

Femme Poem

Bidhan Chandra Pal

Translated from the original Bengali
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Gronthik Prokashon

Dedicated to

The development of a nation can only be accelerated when men and women together as a whole population contribute. To end the violence against women, men have to be there with them in each step. Men have to realize that they cannot progress by exploiting, neglecting and discriminating against women. The men who are there in this good fight with women as well as the strong and brave women of tomorrow, this is dedicated to them...

Translator's Note

There is a lot to be said and even more to be listened when it comes to women. Hence, I have tried to solicit as much assistance as possible from them. Hafsa Siddiqua, this would have been impossible without you. I am grateful. I am also grateful to Nawshin Nawal Mridha for the last moment assist. My mother, always being my inspiration and taking care of me. To all the women in my life who have shaped the man that I have become, thank you. Maya Angelou and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie have been my recent literary influences.

Last but not least, Bidhan Chandra Pal, once again trusting me with this great task and bearing with me every time that I had tested his patience, my gratitude to him knows no bound. May there be more sensitive and sensible people so there be a better world for men and women alike.

1 February, 2023
Dhaka

Nafis Salman

Foreword

Half of the population of Bangladesh is women. Our development depends on their development. In our social structure girls face neglect and discrimination right after their birth. The socio and economic discrimination along with mental abuse disrupt their sense of security. May it be education, health, nutrition or employment opportunity, our women, especially rural women are very much neglected.

This discrimination is not a recent development but has existed for decades. The stories have been depicted in folklore and relics. The tendency has become a habit. Patriarchy has created a chokehold for the women in society. We tend to disregard women habitually or subconsciously. Our society is structured in such manner that creates this discrimination.

Home or work, everywhere women face discrimination. That is why equal rights and opportunities cannot be secured for them. The result of this discrimination is frightening which is reflected in person, family, society and the whole nation.

But it is true that women have progressed much in the last hundred years all over the world. Social, financial, political, cultural, literature, science, technology- there is no field where women are not contributing. Challenging professions such as medicine, engineering, police, defense, air force, navy and government non-government organizations- even if the number is small, they are there.

But in terms of social and political empowerment, the women of Bangladesh are still falling behind.

Desired level of socio-political empowerment for women is still not achieved. Whereas a nation's speed of progress depends on women's progress. If women become educated, healthy and join the workforce then we will get a productive and dynamic generation. Therefore, to continue the progress of women, women must be connected with modern education, training, science and technology at a higher rate.

It is an absolute necessity to clear the obstacles on the way of women empowerment if we want to keep the progress of women steady and create an equal society. For this, we have to bring education, science and technology within women's reach and secure women's economic empowerment. And to secure women's economic empowerment we must stop child marriage and secure the opportunity of higher education; to improve skill we need to provide long and short term skill-building training programs; to stop sexual harassment and acid terrorism we need to unite to create a strong social defense; equal wages must be established; women's contribution in the household should be counted in the gross national income, we must ensure women's social security and positive environment in workplace; we need to take special care of girl children so the seed of a more developed Bangladesh remains protected.

Commemorating the language movement of 52, this book consists of 52 poems. Through this book and its poems the importance of women, their lives, their contribution, their current situation, hopes and dreams etc. have been depicted. Historical and traditional importance

and qualities of women girl and infant girls have been depicted as well. Not only that- many poems have depicted the chant of women freedom and roared against corruption. The poems have given the birth to new life and brought the news of age. The hope is that, billions of life will be electrified in the unifying message of comradery.

Many have assisted and inspired to make this publication possible. The most who has contributed is my wife Dalia Das. I am thankful to her from the bottom of my soul. 'NariKabbo' was published in the Amar Ekushey Boimela from Agamee Prakashani in February 2019 and received many accolades. Not only in East Bengal, this has received much praise in West Bengal as well. A few poems from the book has been recited there and published in an audio album. Young and talented Mr. Nafis Salman has indebted me by taking the responsibility to translate my poems. Through his effort the appeal of this book will cross boundaries and reach new frontiers and hearts- what more can I ask? In the end, the way Mr. Razzak Rubel has taken the responsibility to publish this book after hearing it being translated has not only surprised me but also increased my respect for him. I am endlessly grateful to him. Last but not least, if these poems appeal to the readers then all our effort is a success.

1 February, 2023
Dhaka

Bidhan Chandra Pal

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The plan unknown

It had been raining relentless since late night...
I fell asleep listening to the rhythm of rain!
When I woke up- it was very early;
I could still hear the rain,
I got down from my bed with sleep in my eyes
Outside I gazed intently, and saw-
The mesmerizing dance of the rain;
Rolling down from the tin shed, between the leaves,
Down to the feather of a drenched bird,
Rain is falling- relentless, restless...!

The stove is flooded;
The straws beside are wet,
A little further, wet by the rain
The cock and hens are silent;
Who know why they are so upset!

I stood a long time
Gradually light began to appear from the dark;
I felt- day has come,
Children and husband need to go to school and office
There isn't much time;
Suddenly saw our pet dog-
As if it spent the whole night in peaceful slumber
On the stump of the big mango tree on the yard,
And now the whole yard is flooded,
Realizing it, dipping a little
It went up into the balcony of the other room;
I looked at the stove again, I thought-
I have to find another way, I remembered-
The backup stove I bought a while ago;
Finally, after much effort cooking was done,
Breakfast, lunch, tiffin for school and office...!

So much planning is done insentiently like this one,
So many thoughts are at work- night and day,
In the hope of little love, peace and happiness;
While our time here on earth decreases,
As memories increase, and the future gets bigger.

Ominous Shadow

As if a thousand needles
Are piercing my head-
Her acid burnt face whenever I close my eyes
I can't stand it anymore.
The face at which I looked at
While I laughed, played, danced all day
That face is now acid-burnt
The monsters, the hyenas are laughing;
Swallowing bottles after bottles
But has anything changed?
Man is supposed to evolve
But they are probably the only ones
Disgrace in the name of man,
If they are called animals
Animals would be offended.
God has given them human's shape
That's true,
But in sense and sensitivity
They are
Filthy, repugnant and low of the lowest.