

In the Heart of Bangladesh

Lutfor Rahman Riton

One Mujib drives away enemies of the *Mother Bengal*
One Mujib comes forward and extends his hands forward.
One Mujib twinkles in the stars far in the sky
One Mujib comes forward with his chest exposed.

One Mujib spreads far and wide as slogans
One Mujib resides in everybody's house.
One Mujib is framed in the picture across the walls
One Mujib is there in the inspiration for love and rebellion.

One Mujib is the blazing words of protest.
One Mujib is the last resort, and ray of hope.
One Mujib is daringly the conqueror of death
One Mujib is the *Joy Bangla, Banglar joy*.

One Mujib is firm, steadfast and immortal
In the hearts of Bangladesh remains Sheikh Mujibur.

Translation: Abu Turin Tahsin

A Tribute

Aslam Sani

The first ray of sun of comes
And says, "Listen, O Poet
On the day of the Father's birth
Put aside all works
Call on the children
And ask them to make some garlands."

Let the floral message
Roll along with a chariot
From the heart of Tungipara of Gopalganj
To the fields, market places and roads
And spread his dream and his message.

His bosom treasures this soil, land, map and the flag
His bosom hoards the eternal joy and sorrow of the people
The memory of his sacrifice
Is voiced out by all!

The blessed son of history
Graced as the greatest man
That this land, nation and age have ever seen.
All the people of the land
Are grateful to him and
On the day of his birth, we vow
That never ever shall we forget
The great sacrifice of
The greatest son of the soil!

Says the sky, says the wind
Glow the moon and glows the stars,

Says the wood, say the hills,
Flow the rivers and the seas,

Say the peasants, the workers, and the boatmen
Of an independence that cannot be separated from
The name of the Father of the Nation

The children of Bangladesh
Join me on the day of birth of the Father of the nation
With our humble tribute
To the golden Bangla of Bangabandhu

Translation: Abu Turin Tahsin

Tragedy of an Epic

Tokan Thakur

We need tragedy. Otherwise an epic is not complete. The country-roads knew you; you were the son of a rural homestead! The villages lit by kerosene lamps knew you. The Banyan tree at the road's bend also saw how far you walked. The people on the river-bank were aware – your boat surged ahead at each turn, in the pages of our riverine history. The seventy million people drew a map by waging war; you are the greatest hero of that map. Many of your ribs were broken because of the struggles, but you stood up again. Your dream became stronger, sovereign. Your blood spilled ceaselessly due to relentless assaults, but you turned around bravely. You said, 'We shall sacrifice more blood...' A blood-drenched habitat then lay on your chest, the Bay of Bengal in your heart, a flag in your breast; your heart was then the country's sky – history itself was watching you intensely.

An epic is composed by man. The colloquial words pronounced in households become an epic. But an epic cannot be complete without a tragedy. You spilled all your blood for that epic. Should I not then assume that the last martyrs of the liberation war were you, your family? The epic was finished with the blood of your heart. The epic became complete with the blood of women and children. The intensity of your absence is a great tragedy, and an epic cannot be complete without a tragedy.

I dream every day, none can 'hold us at bay' – living is not possible bereft of dreams. Just as there cannot be a mother without a child, a tiger without a jungle, paddy without a field, and fish without any water, there cannot be any Bangladesh without you.....

Translation: Helal Uddin Ahmed

The New Generation and Bangladesh

(From Page-25)

when within some days everyone will find that none of these questions common in the real examination, this guide book business will go to the dogs). The most important thing in our country is handing over brand new books to the children on the very first day of the year. None can ever imagine how inspiring it is for a child. And the number of the books is also astounding - 24 crores. Interestingly enough, if we put these books side by side, this will round the globe twice! Not only that number of books is so big, these books are newly written and published and several of them are printed in four colours. If these books please us this much, we can feel what the degree of joy they bring for the children! In one or two years when all these books will be written in new curriculum in new way, it will bring a great revolution in the country.

At the beginning of this millennium, the Time Magazine published an article. On its cover, the introduction of a big report read that the resource of the new millennium is knowledge. Neither petroleum, gas, uranium, neither automobile or aircraft factories, neither electronic industries or war weapons factories, nor diamond or jewels, but the resource of the new millennium is knowledge. I was over-whelmed with reading this. Because, all on a sudden, I could visualize, we have stood as the most potential country of the world. Only the total number of our school going children is about three crore. If these three crore kids solve a single mathematical problem a night, the country will be a little richer than it was a little while ago. We don't need anything else, if we can give proper education to them, then who will be able to stop us from being the most resourceful country in the planet.

Even though there is not any pain in heart, it is not like that. We all expect the budget allocation for education will be more than it was earlier but it's not happening.

Who is the wisest man of the world? There might be debate over the issue but Einstein will undoubtedly be amongst the top ones of the list. Einstein once said a very beautiful thing, imagination is more important than knowledge. How beautiful the saying was because, if we think about it we can realize how true it is and his saying is hundred percent true. A man who has no imagination, it is as if he has knowledge but not in real sense. It is as if he does not have the best way of using his knowledge. The knowledge he possesses cannot come to any use. Man can use his knowledge only when it is



Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is in loving care of his mother

combined with imagination. Just a few days ago, how cruelly we used to destroy the power of imagination of our children. We taught them to memorize thinking memorization is the best way of learning. The scenario has changed, now we understand rote-learning cannot help us advance. Gradually, we will be able to make our students understand this. I believe, eight to ten years from now when the children will complete their education in this completely new system and lead the country, Bangladesh will have a complete new look.

Yet there is something to say. If our new generation gets very wise and imaginative only, we cannot accomplish everything. They have to be good human beings in the first place. Rabindranath Tagore has talked about this using a beautiful simile. He said, culture is like a pot. There has to be that pot inside everyone because when we learn something, it is accumulated there in the pot. Those who don't have culture, don't have the pot to carry their education inside them. Therefore, whatever education they receive doesn't remain in them. It comes out pouring. They remain uneducated even after having big degrees. Don't we find such uneducated people around

us?

Hence, it is very important that we build that pot of culture in our children at their early life so that all their education is properly preserved. For that we need to build beautiful libraries in the schools, give them environment for practicing art and culture. We have to raise them as cultured human beings.

Among all these, our country must be at the centre. How will it be if we do not make a small pledge on this special day, the birthday of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the architect of this beautiful country Bangladesh. I have seen in many places children remain silent not putting their lips together and stand still when our sweet national anthem is being sung. It hurts me. It hurts me more when I see people singing it wrong. All may not have that melodious voice but shouldn't we at least utter the lyric correctly.

Right at the beginning of the text books of the school children, there is given instructions on how the national anthem is to be sung. All the children of the state must learn it, doesn't matter whether the elders do it or not. Everyone wants to do something for their country. By showing honour to the country the process can begin and by singing the national anthem properly that honour can be given a start.

We should not draw the end point of showing honour to the nation. Let us see how far the new generation can proceed.

Translation: Sharif Hasan

The Way the Little Boy Grew Up

(From Page-25)

During the agitation for language, many students were rounded up by police. For many of these students, it was the first time inside the jail. When the students were queued up for a head count, some of the students were playing pranks with the non-Bengali sepoy in charge. They were changing queue much to the confusion of the sepoy who started yelling at the students. Instantly, the students mobbed him up, and the warden rang the alarm sensing danger. When other sepoys stormed in, Mujib realized that the students would get beaten up over a trivial issue. He stood between the students and the sepoy with stretched arms and took control of the situation: "Everything is alright. Take away your sepoy." The guards were already pointing gun to Mujib's chest, but he remained calm as ever. By that time, the jailor had also arrived and the students had produced the sepoy who was doing the head count.

The mental strength, the dedication and concern for his people, and the willingness to sacrifice his own goodness for the sake of others have put him at the helm of our cruise for freedom.

He was never shy of speaking the truth. He was always vocal against the Pakistan regime and the failure of the Muslim League administrators and the suppression of rights of the Bengali. He was a very good orator, and was fast becoming popular as a public speaker.

The government was afraid of him. He was always under surveillance. All his movements were reported, some of which have now been recovered. The Muslim League government branded him as the most dangerous element. Hence he was arrested many times.

The secret service men would meet Mujib inside the jail. They would offer him bail-out, asking him to sign a bond that he would not indulge in any anti-state activities. Mujib rejected the offer saying that he would never enter in any bond that would stop him from working for the people of the land. "I will always work for the people of Bengal and I will always speak against the oppression of Pakistani regime." One of the secret service reports, read: "This prisoner is willing to die in custody. He has strong will power, and he will not sign any bond to compromise his freedom."

He was probably 31 or 32 at that time. He was arrested on repeated occasions. His lawyers' bail prayers were regularly denied. Whenever he was released after doing his sentence, people would throng at the jail gate. They would like to hear Mujib speak. He would give fiery speeches against the Pakistani regime. Again he would be arrested, and sent to some remote prisons.

His daughter Sheikh Hasina was four or five at that time. His son Kamal was still a toddler. Mujib was once produced before Gopalganj court. His father, Begum Mujib, Sheikh Hasina and Sheikh Kamal went to see him at the court house.

Let's hear it in Sheikh Hasina's own account: "Kamal has just started talking. He has never seen our father. At the courtroom I went to father and addressed him as dad. Kamal was surprised. Later when we were playing near the pond outside Gopalganj police station, Kamal told me, 'Hashu'bu, can I call your dad my dad!'"



Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with his parents and wife

Bangabandhu's fight for his people has forced him to stay in jail far away from his own family. His own son had never had the opportunity to know his father. He has never given thoughts about personal happiness. His wife too suffered many pains all by herself. There were times when Mujib was a Minister just a day before. The next day while the Ministry was gone and Bangabandhu had been sent to Jail, Begum Mujib would go around the city in search of a rental house.

Bangabandhu has given away his own life for his people; I will say it over and again. In 1969 he was arrested under the Agartala conspiracy case. The Pakistanis even plotted to kill him. A grave was dug next to his prison cell, and the judges pronounced his death sentence. He

responded by saying: "I am a Bengali. I am a human. I am Muslim. Bengalis do not die twice. I will not compromise. On my way to the scaffold, I will say: I am a Bengali, Bangla is my land, Bangla is my language. You can kill me, but give my body to the people of my land."



Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with his family

Such was his courage. Such was his love for his people. The people of Bengal have also reciprocated his love. On March 7, 1971 he declared, "Build fortress in each house. You need to be ready with everything that you have." The Bengali listened to Bangabandhu's word. Each house was a spot of resistance. Each soul fought with everything they had. Bangabandhu said, "This struggle is the one for freedom. This struggle is the one for independence."

Many a times Pakistanis tried to kill him. They dared not kill him even though they had dug a grave for him. But he was assassinated by local of agents in 1975. Not only this man but also his family including his wife, sons, daughter in laws—even the maid of the house were killed. Not even the youngest child Rasel was spared.

When the guns roared on that day, the pigeons of the house flew in the sky as if they too wanted to confront the bullets. As this great man fell down on the stairs of his residence, I am sure, his dying words were: "I am Bengali. Bangla is my country. Bangla is my language. Joy Bangla." The pigeons joined in to chime with him as did the trees, forest, rivers, as they echoed: Joy Bangla!

Translation: Dr. Shamsad Mortuza