

SWEET AS HONEY FROM THE COMB!



LIFE'S LYRICS
NASHID KAMAL

Sohrab Hossain has been a household name synonymous with songs of Kazi Nazrul Islam, the national poet of Bangladesh. 9th April is his birthday. I had the good fortune of knowing him from my childhood. He was a student of my grandfather Abbasuddin Ahmed. My father recalls meeting him for the first time in their home in Park Circus, Kolkata around 1945. Sohrab Hossain was a lanky young man. He had met Abbasuddin in some concert and wished to learn from him personally. Abbasuddin invited him on the occasion of a milad mehfil and asked his son to keep an eye for him. My father saw this man pass by the house twice, once up and once down and he realized maybe this is the new singer. He came in and later on became a part of their household. Sohrab Hossain migrated to Dhaka, Bangladesh in 1947,

here too he was a member of the Abbasuddin household, eating, sleeping and learning. When he auditioned for Radio Pakistan Dhaka, he failed. Abbasuddin invited the Director General of the Radio, Mr Z A Bokhari. After a round of beautiful, honey-like songs by Sohrab Hossain, he served a sumptuous dinner. DG enquired about the boy who sang, he learned that this boy had failed the radio auditions. Henceforth, there was no looking back.

Innumerable songs of Nazrul Islam has been rendered by exponent Sohrab Hossain, he also sang folk songs and some modern numbers which are also excellent in quality. He had a penchant as a tuner and sometimes lyricist. In 1976, on learning about the demise of Kazi Nazrul Islam, he rushed to catch a last glimpse near the Bangabandhu Medical

College, but was unable to; the traffic and ensuing crowd deterred him. He came back home in a vespa scooter that he used to drive and wrote and tuned a song instead, "Amar ganer shurer pakhi hariye phelechi tai, tai ami ei shobhate besh uro gan gai" (I lost my singing bird and begun singing out of tune).

My grandmother Begum Lutfunnessa Abbas teased him about his Vespa. She called it "bhot bhotia". He teased her too, asking, "Bhabi, will you ride with me?" She would reply, "Only if you manage to shed a few pounds from the middle of your body, your kurta seems to be that of your younger brothers!" And both would roll into laughter.

Rolling into laughter was another side of Sohrab Hossain. He taught from the very beginning of his life, Chayanaut was his baby. Later on, after the creation of

Nazrul Institute by the government of Bangladesh, he churned many students there. Sudhin Das and Sohrab Hossain shared the laughter, always pulling each others legs and making fun. Who could tell that during the last four/five hours they were editing the notation of the original Nazrul songs, which have been published from the Nazrul Institute.

He was decorated by the highest civilian awards of the government. However, the listener does not care for any decoration. When a song is played, when he is enthralled it is the honey and magic in his voice which brought the audience to love this simple man and his music.

I never learned music from him, but learned a lot, rest in peace Dadu.

Nashid Kamal is an Academic, Nazrul exponent and translator



TV TALKIES
SHAMS RASHID TONMOY

BOK DEKHICHO

Channel: BanglaVision
Script: Brindabon Das
Directed by: Sagar Jahan
Cast: Chanchal Chowdhury, Tarin Jahan, A K M Hasan

We live in a society filled with all sorts of individuals. While some may be mentally challenged and in assist of the society's help, there are people who love to prey on the weak just to get some cheap entertainment out of it.



Bok Dekhicho is a drama that features such a cruel aspect of reality, where unjust treatment is dealt to a handicapped individual with no one to consider the victim's side of the story. The director of this natok, Sagar Jahan, is known for popular Bangla serials such as *Arman Bhai* and *Sikandar Box*, so when watching this particular drama, quality story-telling and direction was expected. And certainly, *Bok Dekhicho* didn't disappoint.

Despite the name sounding rather off-putting, it holds a significant meaning in context of the plot. The main character, Rohom Ali (played by Chanchal Chowdhury), is a deranged man who

instantly gets triggered upon hearing the word "bok" (crane). The story heavily suggests that he is a patient of a mental disease which makes him act this way, but it is eventually revealed that he is suffering from a childhood trauma caused by constant bullying. Unfortunately, the bullying exists even in present time as he is frequently victimized by his fellow villagers via verbal abuse and mockery. As a result, Rohom Ali runs around the village chasing his bullies with a stick, despite never really injuring anyone. His wife (played by Tarin) is his constant support, though sometimes even she gets fed up at her husband's insane antics. The

bullying is planned by a character played by A K M Hasan, who eventually drives Rohom Ali to severe mental breakdown, leading to Rohom Ali's apparent death.

There were several positive elements of *Bok Dekhicho*, the most prominent one being the excellent acting. Chanchal Chowdhury delivered his usually fantastic performance in portraying a victim of bullying who is at the verge of losing his mind. His eccentric yet energetic approach to the character was especially entertaining, but also managed to leave behind a trace of sadness as well. Tarin played the role of a supportive wife quite well; she is burdened by her own inability to abandon her insane

husband, and berates the bullies who are always after him. A K M Hasan also did a good job in being a hateful villain who manipulates all other characters to turn Rohom Ali into a public victim. Other positive traits of this film was the steady yet effective story-telling, good use of characterization and an overall positive moral that we can all learn something from. Don't pick on those who may seem "dumber" than you. It is your responsibility as a part of the society to help those in need and not drive them further into insanity.

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