Still 18...

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IT was one of those shining bright and youthful days in IUB when I was just about to gallop up the staircase, running for my class. It was a usual Sunday afternoon and I found him again standing near the staircase and staring at me with frowned eyebrows and a bit of surprise about which said, "why this girl is leading a life like a shredded piece of withered fallen leaf lying uncared in the windy road when it was supposed to be filled with colour and rainbow hues!"

Yes it was me the girl, kind of surviving like the to-be-burnt out candle, trying to rekindle back with some lost spirit of not being able to make it for the USA undergraduate program in Arizona State University (ASU) .I was like a small sparrow with a broken wing, with lost hopes, exasperated and frustrated at the same time. Going to IUB was just like a dead nightmare to me with no known face around and with an alienated feeling.

His name was Ahmed Sayeed Jamal, who was the centre of attention in our group. He glared at me like one of those usual days with a sneer and asked me for the first time, "Have you been to our reading room?" I nodded a "No" to which he just made me follow him to the 6th floor of IUB. I found a room with some rowdy, raucous and unruly bunches of youngsters yelling with shrill cries as if it was their own room or something. That was how I was considered to be one of them slowly in the next 4and half years.

Sayeed, a very brilliant student, a very compassionate and generous friend, with a heart full of fun and a mind filled with intrinsic creativity and knowledge. I remember him teaching his junior fellows of marketing and sometime even taking the care of his own fellow mates in his batch. He was termed the 'guru' of marketing.

Then again, in case of fun and entertainment he used to be the centre of amusements all the time. I still remember how much he participated in all the events of IUB, especially in the BSS (Business Student's Society) ones and I still remember him asking for votes from every random students when anyone from our group used to stand in the panel for the DOSA (Division Of Student's Activities) election; luckily whoever stood up always came up with the flying, winning title.

He was excellent in managing every single problem, he solved them within snap of fingers. He had good leadership potential. He could just organize any event or program within a blink with his magical power and make our days a youthfully jovial one. He was like a 'King Penguin' standing high guarding his whole team of 17 noisy bunches of youngsters behind him. We were '18'.

All of you must have thought by now why am I saying, 'we were'? The reason is, our beloved friend Ahmed Sayeed Jamal is no more in this world. 14th of March was his last day that he gifted this world with his big smiles and bright future hopes. It was the last day that his company could unknowingly not give farewell to one of its best and striving employee. It was the last day of making his favourite song be a real story of his life, *"Jeene ki hai char di"'...his life was really for few days as a gifted guest of God.*

In a sudden jolt our whole group of friends were caught in like a real tremor when we heard the news that he had a stroke on the 15th of March'10. He was being taken on the hospital where doctors declared him dead. He was later brought down to Chittagong from Dhaka and was buried in eternal peace in Lohagara, his village home.

It has been almost a month but the thought of him not being there still does not catch my mind. I still go through his facebook profile every day, when I am done with my work at the end of the day, and want to convince myself of him not being there. I know wherever he is, he is resting with an ever-lasting dream of the heavens to be his next destination, which he deserves as a human being.

In Albert Einstein's words I feel like saying today "Strange is our situation here upon earth. Each of us comes for a short visit, not knowing why, yet sometimes seeming to a divine purpose. From the standpoint of daily life, however, there is one thing we do know: That we are here for the sake of others. With whose fate we are connected by a bond of sympathy. Many times a day, I realize how much my outer and inner life is built upon the labors of people, both living and dead, and how earnestly I must exert myself in order to give in return as much as I have received."

But I would like to say that true friends are the ones who never leave your heart, even if they leave your life forever. Even after years apart, you pick up with them right where you left off, and even if they die they are never dead in your heart.