It's Just as Easy to Teach 'Right' as it is to Teach 'Wrong'

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Monday, January 13 was Bangladesh Pupils' Liberation Day – a memorable and auspicious occasion for many Bangladeshi school pupils, but regrettably, not all.

It was on this date in 2011 that eminent Bangladesh High Court justices Md Imman Ali and Sheikh Hassan Arif outlawed the barbaric practice of corporal punishment in schools declaring it: *"cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and a clear violation of a child's fundamental right to life, liberty and freedom".*

While some children have reason to celebrate their "Liberation Day" from the horrors of cruelty in the classrooms and attend school without tears, without fears, many of their young comrades are still not so lucky.

During the past three years there have been countless reports published in newspapers (including *Star Magazine*) and appeals made for 'teachers' to abandon their despicable practice of beating defenceless children. There's been feisty discussions on TV and Radio talk shows, memos from the Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid MP and Education Secretary Dr Kamal Naser Chowdhury, all informing and reminding headmasters and teachers alike they are not permitted by law to hit any child.

The message was clear: "There's nothing to gain by using the cane"

During this period there's also been a number of horrifying news reports published that link corporal punishment to cancer and life-long disabilities, but some 'teachers' just don't seem to care. Some, it would appear, view every child entrusted into their care to be there for their masochistic pleasure to be slapped, kicked, beaten, mentally and physically mistreated as they so please. And they have the nerve to call it discipline!

Unfortunately, ignorant parents of some village children believe and trust the 'teachers' to be acting in the better interest of their child. After all, the 'teacher' is educated and would be knowledgeable on such matters, correct? – Ha! How wrong can they be?



In many cases the 'teacher' knows only a little bit more than those in his charge and succeeded in winning the brown envelope game to get the job.

Teachers they're not, and highly unlikely they will ever become one, no matter how many years they've already escaped detection. While I can sympathize with the Bangladesh education system in desperate need of good professional teachers – which will take decades to sort out – there is no excuse for any form of corporal punishment from the consummate incompetent.

Qualified as teachers, they might not be, but they have a duty to Allah, the nation and the code of common decency that clearly states if they can't help then, at least, they shouldn't hinder the development of the child.

There's an enormous despicable violent undercurrent in Bangladesh, you will have noticed. We see its ugly face regularly during hartals, especially. We read about the mindless beatings and