



**LIFE'S
LYRICS
NASHID KAMAL**

A man who's a mentor to many

Harold Rasheed went to Wales for his schooling, he stayed in a boarding school all his life. He and his wife Shampa Reza were decided that their sons were not to be sent off to boarding schools. With his sister Leapie on board, thus started the school in Sylhet named Anadaniketan. The students were their two sons, Leapie's daughter and Ryan and Shameem's son Sabeth. By year 2001 Anadaniketan was well established as a school in Sylhet.

Around this time Harold (2001) started The Academy of Arts and Sciences in Uttara, Dhaka. It was from his love for art. My daughter Aashna was his student. In 1978 Harold had graduated in graphic design from Wales University, UK. He taught Art for O level and A level students and indeed his home was like a 'Gurugriha', his man Friday Ranglal was the subject of live drawing for Aashna. Her many sketches of Raghu in various daily poses comprise of the collections that she left behind when she travelled abroad.

I went to meet Harold to be able to exchange some news of Aashna. Harold exclaimed happily, 'Nashid, this year we have introduced chess in our list of recreational art (2018). More than thousand students



have graduated so far from this Academy. These children may become graphic designers, architects, fashion designers or computer special effects designers! The children learn to draw fruits, flowers, geometrical shapes and human body. Then we develop the sense of perspective, forms and shapes and their sense of colour and shades. We try to hold exhibitions every year comprising of the children's works and those of established artists.'

In the dance department they offer Bharat Nattyam, Kathak and folk dances. Most students want to learn the guitar but dottara, tabla, flute and drums are encouraged.

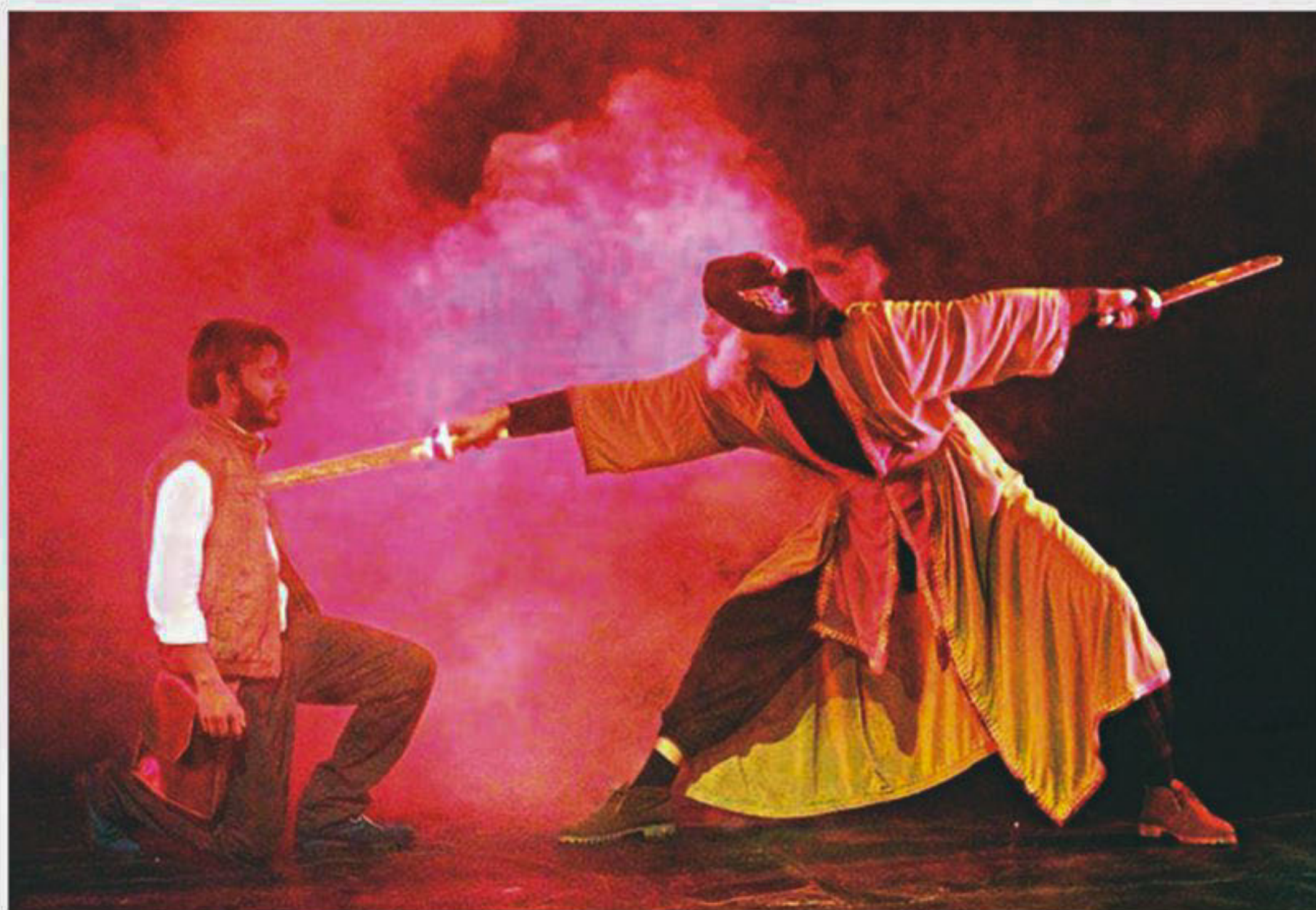
Harold says, 'Even though I am a musician and an artist, I hate teaching music because I am very limited in that, I don't even use the normal tuning'. I play in an open A tune which no one wishes to learn. Everyone wants to be Eric Clapton nowadays!'

I find his apartment full of paintings, some of his own and some by others as he leads us (Armeen and me) to the stairs leading to the unfinished landing. The door reveals another Harold. There is a roof top garden with exotic mangoes hanging from the plant, not to mention various trees with lovely flowers!

'My love of plants dates way back. I grew roses. My father had over three hundred varieties. I only got up to two hundred. I plant all the time. My roof top garden has mangoes, guavas, oranges, star fruits, star apples and sepatoes. I talk to all the plants. When I pluck a ripe fruit I tend to always thank the plant. Plants are part and parcel of our lives.'

After he has completed the sentence, I didn't know what to say, I am thankful that my daughter was mentored by him, I am thankful that more than a thousand children have known the genius of Harold, and am thankful that such people still exist. They keep on contributing till their last breath!

Nashid Kamal is an academic, Nazrul exponent and translator.



Story of a Brazilian shepherd boy dramatized in Bangla

**WHAT'S
IN THE
THEATER?
ABDUS SELIM**



Paulo Coelho in a note on his 1987-Novel *The Alchemist*, wrote—before the novel was translated from Portuguese to English—that he one day received a letter from HarperCollins that read, 'reading *The Alchemist* was like getting up at dawn and seeing the sun rise while the rest of the world still slept.' He then went on to say, 'I went outside, looked up at the sky and thought to myself, "So, the book is going to be translated."'

The Alchemist, is a fiction about 'magic, dreams and the treasure we seek elsewhere and then find on our doorstep.' This instantly links my memory to an oft-quoted six-line poem of Rabindranath: *I travelled for many a year/I spent a lot in lands afar/I've gone to see the mountains/The oceans, I've been to view/But I haven't seen with these eyes/Just two steps from my home lies/On a sheaf of paddy grain/A glistening drop of dew.* (Copyright Ananrita De). In fact a glistening drop of dew' is what Santiago, Paulo's shepherd boy, adventured to find as his dream 'treasure'.

The book brought immediate fame and recognition for the writer and was translated into different languages of the world. Paulo himself being a dreamer—(or else how he could detail the dream of a shepherd boy in the novel!)—wrote in the same note of his, '... little by little, my dream was becoming reality.' Yes, it was like the dream of his shepherd boy we find in his *The Alchemist* who dreamt of 'travelling the world in search of a treasure.' But there is a subtle difference. While Santiago was looking for a metaphorical treasure from an alchemist, Paulo was dreaming of selling millions of copies of his translated novel—and ironically enough the boy had to get back to the same place from where he had started his journey whereas, the writer became one of the most widely read [translated in 80 different languages including Bangla and sold 65 million copies so far] and loved authors in the world.' Meaning, Paulo's dream came

true aspiring millions of reader worldwide to dream—his reader-list includes President Bill Clinton, a girl and her mother from Miami and celebrity actress Julia Roberts. Paulo Coelho is really fortunate to see all this in his lifetime.

The novel has been translated in Bangla and there is, in fact, more than one translation of the same as there are many translations in other languages too. One of which has been adapted for the stage recently in Dhaka by Professor Reza Arif, Department of Natyakola and Natyatotto, Jahangirnagar University. He transformed the novel into a play from Chunilal Bondopadhyaya's Bangla translation from Alen R. Clarke's English translation—that is, the drama version is actually from the translation of a translation.

Adaptation of a novel into drama is a work of conversion from one genre to another, which is obviously not an easy task. Though this practice is there all over the world (many world classics like *The Grapes of the Wrath*, *Crime and Punishment* and *To Kill a Mocking Bird* had acclaimed stage versions), in Bangladesh this is frequently done. Many of Tagore's and Sharatchandra's short stories and novels have been adapted for the stage and a good number of them have been successfully performed too. As far as I know *Kajol* and *Karan Johar*, two celebrities of Indian screen, did a book reading performance of *The Alchemist*.

The drama version of *The Alchemist* in Bangla by Reza Arif is a good and praiseworthy endeavor. He very deftly and creditably metamorphosed the novel into a play no doubt, for he expertly percolated the dramatic elements in his adaptation and direction. The audience who had read the novel before could distinctly track the quest, adventure, fantasy, magic and dream of the shepherd boy Santiago created by Paulo Coelho save one (of course not to mention *weak acting*)—absence of sublimity, smooth mobility and tranquility of his narrative. Perhaps that is the prime problem in the interpenetration between genres.

The writer is a theatre activist, playwright and theatre critic. He is also a Bangla Academy awardee for translation.