

Lest We Forget

Abul Kalam Shamsuddin

by Prof M A Ghafur

liberal in their outlook having refined taste for the nation's rich heritage. His family was conspicuous for its cultivation of Arabic and Persian and Punthi literature. Abul Kalam Shamsuddin's life long interest in literature in general and fiction and Punthi in particular can be traced to this family tradition.

Abdul Kalam Shamsuddin started his literary career while he was student. He had already established himself as an essayist and literary critic during his college days. His essays and writings on literary criticism were published in the literary journals like Saogat, Al-Islam and Bangiya Muslim Sahitya Patrika. He took up the profession of journalism in 1921, at the call of eminent literature Mohammad Wazed Ali and joined the Mohammadali founded and edited by Maulana Akram Khan, the father of journalism in Muslim Bengal. He subsequently served in Dainik Sultan and The Muslim. He also served in various capacities in monthly and weekly Saogat His article Maha Shashan Kabya published in Saogat in 1926 BS firmly established him as a distinguished literary critic in 1934 BS. He published in Saogat a long serial article entitled Kaoya Sahitya Bangalee Mussalman which earned him much fame. In his article Abul Kalam Shamsuddin elaborately dwelt on the poetic genius of Kazi Nazrul Islam. It was in this article that Nazrul was for the first time prophesied to be an epoch making poet (Juga Probortak Kabl).

In 1936 when the oldest daily of Muslim Bengal The Azad was started Abul Kalam Shamsuddin joined its editorial department. He became the Editor of the Azad in 1940 and remained so till 1962. He was connected with the daily Azad for long 26 years since 1936 and this was a historic period in the annals of Muslim Renaissance in Bengal in which The Azad played an outstanding role in guiding the destiny. It goes without saying that Abul Kalam Shamsuddin had his big part in this Renaissance. During the period between 1936 and 1947 The Azad fought for the Muslim cause and the Editor of The Azad had to perform the role of a friend, philosopher and guide in all such activities.

In course of his work for Muslim Renaissance he came in touch with innumerable socio-cultural organisations which he either patronised or assisted. But there were some organisations again like Purbia Pakistan Renaissance Society of preparation fame and Raunak (RONAC) of post-partition days in which he had been the central figure. He was also connected with Pakistan Sahitya Majlis, Pakistan Lekhak Sangha, Bangla Academy and he was one of the founders of Nazrul Academy, and its first president. He had been in journalism for long 50 years from 1921. After he severed connections with The Azad in 1962, he joined another vernacular daily The Jihad. In 1964 when Press Trust of the then Pakistan brought out Dainik Pakistan (Now Dainik Bangla) he joined as its Editor. He retired from this daily in 1972, then renamed as Dainik Bangla. Although he retired from active journalism in 1972, he retained his active interest in the profession and guidance for the profession till the last days of his life.

He had a colourful literary career. Like many litterateurs he too started his literary career through poetry. But soon he took to his basic line — the field of essay writing and literary criticism. His style was superb both in fiction... and other prose writing. He enriched the Bengali literature by translating three great works of Turgenev who was one of his favourite authors. His works of translations and adaptations from Turgenev are Anabadi Jami (Virgin Soil), Kharataranga (Torrents of spring) and Trisrota (three currents) a book consisting of three famous stories of Turgenev. His writing on literary criticism are many but unfortunately we have so far got only one book on the subject and it is Dristikon (The outlook). Among his other important works are Atit Diner Smriti (Memoirs of bygone days) Palashi Thekey Pakistan, and Natun Chin, Natun Desh all of which have enriched our literature. He also wrote quite a few books on journalism which are both enchanting and educative at the same time.

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Biotechnologists: Their Marriages and Future

by Asoke K Bagchi

THE purpose of this article about marriage is, like the purpose I see in many highly technical careers, to deal with a state that has some measures of hope and viability. There are these states of being that possess potential, actual and future existence. All else is mere hope and history.

Apparently there are probably more reasons today for not marrying. Some of these reasons are the fast changing style of living together, having fewer children and much less of a small unit family, less restrictive life styles and premarital sex experiences. Yet, most people marry at least once.

In view of the ideology of love as the motivating factor for marriage, less than half marry for love. The most frequent reasons are companionship and having a homelife with hot meals. Perhaps this is so because other traditional functions of married life have been eroded by the ever changing world. The family is no longer a unit of economic productivity, the sole source of education, care and upbringing of children. Reproduction is no longer the dominant factor in a married life.

Human expectations are often based on the behaviour of the successful and faithful partner in courtship, which is no predictor of marriages. Twenty per cent of those who marry state family pressure as their motivating factor to marry. The security of marriage does not equate with the contentment.

The current mounting divorce rate seems to show that marriage is an artificial bond of the society. Marriage also seems to impede the liberty of the man as well as subjugate him. Marriage appears to be an instinct as it is seen in every culture, civilisation and group of men. The system of moral codes and traditions, often equated with godliness appears to be another motive for marrying. Love and companionship cannot be defined. One can categorise 3 distinct types of loveable objects: (1) Those whom we seek for pleasure, (2) those who are useful to us, and (3) those whom we admire and perceive as good and virtuous. In a relationship based on utility, each compliments the other. Unlike the amorous relationship, utilitarian relationship seldom permanent. Such relationship do not find pleasure because they are more interested in some profits than in the person. Most relationship begins with a feeling of pleasure. However, unless there is time for the development of familiarity with the other person, marriage fails. True companionship or comradeship, the genuine regard for one another as friends and equals, takes long time to develop. Most of the successful marriage partners ultimately exchange their ideas for a more mature form of love or companionship.

People of change psychologically, married or unmarried but, how does one view the changing status of each individual after marriage? The personalities entering into marriage often see themselves as considerate and affectionate. High income-earners often emphasise on the word "affectionate" more often than the less fortunate. Husbands who are mature enough to admit they are short tempered seem to have shown competence enough to select wives whose personalities compliment their own. To compliment is to express appreciation or praise.

In the context of going through changes, it is absurd to have the optimism of those who expect marriage to effect a profound ennobling of the human soul through the exchange to textual vows and rituals. Majority of persons report that marriage changes them for the better. The most common change is that of maturity which appears not unlike technical training, to occur through increasing the amount of responsibility. But responsibility in marriage, unlike technical training which demands a course of prescribed duties, is a state of readiness to respond to the need of another person. It is the much less vital yet the predictable routine of technology at work. The truly wise person feels inadequate to meet great responsibility. Lesser equipped and more self aggrandised persons are those who seek to overpower others. About a third of those who marry feel that they have become more considerate. Similarly a quarter of women attribute greater self confidence to marriage.

Is conflict inevitable in a marriage? Well, one does very seldom encounter couples who never fight. These couples are characterised by personalities which will relent on any point of contention because they cannot bear displays of aggression or any threat of loss of affection. Others may be absolute tyrants in the office or the place of work because they dare not oppose a dominant and aggressive wife. But, what people fight about is not as important as how they fight and how they make peace.

The principal cause of conflict is money, far above any other reason. Money and careers are inseparable. The most common complaint the wives have about a technologist's career is that it takes up too much time. The hazards of the occupation, not always measured in strenuous physical acts, also play a role. The most frequent psychic dangers cited by technologists' wives, are the admiring and nearly adorable attitudes of women working with a technologist-husband. Lack of communication with relatives, social activities also add to the frequency of arguments. Not surprisingly, parental matters engender more opportunity for arguing. This is especially true in high income families where arguments may be less related to money than to the upbringing of children. Adding a child necessitates change, yet, the change appears to be one of the greater burdens placed upon the mothers in adjusting their lives to the addition of another child. The marriage also becomes increasingly focussed on instrumental functions and less on emotional functions. Mothers who stress on positive aspects of their marriages are better able to look beyond the negative marital effects that invariably accompany the transition to parenthood. For husbands, change occurs from romance to reality. Yet, disagreements about children are handled with greater acceptance, than other familial problems.

New parents and family members can face feelings of being divided between two parents or two households, feeling excluded by feelings of guilt and anger or feeling lonely. If the parents face these challenges in a creative way strong bonds can be developed by various means. Marital crises range from voluntary actions, such as adultery to involuntary events, such as illness. Few marriages escape crisis, but not all agree on what makes a crisis beyond the individuality of the person involved.

A major crisis is currently thought to be one where the wife chooses to be independent, yet married. Independence does not necessarily lead to smooth sailing, nor does it lead to crisis. A discussion between them tends to lead to peaceful resolution more easily than does an absolute act of submission.

The successful technologists, in my opinion, are based on multiple informal interviews. This factor is present in the wives of each of these men. The ability of the wife to lead a separate, distinct life that is supportive of her husband appears in no small measure due to her ability to exist outside of, and yet close to him.

The expectations that motivate technological and married life styles must be considered as carefully as the innovations in each, or we shall never understand whether the experiments failed or whether they were designed simply to fill a set of goals unrelated to a more distant goal that lay in another direction. Before we can decide whether a state of being is fulfilling its functions, we must determine what we expect of it.

Were does modern marriage go wrong? Everyone seems to want it yet no one knows how to keep it going. Those who do keep it going have occasions of being dissatisfied with how it is running. What seems to be emerging is a set of assumptions about marriage that run contradictory to our traditional expectations. Rampant primary assumption is that marriage is a private and personal contract between two persons. But far from it, it is a three sided pact among the man, the woman and the profession. If we liberate women from domestic chores and enable them to pursue careers, the family should provide child care, enable fathers to have easy access to divorce and the family will find ways to take over enforcing payment of the costs of child care.

The new assumption is that marriage is somehow a vehicle of personal growth and happiness. Marriage, it should be said, has nothing to do with pleasure. It certainly has its moments of joy. Would the world go on if everyone quit the job because it was not totally pleasurable? Would one stop working because the procedure did not provide with consistent results?

Marriage is too important, too vital for us to burden it with improbable demands such as sharing all thoughts, total empathy with the partner.

The development of one self as a person at the expense of a loved one was once a privilege reluctantly accorded by society only to the most esteemed artists and men of genius. Now, suddenly it seems that it is the right of any citizen to overthrow the spouse, children and obligations in order to fulfill an insatiable quest for personal or professional glory. People speak in glowing terms of careers for which marriage could be readily sacrificed. However, they miss the fact that nearly all work, no matter how externally glamorous or worthwhile or all the adjectives used to describe high technology is a mere boring statement. Is it worth the missing of a smile from a child or the satisfaction of any other personal achievement?

The modern couple seems to have lost the capacity of a conception of a future and the logical intellect to plan for it. In the acceptance of the dictate of "good living", the modern couple seems to have disavowed traditional norms. They advocate special freedoms and return to a primitive pattern and forsake the security of devotion to an from a single mate. In short, they reject everything that is human and then complain about the inhuman state of marriage. We need to forget about our brief hours of personal glory and involvement. Marriages, like a technological career, may always start with an atmosphere of happiness and optimism. Yet, the passage of time bring, error, tribulation and termination. Neither state can protect us from having to confront darker days. Marriages can help us from having to confront them alone.

Crisis will come to each human being. If we expect it and can face it with confidence, we can negotiate each curve including a final point of no return. Our children and others can carry on the legend which we all once shared as parents.

The writer is a consultant neurosurgeon in Calcutta. The article was adjudged as the best published in the journal of the Indian Medical Association during 1992-93 and is reproduced here by exclusive permission.

The British Council Language Matters

The Intro

This week's column has an article on phrasal verbs. This is quite a difficult area in English for a number of reasons. This article concentrates on the issue of meaning.

There is also a Wobbly Words puzzle and a little game of 'guess the language'. English is not shy about adopting words from other languages and they become so much part of the daily vocabulary that many British people do not themselves realise that they are foreign words

Good for a Game?

English is full of words that are borrowed from other languages. Can you guess which language each of the following words come from? Match the word on the right with the correct language on the left. One example is done for you.

| | |
|-----------------|------------|
| 1. spaghetti | a. Persian |
| 2. amok | b. Czech |
| 3. barbeque | c. German |
| 4. kindergarten | d. French |
| 5. pyjamas | e. Eskimo |
| 6. robot | f. Italian |
| 7. anorak | g. Spanish |
| 8. creche | h. Malay |

Verbs and prepositions

Many very simple and common verbs in English often change their meaning when followed by a preposition. You 'know' the meanings of both the verbs and prepositions when they are used on their own, but do you know what they mean when they're used together?

Such combinations (often called *phrasal verbs*) are sometimes transparent - i.e. you can logically deduce the meaning of the phrase by looking at each of its parts, but very often this will not help you at all. It could even cause problems because you think you have understood when you haven't.

As far as using these combinations in your own speech or writing goes, one strategy with phrasal verbs is to avoid them altogether, and this is what many learners of English do. You can usually make your meaning quite clear by using a longer word with the same meaning (these longer words are usually of Latin origin). For example, you can 'postpone' something rather than 'put it off', or 'abscond' rather than 'get away' with something.

This is fine if your main purpose is to communicate your meaning, but you must also be aware of the fact that the words you choose communicate something about your personality. Use of these 'latinate' words when a phrasal verb is more appropriate can give the impression that you are a very stiff and formal person - even pompous!

Phrasal verbs are appropriate to spoken English (unless it is a very formal speech in front of a large gathering), and are being used more and more frequently in modern written English.

One of the most striking things about Bangladeshi English is the overuse of latinate words. The could be several reasons for this, such as the fact that twentieth-century English has not yet been fully established in Bangladesh, or the belief that the use of 'long' words indicates a better education, or that latinate words are the ones taught in school, or simply because the grammar of phrasal verbs is far more complex than one-word verbs.

Try filling in the chart below.

* Consider which combinations are acceptable - put a tick if they are, a cross if they're not.

* Where the combination is acceptable, consider whether the meaning is transparent (i.e. both words keep their standard meaning) or opaque (i.e. the combination of the two words gives a totally separate meaning).

* Is there more than one meaning? If so, make a note of both, or all meanings.

* With the use of a good dictionary, note the 'grammar' (eg Does it have an object? If so, does the object go between the two words or after them, or is it optional?).

* Finally note which one-word verb which has the same meaning? Find out which would be more appropriate in which contexts.

Wobbly Words

Try this word puzzle. In each shape the letters are jumbled up. Put them in the correct order. What do they all have in common? Be careful. Some shapes might have more than one word.

1. 2. 3. 4.
5. 6.

| | by | up | in | over | on | off |
|-------|------|----|----|------|----|-----|
| get | eg ✓ | | | | | |
| come | ✓ | | | | | |
| give | X | | | | | |
| put | | | | | | |
| make | | | | | | |
| break | | | | | | |

For example:

(a) - *get by* has a transparent meaning (*Could you move your chair please? I can't get by.*)

- and an opaque meaning (*Since her husband died, she has had to struggle to get by.*). In this second use, the meaning is 'to manage - but with difficulty'. It does not have an object. A one-word verb equivalent is 'survive'. 'Get by' is more informal, but 'survive' is commonly used.

(b) - With *get up*, the meaning is quite transparent - you get up (out of your bed) in the morning. If there is an object, it goes between the verb and the preposition (eg *Is Kamrul still in bed? Go and get him up now or we'll be late.*) A one-word verb equivalent is 'arise' but it is so formal and so rarely used that you would probably only come across it in poetry or in political slogans.

You can do this exercise with any combination of verbs and prepositions. Make a grid like the one above, with a selection of verbs down the side and prepositions across the top. As before, consider:

- which combinations are acceptable
- make a note of the meanings, and whether they're transparent or opaque
- note the one-word equivalents, and any restrictions on use
- study 'the grammar'.

Answers: 1. triangle 2. circle 3. square 4. sphere 5. rectangle 6. pentagon - they are all geometric shapes.

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Snake

by Shamsul Islam

Latika woke up crying — 'snake, snake' Suddenly at the dead of night Amidst a hissing darkness And no sooner did I switch on the light, Latika was found nowhere In the dazzled room Only a naked snake was there Dancing sweetly with all its serpentine Slithering; and bright burning eyes.

Translated by Alfaz Tarafdar