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beloved teacher 118

writing history of independence of Bangladesh and also on the editorial board of several journals. He joined the Department of History as supernumerary Professor on July 1, 1986. Besides Bengali and English Prof. Kabir knew several languages like Arabic, Persian, German, Urdu, and Hindi, specialised in medieval History of Islam and taught several branches of history including early history of Islam, modern History of West Asia (Middle East), International Law and Organisations and Mediaeval History of South Asia. He published seven books and more than 40 research papers in leading journals besides many popular essays, articles and book reviews. Kabir visited a number of countries including the UK, the USA, West Germany, India, Iran and Indonesia in connection with studies, researchers, international conferences, committee meeting and International Visiting Programme. He participated in and presided over hundreds of popular seminars, symposia, discussions, on various national and historical occasions and celebrations and delivered speeches and addresses, some of which were covered by news media and published in journals during his lifetime.

Prof. Mafzullah Kabir had a brilliant academic and professional records to his credit and served the country in many capacities and earned a very high esteem from his colleagues, friends and subordinates, but to thousands of his students he was a devoted teacher, guide and inspiration. I worked with him for two decades and never felt that we were his subordinate colleagues. We always found in him a well-wisher and friend as the Head of the Department. He never ordered but requested his colleagues to do some additional works for the Department and that worked

like a magic. He was equally devoted to his academic researches — very methodic organised and lucid in expressions and used minimum words express maximum thoughts — this is evident in all his written works.

I came in close contact with Prof. Kabir when I was a student of M.A. Final Year. I belonged to his tutorial group and he took classes on West Asia and International Law and Organisations. He used to read carefully every word we wrote and give very useful suggestions for improvement, later as the Head of the Department of History we found him very tolerant and he used to give patient hearing to everybody in matters calling for his final decisions. I recall an occasion when he showed extreme tolerance and listened to opinions of all groups of students meeting of all students of the Department was called to consider certain changes in the rules of the departmental students union. He presided over the meeting. At the very outset a group of students raised objections to the acceptability of the proposal for changes in the particular meeting and on this point arguments and counter-arguments continued for about four

hours. In the end Prof. Kabir adjourned the meeting by saying that he was listening with great interest to the way students put forward their arguments; though nothing was achieved he was fully satisfied with the quality and force of their arguments and declared that was the greatest success of the meeting.

Prof. Kabir never boasted his positions and achievements — rather was satisfied with much less than he actually deserved. He was never a rich man and lived all through a simple but decent life but was always dutiful, pious and honest. He was above all kinds of superstitions and evils. He was equally dutiful to his profession and to his family and possessed certain qualities which are rare in our society in the present days. With Prof. Kabir's death not only his children have lost a loving father and his wife a devoted husband but the Dhaka University also lost a teacher and researcher, his students a friend, well wisher and guide and the nation a historian and educational of high repute and a person of the highest sense of duty and values.

We pray to the Almighty for the eternal peace of the departed soul.



Late Prof. Mafzullah Kabir with his wife.

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Tributes to a



Late Prof. Mafzullah Kabir addressing a seminar almost a decade ago.

"Professor Kabir retired in June 1985 and joined the Department of History, Dhaka University as a supernumerary Professor from July 1, 1986. He is very well and busy with his own research works on Muslim civilisation." When I gave the above information about Prof. Mafzullah Kabir to a London University Professor whom I met at the India Office Library, London on August 8, I had no knowledge that he had been fighting a vain struggle for survival in a Dhaka hospital following a road accident and doctors operated on his body twice to get him well. Prof. Kabir died on August 8, 1986 at the age of 62 leaving behind him a family of five — wife, a son and three daughters — and thousands of his students, relatives and friends.

Professor M. Kabir was born in Noakhali district on

February 28 1925 and was educated first at the High Madrasa and then at the University of Dhaka. He secured first position in both the High Madrasa (Matriculation) and Intermediate 2mm (Group C) examination of the Dhaka Board — with letters in Arabic, Maths, (Addl. and Compulsory) and Fiqah

K. M. MOHSIN

in the High Madrasa examination in 1941 and then studied B.A. (Hons.) and M.A. in History at the University of Dhaka and secured First Class in his M.A. examination in 1947. He obtained Ph.D. from the University of London in 1953 for his dissertation "Buwayhids of Baghdad" and subsequently acquired junior and senior Proficiency Certificates in German from the Dhaka University.

Prof. Kabir joined the Department of History in the Dhaka University in June 1948 and served the University for 37 years as Lecturer, Reader (Associate Professor), Professor, Provost, Dean and Pro-Vice Chancellor. He was also the President of the Dhaka University Teachers' Association for sometime. He was a visiting Professor at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and Fellow, Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, Simla during 1974-1976. He associated with the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh as General Secretary, Treasurer, Vice-President and President and was elected a Fellow of the Society in 1983. Prof. Kabir served the Dhaka Museum — now the National Museum of Bangladesh — as its Honorary Curator, worked as Vice-President and President of Bangladesh History Association, Chairman Authentication Committee for