

From Bangabandhu to Viswabandhu: Towards Global Liberation through Public Reasoning

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Abstract

This lecture will be based on a modest book length contribution which is the second in my decades' long project towards writing a truly global history of our liberation struggle. I have followed a particular strategy in trying to capture the global within the local here. I have also endeavoured to present the macrocosm of tumultuous postcolonial politics in South Asia since 1947 through the independence of Bangladesh and its recognition by the World by 1974 through the political life of one key actor, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his progressive democratic revolutionary companions from all sectors of today's Bangladesh. One of the main theses of this book is that Bangabandhu was an emotionally mature, thoughtful and courageous human being who valued democratic public reasoning deeply.

JEL Classification B24 · B31 · N01 · F54

Keywords *Liberatory · Thoughts·History of Economic Thoughts of Bangabandhu · Political Economy History*

I present authentic new translations of Three of Bangabandhu's most important speeches during the period 1970 to 1974 and build my narrative and analysis around the important historical events and processes surrounding these. My main purpose is to let an international readership—especially young people who are looking for a way out of the present global crisis—know that the political ideas, strategies and tactics of Bangabandhu are relevant—within proper historical limits—for our crisis-ridden period of struggle. The proposition that this work

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needs to be done has several justifications. The most important one from a historical perspective is that the history of our liberation movement has already been distorted by both the extreme right and the extreme left with the middle in great confusion.

Bangabandhu in death needs neither adulation nor condemnation but rather the country needs an objective evaluation of the most important ideas that motivated millions of people during their struggle for self-determination. In many ways, Bangabandhu embodied symbolically their aspirations and his ideas concentrated the inchoate but deeply felt needs of the people. The secular democratic and socialist ideals of politics and political economy are the most important here. Undoubtedly, there is much to be criticized if for no other reason than simply for incompleteness. Therefore, my aim here is also to extend the discussion in several useful directions for the future. This is undertaken in the concluding part of this book.

Finally, the present effort may also be considered in light of the emerging frontier areas of research on narrative politics (Mayer, 2014) as well as the more radical post-Bakhtin analytical approach to narrative form as a polyphonic discourse of the people. My research emphasizes the construction of public and collective goods through the use of common narratives and original interpretations for advancing the common good. In the East Pakistan of the 1960s the construction of the six points and 11 points programs in light of the theory of two economies advanced in the 1950s and 1960s by a group of Bengali economists can be insightfully seen from this new perspective of narrative politics.

An important methodological point also needs to be mentioned at the outset. This short investigation of both the narrative structures of three of the most significant speeches of Bangabandhu is also an attempt to present both the objective and the subjective factors that led to the independence of Bangladesh on 16 December, 1971. This is done through both a dispassionate analysis of the objective factors within the limited space here. For the subjective factor, the organization and structure of the new AL under Bangabandhu and other progressive political forces were the most important. Intricately interweaved with these subjective factors were also the personalities and actions of the leading figures that included not only Bangabandhu but also Maulana Bhashani, the other leaders of NAP and the communist party, the young student leaders and many others at the local levels. It is impossible to do justice to all of them in a short book. Here, I have chosen three speeches by Bangabandhu to highlight his discourse and leadership. However, one of my theses is that Bangabandhu is symbolically far greater than the person who was called by that title. Through his

consistent and courageous judgements and actions his subjectivity merged with the objective forces of the history of Bengal, of South Asia and ultimately, the whole post WW2 world.

সময়কে উদ্ধার করি, চলো

আমি হারিয়ে যাওয়া সময়কে উদ্ধার করতে গিয়ে দেখি
ছবিটা আজও ঝুলছে
বহুদিন ধরে একই জায়গায়—রোজই চেয়ে চেয়ে দেখি
রোজই নানান কাজের ভিড়ে হারিয়ে ফেলি তোমাকে

আজ আমি হারিয়ে যাওয়া সময়কে উদ্ধার করতে গিয়ে দেখি—
আগের চাইতেও আরো জীবন্ত

তোমার সেই মুখচ্ছবি তোমার সেই আয়ত দৃষ্টি
অনেক দূরে টেনে নিয়ে যায় মরচে-ধরা মনের আয়নায়
আবারো ভেসে ওঠে অনেক আগের এক বসন্তের ছবি

হঠাৎ আলোর ঝলকানি জাগিয়ে তোলে অনেক আগের এক বসন্তের ছবি

সেদিনও তো এমনি ছিল, সেদিনও তো ফুটেছিলো ফুল—তারারা আলো জ্বলেছিলো...
কোকিলও ডেকেছিল বুঝি

বাংলার বিষাদের দুঃখভরা দিন দুর্দিনের ইতিহাস শেষ হবে, এই জেনে

আজ চেয়ে আছি আমরা সকলে তোমার চশমার চূর্ণ টুকরোর দিকে
তোমার নিভে যাওয়া পাইপের পানে
দুর্দিনের ইতিহাস শেষ হবে এই জেনে
প্রার্থনায় নতজানু আমরা সবাই
ফিরে এস, হে বান্ধব
ফিরে এস, সাহসের আগুন জ্বালাতে
ফিরে এস, সান্নিক জমদগ্নি
বাংলার অগ্নিপুরুষ
সাহসী মানুষদের নিয়ে আবার
শুধু আর একটিবার
সেই সাহসী সময়টাকে উদ্ধার করি, চলো

কাহ্নপাদ হায়দার (হায়দার আলী খান)
ডেনভার, জানুয়ারী ২০২০

Let us redeem our time
 I went to redeem le temps perdu—the lost time
 Saw your picture still hanging in the same place
 Lost to my consciousness in the swirl of everyday life
 Today I want to redeem le temps perdu—the lost time—
 Your face looks more alive than before
 Your eyes opening an immensity before me
 Takes us far, far away—the rusted mirror of my mind
 Shows the picture of another Spring long time ago
 A sudden shaft of light floods my memory
 That day was like today with flowers blooming—stars sent their faint light
 Perhaps the cuckoo was singing then too
 Hoping that the sorrows of Bangla, the nightmare of history will finally be over
 Today I am looking at the broken pieces of your eyeglasses
 Today I am looking at your extinguished pipe
 Knowing that the nightmare of history will end
 We all bow in prayer
 Come back, our friend!
 Come back to light the fire of courage
 Come back like the fiery sage Jamadagni
 Come back the intrepid son of Bengal
 Come back just to gather all with courage
 just once more
 Come, let us redeem that time without fear
 Let us march together.
 Facing the force of future

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