

NAZRUL ISLAM'S ISLAMIC SONGS

NASHID KAMAL

Rachel McDermott works as a Professor in Columbia University, USA. She studied Bangla in Santiniketan and started translating some of the songs and poems written on the Goddess, Kali. In this connection, she met with Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam (his works) and started a new journey aiming to understand more of Nazrul and translate his works into English. Last year (2014) she came to spend some time in Kolkata and Bangladesh. Her quest was to know poet Kazi Nazrul Islam in greater details.

Her first question to me was "What is your perception of poet Kazi Nazrul Islam, who is he to the people of Bangladesh?" My instant answer was that "Kazi Nazrul Islam is the writer of the song O mon ramzaner oi rozar sheshe elo khushir Eid, this is the song known to every single person, man, woman, child, adult of this country. Even the 'Rebel' poem is not so widely known. Eid is incomplete without this song and this one song enjoys phenomenal popularity." I added, "From my childhood I have been an ardent fan of Nazrul, and have played many roles. Out of all the roles that I have played, Nazrul Islam's Islamic songs have brought me closest to the audience."

I explained to Rachel how during the month of every single Ramadan, the sehri and iftar are marked by the rendition of Islamic songs written mainly by poet Kazi Nazrul Islam. How vividly he has described the Islamic history in his songs. How poignantly he has expressed his wish to visit Mecca, Medina, the seat of The Prophet (SWT)'s birth, hijrat and how



beautifully he has illustrated the love of Ma Ameneh, the mother of The Prophet, Muhammad. Some of the songs contain pieces from the suras, the indepth knowledge of Arabic in reference to the events mentioned in the Holy Quran have been rewritten to form simple messages which then enter the hearts of the people. Those

who do not understand the content of the Arabic suras can get to know Islam through the songs of Kazi Nazrul Islam.

Ramadan is a month of sacrifice and self-discipline. It is a month of consolidation with the family. At other times, we get a partial segment of the population as viewers/ listeners of TV/Radio. During

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iftar and sehri the entire population waits expectantly for the azaan. The songs in praise of Allah (hamd) and those in praise of his beloved Prophet (SWT) are aired at those times and enter the head and hearts of the listener. One seller in the sari shop Kanishka asked me with eagerness, "Apa, I see you on TV at 3 am for sehri, do you go there at that time?" I feel humbled by people's simplicity.

In this connection, artist Khaled Hossain has played the pioneering role. Every year, ever since I can recall, he has led us to listen to poet's Islamic songs and brought us closer to the Islamic doctrines. It has been followed by artists MA Mannan, Shaheen Samad, Fatema Tuz Zohra, Yasmin Mushtari, Leena Taposhi, Salauddin Ahmed and Yakub Ali Khan, Rahat Ara Giti, Roshan Ara Shoma, Nousheen Laila. Thanks to all these artists who have kept the lamp burning. It is not an easy task to record songs during Ramadan, nor is it easy to sing by heart, memorizing the difficult Persian/Arabic words.

I stood next to the lift, waiting for it to reach the 8th floor, the apartment of my friend Kaniz Siddiki. Her domestic staff came running, she asked me to wait one second. She brought her mobile, "Apa, my son recorded your Islamic song for me." I heard myself sing, 'Ore ke bole Arabe nodi nai.' My friend Dr Tasneem Fateh was with me, we both cried.

Through this essay, the nation pays tribute to all those who listened, all those who cried.

The writer is an academic, Nazrul exponent, writer, translator



TELEVISION OF A LIFETIME

FRESH PERSPECTIVE

FARIDUR REZA SAGOR

In BTV's history only two women have taken the responsibility of the position of General Manager. One is Khaleda Fahmi. Kamrunnesa Hasan has taken this responsibility in 2006. Though this position of General Manager is a very crucial position in BTV but still some people says that it is a "thankless" designation. So many responsibilities have to be taken while sitting in this position. But if anything causes hamper in time of responsibility all the blames go to the general manager. That is why everyone says that it is a "thankless" job. Sadly it is true that whoever has left this position couldn't have a happy ending.

Though the joining event of Kamrunnesa Hasan was simple but she has officially taken all the responsibilities from the former general manager Ali Imam. Ali Imam has also taken his farewell officially through a farewell program. Before him Nowajish Ali

Khan has taken official farewell from the same post. It has to be mentioned that Nowajish Ali Khan at that time joined Ekushey Television.

Kalim Sharafi was the first who joined as the chief of the program. After the country got independence famous journalist ABM Musa has joined the television as the first managing director (at that time the post was named as Managing Director). At the same time actor Abul Khayer had taken the responsibility of the managing director of FDC.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman himself has appointed them in both of the positions. It has been heard that as a senior artist Abul Khayer would run the administration of FDC with enough efficiency and ABM Musa would be enough to run BTV's administration.

In a program Bangabandhu had said that he was looking for ABM Musa to appoint him in the television. Thus ABM Musa went to the DIT.

Seeing the condition of DIT ABM Musa didn't dare to take the job. Even the former officials were not interested to take him easily. Then one day seeing him Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman asked, "What is the condition of television?"

ABM Musa then replied that he had not joined television. Bangabandhu then immediately called up his PS to bring a piece of paper. Then he wrote in the paper that he want to see ABM Musa as the managing director of television. Then ABM Musa took that letter to the television and joined as the first Managing Director of television. But he has seen that the condition of the television was not up to the mark. A huge crowd of young people was in the DIT Bhaban. Their demand was, "they are the freedom fighters. They have to be given the chance to perform in the television". ABM Musa then threw a question to the crowd in which program they can perform since the television has only two hours

broadcasting time every day?

But the youths were tenacious. They have to give them the program to perform. Then ABM Musa said, "Okay! There are some rules and regulations to perform at television. Everyone has to give audition". Then the youths became angry. Why would they give auditions? Are they the dancing artists? ABM Musa then said;

"If they don't know any dance then what will they perform?"

The youth freedom fighters said, "We don't know but we will learn".

"Still you have to give auditions at first".

ABM Musa was irrevocable in his words. At the end he said, "You must give auditions. But not for music or dance. Since you have fought with guns you have to give auditions of something like that".

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Translated by Imtiaz Salim*