

The Memoirs of a Life Insurance Icon: Khuda Buksh

Various Contributors, Editor

Muhammad Rahim, Compiler

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Working tirelessly from the 1930s until his death in 1974, Khuda Buksh established insurance as an institution in Bangladesh, became the driving force in expanding life insurance in Pakistan, and helped nurture the business in East India, becoming a much beloved business figure in all three countries.

In this homage to his work, compiler Muhammad Rahim and the book's seven editors present a thorough, in-depth biography based partially on Buksh's writing, but also on numerous interviews with friends, associates, and family members of the life insurance icon. The result is a full portrait that would likely be much appreciated by its subject, and will definitely be admired by anyone seeking to know about Buksh, life insurance in other countries, and how the culture of India, in particular, affected business there in the early part of the twentieth century.

Buksh started his career as an agent of the Oriental Government Security Life Assurance Company of the undivided India, and was the first among the Bengal Muslim community to embrace insurance as a profession. Later, he became general manager of the life insurance department of the Eastern Federal Union Insurance Company of Pakistan, demonstrating that his leadership and sales skills could span a wide geographical distance rife with language barriers and religious differences.

Those who remember working with him describe a man who was tough in business, refusing to look the other way if an agent tried to take advantage of a client or attempted to implement unscrupulous practices. Agents who worked hard and showed strong ethics, though, were amply rewarded with Buksh's mentorship and appreciation.

His personal qualities of generosity, warmth, and thoughtfulness are often highlighted in the recollections collected in this volume, showing that if he had a secret to his success, it was to see other people as human beings who could benefit from his services, rather than as mere customers. Stories abound of Buksh going out of his way to help others, either through minor favors or major assistance, and he did so without complaint or expectation of anything in return.

Based on the outpouring of memories so lovingly compiled here, Buksh was far more than a business leader who established a specific industry; he was a humanitarian, dedicated family man, and exemplary person, and it's only fitting that he should be honored with such a well-crafted, thorough memoir.

ELIZABETH MILLARD (March 1, 2011)

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