

# THE AIM OF YOUTH

POET KAZI NAZRUL ISLAM

TRANSLATED FROM THE BENGALI: PROFESSOR NASHID KAMAL

(Concluding part)

This is 'youth' and the religion of 'youth'. We have no other country, no nation, no religion. Their cantonment belongs to no country, race or religion. We, the Muslim youth should be able to declare firmly that our religion is Islam, but the religion in our hearts is that of youth and youthfulness. We belong to all countries, all nations, all religions, all times. We are the followers of 'Youth'. Those who have been able to overcome these barriers of religion and nationalism, have turned into superheroes, supermen and great personalities, and they are respected by all.

Our religion is to break those buildings which are in imminent danger of falling apart, it may be the cause of death for many. If our beloved home is about to fall apart on our heads, then the youth should have the courage to pull it apart and rebuild. If one is not able to enjoy the bounties given to you by God, only raising hands in prayers will not grant them. God has given you the hands to achieve heaven and heavenly objects. Let the youth have this motto 'We shall build our world according to our taste'.

I think that the Bengali Muslims face a lot of superstition and conservatism which is not present among other Muslim societies. Some 'self proclaimed' religious leaders have unnecessarily created avenues to bring in false values and inhibitions, whereby some of our values are being submerged! Additionally, some 'crocodiles' are also entering through those avenues. I am able to tolerate the religious men, even when they interpret Islam in their own ways, I cannot tolerate the fake Mullahs, find them simply intolerable. In the name of serving Islam, they are actually causing more damage. Their actual intentions are summarized this way, 'Whether the dead man goes to heaven or hell, I am happy as long as I get paid for the rituals'.

There is a saying that 'An empty stable is better than a naughty horse'. If we fail to follow this saying, the entire world will make a laughing stock out of us. These entire beings are full of superstitions and weird dictates. Only the youth can save the poor people from the weird dictates of the 'so called' religious leaders. Sometimes, they will try to overpower the youth by showing off their immense strength, but one cannot be daunted by such possibilities. I condemn the internal feuds and rivalries between brothers, between relatives. However, if the relatives have leprosy, then they need to be removed! If a tiger has bit off a hand, it is necessary to cut off the hand and save the rest of the body. I feel extremely distressed that I am having to say all this. This is not a time to judge our faith in Islam by the yardsticks of beard, and long dresses. We are much backward compared to the followers of Islam, who live in other parts of the world. Those who are just happy to pass days, I would like to convey the message that in this day and age when the cars/aero planes can carry us fast, there is no point in wasting time, adhering to the age old tradition of bullock carts. We have to walk faster to catch up with those who have passed us, and if necessary we have to make unusual adjustments to achieve the same. We should not be alarmed of losing our faith. If Islam is gone and Muslims are gone too, then how will faith survive? On

whom? Enough of this, I do not wish to create anymore enemies, only happy that our wives have not left us even after learning about the 'fatwas' of divorce. Moreover, none have become 'pure' even after some 'fatwas' and similar dictates have been hurled at them!

On our journey forward, if the 'mullah's are obstacles then 'seclusion' is synonymous with 'mountains'. God knows when these useless objects will be moved from our premises. The 'seclusion' practiced by the uneducated Muslims of Bengal is almost stifling. The fear of these dictates not only dominate men, they also dominate the women. Most of the educated or half-educated Muslims earn their living from jobs. They are unable to make both ends meet, yet they boast about keeping their women in seclusion, and majority of their women are dying at home due to the lack of light and fresh air. How will the new generation be born to women in such ill health? Even the prisoner with a death sentence has more freedom than these women in seclusion. We seem to emphasize on those Islamic rituals which are free.

We cannot even think that our daughters have to be given equal opportunity in education as our sons. By not providing them with education, we have not only kept our daughters and wives in the dark, we have ushered them into deep dungeons of backwardness. The result of such oppression is that they shall never be able to come out of it, even if they are set free. They have stopped feeling their pains and weaknesses. We pride ourselves of being Muslims, but we forget or we choose not to acknowledge that the first Muslim was a woman!

The aged people are now at the end of their life cycle, it is the turn of the youth to free the women from these dooms of internment and free them from the braces. These birds have been tamed from birth, they do not know how to fly. When they see their fellow birds fly outside, they erroneously think them to be of some different species! We must set them free from the cages, we must allow them to enjoy the bounties of nature. Today, the men are the hunters and the women are the 'hunted'. Their cries make us despondent and from those lowly semen, lowly human beings are conceived!

All these situations, the questions and answers, can only be solved by the youth. They have the strength and courage to overcome the mountains, the obstacles, the deserts of gloom, the problems posed by unreasonable dogmas.

To achieve all this, we need tenacity, steadfastness, we need organisations. We, the Muslims of Bengal are aimless because of the lack of organisations and perseverance. We watch the Hindu youth, they have such unity, perseverance and sacrifice. They seem to be the same in body and soul. They are able to build a solidarity in spite of their differences. They are comparable with any other youth-based organization of the world, we do not know the amount of sacrifice that they have gone through in building up their organization from scratch. They have sacrificed the love of their near and dear ones, relatives, lovers, friends, their personal aims for the sake of the nation, for the betterment of the country, for the



improvement of humanity. It is because of these brave young men that we are able to spot the radiant sun. They have the courage to stand fearless next to their deaths and snatch away the fervor of life from its fists. These are the brave, forest farers who prevented us from rusting. Unlike us, they do not have the heavy weight of 'jobs' on their shoulders. That is why they are independent, unfettered. They have been able to overcome all obstacles and soar high. The brilliant youth, who could have had cushioned jobs as judges, barristers, professors and magistrates, are ferrying on the roads. It is because of them that the spineless nation is being able to survive. Like the wick of the lamp, it lets itself burn to produce light among those living in the villages.

The Muslim youth does not get educated for the thirst of knowledge, he only wants a job. We look forward at his 'future prospect' as if he is a donkey! They calculate that by completing BA or MA exams they shall at least get the job of a sub-registrar. I condemn such tunnel vision and such unimpressive aims, we have no scope to earn freedom! If

we do not get rid of this mind set, we shall never be able to progress, we shall remain in the dark. The youth can only take a stand against these traditions. If they are unable to tolerate their own compatriots, we shall not get any decent position in the world!

If we cannot free ourselves of the greed for positions, titles, lucrative jobs and salaries, we shall never be able to organize ourselves, nor create an organization. Where are those brave martyrs? I urge you to come out into the freshness of the air, under the limitless blue skies, which hosts the moon. Our organization (of youth) will be established on the basis of our knowledge, foresight, our physical and mental agility. For this, we need sacrificial souls, who will shun all greed and lust and will carry the sack of the beggar, posing as a traveler from one hearth to another.

Our goals should be the same, although the ways may differ. For the ferocious, let him hoist his flag of the hailstorms and march towards the expedition. For the brave, the war zone is for him, for the worker, the huge working ground awaits. For the dreamer, the

meditator, one who worships the beauty, let him dwell in the wings of imagination and propel himself to the dream world, into the wide expanse of the beautiful blue sky. He will win the aspired princess from the dream world and the beauty of that will ease the tension of our worst struggles. We will let the singing bird fly into the realms of the greenery, he will fly nearby and his songs will fill our tired moments with music and new aspirations. They are our beautiful friends. Just as we bless our sore eyes with the beauty and gaiety of the flowers growing in our front porch, in the same way we shall please and fulfill ourselves with their songs, poems and pictures.

We do not listen to dictates, we have no reason to kill the singing bird, whose nature is to sing. He has been born with the right to create beauty, who is going to prevent that by issuing *dictats*?

That will be equivalent to playing God with the Gods, I am not a party to that.

If we just consider India (leave the rest of the world apart), we find that the best singers, musicians are almost all Muslims. The religious personnel of those countries are far more firm compared to our nations. Yet, they have never insulted the talented people, instead they have accorded them great respect. The youth will have to work hard to create an environment whereby the mindset of the mullahs will be changed. They need to propagate that art, music etc. are beautiful and there is no sin associated with the practice of the same. The religion of the heart is the key which exists above all doctrines and dogmas.

What is more shameful than the fact that today there are no painters, musicians, scientists, sculptures among the Bengali Muslims? Our conservative society has strangled them! We have to voice our opinions against this act, otherwise we shall be left without any artists. What is the use of living an animal's life with a high majority when we cannot boast of finer achievements? The more internal deaths amongst us, the more are the numbers added. A huge banyan tree is much more important than a garden full of useless weeds.

My speech is now turning into a speech, my last word is that we are the worshippers of youth, we are the messengers of new innovations, the leaders of freshness and green. We should be able to march past with any nation of the world. We are hostile only towards those who oppose us in this mission. We shall wear the anklets of the storm and we shall march past like the dancing tornado. Those that need to remain will do so and those that need to be broken will be done with. Let the light of our lives be emitted through the dimness of the dark, scary, stormy night. On the peak of the carnage of breaking through all obstacles, we shall hoist our flag of victory. Let us be able to fill our hearts with the thrill of life and let us be able to trample over all superstitions.

We want the truthfulness of Siddique, the bravery of Umar coupled with his greatness, the sword of Ali, the sacrifices of Hassan-Hossain and their tolerance. We want the swords of Khaled-Musa and Tarek, the love of Belal. If we can achieve these qualities then we shall remain immortal in the eyes of the world.



## Monster in Us

MD MEHEDI HASAN

Nowadays I dream too much  
What else a middle class boy has.  
I am sorry! I went with the stream,  
As if Rati came in my dream!  
I saw the Bengal in a white sari,  
I made her naked.  
A confused voice asked, "Are you in hurry?"  
We killed love in bed.  
Her beauty was gone with the sari  
But the monster was happy which I carry.  
I bleed in bed,  
A mistake, I have always made.  
Her skin, I still feel  
I thought: Just a dream, no big deal.  
She got away, they always do;  
It's me who sings rondo.  
A mistake, I always make;  
I bleed in bed.  
Whichever path I take:  
I bleed in bed.

## IN THIS WINTER

AHMED NAKIB

TRANSLATED FROM THE BENGALI:  
SOFIUL AZAM

And these buildings wearing out this winter's heart – each one has long stood like a colossal winter, limbs of these lie frozen stiff in the fog, their windowpanes as if chunks of ice – endlessly melting away. Up on the roof of another, we watch out for all these – that's another boulder of winter, too. Overwhelmed, we all are praising this winter's loveliness, with hands deep into pockets, clutching hard at all of our warm clothes worth any winter.

Down, way down at the basements of these buildings, people are rushing to the rhythm of insects, the winter has skidded underneath their feet, stuck in the ground, in every stride of theirs.

And these buildings wearing out this winter's heart – each one has long stood like a colossal winter.



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