

I was one of Asha's philosophy lecturers, and it's a great honour to speak today. I know that my feelings can't remotely compare to the grief of her parents, brother, family and friends. Still, I hope it might mean something to hear of the feelings that Asha inspired in one of her teachers. I won't presume to speak for my colleagues, though I can simply say that the entire Philosophy Department is bereft.

Asha was very clearly a remarkable person. What was it that made her so special? For one thing, she had many wonderful qualities that seldom go together. Of course she was brilliant, in philosophy and many other fields, but she was also modest. She spoke her mind, standing up for what she believed, but was sensitive and gentle too. She was devoted to her work, and also helpful and giving to others. She was serious and funny. She could express herself very simply, and she was profound, with an appreciation for the nuance and depth of the world.

As Asha's teacher, I learnt a lot from her. I remember a presentation in which she set out the views of a difficult author. She had asked herself repeatedly what this person meant, and how best to put it, and she gave a talk that was clear, precise and entertaining, qualities that the author himself hadn't managed to achieve.

For a teacher, there can be a complicated pleasure in having an outstanding student; one awaits the questions and remarks with a mingled sense of anticipation and dread. But Asha's manner made it enjoyable even to be corrected. I recall her pointing out a significant philosophical mistake I'd made in my lecture notes in the kindest way. She said, 'I think I see a typo.'

Asha's Honours thesis was a creative and rigorous reflection on how thought experiments work. In our meetings about the thesis, she showed suppleness and steel in her responses to my remarks. Sometimes she agreed with criticisms, and adjusted her position accordingly; at other times she stood her ground, and explained why she was right.

As a teacher of undergraduates herself, Asha showed great concern for her students, who often expressed their appreciation of her. Once she gave a lecture to my class when I was away, something on the British Empiricists. The topic certainly had the potential to be dull, but I saw Asha's slides afterwards, which included witty poems, beautiful images of the cosmos and of a sunlit forest, and an incisive structure. Humour, grace and clarity; I was lucky to be her teacher, and *her* students were lucky too. It was a joy to hear that Asha had won a Commonwealth Scholarship, though it wasn't surprising. Of course, she was modest about it.

Three days ago my mother saw the notices in the newspaper, some of them written by Asha's relatives, and she realised that our family had a connection to Asha's, some generations upstream. It turns out that Asha's great-grandparents lived in a hotel that was managed by my grandfather. Not only that, but my grandparents were friends with Asha's great-grandparents, and often said that they held them in very high regard. My mother emphasised that phrase when she told me: *very high regard*. She was remembering her parents saying it, more than fifty years ago, about their friends.

After I heard this, I thought of a few lines from Shakespeare's play Julius Caesar. Shakespeare has the character Mark Antony, in his funeral oration over Caesar, say a cynical thing about what we remember of people. 'The evil that men do lives after them,' says Mark Antony; 'The good is oft interred with their bones.' I think that even if there is a little truth to this, it is so far from the whole story. We *cherish* the memories of those we find remarkable. We hold onto our admiration and respect for them. These memories are a gift: they comfort us, they inspire us, they enrich our lives. I can't really believe that Asha's gone – I feel she's going to send me a mail or pop her head round the door. But even when the dreadful truth of her passing has sunk in, I know that as long as I have thoughts and feelings, Asha will have an honoured place in them. She is unforgettable. And though there can be no compensation for the terrible enormity of her absence, I want to say now – to say always – that I hold Asha in *very high regard*.