

Classic Poetry Series

**Abu Zafar Obaidullah**  
**- poems -**

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# Abu Zafar Obaidullah(8 February 1934 - 19 March 2001)

Abu Zafar Obaidullah, a career civil servant by profession, was a first-rank poet of Bangladesh. Two of his long poems, namely, 'Aami-Kingbodontir-Kathaa Bolchi' and 'Bristi O Shahosi Purush-er Jonyo Pranthona' have gained legendary renouence since their first publicaiton in late 1970s.

## <b> Life and Career </b>

Abu Zafar Mohammad Obaidullah Khan (A. Z. M. Obaidullah Khan) was born in Baherchar-Kshudrakathi village under Babuganj upazila of Barisal district, in undivided India now in Bangladesh. He was the second son of Justice Abdul Jabbar Khan, a former speaker of the Pakistan national assembly. He received his primary education in Mymensingh town where his father Abdul Jabbar Khan was at that time working as the District Judge. In 1948, he passed Matriculation examination from the Mymensingh Zilla School. He passed the Intermediate of Arts examination as a student of the Dhaka College in 1950. Then he got admitted into the Dhaka University for studying English and after securing B.A. (Honours) and M.A. degrees he joined the same university in 1954 as a lecturer in the Department of English. He appeared in the Pakistan Superior Service Examinations and having stood second in the combined national merit list, he joined the Civil Service of Pakistan in 1957. He was promoted as Secretary to the Government of Bangladesh in 1976 and after retiring in 1982, he accepted to be a minister for Agriculture and Water Resources in 1982. Later he also served as Bangladesh's Ambassador to the United States of America. In 1992, he joined as Asstt Director General of FAO Regional Office in Bangkok from where he retired four years later. He died on March 19, 2001. He was the second eldest brother of journalist Enayetullah Khan and politician Rashed Khan Menon.

## <b> Participaiton in Language Movement </b>

Abu Zafar Obaidullah actively participated in the Language Movement of 1952 . He composed "Kono Ek Ma-key" [Tr. To a Mother] for the first anthology on Ekushey, which is recited at the Central Shaheed Minar on February 21 every year.

## <b> Poetry </b>

Obaidullah Khan not only created a new type of poetry, but also introduced a

new style. The root of Obaidullah Khan was in the soil of this country and so he wrote about lives of ordinary people and dreams, language and liberation movements and the struggles of our mass people including farmers, fishermen. He was not only one of the major poets of Bangladesh, but also became the spokesman of the Third World countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America by projecting their aspirations, demands and liberation struggles.

### <b> Padaboli </b>

He founded "padaboli" which became the leading poetry movement of Bangladesh in 1980s.

Notably Obaidullah Khan was one of the pioneers of Dhaka-centric group theatre movement that commenced in the 1950s. Along with Syed Maksudus Saleheen, Taufiq Aziz Khan and Bazlul Karim he established Drama Circle in 1956.

### <b> Recognition and Awards </b>

Abu Zafar Obaidullah is acclaimed as a major poet of Bangladesh. Two major awards given to him are:

Ekushey Padak

Bangla Academy Award

### <b> Poet Abu Zafar Obaidullah Foundation</b>

Poetry lovers of Dhaka established Poet Abu Zafar Obaidullah Foundation in 2002. Currently Arif Nazrul is the Foundation president (2008). Among other regular activities this Foundation awards every year persons who are contributing in the national interest. In 2008, sixteen nationally renowned persons have been selected for the award. They are: Prof Muzaffer Ahmed, Chairman of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) in Economics, Md Kamal Uddin Ahmed, Executive Chairman of Board of Investment in Administration, Rahat Khan, Editor of daily Ittefaq in Literature (Prose), Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, Editor of The Bangladesh Observer, in Journalism, Dr Abul Hasan M Sadeque, Vice Chancellor of Asian University of Bangladesh, in Education, Sayed Abu Naser Bakhtiar Ahmed, Managing Director of Agrani Bank, in Banking, Nasir Ahmed in Poetry, Rahim Shah in Child Literature, Mainuddin Biswas and Eng Safiqur Rahman in Industry and Commerce, GM Afsar Uddin in Research, Mohammad JAhangir Molla in Lyrics, Rakhi Bhoumik in Music, Lion Sheikh Tofael Hossain in Social Welfare and Md Selim Master.

Also, "Poet Abu Zafar Obaidullah Smriti Pathagar" [memorial library] has been

established in Babuganj of Barisal in 2003.

# Ekjon Probin Boyati

Abu Zafar Obaidullah

# Ferari Kobir Khonje

Abu Zafar Obaidullah

# I Speak Of Legend

I speak of legend  
I speak of my ancestor.  
I speak of the restless present  
And of the final struggle in the future.

Abu Zafar Obaidullah

# Mago, Ora Bole

Abu Zafar Obaidullah