the penalty was. That is what an ideal teacher should be doing even after more than two thousand years of death of Socrates. But alas that is something often seems to be missing in today's teachers. Academic and financial dishonesty along with painful ignorance have become an integral part of some 'teachers' and they are least bothered about these. A university 'teacher' plagiarized his entire thesis and is awarded his degree by another group of dishonest colleagues. He now preaches honesty regularly in TV talk shows. Reports are often published about how chief executives of some universities using their position have put employments in their institutions up for auctions to the highest bidder. A young university teacher teaches the learners that the Red Army is the Indonesian Army! That teacher's parents are very respectable people in the country. That was an important criterion in getting the job. There is nothing wrong in ignorance provided one made efforts to correct the ignorance. I have often found students to be very good source of correcting my ignorance. One just have to believe in the saying of Socrates 'no evil can happen to a good man either in life or after death.' There is not harm in trying to be good man. You just have to try it.

Today's teachers believe much on lectures and less on student's participation or active learning. To most students teachers belong to class of people who only believes in preaching sermons, something like a preacher does. He does not have much time or intention of listening to his pupils' ideas and alternatives. He is neither interested to inspire students to come out with something different. That the objective of education should be learning and not only teaching is hardly realized. In their best seller book 'Turning Learning Right Side Up: Putting Education Back on Track' authors Russell .L Ackoff and Daniel Greenberg points out that because of this wrong interpretation of education, 'today's education system is seriously flawed.' Teachers in most schools, around the world, still mistakenly takes memorization for learning not realizing most of what is remembered is remembered for only a short time, but quickly forgotten. Learners unfortunately are treated as poor surrogates of such machines as computers, calculators and recording instruments. Whereas the focus of education should be on what humans can do better than the machines and instrument they create.

Teaching is an excellent method of learning because one who explains learns the most, because the person to whom the explanation is made can afford to forget the explanation promptly in most cases; but the explainers (teachers) will find it sticking in their minds a lot longer, because they struggled to gain an understanding in the first place in a form clear enough to explain. Otherwise you are on the wrong side of the fence. This is hardly appreciated.

> Socrates made a very powerful speech in his own defense. He said he teaches as he does because it is his way of serving God and Athens. He said it is Not true that he wants to destroy the ideals of Athens. He argued that there was just one important lesson--to know what is right and do it.

Back in the fifties for Mr. Peter Shah to teach the fourth graders the Bangla alphabets in an English medium school was not an easy task. However in the end he did it very successfully as he did not pretend to be a 'sage on the stage.' He was a 'guide on our side' meticulously trying to hold our hands to make sure we went home learning the alphabets. Most of his students still remember him for his enviable feat as a teacher that spanned over four decades. His face was beaming while sharing with me his experience of attending not less than sixty lunches and dinners with his former students while he was visiting his son in Canada few years back. He seems very proud not just only as a teacher but also as a parent as well. All his sons and daughters are well placed. He was a teacher to all of them. His youngest daughter who came visiting her in-laws in the city would spend the night with her parents today. Mr. Pete Shah seemed very happy. What more could he ask as a teacher and a father?

UNESCO inaugurated October 5 as World Teachers' Day in 1993. It commemorates teachers' organizations worldwide. Its aim is to mobilize support for teachers and to ensue that the needs of future generations will continue to be met by teachers. According to UNESCO, World Teachers' Day represents a significant token of the awareness, understanding and appreciation displayed for the vital contribution that teachers make to education and national development. 'Teachers Matter' is the theme of 2008 World Teachers Day. Teachers in Bangladesh from primary to university level are still the neglected lot amongst all professionals. These along with other reasons have compounded the problems of this sector by not being able to attract the right type of people to this profession. In most cases the niches are being filled by the mediocre. Mediocre can only breed mediocrity. The nation needs teachers with intellective, social and moral competence. This is only possible if the nation can provide the proper environment that will be able to attract the right people to the teaching profession. When knowledge is shared, skills are gained and lives can change. No one is in better position to share knowledge than an ideal teacher, a 'guide on the side'. Teachers matter.

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