

Study Of History

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History has to be seen in its correct perspective. It is to be studied, understood, interpreted and evaluated. And all this has to be done with an amount of fairness, an amount of objectivity, that would render the whole exercise meaningful and make the people see the pastness of the past as well as its presence. The roots that go deep into history are those which also sustain the present and determine the future. It is therefore an insight into history that alone can provide to all that is being done at present and all that is being planned for future. The National History Conference, which is now being held at Bogra, has once again brought into sharp focus the persistent forces of history and the role they play in shaping the destiny of a people.

Professor Md. Shamsul Huq, the Foreign Minister, has, when inaugurating the Conference on Sunday last, said that a nation must look for its true identity in its history and that the study of history is therefore essential and imperative. Laying a particular emphasis on this sense of national identity, Professor Huq went on to say that there were many instances in history which go to show how a nation, inspite of achieving the position of statehood, did not succeed in discharging its responsibilities in a disciplined and constructive way and therefore in making the best possible use of the opportunities available to it because of a lack of sense of national consciousness. The correlation which Prof. Huq has established between history and the sense of national identity is of particular importance, for a nation cannot break away with its past and its attempts at future growth must clearly be linked with its past on the one hand and with its sense of national identity and national pride on the other. Professor Huq has emphasised a correct analysis of the lessons of the past and has made it clear that an analysis of this kind alone can inspire a nation to move ahead and find the right direction for its development.

Our liberation war symbolis-

es our national consciousness and our national pride. The determination with which the war was fought and the unity which it had fostered among all people are clearly an outcome of a realisation of the gravity of the crisis which our identity as a nation was faced with. In a world of changing realities, challenges of various kinds will have to be faced by all nations, especially the developing ones. It is our pride as a nation which will carry us through all such trials and will inspire us to build a happy future for our children. The Foreign Minister has expressed the hope that a correct evaluation of our history would strengthen the uninterrupted progress of the nation. He has called upon the historians to complete as quickly as possible the arduous task of writing a history of our struggle for freedom. The conference will hopefully underline the importance of this call.

Professor Huq has observed that the study of history must be dispassionate. There is no room for prejudice in such a study. It is not the history of our nation alone that demands a careful and close study. History of the world too has a claim to our attention. The Foreign Minister has considered it important to have those chapters of world history as are relevant to an understanding of our past translated into our mother tongue. Civilization is a continuous process, and a man in the modern world; conscious as he is of his responsibilities, is the proud inheritor of the entire civilisation of the world. Various streams of the world history have a bearing on our own past and on our own present and both our own past and present have to be viewed, understood and interpreted in the context of these. As Prof. Huq has pointed out, we have reached a point in history where we must be able to play our role as a nation with ability and determination. We must not miss this chance. Our understanding of our history will provide us with an insight that would enable us to perform this role in the bold, courageous, and imaginative way in which we should perform it.