

Professor M. U. Ahmed used to say; "We are the best products of the university and as such we must maintain our dignity at all costs." Principal M. N. Karim pays tribute to his late colleague

In memory of a self-respecting educationist

Professor M. U. Ahmed, an erudite scholar of the Dhaka University and a reputed psychiatrist of Bangladesh breathed his last on January 31. He was a person of impeccable character with a remarkable personality. In fact both as a philosopher-psychologist and a psychiatrist he proved himself to be a beacon light for the successive generations.

He had a brilliant academic distinction, standing first in First Class in his M. A. in philosophy in 1933 from the Dhaka University with a subsequent Master's degree in psychology from the Toronto University, Canada in 1955.

He had his early appointment in the Allahabad University as Lecturer for a short period and subsequently served as Professor of Philosophy in various government colleges of both undivided Bengal and Bangladesh and had established his reputation as a teacher of profound knowledge and of outstanding ability. Soon he had his lift in the Senior Educational Service and as such served in various capacities as Vice-Principal (T. T. College, Mymensingh), Divisional Inspection of Schools (Chittagong) and as Principal of the Dhaka College (1957-62). In each of these administrative spheres Prof. Ahmed proved himself an administrator of rare quality of head and heart with power of taking judicious decisions on all important affairs attaching little or no importance to the influence or threats from any superior quarter.

I knew him very closely for sometime as a dependable friend/colleague at the Chittagong College where I was a Professor of History and more closely as a philosopher-friend at the Dhaka College from 1957-62 when he was Principal of the college and I was Professor of History and Vice-Principal and Professor-in-Charge of the students' union. He was found to be a person of strong conviction, always conscious of his own self-respect and self-confidence, suffering neither from superiority complex nor from any inferiority complex. He was a pillar of patience under adverse circumstances and would remain firm and undaunted under personal calamities and under any administrative troubles. While supervising construction work

at the Dhaka College in 1958, he had an accident which required a major operating on his right leg. At the sight of his operation I fell instantaneously on the ground, as it was so much shocking to me that I could not stand it, but he kept quiet and firm with eyes open with a smiling countenance directed towards me for my encouragement and relief.

The principle of self-respect was another remarkable feature of Prof. Ahmed's character. He used to tell me, "We are the best products of the University and as such we must maintain our dignity at all costs." In other words, he meant to say, 'try to respect your own self and you will have respect from others.' This is just in consonance with a valuable saying of our Prophet (S.M.) Prof. Ahmed did not like flattering to the vanity of a boss for any favour nor he would like it from others. As a matter of fact, I did not find him even to address his immediate boss as 'Sir'.

His reputation as an outstanding teacher and administrator tinged with his dignified personality earned for him the post of a member of the Public Service Commission. If he could be crowned with a higher post like that of a V.C. of a university or the like, he could have left behind his impact on society in a biggest way. But he was above all politics, and as a true philosopher he not only disliked but hated to indulge in politics for self elevation.

While a Professor of Philosophy at Chittagong College, Prof. Ahmed established his reputation as a master of hypnotism. He could hypnotise students and as such extract from them poetic verses and lectures of persons of note by his hypnotic suggestions based on his wonderful by developed will-power. It is said that in the subconscious region of man there is a poetic and imitative talent which lies dormant and which works wonders under proper stimuli from outside. When as Professor of Dhaka College I was in charge of the administration of the then Iqbal Hall (1950-53), now known as Zuhurul Huq Hall, I once requested him to give a demonstration of his hypnotism in the Iqbal Hall auditorium during his short stay at Dhaka in

his vacation period. He complied with my request. His demonstration kept the audience spell-bound. One student was picked up and he gave him his hypnotic suggestion that he was Jinnah in the Jahangir Park facing a great gathering awfully anxious to him. He gave the signal for start and the student went on lecturing as Jinnah to the surprise of all. A few other demonstrations of different types were also given to the surprise of all. While posted at Dhaka, Prof. Ahmed avoided his practice of hypnotism. One day he gave out to me the reason of his abstention thus: "If I practise it here, my authorities will be terribly afraid of me and will seek my ruin." He considered me to be the most dependable friend and colleague for reasons best known to him.

In his retiring period Prof. Ahmed was for sometime a supernumerary teacher of psychology at the Dhaka University. He was Chairman of the Bangladesh Psychological Association for a long time and was associated with many such intellectual organisations as life member. But he played his part more prominently as a psychiatrist and came to be known as a healer of mental diseases with eminent success. Even in the last day of his life (31-1-88), he had attended his mental patients in the morning hours of the day and passed away silently on his bed in the evening hours of his rest (at 5.15 p.m. without causing any trouble to anyone).

Prof. Ahmed was informed six months earlier all about the deteriorated condition of

his heart and as such the sword of Democles was hanging on his head. But he was not afraid of it at all. As a psychiatrist he was ready for that inevitable hour a mortal man and therefore kept himself ready for that in every possible way. He got a major portion of his Dhanmondi residential land sold and with money thus gained he made provisions for the creation of a few Trust Funds for the cause of education at Dhaka and other Universities and societies of Bangladesh.

Prof. Ahmed had a number of family bereavements in his life. He lost his devoted wife about a decade and a half ago, and lost his two sons-in-law and a son, one after the other. His had the unique psychological stamina to stand these misfortunes of life without losing his mental balance at all.

Prof. Ahmed took his life to be a reality in the same breath with a poet who says:

"Life is real, life is earnest
And the grave is not its goal,
Dust thou art, to dust thou
returnest
And was not spoken of the
soul."

Prof. Ahmed has passed away and will soon pass into oblivion as 'coming and going' is the go of the day and none is blessed with eternal life of memory. But has left behind him a rich legacy of books on psychology and hypnotism and eight published volumes of work on psychiatry. He had thus left behind him his 'foot prints on the sands of time' for the posterity. May his soul rest in peace.