan and begged him to do



Dr. Alim Chowdhury

something about this. Never before, I have spoken to him or had come infront of him. rocoiled in fear or in disgust.

The micro-bus was vet to leave the premises. I told

Maulana didn't say a word. saying, "Don't worry, they are my pupils. It was them who

I asked him why they had taken him.

He replied that they were taking him for treatment to

four in the evening. In an emotion chocked voice the lady asked me if they would

I became very frightened after hearing this. An unknown fear chilled my spine. Again I went downstairs to Mannan and requested him to give me right information of their where abouts.

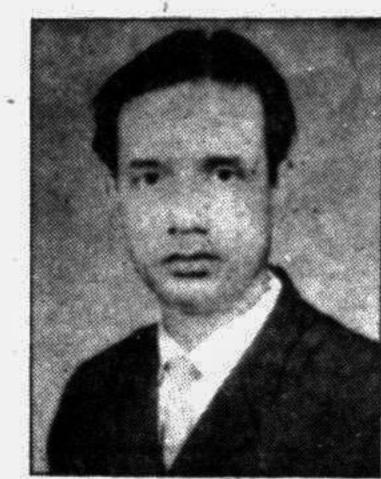
nothing to worry and reminded me that Alim was taken away for treatment. They will return him safely after the job is done and that the Maulana had a talk with Captain Quiyoom.

Night begun to creep in. I glued my ears to the door bell, smallest of noises started me, Every time I was thinking, here comes Alimi

went to her and assured that there was no reason for her to cry. Alim will return as soon his work is done. Never did it cross my mind that the Albadrs will kill him.

The sun rose and it was dawn of December 16th stood on the verandah with the earnest hope that because Alim didn't return last night, he will definitely return today. I kept on waiting with lidless eyes.

## Rashidul Hassan's Martyrdom



Dr. Rashidul Hassan

He was buried along with

other Shaheed teachers in University's central mosque (North side).

in 1969, Rashidul Hassan joined the Dhaka University, as a teacher in the English Department, and till the day

he died he was serving the University. He earned his honours degree in English in the year 1953 and in 1958 completed his masters in the same subject from Dhaka University. From 1953 to '56 he was teaching English literature in Narsingdi College, 1956 to '59 in Pabna Edward college and from 1959 to 67 in the Hatempur college in West Bengal.

politics but was always politically aware. While he was a university student, he became the cultural secretary of Salimullah Muslim Hall. He was a true Bengalee in the heart and mind. He always supported any movements regarding the rights of Bengalees and he played a vital role and was involved in the '69 mass upheaval. He always wanted a · separate country for Bangalees. He gave his opinion and showed his support to the mass movement of '70 and the Liberation War of '71.

He was never involved in

## 'I Haven't Done Anything'

By Asif Munir

I WAS VERY little when they took my father away. was about four then. should not remember any thing. I have heard from my mother, grandma, it seems their words are always reflected in my own mem-

Dec 14, 1971. Father had just finished bathing, and was about to have lunch. He used to bathe in the open verandah of his parental home at Central Road.

Somebody came to the door outside. My uncle Rousseau opened the large front gate, and saw some youngmen, aged between 20-22, getting off a car. They asked, "Is Munir sir

here? Could you call him?" Rousseau uncle thought they were my father's students, and called him. Father was on the first floor, and as soon as he

steps, mother stopped him. "Don't go, there is a curfew on outside, why has this car come ?" she asked. But father dismissed her

started going down the

worries. "Don't be silly, haven't done anything. What will they do to me They'll let me go after a few words". Grandma was watching

her son through the door,

but a frightened daughter

moved her away. My mother

went to grandma and said,

Munir Chowdhury

"Mother! They've taken Bhason's father away in that car !"

Father never returned. lost in an aimless journey, wearing his favourite and well-known cloths - white panjabi.

Mishuk and uncle Rousseau were taken to Central Jail to identify some of the suspects being held there. The two of them managed to identify only one. But nobody knows what happened afterwards. Later on, we heard that one of the suspects was punished.

Later on, my brother

Today, it is becoming very difficult to pin- point the real culprits.

- Translated from original Bengali y Sabir Mustafa

#### Translated from original Bengali by Sabir Mustafa for t won't be long before we are independent. Can't you see how low the planes are flying, there s nothing that can resist them We will become independent within 24 hours now, they won't be able to stop it". That was December 14. 1971. Independence came

Chowdhury, did not live to see that day. In 1971, I was only seven years old, I do not remember many of the things that happened in those days. Still some memories remain, and will do so forever.

alright, but the one who

uttered those words, my

father Prof Mofazzal Haider

1971. Babbi - I used to call my father Babbi - had gone with so much hope, to the Racecourse Ground to hear Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Then there was the terrifying night of March 25, when the Pakistan army came to

can remember March 7

watch the army. These was so much anguish on Babbi's face so much phin. So many times people had

the campus. I can remember

Babbi and mother to seek

through the window and

asked Babbi to go to India, to Shantiniketan. He would laugh and say, "I will not leave my little ones behind and go anywhere. He used to love us tremendously and he gave his life to prove

that love. Through the war of libera tion, we stayed at our Fuller Road house (14/F). On Dec 11 we went to our uncle Lutful Haider Chowdhury's house in Shantibagh. It was from there, on Dec 14, that the Al-Badr picked up my

father. Dec 14, 1971. From the early morning Indian air force planes were flying in very low and bombing the cantonment, Governor's House. Babbi

children. No matter what, I have to leave today. I wouldn't At last we settled that, mother and Deepa will stay back at home with father. Because its going to be a hard task shifting my invalid father to another place. Because he cannot also be left alone back at home, mother and Deepa also has to stay home to look after him. Alim (my husband, Dr Alim Chowdhuryl got ready to go to Mitford and asked me to get Next few hours passed in

Mofazzal Haider Chowdhury with son Shumon

something"

surprised that we should be

frightened just by the sight of

Mother asked them,

in reply, the masked man

"Where will you take him? He

hasn't had a shower nor had

his lunch. At least let him eat

said, 'Bhabi, we will return

him in no time. You shouldn't

worry. He's our teacher, how

could we do any harm to

self said. Why are you all

worrying? I haven't done any-

thing wrong". I didn't know

then that, not to have com-

mitted a crime was the biggest

coloured suit and boarded a

microbus, camouflaged with

mud. Mother, uncle wanted to

go with him, but they said,

will return very soon."

he never returned.

"That won't be necessary, he

My Babbi went away, but

Babbi put on an ash-

At that point, Babbi him-

utter anxiety. The piercing noise of mortar shelling went on without any stop. The small hand of the clock reached at one in the afternoon. So the curfew began. Just then we heard the noise of a car engine. It was Alim.

When inquired why he came home late Alim said that after his assigned duty he went to meet Dr Latif, Principal of Mitford Medical College Hospital to seek permission from him, if he can provide to accommodate us in the hospital. But Dr. Latif, a close relative to the infamous Rao Forman Ali simply said that he was sorry and that he cannot

After a few minutes we up and saw a camouflaged mi-Approximately, forty-five min-

needed help.

to let them in. The killers told Alim to put his hands up and accompany

And when asked here they

killers wearing a shirt and a 'lungi.' Perhaps he had believed the false assurances of Hakim and Momin came running to inform us that the Al-

'Shaheed.'

But today was not a day to be Mannan that the micro-bus has not yet started off and begged him to them to set Alim free.

We heard the car start-off. I couldn't hold my tears any longer. In fear and anger I started crying infront of him. Then Maulana assured me by

took Dr Rabbi also."

the Combined Military Hospital l was somewhat relieved after this brief dialogue with the Maulana. I phoned Mrs Rabbi. She informed me that they have taken Dr Rabbi at

ever return!

He told me that there's

Mother was crying silently.

After the country was liberated, they were searched for everywhere and on January 4 72, his dead body was found along with seven other university teachers who were picked up the same day from Mirpur

# By Rokaiya Hasina