

Classic Poetry Series

**Abu Hena Mostafa Kamal**  
**- poems -**

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# Abu Hena Mostafa Kamal(11 March 1936 - 23 September 1989)

Abu Hena Mustafa Kamal (Bengali: আবু হেনা মুস্তাফা কামাল), a poet, educationist, singer and composer of songs, was a professor of Bengali literature at Dhaka University and worked for the government as the Director General of the Bangla Academy from 1986 till his death.

## <b>Life</b>

Abu Hena Mustafa Kamal was born in Gobinda village of ullahpara upazila in the district of pabna on 11 March 1936. After passing MA in Bangla in 1959 from Dhaka University, he taught at different local colleges before joining the Department of Bangla, Dhaka University, as a lecturer in 1963. He joined Rajshahi University as senior lecturer of Bangla in 1965.

In 1966 he went to London University on a Commonwealth Scholarship and earned PhD degree for his dissertation on Bangla writing and the Bangla press. Abu Hena joined Chittagong University in 1973. In 1978 he rejoined the Bangla Department of Dhaka University as professor. He became Director General of the bangladesh shilpakala academy in 1984 and of the bangla academy in 1986.

## <b>Death</b>

While serving the Bangla Academy, he died of heart disease on 23 September 1989.

## <b>Literary Life</b>

Abu Hena was one of the young writers of the new literature of the fifties. Fond of poetry, he published an anthology, Purba Banlar Kavita (Poems of East Bengal), in collaboration with Mohammad Mahfuzullah in 1954. He also wrote poems and composed songs, many of which were sung by his friends, Abu Bakr Khan, Anwaruddin Khan and Md Asafaddaula, thus helping in the creation of modern songs. Among his popular songs was 'Sei champa nadir tire', sung by Abu Bakr Khan. Abu Hena also had a mellifluous voice and regularly performed on Dhaka Radio. His voice could convey intimate feelings and deep emotions, making his songs memorable.

Abu Hena Mostafa Kamal produced three books of poems: Apan Yauban Bairi (My

Wayward Youth, 1974), Yehetu Janmandha (Since Born Blind, 1984) and Akranta Ghazal (Oppressed Ghazal, 1988) and a compilation of songs Ami Sagarer Nil (I Am the Blue of the Sea, 1995). He was also a fine prose writer and wrote several essays on Bangla literature, which have been collected in Shilpir Rupantar (Transformation of the Artist) and Katha O Kavita (Discourse and Poetry). These books are a valuable contribution to Bangla literary criticism. He also used to write witty columns, which were greatly acclaimed. Abu Hena's research work written in English, The Bengali Press and Literary Writing, is a discussion of literature published in the Bangla periodicals of 19th century Kolkata.

### <b>Personality</b>

An orator, narrator and conversationalist, Abu Hena was an attractive personality. He could captivate audiences with his eloquence and humour. He was also popular as a professor of literature.

# A Poet

Dear God, a poet: at least many poets say you  
Are a poet too.

They say it, because your fingertips make  
The sunset beyond the mountains  
Under the shade of the wide sky-leaf,  
And deposit the hopes of a star On birds' eye-lids'

And your melodies tune up on the cloud's organ  
Prompt on the first day of the rainy season.

I heard only this, because  
I never have gone far from this city,  
Not stayed beyond these dark lanes  
And their shrouded surroundings  
Denying their earnest call.

So please tell me, God,  
Did you ever enter into a burning hell of agony  
For a single piece of poetry?  
Did you ever pace back and forth upon  
The same street again and again?  
Did you ever lay awake  
So you could shine a lady's face with suitable words.

Then, tell me God, 'the poet',  
Admit that you, too, are covered with your own blood,  
You, too, are often mistaken  
For just a remarkable metaphor.

[Translated from the Bengali by Hassanal Abdullah]

Abu Hena Mostafa Kamal

# Chhobi

Abu Hena Mostafa Kamal

# Onek Bristi Jhore Tumi Ele

Abu Hena Mostafa Kamal

# Tumi Je Amar Kobita

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