

A Journey of Battling Breast Cancer

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This is not a fiction but a story of a destitute woman in Bangladesh – her fight for her life.

The story began in 2010. One day my sister's housemaid told her that she felt a lump (mass) in her breast. My sister is a doctor and as per her advice she went for ultra-sonogram and a biopsy. She came to my sister with the report with great despair – report findings suggestive of breast cancer. She was very much upset – what will she do now? She did not have enough money to bear the huge expense of the treatment. Moreover it was uncertain whether the result of the treatment would favour her or not. Her close relatives suggested undertaking “Kabiraji” treatment as nobody with cancer survives – according to them. My sister assured her – ‘let's try and Allah will save you’. As my sister was serving in Dhaka Medical College, she brought her to this hospital, made arrangements for her surgery after consulting with the doctors. After a few months, radiotherapy and chemotherapy started. She tolerated the hazards of all those. At times she became disheartened by seeing her physical condition and on top of that, everybody told her that it was the critical period, nobody can tolerate the chemotherapy. We just assured her – be patient. Allah only knows who will survive or not. She often became depressed about how she would manage the expense and how she would manage her future even if she survives. She is a widow and has no sons. I and a few others managed part of the expense by collecting donations from work colleagues and friends in Australia. Informally, this kind of fundraising is sometimes called “Friend-to-friend” or “peer-to-peer” fundraising. Throughout this journey, I was astonished to witness the heartening attributes of those people who took great initiative and contributed to assist in this woman's wellbeing. My sister mostly managed the hassle of the hospital. Those who have experience about the government hospitals of Bangladesh, they can understand what is meant by “hassle”.

She has now finished her treatment and after taking rest she has returned to her usual domestic job. Death awaits her at any moment, but at least our effort has not failed. I wanted to share this story to highlight that even the smallest contribution from those compassionate souls has enhanced her life. Has allowed for her to live another day. This has allowed for her to grasp that last breath with genuine faith in humanity. I think that most people want to make a

difference in the world but just really don't know where to start. There are many ways that individuals can be involved in fundraising events. The help and assistance may be in different forms - it may be monetary help, it may be guidance and sympathy, or even your prayers and inspiration and utmost faith in the Mighty Allah (SWT).

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