

The First Overseas Branch of Bishwo Shahitto Kendro in New York

BISHWO SHAHITTO KENDRO

world literature center



বিশ্বসাহিত্য কেন্দ্র

WELCOMES YOU TO ITS REGULAR MONTHLY DISCUSSIONS ON

FILM

First Saturdays of every month

CLASSICAL LITERATURE

Last Saturdays of every month

CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE

Second Saturdays of every third month

MUSIC

Third Saturdays of every third month



Tel: 917.731.5952 ♦ 917.731.8344 ♦ Fax: 718.732.0785
email: kendrousa@yahoo.com web: www.kendrousa.com

75-22, 37 AVE #303 • JACKSON HEIGHTS • NEW YORK 11372

The
Nightingale
বুলবুল



North America Nazrul Conference Committee
(NANCC)

উত্তর আমেরিকা নজরুল কনফারেন্স কমিটি

সংখ্যা-৪ : মে ২৪, ২০০৮

North America Nazrul Conference

(A brief history & chronological events)

The North America Nazrul Conference is a platform of the North America Nazrul Conference Committee (NANCC). The conference offers researchers, singers, poets & dancers the chance to gather and exchange Nazrul's creative work through various performances, consistent with the NANCC mission & policy statements.

MISSION:

The mission of the NANCC is to explore, practice and promote the versatile talents of poet Kazi Nazrul Islam, primarily through international conferences. The goal is to generate international awareness of the imperative need to preserve this immense treasure and to gain a wider recognition that he, so rightfully deserves.

POLICY:

It is the policy of the NANCC to provide quality performance & product in support of our mission and to be responsive to the needs of Nazrul admirers. We pledge to undertake our responsibility seriously and assure to monitor our actions to strive for continuous improvements.

The first conference was organized by Shoukhin cultural group of New Jersey, in the year 1990. Subsequent to this breakthrough event, an ad-hoc North America Nazrul Conference Committee (NANCC) was formed. During the second Nazrul conference (1992), hosted by Taranga of Boston, the ad-hoc committee was transformed into a full blown committee. Since then, the Nazrul conference (NANC) continues to be organized biennially, by reputable socio-cultural organizations of North America, as listed below:

First Conference: 1990
Host: Shoukhin Cultural Group, New Jersey
Convener: Musharoff Hossain
Coordinator: Mahmood Billah
Featured Artist: Feroza Begum

Second Conference: 1992
Host: Taranga of Boston
Convener: Gulshan Ara Kazi
Coordinator: Kazi Belal
Featured Artist: Niaz Md. Choudhury

Third Conference: 1994
Host: Bangladesh Asso. of America, Inc. Wash. D.C.
Convener: M. Musharraf Hussain
Featured Artist: Fatema Tuz Zohra

Fourth Conference: 1996
Host: Bangladesh Society of New York
Convener: Md. Awlad H. Khan
Featured Artist: Sohrab Hossain
Fifth Conference: 1998
Host: Mohona Cultural Group of Atlanta
Convener: Shahab Siddiqui
Featured Artist: Nilufar Yasmin

Sixth Conference: 1999
Host: Bangladesh Institute of Performing Arts, New York
Convener: Selima Ashraf
Featured Artist: Sipra Basu

Seventh Conference: 2000
Host: Bangladesh Society of Florida
Convener: Shahed Nawaz Choudhury
Featured Artist: Ajoy Charoborty

Eighth Conference: 2002
Host: Taranga of California
Convener: Obaidul Khan Rumi
Coordinator: Kazi Belal
Featured Artist: Fatema Tuz Zohra

Ninth Conference: 2004
Host: International Society of Bangladesh, Montreal
Convener: Abul Lais Sher
Featured Artist: Ferdous Ara

Tenth Conference: 2007
Host: Deshi Television, Toronto
Convener: Ellora Ameen
Featured Artist: Fatema Tuz Zohra

Eleventh Conference: 2008
Host: Bangladesh Asso. of America, Inc. Wash. D.C.
Convener: M. Musharraf Hussain
Featured Artist: Leena Taposhi

11th ^④ NANC - 2008

সম্পাদকীয় বোর্ড

ডঃ দলিলুর রহমান
দেওয়ান শামসুল আরেফীন
আমিনুর রশীদ পিটু
ওয়াহেদ হোসাইনী
গোলাম সোহরাব

কৃতজ্ঞতা

দেওয়ান শামসুল আরেফীন-
প্রুফ রিডিং ও প্রিন্টিং ব্যবস্থাপনা
সোহায়েব আবেদী- টাইপিং

সম্পাদকীয়

Bangladesh Association of America, Inc. (BAAI)- এর আয়োজিত ১১তম নজরুল সম্মেলনের মহা সমারোহে-তৃতীয় বাদকদের দল আবারও একত্রিত হয়েছে। সমগ্র আমেরিকার নজরুল প্রেমীগণ তাঁদের নজরুল বন্দনায় মুখরিত হবে গান, কবিতা, নৃত্য আর আলোচনার মধ্য দিয়ে। সবাই মিলে সচেষ্ট হবে নজরুলের দর্শন, ভাবধারা ও বিশ্বমানবতাবোধ অনুধাবন করতে, নিজেদেরকে অনুপ্রাণিত করতে।

North America Nazrul Conference Committee প্রতি দুই বছর অন্তর নজরুল সম্মেলন আয়োজনের প্রশংসনীয় এ উদ্যোগ আমেরিকা প্রবাসী বাংলা ভাষাভাষীদের জন্য নজরুল চর্চার এক অনন্য সুযোগ। তবুও আমাদের কর্মকান্ড শুধু নজরুলের গান, কবিতা বা আলোচনার মধ্যে সীমিত রাখলে চলবে না। আমাদের পরের প্রজন্ম তথা বিশ্বের সকল মানুষের কাছে তাঁর মর্মবাণী পৌঁছে দিতে হবে। প্রযুক্তি আর প্রগতিশীলতার এই যুগেও বৈপরীত্যে ভরপুর এই পৃথিবী। একদিকে যেমন অসূরের যক্ষের ধন অন্যদিকে দারিদ্র্যের কষাঘাত। জীবনের এই বৈষম্যের বিরুদ্ধে চিরদিনই সংগ্রাম করে গেছেন নজরুল। তিনি শুধু সুন্দরের হাতে বীণা, তার পায়ে পদ্মফুলই দেখেননি, তার চোখে জলও দেখেছেন। তিনি বলেছেন – “দিয়ে যাবো নিজেকে নিঃশেষ করে, সকলের মাঝে বিলিয়ে, সকলের বাঁচার মাঝে থাকবো আমি বেঁচে”। তাঁর সেই আত্মত্যাগের বাণী মর্মে অনুভব করে যদি আমরাও অন্যায়ের বিরুদ্ধে, রুখে দাঁড়াই, নিপীড়িতের সহায় হই তবেই এই নজরুল সম্মেলনের লক্ষ্য সফল হবে, শ্রদ্ধা জানানো হবে অন্তরন্যাশনাল সংহতির কবি নজরুলকে।

আমরা Bangladesh Association of America, Inc. (BAAI)- এর আয়োজিত ১১তম নজরুল সম্মেলনের সফলতা কামনা করি ও কর্মকর্তাদেরকে অভিনন্দন জানাই।

সম্পাদকীয় বোর্ড

Message from NANCC Chairperson

The North America Nazrul Conference Committee (NANCC) is pleased to bring to you the fourth volume of its magazine, *The Nightingale (Bulbul)*. The purpose of the magazine is to provide a medium of publicizing the work of the great poet Kazi Nazrul Islam (1899-1976) to an audience outside Bangladesh through translations, research, poems and other creative work related to the great poet. We thank all those writers who have contributed to this edition of *The Nightingale (Bulbul)*.

The Nightingale (Bulbul) is published in time for the North America Nazrul Conference. The Eleventh conference is being held this year in the Washington DC area on the Shady Grove campus of the University of Maryland, May 24-25, 2008. The Conference brings together scholars, researchers, recitation artists, singers, dancers and a host of other performers to celebrate the poet's work in a festive atmosphere. The Third Conference held in the DC area in 1994 was a huge success and was attended by some seven hundred persons. Let us hope that the Eleventh Conference will also be similarly successful.

We all appreciate the hard work and sacrifice of time and money that are needed to stage a Conference. We thank the organizers and all those who have contributed money, time and talent to make the event possible.

The NANCC have some twenty members. Most of them have been conveners of past conferences, some are renowned singers and musicians and others are poets and writers. They are all dedicated to promoting the legacy of the great poet that we all love.

Finally, we thank the members of the Editorial Board who have volunteered their time and talent in bringing this volume out in time despite paucity of resources.

Sultan Ahmad
Chairperson
North America Nazrul Conference Committee
sahmadraj@hotmail.com

North America Nazrul Conference Committee (NANCC)

List of members as of 3/14/08

Ahmad, Sultan 1294 Middleton Court Vienna, VA. 22182 703-759-9821 Sahamdraj@hotmail.com	Ahmed, Ziauddin 6 Cedar Hollow Drive Wallingford, PA. 19086 610-891 2771 ziauddin.ahmed@drexelmed.edu	Ameen, Ellora 6470 Osprey Blvd Mississauga, ON.L5N-6E1, Canada 905-785-0680 eameen@rogers.com
Arefin, Dewan Shamsul 18 Redbud Road Piscataway, NJ.08854 732-699-9412 home 732-266-4037 cell dsarefin@optonline.net	Ashraf, Selima 67-32 136 th Street Kew Garden Hills, NY. 11367 718-544-7817 Selima_islam@yahoo.com	Bhuyan, Md. Wadud 1911 New Hyde Park Rd New Hyde Park, NY.11040 516-358-7464/352-2828 MWBhuyan@msn.com
Billah, Mahmood 20978 Bull Ridge Circle Kingwood, TX- 77365 Ph (281)-354-0985 Mbillah@eagle.org Billah39@hotmail.com	Bulbul, Ashraful Hassan 38-11 Ditmars Blvd, #124 Astoria, NY.11105 718-728-4999 Cell: 917-731-5952 Bulbul2000@mindspring.com kendrousa@yahoo.com	Ferdous, Annie 131 Chester Avenue Brooklyn, NY. 11218 718-854-6278; Fax: 718-884-9559 Cell: 917-674-4746 AnnieatBipa@hotmail.com
Haider, Roquiya 3711 Madison Lane, Apt. B Falls Church, VA. 22041 703-671-4959 Rhaider@voanews.com	Hossaini, Wahed 7008 Bethnal Court Springfield, VA. 22150 703-451-7942 Wahed@cox.net	Hussain, Mahmud Musharraf 5 Echo Court Potomac, MD. 20854 301-294-2176 MMhussain@aol.com Mahmud.hussain@vdot.virginia.gov
Kazi, Gulshan Ara 40 Sunny Side Drive Northford, CT. 06472 203-484-2546 kbelal@sbcglobal.net	Khan, Obaidul (Rumi) 2332 Hampton Avenue Simi Valley, CA. 93063 805-520-4884 obaidulkhan@hotmail.com	Niva, Nurun Nahar 77 Park Avenue #3 Worcester, MA. 01605 508-797-1365 NivaRahman@yahoo.com
Pintu, Aminur Rashid 68 Concord Circle Howell, NJ. 07731 732-370-4055 kabi1949@yahoo.com	Rahman, Dalilur 62 Concord Ridge Road Flemmington, NJ. 08822 908-806-3751 Cell:908-803-6747 Dalil.Rahman@AZ-EM.com	Sher, Abu Lais Executive Director Soc��t�� International du Bangladesh 419 St-Roche, RC 14A Montr��al, QC, H3N 1K2, Canada. 514-630-7165 isb1989@gmail.com
Siddiqui, A.K.M. Shahab 527 Coopers Pond Drive Lawrenceville, GA. 30044 904-443-1148 (work) ASiddiq3@visus.inj.com	Sohrab, Golam 40-15/102 nd Street, Apt.2A Corona, NY.11368 718-446-2065 917-225-0381 cell Shos537473@aol.com	

Officers:

Sultan Ahmad, Chairperson

Ziauddin Ahmed, Vice Chairperson

Mahmud Musharraf Hussain, Vice Chairperson

নজরুল গীতির সুর ও শ্রুতি

গোলাম সোহরাব

কাজী নজরুল ইসলাম। ঔঁর নামের সাথে ছন্দ মেলাতে গেলে যে শব্দটি প্রথমেই মনে আসে তা হলো “বুলবুল”। অর্থাৎ গানের পাখী। যে পাখী স্বতঃস্ফূর্তভাবে গান করে, এই ধরার নৈসর্গিক সৌন্দর্য্যকে উপভোগ করে, সাগরের গর্জন আর বিশালতাকে অনুভব করে, শাসিত ও বঞ্চিতদের সপক্ষে বিদ্রোহ করে, ফাঁসির মধ্যে নিভীকতার জয়গান করে, দেশপ্রেমকে মাতৃস্নেহে আলিঙ্গন করে, সংগ্রামীর চেতনাকে উজ্জীবিত করে, গহীন সমুদ্রে তরণীর মাঝিকে শঙ্কামুগ্ধ করে এবং জাতিকে এগিয়ে নিয়ে যেতে চায় দীপ্ত শপথভরো। গানের এই পাখীই আবার তার গানে প্রেয়সীকে বুকভরা ভালবাসায় উষ্ণতায় নেয় বরণ করে আবার কখনও বা বৃন্দ হয় সুর ও শ্রুতির গভীরতায় অবগাহন করে। যার গানের ভাষা ও সুরের এত বিচিত্র রূপ ও সমাহার, তাকে নিয়ে কিছু লেখা সহজ সাধ্য নয়। নজরুলের সৃষ্টি ও তার গীতি সম্ভারকে মূল্যায়ন করার মত জ্ঞান ও উপলব্ধি যদি সত্যি আমাদের থাকতো, তবে এই পৃথিবীটা শুধু গদ্যময় হোত না, হোত পদ্যময়। আমি নজরুলের সমগ্র সৃষ্টিশীলতার গভীরে যাবো না – শুধুমাত্র তার গীতিমালার সাথে এই উপমহাদেশীয় শাস্ত্রীয় লোকজ সংগীতের ব্যবহার, বৈশিষ্ট্য ও পরিণতি নিয়েই সীমারেখা টানবো। এ সামান্য নিবন্ধ থেকেই হয়ত পাঠক কিছুটা ধারণা করতে সক্ষম হবেন যে সুরকার হিসাবে নজরুলের পরিমাপ ছিলো কতটা গভীর।

কবি নজরুল একজন সফল গীতিকার তো ছিলেনই, সাথে সাথে তিনি একজন গায়কও ছিলেন বটে। গান শোনা ও গাওয়াটা তার ছিলো নেশা। সংগীতের সাথে তার সম্পৃক্ততটুকু ছিল অনেকটা সুরা আর সাকীর মত। শাস্ত্রীয় সংগীতকে ব্যাকরণিক অর্থে গভীরভাবে অনুধাবনের জন্য নজরুল প্রাথমিকভাবে জ্ঞান অর্জন শুরু করেন বিখ্যাত ওস্তাদ আমীর খসরুর ফাসী ভাষায় রচিত গ্রন্থ থেকে। পরবর্তীতে তিনি দক্ষিণ ভারতীয় সংগীত গ্রন্থ “শুদ্ধাসুর”, “রত্নাকর” ইত্যাদি কিছু প্রাচীনতম সংগীত গ্রন্থ নিয়েও বেশ কিছু গবেষণা করেন। সাক্ষাৎ শাস্ত্রীয় সংগীত শেখার সুযোগ লাভ হয় যখন তিনি ওস্তাদ কাদের বকস্, মাস্তান গামা, মনজু সাহেব, ওস্তাদ আশফাক খান প্রমুখের সান্নিধ্যে আসেন। ক্রমদ্বয়ে তিনি পরিচিত হন তদানিন্তন এই উপমহাদেশের অসংখ্য শাস্ত্রীয় সংগীত ঘরানার সাথে। বিভিন্ন এসব ঘরানার স্বকীয় বৈশিষ্ট্যসম্পন্ন সংগীত পরিবেশনা তার শোনার সৌভাগ্য হয়। এদের মধ্যে “কিরানা”, “মাইহার”, “পাতিয়ালা”, “গোয়ালিয়র”, “বানারস”, “আগ্রা”, “সেনিয়া”, “তানসেন”, “ইমদাদখানি”, “মাইসোর”, “কর্ণাটক”, “দিল্লী” ও “সেওয়াতী” ঘরানাগুলি উল্লেখের দাবী রাখে। এখানে উল্লেখ করা যেতে পারে যে বিখ্যাত পন্ডিত যশরাজ ছিলেন সেওয়াতী ঘরানার এবং ওস্তাদ ভীমসেন যোশী ও বড়ে গোলাম আলী খান হলেন যথাক্রমে “কিরানা” ও “পাতিয়ালা” ঘরানার।

নজরুল তার ছন্দছাড়া জীবনে আঞ্চলিকভাবে বিবিধ জায়গায় কারণে অকারণে ভ্রমণ করেছেন। এই উপমহাদেশের উত্তর দক্ষিণ, পূর্ব পশ্চিম প্রায় সকল স্থানেই তার পদচারণা হয়েছিল এবং সে কারণেই তার গানে আমরা একদিকে যেমন পূর্ববাংলার জারী, সারি, ভাটিয়ালি, ভাওয়াইয়া বা শিবের গাজন ইত্যাদী গান পেয়েছি আবার তেমনিভাবে পেয়েছি উত্তর প্রদেশের কাজরী, হোরি বা ঝুলা গানগুলো। দক্ষিণ ভারতীয় সংগীত থেকে নজরুল আমাদের উপহার দিয়েছেন “কর্ণাটকী সামন্ত”, “নাগসরাবলী”, “সিংহেন্দ্র মধ্যম”, “শিবরঞ্জনী” অথবা “নারায়ণীর” সুর। পশ্চিম অঞ্চল থেকেও সুর আহরণ করে নজরুল আমাদের বাংলা ভাষায় দিয়েছেন “গীত”, “গজল” ও কাওয়ালী ঢংএর গান। এই ভ্রমণ করতে করতেই কবি সুযোগ পেয়েছিলেন এই মহাদেশের বিভিন্ন উপজাতীয় সম্প্রদায়ের সাথে মেলামেশার, তাদেরকে জানার। এই সুবাদে তিনি পরিচিত হন তাঁদের লোকজ গান ও সুর ছন্দের সাথে। পরিণতিতে আমরা পেলাম লোকজ শৈলী ধরে নজরুল সৃষ্ট “ঝুলা গীত”, “কাজরী”, “চৈতী”, “ফাগওয়া”, “ভাংগাগীত”, আর “ঝুমুর” ইত্যাদী। সাঁওতাল, গারো, চাকমা, অসমীয়া

ইত্যাদী আঞ্চলিক ভাষার সাথেও তার পরিচয় হলো যা কিনা তাদের গীত, সুর ও ভাষার সমন্বয় ও ছন্দ প্রক্রিয়াকে বুঝতে সাহায্য করলো।

বিভিন্ন অঞ্চলের এই ভিন্নভিন্ন ভাষা ও সুর, বিভিন্ন ঘরানার এই যে সুর তারতম্যের বৈশিষ্ট্য, প্রাচ্য ও পাশ্চাত্যের এই সব ভিন্নধর্মী সুরগুলোকে এবার নজরুল একই সূতোয় মালা গাঁথার জন্য সচেতন হলেন। তিনি লক্ষ্য করলেন একই রাগ কাঠামোগতভাবে ঠিক থাকলেও, পরিবেশনার ক্ষেত্রে নিজ নিজ ঘরানার গায়কীয় বৈশিষ্ট্যের কারণে এগুলো শুনতে সবসময় একরকম লাগছেনা। সংগীত নিয়ে এভাবে গবেষণা করতে গিয়েই তার মাথায় আসে সুর সংমিশ্রণের প্রক্রিয়া। গানের সুরকে বাঁধা ধরা ছাঁক থেকে মুক্তি দেয়ার উদ্দেশ্যেই তিনি শাস্ত্রীয় সংগীতকে ভেংগে ভেংগে নতুন নতুন রাগ ও সুরের সৃষ্টি শুরু করলেন। তৈরী হলো নতুন নতুন রাগ। যেমন “নীলাম্বরী”, “পটমঞ্জরী”, “বসন্তমুখারী”, “নিঝরিণী”, “আহীর ভৈরব”, “মিনাক্ষী”, “যোগীণী”, “উদাসী ভৈরবী”, দোলন চাঁপা”, “বেণুকা”, “বৃপমঞ্জরী”, রক্ত হংস”, “সারং”, “সন্ধ্যা মালতী”, “বনকুন্তলা” ইত্যাদি। শাস্ত্রীয় সংগীত গবেষণার উপর নজরুলের “সুর ও শ্রুতি” নামক একটি নিবন্ধ প্রায় অনেক বছর অপ্রকাশিত ছিল। পরবর্তীতে কোলকাতা থেকে কম্পতরু সেনগুপ্ত সম্পাদিত “নজরুল গীতি অন্বেষা” গ্রন্থে তা সংকলিত ও প্রকাশিত হয়।

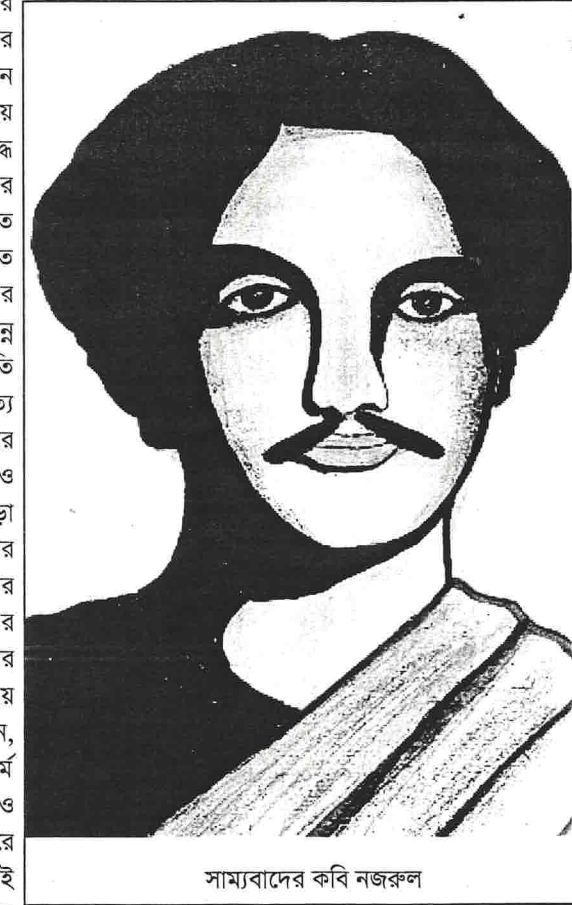
গানের গতি, প্রকৃতি ও ছন্দ নিয়ে নাড়াচাড়া করতে গিয়ে নজরুল শুধু বাণী ও সুরই রচনা করেননি, তিনি অনুভব করেছেন গানের সাথে তবলা সংগতের সফল ব্যবহারের। তার গান সঠিকভাবে পরিবেশনের তাগিদেই তাই তিনি কিছু নতুন তালের সংযোজনা করেন। নজরুল সৃষ্ট এই “নবতালের” মধ্যে রয়েছে ৭ মাত্রার “প্রিয়া”, ১৬ মাত্রার “মন্দাকিনী”, ১৮ মাত্রার “মঞ্জুভাষিণী” ও ২০ মাত্রার “মনিমালা” অথবা “নবনন্দন”।

নবতালই হোক অথবা নবরাগই হোক, একটা ব্যাপার অধুনা লক্ষ্যণীয় যে, নজরুল সৃষ্ট গানের যে সব রাগ গ্রন্থে লিপিবদ্ধ করা হয়েছে তার সাথে প্রচলিত কিছু রাগের কাঠামোগত মৌলিক পার্থক্য। যেমন নজরুলের রাগ “কর্ণাটকী সামন্তে”র উপর গান তৈরী হয়েছে “কাবেরী নদী জলে কে গো বালিকা”। এই গানের সুরের সাথে প্রচলিত রাগ সামন্তের (অপর নাম দূর্গা) কোন মিল নেই। রাগের নাম শুনে বোঝা যায় যে এটি দক্ষিণ ভারতীয় শাস্ত্রীয় সংগীতের আধারে তৈরী হয়েছে। এক্ষেত্রে সবার অবগতির জন্য বলা প্রয়োজন যে দক্ষিণ ভারতের কর্ণাটকী শাস্ত্রীয় সংগীত তাদের প্রাচীনতম রাগসংগীত গ্রন্থাবলী “শুদ্ধাসুর” বা “রতনাকর” ব্যবহারে সমৃদ্ধ। এসব গ্রন্থাবলী (যা আজকাল দুঃপ্রাপ্য) রাগ সংগীতের কাঠামো হিসাবে যেসব সুর নির্ধারণ করেছে তার মাঝে বেশ কিছু রাগ বর্তমানে প্রচলিত রাগের সাথে মেলেনা। “কাবেরী নদী জলে কে গো” গানটি শুনলে প্রথমেই মাথায় আসে রাগ “যোগীয়ার”। এখন ব্যাকরণিক কারণেই হোক বা কর্ণাটকী সংগীতের প্রভাবের কারণেই হোক, নজরুল এই গানকে বলেছেন “কর্ণাটকী সামন্তত”। সুতরাং নজরুলের নবরাগ সৃষ্টিকে বুঝতে হলে তদানিন্তন শ্রুতিধারা ও আঞ্চলিক পরম্পরার ধারাবাহিকতাকে আমাদের জানতে হবে। সন্দেহপ্রবণ হয়ে নজরুলের সৃষ্টি নতুন রাগগুলিকে নিজের অজান্তেই ভুল ব্যাখ্যা প্রদান করলে হয়ত আগামী প্রজন্মের নজরুল অনুরাগীদের মনে দ্বিধা ও সংশয়ের জন্ম দিতে পারে। তাই আমাদের তথা এ প্রজন্মের নজরুল শিল্পীদের নজরুলগীতির বাণী ও সুর পরিবেশনের ক্ষেত্রে সতর্ক হওয়া উচিত। নজরুল শুধু নজরুলই। এক অসাধারণ সুরশ্রষ্টা। তার দেয়া সুর ও শ্রুতি নিয়ে সন্দেহের কোন অবকাশ নেই।

নজরুল কাব্যে মানবাধিকার

দামিন্দুর রহমান

কবি নজরুল ইসলাম বাংলা কাব্যে প্রথম বিদ্রোহের ও সাম্যবাদের সুর | এই সমাজে জন্মেছি বলেই শুধু এই দেশেরই এই সমাজেরই নই। এনেছিলেন। তিনিই সাম্প্রদায়িক মৈত্রীর বাণী প্রচার করেছিলেন। বাংলা | আমি সকল দেশের সকল মানুষের। সুন্দরের ধ্যান, তার শব্দগানই ভাষা ও সাহিত্যে উচ্চ ও মধ্যবিত্তের মূল্যবোধের পরিবর্তে তিনিই প্রথম | আমার উপাসনা, আমার ধর্ম। যে কুলে যে সমাজে, যে ধর্মে, যে সাধারণ মানুষের জয়গান গেয়েছিলেন। নিপীড়িত শোষিত মানুষের ও | দেশেই জন্মগ্রহণ করি, সে আমার দেব। আমি তাকে ছাড়িয়ে উঠতে অগণিত অবহেলিত কৃষক শ্রমিকের আশা আকাঙ্ক্ষাকে তার কলমের | পেরেছি বলেই কবি।” ভাষায় জগ্নত করেছিলেন। এ জন্যেই শুধু কবি নজরুল ইসলাম “জনগণের | কবি” অভিধা পেয়েছিলেন কারণ, আর কোন কবির বাংলার জনসাধারণের জীবনের সঙ্গে মিলিয়ে কবি সত্ত্বার এমন ব্যাপ্তি ও বিস্তৃতি ছিল না। তাঁর সময়ে ভারতবর্ষ পরাধীনতার জিজিরে আবদ্ধ ছিল। সে পরাধীনতার বিরুদ্ধে জিজির ভাস্কর স্বপ্ন মাত্র একজন কবিই দেখাতে পেরেছিলেন। একজনই বিদ্রোহী হতে পেরেছিলেন। সাধারণ মানুষের অধিকারের বক্তব্যের কবিতা তিনি ভিন্ন যারা একটুকুও এনেছিলেন তা অতি নগ্ন। বাংলা ভাষার বিস্তৃত সাহিত্যে ঐ সময় কবিতায়, গদ্যে, গানে মানুষের অধিকারের কথা নিপীড়ন ও ঔপনিবেশিকতার বিরুদ্ধে তিনি ছাড়া অন্যেরা বড় একটা বলেননি। নজরুলের কবিতায় সাধারণ মানুষের অধিকার, নারীর অধিকার ও খেটে খাওয়া মানুষের অধিকার একটি বড় অধ্যায় যা অন্যদের কবিতায় নেই। শুধু বাংলাদেশের জন্য নয় সমগ্র বিশ্বের জন্যেই নজরুলের জীবন, সাহিত্য ও সাংস্কৃতিক কর্ম ধর্মনিরপেক্ষতা, অসাম্প্রদায়িকতা ও শোষিত নিপীড়িত মানুষের কথার বিচারে এক অনন্য অবিসংবাদিত ঐশ্বর্য। এই ঐশ্বর্যকে আড়াল ও অবহেলিত করার



সাম্যবাদের কবি নজরুল

কোন অবকাশ নেই। নজরুলের বাংলা সাহিত্যে আবির্ভাবের সময় গোটা | এর জন্যে তাকে কারাভোগ করতে হয়। এই ধারায় রচিত হয় ‘কারার বিশ্বে নিপীড়িত নিগৃহীত, বঞ্চিত, পরাধীন ও শোষিত জনগোষ্ঠী তাদের অধিকার প্রতিষ্ঠার চেষ্টা করছিল। তাঁর কলম থেকে জাতি ধর্ম নির্বিশেষে এসব মুক্তিকামী মানুষের জন্যেই ঋণাধারার মত ভাষার স্কুলিঙ্গ বের হয়ে আসে। তাই তিনি বলতে পারেন “যাঁরা আমার নামে অভিযোগ করেন তাঁদের মত হলুম না বলে তাঁদেরকে অনুরোধ আকাশের পাখীকে বনের ফুলকে গানের কবিকে তাঁরা যেন সকলের করে দেখেন আমি এই দেশে |

তিনি বিদ্রোহী কবি হিসেবে আখ্যায়িত হলেও তিনি প্রেমিক কবিও বটে। প্রেমই তাঁর বিদ্রোহের কারণ। মানব প্রেম থেকেই তার বিদ্রোহের আগুন জ্বলে উঠে। মানব প্রেম না থাকলে মানুষের জন্য ভালবাসা না থাকলে কেউ বিদ্রোহী হতে পারে না। একজন মুক্তিযোদ্ধা যখন দেশের সাধীনতার জন্য যুদ্ধে ঝাঁপিয়ে পড়েন, তিনি সেটা তখনই পারেন যখন তার ভেতর দেশ প্রেম তথা দেশের মানুষের ভালবাসা কাজ করে। তিনি যখন দেশের মানুষকে ভালবাসেন তখনই তিনি যুদ্ধে ঝাঁপিয়ে পড়ার সাহস পান।

অগ্নিবীণা কাব্যগ্রন্থের বিদ্রোহী কবিতার জন্ম হয়েছিল মানুষের প্রতি তাঁর প্রেমের জন্যই। মানুষের উপর অন্যায়, শোষণ ও অত্যাচার যখন আঘাত হানে - তখন মানব প্রেমই একজন মহৎ ব্যক্তিকে বিদ্রোহের পথে নিয়ে আসে। বিদ্রোহই যখন একমাত্র পথ আর তখনই রণতুর্য বেজে ওঠে, চোখে দেখা দেয় অগ্নি স্কুলিঙ্গ। ‘আনন্দময়ীর আগমনে’-র উদ্ভবও এই প্রতিবাদ, প্রতিরোধ ও মানব প্রেম থেকেই,

এর জন্যে তাকে কারাভোগ করতে হয়। এই ধারায় রচিত হয় ‘কারার ঐ লৌহ কপাট’, ‘আজ রক্তনিশি ভোরে,’ ‘শিকল পড়া ছল মোদের’।

নজরুলের কেবল শিল্পের জন্য শিল্প সৃষ্টি লক্ষ্য ছিল না। তিনি শিল্প সৃষ্টি করেছিলেন জীবনের প্রয়োজনের তাগিদে, জীবনের প্রয়োজনকে তিনি উপেক্ষা করেননি এড়িয়ে যাননি। গণমানুষের দুঃখ দুর্দশা সামাজিক অবিচার তাঁর হৃদয়কে নাড়া দিয়েছিল। সাধারণ মানুষের

সামাজিক অর্থনৈতিক অবস্থা ও অবস্থান তার কাছে গুরুত্ব পেয়েছিল। তিনি যেন সাধারণ ও নিপীড়িত মানুষের জন্য সততা ও বিশ্বাসী হয়ে জন্মেছিলেন তেমনি অত্যন্ত সংবেদনশীল মনের পরিচয় দিয়েছেন যার ফলে তাঁর মতো একজন সৃজনশীল প্রতিভাবান মানুষ নিজের ধর্মবিসর্জন না দিয়েও বিভিন্ন ধর্মীয় সম্প্রদায়ের সাথে সহ অবস্থানে বিশ্বাস করতেন এবং সেই লক্ষ্যে কাজও করেছেন। তিনি সাম্প্রদায়িক মৈত্রীর আলো অনিবার্ণ জ্বালিয়ে রেখেছিলেন - তাঁর গান “হিন্দু না ওরা মুসলিম, ওই জিজ্ঞাসে কোন্ জন?” এবং “আমরা একই বৃত্তে দুটি কুসুম হিন্দু মুসলমান”। হিন্দু-মুসলমানের মিলনে এগুলি তাঁর অমর বাণী।

তাঁর রচিত অসংখ্য ধর্মীয় গান (হিন্দু দেবদেবী অথবা মুসলমানী ঐশ্বরিক ভাবানুশঙ্গকে অবলম্বন করে) সাম্প্রদায়িক ঐক্যেরই আহবান। ব্রিটিশ ঔপনিবেশিক শাসন আমলে হিন্দু ও মুসলমান সম্প্রদায়ের মধ্যে বিভেদ ও বিভাজন ছিল রক্তচক্ষু ব্রিটিশদের অন্যতম হাতিয়ার। তারা এই দুই সম্প্রদায়ের মধ্যে অর্থনৈতিক, সাংস্কৃতিক এবং রাজনৈতিক ভাবে বৈষম্য সৃষ্টি করে রেখেছিল। সে সাম্প্রদায়িকতা দোষে দুষ্ট ছিল বাংলা কাব্য সাহিত্যের অঙ্গনও। কাজী নজরুল ইসলাম শুধু অসাম্প্রদায়িক ছিলেন না তিনি দুই সম্প্রদায়ের মিলনে যে সোচ্চার ভূমিকা রেখেছিলেন তাঁর নজীর বাংলা সাহিত্যে আর নেই। শুধু তাই নয়, ধর্ম ভাষা ও আঞ্চলিকতার গন্ডি পেরিয়ে তাঁর সাহিত্যে এক উদার আন্তর্জাতিক চেতনা আছে যা বিশালভাবে বিশ্বজনীন। তিনি ছিলেন বিশ্ব মানবতাবাদী যার মূলে ছিল সাম্যবাদ। বিদ্রোহী কাভারী হুঁশিয়ার, সর্বহারা, সাম্যবাদী, ফরিয়াদ, দারিদ্র এ সব সাহিত্য কর্মের মধ্য দিয়ে প্রকাশ পায় তাঁর প্রগতিবাদী ব্যক্তিত্বের। ১৯২৫ সালে “লাঙ্গল” পত্রিকায়, যার প্রধান সম্পাদক ছিলেন তিনি নিজেই, ছাপা হয় বিখ্যাত লাইনগুলী -

“গাহি সাম্যের গান

যেখানে আসিয়া এক হয়ে গেছে সব বাধা ব্যবধান

যেখানে মিশেছে হিন্দু-বৌদ্ধ-মুসলিম-ক্রীষ্টান

গাহি সাম্যের গান”

তিনি মানুষের অপমান সহ্য করতে পারতেন না-তিনি মনে করতেন এটি মানবতার জন্য লজ্জার। তিনি একজন বিশাল হৃদয়ের মানুষ ছিলেন। তার কবিতায় ফুটে ওঠে।

“দেখিনু সেদিন রেল

কুলি বলে এক বাবু সাব তারে দিল নিচে ফেলে

চোখ ফেটে এল জল

এমনি করে কি জগৎ জুড়িয়া মার খাবে দুর্বল?”

গরীবের জন্য ভালবাসা না থাকলে এমনি লেখা কি সম্ভব?

কাজী নজরুল ইসলাম রাজনৈতিক সচেতন ছিলেন এবং তাঁর ছিল সামাজিক সুবিচারের বিবেকবান কণ্ঠস্বর। যেমন Johann Wolfgang Goethe (17th-1832) উচ্চ কণ্ঠে সচেতন করেছেন “The judge who can not punish crime joins with the culprit in his court (Goethe Faust part two p.29) তেমনি নজরুল ও বলেন O justice! Hold up the rod of your judgement!

The big become swollen with riches by committing theft of the means of the smalls (Translated by M. Mizanur Rahman) আমাদের আজকের বাংলাদেশের সমাজ জীবনে কাঙ্গালের ধন চুরির চিত্র বড়ই প্রকট।

সে যুগে মুটে মজুর কৃষক শ্রমিকদের মত নারীরাও ছিল নানা ভাবে শোষিত ও নিষাতিত। নারীর অবস্থান ছিল ভয়াবহ। কবি নজরুল ইসলাম ছিলেন নারী মুক্তি আন্দোলনের পুরোধা। নারীর অধিকারের ভূমিকায় তাঁর মানবিকতা অত্যন্ত সবল ছিল তার ভাষায় - ‘নারী’ কবিতায়-

“এ বিশ্বে যত ফুটিয়াছে ফুল, ফলিয়াছে যত ফল, নারী দিল তাহে রূপ-রস-মধু-গন্ধ সুনির্মল”

সমাজে যারা ঘৃণিত যারা পথকিল জীবন যাপন করে তাদেরকেও ‘মা’ বলে সম্বোধন করেছেন তিনি, তাদেরকেও সম্মানের আসনে বসিয়ে মহীয়ান করে তুলেছেন তিনি।

“সাম্যের গান গাঁই-

আমার চক্ষে পুরুষ-রমনী কোন ভেদাভেদ নাই

বিশ্বের যা কিছু মহান সৃষ্টি চির কল্যাণকর

অর্ধেক তার করিয়াছে নারী, অর্ধেক তার নর।”

অধিকাংশ নারীরা ছিল সামাজিক ধর্মীয় কুসংস্কারের শিকার। সামাজিক ভাবে পরাধীন, বন্দী! এর বিরুদ্ধে তিনি ছিলেন সোচ্চার। ‘তার মৃত্যু ক্ষুধা’ উপন্যাসেও দেখা যায় স্পষ্টবাদী নির্ভীক নারী চরিত্র। কুসংস্কার ও সঙ্কীর্ণতা থেকে তিনি নারীকে উদ্ধার করতে চেয়েছেন।

মানব অধিকার, নারী মুক্তি, মানব প্রেম, অসাম্প্রদায়িকতা ও সাম্যবাদীতা তাঁর যে আদর্শ চিন্তা চেতনা, তার কতটা প্রতিফলন আমরা আজকের সমাজে দেখতে পাই? নারীরা কি মুক্তি পেয়েছে? কুসংস্কারাচ্ছন্ন সমাজের সঙ্কীর্ণতা হয়তো কিছুটা দূর হয়েছে। তবু কাজিত লক্ষ্যে পৌছানো যায়নি। নারী নিষাতিত্বের হার কমে, বরং বেড়েছে। শ্রেণীর শোষণ, ধনী-গরীবের বৈষম্য দূর হয়নি।

কাঙ্গালের ধন চুরি আরো বেড়ে গেছে। সে জন্যেই নজরুলের চর্চার প্রয়োজন রয়েছে। তাঁর আদর্শ চিন্তা ও চেতনার প্রয়োগের প্রয়োজন রয়েছে আমাদের বর্তমান সামাজিক রাজনৈতিক ও অর্থনৈতিক ব্যবস্থাপনায়।

রেফারেন্স :

(১) শ্রেষ্ঠ নজরুল; আব্দুল মান্নান সৈয়দ।

(২) Nazrul Institute Journal Vol.3.M.M. Rahman।

(৩) নজরুল চর্চা, নারায়ণ চৌধুরী।

(৪) The Nightingale, 2008, দেওয়ান শামসুল আরেফিন ও ওমর শামস্। □

ফ্রেমিংটন, নিউ জার্সী।

প্রজন্মের চোখে ভূমি

জুলি রহমান

জাতীয় কবি নজরুল স্মরণে-

সাতচল্লিশ থেকে একাত্তর হাঁটে

তোমার বাবড়ি চুলে

ঘসেটি প্রনয় বাঁধে কলম তোমার

গারদের শিকে

মলিন চাদরে ঢেকে প্রেম

বিলাও অবোধ জনতারে-

ভোরের সূর্য্য-ডাকো শব্দের নিটোল ভাঁজে

সমতার সুরে ভাসানী বঙ্গবন্ধু আসে

সুনিলা আকাশে চন্দ্রবিভা

অগ্নিমন্ত্রে প্রজজ্বলিত

জাতীয় চেতনার মূর্ত প্রতীক

প্রজন্ম থেকে প্রজন্ম

ভুলেনি সে কথা চৈত্র খরা দিনের-

এখন কারাগার নেই শেকলের

আছে ধ্বংসের ধ্রুপদ গীত

আছে মৃত্যু হানাহানি রক্তের কোলাহল

ঝরে না সঙ্গীতের শব্দ

সেই পুরনো বানী

সংক্রামক শোষণ প্রতিতি অক্ষর নেয় শুষে

বারুদ বোমার বিপ্লবে-

তোমাকে আজ খুব বেশী পড়ে মনে

যদিও সুচাঞ্চ কল্লমের নিব বড়ই সৌখিন

মাকর্স লেনিন সংগায় হয় না আত্মালীন

ভাবছি তাই এই প্রজন্মে বসে

তোমার বয়ান ??

এতই কি সহজ লিখন !

NAZRUL ISLAM: NATIONALIST, GLOBALIST, AND MORAL GIANT

In his novel, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, D. H. Lawrence had Sir Clifford Chatterley identify two groups of people in modern life—those who had an appetite for “flattery, adulation, stroking and tickling,” much like many of our artists, writers, sports figures, television and movie stars, political leaders, in general, and even professors. The other are those who have the appetite for the “meat and bones” of things, who are the every-day workers, those who do not like to be seen, who are suspicious of flattery, not well-groomed, and make their money in industry (doing hard work). He could not find sympathy with the last group.¹

Lawrence was not unique in dividing humans into certain groupings. The Hindus divided human beings into five groupings, at the top of which was the Brahmins; the Greek, Plato, offered three groupings, led by philosopher-kings; the Marxist allowed for two, with the industrial proletariat having a special place; and the later part of the 20th century (1997/98 to be exact), we had claims of the end of history, with two groups remaining-- a dying type, and an emerging type (the “last man”—the last type of human being, of human grouping).² The field of Freudian psychology, which has had such wide and deep impact on the world, also divided humans into more or less three types, with those led by the superego representing some advance on the other two.

1. See D.H. Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* The Complete and Unexpurgated 1928 Orioli Edition (N.Y.: Bantam Books, Inc., 1968) Chapter IX
2. See Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (N.Y.: The Free Press, 1992)

And then we have the body of thinkers on race, which has divided humans according to that supposed category, with one group said to be inherently superior and others inherently inferior. Gender, which has been with us the longest, has posited two distinct groups (often said to be one), and religion, each of which recognized its communicant as having a “special” place found some not-so-special-places for “others”.

There is an underlying unity to all of these divisions of human beings into groups. The unity bears on the view that you and I, that human beings, are capable of creating (and sustaining) some quasi-ideal social order; and that, while all human beings might, in varying degrees, be able to make some contribution to that order, there are historical types or groups which must lead the way. So, for Plato, we have the philosopher-king; for Marx, the industrial proletariat, with a vanguard political party; for the Hindu, the Brahmin; for Freud, the one who is led by the superego; for the racist the presumed superior group; and for religions, the believer who embodies certain sentimental ideal.

Among the divisions of human beings is that which is—and has been for centuries—based on what we have come to call the nation-state (as distinct from the empire-state or the city-state). It is considered an ideal.

These divisions that have ostensibly defined humanity were not or have not been mere descriptions; they became—and in every instance have remained—subjective embodiments. People developed identities (become nationalists and espoused the idea of nation and nationalism, for example. They also became sexists, racialsists, Freudians, and

Marxists.

Nazrul, if one were to take nationalism as an example, was a moral giant because he transcended the political boundaries of his time, in the identities it espoused. First, he could not accept, as nationalists have claimed, that the world is *naturally* divided into nations, although he did accept and espoused the idea of a “people” (or nation) by virtue of its history, culture, and unique experiences. Second, he did not share the view that one’s highest loyalty is to the nations (my country right or wrong). Third, he rejected the view that the differences people have in historical experiences make them *fundamentally unlike*; as well, he rejected the notion that *national unity* of one nation-state should be effected or maintained by the supposed extent to which the nationals of one nation are, claimedly, unlike those of another. This latter claim, to him, seeds the distrust and dislike of the so-called *foreigner*. Fourth, he rejected the exclusivist policy or egoism that is associated with the nation-state—the principle of national interest.

The principle, above all, contends that the sympathies which structure the sentiments of people who constitute a nation and advance its collective well-being do not extend to people outside those borders. So, in a world without any central authority to ensure a modicum of consistent common concerns, the promotion of national interest is the highest moral duty of political (and, by extension, other) leaders. The pursuit of that interest, even if it results in the utmost, physical destruction or psychological and spiritual degradation of another people, is seen as morally praiseworthy. This mode of thinking and acting confirms people in the identities of their respective tribes, clans, ethnic, religious and other groupings. And yet, Nazrul was a nationalist.

He was a nationalist—and part of his status as a moral giant is that he redefined nationalism and its—in the sense that he saw himself as, in part, a person who was shaped by a body of experiences he shared in common with people in former “British India,” especially those who today form the nation-state, Bangladesh. That common experience included oppression by another type of state, the empire-state, called the British Empire. The idea of the nation-state is that the physical/political borders of the state should be co-extensive with the common cultural experience of a people; for Nazrul, this cultural/experiential emphasis is important, because of the diversity it preserves, the insights it confers, the creativity it offers, and the character it solicits. Institutions and practices that undermine this diversity, especially in seeking to subsume the multiplicity of human experience under that of any single, dominant narrative or outlook is not only to be complicit in perpetuating historical inaccuracy but in engaging in moral corruption.

He was a nationalist, also, in the political-moral sense, in that he believed in the

equality of nations and saw the right to national self-determination as an elementary moral principle that should be applied everywhere; he was also a nationalist in the socio-cultural and political sense (and all one has to do to see how far he towered above his contemporaries—Woodrow Wilson of the United States, Sun Yat-sen of China, Mustafa Kemal of Turkey, and Lenin of the former Soviet Union—is to look at this area). He believed that all human members of the nation, not some selected social, religious, linguistic, or other class, should have an *equal* chance to participate in shaping the national identity, so he mostly frowned at what then passed (and to an extent now passes) for “democratic nations.”

Nazrul was also a moral giant in the sense that his nationalism was strongly empirical—a term one does not generally associate with a poet. That is, he felt that concrete experiences and observations should form the poets images. And to him nothing was more concrete than that which is immediate and local. The local was part of what is an integral source of that which properly fits (aesthetic), about which one is most knowledgeable and, thus, in control (power), and that which partakes of intimacy and passion—all of which, to him, must be part of the moral order of things. The voice of poetry is, however, at once local and universal—it links things which appear to be unlinked and even un-linkable, and shows relationships where one may have thought there was none. So, while his poetry employed local images, those images were also extended to show relationship with and offer support for nationalists in Haiti, Ireland, Turkey, and China, for example.

If one were to examine his poem “The Hilly Song,” a portion of which I am going to quote in a few moments, one will find some of these images (“nomads of the desert,” who know neither “king, or the king’s law,” who are “lotus hearted” and are like the “tides of the ocean”), as he sought to awake in young people a sense of the need to revolt to regain their freedom:

We are open hearted like a wide field
We are a super strong mountain
We are wing-open birds
We are lively like laughter and song
We drink rainwater, eat wild fruits, and lie on green grass
We are the tides in the river of life
We are over-flown water of a liberated brook 3

Being the “overflowed water of a liberated brook” has meaning for the claim this presentation is trying to make—that Nazrul is a moral giant. Far from being the conventional nationalist many have sought to make him, he was also a global citizen of the first watermark, in an age that was then setting the stage for Fascism and Nazism,

3. See “Hilly Song” in Katunamaya Goswami, *Introducing Kazi Nazrul Islam* (New York: Bangladesh Institute for the Performing Arts, 1999) p.41

some of the foulest expressions of racism, homophobia, sexism, militarism, and economic nationalism (remember the high tariffs of the 1920s and early 1930s). In the

above poem we find him attempting to socialize the young against limits and boundaries, urging them to overflow such human confinements as seem to be defining of their respective circumstances, and to experience liberation.

Part of that liberation is to find kinship outside traditional markers and identities. And those who are cognizant of Nazrul’s focus on this area will cite, among others, two statements from him, one part of a prose poem and, the other, a comment in an address made at a civic reception in his honor in Calcutta, on December 15, 1929. In the first, part of a response to his own trial and conviction on charges of sedition (he was writing against injustice), he said:

...what I’ve understood to be unjust, oppression, a lie—I’ve called just that—without trying to please anyone or receive praise or favor. I have not merely rebelled against injustices of the king, but my Truth-sword has also attacked and rebelled against society, race, nation. For this, in and outside my home, I have been subjected to... much ridicule, humiliation, reproach, attacks...

The rebel with his truth-sword cannot be confined or limited to nation, society, race, humiliation, or ridicule; injustice knows no border and its conquest must be co-extensive with its reach. This is part of the moral giant we speak of—the scope of his concerns recognized no confines, except a human one.

In the other statement, he said he refused to be a “torch bearer” for anyone (“you are either with me or against me”, says the nationalist), any group, or party, and compared himself with the “birds of heaven, the flowers of the forest, the poets of music”—all of whom/which he viewed “as universal,” as *res communis* --as belonging to everyone. Then he went on to say: “It is not at all a fact that because I happen to be born in this particular country [that] I belong to this country alone and this society in particular. I belong to the world, to all human beings of this earth.” 4

So how can we reconcile his being a nationalist and his belonging to all human beings. First, he maintained a distinction between nationality and citizenship, the latter seen as having broader ties and duties to all human publics, even inchoate ones. He was among the first true global citizen, the focus on proletarian internationalism by Marx and Trotsky, and the launching of the League of Nations by Woodrow Wilson of the United States, notwithstanding. It is true that Ibsen of Norway, Pushkin and Tolstoy of Russia, Dante of Italy, Goethe of Germany, Tennyson of Britain, and Mo Tzu of China, among others, are associated with this idea, but they constrained their outlook by nation-state identities, among others. Philosophers such as Immanuel Kant are rightly praised for highlighting a sort of duty beyond national borders, but they could not think of moral identities outside the state system.

And what do we mean by citizenship? It is not that which is part of the conventional notions about paying taxes, voting, and benefiting from in-state tuition. It may entail some or all of these, but it’s really concerned with public status (social, moral, intellect-

ual, aesthetic, and psychological) that requires/enables one, as an individual, to recognize issues, form judgments, make decisions, and take action—consistent with those decisions—that at once links one to and have impact on the common affairs of

4. Ibid., p. 70

the group or community to which one belongs. The person who occupies this status is called a citizen.

For Nazrul, we concurrently belong to and are citizens of several communities—the family, the city or town, the university, the nation, and the globe, as well as nature itself, in which human culture is rooted and from which that culture is largely shaped. So—according to him—the status of citizen encompasses the entire range of judgments, decisions, and actions that affect or potentially affect all the communities to which one belongs. These judgments and their duties are not artificial, in the sense that many thinkers claim, namely, that it is impossible for the Indonesian to feel the type of identity with problems in Brazil or Canada that s/he would feel for like problems in Indonesia. And this brings us to the second point of reconciliation between the nationalist and the global citizen.

This exemplary poet saw human beings as possessing multiple identities, each overlapping and associated with character-rooted passions (passions linked to the universal need for orientation, effectiveness, relatedness, rootedness, and unity, among others). We have a personal identity—our name, our physical appearance, our blood chemistry, our fingerprint, not to mention our genetic constitution. We have a social identity, often more than one, based on the social groups with which we associate and interact. A national identity is something about which we boast, grounded on actual or supposed markers such as language, ethnicity, religion, and more broadly common experiences, including triumphs and suffering. We may not even know others who also belong to the nation, but we construct or have constructed in our minds images who are or who are not. We have a global and cosmic identity, also.

We respond to the beckoning of the stars, the smile of the flowers, the sparkle of the dewdrop, the hush of the quiet woods, the textured rhythm and color of sound, the play of electrons, to the elegance of calculus, and the sweetness of the fruit. All solicit our sense and intimate that we are one. Every living cell—everywhere--seeks a larger connection. In Nazrul's poetry, the sea is in love with the moon.

Our global and cosmic identity is, therefore, consistent with our global citizenship; and our multiple identities—given our “fathomless and infinite” self --are consonant with the many communities to which we belong as citizen. And this brings us to the point of reconciliation.

The reconciliation lies in our *human* identity. That identity is at once the most basic, the most intimate, and the most global. Mothers are anxious about their children, wherever those mothers are; each person has the need to make a dent (need for effectiveness)

wherever s/he happens to be; to establish deep links with others and with places (rootedness); to interact with and relate to other people and things (relatedness); to have a map of the social, physical, and ideological universe (a frame of reference); and to experience a sense of oneness internally, with others, and with nature (unity). These existential needs and their associated passions are part of our human identity, although we spend our lives fighting for the primacy of that identity. Groups take turn, from the tender age of each of us, to persuade us that we are Americans, Muslims, blacks, women, terrorists, brothers, peasants, communists, liberals, conservative, students, professors, among others, before we are human. So we can humiliate, enslave, torture, kill, engage in genocidal and other wars, and even systematically assault our environment—all in the “interest” of the group with which we boast an identity. But to the extent we allow the all-pervading efforts at persuading us to succeed, to that extent—says this great poet—we will be rendered unable to experience the “the pain of the world as our own”; discover the “joy of sacrifice”; to expand our souls to “attain a nobler quality”; and to see and encounter humanity as a single moral community. To that extent, also, we live in disaccord with our true selves--and in rank moral hypocrisy.

It cannot be immoral to kill our neighbor across the street but moral to kill our neighbor across the ocean; it cannot be immoral to possess guns intended to kill and maim others, but moral to build and possess weapons intended to destroy cities, towns, nations; it cannot be immoral to poison my milk, but moral to poison the rivers, the lakes, the oceans, and other expressions that make the milk and the sustenance of life possible. It cannot be immoral to sell products known to be harmful to consumers in Storrs, Connecticut, but moral to sell them to people in Sao Paulo, Calcutta, or Moscow. It is not a matter of nationality or geography; it is a matter of humanity.⁵

One of the areas of the human condition that is currently testing our capacity to live on earth as members of a common human family, as members of a single moral community, and as stewards of each other's well-being is that of the relationship between and among members of different religious communities. Many (in the secular spheres of society) blame religion for a number of ills, including wars, and find the idea of religion as part of public life troubling. For Nazrul, we should make a distinction between the uses to which ambitious—sometimes unscrupulous--people put religion and the nature of religion itself. In his view, religion is major part (not all) of the broad terrain of

5. See his poem “Complaint”, as he focuses on hypocrisy.

human spirituality, and to keep that part from the public domain would be to amputate human beings and place that domain in spiritual poverty. Indeed, he sees the heart as a sacred site of empathy, through which all religions course and help us understand the human. In his poem, “The Doctrine of Equality,” he praises that heart; he also praises Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, as the instruments through which we can realize the “universal temple” in us; and, far from being the source of any future “clash of civilizations,” or the end of human creative development (the end of history, to which we referred earlier), he sees religion—and the heart—as the seat of timeless self-revelation.⁶

...This heart is...a Jerusalem, a Medina, a Kaaba;/It is a mosque, a temple, a church;/ Here sat Jesus and Moses and joined the Light of Truth/ In the field of battle and the holder of eternal flute sang the Gita...;/Returning into the Sanctum Sanatorium of the heart of this heart Sakya Muni/heard the still, sad cry of Humanity and relinquished his kingdom/In the cave the Darling of Arabia sat in meditation and heard the Call,/And preached the message of Equality.../I have heard no untruth, Brother!/There is no temple, no Kaaba, greater than this heart!

I refer to religion and the heart in Nazrul's voice of poetry, for a number of others reasons we cannot here touch on, because of time limitations. Among those reasons, however, are his efforts to refute those who would claim that *human nature* (genetics) instruct us to seek our own (back to the earlier divisions of humans) and that we are wedded to power and "top-dog-ism." He wants to awake in us the realization that sustained, successful human activities are founded on what we do instinctively (even when we might initially think through them); and that true equality, grounded in human dignity, does not truck with top-dog-ism. The species (cosmic) identity he seeks to have

6. See Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations" in *Foreign Affairs* vol. 72 #3 (Summer 1993), pp. 22-49

us experience and espouse is therefore something that should be instinctive. And I would like to refer to a play, entitled "Truthfulness," which he wrote.

Two brothers, whose father had been killed by a "desert dweller" (note the identity), brought the wrong-doer to the king. Upon presenting their case to His Highness and pleading for justice, the king asked the alleged wrong-doer if he had anything he wished to say. The "desert-dweller," against whom the king had pronounced a sentence of death, requested that the execution of the sentence be deferred, until he had a chance to return to his home where, unknown to anyone, he had hidden monies in the ground—monies which, as an appointed guardian of his young brothers by his then dead father, had entrusted to him. Were the death sentence carried out immediately, the would-be beneficiaries of the monies would be left without provisions for their future. He promised the king that if he were given until sunset of the day on which he was making his request, he would return to his home, appoint another guardian for his brothers, transfer the monies to the new guardian, and return to accept his punishment.

The king, although sympathetic, indicated that he could grant his request only if there were someone who could serve as his bail (meaning, someone who would risk his/her life, in case the condemned man did not return). After looking around and recognizing no one who might help him, he was almost at the point of despair when the king's "But suppose," said the king, "this unknown Bedouin does not return—have you thought about the consequences?" The king's brother had counted the consequences. The condemned man, pleased by this development, left for his home. Time passed, the evening came, and there was no return. The courtiers began to whisper about the irrational expectation of his return, given the death sentence. But the Bedouin returned,

apologizing for the delay—caused by relatives who tried to prevent him from returning—and asked the king requested of the king that his bail be set free.

The brother who posted the bail was happy that his life had been spared; and, moved by the moral royalty exhibited in the behavior of the convicted man, he no longer saw him as a Bedouin but as a "human being," one "greater than I," he said. The two aggrieved brothers forgave him and asked the king to pardon him. The king, in turn, seeking to become part of the atmosphere of moral elevation, offered the two aggrieved brothers compensation from his *personal account* for the loss of their father.⁷

There are many lessons to be drawn from the play. Among them is the suggestion that the walls of blood, social class, and birth can be penetrated; that residing in the "stranger" (the "desert-dweller") is the *human*—there is, in fact, no stranger; and that nobility has nothing to do with blood, social position, political affiliation, or economic status; it is moral in content and in deed.

There is something else that Nazrul sought to bring to our attention: that to be fully human, we must take risks; risks based on the belief that we cannot remain in the same "place"; risks based on the impulse that we are at our best, at our most fulfilling, when we countenance the overcoming of existing limitations; and risks grounded on the search for a reconciliation of our many identities in a search for completion. Completion not as the finality of becoming, but as a more comprehensive condition of being. To gain this

7. See Nazrul's play, "Truthfulness" in *Kazi Nazrul Islam: Selected Works*
Translated by Sajed Kemal (Dhaka: Nazrul Institute, 1999), pp. 179-181

completion, this expansion of the self, we must, Nazrul claims, wrestle—through the temple of the heart-- with the moral grammar of our being, a grammar which is inborn but neglected. This means nothing less than the liberation of the moral conscience, which for many, is but a "dull remembrance."

But that dull remembrance, that frozen impulse, that cancelled dream—sometimes in the world's most crowded street, in the midst of din and dirt, there arises, if even for a moment, a thirst to spend the fire and restless force of our true original self, to indulge a longing into the mystery of the heart, and embrace the smell, the wind, the faces of laughing children. And on some rare occasion—which Matthew Arnold recognized and Nazrul wanted to make permanent—"our eyes in another's eye read clear, we find something revealed:

A bolt is shot back somewhere in our breast,
And a lost pulse of feeling stirs again.
The eye sinks inward, and the heart lies plain,
And what we mean we say, and what we would
We know...⁸

This "dull remembrance" is what the king's brother had; it is that which

will allow us to become rebels, as we hear the “united yearnings” of all seeking a new human fellowship; it is that which recognizes, not the end of history, but the beginnings of a new history, one with universal responsibilities (nearly 60 years after Nazrul’s writing in this area, we have the Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities). It is the special duty of intellectuals to help us break the walls of separation—gender, race, religion, social class, among others; to reclaim that

8. See Matthew Arnold’s poem, “The Buried Life.”

“dull remembrance” toward the comprehensive, “infinite” self (human persons) Nazrul sought; and thus, to liberate the moral revolutionary we truly are.

By. Prof. Winston E. Langley



KAZI NAZRUL ISLAM AND HUMANISM

June McDaniel
College of Charleston

September, 2006

Nazrul Conference
University of Connecticut

I begin this paper with reference to the last paper I gave to this group, on Kazi Nazrul Islam’s work. In that paper, I spoke of him as a person concerned with the suffering of other human beings, a person of broad love and caring. A month or so after I had given the paper, I received a hostile e-mail message. The writer of the message considered himself to be an expert on Nazrul, and wrote that my interpretation was wrong. He said that Nazrul was a true Muslim, and that Muslims did not care about other human beings, they only cared about God. Therefore, I was wrong in saying that Nazrul cared about humanity.

I believe this writer’s statements misrepresent both the religion of Islam and Kazi Nazrul’s views. But because these views are becoming popular in some areas of the world, I wished to address them.

The Qur’an is a book with a great emphasis upon social justice, and the way that society should be run. Allah himself is referred to as the merciful and compassionate one, and people are told to care for widows and orphans, and to help their neighbors and the poor. This is the reason for the *zakat* tax. Indeed, compassion for those who suffer is one of the most important bases of religious ethics in all religions. The prophet Muhammed is called the perfect model for humanity, and he is known for his humility, kindness, and nobility of character. Many stories from his life teach that one should help others, whether or not they are Muslims. To ignore human suffering and oppression is not following Muhammed’s example. Allah breathed his spirit into humanity (Surah 32:9), and in Islamic thought all human beings thus contain a spark of God.

To say that one cares about God in a monotheistic tradition, but can freely ignore what God says and wants, makes no theological sense. And in ignoring human beings, we are ignoring God, whose spirit dwells within mankind.

The idea that individuals do not matter, that only God has value, is also found in modern Christian fundamentalism. However, this idea comes from neither the Qur’an nor the Bible. In both of these sacred texts, God has great concern about humanity. The literary source of this callousness towards human suffering is actually the nineteenth

century ethical philosophy developed by Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill, which is known as Utilitarianism. This is a atheistic philosophy, which intends the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people. However, it has the danger of having people treated as commodities, allowing the sacrifice of individuals for the greater good of the society or nation.

It is most popularly known for the saying that the end justifies the means, and thus it can be legitimate to perform evil acts if they lead to a worthwhile end. People can be killed and kidnapped and tortured, according the religious version of Utilitarianism, if this would lead to a worthwhile group religious goal. People themselves do not matter- only the goals of the group matter.

What I am calling here 'Religious Utilitarianism' goes against both religious ethics and against revelation. For Islam, why would God reveal his will to mankind if people were worthless and did not matter? Why would God reveal laws, such as not killing women and children and the elderly, if they are to be violated in God's own name? To define Islam as a religion that does not care about humanity is to deny the importance of Quranic law, and to deny Allah's concern with human morality. Religious utilitarianism also twists the idea of the greatest good for the greatest number of people; instead, we have the greatest good for US, whoever that group of the virtuous and saved happens to be. Other human beings and their pain are simply ignored.

While the philosophical justification for Islamist violence and ignoring human pain comes from atheist rather than religious sources, its political sources are also atheist. The idea of terror as a tool of the Revolution comes from the Russian anarchists, anti-tzarists, and early communists. It was publicized by Lenin with his October Revolution; he believed in terrifying potential enemies by murder en masse, and killing entire crowds.ⁱ Later Hitler's more organized attacks also became attractive, as Nazi propaganda and fugitives spread through French North Africa at the end of World War II (while the Allies focused on liberating France from German domination, they largely ignored its colonies). Thus, some of the people accusing Nazrul of non-Muslim values themselves have values adopted, and twisted, from Western sources.

As for Nazrul, is it accurate to say that he is immune to human pain because he is a Muslim? I would say quite the opposite- he shares the pain of humanity, and bemoans the situations that cause it. This is why he is a poet of both love and revolution. I shall give examples from his poetry of his concerns for the joys and sorrows of humanity.

However, some confusion may arise from the varied meanings of the term "humanism". There are several different definitions of the term. It was originally associated with a philosophical and literary movement which developed during the Renaissance in Western Europe, which emphasized the study of the classics, or the humanities. It also represented a rebellion against the rigidity of the church of its day, emphasizing the role of the arts and sciences, and having a "general emphasis on lasting human values." The traditional definition of humanism emphasizes the dignity and worth of all people, a commitment to the search for truth, and faith that people can build a better world. It values art and beauty, as well as personal independence.

However, the term has been redefined and sensationalized by Christian fundamentalists as "secular humanism," which is different from traditional humanism. 'Secular humanism' refers to a belief in scientific knowledge rather than religious revelation, and emphasizes pragmatism rather than romanticism or idealism. Sometimes

it is given political dimensions- as in the 'one world government' and 'new world order' ideas that came from the Bahais a century ago. For fundamentalists, secular humanism is equivalent to unbelief, and its concern for morality is ignored- indeed, it is said to be unconcerned with ethics. It is a 'humanism' which has little or nothing to do with the humanities. Indeed, it finds the humanities ultimately irrelevant.

The term "humanism" can thus be confusing, because it is used to mean very different things in the modern media. In this paper, Nazrul's humanism refers to the original Renaissance or traditional definition, a concern for lasting human values, and the dignity and worth of all people. We might also note that Nazrul was an excellent twentieth century example of the ideal of the "renaissance man", a person who had many skills and abilities. Nazrul was a songwriter, a musician, a director, an actor, a poet, an artist, and a composer. He wrote over 3,500 songs and *ghazals*, 25 books of poetry, 29 plays and operas, and numerous essays and speeches. He fits perfectly the ideal of a cultured man of many talents.

If we look at themes that are found in traditional humanist writings, there are four important ones that I will list here:

1. The dignity and worth of each human being
2. The value of human love, creativity and wisdom
3. Compassion for human suffering
4. The desire to contribute to a better world, with less suffering and more tolerance

These can be found in Nazrul's writings. For example, on the theme of the dignity and worth of each person he writes:

I sing of equality
There is nothing greater than a human being
Nothing nobler...ⁱⁱ

He also writes in the poem "Human Being" of the selfish hypocrites:

Who are they, hating human beings
Yet kissing the Quran, the Vedas, the Bible?
Snatch away those books from them.
The hypocrites pretend [to be] worshipping those books
By killing the human beings who have, in fact,
Brought those books into existence!...
All the holy scriptures and houses of worship
Are not as sacred as that one tiny human body.ⁱⁱⁱ

Human beings have their own divinity, which is largely unrecognized, as he states:

Friend, you're full of greed
With a blinder of selfishness over your eyes.
Otherwise you'd recognize the god
Serving you as a coolie.^{iv}

In his poem "God," Nazrul speaks of this:

Don't shudder Hero, don't be intimidated
By the scholars of the scriptures-

They're not God's "private secretaries."
We all are His manifestation
He is present in us all.^v

As for our second theme, the value of wisdom and love within the human heart, Nazrul states in "I Sing of Equality:"

Open your heart- within you lie all the scriptures
All the wisdom of the ages.
Within you lie all the religions, all the prophets
Your heart is the universal temple
Of all of the gods and goddesses.^{vi}

He also speaks of the importance of love, in the poem "Coming to this World for the Poor, the Downtrodden, the Destitute, Hazrat"

Today there is no one to think about human suffering and needs
The rich Muslims are constantly immersed in pleasures and luxury...
When will we regain our humanity
By loving fellow human beings?^{vii}

Such love is part of religion, as he says in "Eid Mubarak:"

Says Islam, we are all for one another
We are all brothers and shall
Share joy and sorrow equally.^{viii}

This is not only for members of one religion, but for all people of all religions, as Nazrul states in "There Smiles the Eid-ul-Azha Moon":

Forget your sectarian quarrels today
Welcome all as your dear guests.
Let kind words and sincere love
Be your most precious offerings to your guests.^{ix}

Love is part of God's blessings, as he states in "Bless us oh Lord":

Let others love us and let us love others.
Let there be no hatred or malice or physical pain or mental agony.
Let the earth be another paradise oh Lord.
We will explore you in the light of the knowledge you have given
Your strength will aid our work.^x

On the issue of our third theme, compassion for human suffering, Nazrul is especially articulate. In his poem "Coolies and Laborers," he speaks of sharing pain:

And if one human being is hurt, then
Let each of us of the whole humanity feel the pain equally.
If one human being is humiliated, then
Let it be considered humiliation of the whole humanity.^{xi}

He speaks of the pain of poverty, starvation, insult, illness and death. He says in "The

Rebel:"

I'm the madness of the recluse
I'm the sigh of grief of a widow
I'm the anguish of the dejected
I'm the suffering of the homeless
I'm the pain of the humiliated
I'm the afflicted heart of the lovesick.^{xii}

In the "Nobility of Sorrow" (or Life Science) he states:

To feel the pain of others is to realize the nobility of sorrow. There is no motive or selfishness in it. The pain is such that it is felt through the remembrance of one's own pain. So amazing is the way of the soul that in the empathic realization of the pain of others there is an intimately felt touch of joy, like a refreshing long stream of a fountain flowing through the heart of a red stone.

It is the same kind of sorrow which the prophets felt through the hearts of global humanity... it is the same realization which elevates human beings to godliness.^{xiii}

On our fourth theme, contributing to a better world with less sorrow and more tolerance,

he states that, as the Rebel, he will only rest "when the anguished cry of the oppressed

shall no longer reverberate in the sky and air."^{xiv} He also states:

I sing of equality
In which all barriers and estrangements are dissolved
And in which Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims and Christians are united
I sing of equality.^{xv}

He speaks of Muhammed:

We have forgotten your message of toleration
And have turned instead to religious blindness
Therefore, your blessings no longer shower upon us from heaven...
You did not want this disgraceful fighting in the name of religion...
Half the world came to believe in the virtue of toleration,
in your virtue of toleration
But we never learned that toleration, only heard it,
Only heard it in the Quran and the Hadith.^{xvi}

This prejudice and ignoring of suffering has acted as a curse, as he states in "Once again,

Hazrat, Send from Heaven the Message of Equality:"

Defying your command
 We are universally disgraced
 We despise the suffering humanity
 Yet we say, "We submit to the will of God."^{xvii}

He puts this in the specific context of religious war, as he states in "If the Flute Doesn't Play Any More":

The constant fighting between Hindus and Muslims, animosity between nations, and wars, the inequality between the mercilessly indebted and needy, and the monstrously greedy piling up of crores and crores of rupees in the banks- these are what I came to eliminate... Don't look at me ... as someone belonging only to the Muslims., [but] as a servant of the one and only indivisible God who is above Hindus and Muslims, above all nations and creeds... Please think of me as a restless youth who came to this world with a thirst for fulfilment, but it was his departed soul suffering from the pain of unfulfilment who came to you in your dreams and shed tears.^{xviii}

Though Nazrul does not see himself as limited to Islam, it is still a spiritual path with which he identifies himself. As he states:

Allah is my lord, I have no fear
 My prophet is Muhammed, whom the world praises.
 With the Quran as my trumpet of life, what can terrify me?
 Islam is my code of life, and Muslim is my name.^{xix}

However, he is very disturbed at religious callousness and dishonesty. As he states in the poem "Man":

Hammer away at the closed doors
 Of the mosques and temples
 And hit with your shovel mightily.
 For, climbing on their minarets
 The cheats are today glorifying
 Selfishness and hypocrisy.^{xx}

Nazrul describes the better world that he seeks in his poem "Resurrection":

A new world reborn
 Is soon to dawn.
 These fetters of ancient scriptures
 Wrought this utter ruin...
 On a new foundation
 A young world shall dawn...
 Our rights we shall recover
 With the unity of sufferers
 All the world over.^{xxi}

As Abu Muhammed Habibullah phrases it, Nazrul had "innate catholicity and cosmopolitan humanism."^{xxii} He was theistic, yet he rebelled against the corruption that he found in religion, and was essentially an optimist, "who believed in the perfectibility of man" as Syed Sajjad Husain states.^{xxiii} He wished to fight injustice in the world, and the exploitation of people in the name of God, especially by institutionalized religion.

What are the ideals of Kazi Nazrul Islam? In his own words, he came to argue against inequality, oppression, colonialism, tyranny, religious, moral and political hypocrisy, and religious fanaticism. He was in favor of equality, freedom, justice, love, romance, idealism, unity and peace. He was a man of his own age, but these ideals are universal ones, for people have not greatly changed today from Nazrul's time. His words are as important today as they were in his own time.

ⁱ Paul Berman, *Terror and Liberalism* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2003), p. 41.

ⁱⁱ *Kazi Nazrul Islam: Selected Works*, edited and translated by Sajed Kamal. (Dhaka: Nazrul Institute, 1999) p. 27.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid, p. 48.

^{iv} Ibid, p. 50.

^v *Poetry of Kazi Nazrul Islam*, ed. Mohammed Nurul Huda. (Dhaka: Nazrul Institute, 1997), p. 255, trans. Sajed Kamal.

^{vi} Kamal, Ibid, p. 43.

^{vii} Ibid, p. 140.

^{viii} Huda, Ibid, p. 469, trans. Bashudha Chakravarty.

^{ix} Huda, Ibid, p. 549, trans. Kabir Chowdhury.

^x Huda, Ibid, p. 673, trans. Abu Rushd.

^{xi} Kamal, Ibid, p. 46.

^{xii} Ibid, p. 109.

^{xiii} Ibid, pp. 185-186.

xiv Ibid, p. 33.

xv Ibid, p. 27. Slightly rephrased.

xvi Ibid, p. 141-142.

xvii Ibid, p. 142.

xviii Ibid, p. 223.

xix *Kazi Nazrul Islam: A New Anthology*, ed. Rafiqul Islam (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1990/1397), p. 87. Slightly rephrased.

xx Ibid, p. 39.

xxi Huda, Ibid, p. 397, trans. Syed Mujibul Huq.

xxii Islam, Ibid, p. 151.

xxiii Ibid, p. 207.



Nazrul – The National Poet of Bangladesh.

Dr Mokhlesur Rahman

This article offers some contemporary background basic facts about Nazrul and some understanding about the poet. Looking at the past few conference Magazines of the North American Nazrul Conference I found the need for articles in the magazine written in English for young generation, of Bengali parents, was born and lived outside their country of origin whose first language is English and also for readers whose mother tongue is other than Bengali. These observations inspired me to write this article.

Kazi Nazrul Islam, a very short lived Bengali literary genius, was born (1899) at a time when his country's (British India) socio-political conditions were in turmoil. Under the foreign rule social discontent grew all over the country, which gave way to growing nationalism and preparation for the fight for independence from the British rule. Social injustice and oppressions were universal. The whole of the country had been suffering from the communal disturbances as the population was divided by the two major religious groups Hindu and Muslim. Finally, independence came in 1947 dividing British India into Hindu majority India and Muslim majority Pakistan (East and West). Nazrul remained in the Indian state of West Bengal at his main residence in Kolkata while he was ill of an unknown disease caused him loss of memory and speech. The disease struck in 1942 and remained undiagnosed until 1953 when the poet was brought to London and Vienna where it was diagnosed to be 'Pick's' disease, a neurological ailment which was found to be too late for any treatment due to the lack of initial treatment (R. Islam, 1992). The poet was brought back to Kolkata where he lived ever since with his disease in difficult conditions and passed the most agonising time of his life. In 1972, he was brought to Dhaka by the Government of the newly independent country Bangladesh (formerly East Pakistan) conferring upon him the title of its National Poet. His disease left him interacting with others like a small child having lost his memory and speech. He received stately honour from the Govt and rapturous reception from its people. The poet appeared to have been happy in the new environment and circumstances. With the constant care and nursing, his health showed improvement. However, this did not last for long and he died in August, 1976. The authority declared days of mourning. The people of Bangladesh, from all walks of life, showed how dearly they loved the poet. Whatever thinking was there in the gesture of Bangladesh authority in conferring upon him the honour of the National poet, it is difficult to say what would be Nazrul's reaction to this.

Nazrul was born in an extremely impoverish family background in a remote rural part of West Bengal. He had a very difficult childhood with no support for proper living and schooling. However, he had thirst for learning and learnt some Persian language with great enthusiasm from his uncle Kazi Bazley Karim at a time very early in his life. Unfortunately he had to earn his family living as a child labour after his father Kazi Fakir Ahmed's death in 1908. He was always driven by an inner force and moved around restless with some unknown inspiration which was manifested in his later life through his creative writings. Haunted by the poverty he joined the rural drama group 'Leto' at the

age of 11 where he found his passion for art and culture. He took keen interest in script writing, acting and singing. He learnt techniques of stage performance, writing drama script and poetry and became very familiar with the rural culture. His popularity grew in no time for writing popular rural poetry and songs. He had enormous thirst for learning and managed to get into school intermittently with the help of some generous people. In school he proved to be very meritorious student. By this time World War 1 commenced. Nazrul left school to join the army probably driven by his thirst for knowledge of different kind. He left just before his Matriculation Examination, and was sent for training at Nawshera in the North West Frontier Province of the subcontinent. After training he was posted at Karachi cantonment where his main literary work started being at the cantonment and not at the fighting frontline. Here he learnt and supplemented his Persian language and studied Persian poetry, with a Punjabi Moulavi in the cantonment, included the famous poems 'Diwani Hafiz' and 'Masnabi Rumi'. His first prose 'Boundeler Atma Kahini' published in the weekly magazine 'Shougat' of Kolkata in May 1919. At the conclusion of the war Nazrul returned to Kolkata and found a politically leftist friend Muzaffar Ahmed who welcomed Nazrul to reside at his Taltala Lane home. While living at this place Nazrul's concerns about suffering humanity and his socialist thinking got consolidated. He kept abreast of contemporary political and social events around the world. He supported Mostafa Kamal Atatürk's movement which had overthrown the Sultanate and created secular modern republic of Turkey.

Nazrul's concerns were the human suppression and oppression under foreign rule, sufferings of the destitute, religious fundamentalism and communal conflicts due to ignorance. He revolted against all of these through his writings. While at Muzaffar Ahmed's place Nazrul published his famous poem 'Bidrohi' (revolutionary) in the Moslem Bharat in 1922. It made a great impact and remained as a memorable event in the history of Bengali literature. The poem generates courage and determination having words and analogy and strong emphasis to make it distinct and loud sounding like mountain torrent coming down on its way to the plain, like the ocean's roaring waves breaking on to the shore. It was a call for fearless hearts, manly strength and courage to break out of all chains in the march of freedom. It is this call of Nazrul which captured the contemporary young minds of Bengal and was very effective in the fight for freedom from the foreign rule. Nazrul's creative life was very short about 22 years (1919 – 1942). He came like a comet and created a voluminous literary work, novels, Short stories, poems, drama, children literature and songs (3000 songs) now called Nazrul Giti.

Nazrul was a humanist and secular in thoughts. He expressed himself with many ideas and feelings in many ways medium, colours, directions or forms. It is to the people who will find him in their own perspective i.e. secularist, religious, leftist, Egalitarian. However, Nazrul used all sources for a central point- the humanity. Nazrul cannot be seen singularly belonging to any particular group of people. His thoughts were for all mankind and not confined to a specific nationality. His patriotic songs were written against the colonial rulers and were thematic on freedom and liberty, courage, bravery and sacrifice for human dignity. His revolt was not only against foreign rulers but also against oppression of all kinds – social, economic or political. However, he was aware that independence or liberation is pre-requisite for restoration of justice. His work can be used

by people of many nationalities to achieve their goal as his writing so general in nature. He wrote passionately on any of the topics he chose. At the time of rebellion he would declare 'Khodar Ashon Arosh vedia' means penetrating the seat of heaven; when offering love to his beloved he wrote, 'Ramdhano Hotey Lalrong diey Alta Porabo Pai' means reaching to the rainbow to get the red colour to decorate his lover's feet.

In his religious thought, he was a believer in God but his religious views had several specific reservations. He was against use and abuse of religion for exploitation or oppression. He was thoroughly conversant with the details of the ceremonial aspect of Islam and Hinduism but his personal life did not reflect practise of the basic rituals. However, he did not avoid rituals in contemptuous defiance. In his work he expressed deep sorrow and repentance for it and wrote 'Roj Hashore Allah Amar Korona Bichar' means O God please don't judge me on the Day of Judgement. He was against religious intolerance anywhere in the world and the communalism between Hindu and Muslim in the Indian subcontinent. As a humanist he appreciated the dynamics and growth of human mind and spirit and tended to reject any set of writings however sacred furnishing complete and satisfying guidelines to human activity of all ages. Jesus, Buddha, Krishna and Mohammad were all regarded by him as sacred. However, he prevented others from labelling him as Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist or Christian. He firmly opposed the suggestion that he was a Pagan (non-believer). His use of ingredients both from Hindu and Islamic sources for his literary work might have led people to label him either Muslim or Hindu. He was too passionate in writing any of his thoughts and emptied his feeling into his literary work whether he wrote Gazal or Bhazan. Thus he was misunderstood by both the communities. However, he remained unconcerned about human judgement about him and knew that no human being is capable of making spiritual judgement.

However, one of the objectives of this article is to focus on what independent Bangladesh can achieve from Nazrul's thoughts about this unjust world and life which are recorded in his literary works. The injustice probably will perpetuate through the unknown length of time. This is probably because of human nature to dominate and exploit the weak whenever an opportunity is available. Therefore, Nazrul's revolt will always be there against that nature until justice achieved. The foreign colonial masters are gone now and the people have been independent twice since Nazrul's active time. Once as Pakistan in the name of religion, which Nazrul would have opposed uncompromisingly, then as Bangladesh in the name of language in quest of justice for its people. However, even thirty seven years after independence the country is far from being just or free. The majority people do not have the right for the basic need for proper human life e.g food, medicine and education where as the fruit of the independence has been harvested by a powerful few of the population who shun their own Bengali language and encouraged setting up former colonial type schools, Universities to educate their children. These educational institutions clearly are not design to produce national or patriotic leaders. The generation of young people who are educated in these institutions have learnt not only to look down their own language but also are reluctant to speak it. They aspire to go abroad either to settle down there or to learn colonial type ruling and back to rule Bangladesh. It looks like we are going in circle in search of freedom. Nazrul most certainly would have revolted against the system which is still causing people's sufferings. He may not be

amongst us physically now but his soul must be very unrest in defiant protest. Thus whatever thinking was there of the Bangladesh authority in conferring him the title of National poet, he only can be shown real honour and put his soul at rest if his thoughts are used in the national life of Bangladesh to make it a true secular democratic nation where people will find freedom, justice and no more sufferings.



Brief history of the North America Nazrul Conference, the importance of the 1st, the 2nd, and the 8th conferences, the significance of 2006 Nazrul Symposium and the contributions of Professor Winston E. Langley.

(This is a document of a true testimony to humanistic goodwill, not only with respect to this undoubtedly great poet/musician, but also to all of you who have worked so hard with such heart to forward this message to the rest of the world)

National Poet of Bangladesh, Kazi Nazrul Islam was a literary & artistic phenomenon of the 20th century. Born in British occupied India., he entered into the world of literature at a time when the tapestry of his country was tainted with violence and hatred, and became an activist. Through his powerful & epic writings, he called for unification of people, urging them to rise above their religious and sectarian differences and unite as a single human race. In today's world, infested with hatred, violence and malice, Nazrul's words can still show us the way to global peace and harmony.

Simultaneously a poet, novelist, dramatist, philosopher and a musician, Kazi Nazrul Islam was one of the most mind-boggling talents of the 20th century who is being discovered slowly but surely, by the western world. Nazrul said, **"Even though I was born in this country (Bengal), in this society, I belong to the world"**. Nazrul's superlative and indelible legacy to humanity is far too valuable to be limited only to Bengali readers and must be shared with all of the world's people.

Importance of the 1st. North America Nazrul Conference: (1990 in New Jersey)

With this goal in mind, a group of determined & highly motivated individuals teamed up in early 1990 in order to develop a strategic plan to organize international conferences honoring Nazrul & his great legacy of world peace. **The challenge would be to successfully promote this fascinating poet and his epic writings through academic conferences & seminars, films, recitations, photo exhibits and musical performances.**

The hope was that through such promotional activity, an international appreciation of the extraordinary and versatile talents of the poet would develop, along with a global awareness of the need to generate worldwide support and enthusiasm toward the preservation and eventual global recognition of his prolific and monumental work.

The group realized that the conference planning would not be easy, as a strict guideline along with a strong working committee had to be structured within a short time period. They also had to make sure that all related important aspects of the conference were taken into consideration and examined carefully and accurately. It was further understood that the success of the 1st. conference would be vitally critical to the organizers and sponsors of future conferences. Nonetheless, despite all the difficult tasks and roadblocks, the group came up with a solid plan skillfully, collectively and quickly.

Finally, they were ready to launch the 1st Nazrul conference. Organized and sponsored by a New Jersey based cultural group called Shoukhin, the conference was held at Rutgers University in 1990.

Much to their surprise, there was a large attendance and the energy level of the audience was incredibly high. The conference was a huge success and truly a positive boost for Nazrul admirers. Our good friend, Mahmood Billah was one of the principal architects of this very important & ambitious project.

Importance of the 2nd North America Nazrul Conference: (1992 in Boston)

As a follow up, in 1992, a second conference was held in Boston, organized by a cultural group called Taranga of Boston. Gulshan and I had the major responsibility of gathering and organizing a group of dedicated people. At this time, an official name was given to the conference **“The North America Nazrul Conference” (NANC)**. It was determined that the **conference presentation would be bilingual** (Bengali and English), so that our western friends can participate, understand and enjoy the proceedings while developing further interest. **A permanent working committee, consisting of 24 original members was also elected from different parts of USA.** The responsibility of the committee would be to oversee activities, provide guideline expertise and monitor the conferences.

The long-term goals of the conference were also identified. The major ones being to preach, practice and promote Nazrul’s creative literary ideas in North America, to gain a global recognition for his works, and to introduce them to academic institutions so that his work would cross the language barrier and find it’s rightful place in the world of literature. **It was further decided that the future conferences would be held bi-annually**, and be hosted by either Bangladeshi or Indian organizations located throughout North America.

The two-day long second conference was also a grand success and attended by six to seven hundred people from all over United States, Canada and Bangladesh. His Excellency Abul Ahsan, the Ambassador of Bangladesh to the USA was the chief guest. The Keynote speaker, renowned Nazrul Professor, Rafiqul Islam came from Bangladesh and stated “Nazrul has been one of the greatest crusaders for humanity. Today we find a troubled and torn world divided by race & creed, religion and color. It is time Nazrul’s work be translated into different languages and spread outside the Bengali speaking community so that his message and love for humanity can be shared by the rest of the world”.

President George Bush (sr.) in a special message said” This conference is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate Bengali culture & language, as well as the many musical and literary compositions of Nazrul. It is heartening that you are working to share these treasures with friends of many different cultures and that you are determined to bequeath them to your children. I commend the administrators and staff of Taranga School for hosting this conference and all of you for sharing your ideas”.

Subsequent conferences were held in Washington, DC, New York, Atlanta, Florida, Los Angeles, Montreal and Toronto. The 11th conference will be held in Washington DC in May 2008, hosted by Bangladesh Association of America Inc. (BAAI) which also hosted the 3rd conference.

For quite some time, Gulshan and I have been privileged and honored to be a part of the NANCC. It was a pleasure for us to serve on the committee and we remain fully appreciative of NANCC’s relentless pursuit for the promotion of Nazrul & its efforts in spreading his literature & music world-wide. This is indeed commendable.

While we continue to lend our full support to the NANCC and its valuable activities, we have also decided to take a different approach and add a yet new dimension to them. We have been determined to integrate Nazrul’s literature into the academic environment through US and Canada based educational institutions. Our goal has been to establish endowments in his name. That being said, we have gone to work and teamed up with university professors & administrators, Nazrul scholars & researchers from all parts of the world. We knew that the task would be quite difficult, but have remained steadfast and kept at it. Our effort took a long time before it began to pay off.

Though some of you may already be aware, we feel privileged to inform you that so far we have successfully established two endowments for Kazi Nazrul Islam. First one was established at the California State University, Northridge in 2003, and the second at the University of Connecticut in 2006. So far, this was the biggest victory for us.

Importance of the 8th North America Nazrul Conference.

Nazrul Endowment Established (for 1st time ever) in California, USA. (May 2002)

Under our leadership & guidance the 8th NANC was held in Los Angeles, California, in May of 2002. This significant conference was organized and hosted by the Taranga of California in conjunction

with the California State University, Northridge, (CSUN) East Asia Club of University of California Los Angeles (UCLA), Simi Valley Cultural Center, Bangladeshi communities of Simi Valley (lead group) & greater Los Angeles, and the California Council for the Humanities.

During this conference a historic proposition was made to establish a Nazul Endowment, for first time ever in USA, at the California State University, Northridge (CSUN) campus, which became a reality in 2003. Dean, Dr. John Mason, Dean, Dr. Elizabeth Say, Professor Phyllis Herman, Chairman of Humanities Group and the Executive Director of the University Foundation

Mr. Murray Wood worked very closely with us and they were the key players behind this effort. This was one of the biggest accomplishments of our effort.

Of course, there were many others involved as well, including some highly influential university administrators & professors, community leaders and Nazrul enthusiasts. Prof. Winston Langley, Associate Chancellor and Professor of international relations & political science of the University of Massachusetts, Boston, was the keynote speaker. His powerful & compelling testimony

“Nazrul:

the Moral Giant” also aided in further convincing the university leaders to establishing the Nazrul Endowment.

The current Executive Director of Taranga of California, Mr. Shiper Chowdhury is administering the Nazrul Endowment at CSUN. He is working with university authorities to schedule and coordinate Nazrul lectures and other educational endeavors centered on Nazrul’s teaching, which involve the participation of university students and community members.

In early 2003, immediately after establishing the Nazrul Endowment Fund at CSUN, Taranga of California and the Bangladeshi community members of greater Los Angeles took up an aggressive fund raising campaign. So far they have successfully raised \$30,000.00 and the effort continues.

His Excellency Shamsheer Mobin Chowdhury, BB, the Bangladeshi Ambassador to USA also visited the university in 2005. He was invited by the university president to speak to the students about Kazi Nazrul Islam. He congratulated & praised the university. Evidently, he was highly impressed by the effort and thus pledged \$50,000.00 to the exiting fund.

**The following messages were received during the 8th conference.
Special Messages from Special People:**

“During these extraordinary times, humanizing expressions of freedom and justice remind us of our goal to defeat terrorism around the world. Your celebration of the poetry, prose, and music of Kazi Nazrul Islam provides an opportunity to reflect on a world of peace and unity. I commend you for your efforts to promote Kazi Nazrul Islam’s inspired works and for communicating his message of human rights and social justice.”

President George W. Bush, President of the United State of America

“ This is a wonderful opportunity to bring together people of different backgrounds to celebrate the life and work of Nazrul Islam. I applaud the dedicated members of Taranga of California who have made this conference possible. By raising awareness of Nazrul’s poetry, they have made a valuable contribution to California’s cultural life”

Governor Gary Davis, Governor of California

“Kazi Nazrul Islam, a Bengali poet, has brought global attention to the plight of millions of Muslims and Hindus, and continues to inspire us all. I commend you for working to advance his legacy of peace

and international brotherhood. Dedicating the conference to the innocent victims of September 11 is a most fitting tribute to Nazrul’s humanistic vision”

Senator Dianne Feinstein, The United States Senate

“ This year’s event is particularly important because it honors the victims of September 11. Your conference helps reiterate the need for greater cultural understanding during this most difficult time”

Senator Barbara Boxer, The United States Senate

“ It gives me great pleasure to extend sincere and cordial greetings to all who have gathered for the 8th North America Nazrul Conference. I am pleased to join with other members of the community in recognizing your contributions to the cultural, social and economic growth of the community. I commend your ongoing efforts and dedication to promote the art and culture of the people of Bangladesh”

Mayor James K. Hahn, The Mayor of the City of Los Angeles

“ Nazrul’s poetry, focussing as it did on human values and virtues, contributed immensely to the advancement of Bangla literature. Its influence on the later generation of poets and writers was tremendous. Remembering Nazrul is something which as a nation we owe it to him. I greatly commend this effort on the part of the members of the Bangladeshi community in California who in spite of their being so far away from their motherland have not forgotten to acknowledge the nation’s indebtedness to this immortal soul.”

Ambassador Syed Hasan Ahmad,

Ambassador of Bangladesh to the USA

“Though Nazrul wrote in Bengali, the eternal values of his writings transcend all narrow linguistic confines. Nazrul holds a special significance in the contemporary world where religious intolerance and terrorism are rearing their ugly heads and socio-economic disparities have still not been addressed”

Ambassador Lalit Mansingh, Ambassador of India to the USA

“ I wish to thank you for thinking of me and to wish the event, in honor of one of the

literary and humanist giants of South Asia, every success” Mr. Kamallesh Sharma, Permanent

Representative of India to the United Nations

“I want the world to know that this human being is not only a great poet, but that his poetry speaks to us today, and in profound ways—ways which reflect an intellectual, aesthetic, moral, social, and political sophistication that we cannot afford to overlook”

Professor Winston Langley, University of Massachusetts

“In this world of today where race and religion have divided humanity, amplifying the disbenefits of globalization, I wonder what could be a more appropriate message than those left behind by the national poet of Bangladesh - Kazi Nazrul Islam”

Dr. Kazi F. Jalal, Visiting Scholar, Harvard University, Camb.

Mass.

“Allow me to commend you and your colleagues for keeping alive the name and good works of Kazi Nazrul Islam. You do us all a great service by celebrating his creativity”

Professor Roger Buckley, University of Connecticut

“This is an important project and a much needed one, especially at this tumultuous times in

international society”

Dr. Felicia Harmer Kelley, California Council for Humanities

The first academic seminar was held at CSUN in 2003. Both of us spoke at this seminar and provided a plan for furthering the cause of endowment lectures. Prof. Phyllis Herman also spoke in support of the program and promised to help expand its activities.

The first Kazi Nazrul Islam Endowed Lecture focusing on the art, culture and literature was held on April 23, 2004 by the Humanities Division of California State University, Northridge. Porf. Phyllis K. Herman of CSUN was the host and the moderator of this event. Her presence greatly enhanced the quality and structure of this honorary occasion held in recognition of our poet.

Professor June McDaniel and Prof. Omar Farooq were invited to deliver the lectures, both of which focused on Nazrul as a poet, songwriter, humanist and a philosopher. Prof. Mc Daniel reminded the audience that according to many, Nazrul was an influential figure who inspired millions with his epic writing during the 20th century. His work on social injustice & religious

fanaticism illustrated his indignation at the contemporary British colonial rule over India. She further identified a need for a more modern & progressive Islam, as a regressive ideology leads to religious warfare and destruction, much like those experienced during the poet's time. With an unmistakable humanist bent, Nazrul also represented a non-parochial understanding of Islam and the society. "Kazi Nazrul Islam's voice is needed today," McDaniel urged, "as not enough people are not talking about peace".

Prof. Omar Farooq's speech energized the audience, while reminding them of the power, influence and relevance of Nazrul's epic writing. Prof. Farooq is an Associate Professor of Economics & Finance at Upper Iowa University. He is also the founder & developer of nazrul.org, a highly resourceful website dedicated exclusively to Kazi Nazrul Islam, which contains an internet discussion forum.

Both the site and the forum have provided a tremendous wealth of resources for thousands of Nazrul enthusiasts, artists & researchers around the world.

The second lecture was held at CSUN in December 2007. Professor Winston Langley and Professor Neela Saxena were invited to speak. Both of them delivered convincing oratory. It was widely attended by the university students, faculty members, Bangladeshi diplomats and community members of greater Los Angeles. Once again, it was a huge success.

The 2006 Nazrul Symposium at University of Connecticut: The Second Nazrul Endowment established in the East Coast.

Why Nazrul? Why Now? (A press release by U-CONN)

Five years on since the attack on the world trade center, and amid the daily spate of headlines, both good and bad, implicating Muslims all over the world, a desire for a deeper understanding of Islam and a more nuanced approach to the universal quest for peace and harmony has taken root.

Hoping to transcend the narrow sectarianism of "business as usual" an increasingly vocal and sophisticated community is calling for a more progressive vision of Islam. In North America, there is

a growing movement of scholars and activists advocating for greater inclusion, particularly of women, and for improving relations with other faiths and backgrounds. While the movement is still in its nascent stage and faces its share of challenges from within and the more conservative voices from without, there are indications of forward momentum.

Embracing both the needs for a deeper understanding of Islam and the challenge of forgoing a more nuanced approach to achieve this, the Asian American Studies Institute (AASI) at the University of Connecticut, under the direction of professor of history and Director of AASI, Prof. Roger N. Buckley, has teamed up with key members of the Greater Hartford Bangladeshi Community to sponsor a day-long Symposium on Saturday, September 9, 2006, to examine the works of *Kazi Nazrul Islam*.

In her submission for the Symposium, professor of religious studies at College of Charleston, June McDaniel proposes a wider engagement and study of Kazi Nazrul Islam as a voice for a more progressive Islam. She writes,

"I believe that we need a new understanding of Islam that is progressive rather than regressive,

that values knowledge and love and freedom and tolerance. We also need a writer who expresses these goals in a way that makes them understandable and valuable to people over the course of time.

I think Nazrul Islam is such a writer".

Adds Winston E. Langley, professor of international relations and political science & associate chancellor of UMASS, Boston, "Nazrul is one of the modern poets who has had a significant effect on the 20th century, and will have an even wider and more profound effect on the 21st century. His views on politics, aesthetics, ethics, religion, human liberation and development, globalism, the nature of citizenship, and, human nature and possibilities, bear directly on some of the most important themes that have become the defining attributes of where we as human beings (especially after September 11, 2001) are tending and the collective ends we are seeking".

Significance of 2006 Nazrul Symposium. U-CONN. Storrs, Connecticut

Once again, with our initiative & guidance the 2006 Nazrul Symposium was held at the University of Connecticut (UConn), in conjunction with the Asian American Studies Institute, the Asian American Cultural Center of UConn., and the Bangladeshi community of greater Hartford.

In his opening statement professor Roger Buckley said "We gather here this morning, thanks to UConn., and Bangladeshi community, to celebrate the creative artistry & humanity of Kazi Nazrul Islam, the national poet of Bangladesh. Writing in Bengali, Persian, Sanskrit, and Hindi, he explored the universal themes of love, hardship, freedom, poverty, revolution, music and religion.

What better time to explore his work and ideas at a time when the world is increasingly beset by sectarian violence, the misguided belief in military interventionism as a solution to problems, and those who speak falsely of Islam. What better time to remember Nazrul, who reminds us of our humanity who was a true and unfettered voice of Islam and, who also reminds us that there is no distinction between ends and means".

Dr. Phillip Austin, President of the University of Connecticut welcomed the audience and then introduced the chief guest, his Excellency, Shamsheer Mobin Chowdhury, BB, the Ambassador of Bangladesh to the USA. The Ambassador delivered a powerful & persuasive speech, identifying Nazrul's contributions to world literature as well as the significance of the symposium. He then urged everyone to continue to pursue the ultimate goal, that of securing widespread global recognition of this extraordinary poet.

Dr. Gulshan Ara was the chief architect of this symposium. She spoke to the audience, detailing the background and the history of Nazrul Conference and its goals. She also said that it is our moral duty to see that the goals are met in a timely manner, and further stated, "I will remain optimistic and hopeful for poet Kazi Nazrul Islam and our goals for furthering his cause, the cause of peace and social justice in our gorgeous but frail planet."

Professor Winston E. Langley was the keynote speaker. His powerful and compelling speech coupled with the strong determination of the symposium organizers and with total support of Prof. Roger N. Buckley, the Director of Asian American Studies Institute and Ms. Angela Rola, the

Director of the Asian American Cultural Center **resulted in the establishment of yet another Kazi Nazrul Islam Endowment in a prominent university on the East Coast. A bridge was built to link the two universities, one in the East, UCONN & and one in the West, CSUN., which would allow an additional opportunity to practice Nazrul's literature in a coordinated way.**

In her closing remark, Ms. Rola thanked the audience and said, "It has been a true pleasure to host this important event". She promised more awareness publicities and frequent lectures on Nazrul at the University of Connecticut.

Without a doubt, Prof. Roger Buckley and Ms. Angela Rola were the main forces behind this important & historic achievement. Their strong testimonies on Nazrul's contributions and his legacy were true to life, influential & persuasive, to say the least. The daylong symposium was a stunning success.

Another influential & notable person, Prof. Rafiqul Islam, renowned Nazrul Professor from Bangladesh, with his long-term vision and genuine support for the promotion of Kazi Nazrul Islam, also provided tremendous energy toward the achievement of our goal. Without his in depth knowledge and enthusiastic guidance, none of these would have been possible so soon.

The first lecture on Nazrul was held at the University of Connecticut in 2007. Once again, Professor Winston Langley was selected to deliver the lecture. He spoke eloquently and described the importance of Nazrul's message in today's context, stunning the audience with his fascinating and captivating oratory. The book signing by Prof. Winston Langley was another highlight of the program, during which he signed his newly published book, **Kazi Nazrul Islam: the Voice of Poetry & the Struggle for Human Wholeness** for the attendees. He also announced that he is currently authoring two other books on Nazrul.

Winston E. Langley is Associate Chancellor and Professor of Political Science and International Relations at the University of Massachusetts Boston. He was, from 2000 to the summer of 2007, the Associate Provost of the University. He earned his Ph.D. in International Relations from Howard University in 1969. In 1974, he earned a J.D. from Suffolk University. He has taught for over 37 years at collegiate or university level, with an emphasis on global order. One of his favorite courses is that of World Politics through film and literature. He specializes in international law, with human rights law as his particular area of research, and he has published widely in his field.

Professor Langley became interested in Kazi Nazrul Islam in 1996 when he attended a dinner with musical entertainment at a Bangladeshi friend's home in Boston. His interest in Nazrul grew after this first-time opportunity to hear some of the composers (Nazrul) songs, as performed by local singers at the party. As the two of us offered a couple of nazrul's songs along with their English translations, he was further inspired. He immediately began to collect books from us & other friends and commenced with extensive research on Nazrul. Since then, he has been seriously involved in research on Nazrul and has regularly attended Nazrul conferences and symposiums held in North America.

Prof. Langley's book was edited by notable Nazrul scholar, Prof. Rafiqul Islam, who has been a great supporter of our cause from the onset & involved in assisting our efforts in every possible way.

The book was published by the Nazrul Institute of Bangladesh in 2007.

To obtain a copy of his book please contact: Email: coopbks@uconn.edu / Store Tel. 860-486-5027.

"Kazi Nazrul Islam the Bengali Poet, came to us like a beam of light with a new direction. He was committed heart and soul to the cause of liberating those who were shackled and imprisoned by a false and decadent social system. To those who he aroused by the cadence of his words and music, he is still a presence, evergreen and immortal"
Taranga of USA

AN URGENT APPEAL: *Kazi Nazrul Islam's literary & artistic output is an immensely prolific and rich cultural treasure. It must be shared with the people of the world. It is our moral duty to make sure that the literary community of the world recognizes our national poet and his valuable work is duly credited in western educational institutions. We need to raise almost \$100,000.00 for the Nazrul Endowment at UCONN., but, we still have a long way to go. The larger the amount the more lectures will be sponsored., which will generate more publicity in the literary communities. It is only through our concerted effort that we can ensure the success of establishing global recognition of Kazi Nazrul Islam. Such is our goal. Let us all join hands in this noble cause and do what we can to establish his name worldwide. The success of this endeavor would be monumentally rewarding indeed. He has given us too much, let us give him what little we can. Without your involvement, support & help, we cannot reach our goal.*

Kindly donate generously (your donation is fully tax deductible)
and make your checks payable to: UCONN Foundation/ Nazrul Endowment: (East Coast)
Mail your donations to: Angela Rola, Director, Asian American Cultural Center, 2110 Hillside Road, Unit-3186 University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT-06269, Tel. 203-486-0830/angela.rola@uconn.edu
For more information, please contact us at: 203-484-2546 /203-687-7691

You may also send donations to: CSUN Foundation /Nazrul Endowment (West Coast)
Mail it to: California State University, 18111 Nordhoff St., Northridge, CA-91330-8252
Attn: Prof. Phyllis Herman, Department of Religious Studies
For Information, Please Contact Mr. Shiper Chowdhury at 805-551-0392

Future Agenda:

An International Conference on Nazrul will be held in June 2008 at Nazrul-Burns Center, Glasgow University, Scotland. Professor Winston E. Langley received invitation to attend & deliver the keynote speech. Prof. Zashem Ahmed is the principal organizer. He can be contacted for further information by phone: Res. 0141-557-0975 or cell. 07949-769-052.

The 2nd Nazrul Lecture in 2008 at U-CONN. The date will be determined soon.

A Proposal for a Nazrul Symposium is waiting to be submitted to the University of Massachusetts,
Boston. The university, in cooperation with the Bangladeshi community of New England, would host the proposed conference.

The Nazrul Institute, in conjunction with the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB) and the Bangla Academy has set forth a proposal for an additional international conference on Nazrul

to be held in Bangladesh. Though the date is yet to be determined, the institute hopes to invite Nazrul scholars from USA, Canada and UK to this event.

During his recent visit to Bangladesh, the Executive Director of Taranga of California; Mr. Shiper Chowdhury met with Prof. Rafiqul Islam, Pro-Vice chancellor of ULAB, Mr. Syed M. Shahed, Director General of Bangla Academy, and Mr. M. Abul Kasem, Director General of Nazrul Institute. The principal purpose of the meeting was to discuss the details of a proposed international conference in Bangladesh, as well as the development of the Nazrul endowments at CSUN and UCONN. Mr. Chowdhury was assured of their full cooperation & support. Later, his TV interviews in Bangladesh, conducted by Prof. Rafiqul Islam also revealed a lot about Nazrul's research activities in North America.

--

Last but not the least, we would like to congratulate the Chairman and the Members of the NANCC, as well as the Organizers of the 11th North America Nazrul Conference and wish them a grand success. We would also like to thank the editors of "Nightingale".

Gulshan Ara.

Chairperson: Nazrul Endowment Research Studies Group, California State University, Northridge. (CSUN)
Chairperson: Nazrul Research Committee, University of Connecticut (UConn)
Founding Member: Nazrul Endowment at CSUN & UConn.
Creative Director: Taranga of USA
Founding Member & Ex-Chairperson: North America Nazrul Conference Committee (NANCC)

Kazi M. Belal.

Chairman: Fund Raising Committee, Nazrul Endowment at University of Connecticut (UConn)
Founding Member: Nazrul Endowment at CSUN & UConn.
Founding Member: North America Nazrul Conference Committee (NANCC)
Executive Director: Taranga of USA



Planning to Visit Dhaka?

Now there is help available for all visitors at the Airport.

Help Line Ltd., a newly established private company (airport assistance with special care) will receive you as you get off the airplane and clear you through customs & immigration. Their representative will also collect your baggage and then take you to your transportation outside the airport area. **Only for taka 400.00 to 600.00.**

Help Line Ltd. also offers a comfortable lounge inside the airport area. While you sit and relax at their lounge, the **Help Line Ltd.** representatives will do the work for you.

Help Line Ltd. offers a modest, experienced team to extend personalized and efficient services to the valued passengers with check in, check out, immigration, private lounge, baggage handling & carrying and meet their special needs in the airport during arrival & departure.

Help Line Ltd. Services:

Please contact us for the following special service prices.

Welcome & Reception with Flower
Left Luggage Facilities
Special Service for Group Tour (arrival & departure)
Assistance with Customs & Immigration & Baggage Services
Special Services for Children, Senior Citizens & Disabled Persons
Helicopter & Ambulance Service
Ticket Reconfirmation & Hotel Reservation Service
Transportation & Limousine Service
Internet, Phone & Photocopy Service

(All services are designed in accordance with IATA & ICAO regulations)

Give us an opportunity to help you, you will not be disappointed, I guarantee.
Please contact us ahead of your trip & ask for Faisal Karim Joney or a representative.

Help Line Ltd. Airport Assistance with special care

**24 hour hotline: (011-8802) 895-5725 / 893-1185
(011-88) 0193-199-199 / 0193-665-544**

The First Overseas Branch of Bishwo Shahitto Kendro in New York

JOIN THE UNIQUE KENDRO ASHORES (DISCUSSIONS) AND BE A PART OF WORLD CULTURES



BISHWO SHAHITTO KENDRO

world literature center



বিশ্বসাহিত্য কেন্দ্র

WELCOMES YOU TO ITS REGULAR MONTHLY DISCUSSIONS ON

FILM

First Saturdays of every month

CLASSICAL LITERATURE

Last Saturdays of every month

CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE

Second Saturdays of every third month



MUSIC

Third Saturdays of every third month

Tel: 917.731.5952 ♦ 917.731.8344 ♦ Fax: 718.732.0785

email: kendrousa@yahoo.com web: www.kendrousa.com

75-22, 37 AVE #303 • JACKSON HEIGHTS • NEW YORK 11372

The
Nightingale
বুলবুল



North America Nazrul Conference Committee
(NANCC)

উত্তর আমেরিকা নজরুল কনফারেন্স কমিটি

সংখ্যা-৪ : মে ২৪, ২০০৮