

# **Bipolar Disorder, Bilateral Teaching**

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This is the story of my teacher who saved the life of her student who had once tried to commit suicide and may have made a second attempt. Ms Kashf Taj taught us in F.Sc. She had a deep interest in the overall well-being of her students. In this age of materialism she offered us free coaching classes. After patiently hearing out our problems, she used to give us sincere advice. Naturally, we became emotionally attached to her and would share our personal problems with her.

One of our class fellows Shazina got a lot of attention from Ms Kashf, as she often seemed disturbed and was lagging behind in studies too. At times Shazina appeared very energetic and enthusiastic about life and at other times she was depressed and lethargic.

We didn't know then that she had bipolar disorder. It is a psychological ailment in which the patient passes alternately from a phase of high energy followed by a phase of extreme depression. The depression phase is marked by low energy, non-social behaviour, unexplained feelings of exhaustion and lack of self-esteem, sadness, weeping and suicidal thoughts. The exact reason of the disease is unknown. A lot of times it is due to genetic inheritance. There is treatment available for it, through counseling and medication.

Ms. Khashf had been observing Shazina. She developed a rapport with her. After FSc Shazina had to seek admission in another college. She was denied admission in our college due to her psychological disorder. This was very disturbing for her, so much so

that she tried to commit suicide. Her family found out and rescued her, but they were not sending her for psychotherapy or counseling.

All through this difficult phase of Shazina's life, Ms Kashf maintained contact with her and continued to comfort her. Ms. Kashf spoke to Shazina and convinced her to tell her parents to take her to a psychiatrist. Initially Shazina resisted the idea as she didn't want to be labeled 'a mad person' by her family and by society. With Ms. Kashf's constant persuasion she finally agreed to speak to her parents.

As Shazina had anticipated, her parent flared up. They said Shazina was crazy to suggest such a thing and that her teacher Ms. Kashf was a fool; how could they take Shazina to a psychiatrist? How would they find a suitable match for her if people got to know that she was crazy?

Ms Kashf tolerated their anger, understanding that they knew no better and that their concerns were very real in a society where it is considered better to live like a mad man, than to get treatment for being mentally ill. She continued to speak with them at regular intervals. Finally they gave in and agreed to take Shazina to a psychiatrist.

After a year long treatment, she had successfully overcome her depressive states. She graduated from college and then did her MSc. She started to work at a university of international repute. A life had been saved and made purposeful by Ms. Kashf's persistent intervention.

Ms Kashf moved to university teaching. She is currently doing her PHD in UK.

This is one among many episodes depicting Ms Kashf's passionate and continuing involvement with her students.

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