

Lament of a Parent on Loss of a Child

by M M Rezaul Karim

Ship sails and I stand, watching till she fades on the horizon and someone at my side says, "She is gone." Gone where? Gone from my sight, that is all; she is just as large as when I saw her. The diminished size and the total loss of sight is in me, not in her. And just at the moment someone at my side says "She is gone." There are others who are watching her coming, and other voices take up a glad shout, "There she comes!" And that is dying.

The above quotes were from Bishop Brent on 'What is Dying' and figure out prominently among the finest pieces one can come across on the subject. There are still other equally notable sayings. Yet, no amount of poetry, logic and prayers can fill the unfathomable vacuum created in the heart of a parent on the loss of his or her child. It is an inexplicable, excruciating, lingering pain exacerbated by the sudden and unacceptable thought that the dear one will never be seen or heard again. Latifur Rahman and his gracious wife will never get another hug or a sweet call, Papa or Mama, from their little Shazneen again.

The gruesome murder of a young 15-year-old daughter of a celebrated socialite and industrialist last week in Gulshan covered the entire society with shocking grief, a sense of deep concern for all. The number of callers to show sympathy and extend condolences to the heartbroken parents was unprecedented. They came from

all walks of life, from all strata of the society and, indeed, from manifold organisations and institutions many of which had no or the remotest connection with the deceased and her family. Such was the widespread and spontaneous impact of this horrid crime on the society.

Why was it so? Is it due to the macabre nature of the crime; the hitherto unknown sense of insecurity in the upper class of the society; sudden rise in the highest degree of crimes like murder, rape, kidnapping etc.; failure of the law enforcing agencies to accord protection to citizens, especially women and children or the deep and pressing concern of many to prevent recurrence of such heinous crimes? The answer is not one but a combination of all these factors. Prevention is, no doubt, better than remedy. Sterner measures are, therefore, called for and all, irrespective of different shades of public opinion and political leanings, must endorse and promote these measures.

A final word for one sufferer from another. Only one who has been subjected to a similar situation can only comprehend and share, though not fully, the real intensity and depth of the grief. Having lost my grown up son under tragic circumstances in London last year, I can only say that my wife and I can share Rahman's grief but we can give them no solace. The one who is lost is lost for ever. Yet, yearning for the bygone persists, defeating all canons of logic and circumspection.

Do you hear the children weeping, O my brothers
Ere the sorrow comes with years?
They are leaning their young heads against their mothers
And that cannot stop their tears.

The young larks are bleating in the meadows,
The young birds are chirping in the nest,
The young fawns are playing with the shadows,
The young flowers are blowing toward the west -

But the young, young children, O my brothers
They are weeping bitterly!
They are weeping in the playtime of the others
In the country of the free.

The Cry of the Children
Elizabeth Barrett Browning
1806-1861

I look, quietly, into the eyes of the children. Startled children. Fearful children. Angry, restless, confused children. Scared children. Brave children. Girls and boys, teenagers, adolescents, young adults - there are so many children; so many children in our lives this week.

Everywhere there is a child who might have been Shazneen. Shazneen Tasnim Rahman, a lively, talented teenager whose life on this earth had barely begun, was murdered 11 days ago. She was brutally cut down in the privacy and protection of her own home, in her own bedroom, while under the same roof her family was having dinner with a small group of friends.

As we read about the tragedy and no doubt, absorb not a small portion of the sensationalism that has accompanied even mainstream media reports of the heinous crime, a gamut of emotions rages within us, among us.

There is primarily and for many, predominantly, a sense of horror. You cannot get away from the evil inherent in the

murder of Shazneen or, indeed, in the murder of any defenseless child. To take up a sharp weapon, to attack an innocent child with it, to cut her down, ignore her cries, to hurt, maim, destroy and extinguish - all these are possible only in the presence of manifest evil. I don't know about you, but I shudder - I cannot help myself - as I contemplate the evil personified in the incident.

But the contemplation of evil personified is not the only challenge for me. As I look at her photograph, at the smiling Shazneen, I realise what many others might have already realised before me. I realise what many young girls and boys have already been grappling with before me.

Shazneen was murdered inside her own home.

In Memory of Shazneen

Coming Home...

Almas Zakiuddin

It doesn't matter that it is big or small, permanent or temporary, broken or sturdy. Your home is your home. Your own home, your own space, your own abode - there is something special about the space you call your own. It is special because it is here, of all places, that you expect to be safe. It is here, of all places, that you expect to be protected. It is here, of all places, that you expect to be at peace.

That is why, when I look into the eyes of the children this week, I can see so much that challenges me.

Is this the world you are leaving behind for us, they ask me. Is this the world you have created for us, they ask me. Is this the life you want us to lead, the protection you profess to give us, the bounties you promise to bestow on us? Is this the future you have promised us?

And I have no answer.

But do you know something, the greater challenge is yet to come. Although I do not know the answer and I cannot explain to the children what has gone wrong, I know I must find one.

We must all find the answer. We must all make sure not only that Shazneen's killers are found, but also that she has not been killed in vain. And to this end, we must force ourselves to contemplate and focus on areas that are not easy to deal with, are not without controversy and not always clearly defined.

You see, even as we contemplate the horror of Shazneen's murder, even as we lament and mourn her untimely and cruel death, even as we contemplate the implications of a world in which our children are no longer safe within their own homes, we also know for sure that we must go on. Life must - and does - go on.

It is so easy, therefore, to condole Shazneen's death and move on. It is easy to tell ourselves this will never happen to us. It is easy to believe that if we lock our doors with bigger locks and erect higher walls around our homes and guard our daughters and our sons with greater vigilance - if we do all this, no harm will come to us or to them.

The real challenge is to con-

front reality.

Reality Number One is the realisation that public protection is a myth in Bangladesh. There is law, but poor law enforcement. There is punishment, but the real culprits are hardly punished. There is accountability, but no one guilty is ever held accountable. Our system is permeated by graft, inefficiency and a lack of commitment to morality and truth on such an insidious and entrenched scale, that it is now virtually impossible to believe in the system at all.

Reality Number Two is the knowledge that Reality Number One exists. In other words, no one believes in the existence of public justice.

Given these two realities, it is not surprising that criminal acts have gone unpunished and violence against women and children has increased alarmingly. It is not surprising at all, either, that most people believe that no matter how hard we might try, in the end killers will escape, violence against women will continue, the guilty will not be punished, the innocent will not be protected.

So how can we make a difference? Can we make a difference? Can we create a new reality?

My answer to this comes from the example I have seen before me this last week in the family of Shazneen. They have been wounded, dealt a mortal

blow no less, and tested beyond endurance. But they have coped beyond belief. Indeed, they have coped with amazing belief. The Almighty gives strength to those who need it most, they say. I believe this to be true.

I also believe that if ever we have to look for inspiration, we must look to those who have endured, suffered and have continued to believe.

Shazneen's family is not alone: there are countless others in this country, families of victims, ordinary people who care, thousands who have felt the need to cry out and protest, to change, to make this a better place for us and for our children.

Let us speak out, all of us.

I don't know about you, but Shazneen's murder has brought home to me the stark reality of how unprotected we really are (in Bangladesh). It has made me, personally, realise how fragile a hold we have on our own birthright in this land.

Most of all, it has made me realise the need to fight back. We must fight back in different ways, but fight back we must. We must make ourselves - and our daughters, especially - strong. We must expose evil. We must challenge injustice. We must work together to reform society every which way we can.

For Shazneen, her bereaved family and for the future Shazneens in our country - we must never give up.

Garfield



by Jim Davis



FOR child lifters, child molesters and rapists Bangladesh is simply a paradise! Here children - unguarded and unprotected - are found everywhere. You don't have to search them out, they are there right before you. All you need is the loathsome desire and you can get them without any pains. So is the sad story of the children of our country - a free country. But alas, they are not free from the fear of the assailants who are lurking there to grab them at the slightest opportunity.

These poor children are not free any more to earn their livelihood honestly by working on the streets under harsh circumstances. As they are being picked up and smuggled out of the country, across another country, to reach their place of work as a camel jockey - what a weird work! Wonder why kids from the countries they cross are not taken to the Middle East. Why is it only our children who are? What is the mystery behind it?

The children can now no more go out and play freely in the playgrounds as their earlier generation did, so gleefully and happily. They cannot walk down to their schools or to their friends' house, on their own. For the danger of their being kidnapped for ransom or to be rapped is getting commoner with the passage of each day. Parents are always in fear of such a tragedy to occur. Therefore they restrict the normal

movements of their children. This is not healthy but can't be helped, in the given circumstances.

Poor girls are the worst sufferers. The way the number of rapists is increasing in the society, they feel unsafe every moment and every hour when they are out of their houses. Strangely enough, they are not even safe inside their own house these days! For, incidences have been reported where they have been raped, murdered or thrown acid upon, inside their very own abodes! How frightening indeed.

Rape of school and college girls is not at all limited to the cases reported to police or the ones we see in the dailies. Innumerable girls when subjected to this inhuman humiliation are too ashamed or horror-stricken even to relate it to their dear ones, let alone the police.

Once a student of Chittagong University was sent to me to find out if she had got pregnant. She had been gangraped couple of months before. She had missed the university bus, being busy in the library, so she started for home in a rickshaw, with a male class friend of hers. Chittagong university being far from town, they had a long way to travel. Suddenly a gang of men attacked their rickshaw,

and saving her from bad name and reputation, would be quite difficult and risky.

So girls and women of all age, married or unmarried, when victimised as such, should report to the doctor without delay - to a lady doctor, if they prefer so. For she is the only person who can help them then. If they do not feel like going to the police, or their guardians or friends - okay, but please do go to the doctor at least, secretly if you want to. At least the doctor can help them to get rid of this 'shame' that is growing inside, timely and effectively. So that in addition to the mental and physical trauma, they don't have to face the distress of a child of shame thriving inside them.

People may not even believe that they have been raped and start pointing their fingers at them, tarnishing their reputation forever. What more torture their can be for an innocent girl? During the Liberation War our women were raped, but were our children? Now this our own countrymen are doing without any fear or remorse. How shameful indeed. We have asked Pakistan army to apologise for their heinous acts, but who is going to apologise for the present-day rape of women and mere children? Now we are at a

loss as to whom shall we ask to apologise? Our own countrymen!

The rape and gruesome murder of a teenage girl inside her own well-guarded home leaves us all aghast with fear, disgust and uncertainty. Whom can we trust these days? Nobody seems to be worth it. A decade or so ago, there was something very important in the employees and that was loyalty. Nowadays this important quality seems to be lost forever. Anybody can stab you on your back for his own interest.

As we read how brutally the innocent girl was violated and murdered by repeated stabs, icy fingers of fear gripped our hearts. This could have happened in any household, to any girl or woman, in any part of our country. It makes us feel sick. Can a man's lust drive him to such madness that he could stab an innocent girl more than 30 times, only to satisfy his wanton lust. The brutality is nothing short of animalish.

These days you cannot even trust your own relatives let alone employees. A nephew murdered his aunt in Dhaka. An uncle raped his niece when his wife had gone to the village - then brought her to the doctor to see if she had got pregnant or not, and she had.

The reason for all this degradation in society is nothing but lack of punishment. Anybody can commit any crime and go scot-free. So why not?

World Press Freedom Day observed 'Govt doesn't want to control newspapers'

State Minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed yesterday made it clear that the present government does not want to control the newspapers and journalism in anyway, reports BSS.

The government believes in transparency and accountability in democracy and freedom of expression in the age of information. Prof Sayeed said while addressing the chief guest a symposium held to observe the World Press Freedom Day at CIRDAP auditorium in the city.

The symposium was jointly organised by UNESCO, the UN Information Centre (UNIC) and the News Network, a news-feature agency of Bangladesh. It was also addressed, among others, by information officer of UNIC - Kazi Ali Reza, Mohammad Jahangir and Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) president Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, UNESCO representative in Bangladesh Dr Ansar Ali Khan presided.

Prof Sayeed said, "The Press Freedom is very important. It relates to exercise of freedom with objectivity and responsibility. But in practice in most cases it is not properly followed in the newspapers."

Referring to the dissolution of the Times-Bangla Trust, run by the government, Prof Sayeed said the present government had fulfilled its election pledge which was also a public demand for long. He refuted the allegation about the distribution policy of the government advertisements for the newspapers, and said, the government advertisements do not depend on newspaper's circulation.

He said the government is committed to allowing private radio and television. The process has already started, he said adding tender has already been floated for private radio and the tender for private television will be floated this month.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Press Institute (PIB) organised a discussion meeting in the city yesterday marking World Press Freedom Day.

The meeting was addressed, among others, by Director General of PIB Dr Sheikh Abdus Salam, Professor of the Department of Journalism of Dhaka University Dr Sakawat Ali Khan, Special correspondent of Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha Zogul Ahmed Chowdhury and News Editor of Dainik Sangbad Humayun Kabir Bulbul.

Metropolitan



Sheikh Hasina presiding over a meeting of the Awami League Parliamentary Party (ALPP) at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhavan yesterday. — PID photo

Workshop on CPR begins

Speakers at a workshop in the city yesterday said treatment of heart attack patients with proper cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) can result in eighty per cent success, reports BSS.

They said this in the opening session of a four-day training workshop for trainers on 'cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR)' organised by Centre for Medical Education and Department of Anesthesiology, Dhaka Medical College (DMC), and sponsored by Further Improvement of Medical College (FIMC).

Presided by Prof ABM Ahsanullah, Principal of DMC, the session was addressed by Prof Nurul Anwar, Director General of Health Services, Prof Shah Monir Hossain, Director of Medical Education, and Prof M Haque, Director, Centre for Medical Education, Dr M Khalilur Rahman of the Department of Anesthesiology, DMC, presented the keynote paper.

Prof Khalilur Rahman, in his keynote paper said CPR is a life-saving process. "If the functioning of a patient's heart ceases, the patient may survive if he is treated with CPR within two to three minutes," he said.

Canada keen to invest in Bangladesh

CHITTAGONG, May 3: Canada is considering to invest in Bangladesh especially in the fields of power, gas, software infrastructure and agro-based industry as an excellent investment opportunity is existing in Bangladesh, reports BSS.

This was disclosed by Canadian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Nicholas HR Etheridge while exchanging views with the members of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) at the chamber house here today, a chamber press release said.

The Canadian High Commissioner said Bangladesh is the highest recipient country of Canadian grants during the last five years and as such it wants to improve socio-economic condition of Bangladesh through small industries.

Etheridge said Canada has been assisting Bangladesh Railway through investment to the tune of 250 million US dollars during the last three decades, besides, "Canada is keen to provide competent expertise in exploration of gas in Bangladesh, the high commissioner further said. Earlier, chamber president

Kamaluddin Ahmed welcomed the high commissioner and briefed him on the investment opportunity offered by the present government and urged the high commissioner to extend his cooperation for expansion of the volume of trade and investment between the two friendly countries, the press release said.

Kamaluddin referred that a Korean Export Processing Zone and an exclusive industrial zone of Japan will be established in Chittagong and requested the High Commissioner to come forward for investing in various prospective sectors in Bangladesh.

Reciprocating the sentiments, Etheridge proposed for holding a seminar in Canada to highlight the prospects of trade and investment in Bangladesh, the press release said.

Referring to the economic crises, that persists in South East Asia, Etheridge observed that Bangladesh will have to compete with these countries and expressed the hope that Bangladesh would economically become a "Bengal Tiger" in this region.

Kibria returns from ADB meet Dhaka concerned at unregulated movement of short-term capital

Finance Ministers participating in the 31st annual meeting of the Board of Governors of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in Geneva expressed concern over the unregulated movement of short-term capital and its impact on the economy of the developing countries.

This was stated by Finance Minister Shah A M S Kibria while talking to BSS at the airport on his return from Geneva after attending the four-day long meeting of the ADB held there between April 27 and May 1.

Describing the meeting as important in the background of BCU asks govt to aid ailing Zuenko

Bangladesh Chhatra Union (BCU) yesterday urged the government to provide financial assistance to former Soviet naval officer S P Zuenko for his treatment as he was a trusted friend of Bangladesh in the post-liberation period, reports BSS.

Rear Admiral Zuenko actively participated in the mine clearing operation and removal of war-damaged ships at the Chittagong Port during 1972-74 as the chief of the naval team of the then Soviet Union.

Rear Admiral Zuenko recently appealed to the Bangladesh government through the Russian Embassy.

Leo Burnett co awarded

Leo Burnett company dominated the 17th annual Magazine Publishers of America Kelly Awards this year taking home the \$100,000 top prize for the magazine ad campaign for Callard & Bowser-Suchard Altdorf, "The Curiously Strong Minst," says a press release.

Burnett was selected for the "General Excellence" award by a judging panel of 19 top Creative Directors from the nations leading Advertising Agencies.

Burnett also awarded the "Best at Meeting Campaign Objectives" for the Altdorf work, which was one of only three other awards presented. In Bangladesh Bitopi is the Burnett Agency.

current Asian financial crisis, Kibria said most of the countries wanted the assurance that recovery would be speedy and growth which was now halted in these countries would resume within a year or two.

The minister said the stable macro-economic situation in Bangladesh, including steady growth of GDP with low inflation rate, was highly appreciated by the participating finance ministers and ADB President Mitsuo Seto.

He said the ADB president had accepted an invitation to visit Bangladesh to attend the inauguration ceremony of Bangabandhu bridge over the river Jamuna, scheduled to be held in June. The ADB president during a meeting with Kibria assured that the level of assistance by the bank to Bangladesh would be maintained.

The finance minister said the Indian Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha had responded positively to his request for a state credit of 200 crore Indian rupees during a bilateral meet-

ing held between them in Geneva.

He said he had also raised the question of removing non-tariff barriers with the Indian Finance Minister which are impeding expansion of Bangladesh exports to India. He said Sinha had assured him that the matter would be looked into.

Kibria had a bilateral meeting with Pakistan Finance Minister and discussed with him the forthcoming SAARC finance ministers conference. Besides, he had discussions on bilateral issues with finance ministers of Indonesia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and other countries.

He met with the Director General of Swiss Development Corporation and was assured of the continuation of Swiss assistance to Bangladesh.

He also signed an agreement with Nordic Development Fund in Geneva which, the finance minister said, had opened up prospects of additional economic assistance from the fund.

BCIC Tender Notice


Managing Director, Chhatak Cement Co. Ltd, Chhatak, Sunamganj invites sealed quotations for supply of Lab. Instrument & Lab. Glass ware, Tender No. PUR/B/RT (1)/196/97-98. Tender will be opened on 25-5-98 at 3:00 PM at Purchase Division, BCIC Head Office, Dhaka & Purchase Section, Chhatak Cement Co. Ltd. Tender documents will be available against cash payment of Tk. 400/- only (Non-refundable) from 1) BCIC Head Office, 30-31, Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka, 2) BCIC Branch Office, 6, Agrabad, C/A, Chittagong & 3) Chhatak Cement Co. Ltd, Chhatak. No tender document will be sold on opening day.

BCIC 311-26/4/98

DFP-9218-27/4/98

G-918

For Managing Director



ইসলামী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

রেজিস্ট্রারের কার্যালয়

পুনঃ দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

নং প্রশাঃ/বিঃ-৯৮/২৬৪৪ তারিখঃ ৩০-৪-৯৮

ইসলামী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ব্যবসায় প্রশাসন অনুষদের জন্যে ০৫ (পাঁচ) টি, রেজিস্ট্রারের কার্যালয়ে জন্যে ০১ (একটি) (প্রিটারিং) ও হিসাব বিভাগের জন্যে ০১ (একটি) (প্রিটারিং) কম্পিউটার মেশিন এবং কম্পিউটার শাখায় জন্যে ০১ (একটি) টি মাল্টিমিডিয়া মেশিন ক্রয়ের নিমিত্তে প্রকৃত সরবরাহকারী/প্রদানকারীর নিকট থেকে নিজস্ব মোটরহাউজে প্যাকেজ সীলমোহরকৃত দরপত্র আবেদন করা যাবে। আগামী ২০-০৫-৯৮ তারিখ ইসলামী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, কুষ্টিয়া, রেজিস্ট্রারের কার্যালয় এবং বাংলাদেশ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় পরিষদ, বাড়ি নং-এ-৬/১, সড়ক নং-৯, ধানমন্ডি আবাসিক এলাকায় ঢাকা-১২০৫-এ রফিক দরপত্র বাস্তবে দরপত্র গ্রহণ করা হবে এবং এদিনই বেলা ১২-০০ মিনিটে দরপত্রাদাতা বা তাদের প্রতিনিধির (যদি কেউ উপস্থিত থাকেন) উপস্থিতিতে দরপত্র বাস্তব করা হবে। দরপত্র প্রকাশের তারিখ হতে ১১-০৫-৯৮ তারিখ পর্যন্ত (অফিস চলাকালীন) অগ্রাধিকার থাকবে, ইসলামী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় শাখা, হিসাব নং-০৩ ও অগ্রাধিকার থাকবে নাগাদা শাখা, কুষ্টিয়া হিসাব নং-এসটিডি-২৪-এ ২০০ (দুইশত) টাকা করে (অফিসভাষায়) জমাদানের মাধ্যমে দরপত্র সিডিগল ও অন্যান্য প্রয়োজনীয় তথ্য পাওয়া যাবে।

আগামী ২০-০৫-৯৮ তারিখে কোন দরপত্র সিডিগল বিক্রয় করা হবে না। কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করেন।

উপ-রেজিস্ট্রার (প্রশাসন)
ইসলামী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
জিডি-৩১৭