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## TEACHERS AS ROLE MODELS TO THEIR STUDENTS

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### ABSTRACT

"The real danger" said a genuine teacher Dr. Ferry, "does not lie in the fact that the machine will start thinking but that the man will give up thinking"<sup>1</sup>. And of course man has given up thinking and judging something sincerely. Therefore, very often, it is difficult to draw a line of demarcation between the teacher and the propagandist. Bertrand Russell writes: "something called education is given to everybody, usually by the state, but sometimes by the churches. The teacher has thus become, in the vast majority of cases, a civil servant obliged to carry out the behests of men who have not his learning, who have no experience of dealing with the young, and whose attitude towards education is that of the propagandist."<sup>2</sup>.

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He again writes in the same essay on P-118:

"No man can be a good teacher unless he has feelings of warm affection towards his pupils and a genuine desire to impart to them what he himself believes to be of value. This is not the attitude of the propagandist."<sup>3</sup>

Unlike a genuine teacher, a propagandist may go to any extent in order to carry out the behest of authority. Let me frankly accept that in the name of teaching students are still filled with propaganda. Schools, Colleges, universities and other agencies function like factories to produce desired products. In our ultra modern technical society man is getting or has got no more than a make shift device in place of a robot. And what robots can do but just carry out the behests of its masters. Can a mechanical or robotic teacher feel the pangs and anguish of the students? They can never go against their masters. They will do what they are fed to do and nothing more than that. Nowadays we can see the institutions spreading hatred and bigotry in the name of education which is sufficient to destroy not only humans but also the essence of humanity. And of course a robotic teacher can never be the role model to the students.

A genuine teacher teaches how to question a question while a propagandist demands unquestioned obedience and submission to the behest of authority. A real teacher makes students observe multi aspects of a coin while a propagandist teaches only aspect of a coin. For example we are taught only good things about democracy, socialism etc. but not their vices. In books we have been

taught that “man is a rational animal”<sup>4</sup> and we have found that man is racial and brutal animal in majority of cases in the name of caste, creed, race religion, country etc.

In the name of teachers we have not only propagandists but civil servants, businessmen, and trained cogs also. A teacher as a civil servant remains more loyal to the tasks of the state than the task of teaching. A teacher as a businessman knows only how to make money, a teacher as a trained cog performs like a particular instrument for a particular purpose. Even prejudiced idiots and bigots etc. are easily available and prevalent everywhere. And of course, these ones may be, may not be role models to their students (infact, they mustn't be so).

Independent genuine teachers are always role models to their students. Teachers like Plato, Aristotle, John Dewey, Ross, Gandhi, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, Madam Curie, Kalpana Chawla, Sunita Williams, Romila Thapar, and Irfan Habib etc. are still role models to their students.

The question arises what makes a teacher role model. Answer is very simple virtues and unique experiences. Again the question arises; can a person remain virtuous to the whole life? Certainly not, but he can try to remain so. And in trying so he performs the genuine tasks of teaching. Example is better than perception. Living simple life he becomes sample or model to the students. Producing his own example he proves that simplicity is better than ornaments.

A genuine teacher Rousseau who transformed the whole system of education describes “the aim of education as the attainment of fullest natural growth of the individual”<sup>5</sup>. According to him “education is a natural not an artificial process. It is development from within, not an accretion from without. Education must be in harmony with the original and unspoiled human nature”<sup>6</sup>. He held that “learning takes place best when child is free to develop and grow according to his natural impulses”<sup>7</sup>.

A genuine teacher Gandhi thinks of “education as an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man-body, mind and spirit”<sup>8</sup>.

When a teacher becomes friend to his pupils like Rousseau, Gandhi etc. he surely becomes the role model to his pupils also.

In Sanskrit language there is a Shloka (verse) which means a teacher is mother, father, brother, friend, wealth and everything even god of gods.

Twameva mata cha pita twameva.  
Twameva bandhushcha sakha twameva.  
Twameva vidya dravinam twameva.  
Twameva sarvam mamdev deva<sup>9</sup>.

(Pandav Geeta sloka 12)

You truly are my mother and my father.  
You truly are my brother and my friend.  
You truly are my knowledge and my wealth.  
You truly are my all, my God of Gods.

Those who lack these virtues cannot be role models to their pupils as they are merely professionals. Teaching is not an easy task but an awful art. Now the question arises what an art is. I would like to conclude replying the question in the words of Bertrand Russell: “Art is an attempt of humanizing the universe, its humanizing, no doubt, begins with the humanizing of man himself”<sup>10</sup>.

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