

A Tale of Teacher

Translated by
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I was feeling quite relieved not having any class in the very first period. I was just taking a puff on the cigarette, just then Shyam da appeared with the notebooks of the gap period. I had got so peeved at that moment that I left for the class.

There were three ceiling fans in the classroom running above our heads, but the air was not being circulated all over the room. Since there was no teacher in the next classroom, just adjacent to the classroom I was in, the pupils were making fuss. Headmaster had not yet come. So, there was no one to care about. Everyone just wanted to avoid their duties. After I had taken the attendance and taught awhile, the bell rang imparting the end of the class. Entering in the staff-room I heard Atishbabu saying in an emphatic tone that had the British rule been continued in India, it would have been advantageous for the Indians to make an economic as well as intellectual development. Atishbabu, himself was an English teacher and wholeheartedly, he was a 'pure English and a communist'. He was adept in speaking English quite proficiently. He was very popular among the students. He instructed his pupils that there was no need of learning grammar in order to learn the English language. If one wants to learn the English language, he has to listen to English news and watch English movies. One has to adopt the different ways and styles of speaking in that language. Atishbabu, the la-di-da has come to the school wearing a jeans-pant with a chest-exposing t-shirt.

All the teachers are apparently good to one another, especially to the people in the administration. Nevertheless, they have formed distinct groups and sub-groups, and in their own opinions they think that they are absolutely correct. There are some teachers who do not even know how to dress up themselves. But when comes the time of school election, they cast their votes for the party which would help in securing their self-interest. During the election and also when comes the question of salary, there is no chance of mistaking on their part.

All of them think themselves to be a 'Pundit'. This type of egotism probably can be seen only in human world. It is even present in some people who do not exhibit themselves. Those teachers who are new comers think that the senior teachers cannot teach well, while the senior teachers think that the newcomers will lead the coming generations to their doom.

Nobody would accept their own delinquencies. But secretly I would like to confess my flaw- I always set questions which would prove my scholasticism and ultimately my advantage would be not to put much effort at evaluating the answer scripts since I know very well that the questions would remain unanswered.

But there are some who can aptly be regarded as good teachers. They never opt for earning money giving tuitions. They never have any tendency to waver in paying proper income tax. They maintain punctuality in taking classes. They do not take leave unnecessarily. They try to teach things in the easiest way they can. They teach without aiming to get students for tuition. Nevertheless, the numbers of such type of teacher are really very few. But there are also many teachers who collect the receipt of home rent from their own father in order to avoid paying taxes.

Nobody can get rid of those who make fun of others and do not leave a chance to ridicule anyone. It is actually very easy to point fingers at others` mistake. But those who are really good teachers never get stirred up with these mockers, even though they get hurt.

Entering into the classroom, I was informed that there was a phone-call from my home. I did not have any mobile. Making a call to my home from the Headmaster`s office, I came to know that my daughter was suffering from an acute fever. While coming to the school, I saw her having little fever and now that has increased. I also had in my mind the tension that people around were getting pox these days. So, I left for home immediately after informing the Headmaster.

But it was quite impossible to reach home so fast enough as I desperately wanted it to be so. I started walking as I faced traffic jam at Moulali. The sex-workers had called for a meeting at Dharmatala for their legal rights. A protesting worker from 'Durbar Samiti' was heard to

canvass on the mike: “now a days, the police charge money but do not provide proper service, the lawyers accept payments but do not provide receipts in turn, and we cannot say anything even if they do not give proper service. But we take money from the people and offer proper service in return. As we do not have any legal permission, we face and resist mobsters who have the support of the police on their side.” I noticed a sizable number of male audiences who were seem to be very excited. For awhile I enjoyed the moment, since nobody knew there that I am a teacher, but I left to catch a bus as I had in my mind the fact that my daughter was ill.

Getting into the bus at Dharmatala, I noticed everyone has got a seat on the bus except me, but I had had no option left – I could not also wait for the next bus to come. In the bus, I could hear the protesting people screaming. A gentleman who was sitting just in front of me said, “See, how they have become uncontrollable – this is only the result of too much indulgence.” Even though people around him were quite, they were stirred up as they heard him say those things. The gentleman kept on saying: “that time is coming when they will also demand for seat reservation in employment as the lower caste people have already done. Our sons and daughters will not get jobs anymore.” I became conscious to see if there was any woman around- fortunately, there was none. The gentleman was sitting on a seat reserved for female passenger. I feel very uncomfortable if someone uses foul language in front of women. In anger, the gentleman uttered a slang word while mentioning about the other backward classes. The bus gained speed and the passengers were increasing in numbers. At P.T.S. some female passengers got onto the bus. Before leaving the seat reserved for female passengers, the gentleman took out a bandage from his bag and putting it around his neck, he hung his right hand with it – as if he had a fracture in his hand. Leaving the seat reserved for female passengers, he managed to stand before the seat reserved for the differently abled people. Seeing the condition of the gentleman, he was offered the seat reserved for the differently abled people. That clever man reached Dharmatala to Mandirtala sitting at first on the seat reserved for women and then on the seat reserved for the disabled persons.

**Keeping name in the voter list for 30-40 years,
Now voting right is like taking away the right of citizenship**

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