No Bearer of Burdens will Bear the Burden of Another

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The son of a doctor does not become a doctor, nor does a daughter of an engineer start building buildings and bridges, and never does the grandchild of a military officer don the pips without going through the rigours of education and experience.

Is it possible to become a professional singer just because one's dad is Mohammad Rafi? Did Picasso's child get to paint another *Guernica?* A sitar maestro's son attains the maestro-ship only by serious *rewaz.*

In mainly the democracies of Asia it is seen often enough that the mantle is passed on by blood lineage, PM to PM, MP to MP..., and even so, they who inherit political prowess excel as parliamentarians and/or governors only by the dint of their merit.

Then how is it assumed that the son of a razakar, or for that matter the grandchild of a collaborator, is a razakar? At worst, because of clanship, a descendant may support the same ideology. And again, he may not. Socio-political dogmas most often do not run along the blood veins.

During our War of Liberation 1971, we had one son as a Freedom Fighter and his father as a razakar. In one instance at Mahasthan, Bogra, the razakar father was killed by the Muktijoddha group of his son. He is still friends with those valiant sons of the soil.

The deepest ideologies are religious, and even so we are used to mocking with the adage that a *kazi's* son became a *paazi.* I believe (going by the flavour of the day) that would read better as an *astik's* son going *nastik.* But then some of *huzur's* other children may indeed be believers; and that by their conscience and conviction.

Socio-political-spiritual behaviour of any individual, therefore, boils down to unique personal traits, development of which are based on many factors, not all of which are explainable by mere science.

In this era of youthful exuberance manifest in the month-long peaceful demonstrations demanding apt punishment for war criminals of 1971, countered by threats, blasts and murders supposedly linked to anti-Islamic blogging, it has become a fashion to name names. His dad was a peace committee member, his grandfather was in the Pak army, his father-in-law is the brother of a razakar, and so on. Don't we have MP siblings in the present parliament who are from opposite camps? So?

Even if a person's nana, dada, mama, chacha was a razakar, does that deny that person the right to become a supporter of pro-liberation ideals? As one scribe penned, if it is true that the nati of a razakar has grown up enriched by the ideals of Muktijuddho, and is now in the forefront of the anti-razakar movement, there can be no happier a situation.

When one runs out of arguments to establish his belief or to sully a person of repute, he stoops to attack his ancestors and relatives. Well, it does not work like that. We have to judge a person by his/her own deeds and not by those of his/her kith and kin.

Allah swt says in the Quran, *'And no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another. And if a heavily laden soul calls [another] to [carry some of] its load, nothing of it will be carried, even if he should be a close relative. You can only warn those who fear their Lord unseen and have established prayer. And whoever purifies himself only purifies himself for [the benefit of] his soul. And to God is the [final] destination'* (Surah Fatir 35:18)

Our own sins, our actions, are obviously our responsibility, as theirs are theirs. The sins of others cannot be passed on to another so that their sins can be erased or even reduced. There is no way someone can inherit the sins done by their relatives or ancestors. Nor can one transfer one's burden to another, now or in the future.

'The souls will only be recompensed for their deeds, good for good and evil for evil. No person shall carry the burden of another person, a fact that indicates Allah's perfect justice.'

According to Surah al-Baqarah: *'God does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity. It will have [the consequence of] what [good] it has gained, and it will bear [the consequence of] what [evil] it has earned'* (2:286)

Therefore, let no one try to divert the good contribution of any person by inflicting on that person the burden of his relatives, ancestors, friends, and even colleagues. He is what he is, not what his father, mother, uncle, husband, wife, or grandfather was.

And vice versa, let not the bad deeds of any one person become a blanket of blame and shame for his fraternity, unless of course the latter are backing the sinners, as indeed some are. For then the backers too become the sinners. ■