CHAPTER-II

MALIK, THE MAN AND THE WRITER

II.I. Malik's Life

Sayed Abdul Malik was a short man with a big heart, too big to grasp without a close and deep observation. He was born in the village of Naharani Golaghat, Assam on 14 January 1919. That was the most festive day of the year for the Assamese people, the Magh Bihu. His father Sayed Rahmat Ali and mother Sayeda Latifunnissa were descendants of Hajarat Khandaker Peer (Komoldaiya Dewan), both of whom were religious minded and having a good repute. His formal education started in 1924 at the age of 4 in 33 no. Naharani L.P.school. In 1929, he was admitted to Dergaon M.E.school. He was an uncommon sort of student. Then, he was admitted first to Dergaon High school in class- VII in 1933 (then, a newly established school), and afterwards in class- IX of Jorhat Govt. High school in 1935 where he wrote poems in Ajoli, a handwritten magazine of the school and could bag the first prize in writing competition in Fateha-i-Dohaj Dahom for his essay “Ma'naw Rupe Mahammad(PBUH) (1935).” His first poem and the first short story were published in the Annual Magazine of the school. He completed his Matriculation with letter marks in Persian (both compulsory and the additional paper) in 1937. He did his I.A. from Jorhat college in 1939 and his B.A. with Honours in English from Cotton college, Guwahati in 1941. He was only among the students but also among the teachers, specially, for his sharp memory and clever comments. One of the teachers called
him "a walking encyclopaedia". Malik began his service life as an Assistant Inspector in the department of excise in 1942. He joined the post of Civilian Censor in the Army in 1943. In 1946, he joined Jorhat College as a lecturer in the department of Persian. He worked in the Shillong-Guwahati Radio as the Programme Assistant during 1948-49. In 1945, Malik, too, joined the league (Muslim League). The goal of Muslim League was to create a new sovereign state for the Muslims. At that time, Malik edited a monthly magazine entitled as "Payga'm" which was similar in ideology. The country has become independent and the creation of Pakistan was also realized: "Afterwards, many of the leaders joined Congress but Malik remained in the opposition camp. It is remarkable that Malik, the active supporter of Muslims has become attracted to the leftist party of politics and has become associated with the Communist Party of India. But he was not an active member of the Communist Party of India. Yet, he contested in the general election in 1957 as a nominated candidate of the Communist Party for the Jorhat-Golaghat Parliamentary seat. But the candidate of Congress Party defeated him. He remained there in the leftist camp after his defeat in the general election but in 1971, joined Congress under the leadership of Indira Gandhi. In 1972, he contested the Dergaon Legislative Assembly seat as a congress candidate but was defeated, though it was a time of victory for Congress. His relation with Congress remained unchanged. In 1976, he was elected as a congress candidate to the upper house (Rajya Sabha) from Assam and continued as a Member of Parliament upto 1982 (trans. mine, ed. Hajrika, Hemen Chandra, 1999, 13)."
In 1950, he joined the post of an Assistant teacher in Dhekial High School. Next year, he joined the post of the founder Head Master of Kuralguri High School. In the same year, Malik appeared at the M.A. Examination in Assamese and stood Second Class First from Calcutta University. He joined the post of a lecturer in the department of Assamese in Jagannath Baruah College, Jorhat in 1951 and retired from service as the head of the department in 1976. Malik was associated with many socio-cultural and political organizations like- World Youth Federation, Indian Dramatic Organisation, Indian Organisation of Progressive Writers, Organisation of Afro-Asian Writers, All India Peace Cultural Conference, Assam Sahitya Sabha and so on. He represented Assamese writers in All India Peace Cultural Conference in Calcutta in 1951 and Assamese artists in All India Dramatic Organisation in Mombai in 1952. In 1954, he led a group of north Indian artists to south India and performed many programmes there. He carried out the research work under the department of Folklore of Gauhati University on "Asamiya Jikir Ā'ru Ja'ri" during 1954-56. He participated the conference of the Asian writers held in Delhi in 1957. He contested the General Election from Jorhat- Golaghat Constituency as the nominated candidate of C.P.I and was defeated by the Congress candidate. One of the notable points of Malik's personality was that he took everything in life easily and could delight in defeat and failure whose comment on this was: "The readers love Malik; the electors
have not followed the readers (trans. mine, Shastri, B, ed., Bargohain, H., 2003, p-34.)."

In 1961, Malik became the first secretary of the Audit Council of Assam Sahitya Sabha in the executive meeting in Goalpara. In 1963, Malik married Sayeda Hasna (Chisti), daughter of Dhai Ali of Sibsagar. He was one of the members of the Land Reform Committee of the Govt. of Assam during Sarat Chandra Singha Ministry. Among other notable organizations, he was associated with are: National Book Trust, Music Academy, Fine Arts Academy, Hindi Board of India Government, All India Urdu Board, Advisory Board of Education, Culture and Social Welfare of the Govt. of India and institutions like Gauhati University, Dibrugarh University, North East Hills University, Assam Publication Board, Radio Centre, Television Centre etc. In 1965, he was awarded the Soviet Desh Nehru Award for his "Mā'Jat Mā'thon Himālay", a book on travel. He contested the Assam Assembly Election in 1972 as a nominated candidate of the Congress Party from Dergaon constituency but was defeated. This year, he was awarded the Sahitya Academy Award for his novel "Agharf Ā'mā'r Kā'hini". He participated the conference of Assam Sahitya Sabha at Tihu as the President of its Seminar in 1976. This year, he was nominated by the Govt. as a member of the Rajya Sabha. In 1977, he became the President of the Abhayapuri Conference of Assam Sahitya Sabha. He participated the International Conference of the minorities in England as one of the members of the representatives in 1981. This
year, he was awarded the *East India literary and Cultural Integration Award* by the West Bengal Govt. He was awarded the *Padma Shri Award* in 1984 and the degree of doctor of literature by Dibrugarh University in 1988. He was the Chairman of Assam Minorities Development Council twice during 1985-86 and 1993-99. He performed *Haj* in 1991. He was awarded the *Padmabhusan Award* and the *All India Harmony Award* by the Govt. of India in 1992. In 1993, he was awarded the *Assam Express Award*. In 1994, he was awarded the *Assam Valley Literary Award (Williamson Magore's)*, and the *Mukta Kantha Award*. In 1995, he was awarded the *Ajan Fakir Award*, and in 1996, the *Moonlight Media Award*. He was awarded the highest honour of Assam Sahitya Sabha: *Sahityacharyya and the Srimanta Sankar Deva Award* in 1999. The greatest shock in the life of the evergreen writer came in the form of the death of his beloved wife on 22 May 2000, a fatal blow that he could not bear with and followed the same path on 20 December 2000. He was buried in the graveyard in village Naharani next day. In the huge gathering of about seven thousand people irrespective of caste, creed and religion for his *Nāmaţ of Jānaţa*, his younger brother appealed to the people:

"Malik Sahab met millions of people, If anybody was hurt by his speech or behaviour, I pray that he may be forgiven. If he woes anything to anybody, that may kindly be informed to us- his son, two sons in law, and we the brothers will take the responsibility for repayment (trans. mine, Manjuma, S et, al.2004, 38)."
II.II. Malik, the man

Malik was four feet and two inches in height (he said one day humorously). This short man could leave behind him such a long list of literary production that Assam was amazed to see. A son of the soil, Malik worked in the paddy field as a farmer and on the road as a social worker. It was a scene of rare delight, i.e. to see a man writing with the pen, walking with the plough on his shoulder and working with the hoe: "It was 12 noon. I myself and a friend of mine reached the house. It was shining hot in the month of 'Sha{o}n'. We were standing under the pine tree in front of the house and were looking around. We found a short man smeared with mud wearing a lungi, a triangular basket in his hand and spectacles in his eyes. The spectacles were also smeared with mud. The man said with a very sweet smile, 'Have your seat (in the Portik), let me have the bath and the we shall have our talk.' We saw the man insufficiently through the mud, saw the fishes and saw that the knot of the lungi had become loose. The short man went to bath with a captivating nod (trans. mine, Goswami Arup, ed., Gohain H, 2003, 81-82)". He was a man who always felt for the poor, a noble brother who was fully proud of expressing in a classroom filled with his students that his shoes were in tattered condition because he shared them with his other brothers at home. He possessed a noble heart that longed for the poor workers in his native village at a distance of seven/eight k.m. who were hired by him only for the ground that it would provide them the days meal and would provide himself with satisfaction. He was a man of extra-ordinary talent who talked and wrote
well, won people to his way of thinking and persuaded and conveyed his message to his listeners in an interesting way. A cogent talker, Malik could put his ideas forward in a language, which is not only persuading but also awfully crystal and captivating. In connection with the so-called writers of our time he wrote: “There are different types of writers in Assam. For instance, - Writers who write, writers who do not write, writers planning to write in future, writers who have decided not to write any further after writing for a period, writers who have become writers, would have become writers, would have been writers, about to be writers, denounced writers, awarded writers, discovered writers, writers who consider none of others to be writers, writers who think that they could have written the books already written by somebody else, writers who do not like to read books by other writers except those written by himself, denied writers, silent writers, pornographers, writers who participate different meetings as representative, writers listening the lectures of great writers with full attention, writers canvassing for the membership of the executive committee, aggressive-writers, writers with terror, writers of festival, translation writers, writers of controversy, writers of infamy, lost writers etc. (trans. mine, ed., Borgohain, H, 2003, 86-87).”

Malik was a man of magical personality around whom people hovered like bees hovering around the beehive. A well-mannered man, he talked of things in a way, ever novel and humorous that transformed the listeners to a world of delight. His talks were always a shelter for the tired and the tormented: “On board of a
bus, there was always a competition among the fellow travelers of offering the seat to Malik, gathering around him to listen to his delightful talk on numerous topics (trans. mine, Goswami, Arup, ibid, 27).” When he delivered lectures in his classes (in J.B. College, Jorhat) the hall was over-crowded but spell-bound and what is interesting is that many of the students were of other classes /departments. They came to the class for refreshment and knowledge both textual and extra-textual. In connection with the depth of Malik’s knowledge, one of his fellow-students in Cotton College remarked: “How lovely! How talented! Equally expert, in literature, in debate and everywhere. His name is Sayed Abdul Malik. We do honour him. I met this very Malik in the All India Radio. I never saw such a prolific man. In fact, it is a rare experience to meet a man of such capability (trans. mine, Hajarika, Bhupen, ibid, 32-33).”

Malik, the man of ninety was as lively as a youth of nineteen. When he was a man of eighty, he was suffering from cancer and had to be operated. Still, he worked through all the ills of life. The force of time let him free. He missed no opportunity for rural pleasure far away from urban artificiality. He habitually took part in planting paddy, harvesting crops, lading of ponds, eating shingeri and chechor (aquatic fruits) from the ponds, collecting the left-out of the paddy, arranging picnic, collecting and eating futuka (a spotted fruit) along with his son and daughters and other children of the village. He used to catch fish during flood with the children. He used to bathe his son and daughters on a bridge half- sunk in
the flood. He liked very much to work with his own son and daughters and with other children of the village. This was the greatest of all the festivity he was ever longing for and appreciative of. The door of his house was always open for the guests for whom he was enthusiastic about with his humorous and juvenile talk, as spontaneous as delightful. Whenever guests came to his house, he became as happy and cheerful as little boys and girls. A man loving man, Malik would always enquire about whether other members of the family had eaten or not. If it were outside the house, he would enquire about whether the driver had eaten or not. While traveling in his car, he would give a lift to an old man waiting for the bus and help the distressed. It was his daily routine to visit the houses of his neighbour and enquire about their health and about many other problems: “I met this man loving man when I was a little girl and when I used to go to my uncle’s house. A man returned from Jorhat with bagful of marketing, reaching home, he would visit the neighbour’s houses, inquire about their well and woes and we the little boys and girls would amaze listening his experiences of meetings at villages and towns of entire Assam (trans. mine, Begum S, R, ed., Manjuma, S, et al. 2004, 65).” Once, a man died in his village for want of food. He felt fully demoralized and ordered his householders not to lit the light and to spend the night uneaten. Undoubtedly, this is a superb example of self-reproach, repentance and showing respect to the poor departed soul. Whenever he returned home after visiting the house of a guest, he would not take food though he was told by the family members not to take food outside. If he was reminded of that fact, his very simple and touching reply was: “They were so eager in welcoming me. They love me
and respect me. How could I dishonour them?” Malik himself was very eager in welcoming guests. He liked his house to be filled with guests and relatives or he would look very poor and morose. He had the habit of planting trees in village Naharani that he collected from different nurseries. He considered Naharani, as he would most often say, his Mecca and Medina, his London and Boston. He had an unfailing nostalgia for Naharani and declared that his grave should be given nowhere but in Naharani.

“There is a woman behind every successful man “. This is true in Malik’s life. Towards the first half of his life, he suffered economically. He had to manage the family somehow with the small amount he earned by writing. Mrs.Hasna Malik was expert in maintaining the family as economically as possible. She let him free from all sorts of responsibilities of family life. He said to one of his nephews: “Listen, I have become mentally exhausted at the death of your aunt and cannot eat properly. Sometimes, I take liquid food. I cannot write properly. Manjuma writes for me. My heart longs for the meetings but I cannot as I have become invalid now. Someone is to lift and keep me seated on the chair..............Listen, I have become very lonely. Besides, the pain on my back has been torturing a lot (trans. mine, ed., Manjuma, S. et al., 2004, 64).”

Malik had a habit of rising early in the morning. He wrote in this early morning in a round table sitting on a ‘Mora’ (a stool made of bamboo). While writing silently, there was only a slight movement of his head and the pen went on
drawing carves and lines that resulted in a novel, reservoir of enchanting power depicting many characters and must be God-gifted that he could write a novel sometimes in seven to fifteen days. While writing, he was looked like a saint deeply engaged in his meditation. His modesty and honesty was of an uncommon type that he never boasted of the awards and rewards he received and the vast literary production he made. Rather, he remarked of his own achievement as: “I have taught in schools and colleges for long twenty five years. But I have no audacity to claim the same mastery in the literary field. What I could do in this field are only a little of thought, a little of imagination and too meager an amount of experience. My knowledge and study are also of that sort. That is my all. The world of experience is tiny, the treasure of my knowledge has only a little impotent amount in it and maturity is yet a long way. May be till then, I shall have to step the door of death. You should not expect more than that from me (trans. mine, ed., Bargohain, H, 2003, 26).” He was a man who did not want the bitter criticism by a relative to be answered by his son in law. He simply said: “I have read your “Asamfyä Kekora”. Let him say so. He said that way because he is our close man (trans. mine, ibid, 75).”

Most often, the famous men do not have a family bound by the thread of love. Tolstoy and Lincoln are two glaring examples. However, Malik was a fortunate man having a family consisting of the able wife, five daughters, and two sons in law, a son, nephews, four grand sons and daughters, brothers and sisters in
law and others all are bound by the magical connection of love. From all the four corners of Assam came the guests to his house. His house was always lively and crowded as a gathering place. Malik the company loving man, was extremely sad when his family members debarred him from attending meetings and invitations that had been almost a daily event in his life, because he was not in good health. Once, on such an occasion, he was asserting that he was quite well to attend the meeting. This is enough to prove his love for congregation and the urge for togetherness. In his age of about eighty, he was called by one of his closest neighbours as "Youngman" and was presented with a 'chakolet' during their evening walk. He this enjoyed heartily. Though he was called so sportingly, this unerringly exhibits the very nature of Malik as a man. Living with Malik was living with life, youth and spring.

During Assam Movement (1982) by the AASU, Malik was mentally exhausted because he was supposed to be and accused of being against the movement. His crime was to talk and mingle with men who loved men but who were considered to be against the movement. The price of his head was given Rs 500/- (five hundred) only. He humorously said, "Nobody will come to take such a cheap head ". Indeed, nobody did come. The so-called patriots were disillusioned, found the truth and re-embraced the writer of "Mafr Asamiyya" and "Surujmukhi'r Svapna". This was a re-discovery of the born Assamese, the Assamese by heart and soul and in blood above all social or communal
complexities. He said: "Untouchability, racialism, colour division make the society segregated. However, there is no limit to the lectures and declarations; there in our society that have poisoned and handicapped our social life. A section of learned man have fostered an inhuman and mean outlook of regarding another section to be untouchable and low because of personal, communal, or racial ground (trans. mine, ibid, 53)." He believed that literature becomes common literature only when there is emphasis on common life and common problems. Mere complication of common experiences is a show of learning that may not have the touch of great literature. The observation of the writer, his feelings and his sincerity heighten the reality of life to the reality of literature. He was ready to sacrifice the artistic quality of his writings for his social accountability. He thought that literature was for man and not that man for literature. In his opinion, the sense of oneness between the writer and the readers is the all-important matter in literature. The writer, besides being a writer, has another identity, original and genuine i.e. a man. An escape from this identity in any form means an escape from reality. He was fully aware of his limitations and expressed that it was great nobility of the readers to accept him despite all those limitations. This nobility of the readers helped him discovering the individual within himself.

II. III. Malik, the writer

Homen Bargohain called Malik a poet, mainly. His novels and short stories are the writings of a poet. The truth that is there in his writings is the truth
perceived by a poet. But Malik himself says in this regard: "In fact, I am not a poet. But it cannot be ignored that I sometimes trespass into the area of the poet. Whether there is meter or not, I feel for a rhythm and accordingly arrange the sentences and the words of my writings (trans. mine, ed., Rahman, L., Vol. I., 2001, iii)."

Whatever Malik says about this, Dr. Nagen Saikia also says that he is undoubtedly a poet. His prose is poetic and the poetic appeal of his novels and short stories runs from the beginning to the end. Dr. Mahendra Bora is also of the same opinion: "Many people do not know that Malik is also a poet. In essence, a poet, whether a story or a novel, it becomes a poem unknown to the writer, a poem in disguise (trans. mine, ibid, iv)."

Dr. Nagen Sakia says that an understanding of Malik’s writings needs an understanding of his immortal poems: “Mor svarga”, “A’mak kone Ma’re?” and “Maī Asamiya”. There are his ‘love’, his ‘Promises’ and his ‘countrey’, his ‘nature’ and his poetic sensibility. Malik says: "A deep self scrutiny has revealed that I cannot think so deeply as I can feel something. I have much of feelings. More than that, I have greater sensitivity..................... The existence of the poet can be felt in this observation. In addition, the poet in the words of Homen Bargohain, the poet according to the definition of a poet given by Surjakumar Bhuyan. The poet is bound by emotion and not by law (trans. mine, ibid, iv)."

The literary achievement of about sixty years of Malik has been well accepted by the readers, critics and scholars of Assamese literature. Three is a source for learning the changes came to the social life of Assam during last sixty years in his writings that may help us in understanding the present society and life of Assam. He tells
of his literary activity: “I have roamed about in the course of experiences like achieving and failure, loss after achievement, various experiences of smile and weeping.” This remark of Malik about his literary activity is really, an attractive remark. In fact, we can say simply that Malik has enriched Assamese Literature by expressing the life of the oppressed and the down-trodden perfectly in simple language (trans. mine, Chaudhury, Lakhsadhar, ed. Hajarika, Hemen Chandra, 1999, 14).” He had all the qualities of a successful writer to depict the true picture of life and society that has enabled him to occupy the highest place of honour in Assamese novels and short stories. Malik’s own views on literature are significant in considering him as writer. It is worth mentioning that his daughter, Saiyeda Manjuma Rahat had published some of his views on literature in “Malik C’a’ha’bar Ga’Ja’ A’ru MaJa” (ed., Bargohain, H. 2003)

1. “Assamese literature has special characteristic from ancient times that it has been related with the life of the Assamese people. The Baisnab literature of Assamese literature was written for the welfare of the people (world people) in general. Assamese poets boldly create the character like Mahadeb, Parbarty, Bhim, Narod in the attire of Assamese dress and disposition. In Assamese Lokageet, Goddess Parbony prepares for the weaving under the piple tree and the pagala (Shib) beats her for that. In Assamese Jikir and Jari, the guests are welcomed by offering betel nut and betel leaf (trans. mine, ibid, 12).”
2. “The writer is not only a worshiper of the truth and the beautiful, he is also a crusader against what is untrue, ugly, evil and unlawful (trans. mine, ibid, 13).”

3. “Literature remains at its preparatory ground if the writers observation, experience and affinity cannot be transformed skillfully to the literary truth with craft and technique which is difficult (trans. mine, ibid, 13)”

4. “In fact, to be a writer is not a luxury but to face a difficult challenge (trans. mine, ibid, 14).”

5. “In my opinion, Gandhijee’s ‘Ahimsha’ had become fruitful in the fertile land of Assam which was ploughed by Sankar-Madab and Ajan Fakir (trans. mine, ibid, 14)”

6. “In many cases, criticism becomes more pungent and the writer at the same time the critical view becomes adverse. The search for a fit man for the foreign -made shirt may become futile. If is wise to search the cap to suit the head but not the head to suit the cap. We welcome the scientific criticism though foreign. Such criticisms may help the writers to have an appraisal of their own writings. But it may be that the contemporary popular criticism can be taken as the final word. Sometimes the cure may resemble the hot water prepared for the wound if it becomes more acute (trans. mine, ibid, 16).”
7. "It is not necessary that the whole world should be depicted in our writings to give it a worldly acceptance. Mere imitation of others will attract others. What is Assamese that will attract others even though they may not adopt it. There is curiosity and attraction in it (trans. mine, ibid, 17)."

8. "Literature will not be mass-literature unless the writer pays respect to the life of the people, and the problems of the people are not given their proper place in the writings. The complicacy of the simple experience of life may exhibit wisdom and audacity but it won't create grand literature (trans. mine, ibid, 19)."

9. "It is desirable that the gulf between the poets and the readers of Assamese literature should be as short as it can be translation, mine, (trans. mine, ibid, 21)."

10. "There is only one consolation we have that we can proudly say that this is the Assam of Sankardev. That we are heir to a rich tradition, enriched by a historical person. We have Sankardev's Assam (transl. mine, ibid, 27)."

11. "We are sons and daughters of Sankardev; his followers. This identity can be given by the Assamese people irrespective of caste, creed and religion. Our identity is there in the immortal note of Sankardev's Bargit which has been rolling from voice to voice (trans. mine, ibid, 28)."

12. "The service to literature is a service to the land. The youth should bring in new things, technique and mode to literature. They should come simultaneously into the platform of politics and literature. They should replace the bye-gone writers with their new creativity (trans. mine, ibid, 32)."
13. “I want to appeal to our writers: Look at the life (of people) around, observe with reverence the pangs and delight, hopes and desairs, aims and struggles, feelings and imagination of it depict them in your writings and let the people look at their own picture. Write about them. In that case, they will be your respectful reader, critics and buyers. The write and the readers will be of one-another forever. This oneness of the writer and the reader is an invaluable wealth for literature (trans. mine, ibid, 43)”.

14. “I don’t have the audacity to claim to be a great man, but I have every right as a writer to raise my voice for the people. I don’t regret for the loss of the literary quality of my writing while doing this (trans. mine, ibid, 45)”.

15. “What you have got from me as a writer that is my all and everything. I have nothing more. The readers have noticed many faults and shortcomings as a writings. Still, they are not without loving me. This has made me indebted to them. They have given me much more than I deserve which has helped me understanding my pettiness (trans. mine, ibid, 46-47).”

16. “The literature has a social identity. One who does not want to be identified by that identity is one’s escapism (trans. mine, ibid, 48)”.

17. “I shall go on writing to the best of my time and ability (trans. mine, ibid, 49)".
18. “I am satisfied that I have no misunderstanding about my writings. I have acquired the capability of being cruel to myself and that’s why, I can show my respect to the critics of my writings (trans. mine, ibid, 52)”.

19. “I was born for writing. So, I shall go on writing throughout my life (trans. mine, ibid, 52)”.

20. “Untouchability, Caste-system caste difference makes the society divided into parts. There are innumerable lectures and declarations for abolition of such differences. Yet, the Indian society has been polluted by such contagious diseases (trans. mine, ibid, 53)”.

21. “Reasonless religious bigotry is against development. Such bigotry and superstition should be discarded totally. Apart from the age-old supernatural and imaginative episodes and events, there are some eternal human values which are equally true and acceptable (trans. mine, ibid, 54-55)”.

22. “A particular religion is not for the followers only but a source of unbound education of culture philosophy and spiritual upliftment. Religion directs the everyday life its do’s and don’ts. All sorts of secular education can be divided from the religious principles and obligations (trans. mine, ibid, 55).”

23. “An artist or a writer has biological, domestic social and economic problems like other people. He/She is a social being. He/She may differ in respect of feelings and imagination, emotion and reasoning but this does no make him/her different from other people. If anyone thinks so, it is his/her self-centredness and unsocial bearing (trans. mine, ibid, 59)”.
24. “Knowledge breeds confidence and confidence provides us with struggle (trans. mine, ibid, 69)”. 

25. “Noble creation needs a noble heart. Noble literature cannot be created without a noble purpose. The writer should acquire the right to speak for the world people. For that the writer should understand the eternal human values. These values cannot be bound by slogans. The Writers should search them among the silent—cry of deep humanism. A writer is not only a creator but also a teacher (trans. mine, ibid, 7)” 

26. “Nabakanta Baruah called Malik “Kathā-’r sa’gar”. In literature he is called the “Kathā-’Sarit Sa’gar” of modern Assam (trans. mine, ibid, 7)”.

The name Sayed Abdul Malik brings in the picture of a man who was evergreen, the writer of unsurpassed stories like “Prā’ñ Powa’r Piçḥat” and “Ka’ṛṭhphula”,” and unparalleled novel like “Surujmukhi’r Svapna” to toss the heart of the Assamese people, and feed their heart supplying novel after novels years after years. The picture of Malik has become permanent in the heart of Assamese people unchangable and unperishable by the force of time. Malik is evergreen with liveliness in the mind of his reader that can never be defused and defunct. Malik was a resident of a timeless world, with a ready box of laughter, life and liveliness as if he knew no pangs of life. Malik has become a legendary figure in his lifetime: “There is no thorough and threadbare discussion of the characteristic features of Malik as a writer. (If anybody discussed we have not
Our personal opinion is that characters in his novels and short stories are simple; his language is simple and readable. Whether the character is real or not (there is no reason that the characters in “Surujmukhīr Swapna” are not real) the reader notices the writer’s simple approach to that character. Afterwards, he will lead the readers with his spontaneous and magical language, which is one of the qualities for his popularity. Most often there is a social problem or a contradictory character in his humorous writings, but the first attraction for the readers is his simple language, humour and creation of appropriate atmosphere (trans. mine, Das, Jogesh, ed. Hajarika, Hemen Chandra, 1999, 22).

Unbound love towards fellow beings was the main source and touchstone of his writing where there was no room for hatred and jealousy. Nature, Assamese culture and the harmonial life of Assam was there as the creative force behind the growth of the famous writer. His mind was a world as open as the sky rather than being a closed world, which can be taken as a prototype of the Assamese culture and convention. His pen become stronger and more active whenever there had been a threat to the existence of Assamese culture. It is surprising enough that Malik was equally able and spontaneous in his writing in his political and his family life, a man always working and working and working. “He paints vivid pictures of modern life with its dust, smoke, sweet and labour. In many of his short stories, there is no plot but only some particular environment. The stories, which give a perfect picture of village life, are
sometimes based on some particular circumstances and both character and action remain secondary. Often in some of his novels, circumstances lead the characters and some are drifted away by circumstances to the places they never imagined to be in. So, one may doubt whether he has a clear-cut line of plot in mind or whether his pen lead his mind. But to an artist of Malik’s stature both are possible. His mind and his pen are complementary to each other (original: Hajarika, Karabi Deka, trans. Borgohain, Mamoni Gogai, ibid, 190 – 191).”

Malik was a committed humanist above all the complexities of life who can be called the Kabir of Assam. His religion was “Ma’nab Dharma’ who was Muslim of the Muslims and Hindu of the Hindus, who collected the ‘Jikirs’ of Ajan Peer, wrote the first biographical novel on the life of the founder of today’s Assamese thought and culture: Srimanta Sankardev. He enjoyed a place of love and honour both in the Masjid and in Namghar. His way of life is best conveyed the message of his mind and writing, both equally glorifying. Malik represents the life and culture of Assamese people, an immortal personality above the destructive forces of time: “Malik is the greatest writer of Assamese prose – Literature. The varied life of the Eastern region has vividly been reflected in his novels and short stories along with the life of Northeast India. Whatever may be the character, flat or round, type or individual, Malik left no aspect of human nature and Assamese culture untouched or unexpressed. His unchallenged place in Assamese Literature is due for his perfect point of view and extraordinary skill over Assamese Language. The language of the characters of
his novels and short stories is the common language of Assamese people filled with phrases and idioms, cliches and proverbs, imageries and symbols were skilful. His writings emerge of the varied life and culture of Assamese people. His command over Assamese culture and language is amazing. His characters are of the earth earthy, having all the human qualities and weaknesses. As a novelist, he had infinite curiosities and fellow feelings for others and nothing human escaped his attention. Vast scope of subject immense experience and adroit hand in character portrayal made him immortal not only in Assamese literature but also in Indian literature. He is building a solid background and appropriate environment for his characters. It is a great pleasure to note that he is the founder of Biographical Novel in Assamese literature. Malik is one of the great investigators of Assamese classical literature and music of Assam. He made a scholarly collection and investigation of the invaluable "Jikir" and "Ja'ris" of Assam. He searched out of the Historical and literary vale of the "Jikir" and "Ja'ris" thoroughly in the preface of his research work "Jikir A'ru Ja'ri". "This work can be called the milestone of Assamese Folk-literature. (trans. mine, Patani, Sarma, U.N,ed., Rahman,L, 2001, Vol.-IV, )." Most generally, one bows down one's head before the amazing literary creation of Malik that had run for long sixty years. He has been well received by the readers throughout the nation. His writings portray vividly the social changes of the Northeast in general and of Assam in special. Meticulous scrutiny of truth is one of the main characteristic features of Malik's writing. His is a charming way of narration of stories that may claim the highest position for him as a story teller. the deep humanism that is
evident in his novels and short stories establishes that he was a man of great wisdom. He wrote the novels and the short stories realistically but his realism was critical realism i.e. something that stands the critical investigation and that is there in the subconscious mind of the characters. Malik’s mastery over Assamese language, history and folk-literature is unparalleled and perfect and played a meaningful role in his narrative technique to record the natural beauty of the region and to explore human nature in incomparable poetical language. Malik was born for writing and went on writing throughout his life. He was such a committed writer that he called one of his students (Lutfur Rahman) who took the responsibility of publishing his ‘complete works ‘series and enquired about the publication of the last volume of his works in a broken voice: "My fifth volume?"

Just two days before his death, a million dollar three words that will remind Assamese people of the true and devoted son of Assamese language and literature. Sahityacaryja Malik contributed Assamese literature immensely with his writings. He has as many as one hundred and sixty books both published and unpublished in his credit. His able daughter Sayeda Monjuma Rahat prepared a list of his writings (trans. mine, ed., Malakar, T, 2004, 33-36):

Malik’s Novel:

1. Agnigarbha (1971)

2. Aghari A’tma r Ka‘hini (1969)


5. Anja A`kas/ Anja Tara (1962)

6. Anja Na`m Mr`tu (1970)

7. Aranja Debata (?)

8. Akṣay- Abjay Smr`ti (?)

9. A`dha`rs`ila (1960)


12. BanJui (1942)


15. Bura` Na`war Batara (unpublished)

16. Ç`habi Ghar (1958)


18. Dokmoa`li (1972)

19. Dr. Aruna`bhar Asampurna Ji`bani (1957)

20. Eka` Bekha` Br`tta (1957)


22. E`ta` Surja, Dukhan Nadi` A`ru Ekhan Marubhu`mi (1972)

24. Jaya', Manika', Itja'di (1968)
25. Jetuka' Patar Dare (1973)
27. Kabita'r Na'm La'bha' (1956)
28. Kanta'haha' (1960)
29. Kebal Premerei jadi (1985)
30. Khora' Nida'n (1971)
31. Mai' Marino NeJa'o' Kiya (1997)
32. Mai' Prosta'b karo' je (?)
33. Manusattar Maris'alit (1994)
34. Maramar MaJiya'r SeuJi' Dubari (2000)
35. Ma'tir C'a'ki (1959)
37. Mor Ba'be Nuruba' Ma'lati Phul (1966)
38. Muni C'uni Dhaka' C'aka' (1994)
40. Nal, Birin, Kha'gari (1973)
42. Nih'sana Maupiya'r Git (1985)
43. Omala' Gharar Dhu'li (1940)
44. Pahumara' Ha'bir Ba't, (1973)
45. Pha'gunar S'es, H'a'hi (1984)
46. Pra'c,ir A'ru Pra'ntar (1968)
47. Phulanibarit Balrapat (1996)
48. Praṇ Samudra (1972)
49. Rajanīgandhar Čakulo (1964)
50. Rathar Čakari Ghure (1958)
51. Raṭir Kabita (1950)
52. Ruṣbarir Palas (1980)
54. Sambardhana (unpublished)
55. Sarilat Ekura Jui (1970)
56. Satjar Pather, Saṅtiir Rathere Muktir Jayjaṭra (1993)
57. Sipaṭe Praṇ Samudra (1972)
58. Smṛṭirekha (?)
59. Saṅli Aṅdhara (?)
60. Saṅli Sutaṭe Bandha (1972)
62. Surujmukhiṛ Svapna (1960)
63. Svapna Bhāga (1985)
64. Svāṭi Nakṣatrar Bhāma (1988)
65. Tīrthajaṭri (1946)
66. Tris'ul (1968)
68. Uṛi- Haḥphalu (1971)
Malik’s Collections of Short story:

1. Alanka’r (?)
2. Andhakup (1977)
3. Arihana’ (1996)
4. Astha’yī’ A’ru Antara’ (1965)
5. A’barta (1978)
7. C’hā’i A’ru Phirinati(?)
8. C’hay Nambar Pros’nar Uttar (?)
10. EJani’ Natun C’howa’li’ (1951)
12. H’a’hire C’akulo Dha’ki (?)
15. Mr.gana’bhi ((1989)
16. Paras’mani (1946)
17. Pora’ Ga’o’t Pahila’ Baha’g (1986)
18. Pra’na’dhika’ (1986)
19. Ra’ga’ta’ (1943-44)
20. S’ikhare- S’ikhare (1963)
21. S’il A’ru S’ikhā’ (1962)
Malik's Research-Oriented Works:

1. Asamat Muqhalman (unpublished)
2. Asamiya' Bha'sa't Madhjapra'c ja'ru Uttar Bha'rat S'abda- Sambha'r (1988)
3. Asamiya' Jikir A'ru Ja'ri' (1958)
4. Asamiya' Jikir Ja'ri Sa'ri (1990)
6. C'uphi' A'ru C'uphi'ba'd (1975)
7. Duwara' Khay'a'm Nahal (1979)
8. Ji'war S'a'rathi Na'm (?)
9. Ra'iJar Mukhar Ma't (1988)
10. S'ankandev A'ru Asamar Sam'skrti (?)

Malik's Writings on travel:

2. Et'a' Cinaki Dipar Tat' rekha' (1990)

Malik's Drama:

1. A'Mor A'pona'r Des' (Musical Play) (?)
2. Ankur (?)
3. Anja EJani S'akuntala' (?)
4. A’dha Aka C̣habí (1952)
5. A’Jan Phakir (Radio Play) (?)
6. A’lahi Ghar (?)
7. C̣ira Kûma’r Sabha’ (?)
8. Durar Dewata’ (1948)
9. Gharito Ghariço (?)
10. Jagara’ Mandalar Prema’bhinay (?)
11. Janata’ Badh (?)
12. Jowa’rar dhau (?)
13. Ka’thphula’ (Radio Play) (?)
14. Kha’n Baha’dur (?)
15. Makara’Ja’l (1964)
16. Miri Jiya’ri’ (?)
17. Protham Prona’m (?)
18. Ra’Jdrohi’ (1957)
19. S’es C̣ahi (?)
20. TeJimala’ (?)
21. TeJpiya’ Gosa’ni’r A’li (?)
22. JoJak (?)
23. jugar Da’bi (?)
Malik’s Autobiography and Diary:

1. Mor Ji’banar A’ge-Picjhe, Sow’e-Ba’w’e, C’aïyad A’dul Ma’likar Aproka’s’t Raçana’wali’ A’ru Da’yeri’, ed.
   Nikumani Hussain, 2008.

2. Da’yeri’, ibid.

3. Mor Ji’banar Nahalbor (1990)

Malik’s Compilation of Songs:

1. Toma’r Kant’ha Mor Katha’ (is being instrumented)

Malik’s Humorous Writings


3. Mit’ha T’enga’ Jala’ Keha’ Tita’

Malik’s Biographies:

1. EJJan Asami’ya’ Bha’rat’ya.

2. KalJayi’ Ba’ha’dur Ga’o’bura’

4. HaJarat Moha’mmadar Ji’ban Ka’hini’

5. Jis’u (Ekhan Hr’dayar Na’m) Sada’ SaJib
Malik’s Poetry:

1. Beduin (1948)
2. Çhandahā’rā Çhandha (unpublished).
3. Çhandahī’n Çhandha (2001)
4. Svapna Dusvapna A’ru Anya Kic'hu Kathā

Malik’s Children’s Literature:

1. A’galai Pic’halai Talalai Oparlai
2. Ekhan Sona’li Dua’r (S’is’u Upanyāś)
3. Kora’n Svariphar Sa’dhu (1975)
4. Mukali Manar Sa’dhu (1979)

Malik’s Translation Literature:

1. Aran'ja Dewata‘ (A translation of “Pen” by Not Hamsun)
   by Lu Chun)
Malik is famous in Assamese literature for his novels and short stories who outnumbered other writers in the field of creative writing. The main source of such a large number of literary productions of Malik was his unbound love towards humanity- the hallmark of his writings. There is no room either for hatred or for jealousy towards the characters of his novels or short stories. It is an accepted fact that in his writings, there are history of Assam, portrayal of Assamese society, culture, life, and various events of the period from 1930 to the
end of the century. His writings represented Assamese life from all corners. These are living records of twentieth century Assam: "Sayed Abdul Malik has been writing right from the age of sixteen. It is helpful and necessary to study his personal and intellectual life for understanding his writings. Assam Sahitya Sabha (1917), the medium of Assamese culture and nationalism (1919), Assam Satra Sammilan (1916), the medium for social consciousness, Assam Congress (1919) were formed just around his birth (1919). The purposes of all these organizations and the ideology and activities of the Communist Party during this period are also to be considered for an understanding of Malik's writings. On the other hand, a knowledge of the literary practices of the closing part of first phase of Assamese Literature. In this phase, the flowering of 'Assamese Romanticism' occurred in the pages of the 'Awa'han' at that time, a mixed Consciousness of Socialism and nationalism became evident in the writings of the young writer, Sayed Abdul Malik. as there is Romantic simplicity, there is also the strong Assamese national consciousness, bias for the socialism. Traditionalism and love for beauty both are the characteristic features of his personality. He might be considered a bridge between the two ages. More appropriately, a running stream of Assamese literature and national life (translation, mine, Sarma, U.N., ed., Rahman, I., 2001, Vol.IV, ii-iii)."

Malik, the novelist and short story writer is unique in Assamese literature for his language. Language works as a character in his novels and short stories. In
his description of nature and environment as well as of characters he uses such language that his views regarding life and the world come to the hold automatically as a rule. The emotional language generates emotions and meanings, in addition to the dictionary meanings, in the mind of the readers. This is one of the reasons for his permanent popularity. He could become a legend in himself. The centre of his writings, by common agreement, was humanism, which was moulded by the nature and culture of Assam and Assamese life. He declared: "Jibane Marane Ma' Assam'ya" and struggled for the existence and establishment of Assamese language with the conviction that "Assam'ya Bha'sa Mor, Katha' Mor, Gi't Mor". As a writer, his mental framework was broad and open for which he could go on writing novels after novel and stories after story and could live the life of an average Assamese, socially accountable and ideologically appreciable. There was no symptom of exhaustion or disgust, neither in his life nor in his writings. There are all-pervading youth, love and robust optimism in his novels and short stories. Love, laughter and life, these three are the general characteristic features of Malik's writings.