

In Memoriam: Professor Ashrafal Haque

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Professor Ashrafal Haque, an eminent educationist, scientist of the sub-continent who breathed his last on Tuesday, January 19, 1982 at his Agri-Varsity residence was a teacher with a difference. He within his means and capacity always tried to contribute most for the uplift of education of the Bangladesh Agricultural University in particular and of the country in general. He always urged the teachers of the university to widen the scope of higher education in agricultural sciences and often cited neighbouring India's achievement in developing her agricultural and allied sciences as example.

Prof. Haque was man of attractive personality, amiable behaviour and broad mind whom the teachers, students, officers, employees of the university and the people of neighbouring villages loved much. One who came in his touch was at once charmed at his pleasing personality. As the senior-most professor of the university he drew respect from one and all of the community. Moreover he was endowed with some uncommon qualities for which all in the university used to place their confidence on any actions suggested by him. For this inborn quality of Prof. Haque he could successfully

tackle all the critical situations of the university during his long tenure of service there.

Born in 1919 at Benaras, India, Prof. Haque later domiciled in the erstwhile East Pakistan in 1948 and since then he devoted himself in enriching the cytological research in the country. He earned name and fame in this field of science and established himself not only in the country but also in the sub-continent as a renowned cytologist. Prior to his joining as Professor of Crop Botany at BAU in 1964 he served in various capacities in the University of Dacca and the University of Oxford. He took his Ph.D. Degree from the University of London where he worked with Prof. C. D. Darlington. He also worked on ionizing radio-isotope of the Radio Isotope School of Japan. Besides, he worked as a visiting professor in the Benaras University, India. He acted as Vice-Chancellor of the BAU on different occasions. His chequered career which began in 1944 and came to an end in 1981 also witnessed some turbulent events and upheavals that shook this sub-continent and in course of time created new histories and nations.

Professor Ashrafal Haque was a man who always re-

garded his duty to be sacred. Sincerity and honesty were the distinguishing traits of his character. When in our time a gap exists in the relationship between the teachers and students, Prof. Haque set an example of paternal concern and care for his students. He always advised the students to study attentively and to take care of their health.

In his personal temperament, the late teacher was very kind to the poor. Throughout his life he tried to help the needy to the best of his capacity. Many of the low-paid employees of Bangladesh Agricultural University were economically benefited by him in times of need. Immediately before his death he donated one of the low-paid employees of the university, who worked at his varsity residence, a large sum of money from provident fund. At the same time, he also donated a good amount of savings of his life for the establishment of educational and religious institutions.

Although Prof. Haque always lived a very simple life. He used to take very simple food and used to wear pajama and panjabi -- a simple dress. "Simple living and high thinking" was his motto of life.

Prof. Ashrafal Haque was



not a Bangladeshi by birth but he loved Bangladesh, her language, her wind, flowers, rivers as his own. His love for the language of Bangladesh was so deep that an incident may be cited as a proof. Once in Mymensingh he was asked to address a function arranged on the occasion of Ekushe February some years back. Standing in front of the loudspeaker he inquired of the audience -- "I can speak my mother-tongue which none of you will understand. I can speak in English which most of you will understand. I can also speak in Bengali, but not so well. Now, which language should I use." A section of the audience requested him to speak in English. Hearing this, he said, "It would be more heartening to me, if you ask me to speak in Bengali, your mother-tongue."

A man like Prof. Ashrafal Haque is rare today. The dedication with which he worked throughout his life is lacking most of us. Inspired by his noble ideals and his sense of duty, we should all make a vow to put in our best efforts to realise his ideals in all spheres of life. He is no more with us but his ideals will remain with us forever. We can only pay respect to him by doing our respective duties with dedications and honesty like him.