

Looking Back...

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organizing 'Concert for Bangladesh' in New York. In India, refugees from Bangladesh including teachers, artists and sportsmen undertook massive publicity campaigns in favour of the Liberation War. People in occupied Bangladesh extended all kinds of support to the freedom fighters even by risking their lives.

Maximum assistance was rendered by the Indian government and the general masses belonging to all classes in the Liberation War of Bangladesh. The Indian government took initiatives to garner support for Bangladesh from other countries. Among these, highest support was extended by the Soviet Union and Poland. Hostility of some countries against Bangladesh was quite overt, while it was covert in some other cases. A small segment within the Bangladesh government itself took the initiative to come to a understanding with Pakistan through US mediation. They were immobilised when their conspiracy was uncovered. This very group succeeded in executing the conspiracy to kill Bangabandhu and the four national leaders in

1975. The Pakistan government was able to bring some politicians and intellectuals of Bangladesh to their side. These were the people who increased the level of repression against the people and freedom fighters of the country by forming peace-committees, and militias like Razakars, Al-Badars, Al-Shams etc. They abducted and killed the greatest sons of this soil on the eve of the final defeat of the Pakistani forces.

However strong the Pakistani military power muscle might have been, there was no way their defeat could be prevented. The killings, plunders, scorching, rapes and genocide that they resorted to generated unremitting rage and hatred against them among the people of this country. Trouble at every step was their fate. They attempted to internationalise the conflict by giving the Liberation War of Bangladesh the shape of a war with India. So they launched air-attacks at various places of India on 3 December. The Indo-Bangladesh joint command was set up anew. Its advances freed one area of Bangladesh after another. The Pakistanis could not escape. The Pakistan army surrendered to the Indo-Bangladesh joint forces on 16 December



afternoon in the Racecourse Ground of Dhaka. After that, there was a new sunrise in Bangladesh. The flow of blood of the heroes, the tears of the mothers and the impregnable unity of the people did not go in vain. The task that remained was building the country anew.

Translation: *Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed*

Philosophy...

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The Bengalis snatched victory on December 16, 1971 following the path shown by their dearest king Mujib. That victory had opened a golden gate of immense potentials before the Bengali nation. The Bengal was debilitated following serious exploitation, misrule by foreign forces for millennium particularly that by the British and Pakistan occupying forces. During the war of liberation in 1971 the



'scorched earth' policies adopted by the Pakistani occupation forces had pushed the economy of Bangladesh to the brink of absolute collapse. Everyone was skeptical about the future of the victorious Bangladesh. National as well as international conspiracies were also there. When President Bangabandhu took charge of the country's administration the whole country was utterly devastated. Within these adversaries, the optimistic and pragmatic leader Bangabandhu strongly took the responsibilities. While there were leaders like Tajuddin, Mansur Ali, Syed Nazrul, Quamaruzzaman as valiant co-fighters in the struggle all along the path following our independence achieved in lieu of a sea of blood, there were also cunning conspirators like Mushtaq with heinous designs and conspiracies. In course of time this conspiracies were gaining strength. Mujib with his optimism was at times became a bit worried. Despite this his patriotism, endless love towards his people guided him to march forward with strengths. Under this circumstances Mushtaq, Zia in connivance with their foreign masters succeeded to remove him physically.

After a lot of year's now it is time to ponder about the subject- were they really successful? But it does not seem so if we look at the present Bangladesh. History is back to its own path. So is Bangladesh. After a long arduous journey we are back to democracy from the preceding Martial Law regimes which were imposed on our national life following the dubious change of administration in 1975. Though the journey was not very smooth.

Bangladesh is marching ahead amidst lots of limitations. Those who have termed Bangladesh 'A bottomless basket' at her very inception, they are the people who are now telling that Bangladesh is an 'Asian tiger'. Though we could not achieve desired goal in some of the fields, particularly sustainable democracy, still I would say Bangladesh is stepping ahead successfully in the world map imbued by the spirit of the war of liberation. In this period of time in some of the fields our progress in not only satisfactory but amazing as well. Though there are much talk on this at the beginning setting aside all fear that the country has no prospects, Bangladesh is now a role model in the world in lot many fields. As per the latest score published on the success of MDG reveals that in the recent years Bangladesh improved and positioned against ultra poverty indices in a lot many areas. Maternal mortality rate has been reduced by 40% between the period from 2001 to 2010. Presence of female students outnumbered male students in schools. Girls are marching ahead in terms of literacy rate. In examinations also their success rate is more than that of boys. In Bangladesh infant mortality rate reduced due to progress in female education. Another success story in women development is in readymade garment industry. Where women are employed in huge numbers and attaining self reliance.

Besides, ultra poverty limit has been down to 10% during the period between 1990 to 2015. After the decade of 1990 the Bangladeshi women folk have progressed in a number of fields. Girls now can pursue their studies with free studentships. Everyone is getting education stipends. This is another reason that, due to progress in education field Bangladesh has been experiencing more than 6% GDP growth annually despite the fact that there has been global recession, political unrest and natural disaster. Had there been no natural disaster due to climate change then there had been 1.5% more GDP growth in Bangladesh.

It could be emphatically said that, had there been no change in regime on the 15th August 1975 then Bangladesh could have nearly reached her cherished goal by now. That day the nation was off the track under the ferocious paws of the defeated evil forces of 1971. They thought they would bring back ghostly Pakistani philosophy in Bangladesh, a nation achieved at the cost of blood, and they were successful in their

heinous design to a great extent. But the people of Bengal cannot betray with the blood of their invincible father. The father had the confidence on his people till his death. And the people of Bengal also submitted to the caring father. The father had reciprocated the sentiments of the people by sacrificing his life. As a result, what we see today in Bangladesh each movement, people upsurge and victory thereof has been named after Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

In our journey, every lane and by lanes are named after Mujib. The name is very dear and fondly to the general masses of Bengal. There were efforts in the past to wipe out his name from Bangladesh. But the ulterior motive did not meet with any success. Because Mujib and Bangladesh are now synonymous. We don't have slightest chance to be off the track from his thoughts, monumental ideals, and spirit. We have to go back to him, to his thoughts his ideals time and again for our own sake. There was a time when reactionary forces tried to make people understand that we have to cope with the changed time. We cannot always be embroiled in conflict considering the happenings of 1971. By this the nation's unity will be at stake. Development will be hampered. Could they make it? No, they could not. Resurgent Bengalis once again awake. They awarded an unprecedented response in the election of 2008 stopping all conspiracies and designs of the reactionary forces. The people of Bangladesh could realize the fact that- the future of the nation will be bleak and dark if we cannot stop the defeated forces of 1971. And through this, all stigmas from the forehead of the nation have to be wiped out. In continuation of this act the nation had strengthened the hands of the people's leader Sheikh Hasina in the 10th parliamentary election setting aside all conspiracies, Who does not know the fact that people's leader Sheikh Hasina is the symbol of their desire and wishes. In this month of victory our oath is loud and clear. We have to move forward under the leadership of the people's leader Sheikh Hasina overcoming all resistance and bottlenecks. We can ill afford to miss the chance to build a secular and democratic state system imbued by the spirit of the liberation war. As a nation as well as the state, the immense loss we have suffered following the removal of the father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from state power is never repairable. So we have to face the reactionary forces unitedly. The spirit of liberation war, that of victory and of new horizon is one, same and inseparable. The philosophy of human civilization's forward movement is the philosophy of our victory.

We have to understand the language of the general mass as of the youths. Because today's Bangladesh is nothing but the output of the struggle of the general masses. The spontaneous presence of them in recent years to stop fundamentalist, extremist and reactionary forces takes us fondly back to the freedom struggle and its father. Their thinking process and language has emerged rotating around the ideals of the state's father. The 'state father' announced in 1971 that 'Joy Bangla is not merely a political slogan. It is rather the symbol of political, economical and cultural liberty of the Bengal.' It seems to us today that, Joy Bangla is back in every homestead of Bangladesh. We are now standing at the historical juncture leaving behind Martial



Law and religious fanaticism. Now one path is open before us, where the general masses and the youths are waiting. When their utterances united by the spirit of the liberation war say that, there will be no anti liberation political force in Bangladesh, then the illuminated enlightened Bangladesh floats before us. The arithmetic of vote and alliance will always be there in politics. But the country is above everything. The political rivalry is there because the existence of the country is there. Nothing will survive if the country ceases to exist.

We will hope that the Bengali nation inspired by the desire to build democratic Bangladesh, unitedly fought under the leadership of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman will march ahead with tolerance keeping in view that aim. Otherwise a scary future will await us. We will be accountable to our future generation. Our journey ahead will continue keeping in front the spirit and philosophy of victory.

Translation: *AFM Nurul Safa Chowdhury*

Millions of souls are astir, eternally

Syed Shamsul Haq

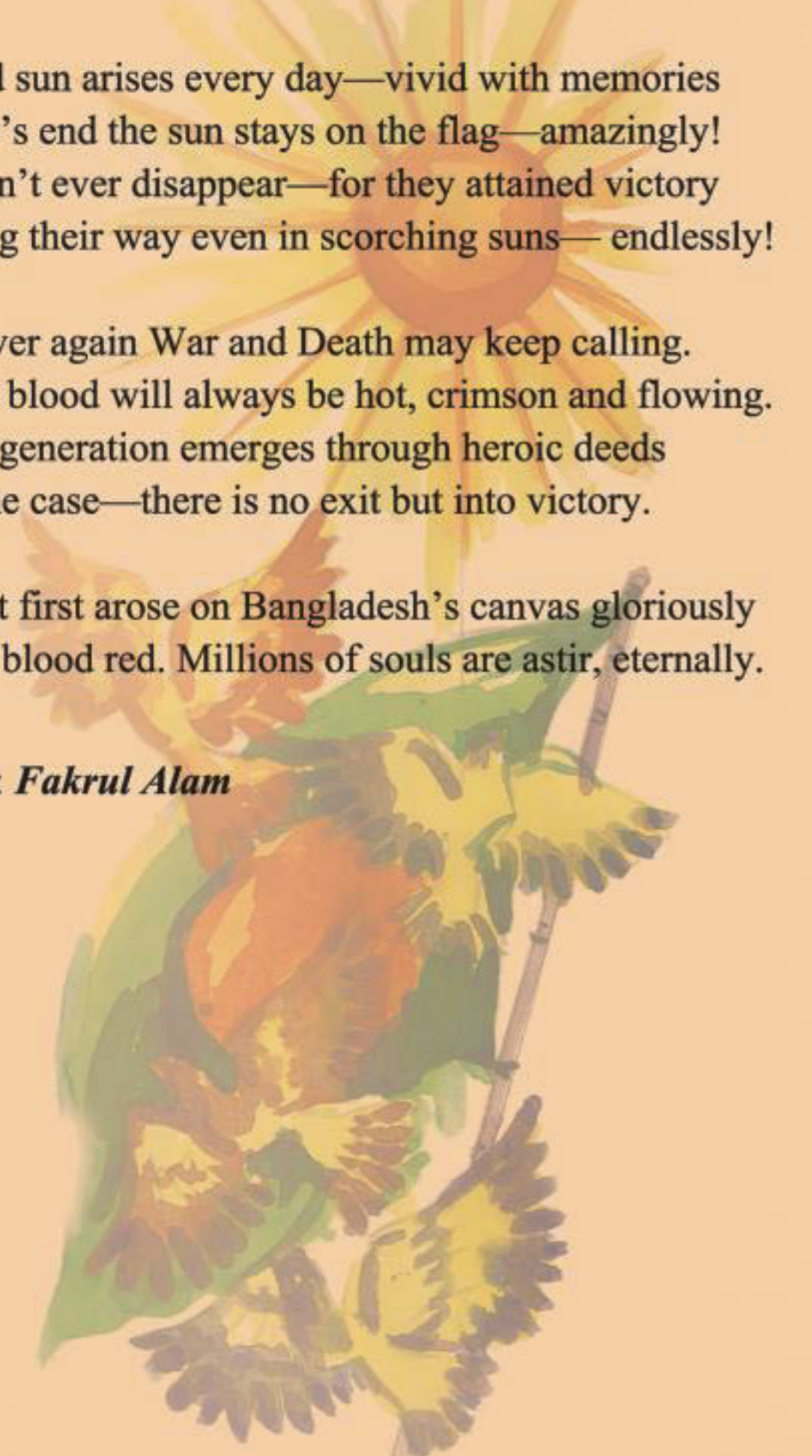
The language called Bangla is the Bangla in Bangladesh Bangla's battle cry *Joy Bangla* echoed across the land! When victory came, Bangalis became one and unique In history; in their hands they got a golden fountain pen.

A blood-red sun arises every day—vivid with memories Even at day's end the sun stays on the flag—amazingly! Bangalis can't ever disappear—for they attained victory They'll wing their way even in scorching suns—endlessly!

Over and over again War and Death may keep calling. And yet the blood will always be hot, crimson and flowing. That a new generation emerges through heroic deeds Is always the case—there is no exit but into victory.

The sun that first arose on Bangladesh's canvas gloriously Shine on— blood red. Millions of souls are astir, eternally.

Translation: *Fakrul Alam*



Our Prince and Bangladesh

Asim Saha

Please do not come to me to recount the tale of freedom Please do not narrate to me how an indestructible voice emerged From inside a roaring tide on the fiery afternoon of 7 March How the earth's soil trembled at his sky-rending cry of thunder!

In the afternoon of that day, I was also a brave youth With you at Ramna; On the sun-drenched ground from noon that day The rural peasants, factory workers, middle-class folks, Prostitutes from Rathkhola and Kandupatti, shy housewives, Poets, brave writers, journalists, intellectuals, party leaders-workers, Even dodgy prisoners who fled by breaking jails were coming; As if the clouds on Bangla's sky were falling on Ramna's bosom as rains. And all the paths-ports and roads, the whole of Ramna Park Were submerged by the over-flowing procession of millions. Only one immortal slogan 'Joy Bangla' Was echoing from their voices. In their hands were sharp weapons of numerous colours and shades, It seemed as if the perilous lava billowing out from Vesuvius Would devour the whole world all of a sudden. There was no fatigue in that wait; fire was raging inside the rib-bone The vigorous time of cherished hope was passing slowly, The luminous prince had not yet arrived - At whose call the rivers and fields, villages, markets and ports Rush towards a terrain even after waking from slumber; Arrived all the grass-flowers, a teenage girl alone Holding the fragrant wreaths of rose, she was looking in amazement At the podium floating on the tide of a huge crowd; A bare-bodied teen was singing alone The song of Bangla's awakening after reaching the TSC corner; At that very moment amid the resonant slogans of millions Through the tides of a sea of people in a proud posture Climbed on the stage that beloved luminous prince of ours. He had on him a white Panjabi, a pyjama of white colour And that radiant black coat wrapped on his body like a kin. There were back-brushed hairs, that beaming pose on the face, The moment he stood before the microphone, The sky and the air of Bangla were vibrant, as the whole ground Trembled at the sky-rending shouts of millions. Then the silence of a calm river descended on the daylight ground of March. What song would emerge from that voice? Sileent moments were passing in anticipation, The heart was shaking in doubt, the eyes were getting wait with tears; At that moment, that heart-rending message was pronounced By that beloved voice of thunder:

"This time the struggle is for our freedom, this time the struggle is for the independence."

From then on we were free, from then on The word freedom spread towards the midnight of 26th March Overflowing the sky, soil, the earth and solar system, Then came the 16th of December Our Victory Day. The name of a new homeland blossomed On the world-map like a new sunrise:

Bangladesh
Bangladesh
Bangladesh.

Translation: *Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed*