

FATHER: A SYMBOL OF SACRIFICE AND PILLAR OF STRENGTH

By Manzar Imam

On 14 April, 2019 my father Mr Mujibur Rahman passed away in Mehdingar village of Purnea, Bihar. Nothing unusual for millions of people around who see many people die every day. But for me, like many who have lost their father, it is one of the most shocking and devastating experiences of life as a son.

Since my senses developed I have known what death means and how people who lose their near and dear ones bemoan the loss. But there exists a huge difference between a personal experience and an experience of seeing others going through a similar kind of experience. Here personal is never political or public, no pun intended to friends fighting for feminist causes.

Thousands of people die every day but they hardly leave us with that experience that we go through when we lose any of our own family members. Our parents top that list. Maybe parents have a similar experience when any of their own sons or daughters passes away in front of them.

Death to me takes away from man all possibilities. It leaves no scope for either regret, repent or reform. Is it an end in itself or the beginning, is left to the philosophers and theologians to argue. However, the loss that a son or a daughter suffers with his or her parental demise cannot be measured on any scale. What possibly can be done is to keep up the good work and earn the departed a good reputation.

There is hardly any child who is not scolded or rebuked, at least in the Asian Continent and more specifically in the Sub-Continent, by either of his parents. These scolds are filled with love and care in order for them to take right steps in life. Most children don't like being scolded. However, their true value is known when one loses one's parent/s. Then no matter how much one yearns for those chides and scolds one never gets them again shrouded with the same care and love.

In the basic unit of society called family, the role of a father carries a lot of significance. He is a role model, a guide, a lover, a provider, a teacher and fighter for his children. No one in a true sense can occupy that place which a father does.

Some fathers are famous, some make their children famous. In both cases the role they play sets society mostly in a positive direction.

It is unfortunate that some of us forget the sacrifices of our parents and leave them in the lurch in their old age. This is the worst kind of injustice that any society can think of.

Children either born orphan or orphaned at a tender age suffer immeasurably. The accounts of such children are often horrible. They are fortunate who have their parents alive to guide and provide for them till they mature enough to stand on their own. It is therefore the responsibility of the youth to respect their aging parents and to provide for them without shouting at them because their parents did the same when they were children.

Every father wants to see his child in a better or at least equal position that he has. What I am today is largely because my father wished that for me. He could have chosen to send me to work to fetch some money which could have eased his hardship-filled life but he decided to make me a better and an educated person.

It is now my duty to also see the world with the perspective of my departed father and enlighten it with the light of education, humbleness and wisdom of a man who wasn't lucky enough to even pass 8th grade but had the courage to provide each of his children with great literacy and a zeal to make their lives better.

I can hardly hold my tears back as I write that my father is no more but our fathers live longer than our ephemeral existence because of the objectives they set and the sacrifices they make. I miss you Abbu!

Bio

The author is a Ph.D. Candidate at the Academy of International Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. He is also doing an online program "Contending Modernities" of the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, USA.