

THROUGH THE EYES

THE POETRY OF LIFE

Raju Alim is a poet, journalist, director, producer and a renowned media personality of Bangladesh. In his multifaceted life, he has explored many dimensions of the media. Currently, he is working for a television channel as assistant general manager (program). In this interview with Star Showbiz, he has talked quite openly about his life, struggles and dreams.

Birth of a poet

If one goes through the lives of veteran poets, most of them have a story to tell about themselves. My story of becoming a poet is a little surreal. I was born in Shariatpur, on the bank of a brutal river called *Krittinasha*. My elder brother Raja was drowned in the overflowing water of *Krittinasha*. Tragically, it also gulped down my younger brother Mohsin in its bottomless pit. That was the first time I wrote a poem when I was in class 9. In my childhood, I was very much into reading biographies; books in Bengali as well as translated literatures. According to my mother I actually inherited this affinity from my uncle, who was a writer of *Madaripur Literary Magazine*. I took shelter in his concealed fondness for literature and he sponsored my first book in 1994. I was the editor of it and it had poems of 71 different poets. Over the period of time, I joined *Ittefaq* and *Seba Publication*. Rahat Khan and Qazi Anowar Hossain have unforgettable contribution for my passion for literature.

Journey with Poetry

My first ever book of poems was *Sobar Upore Shorir Sotto*. Then my other three books *Duranta Pakhir Ghran*, *Nirbachito Dukkho Kosto* and *Akash Jowler Premik* were published consecutively. A card called *Ek Packet Prem Chocolate*, which had my

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poems in it, was very sought-after back then. One of my achievements in this prevailing life is I got the privilege of getting published in *Baro Kobir Premier Kobita* alongside poets like Sunil Ganguly, Subodh Sarkar, Joy Goswami and who not. I wrote quite religiously in different magazines and newspapers of Calcutta, from Malabika Mitra's *Binodon Patrika* to *Sananda*. I have also written in a number of literary magazines of Calcutta which brought me comradeship of many majestic writers and poets. I got association of poets Mandakranta Sen, Arun Sen, Joy Goswami, Shemonty Ghosh, Shangkha Ghosh, Abul Bashar and many more.



A new door

For me journalism started off with theatre plays. First, I enrolled in *Mancha Sena*, then *Loknatya* team and finally in *Prachyanat*. I mostly performed with *Mancha Sena*. I performed in *Nabalok*, *Alapi Golapi* and *Maha Shaitan* which was based on the stumble of Ershad's autocratic government. Throughout that time, I reviewed the theatre plays and those were published in different newspapers- *Chitralli*, *Ittefaq* and many more. Later on, it grew a lack of enthusiasm in me. I wanted to do something more compelling and challenging in the field of journalism. Subsequently, I turned my hands to reporting about Politics and Economy through which I met a number of influential diplomats and political people. Gradually, I got associated with the mainstream media as well.

Rose for the media

At one point of my life, I began to get a number of job offers quite successively from places like *Prothom Alo* and *Manabzamin*. Right then, Faridur Reza Sagar inaugurated his *Channel i* venture for which my mentor in the theatre groups M R Akhtar Mukul recommended my name. Sagar bhai was well acquainted with my propensity for creative works thus I was taken into employment without any interview. Thenceforth my

relentless journey continues with *Channel i*. Shykh Seraj and Sagar bhai have literally indoctrinated me in systematic programming in this line of work. *Channel i* has brought me the fortune and glory of researching and exerting myself in projects about our immortal liberation war. My experience of working with Nasiruddin Yusuf Bachchu for *Muktijuddho Protidin* is unmatched till date. To sum up, *Channel i* has metamorphosed me into a skilled and grounded media personality.

Exploring dimensions

I have always admired and idolized the unbeatable television hosts of Bangladesh among whom Hanif Sanket, Abdullah Abu Syed, Shykh Seraj, Fazlul Lohani and many more are my idols. I genuinely had a fascination towards hosting television shows. Currently I am hosting *Shilpa katha* on *BTV*. Above and beyond, I have written lyrics for many singers. Tishma and Mehrin sang in my lyrics and Ayub Bachchu's composition. I am vocationally associated with a number of beauty pageants. I have performed my duty as the project director of *World Miss University* of which *Channel i* was the director. A girl named Tahmina Othoi, from Bangladesh reached the final round and went to Cambodia. Intrinsically, I am a workaholic. I find happiness in venturing into different horizons of the sky.

My sheltered truth

My actual identity and my sheltered existence are undoubtedly poetry and writing. I never took a leave from my originality. In the meantime, while a lot of directors were making television dramas and telefilms on my stories, I decided to direct some on my own because somehow I was not being able to appreciate people's endeavours on my stories. I have directed 41 television dramas. The stories were taken from different novels and stories of legendary writers such as Humayun Ahmed, Shamsur Rahman, Syed Shamsul Haque, Rahat Khan. The story of *Rupar Jonno Valobasa* was based on Humayun Ahmed's *Rupa* and I made another drama based on Zafar Iqbal's *Ekjon Durbol Manush*. *Sundori Toma* starring Srabosti Tinni and Hillol marked my debut as a director. My original TV dramas are more than 10 in number; among which *Krittinasha Pori*, *Bishesh Manush* are the remarkable ones. In my multifaceted life, I have appeared as an actor in multiple dramas on television. In *Samrat*, a telefilm based on the story of Abdul Gaffar Chowdhury, I played the character of a political personality. I made my appearance as a poet in Anisul Haque's *Sorbonasha Rasha*. All of my characters are mostly imbued with a sense of serenity, character of a poet or journalist therefore it satisfies the demands of my soul. In another TV drama of Tokon Thakur I portrayed the character of an eccentric young man paired with Srabosti Tinni, Dhrubo Esh was the story writer. My penchant for staying in alliance with the entertainment industry is reflected in my books too. I wrote two books with regard to arts and drama- *Doshti Premier Natok* and *Muktijuddho O Bhalobashar Chitronatyo*. As a media personality, these experiences have always added fuel to my passion and profession.

A family-man inside

My family is my emotional shelter. My two daughters, one son and my wife are my ultimate roof at the end of the day. My wife has never come up with a statement of dissatisfaction about my bohemian and not-so-conventional contemplation of life and it would have been impossible without her. My family had inculcated love and some strong beliefs in me. I put in efforts to convey that essence and smell of love in my writings too. *Hridoy e Bangabandhu*, *Unnoyoner Mohasoroke Bangladesh* and *Notun Projonmer Joy* are some remarkable books of mine that the readers have warmly accepted and read.

By Sharbani Datta