

The Man who Conquered the Death

--- Mostafa Kamal

‘After death of Mujib Bangalees can no longer be trusted. The Bangalees who can kill Mujib, can perpetrate any heinous deed.’ This comment was made by the then Nobel Laureate West German leader Willy Brandt. This is how the German leader expressed his reaction after the martyrdom of the greatest Bangalee of the millennium Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman and his family at the treacherous night of 15th August 1975.

Nirod C. Chowdhury commented, ‘Insidious Bangalee.’ The Bangalees exposed to the people of the world their suicidal character by killing the dreamer of Bangalee nation and father of the state named Bangladesh. That did not end here, an Indemnity Ordinance was promulgated to indemnify the killers. Further, those killers were rewarded with prize posting in different Bangladesh missions abroad. Not only Ziaur Rahaman, his wife Khaleda Zia as well, rewarded the killers in various ways. They were given shelters and indulgence. What else can be a sin more abominable than that! The people of the world may naturally, for that, look upon us with hatred.

I myself visited different countries of the world and got proof of that. Many senior citizens said to me, ‘Have you killed your Father? If it is so, you can commit any misdeed.’ I also witnessed, there were many foreigners who did not know Bangladesh, but knew Bangabandhu. Bangabandhu meant Bangladesh to them. Where ever I went - Europe, America, Australia, I found votaries of Bangabandhu. They evaluated Bangabandhu every inch a patriot leader head to feet, and viewed him with profound regards. According to them, a charismatic leader like Bangabandhu is rarely born. The Bangalees as a nation are fortunate as they were bestowed with a leader like Bangabandhu. On many a occasion, I was rather ashamed of witnessing the foreigners’ profound regards for Bangabandhu. Because, what have we done for him? We have, in various ways, wrongly evaluated him and underestimated him. While doing that, the reactionary forces have distorted history in Goebles’ technique. Shamelessly used the media to do that. History in text books was changed overnight. We had to see the malicious attempts to make him controversial. Whereas the world famous leader Fidel Castro compared Bangabandhu with the Himalayas. Fidel Castro, while in Algiers in connection with Non-aligned Summit (NAM) in 1973, held a formal meeting with Bangabandhu. After that meeting, he made his evaluation about Bangabandhu in the words as follows, ‘I have not seen the Himalayas, but I have seen the Bangabandhu. His personality and intrepidity are like that of the Himalayas. That was my impression after I saw him.’

Bangabandhu is a rarely born person in the history of Bangalee nation. It can be said for certain, - had he not be born, Bangladesh would not have been born as well. Recognition of Bangabandhu as well by the international media time and again reminds us of that. The influential British daily *The Guardian* said about him, ‘Sheikh Mujib was a miracle personality.’ According to *The Times*, ‘He is a great personality. In spite of all, Sheikh Mujib will be remembered for all time to come for the fact that without him

Bangladesh would not have acquired its entity in reality.’(The Times, London, 16 August,1975.). And *The Financial Times* asserted, ‘Had there been no Mujib, Bangladesh would not have been born.’

Bangabandhu can not be compared with any other Bangalee. He is the symbol of liberty. He dreamt of an independent nation and had materialised that. Such a big achievement in one life of a man is rare in history. For that, he made sacrifices for a long time. He suffered imprisonment for long 23 years. Had he compromised with autocratic rulers, he could have become the Prime Minister of undivided Pakistan. But he did not do that. To him, his country and people were greater than himself. And for that, we can say that he may not be physically among us, but he is very much mixed with mud and men of this country. Bangabandhu showed the Bangalee nation the road to liberty by playing an unparallel courageous role against a monstrous force. He has established an independent homeland for the Bangalee nationhood. Such an intrepid hero can never die. He has conquered the death only.

Bangabandhu was not only a courageous leader. He was a protesting voice against all wrongs and injustices. The goal of his struggle was to find out a way of freedom for people from the suppression of bureaucracy, and establishment of the just rights of toiling masses. People of this country have been drenched by his unbounded sincere affection. And for that he could become their dear one.

His political life started as an ordinary worker in the limited periphery of school life. He was not lost in the crowd of thousands of workers. One who would build a new history could not be lost. He was destined to grow out as extraordinary from among the ordinary ones. As a result, an ordinary worker later on turned out to be an undisputed leader. He delivered a new independent and sovereign state- Bangladesh.

It needs to be said that independence was not the fruit of only nine months’ war. It preceded a history of long struggle and bleeding. The struggle for language commenced since partition in 1947. The revolutionary students and masses of this country destroyed the nefarious conspiracy of West Pakistan ruling clique to make their language as the state language. The Bangalees established the right of Bangla language in 1952 at the cost of blood of Salam-Barkat, Rafiq-Jabbar, Shafiq and many others. Since then, people of this country started to dream of independence. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman, the dreamer of independence, organised the students and masses in order to earn the right of self-determination of the people of East Bengal. He announced in 1966 the six point known as the Charter of Independence of Bangalee nation. Bangabandhu called for movement on the basis of six point. On account of that, allegation of sedition was brought against him and he was kept interned. At one stage he was charged as the principal accused in the Agartala Conspiracy Case. The blue print was made to hang him. An extensive mass movement started in East Bengal demanding release of Bangabandhu, which culminated into a successful peoples’ revolution in 1969. Fall of dictator Ayub Khan on the one hand and release of public leader Sheikh Mujib on the other hand made the agitating students and masses more self-confident.

With the change of power General Yahia Khan appeared in the scenario. He called for a farcical general election in 1970. In that election the Awamee League under Bangabandhu acquired single majority. Though the government had declared to summon the session, it had actually been passing time on different pretexts. Sensing that, Bangabandhu made a fervent call at the foot of Shahid Minar at 12 hour 01 minute past night on 20 January 1971, 'I can see ominous days ahead. I may not be before you always. A man lives to die. Survival in life is but an accident. I do not know when again I will be able to meet you. But I have a demand of you, let the right of the people of Bangladesh be established. You shall ensure that. Let not the blood of the martyr go in vain.'

When Awami League was deprived of the power to rule in spite of winning majority in the general election, Bangabandhu realised that the Pak rulers would not part with power. Therefore, on 7 March 1971 at the Race Course field (now Sarwardy Uddyan) he appealed to the nation in the huge crowd of millions of people, 'Build fortress at each and every house. Face the enemy with whatever you have, and even if I can not pass on orders, you shall, for ever, close down the roads and stations whatever there are.' He said, You build up council of movements in every village and ward under the leadership of Awami League and remain vigilant with whatever you have. Remember, once we have given blood, we shall give more blood, and shall liberate the people of this country, Insha Allah. This struggle is struggle for our liberation. This struggle is struggle for independence.'

Bangabandhu is called the epic poet of politics on account of his speech of 7 March. And his speech of the 7 March is an epic indeed. Such an important speech is rare in the history of the World. Whereas that speech had no written manuscripts. The speech that he made on that day is not comparable with any other thing. This single speech has immortalized him.

No further formal declaration was necessary after that declaration. Because, the Bangalees started taking preparation for war after that declaration of Bangabandhu. The Bangalee officers of the defense services treated that declaration as the 'green signal' of struggle for independence, and accordingly they took preparation. That is evidenced by the fact of resistance war of the Bangalees in Joydebpur of Gazipur on 19 March. The Bangalees jumped into war as soon as the Pakistanies unleashed the barbarous attack upon the sleeping Bangalees at the inauspicious night of 25 March. However, the formal announcement of the declaration of independence of Bangabandhu expedited the war of independence.

In running governance of the state, Bangabandhu left proof of sagacity. He presented the nation with a Constitution for the independent Bangladesh within only eleven months. His party won absolute majority in the election held under that Constitution. Bangabandhu, upon assuming charge of the Prime Minister, devoted himself to building the country. He rapidly rebuilt the war devastated country. He took up not only the massive works for reconstruction of the roads, culverts, bridges, educational institutions etc, but also moved earth and heavens to straighten the backbone

of the country. He tried to rebuild the country as a 'golden bangla' by piercing through the net of national and international conspiracies.

A leader like Bangabandhu could succeed on that day in sending back Indian allied forces. No where in the world an instance is there that after independence an allied force left the country so quickly. The foreign policy of Bangabandhu played a very effective role to firm up the position of Bangladesh in the international arena and to earn international recognition. He attended the special OIC summit held in Islamabad in 1974 to earn the recognition of the Muslim World. Again, he attended Non-aligned Summit held in Algiers to clarify his position. Bangabandhu left proof of sagacity by taking decisions readily at that time.

No conspiracy about Bangabandhu by the conspiring clique will help them earn any benefit. Bangabandhu has earned permanent place at the heart of the Bangalees. The name of Bangabandhu can not be erased by conspiracies or intrigues. He will remain ever awake at the deepest core of the heart of the people, as long as Bangladesh remains, Bangla language remains, and as long as people shall live on this deltaic land.

On 16 August 1975 in a news review programme of Akash Bani made comments as follows, 'Jesus died. Now millions of people remember him by wearing cross. Perhaps, once Mujib as well will be like that.' On the same day *The Daily Telegraph* published from London said, 'millions of people of Bangladesh shall consider the gruesome death of Sheikh Mujib to be irreparable loss.' Sheikh Mujib is an object of regards and love of people even today.

That prediction of international media came true. Therefore, in the language of the poet I would like to say, 'As long as stay the Padma-Jamuna/Gouri-Meghna flowing on /Thy accomplishment will live on/Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman.'

[Translated by Shahana Akhter Khanam.]