

'Operation Brain Death': A Psychological Autopsy

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*[What proof do we have as a nation that we are not already dead? With the rigor mortise that has set in – in how we wish to live our life and perceive our future, and unquestionably accept the inevitable – as far as I am concerned, **'Bangladesh dead'** is already a foregone conclusion. Perceptions for us are not reality and therefore funeral rites are all that we truly deserve as a nation. Destiny?]*

Was it a surgeon from the Bangladesh Army's Medical Corps that coined the term 'Operation Clean Heart' just over a month back?

'Unimaginative' was my reaction when I first heard it as no 'patriotic Bengalee' had demanded a politically correct translation – which would work out to a very comical '**Hridh jontro porishkar obhijaan**' – however when custodial death's became 'heart attacks' – and the notoriously opinionated leader of the Opposition – said that the Government of the day was 'clinically dead' my suspicions were not entirely confirmed.

I was left to wonder if the country has somehow been taken over by the medical profession? I couldn't have been more wrong. It has been taken over by a bunch of quacks!

Having said that – what in the love of God are we trying to 'clean'? The heart? Medically that is impossible. Cardiac or 'heart' cleansing amounts to clearing blocked arteries and valves – a bypass at best – giving the ailing a 'fighting chance' to chug along a couple more years. Transplantation of 'hearts' have not proved too successful and therefore not in vogue either. And somehow – in all our self-righteous verbosity in newspaper columns, or Internet websites and forums or least of all our prosaic tribute to our alter ego in 'Letter's to the Editor' in our 'national dailies' – not even the medical profession have come forward to correct us that mere 'heart attacks' alone do not contribute to death, i.e., a person is considered 'dead and gone' once brain or cerebral death has occurred. 'Clinically dead' - we have not heard of the heart and lungs machine either have we?

For doctors, I beg you pardon – surgeons – a heart is therefore not a heart but a lump of flesh and the 'heart' as we seem to understand or prefer to refer to it in our culture, is actually the 'mind', infact the intangible sixth sense – and the 'mind' for the Bengalee resides in the..... your guess is as good as mine - **HEART!**

The talk of death is depressingly terrifying – and when it occurs under ‘questionable circumstances’ as it did for two dozen people thus far during the Army crackdown, the thought that overwhelms and immobilizes us is in all fairness is - ‘it could be ME next’! But will it?

What proof do we have as a nation that we are not already dead? With the rigor mortise that has set in – in how we wish to live our life and perceive our future, and unquestionably accept the inevitable – as far as I am concerned, ‘**Bangladesh dead**’ is already a foregone conclusion. Perceptions for us are not reality and therefore funeral rites are all that we truly deserve as a nation. Destiny?

The equation for ‘death merchants’ in our political heirarchy in Dhaka albeit the rest of the country – has by providence turned a complete three hundred and sixty-degree. They have come face to face with a chilling reality. ‘It could be US next!’ and hence this incessant hullabaloo of ‘human rights abuse’, ‘the Army should not overstay their welcome’ and as if that is not enough – the much besotted expression ‘neutrality’ – or else they will not be ‘tolerated’.

But wait a minute. Has everybody lapsed into eternal amnesia?

How long back was it when we heard a ‘leader of the people’ screaming ‘ten dead bodies to avenge a single death’ and the ‘preparation of *lishti*’ (list) of perceived enemies? Have our ‘human rights defenders’ gone into tactical hibernation? Will somebody remind **Hasina Binte Mujib** that her utterances were neither ‘democratic’ ‘neutral’ or worthy of a ‘human right crusader’ – and that the nation as such could not ‘tolerate’ her – and the legacy of that hatred, that intolerance for what she say's or thinks about our future, continues. That the people at large are conceivably bored stiff and have therefore no time for her unintelligible and petty diatribes

The Army’s ‘neutrality’ again is an issue that puzzles me. Will somebody please tell me if the Army is supposed to be neutral to the political parties or to the people?

If it is for the political parties, and we juggle numbers in the arrest count or body count, or whatever – in all fairness the Army has been ‘neutral’ to the Awami League and NOT the BNP – the party in power. When we consider that of the 2000 plus people arrested, close to 300 are activist of the Awami League and out of the 24 ‘heart attack’ deaths – 23 were activist of the BNP – what may we surmise?

Then again we have forgotten that Awami Leaguer’s are sacrosanct have we not – the ‘spirit of liberation war’ walaz – the hyper patriots, who have through their actions and utterances transformed Bangladesh at every given opportunity into a ‘family fiefdom’ and would have it no other way. The see no evil, do not evil,

Speak no evil, devils! Arresting them cannot be an act of 'neutrality' – or am I being wrong here?

The long and short of the Army crackdown will be debated for days to come – but at the crux of the whole situation is national security – that has been badly compromised due to the incessant adulterous relationship between the politico-mafiosi-police-media nexus. The ultimate price being paid by no one else but the PEOPLE – who unfortunately do not have any other option but to vote this criminal quartet combine to power every couple of years.

Now why the media?

Simply because they have been nothing more than an extension of the establishment of the day – have ruefully taken sides with partisan bias and have been beneficiaries one way or the other, of all kind of 'throwaways' and 'giveaways' - achieved not by the power of the almighty pen, but by sheer blackmail, sycophancy and an inherent talent at never questioning the status quo – because they are so much a part of it.

The media has done everything within its power to keep our future doggedly behind with the 'terrorist' and 'godfather's' they have created through their routine and relentless eulogizing, are excess baggage that we cannot easily shed off.

Try as we might we are in a Catch 22 situation.

Don't go heavy on the 'terrorist' and you have murder mayhems, and Bahinis of this or that 'shontrashi' taking over your neighborhood, where your wife and sister could be raped, your children could be way laid, assaulted and stabbed, and where 'gunmen' will enter your premises and extort money at the pain of death – and you can do bloody well NOTHING about it – because the police will not take your case, because the local ward commissioner will not come 'to pay his respects' because it is his 'boys' that have committed the crime in the first place – when human rights is nothing more than a mirage that blur our foggy vision further, and where the media will do a tokenistic 'cry along' and give 'intellectuals' on their payroll the right to ejaculate their impotent debris on the ritualistic sob story – and all we are supposed to do is stand up to Hitleristic 'nationalist deification' in rapt attention under our flag and tell the world 'Amar Sonar Bangla Ameer tomay Bhalobashi' (Golden Bengal I love thee)?

Have we taken leave of our senses?

Anywhere else in the world – people have a choice to decide between the better of two 'evils'. In Bangladesh it's rather monophonic – it has to be miserable low life terrorist and their political Godfathers and their 'leaders' – or nothing at all. The Army is 'evil' because 'remember they killed my Dad in 1975'. 'The Army

cannot be neutral - remember what they did to us in Polls 2001'. Who the hell cares?

'If canines cannot stomach pure ghee, too bad we Bengalees cannot stomach democracy' – again being a straightforward native proverb – and that's the way things have been in thirty-one God forsaken years!

And as if all of the above is not enough – the party in 'position' have not yet set their house in order in over a year. While the 'opposition; will harangue day in and day out the ludicrous propaganda of Talibanisation and the 'Islamist fundamentalist' within the alliance calling the shots – the entire purpose of the Army crackdown whittles down to no LOVE for the Bangladesh, but the square diktats of the IMF the World Bank and 'donor communities' – and their urge to see good governance and transparency.

In other words had it not been for Mr.George Bush – we might still have had to contend with the politico backed terrors in the elusive and bizarrely named Kala Jahangir's and Dhola Munshi's and Picchi Hannan's and the Murgi Milon's et al – while he deals with Osama Bin Laden?

No religion in the word tolerates extremism, murder, corruption or nepotism – the Koran, the book of Muslim Bengalees in Bangladesh being no exception. But it had to be George Bush's will and 'nodding approval' of the US to get the current Army crackdown going to rectify the current situation - Holy Book's conveniently forgotten – Allah, God and Bhagwan combine lives in Washington D.C doesn't H/he?

However there is still hope at the end of the tunnel.

The Army crackdown is against 'crime' – which is a far more all-encompassing term than 'terror'. I have often wondered as to the difference between the Shanti Bahini 'terrorist' in Chittagong and the Seven Star 'terrorist' in Dhaka. Since we are having this rather insalubrious round of debate over the 'legality' of the Army crackdown – can somebody educate me as to the difference between the two?

How is it that we could use the Army in cracking down on Shanti Bahini years ago – but cannot do the same for the Dhaka 'boys'?

Answer : Shanti Bahini had the overt backing from a 'friendly neighboring country' and we needed the Army to 'sort them traitors out'. In some round about way – and the all time 'low' that has been reached in relations with our 'neighbor' since the 'change of Government' – my hunch is that we are in the midst of an undeclared WAR.

What after all is the definition of a 'terrorist'? Somebody that uses weapons illegally to kill, maim, threaten and extort is not only doing it against the people – it is an act of high treason against the state – punishable by death.

The Army crackdown therefore will only meet with REAL successes if we design legislation's that sets into place Dead or Alive warrants, and to shoot at sight anybody that is considered armed and dangerous. This can all be put into practice by giving a last surrender ultimatum to LISTED terrorist – if such a list at all exist.

Last if not the least the MOST important question from **Hasina Binte Mujib** that no one has answered: – 'how come not a single Jamaat or Shibir activists are getting arrested?

Answer : Well they are smarter that we reckon. All they need to do is shave their 'ugly beards', get rid of their turbans and dresses – quickly change on to denim and sneakers – and walk quietly past any Army checkpoint – without being questioned!

Cheeky but Simple!

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"To revolt against injustice, is justified"