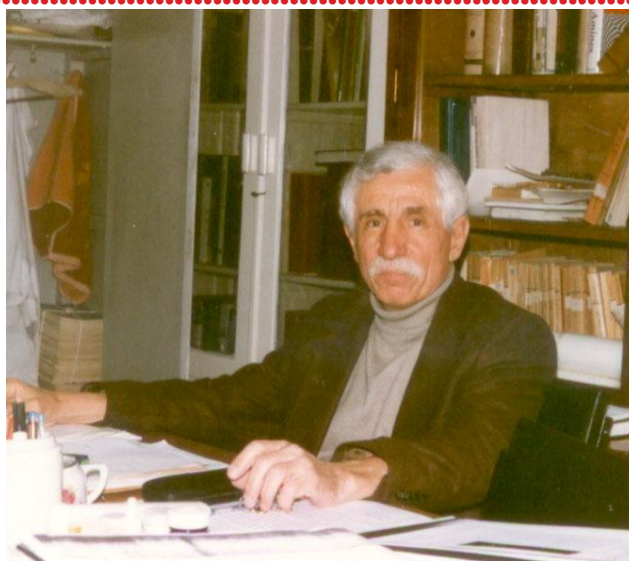


The Late Lamented

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Professor Dr. Hassan Farsam left us with a lot of honors after more than half a century teaching pharmacy students. I became familiar with the name of this pharmacy professor during my pharmacy training around 1992 when my supervisor informed me about unique features of a pharmacy pioneer from Tehran Faculty of Pharmacy. After a couple of years, I encountered with Professor Farsam's publications and interests on the history of pharmacy and natural products. Also, recently when he was the head of the TUMS Museum of History of Medicine, I asked him regarding the situation of Iranian pharmacy in the past 50 years and his perspective on the following 50 years. He did kindly participate in our interview and made us aware of the ethical considerations in the future hi-tech research and production in pharmacy. From my point of view, his three bright personalities were honesty, interest in history of medicine, and loving his mentees.

The first important character of Professor Farsam was honesty and patience in science. There are stories in the memory of his students concerning his being frank in telling the truth and perseverance in protecting and teaching this to his students. In fact, no one could stop him from telling the truth although he would easily change his mind if he encountered with a newer idea.

Another influencing character of this great professor was his affinity to protecting the historical medical documents and antiques for the future generations and presenting the history of medicine and pharmacy. He kindly showed me in detail the Tehran Museum of History of Medicine this year. I remem-

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ber his story of him and his wife having tried for days to prepare old remaining objects from more than 100 years ago which belonged to an old pharmacy from a deserted basement. When he was informed of an early model of a radiograph in one of the private hospitals, he instantly asked us for transferring this old machine to the SUMS Museum of History of Medicine. He was so interested in the Persian history of medicine that he supervised students and published literatures in the field of history of medicine and pharmacy.

Finally, the most important dimension of Professor Farsam's personality that is appreciated by 6 decades of pharmacy students is his mentoring. He had decided to spend around 80 percent of his time in the university during his life, which was one of his marriage agreements. When I asked him to write in the memory of one of his former students, he kindly accepted and wrote down a memorable lament that is now published on the occasion of the first anniversary of Nastaran Nafisi (Associate Professor of Pharmaceutics, Shahid Beheshti Faculty of Pharmacy).

“A Lament on the Death of a Colleague

To drop a line on a painful death is easier than done. Life is not empty and meaningless. We all work to protect the people from grievances. To condole on a bereaved person is a tradition which may calm someone down, but the grief will not burn out soon.

I imagine a girl who begins her education at primary school with this hope to be literate. Her mother embraces her and tears roll down her cheeks. This is the first step for this child. She continued her education up to the end of the high school. Entering the university, she is full of fear and hope. Jumping from this stage is the top of magnificence. Conceive this girl passed the entrance exam and was accepted in a valuable faculty and became an asset for her country and a candidate on advancement of science. During the education, she always tried to introduce herself as a top-flight student. Having achieved the Pharm D., she tried to be an expert and got her wish and was accepted as a faculty member in a top university. She was really well-qualified for this job. During her work in the university, she had an engaging address and was held in reverence by her colleagues. She was like many of the youth and married her classmate. They grew attached to each other. They were really prosperous. Who knew her life span was nearly over, and she would not live to see her fulfillment. I know this girl; she was Nastaran Nafisi Varcheh. God bless her.

I end this lament by a verse from Walt Whitman (the American poet) for Dr. Faramarzi: Long have we lived, joy'd, caress'd together; Delightful! –now separation- Good-bye my Fancy.”

دیرستانی با هم
بسر برده ایم، شادی ما کرده ایم و نوازش کرده ایم
و چه دلنشین! اینک جدایی - بدرود، ای خیال من

Bastani Parizi has mentioned in his chapter entitled: Becoming a Professor (1) “Something which is necessary in the universities is superiority”. The origin of superiority in the human behavior is politeness; i.e. politeness in academics will lead to superiority. It is clear that the root for politeness is fondness and affection for everybody: colleagues, students, etc. Professor Farsam, as the direct or indirect professor of contemporary pharmacy generations, loved university working, so he was polite to truth, and therefore, he has a special superiority. Hafez Shirazi said:

“Never dies the one, whose heart is alive with (true) love (to God)

On the world's record, is written the everlasting existence of ours”

To sum up, as such rare full-time pharmacy professors are available for the students and colleagues, the question is: Is it about high time we appreciated them and documented non-written oral history of pharmacy and their experiences for designing the future of pharmacy situation?

Reference

(1) Bastani Parizi ME. Becoming a Professor. In: Assay-e-Haft-Sang. Tehran: Alam Publication. 2004.