Chaper : V

Essays of Mujtaba Ali

Any short prose that which presents the subject matter through discussion or reveals any specific viewpoint or extracting the context latent in the matter helps the readers to achieve a decision through logical approach is generally called 'Prabandha' (Essay). The words like 'Nibandha', 'Sandarbha', 'Prastab' etc. do synchronize with the word 'Prabandha' in Bengali. However, the word 'Nibandha' is widely in practice. In case of the word 'Prabandha' the English word 'essay' is used as its equivalent expression. Two kinds of essays are mentioned in English—formal essay and informal essay or familiar or personal essay. So far the formal essay is concerned, the essayist keeping his control over the subject matter indifferently analyses the matter deeply by means of his arguments, and considerations. We may call it a serious essay. And in the second kind of essay, the author without maintaining any 'formal' relationship, wants to come in close contact with readers. Whatsoever serious the matter may be— but there is no question for the style of expression being light. There may not be enough data, but truth is the vital point. Bankimchandra's 'Kamalākānter Daptar' or Rabindranath's 'Bicitra Prabandha' are the glaring examples in the regard. This form was introduced by Montaigne of France. We have its expression in the works Charles Lamb, Hazlitt, Chesterton, Virginia Woolf of England. Sayed Mujtaba Ali also belongs to the second kind of essay-group. Of course, it is to be admitted that Mujtaba was equally apt in writing the serious essays.

We have to say something more on Mujtaba's essays. Mujtaba pre-
sented lightly many a serious matter through his own style of humour. Though information after information has deluged his writings—but the actual matter never seemed to have been attacked with mere information. The style is simple, but inner matter is full of significance. Many people considering the light style of Mujtaba wanted to judge the writings calling them as mere ‘belles letters’. That is, many people hold an idea that a humorous work can never be an ‘essay’ in the true sense of the term; and essay is nothing but a prose work which happens to be insipid and loaded with just some kind of philosophical thoughts. Sunil Gangopadhyay passed his remark over the matter in this way:

“আলী সাহেবের বিভিন্ন পত্র-পত্রিকায় যে অসংখ্য ছোট ছোট লেখা লিখেছেন, সেগুলির নাম দেওয়া হয়েছে সমারচনা। আমার মতে, এই নামটি খুবই ভুল। তিনি যা লিখেছেন, সেগুলি অসাধারণ প্রবন্ধ। যেহেতু সেগুলি আমাদের পড়তে ভালো লাগে, কিংবা মজা পাই, কখনো একলা হেসে উঠি, তাই কি তা গুলো প্রবন্ধ হতে পারে না?

...এক সময় এমন অবস্থা দেখেছিলি, যখন যে লেখা পড়তে ইচ্ছেই করে না তারই নাম ছিল প্রবন্ধ। সৈয়দ মুজতাবা আলীহী প্রবন্ধের সেই অকাল মৃত্যুদণ্ড থেকে বাঁচিয়েছেন।”

Considering all these aspects, we may classify the essays of Mujtaba primarily into two kinds from the angle of characterisation:

- a. Serious essays
- b. Light essays

The subject-matter is prominent in the first one and its realistic side is a matter of consideration. In the second one the biggest factor is the writer’s personal state of mind and thoughts. In the first category the main strength of Mujtaba is his logical reasonings and analytical considerations; and in the second category, Mujtaba by means of pleasingly excellent language was lost in self-absorbed thoughts even over the trifle matters; and in many occasions it turned to be variegated ones.

Even on the basis of subject-matter, Mujtaba’s essays can be classified
into following categories:

a. Language and literature.
b. Political & Social.
c. Rabindranath and Visva-Bharati.

and d. Miscellaneous.

Besides these, he wrote on religion, manners and behaviours, Hitler, cultural history, memoirs etc. These writings are included in his ‘Pancatantra’, ‘Mayurkanthi’, ‘Tuni Mem’, ‘Dhūpchāya’, ‘Caturanga’, ‘Bahu Bicitra’, ‘Bārababu’, ‘Raja Ujir’, Du-Hārā, ‘Bhabaghure O Anyanya’, ‘Kato-nā Asūjāl’ etc. Moreover, a major part of essays are in the 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th volumes of his works; and many more important essays yet to be in book-form. “Purba Pākistāner Raṣṭrabhāṣa” and “Paribartane Aparibartaniya” are published separately.

The writings on Rabindranath and Visva-Bharati are collectively published in later time in a book called ‘Gurudev O Satiniketan’.

A. Essays on language and literature:

We have noticed in the biographical part, Mujtaba started writing essays during his student life in Santiniketan. So far the available source, his first printed work was also an essay—“Bangla Bhaṣay Arabi-Phārsi Ṣabda”. 3 It was published in a monthly named ‘Masik Mohammadi’ (Paus, 1339 BS). The subject of the first printed essay was language. We have got many a remarkable work of his on language and literature. He has studied language from different angles. First, we have realised his deep sense of love towards his mother-tongue and about it he has written quite a number of essays. In spite of his knowledge in many languages, he has repeatedly sung the glory of his mother tongue in different occasions. He has composed many essays of
different length from 1946 to 1973, but whose focal point was love for one’s own language. And the same point has been elaborately discussed in many essays on state language. No other writer than Mujtaba wrote so elaborately about the state languages of Bangladesh and India in Bengali literature.

Mujtaba’s essays on language may be primarily classified into three categories— | a. Mother-tongue b. State language and c. Grammatical discussion of language.

Mujtaba contributed a few essays to the Ananda Bazar Patrika’s ‘Ray Pithaurar Column’ and ‘Saptaparni’ in 1953 on mother tongue and the language itself. The anthologies go by “Engragi Banam Matribhasa” and “Bhasa O Janasaanyog”. Mujtaba more widely elaborated the matter in the succeeding period in ‘Bhasā’ (Published in ‘Pancatantra’ Column, ‘Des’, 4th November 1961) and ‘Bhasā’ (‘Panctantra, part II, ‘Des’, 5th and 12th March 1966 respectively). Through all these things be showed that by means of an easily intelligible language a nation can develop itself. Ignoring one’s own language or an intelligible language to all and sundry is nothing but a suicidal step. Mujtaba even brought forth the religious background in this way:

“আমার মনে হয় বৌদ্ধ ও জৈন ধর্মের পতনের অন্যতম কারণ মেদিনী জন্ম নিল, যেদিন বৌদ্ধ ও জৈন পণ্ডিতেরা দেশজ ভাষা ভাগ করে সংস্কৃতে শাস্ত্রোচ্চান্ত আরম্ভ করলেন। দেশের সঙ্গে যৌনসূত্র ছিল হয়ে গেল; ... পৃথিবী জুড়ে অরও বহ বিরাট আদ্যান্ত হয়ে গিয়েছে—পণ্ডিত ভাষাকে সম্পূর্ণ উপেক্ষা করে, মাতৃভাষার উপর পরিপূর্ণ নির্ভর করে।”

Mujtaba wrote quite a good number of write-ups in smaller size under the heading “Alpe Tuṣṭa” in his book ‘Rājā Ujir’. Mujtaba let us know upholding the statement of the then Minister of Education Triguna Sen:

“পৃথিবীর কোন সভ্য দেশ সাধাের দেশে মাতৃভাষা ভিত্তিতে অন্য ভাষার মাধ্যমে শিক্ষাদান করা হয়?”
Mujtaba's inclination to mother tongue got its expression through his concern for the state language. Mujtaba wrote in the 'Ananda Bāzār Patrika' in 1946 under the pen name 'Satyapir' consequetively two articles in the "Ha-Ja-Ba-Ra-La' column (2nd and 9th March). It is to be kept in mind, the liberation of the country was knocking at the door then. So, a brotherly feeling was then strongly desired among the communities and provinces. Controversy was then at the peak as what would be the commonly acceptable language of a newly formed nation. The place of Hindi was almost confirmed as the state language of India. Mujtaba was thinking of a common script (alphabet), but the most important point to note here is that Mujtaba did not raise the question of Bengali being the state language of India. Mujtaba had his say over the mixed reaction that headed up in different circles over the state language—the introduction of regional language, that is, the mother tongue itself, and the country should be led adopting the language of the people as the medium of instruction.

Mujtaba expressed his views in 'Gaṇa Bhāṣā' :

"ইন্দিয়ার জন্ত আমাদের আদর্শ হচ্ছে যা যতই স্থানীয় ভাষা হয়; তাই তা তাঁর জন্য প্রশিক্ষিত ভাষা হয়ে যাওয়া চায়। ইংরেজি সে পথে অস্ত্র হয়ে আসের জমিয়ে বেছিয়ে দিয়ে আজ্ঞা যদি..."
In this very essay Mujtaba even advised that one must be taught in one's mother tongue atleast upto metric level. Of course, Mujtaba was not dead against of Hindi as the state language. He just commented that Hindi should not be forcefully imposed on the non-Hindi speaking provinces. It is noticeable here that Mujtaba craved that every community should flourish through its own language.

We know that serious fight developed over the issue of state language in between Bengali and Hindi. Mujtaba penned quite a number of essays on the state language in his ‘Pancatantra’ column. These were published in seven instalments in ‘Des’ from 30th June 1951 to 18th August 1951.

Arrangements were made at the official assistance in a well-planned manner for the publicity and spread of Hindi as the state language from 1949-50. Side by side, the movement was gathering momentum for the demand of Bengali as the state language in East Pakistan.

Mujtaba under the pen name ‘Ray Pithaura’ wrote a few essays on the mother tongue and the state language in ‘Ananda Bāzār Patrikā’ paying homage the martyrs of 21st February; and where he repeatedly urged that a greater unity and solidarity could be achieved through the spontaneous development of language and culture.

In many of his shorter write ups Mujtaba exposed his very concern. He wanted to express his views in “Pancatantra”, “Mābhai”, “Kono Guṇ Neī Tar”, “Jatiya Saṁghati”, “Bhāṣā” etc that the development of a nation would not be possible by means of imposing and outside language and discarding
the mother tongue and culture and tradition. He ventilated his views very clearly in “Kono Gun Nei Tar—”

“সর্বপ্রথমের সর্বপ্রচলিত সঙ্গে যদি আমাদের বহ ছায়ার হই প্রাদেশিক ভাষার মাধ্যমে সংঘটিত হয়, তবে অবজ্ঞাপূর্বক বিদ্যমানকালেও যারে না, এবং কেনেল মাত্র রাষ্ট্রভাষা শিক্ষায়ই সর্ব সমস্যার সমাধান হবে না।”

Citing the examples of Switzerland and Belgium, Mujtaba told that though we see an assemblage of many language in those countries, yet their national integrity is no less than any other country. But on the other hand, despite the oneness of religion, religion and other things, the Arabian countries are fragmented on many accounts. In the opinion of Mujtaba:

“কারণেই সংঘটির সমানে অন্য যেতে হবে। গুজরাটী, বাঙালী, হিন্দু, মুসলমান, সবই মিলে হিন্দী কর্তৃকই যে রাজার আমাদের জাতীয় সংঘটি গড়ে উঠবে, এ-দারাশা মেন না-করি!”

Mujtaba very candidly opened himself in “Bhāṣā” that he was a lover of Hindi and he had a long-standing relationship with that very language. Yet he considered that it was quite abortive to teach Hindi in every nook and corner of a vast country like India. India lives in her villages; and village is the life-breath of India. It is indeed a toughest effort to reach the people there without the mother tongue. It was done in this way during the British period by the rulers; as the rulers knew only English, and the listeners knew Bengali and other languages. The world of thoughts and feelings and emotions was quite different. At the ruling class began to learn the local language with much difficulty. So, Mujtaba believed that in order to maintain an unbroken relationship between the people and the state machinery:

“সেটি মাত্রভাষায় মারফতেই করতে হবে, অন্য কোন পাশা নেই, নেই, নেই।”

“Hatabhāgya Cāchār” is a different type of essay of Mujtaba. He looked
into the language problem here in a different way. The essay was published in 'Des' on 14th April of 1962. Eleven persons related to the movement for the Bengali language were killed in police firing on 19th May of 1961 in Silchar. The Barak Valley, that is the district of Cachar, is a part of greater Sylhet. The history of language, literature and culture is also very long. The partition of the country made Cachar an orphan. Now Cachar belongs to neither part. The Assamese chauvinism was then trying to introduce Assamese in every nook and corner of the State. As attempt was made but abortively to impose Assamese on the people of Cachar. Mujtaba commented that Cachar had always experienced the reverses of fate. Hence, Cachar seems to have been lying as an isolated part. Mujtaba opened that the forceful imposition of another language upon somebody is not new. There are many instances in the world. The Austrian royal authority in this way wanted to eliminate the Hungerean language. The cultural workers of Hungerey streamed out in the streets and created a fanatic feeling for the mother tongue. Thereafter wrote Mujtaba:

"ঐ-সভ্যতা সংক্রমণ হয় তার পিতা-পিতামাতার কাছ থেকে পেয়েছে, যার কল্যাণে সে সভ্য বল পৃথিবীতে দীপ্ত হয়, যাকে সে পরিপূর্ণ করে পিতৃপুরুষের কাছ থেকে অপমুক্ত হতে চায়—সে তার মাতৃভাষা।" 11

The facts that the protection and preservation of one’s own language and the flourishing of civilization and culture through it have been skilfully pictured in two of his essays on East Bengal. The first essay—“Pūrba Pākistānēr Rastraḥāṣā” was published in ‘Caturanga’ in two instalments and later on in book-form. The second one—“Bhaṣā Bāṅgla”, comparatively small in size was published in ‘Des’ under ‘Pancatantra’ column on 12th May, 1973. Mujtaba wrote in a letter regarding the first one.

“'পোলেমিক'-এ স্টার্টায়র বড়ই বাঙ্গা লাগে। এ যাবত আমি মাত্র একটি পোলেমিক
What Mujtaba told in his only Polimic, has its echo in the other published write-ups on the state language. To speak the truth, such self contained and facts-loaded writing was not then penned by any other person regarding the state language of East Pakistan. Mujtaba is second to none in this regard.

Religious fanaticism began overpowering a section of the Bengalee Muslim from the 19th Century, and in the succeeding period helped to support the linguistic conservativeness too. The movement for independence and the controversy and politics over the language of the sub-continent synchronizingly reached their respective climax. The fundamentalists by no means agreed to recognise Bengali as their language. The outstanding personalities like Nazrul Islam, Humayun Kabir, Muhammad Sahidullah that time thundered against such conspiracy. The Pakistani ruling class just on the pretext of ‘Dharma’ tried to force on Urdu in East Pakistan. All the right thinking persons mobilised wild protest against it through out East Bengal. Thus started the language movement in Bangladesh.

The subject took a different turn as soon as the country was partitioned (1947). Considering East Bengal as Muslim dominated land, it was handed over to communal force of Pakistan. At that time the chief instrument of communal force Mohammad Ali Jinnah delivering incendiary and rabble-rousing speeches organised openly an evil design against the Bangalees and their language. He made remarks in a public meeting in Dhaka on 21st March, 1948:

“আমার মতো আপনারা (বাঙালীরা) সকলেই এখানে বহিরাগত। বাঙালিদের আদি
অধিবাসী কারা? যারা এখন এদেশে বস করছে তারা নয়। কাজেই ‘আমরা বাঙালী বা সিক্কী বা
পাঠান বা পাঞ্জাবী’ একথা বলার প্রয়োজন কি। না, আসলে আমরা সকলেই হলাম মুসলমান
...মুসলমানদের মধ্যে বিভেদ সৃষ্টির উদ্দেশেই ভাবার প্রশ্ন তোলা হয়েছে।”

12
That is, Jinnah wanted to spread seeds of religious identity among the Bengalee Muslims defying their linguistic and cultural identity. He even said:

“এসব (অর্থাৎ ভাষা অন্যতম) যদি বন্ধ করা না হয় তাহলে আমি নিশ্চিত যে আপনাদের সরকার এবং পাকিস্তান সরকার এই বিষয়ে সত্ত্বেও সংস্থাবদ্ধ দোষ করার জন্য কত্ত্বনীতি ব্যবস্থা অবলম্বন করবে।”  

Muhammad Sahidullah thundered against this religious fanaticism:

“আমারা হিন্দু বা মুসলমান যেমন সত্য, তার চেয়ে বেশী সত্য আমরা বাংলাদেশ। এই কোনো আদর্শের কথা নয়, এটি একটি বাংলা কথা। মা প্রকৃতি নিজের হাতে আমাদের চেহারায় ও ভাষায় বাংলাদেশের এমন ছাপ মেরে নিয়েছেন যে, মালা-কিলক-টিকিতে কি তূরি লুষ্ণি-দাদিতে ঢাকবার জেটি নেই।”

Sylhet led from the fore front, when the entire East Bengal got maddened against the non-secular state machinery. At the endeavour of ‘Sylhet Kendriya Muslim Sahitya Samsad’ a debate was organised on 30th November, 1947 on East Pakistan’s “রাষ্ট্র ভাষা বাংলা না উর্দু হাওয়া উচিত” (whether the state language be Bengali or Urdu). Mujtaba participated that meeting as a specially invited speaker. But the fundamentalists were even active here. Mujtaba’s speech was heckled. As a result, Mujtaba had to leave the hall without completing his speech. This very famous speech of Mujtaba is “Purba Pakستانer Rastrabhasa”.

If we study “Pūrba Pākistāner Rāṣṭrabhāṣā” with special care and attention, we will find some sort of striking exceptions in it. The very same composition seems to be different from all other works—the style of Mujtaba is absent here, as if, a different kind of Mujtaba is present in it. He expressed his viewpoints in it on his own reasonings, logic, considerations, as a result, it was flooded with the references of history, religious scriptures, maxims from greatmen. Mujtaba cited a lot of examples to show that the love for mother tongue worked tremendously to speed up the space of development in En-
gland, France, Germany etc. Moreover, the national integrity and solidarity remain firm and unbroken even in Switzerland, Belgium, Canada due to practice of their respective mother tongue. Mujtaba raised the question that there has been no hindrance to the functions of the UNO despite the recognition of more than one language under its command.

Now he hit the sensitive point. Though Iran adopted the way of religion from Arab but not sacrificing its mother tongue. They preached Islamic teachings through the Persian language. Therefore, the Bengalees, too, can sustain their religious existence and identity through the Bengali language itself and what the Bangalees were able to do. Both Arabic and Persian were the state languages of Bengal for a long period of 6/7 hundred years, yet Bengal did not forget and destroy its own language. Mujtaba directly referred the point of ‘holy and unholy’ to the subject of language.

“‘পাক’‘না-পাকের’ প্রথ শুধানা ইসলাম-শিক্ষা পরিপক্কী। কোনো মানুষকে না-পাক বলে যেমন তাকে কলমা থেকে বক্ষিত করা যায় না, কোনো ভাষাকে তেমনি ‘না-পাক’ নাম দিয়ে ইসলামী শিক্ষা-শিক্ষার বাহক হওয়া থেকে বক্ষিত করা যায় না।”

Mujtaba used a good number of facts in this long essay. He presented his own views keeping a parity with those of Dr. Muhammad Sahidullah or Dr. Kazi Mutahar Hussain. First of it was a speech and afterwards he got it published with corrections and revisions. But the biggest point to mention here is that we realised the farsightedness of Mujtaba in this respect after the formation of a new state called Bangladesh.

Mujtaba was never interested in the scholarly and educative discussion of literature. Keeping himself away from the traditional trend of criticism, he discussed many aspects of literature; such as, a comparative study of both native and foreign literature, special propensities of a particular writer, the
formative side of literature, especially the points of language and philology have been discussed in Mujtaba’s literature.

Mujtaba spotlighted three creators of the Greek hero Prometheus in his essay “Asclelius-Shelley-Spitlar” and on the other hand, he discussed the form of a story in his “Munpassant-Chekov-Rabindranath”. Mujtaba discussed in “Nazrual Islam O Omar Khaiyam” that though Nazrul’s knowledge was poor in Arabic and Persian, yet the poet’s introspection and compassionate mind worked behind the translation of Amar Khaiyam’s ‘Rubaiyat’. So, his translation was perfect.

In order to focus the different angles of style, Mujtaba used both ‘Sadhu’ (polished and elegant language) and ‘Calit (colloquial). He remarked here that the question of ‘Sadhu’ and ‘Calit’ is out of mark. Actually, whatever may be the pattern of excellence, the language ought to be transparent, simple and witty. And the practice solely depends on the subject-matter.

After East Pakistan, there follows another short write-up from his pen on the official language of Bangladesh. Here Mujtaba had firm belief that patriotism would be the main instrument of the Bangalees for the love of their language; and somebody or other the Bengali language would get its due status.

He discussed the grammatical aspects of a language in some of light and serious essays. Besides this, the writer also said here and there something on the linguistic principles in his travelogues, novels, stories and letters. So, it is to be understood that it was his favourite subject. Since he himself was a linguist, so his discussions should be an integral part to the analysis of the Bengali linguistics.
B. Political and Social Essay:

When Mujtaba was compelled to be a professional writer, he gathered much knowledge about the global situations and contemporary political atmosphere touring many countries. Moreover, he watched the political situation of British India right from his childhood. He also noticed the dreadful impacts of the World War I (1914-18) in his early stage of life. He had to be a student of Santiniketan due to a political event of 1921. (Please refer 'Brief Life Sketch & Vision of Life’ chapter) we notice the political consciousness in him from that every time. When Mujtaba started to write Post Editorial in the ‘Ananda Bāzār Patrika’ in 1945, even then the hair-raising day of the World War II were not over. Under such circumstances, Mujtaba began his professional writing career through the essays of political consciousness. And hence after this political consciousness got its revelation in many of his write-ups what he wrote by name or pen name. In this regard he is the perfect follower of his master Rabindranath. As Rabindranath himself expressed his views in different ways being alert to the prevailing political situations, so was Mujtaba himself.

The political essays of Mujtaba have their definite limit. He had evaluated the situations of those countries only by means of his political thoughts with which he had relationship in this personal life as well as he watched closely. First, he watch is native land, that is, the undivided India. Secondly, he was to watch the situations of Pakistan-East Pakistan and Bangladesh in many ways. The background of his last novel ‘Tulanahina’ is the political situation of Bangladesh. Thirdly, Mujtaba was the living witness of the rise and fall of Hitler. So, his write-ups were coloured with hitlarcentric political atmosphere.
Fourth, Mujtaba was himself physically present in Afganistan during its political crisis. Hence, his works relating to Afgan political situation was also very important. Besides these, the works that we have from Mujtaba on Palestine-Israil-Egypt-Syria-Lebanon etc., that is, the Middle East, are also equally significant and timely.

Mujtaba discussed the positive and meaningful sides of the August Movement of 1942 in “ ’42- ’45” published in ‘Des’ (22-9-1945) by his pen name ‘Satyapir’. India was then passing through hard times. Most of the leaders were behind the bar, people streamed out on the roads, obstacles appeared—yet the country moved forward being inspired by the ‘Mantra’ (incantation) of ‘Caraibeti Caraibeti’ (Move on). Mujtaba told that it was not then a big question whether the movement was right or wrong, but the million-dollar question was the waking of people. In his own words:

“গরুড়ের ফুটা লইয়া মানুষ ব্যখন জাগে, তখন কি তার খাদ্যাখাদ্য বিবেচনারোধ থাকে? কিন্তু ফুটাকে নমস্তার করি, সেই জাগরণকে দেশের চরম মোক্ষ বলিয়া জানি, সরোজ আজ পাইলাম অথবা দশ বৎসর পরেই পাইলাম।”

In this regard at that time his another writing was “Baralati Lathi”.

‘Hitler’ is a favourite subject of Mujtaba. He had a plan of writing of a book separately in this respect. He had some important works about Hitler. Mujtaba primarily pictured the unfortunate state of Hitler’s life following the Russian attack in his book “Mosco Yudha O Hitlerer Parājay”. Here we get the indication of the politics of Fascism. The Fascist leaders—Mussolini and Hitler blamed one another for this defeat. Mujtaba also hinted that the defeat of Hitler paved the way for the rise of America and Russia in the arena of world politics.
Mujtaba was able to enjoy the company of Rabindranath right from his school days. He was a student of Santiniketan from 1921 to 1926; and he was one of the first graduates from ‘Visva-Bharati’. We feel the presence of Rabindranath every moment in his literature and life. Mujtaba wrote his first essay on Rabindranath published in “Kabipranam” from Sylhet; and he discussed Rabindranath in about forty essays of both short and long size upto 1973; and side by side the reference of Santiniketan and ‘Visva-Bharati’ was brought. After a few years of Mujtaba’s death, his anthology of thirty two essays on Rabindranath and Santiniketan called ‘Gurudev O Santiniketan’ published in 1388 BS by Kolkata’s ‘Mitra O Ghose’. Apart from that, the reference of Rabindranath and ‘Visva-Bharati’ was made in various ways in various occasions.

Most of the works of Mujtaba on Rabindranath and ‘Visva-Bharati’ are of recollective type; but the analysis is not so called scholarly. Rather a deep sense of perception is present in all the works. The picture of the first phase of ‘Visva-Bharati’, its educational system, and above all, the whole picture have been easily prominent in the works of ‘Visva-Bharati’.

We have met a different Rabindranath in the essay “Gurudev”, “Kabiguru Gurudev”, “Santiniketaner Rabindranath” and “Rabindranath O Tar Sahakarmidvay”. He wrote at the very beginning of “Gurudev”:

“...রবীন্দ্রনাথ সন্ধ্যায় কিছু লিখিয়ে আমার বড় সংস্কার বোধ হয়। ভয় হয়, যত ভেবেচিন্তেই লিখি না কেন বিদ্বঘ্নেরা পড়ে বলবেন, দীর্ঘ পার্চ বৎসর রবীন্দ্রনাথের কাছে শিক্ষালাভ করে৷”
Mujtaba did not consider Rabindranath from stereotyped angle. Mujtaba had felt a complete personality of the person Rabindranath in his student life. Rabindranath passed his days through strict rules observing them every hour from 4 A.M. to 11 P.M. Mujtaba remarked that he himself saw with his own eyes that Rabindranath did never go without adherence and regularity. Whenever he read, he read voraciously, but he never dishonoured time table. Mujtaba let us know about the subject of Tagore’s study—chemistry, physics, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, literature—that is, there was no such subject that Rabindranath did not read. In the words of Mujtaba:

“আমার মনে হয় এইটেই ছিল রবীন্দ্রনাথের মূল সুর। চিরজীবন তিনি বহু ভেতর একের সন্ধান করেছিলেন। তার সে-সাধনা আমি প্রত্যক্ষ দেখেছি। এবং দিয়ে তিনি ছিলেন আশীর্বাদ আন-সাধক। আমার দুই বিশ্বাস, রবীন্দ্রনাথ জীবনে অতীতের সত্ত্বেও সন্ধান পেয়েছিলেন।”

Mujtaba wrote “Rabindranath O Tar Sahakarmidvay” regarding the contributions and eruditions of Rabindranath’s two colleagues namely Bidhu Sekhar Shastri and Kshiti Mohan Sen. Mujtaba presented an excellent discussion on their inclination to Indian culture and tradition and their role in the voluminous work culture of Rabindranath.

Some of the essays of Mujtaba are of different type. There is no philosophical discussion, yet the Tagorean philosophy has bloomed out. Some of the essays of this category are—“Bicitra Chalanājāl”, “Rabindranather Atmatyāg,” “Mrityu”, “Mrityomamritam Gamayh”. How ‘death’ appeared one after another in Rabindranath’s life was shown by Mujbata. His wife, two daughters, one son died one after another. At the time of death, the age of his wife was 29, that of his two daughters was 13 and 32 respectively and of his son’s was just 11 (eleven). Mujtaba showed even then how Rabindranath
welcomed the worldly atmosphere and life. The grand son of 19/20 years Nitu died in Germany when the poet was 71. The poet wrote consoling his sonless daughter:

"যে রাতে শীর্ষ গিয়েছিল, সে রাতে সমস্ত মন দিয়ে বলেছিলুম বিশ্বসত্তার মধ্যে তার অবাধ গতি হোক, আমার শোক তাকে এটুকুও পিছনে রেখে না টানে।"

Mujtaba wrote realising this very focal side of the Tagorean philosophy of life:

"এই সেই মূল কথা। সে নেই কিছু আমার আলোকায় মধ্যে সে আছে। বারবার নম্ভরের কবর শুরুকে শুরুনবার। বারবার দূরদূরের কথা কন্ঠের স্মৃতি হয়েছে, কিন্তু কবর প্রায় স্নেহ করেনি।"

There are lot of write-ups on 'Visva-Bharati' and the adepts associated with 'Visva-Bharati'. "Visva-Bharati", "Visva-Bharati Prag", "Paus Melā", "Andruz Saheb", "Rabi-Mohan-Andruz", "Kabiguru O Nandalal", "Acarya Kshiti Mohan Sen", "Acarya Tuchhi", "Acarya Tajes Chandra Sen", "Hidjeebhai P Morris", "Bacu Bhai Sukla", "Dinendranath", "Abanindranath Thakur", "Barababu" etc works bear not only pictures of the then 'Visva-Bharati' but also the internal aspects of the lives of many outstanding personalities. The importance of this kind of works is very much in analysing the history of Santiniketan and 'Visva-Bharati'. Mujtaba wrote regarding these golden days of 'Visva-Bharati':

"শান্তিনিকেতনে তখন পণ্ডিত এবং পাশ্চাত্যের কিছু অন্যটা ছিল না। শান্তিভাবক তখন পরীক্ষা নিত না, উপায় নিত না।

এখানে আমার স্পষ্ট মনে আছে, তখনকার দিনে শান্তিভাবকের অন্যতম প্রধান নীতি ছিল: 'পি সিস্টেম অফ এলজিবিএল অর্থ হাব্বে না প্রেস ইন শান্তিভাবকের নর, উইল দার ব্য একটি মনুষ্যালিঙ্গ অব ডিজিম।"

The brief history of Santiniketan has been discussed in Mujtaba’s "Paus Mela". Mujtaba drew our attention to the philosophical consciousness and
benefactory attitude of Debandranath that were active at the backdrop of Paus Mela.

But the biggest point is that Mujtaba’s works on Rabindranath inform us that Mujtaba’s realisation regarding Rabindranath was quite different. Mujtaba showed through his analysis that it is beyond the range of our capability and power to understand the complete Rabindranath. Even a great man is not still born on this earth of ours, according to Mujtaba, to assess Rabindranath wholly and perfectly. Mujtaba wrote: “প্রার্থনা করি, আমাদের জীবনকালেই তিনি আসেন, বড় বাসনা ছিল মৃত্যুর পূর্বে তাঁর বিশ্লেষণটি দেখে যাই।”

Another remarkable comment of Mujtaba regarding Rabindranath is that Tagore will remain immortal in our civilization at least for his songs. Even Rabindranath himself believed in this way. Analysing deeply in favour of his opinion, Mujtaba showed that the eternal lyrical charm that lies in Rabindra Sangeet is rare in the world.

The towering personality of that Rabindranath whom Mujtaba knew and realised had been even revealed in the brief discussion. Though Mujtaba admitted that he was not a specialist in Rabindranath, but his simple but exceptional works on Rabindranath are a new and unparalled addition, no doubt about it.

D. Miscellaneous:

Mujtaba wrote essays on various subjects. Among them is the evaluation of the personalities of the different persons – what we may call as his biographical section, philosophical essays, works on Hitter etc. Out of all these things the biographical unit is very huge. He wrote on different occasions over the lives of many outstanding personalities of the world. They were his
favourite persons. Mujtaba did not spend enough words in picturing those personalities, yet he in minimum number of words was able to evaluate perfectly a particular side of a particular personality.

Two of his writings on Netaji Subash Chandra appeared with an interval of ten-twelve years. The first one was published in ‘Pancatantra’ column immediately after the independence, and the second one in 1963. Mujtaba analysed in his assessment of Netaji that Netaji was dead against of that political atmosphere which surfaced from the communal line of the partition of the country. Mujtaba wrote:

“সুভাষচন্দ্র শুধুমাত্র সামন্তারিকতা দূর করার জন্য কখনো কোমর বেঁধে আসে নামেন নি। সুভাষচন্দ্র বলছেন, ‘আগন্তুলেগেছে চল আগন্তুলেগেছে, এই আজাদ হাতে জল। তোমার জল দিয়ে এলা!’ সুভাষচন্দ্র কিছু একথা বলছেন না, ‘আগন্তুলেগেছেলে হিন্দু মুসলমানকে প্রথম এক হতে হবে, তারপর আগন্তুলেগেছেলে হবে।’ 25

Such is the appraisal of Netaji by Mujtaba—unparalleled assessment—the blooming of real image.

Mujtaba wrote, “Evan Sergavich Turgenef” on Turgenef. Mujtaba’s realisation regarding Turgenef was that he was thoroughly a poet. Both beauty and ugly seemed to be peerless to him. Mujtaba brought the reference of Dostoyefoski and Tolostoy while discussing Turgenef and finished it with the reference of Maupassant.

Mujtaba contributed four instalments to ‘Pancatantra’ column in August-September 1969 on the mystical poet Hasan Raja of Sylhet. This is that Hasan Raja whose reference was also made by Rabindranath in his speech. The poet Tagore was so charmed by the philosophical aspects of Hasan that he mentioned Hasan’s name in his speech entitled ‘Religion of man’.
wrote noticing some anomalies in Tagore’s quotation of Hasan’s songs:

“রবীন্দ্রনাথ পাঠে পেয়েছিলেন এক ভাষামান লোকগীতি সংগ্রাহকের কাছ থেকে, তিনি
গুনেছিলেন তুলা পাঠ। লোকগীতির কোনটা আকস্মিক হয়।” 26

It is learnt from the document of (‘Des72nd Phalgun/1376 BS) Prabhat Kumar Sharma of Sylhet that the given fact is wrong. Sri Sharma sent 75 poems to Rabindranath copying them from ‘Hasan Udas’ during the life time of Hasam Raja.

Mujtaba wrote in 1968 “Late Pramatha Choudhury—Late Sabujpatra”, “Pramatha Choudhury—Bhasa Sail” on the occasion of the birth centenary of Pramatha Choudhury. Here Mujtaba analysed that what a bold step Pramatha Choudhury took in the modernisation of the Bengali language. Pramatha was well versed in French and moreover, he was proficient in English and Sanskrit too. Hence, it was possible only for him to make the Bengali language time-befitting.

Mujtaba showed in “Yubaraj—Raja—Kahini” there were striking similarities and cultural parities between Ram Mohan Roy and Mughal Prince Dara Sikuh.

“দারা ও রামমোহন উভয়েরই শিক্ষাবাহী বাহন বাঁশী, সংকুচিত ও অল্পী। ...উড়ে মিলিত হয়েছিলেন উপনিষদের একই সিংহাতে। ...দুর্দনস্ত পুষ্কর লিখেছেন মুসলমান সাধকের উদ্ধেশ্যে।
দারা আপন বক্তায় বলেছেন উপনিষদ মারফৎ, রামমোহন তার বুদ্ধিতর্ক সংঘাত করেছেন ইসলামের
ভাস্কর থেকে। ...” 27

Mujtaba had deep regards for Lord Ramkrishna. It is understood that Ramkrishna influenced style of speech of Mujtaba. We notice in Mujtaba’s “Sri Sri Ramkrishna Paramhanshadev” that he had great inclination towards Ramkrishna’s style of speaking:

“এর মত সরল ভাষায় কেউ কখনো কথা বলেনি। শুধু ভাষার সঙ্গে সময় শরীর শেষী সাধনশীল
কৃষ্ণের ভাষা ও বাক্যভাবি। আমাদের দেশের এক আলকারিক বলেছেন, ‘উপমা কালিনাসংস’
... আমার মনে হয়, উপমাবিচিত্রে পরমহংসের কালিনাসংসকেও হার মানিয়েছেন।” 28
Many persons both well known and unknown came to the notice of Mujtaba in many ways. Cherly Chaplin or the world famous German Philosopher Swaitsar got prominence to him and equally important was obscure non-resident Indian Kodanda Muthhana. Mujtaba wrote in a letter in 1952:

“এখানে আমার শ্রেষ্ঠতম লেখা—আমার মতে কোষ্ঠ মুখ্যহানা।”

So, the importance of the essay is proved by it. This is a biography.

Mujtaba came into contact of many outstanding personalities during his stay at Santiniketan. In some of his write-ups their reference is very much evident. As we get his writing on his student life friend Binod Behari Mukhopadhyay, so also Mujtaba’s pen painted the pictures of Ramananda Chattopadhyay, Abanindranath, Gagonendranath, Nandalal etc. Mujtaba wrote “Barababu” about Rabindranath’s elder brother philosopher Dwijendranath Tagore. Such unparalleled portrayal of character of Dwijendranath is never found anywhere else of Bengali literature. In this write-up Mujtaba spotlighted a few particular sides; such as, the deletion of redundant letter and spelling reformation to introduce shorthand in Bengali as proposed by Dwijendranath. The discussion of Dwijendranath about the “Gitā Pāth” is also very valuable.

The works of Mujtaba on Hitler are also remarkable for a special reason Mujtaba was a student in Germany in the pre-rise period of Hitler. Mujtaba belonged to the same of Hitler’s rise and fall and was a living witness to the later part of Hitler’s age. In spite of Mujtaba wish of writing a complete authoritative life history on Hitler, but at last he restricted himself to just a few writings.

His three works on Hitler are: “Hitlarer Prem” (Love of Hitler), “Hitlarer Ses Prem” (The Last Love of Hitler) and “Hitlarer Seś Daś Divaś” (The last
Mujtaba wrote in one of his letters that he was never loyal to Hitler. During his study period in Germany, Mujtaba’s class friends gave him a chance to meet Hitler, but Mujtaba won not interested. Though Hitler did not come to power even then, yet he began enjoying sky-rocketing fame. Despite that, Mujtaba drew our attention to humane side of Hitler’s life. While Hitler was a boy, he had his first love affair in Vienna. During the First World War, Hitler joined as a soldier, and later on entered into politics, and in 1933 he attained majority in the German Parliament and from 1934 he became all in all in Germany—Furher.

Hitler in his boyhood was unsuccessful in his first love. His bliss of second love came when he was at the Cliff of name and fame. The name of that woman was Anieleeka Roukal, popularly known as Gelly; who happened to be the niece of Hitler by relation. Afterward Gelly committed suicide. And the next lover of Hitler was Effy – Effy Brown. She was destined to spend just a few days with Hitler right from 1933 to 1945 – the last day of Hitler’s life. Hitler gave her the status of a wife marrying her just 48 hours before his death.

Many a curious side of Hitler’s life has been thus portrayed by Mujtaba. The very gist regarding Hitler’s love of Mujtaba is that:

“The world is divided but Hitler’s heart was not.”

“Hitlerer Šeš Das Divaš” was in fact written on the basis of “Last Days of Hitler” by Traver Rupar published in 1947 and some other books. The narration of ten days beginning from Hitler’s birth day, 20th April, to death,
30th April, is found in details here.

Mujtaba wrote a philosophical essay in 'Matribhumi' called "Byaktibrahmer Anusandhan". The subject is serious and Mujtaba, too, narrated it seriously. The said essay failed to appear after two instalments, though "to be continued" was declared at the end of each instalment. According to Mujtaba, the quest for Brahma (The Absolute Being) began in Bengal from the 19th Century. The Hindu, Christian and the Muslim all were interested then in search of their respective Brahma. It had its start through Ram Mohan Roy and later on there came Devendranath Tagore. They had an invocation to Brahma of Upanishad to bless them as God incarnate. Ramkrishna, Vivekananda and Bankim Chandra also followed this path. But leaving aside the metaphysical world, Rabindranath unveiled the image of God incarnate in literature.

Mujtaba also expressed his views on 'Dharma' and other relevant subjects in his essays namely—"Dharma", "Dharmanirapeksha", "Siskha Byabastha", "Dharma O Communism", "Dharman Saranan" etc. Highlighting various philanthropic sides of 'Dharma', Mujtaba was scathing about the orthodox outlook of the communists regarding 'Dharma'. When Hitler attacked Russia, the irreligious Stalin was bound to open all the Churches and other religious places and senior Christian Clergyman came from England. In the words of Mujtaba:

"আবার গির্জায় গির্জায় প্রার্থনা উঠলে, 'হে ঈশ্বর, হেলি রাশাকে (হেলি)৷৷৩৩২৬৭৪, তত্ত্বা) বাঁচাও। সেই অর্জনের মত জনসমাগম, ধর্মের বালুকা দেখে জালিন খুশী হয়েছিলেন, না পাবে কমুনিস্টের যা হওয়া উচিত—বাজার হয়েছিলেন, জানি নে। হয়তো বা বিষাদে হরিষ, কিংবা হরিষে বিষাদ। কে জানে!" ৩২

Thus many such subjects have enriched the essays of Mujtaba. But some-
one may call Mujtaba's essays as 'humorous' instead of serious ones considering their style of language and lighter mode of expression. However, from the angle of subject matter these cannot be called anything else other than essay.
Notes


14. Ibid.

15. Ibid. p.187.


22. Ibid. p.42.


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