



# SUPER HUMANS AMONG US

SHAHAN HASNAEN  
PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

The incredible feat of breaking 3 baseball bats with one kick is in itself a jaw-dropping phenomenon. Interestingly the man capable of this display of might was once a scrawny adolescent bullied by seniors. However, his lion-like fighting spirit not only allowed him to overcome the bullies but developed into a intense passion to prove himself; leading him to become a “Super Human” of our times. Prof. Dr. MAK Yuree Vajramunee, was featured on discovery channel's *Super Human Showdown* and has earned a place in the world famous *Ripley's Believe it or Not* archive as the man with the strongest kick in the world. However,

Dr MAK Yuree VajraMunee

Vajramunee places little value on outward, physical displays of strength. According to the grandmaster, what it takes to be a super human is not brute force, aggression or muscle training but mastery over the mind. Vajramunee expresses that though it is essential to condition the body through physical training and learn to control the mind through meditation, true power emerges when mind and body operate in harmony. “Like the two wings of a bird” in his words. “Today the martial arts are practiced primarily as a sport, hobby or self-defense. But people have lost touch with the true teachings of martial arts which emphasises the balance between mind and body.”

According to Vajramunee, martial arts is not about learning how to fight as much as it is about learning how to conquer and defeat the enemies within our own minds; our fears, frustrations and inner turbulence. Vajramunee trains his disciples for the battlefield of the mind, where we remain ever engaged in fighting our inner demons.

Mak Yuree is a 10th degree black belt and has become a global icon as the founder of the unique style of martial arts, Butthan. Butthan, first ever formalised Bangladeshi system of martial arts, is a style of close ranging fighting that combines the art of combat through the use of pressure points with a deep emphasis on meditative practices. Vajra Prana is the art of “meditation through movement” which is

one of the fundamental exercises of Butthan. Dr. Yuree is currently teaching Butthan to people all around the world. Interestingly, like the Japanese terms one must pick up while training in karate, such as Mawashi-geri, Dr. Yuree is teaching the world Bengali with Butthan, with terms like “Shapta Lathi” (roundhouse kick) and “Shoran” (parry).

A remarkable feature that distinguishes Butthan from all other styles of martial arts is the tradition of “Jholok Khela”, a game played in the beginning of a Butthan style sparring match. Each contender sets 11 dice on a board with 24 squares and then challenges the opponent to recall the pattern after one glance. The fighter with the more accurate recall wins 2 points while the loser has to start the fight kneeling. “*Jholok khela* forces the fighters to focus their minds while under the stress and adrenaline of entering a fight.” the Grandmaster explains.

Vajramunee has been hailed in all 5 martial arts halls of fame, and is the first individual from the SAARC nations to appear on the cover of the world's leading martial arts magazine, the *Martial Arts Illustrated*. He is the direct successor of the Grand Master of Bando Khin Maung Gyi (President South East Asia Bando Association), Myanmar. “I began to learn the deeper, spiritual aspects of martial arts after the master passed over the responsibility to spread his teachings.”

STAR PEOPLE

No matter how much we've grown up with Harry Potter, or The Lord of The Rings, there is a part of us that will always remember, unfortunately, that magic is not real. But there are people across the globe who can, even for a moment, make your heart wonder about the possibilities of magic and miracles. One such individual making magic seem as real as the next thing is Syed Wasiul Islam Galib.

Growing up in Bangladesh, Galib attended SFX Greenherald International School until completion of his O' Levels, took his A' Levels in private, and then moved to Canada to study business in York University. “Since I was a child, I would always consider myself a performer. I liked playing a lot of pranks and tricks!” says Galib. When he was in grade 10, he started researching about magic and illusions, and within a year he started practicing; eventually becoming a professional. “My first performance was for my friends. One of them, Salman Chowdhury, even went on to inspire me to come this far.”

Specialising in Psychological Illusions and Bizarre Arts, Galib has no problems stuffing a bunch of blades into his mouth! “Psychological illusions have a lot to do with mind manipulating. Card tricks, tricks involving a lot of numbers and such can be considered psychological illusions. Bizarre arts on the other hand are literally doing bizarre things without a scratch. I soon hope to do this new trick where I'm locked in a box for a week in front of an audience as a test of endurance,” he says.

Galib's first professional performance was on live television when he had a 25 minute skit on NTV's *Janar Ache, Bolar*

*Ache*. He even wrote a script for a TV show named *Magic Man*, which was later aired as *Chocobean Jadur Deshe* on RTV. He has gone on to perform in front of live audiences both in Bangladesh and Canada. “In Canada, the public's reaction was a known reaction, even though it was very positive. They have come across magicians and

Syed Wasiul Islam Galib



illusionists before; I was just a new medium to them. But in Bangladesh, it was better because it was new to the people. They don't come across such an art form too often,” he says. His main inspirations would be David Blaine, Houdini and Robert Houdain. And amongst fellow magicians Fahd Kabir, Max Mystel and Topu motivate

caught my attention. I plan on making videos and films of my performances. I'm actually in the middle of making an independent documentary called 'Into Your Mind', which will hopefully be up on Youtube next month,” he says.

A performance art such as this is very new in our country still, but Galib believes that it has every potential to win over the hearts of the people. “They just need to be a little more accepting of it. They need to acknowledge it as a

# MAGICALLY YOURS

NAZIBA BASHER  
PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

him very much.

In the immediate future, Galib plans on finishing the year and half he has left in York University and enrolling into film school afterwards. “The reason I want to study filmmaking is that it has recently

performance art and make room for it,” he says. For aspiring magicians, Galib stresses on practicing. “Magic isn't something you get easily recognised for. So keep practicing, expand your platform and audience, reach out to anyone and everyone, and keep your grasp on it until you make it. If you believe in it enough, you will make it!”

Subscribe to 'Magic Man Galib' on Youtube to get some glimpses of Galib's magic!

CITY

As soon as the last rings of the bells are heard in the schools located in Tejgaon, Dhaka, 35-year-old Mosammat Aalo prepares for her peak hours of business with her basket full of fancy ornaments such as beaded earrings, necklaces, bangles etc. The students of Holy Cross and Tejgaon Girls' School are some of her regular customers. After school, they gather around their very own Aalo Apa (sister Aalo) to buy these beautiful accessories which they specially ordered for the upcoming Eid. Right after school, Aalo moves her makeshift shop to the foot-over bridge located in front of the Daily Star Centre.



MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN  
PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



Female garment workers and busy pedestrians of Tejgaon-Farmgate area also buy these unique ornaments from her, but not without a good bargain. Without any permanent shop, Aalo has been selling her jewellery for more than five years in this area.

Harsh reality has turned Aalo, a mother of two sons and a daughter, into a hard-working peddler and a craftswoman. Aalo says, “My husband was an electrician. He got electrocuted while repairing a machine. After the accident, he became too weak to do any hard work.”

“To run my family I taught myself to

make jewellery with beads and started selling them,” adds Aalo. Once a week, Aalo travels to Demra, miles away from her home at Kaltabazaar

in Old Dhaka. There, she buys beads and laces of different sizes and colours from the wholesalers. Aalo also studies the popular designs of these ornaments. “For Eid, most of my customers ask for the 'Kironmala' necklace and the 'Rupkotha' earrings. After observing the designs, I learned to make them myself,” says Aalo. Aalo sells all her crafts in several parts of Tejgaon and Farmgate – sometimes in front of schools, near the road junctions or on the foot over-bridge. She earns 500 to 700 takas a day. However, no odds could keep Aalo from making the best necklace to give to her daughter as an Eid gift. ■

SPIRITUAL LEADERS

# THE LIEUTENANT OF FAITH

SHAHAN HASNAEN



The Sufi is born out of impatience. Indeed, impatience is the Sufi's greatest virtue and the inner fire that fuels his quest for God. A Sufi's impatience springs from his unbearable longing for the divine, the intensity of which burns up all and any desire but one: union with Allah. The Sufis mad inclination does not allow him rest from his perpetual state of hunger. He will not wait for the hereafter to unite with his keeper and creator; his need is much too urgent. Thus, he abandons

anything that burdens his quest and weakens his will to strive on the path of truth, surrender and enlightenment.

The great *Auliya* (“Friend of Allah”) Khwaja Gharibe Nawaz Moinuddin Chishti was not only a Sufi seeker himself but a loving father to many desperate souls in need of guidance and refuge.

teacher insisted they travel to Mecca to perform Hajj. One night while staying in Medina the Khwaja went into a deep trance. He woke up, in an ecstatic state with an overwhelming sense of destiny to proceed to India to spread the message of Islam. Thus, the Khwaja is given the title “Ayate Rasul”, meaning the “Lieutenant of the Prophet”.

Afterwards the Khwaja travelled to many centres of Islamic practice including Baghdad, Sabzwari and Balkh, gathering many followers on the way. Anyone who came into contact with him, irrespective of caste or creed would become mesmerised by his presence. The Khwaja glanced at everyone with a loving warmth that filled their hearts with devotion to God and goodness.

The Khwaja ultimately settled in Ajmer with his disciples and spent his



Gharibe Nawaz was born in 1142 A.D. in Sijistan, Iran. He is hailed as “The Founder of the Chisti Order of Sufism”, one of the four branches of the Sufi Faith. From an early age Gharibe Nawaz displayed a disinterest in worldly affairs remaining engrossed in prayer and meditation. His personal possessions comprised of a windmill and an orchard which he inherited from his father. However, when the Khwaja grew into a young man he sold off all his property and distributed the returns among the poor. He set out on a journey to find a teacher to learn the secrets of Islamic mysticism. He travelled to Samarkand and Bukhara to seek the company of Islamic scholars and finally met his spiritual master Usman Hoorani.

When his training, consisting of the most difficult exercises in self-restraint, silence and austerity was complete his

life expounding the divine principles of love and humanity. He adopted Indian customs to make his teachings more accessible to the people. One example of this is worship through music, or *Qawalli*, drawn from the Hindu concept of *Kirtana*. Gharibe Nawaz emphasised upon “Service to Humankind” as the highest form of worship. Once asked by a devotee what it means to have devotion to Allah, he replied: “to redress the misery of those in distress, to fulfil the needs of the helpless and to feed the hungry.”

The Khwaja left the material plane on 16th March 1226. He was buried in his prayer room which became his shrine, the sacred “Khwaja Dargah Shari” where thousands of people flock to every year to honour the great mystic.

Information Source: khwajagharibnawaz.com