

## EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

*'He who tastes, knows'*  
*Proverb*

### Indirect and Impact Teaching

In many spiritual traditions a teacher will often act in ways which seem inexplicable to external observers or even their own students. In reality the teacher is trying to guide the seeker to an intuitive perception of a wider and deeper reality: "For when this wise and deeper world opens, everyday life, even the most trivial thing of it, grows loaded with truth. After all, is not life itself filled with wonders, mysteries and unfathomable possibilities, far beyond our discursive understanding."

A teacher may use unusual or indirect methods to provoke a sudden shift in the disciple's consciousness in order to reveal a wider perspective and understanding:

Tokusan was a great scholar. Learning that there was such a thing as Zen ignoring all the scriptures and directly laying hands on one's soul, he came to Ryutan to be instructed in the doctrine. One day Tokusan was sitting outside trying to see into the mystery of Zen. Ryutan said, 'Why don't you come in?' Replied Tokusan, 'It is pitch dark.' A candle was lighted and handed over to Tokusan. When the latter was at the point of taking it, Ryutan suddenly blew the light out, whereupon the mind of Tokusan was opened.

Hyakujo one day went out attending his master Baso. A flock of wild geese was seen flying and Baso asked: 'What are they?' 'They are wild geese, sir.' 'Whither are they flying?' 'They have flown away.' Baso abruptly taking hold of Hyakujo's nose, gave it a twist. Overcome with pain, Hyakujo cried aloud: 'Oh! Oh!' 'You say they have flown away,' Baso said, 'but all the same they have been here from the very beginning.' This made Hyakujo's back wet with cold perspiration. He had satori. [spiritual awakening] (1)

Teachers sometimes challenge their students' egos by applying impacts that are subtle, indirect or oblique:

Gurdjieff would charge people quite a lot of money to be a student of his at Fontainebleau, except for one person. Gurdjieff in fact paid this man to be there and made him supervisor over the others. He did this because this man had a natural ability to irritate other people to death. Orage, who was in his day a master of prose and a well-respected writer, was a student of Gurdjieff, and occasionally Gurdjieff would ask him to write something or other. On one occasion Orage found that Gurdjieff had given his article to another person, who

was barely literate, to check "to make sure that there were no grammatical errors." Another time a woman who did the gardening for the Institute, and who was very attached and proud of her garden, found that Gurdjieff had "accidentally" left open the gate so that the cows had broken in and ravaged the garden. In the Sufi tradition a teacher sometimes requires his students to deliberately break a societal rule, perhaps to steal something or make advances to a woman, with the intention of being caught and being reviled. The student would be required to accept the consequences without giving any kind of explanation or reason. (2)

Spiritual transmission requires a certain degree of trust and attunement between teacher and pupil: "Harmonious chords always result from the sympathetic resonance of two or more notes." This forms the basis for the teaching relationship and enables the teacher to apply impacts that in other circumstances might otherwise be seen as unwise or inappropriate.

Seekers will usually approach a source of teaching with all sorts of arbitrary expectations, but a real teacher bypasses these subjective imaginings by projecting their teachings in a way in which the spiritual content is not readily apparent. "A teaching may not be visible to one who seeks through outward appearances. Even the most valuable piece of advice may be rejected when it comes in an unexpected manner or form."

The teacher is trying to liberate the student from their own conditioned and reactive mental and emotional patterns and return them to their original state of pure being and open awareness: "Our true resting place is balance, stillness, 'one whole mind'."

Zen calls this 'returning to one's own home,' for its followers will declare: "You have now found yourself; from the very beginning nothing has been kept away from you. It was yourself that closed the eye to the fact. In Zen there is nothing to explain, nothing to teach, that will add to your knowledge. Unless it grows out of yourself, no knowledge is really of value to you; a borrowed plumage never grows." (3)

Teachers encourage the development of inner understanding in their students through the interplay of knowledge and experience of the normal events of life. They are able to assess the relative value and importance of various life situations in regard to their learning potential for each individual pupil. This development can be accelerated by providing 'saturation teachings' in which a student is exposed to a wide range and variety of experiences: "An essential component is 'conduct teaching' whereby students are placed by the teacher in situations carefully tailored to simulate life happenings. Instead of waiting for things to happen in a random way, teachers *make* things happen – and so speed up human experience and learning."

A skilful teacher will use any and all life experiences and a variety of methods to challenge and awaken their students:

There are many Zen stories illustrating the awakening of mind at the occurrence of a sense impact while in a state of mental clarity. In some cases the impact is articulated, such as a saying, a poem, or a line of scripture. Sometimes the impact is inarticulate in the ordinary sense of the word, being a simple sound or physical contact. One of the functions of the shouting and striking that has been employed by many Zen teachers for many centuries is to provide this sudden impact at precisely the right time. One of the things that distinguishes the real from the spurious teacher in Zen is that the real teacher sees when to apply an impact, while the spurious teacher does so arbitrarily or routinely. Zen students do not realize how much they owe to those who guide them toward enlightenment until they have become enlightened. How many people today would have complained from the start that the teacher wasn't giving them enough attention? (4)

A teacher is able to assess the relative value and importance of people and situations in regard to their learning function. Only certain aspects of everyday life are useful in the development of higher knowledge. "The 'tests' and studies which will yield the greatest results are those that are least familiar to the students. This is because if people are given tasks with which they are familiar, something in them will 'cheat' in their performance."

To properly benefit from an impact teaching, the student must be receptive and open to the experiences offered by the teacher:

Sufi teaching is effected through imposed experiences, and training to benefit from experience. People are subjected to materials designed to 'strike' them in such a way as to allow the mind to work in a new or different manner. Sufi circles, their members carrying out all manner of (often seemingly mundane or irrelevant) tasks, are settings for seeking the imposition and tasting of experience. The words, the actions – even the inaction – of teachers are a further form of impact teaching. The content of Sufi literature and contact also enable the student to obtain impacts suitable to his state from what are to others simply some of the ordinary events of the conventional world. He can see them differently and profit from them more extensively, while still retaining his ability to cope with events in the ordinary world on its customary, more limited, levels. (5)

Unless the student is ripe for awakening the actions of a teacher will not bear fruit. "All that Zen can do is indicate the way and leave the rest to one's own experience. With all that the master can do, he is helpless to make the disciple take hold of ultimate reality unless the latter is inwardly fully prepared for it."

Zen is exhausting every possible means to awaken their students, as we can see in all the great masters' attitudes towards their disciples. When they are actually knocking them down, their kind-heartedness is never to be doubted. They are just waiting for the time when their pupil's minds get all ripened for the final moment. When this comes, the opportunity of opening an eye to the truth of Zen

lies everywhere. One can pick it up in the hearing of an inarticulate sound, or listening to an unintelligible remark, or in the observation of a flower blooming, or in the encountering of any trivial everyday incident. (6)

In order for indirect or impact teachings to be effective, they must be applied to the right person at the right time and in suitable circumstances. "In addition to correct study and effort we must have right conditions and experiences. People must enter circumstances in which they are more powerfully surrounded by the 'substance' which their emerging organs of higher perception are to perceive. This is analogous to saying that, if you want to teach someone wine-tasting, he or she has to have the chance to taste many wines." In addition, the results of an encounter with a teacher may not follow immediately, at the time and place desired by the student – other things may have to happen before the full benefit of the interaction accrues.

## Companionship and Emulation

The central core of wisdom is experiential and is transmitted directly through human contact and involvement. A student may learn and develop merely through association with a teacher possessing higher knowledge, much like an apprentice observing a master of a craft. "You can learn more in half an hour's direct contact with a source of knowledge (no matter the apparent reason for the contact or the subject of the transaction) than you can in years of formal effort."

People may learn from a spiritual guide without any overt verbal teachings. Through interaction and companionship, in which no word is spoken, something subtle and transformative is transferred from master to disciple:

It is related that Ibn El-Arabi refused to talk in philosophical language with anyone, however ignorant or however learned. And yet people seemed to benefit from keeping company with him. He took people on expeditions, gave them meals, entertained them with talk on a hundred topics. Someone asked him: 'How can you teach when you never seem to speak of teaching?' Ibn El-Arabi said: 'It is by analogy . . . I find out what is the real intent of the disciple, and how he can learn. And I teach him.' (7)

A certain attunement and degree of preparation is needed for a student to truly benefit from association with an enlightened teacher:

Knowledge does not automatically 'brush off,' any more than it can be transmitted by words alone; neither is it to be conveyed by training of an ordinary kind. You cannot, therefore, learn real knowledge merely by associating with someone who has it – especially if you do not even know that it is there, and if you are not focused correctly to learn. Someone or something has first to impart to you how to perceive the presence of knowledge. Without preparation there can be no teaching. (8)

It is held that higher knowledge can be “caught” from the wise by being in contact with them when they are engaged in certain activities or undergoing certain experiences. “Spiritual truth can be imperceptibly imbibed by association with a master. Moreover the master will not try to teach it like an academic subject, in a given number of lessons, definitions, or propositions, for much of the training consists of absorbing the spirit of the master.” By living in close proximity with a spiritual guide, an individual or group can absorb the teacher’s finer qualities and spiritual energy:

Real education must be absorbed by the student from the teacher. The small number of students to each teacher must be limited to a small group with whom he can live in intimacy, who can know him well and “catch” his spirit by inflection, rather than books, lessons or precepts. We must appreciate that words can never fully express human feelings or character, which consists of spirit. Physical science tends to disregard spirit, though we are all aware that it exists. We all say that we like this school or this community because it is inspired by such a wonderful spirit. We cannot exactly define what this spirit is, although we can sense it. (9)

There is a long historical tradition in many esoteric circles of disciples learning from a teacher through example and emulation. “The inner qualities of one person may help to transmute the learner. People who are real and worthy communicate this higher element through a generally unperceived current.”

To emulate the outward behaviour of a teacher, as is customary in virtually all Eastern systems, is regarded by them as the lowest form of practice. The true form of emulation can come, it is believed, only through being involved in activities of almost any kind, initiated by a teacher. Slavish imitation of a master is regarded as the mark of an unpromising student, and just as bad as criticism. The teacher makes an actual exercise of associating with him, from time to time, all of his pupils in some of the affairs of everyday life. In this way, they learn through observation and by cooperation with ‘something greater’ – this something greater being believed to be an objective force operating within the teacher himself. In this way, it is stated, the teacher and the students constitute together a pattern. The teacher is in contact with a cosmic intention. That intention informs him; he, in turn, relates the pupils with it by allowing them to take a part in his activity. (10)

One important way of gaining knowledge is by observational learning: “You gain experience through watching an experienced person, or even through being near that person. His way of doing things, and even his knowledge can be passed on to someone else, especially if the learner really wants to get it and does not expect to be first taught theoretically.”

Higher knowledge can actually be absorbed in much the same fashion as working with a master artisan or craftsman. In the Middle Ages, great artists and thinkers had disciples who worked with and learned from them, and they became masters in their turn. “An apprentice acquires from a journeyman a ‘something’ which exists independently of both the theory and

practice of his trade. The 'passing-out' ceremony of an apprentice in the old craft-guilds symbolized a recognition that he had acquired this 'something'."

There are numerous historical instances of people grouped in communities to facilitate the process of inner growth. Examples include the aforementioned apprenticeship tradition in craft guilds, secret societies such as the Freemasons, and even the connection or bond between certain families, clans or royalty:

What they all have in common is the belief that certain extraordinary perceptions can be developed by means of a certain kind of human association (call it the alchemist and his assistants, the carpet-making fraternity, one of a hundred others) whether or not the individual entering into the association is at first aware of the extra element . . . In addition to the enterprise at hand, there must be a correct selection of the particular team. This selection must be effected by a teacher. But once these conditions are fulfilled, there is no further need of one single word from any of the vocabularies of metaphysics or philosophy, esotericism as we know them. It is for such reasons as these that spiritual teachers have traditionally followed secular jobs or been administrators or skilled in many crafts: they are teaching through a variety of methods. Only their spoken teachings, or their gymnastics or prayer teachings, however, are recognized as teachings of a higher kind by others. (11)

## Journeys and Experiences

The events and experiences of everyday life may be used consciously in the development of higher human potential. "In ordinary life, certain forms of understanding become possible because of experience. The human mind is what it is partly because of the impacts to which it has been exposed, and its ability to use those impacts. The interaction between impact and mind determines the quality of the personality."

Man is developing whether he knows it or not. While you live you are learning. Those who learn through deliberate effort to learn are cutting down on the learning which is being projected upon them in the normal state. Uncultivated men often have wisdom to some degree because they allow the access of the impacts of life itself. When you walk down the street and look at things or people, these impressions are teaching you. (12)

Exposure to different cultures, languages, climates, ideas, people, work situations and life experiences help to shape the inner human being. Challenges and difficulties can be used consciously as a 'maturing process' in the development of wisdom and skilful living. "Sometimes when we look back over our lives, we may think: 'I learned more through that experience than in all the rest of my life put together,' and the experience may be a tough job of work, a phase of marriage, a serious love, an illness, a nervous breakdown."

The experiences of life, both positive and negative, can be seen as preparation for a more comprehensive understanding of reality. "Experiences repeat. If you have been exposed to enough experiences, you know how to handle future events as they come up."

The mature seeker recognizes that the prevailing conditions of the world, including difficulties, obstacles and uncertainties, are extremely useful in the development of higher consciousness. "Problems are no less regarded as to be surmounted as to be made use of. Problem-solving is only one out of several responses: they include preventing, avoiding and employing so-called problems."

Many forms of stress are beneficial. The most obvious forms of positive stress are pleasurable – playing a game, athletics, hiking, gardening, dancing, making love, travelling, and the like. Other forms of stress, if provided in right amounts at the right moments, can also be of positive value. Various experiences in life are an example. We all experience certain realities of life, and these experiences can assist personal growth and maturity. Such experiences may include giving birth to a child, raising children, working at a suitable job, various social relationships, creative activities, etc. Many of the ancient esoteric psychologies view this life on earth akin to functioning in a huge gymnasium, wherein the various stresses and experiences of life prepare us for greater things. According to this viewpoint, there are tests all along the way, and the bravest of people are those who are willing to undergo such tests. (13)

Although learning from experience *can* lead to higher levels of understanding and a more effective way of living in the world, experience by itself is useless without the means to digest it properly. "Some things in the world conduce towards understanding and some towards a more unconscious involvement with the world and consequent lack of perception and false understanding." The student must learn to discriminate between those aspects of life that lead to higher knowledge and those that do not.

The path toward spiritual enlightenment is often metaphorically described as a 'journey' or series of experiences which may or may not involve conventional travel. There is a tradition in many spiritual teachings for students to travel, for a certain period of time, to different communities and countries. "At a certain stage on the Path, the individual may be sent on a journey or expected to reside elsewhere (sometimes abroad), and given opportunities to develop his or her 'inner life'."

Sufism is seen and described by Sufis as a journey, or a series of journeys. There is a Path, and a Guide. What confuses the ordinary person about this journey is, for instance, is the journey literal or metaphorical? In fact it can be both. The Sufi aspirant may undertake long and trying journeys to obtain completion. There is an inner as well as an outer journey. Therefore a Sufi journey must be understood in both senses. This is a parallel to the tradition that there is a Great Struggle and a Lesser Struggle. One is of the body, the other of the mind. (14)

Although journeys and travels may be spiritually beneficial for some, they are not always indicated for every aspirant: "Journeys to visit teachers in other countries are of no use unless undertaken under special instructions for a certain purpose."

One traditional form of spiritual journey is the pilgrimage. From the Middle Ages on, pilgrim paths were created, linking, for instance, Jerusalem to the Holy Sepulchre or Notre Dame de Paris to Chartres. Along these 'holy paths' initiates constructed castles, monasteries, abbeys, mosques, synagogues, and so forth:

In the Middle Ages, you had the familiar Pilgrim's Walks to Compostela and other places. People walked predetermined routes, visited certain abbeys, sites and ruins, and saw certain relics. They were making contact and establishing connections with people, because the Tradition functions through and because of people. In the absence of people, it is an energy, a function and a philosophy, but when the people are travelling, visiting, communicating both together and with the places, they add the extra element to the equation which causes the energy to flow. You might say that the Sultan Ahmed Mosque and Notre Dame de Paris are both buildings. But even if they are both places of worship, where is the connection? They were both built with a function, and that function was endowed by the designers and by the building itself, so that the people who visit one and then the other in whatever order are making the connection between the two. It is an actual physical contact. The contact is also established and maintained by successive generations of travellers, by the pilgrims who have travelled the various pilgrim routes, whether they go from Europe to Jerusalem, travel within Europe itself, or within the Middle East or Central Asia. (15)

One of the purposes of pilgrimages is to provide common transformational experiences and refine the contact between fellow travellers: "People who travel together are not only able to experience the good, bad and indifferent trials and tribulations of the trip, but also are able to see themselves and their own behaviour mirrored in other people, and other people similarly mirrored in them."

Many of the sites along a pilgrimage route have a special ambience and geo-magnetic quality that allows a spiritual energy to flow. Some of these 'power spots' are charged in a way that enhances healing and the rejuvenation of body, mind and spirit:

Everybody knows that there are miracle cures attributed to various places which are not explicable to normal medical science. Although such occurrences are unusual, they are entirely explicable, not as some magical or supernatural event: what happens is rather that a person will benefit from such a place because they pass through an area which is highly charged in a positive way, and the degree of charge goes a long way to nullify the negative charge they are holding in themselves as a result of certain physical, mental and personal problems. Such things are not supernatural: they are quite natural in the sense that they come about as a result of cer-



tain factors coming together, with the people visiting the place as a catalyst in the overall formula. (16)

During a pilgrimage or other journey people may be able to harmonize with certain places in which there is an accumulation of refined spiritual energy or *baraka*. This concentrated energy can operate on individuals and groups who are suitably prepared to receive and absorb this subtle force:

One of the objects of pilgrimages to the burial places or former residences of teachers is to make a contact with this reality or substance. In neutral phraseology it could be said that the Sufis believe that Sufic activity in producing a Complete Man accumulates a force (substance) which itself is capable of alchemicalizing a lesser individual. This is not to be confused with the idea of magical power, because the power exercised upon the Seeker will operate only insofar as his motives are pure and he is purged of selfishness. Further, it will act in its own way, and not in a manner which can be anticipated by the Seeker. Only his teacher, who has travelled that way before, will be able to judge as to what effect such an exposure will have. (17)

## Work Enterprises and Activities

Many esoteric teachings have a long tradition of establishing groups and organizations in local cultures in order to benefit both the inner work of the students and the community at large. These working groups and organizations may bear no obvious resemblance to communities which are generally considered spiritual or religious. They may take the form of a restaurant, a farm, a commercial enterprise, or even cultural society devoted to the study and enjoyment of literature and/or leisure pursuits. These external structures are based on the principle that a spiritual teaching may be projected within any convenient framework: "Any human organization may be useful spiritually as well as productive in other senses and therefore should be used, since it fulfils two functions, both of them laudable."

We have forms in which we work. Now the form in which we work may be a vocational one, some kind of activity of manufacturing something. So we relate a number of people together, with an objective to manufacture something, it might be carpets, it might be tables, it might be artisan work. Provided that the people are carefully enough selected, and provided that the objective is correctly enough chosen, we will develop a remarkable result. This is the sort of operation which in the past has produced very great art and very great achievements in human culture. This is the type of operation of which you constantly hear stories such as those about the Cathedral builders and about the great artisans of the past who had spiritual objectives as well as vocational ones. (18)

A group may be engaged in worldly activities having an inner purpose. The success of the organization is dependent on achieving a harmonious balance between the inner and outer functions:

They often have a keynote or outward function, as well as an inner or developmental one. This may mean that their members could be engaged in art, social action, human service, even commerce, as well as carrying out appropriate exercises and studies. The purpose of these outward activities includes testing whether the people can work successfully in an organic whole without (a) subjective considerations ruining the operation, or (b) the outward activity taking over and being 'spiritualized' by people imagining that, say, social service is sacred instead of a minimum duty. (19)

When a certain kind of work enterprise is carried on in a certain manner with carefully selected people, the possibility of developing higher perceptions and understanding becomes possible. This process has sometimes been described as 'Work for the Work' and may be the origin of the phrase "work is prayer."

The conception of a community of people who, within the seemingly ordinary structure of a business or a house and grounds, can be working also in a harmony which activates something 'other,' something spiritual but not emotional, something purposeful beyond the overt purposes of the enterprise, is startling and has far-reaching implications. Not least of the latter is the fact that the more successful a Sufi school of this kind is, the less likely will it be to resemble what people imagine a Sufi school to be. Instead of ritual there may be activity of an apparently mundane kind; instead of unusual garb, there will be specific clothing appertaining to the task on hand; in place of hierarchy there will be co-operation; the place of chanting, symbols and various appurtenances will be taken by specifics which are directly and reasonably to all appearances connected to the surface aim of the community. (20)

By carrying out work tasks with others, an individual has multiple opportunities to gain self-knowledge and understanding by monitoring his or her reactions to the various experiences and interactions provided by the enterprise:

When a person is given something to do as an assigned or expected activity, how he does it, whether he does it at all, the degree of competence or activity without constant exhortation: all these are diagnostic. One can tell, and the individual himself should be able to tell, by self-examination, whether he is progressing or whether he is behaving in an automatic manner. If he finds that he needs constant stimulus of threat or promise, he is not attuning himself in the right manner. If he will conduct himself in a certain manner only providing that he receives a certain amount of attention, he is placing the demand for attention before the [activity]. (21)

The process of working with others creates conditions in which students can overcome conditioned attitudes and habitual ways of relating with others. Psychologist Robert Ornstein: "Instead of the average everyday critical concentration on other people's failures and flaws, a student has the chance to reorient his thinking and to consider how different people's skills can come together in a larger, emergent unit, one that can work in harmony. In such associations, one has the chance to become part of something superior, not defeated by the normal social attitudes."

One approach involves the students' learning to be *flexible* enough to organize themselves around a concern, no matter what its apparent aim; attend to the job they are asked to do, and not to personalities. They are often given very many different kinds of jobs in different circumstances; as soon as one seems to be going it changes. This kind of practice, in a situation close to their ordinary experience, is difficult, more difficult than abandoning home and leaving all possessions, but it is what helps them adapt to the *real instability and the constant changes in the world*. Through all the different experiences, the student can develop some internal stability, detachment. (22)

The interactions and inevitable friction between different people involved in a work activity provide many opportunities for self-observation. Fritz Peters, a pupil of Gurdjieff, describes the conditions that were created at the Prieuré in France at his Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man:

The tasks assigned to the students were invariably concerned with the actual functioning of the school: gardening, cooking, house-cleaning, taking care of animals, milking, making butter, and these tasks were almost always in group activities. As I learned later, the group work was considered to be of real importance. Different personalities, working together, produced subjective, human conflicts, human conflicts produced friction, friction revealed characteristics which, if observed, could reveal "self." One of the many aims of the school was "to see yourself as others saw you"; to see oneself, as it were, from a distance, to be able to criticize that self objectively, but, at first, simply to see it. An exercise that was intended to be performed all the time, during whatever physical activity, was called "self-observation." (23)

In an esoteric school the enterprises and undertakings which are assigned to students are designed to further their inner development: "If you seek small things to do, and do them well, great things will seek you, and demand to be performed."

The Seeker is given an enterprise to complete. It may be an alchemical problem, or it might be the effort to reach the conclusion of an enterprise just as unlikely of attainment. For the purposes of his self-development, he has to carry that undertaking out with complete faith. In the process of planning and carrying through this effort, he attains his spiritual development. The alchemical or other undertaking

may be impossible, but it is the framework within which his constancy and his application, his mental and moral development, is carried out . . . It becomes his permanent anchor and frame of reference. It is in something slightly like this spirit that all competitive undertakings are carried out in sport, or mountaineering, or even in physical culture, in other societies. The mountain or the muscular development are the fixed points, but they are not the element which is actually being transformed by the effort. They are the means, not the end. It is not the framework which is altered by the effort, but the human being himself. And it is the development of the human being which counts, nothing else. When the Sufi concept of the deliberate evolution of humanity is grasped, the other elements fall into place. (24)

The students who are involved in a work situation are typically unable to comprehend the overall purpose and pattern of the activity. Rumi offers an apropos allegory: "When a tent is being made, some work on the ropes, some on the panels, some on the pegs. For each, his task is important. When each has completed his task, lo, a tent." The teacher, who knows the pattern of the work and its shape and cadence, organizes the group's activities based on precise knowledge of a higher order. "The teacher's role is to maintain a healthy relationship on some basis of cooperation with the student; and from there to direct his development along the lines which the school, the individual and the overall activity make possible."

An important indicator of the harmonization of a group in a work enterprise is whether or not the operation is successful as measured by the criteria and standards of the external world. The success or failure is seen as an index of the progress of the individuals and group: "The 'profit,' in business as well as spiritual pursuits, shows that the enterprise is working and the people are able to organize themselves into a functioning whole. It is important to be able to give the right effort of oneself, in the right amount, at the right time, for anything to be done."

The Sufi approach to professional, vocational and business activities resembles that of other communities, but the similarity serves also to conceal certain dramatic differences. Sufi disciples will cooperate in what seems to be almost every kind of activity, ranging from the arts, through commerce to academic and other undertakings in the world of learning. A number of seekers will associate together to pursue a project, because the successful completion of a mundane activity is often regarded as an index of the necessary harmonization of the group. In other words, if the project works, the members of the group are in a kind of alignment which will enable them to profit from the subtle, spiritual impulses which the Sufi work is offering. This kind of pattern is familiar in all groups with a common interest. Both religious and other groupings, of short or long duration, can be found working together in a wide variety of areas, throughout the world. The difference comes when one examines the theory and mechanism of the Sufi and the other groupings. In the case of the Sufis, a project is devised and an attempt is made to carry it out. If this succeeds – that is, if the shop, factory, artistic atelier and so forth – flourishes within a reasonable period of time, the group concerned is accepted with its membership as eligible for special exercises and instructions which

are believed to be able to operate through this 'organism' with extraordinary rapidity and effectiveness. The group need not be money-oriented: some groups are charitable, others devised for entertainment, still others work in the fields of planning, design, agriculture or even certain spheres of diplomacy. But, while there need not be a financial aim in the undertaking, if it is one which ordinarily yields a profit, then the index of its success always includes profit: and the entire yield is always made available to the Sufi Path. The Sufi teacher ordinarily authorizes the experiment and may give it the time scale in which it is to succeed. If the project does not progress sufficiently well, the harmonization of the individual members is considered to be at fault, and the effort must be stopped . . . This application of the doctrine that 'the exterior is an indicator of the interior' strikingly emphasizes the belief that harmony brings about coherent ('organic') growth, and, in contradistinction, that the imposition of patterns upon groups will never succeed in developing anything. From this it can be seen why so many Sufis are on record as working so vehemently against imposed structure. (25)

## Humour

Humour is effective as a spiritual technique because it is an eminently practical rather than theoretical tool in helping free the human mind from conditioned mental, emotional and behavioural patterns. Humour can help illuminate many of the quandaries of human life. Plato: "Serious things cannot be understood without humorous things, nor opposites without opposites." Humour can produce a sudden switch-over from one way of looking at things to another by breaking expectations and mental fixations. The indirect approach of humour can "slip behind the defences of our usual logic and pierce the protective armour of conventional thought."

Humour may be used to convey important ideas that otherwise could not penetrate a person's conditioned responses and subjective opinions. "What appears on the surface as jests are in fact structures formulated to bring into cognition patterns which the mind finds it difficult or impossible to render and receive in any other way." One of the purposes of jokes or humorous stories is to illustrate typical patterns of thinking and behaviour by exteriorizing them as cogent examples of real or possible human interactions or social situations. They can reveal, both in their structure and the reactions of people to them, the typical ways in which people think, process information, and are guided by assumptions and preconceptions.

Humour also has an enduring quality that ensures the transmission of certain ideas couched in a humorous framework. In the words of Idries Shah: "Humour cannot be prevented from spreading; it has a way of slipping through the patterns of thought which are imposed upon mankind by habit and design."

Certain jokes and humorous tales contain both an experiential and inner nutritional content. "The fact that a fruit tastes delicious does not mean that it cannot have food value." Certain

metaphysical jokes and stories have psychological levels that provide useful frameworks in the search for self-knowledge: "They have been used for centuries to hold a mirror up to people, so that they can see their own behaviour in a way which is otherwise very difficult indeed." Used as teaching devices, they are viable in several different ranges of meaning:

Jokes are structures, and they may fulfill many different functions. Just as we may get the humour nutrient out of a joke, we can also get several dimensions out of it on various occasions: there is no standard meaning of a joke. Different people will see different contents in it, and pointing out some of its possible usages will not, if we are used to this method, rob it of its efficacy. The same person, again, may see different sides to the same joke according to his varying states of understanding or even mood. The joke, like the non-humorous teaching story, thus presents us with a choice instrument of illustration and action. How a person reacts to a joke will also tell us, and possibly him or her, what his blocks and assumptions have been, and can help dissolve them, to everyone's advantage. (26)

Humour plays a significant role in many spiritual traditions such as Taoism, Zen Buddhism and Sufism. Laughter has been called "the one universal solvent" and in spiritual studies humour may take the form of stories, anecdotes, jokes, witticisms, parody, irony or satire. According to traditional accounts, enlightenment is frequently accompanied by laughter of a transcendental kind.

In Zen laughter is often used as a vehicle to ridicule or lampoon empty ritualistic behaviour, exaggerated expressions of sanctity or piety, and pomposity and undue self-importance. Even the subject of death is permitted humorous overtones. One of the most favoured targets of Zen humour is the human tendency to philosophize, conceptualize or intellectualize without any real inner understanding:

Hogen, a Chinese Zen teacher, lived alone in a small temple in the country. One day four travelling monks appeared and asked if they might make a fire in his yard to warm themselves. While they were building the fire, Hogen heard them arguing about subjectivity and objectivity. He joined them and said: "There is a big stone. Do you consider it to be inside or outside your mind?" One of the monks replied: "From the Buddhist viewpoint everything is an objectification of mind, so I would say that the stone is inside my mind." "Your head must feel very heavy," observed Hogen, "if you are carrying around a stone like that in your mind." (27)

Mulla Nasrudin is a traditional Middle Eastern teaching figure who exemplifies the 'wise fool' folk-hero. "Nobody knows who Nasrudin was, where he lived, or when. This is truly in character, for the whole intention is to provide a figure who cannot really be characterized, and who is timeless. It is the message, not the man, which is important."

Gurdjieff professed unbounded admiration for Nasrudin and pinned many of his own aphorisms, both sensible and non-sensible, upon him. Student René Zuber commented: "Gurdjieff enjoyed embellishing his words and writings with spicy but scathing aphorisms and proverbs, which he attributed to Mullah Nassr Eddin, the legendary character who brought to life the popular wisdom of Asia."

Although Nasrudin often appears outwardly as a fool and simpleton, in reality he represents wit, simplicity and human wisdom. "Sometimes court jester, sometimes cracker-barrel philosopher, sometimes village sage and sometimes buffoon, he combines native shrewdness and insight in a way that helps him see to the heart of a situation that his more analytical 'betters' cannot. He also illustrates, in exaggerated form, the kind of fallacious thinking that hobbles the more sophisticated."

The Mulla is variously referred to as very stupid, improbably clever, the possessor of mystical secrets. The dervishes use him as a figure to illustrate, in their teachings, the antics characteristic of the human mind. The Mulla is probably the most versatile character in Sufi literature, because of the possibilities offered him by humour. He undergoes the most unusual changes in his stories. He has all the faults and virtues of mankind, including those that are mutually contradictory. This is where the strength of his impact lies, with which he destroys all the pigeonholing mechanisms that our minds are used to employing. The Mulla's actions are always unpredictable for the reader who is inevitably confused and tries to puzzle out the meaning of such unusual reactions. (28)

The complexity and ingenuity of the Nasrudin story has both an inward and outward effect which produces spiritual insight and a penetrating regenerative force as it opens the listener or reader to another dimension of perception and cognition. The corpus of Nasrudin jokes and stories are multi-dimensional in nature, featuring many different levels, aspects and purposes simultaneously. "It is inherent in the Nasrudin story that it may be understood at any one of many depths. There is the joke, the moral – and the little extra which brings the consciousness of the potential mystic a little further on the way to realization."

There are many purposes in these quite innocent-appearing Nasrudin stories. They can hold up a moment of action as a template, so that the reader can observe his consciousness more clearly in himself. Often one may read a story, and on later encountering a similar life situation, find oneself prepared for it. In addition, these stories can be considered 'word pictures,' which can create visual symbolic situations. They embody a more sophisticated use of language to pass beyond intellectual understanding to develop intuition. (29)

The Mulla Nasrudin jokes and stories are employed in Sufi schools for a number of higher developmental purposes:

- Illustrating conditioned patterns of thinking and perception: many of the events contained in stories represent the dynamics operating within the human mind

- Acting as a shock or stimulus in order to break entrenched mental, emotional and behavioural patterns
- Revealing the power of assumptions and preconceptions: used as a corrective to help people whose narrow and single-minded attitudes block higher understanding
- Displaying and highlighting the real structure of a situation or experience: the elements, events and interactions contained in the joke or story can be applied to one's own life situation and experience
- Awakening the dormant capacities of the mind so that it might operate on a higher level and provide a taste of illumination.

The Nasrudin tales can also be used to suggest creative ways of thinking and reacting in response to external circumstances. One classic story shows how *supposed* opposition may in fact operate in the reverse. It illustrates how "social and psychological forces can have an effect contrary to that intended by their originators, an effect which can be taken advantage of by the perspicacity of an objective observer."

Mulla Nasrudin is about to engage in litigation. He says to his lawyer: "If I sent the judge 100 gold pieces, what effect would that have on his ruling in my case?" The lawyer is horrified. "You do that," he says, "and he'll find against you, for sure – you might even be arrested for attempted bribery!"

"Are you sure?"

"Quite sure, I *know* that judge."

The case was heard, and the Mulla won.

"Well," said the lawyer, "you *did* get justice after all, you can't deny that . . ."

"Mind you," said Nasrudin, "the gold pieces also helped . . ."

"You mean you actually sent the judge money?" howled the lawyer.

"Oh yes," said Mulla Nasrudin, "but, of course, I sent the gold in the *other man's* name!" (30)

## Zen Koans

In Zen Buddhism koans are employed to awaken the 'inner eye' of students by challenging their conventional interpretation of reality. "A koan is a formulation, in baffling language, pointing to ultimate truth. Koans cannot be solved by recourse to logical reasoning but only by awakening a deeper level of the mind beyond the discursive intellect." A koan may be a story, dialogue, event, problem or statement which serves to act as a spiritual exercise. They have been likened to a technical formula, a design which encapsulates Buddhist teaching in a highly concentrated form. Some, like Zen teacher Albert Low, have even described koans as objective works of art: "Koans are small jewels to be treated with great care; like great music, the more one can appreciate what cannot be explained, the richer it becomes."



The word “koan” originally meant a public document of great authority issued by the government. In present day usage the word “koan” retains the original implication of authority and rightness. It is by means of the koan that we examine the most fundamental and important problems, or questions, of life – such questions as: What is life? What is death? Many koans consist of dialogues between Zen masters and their students. Others are often taken from important passages in Buddhist scripture. Among the koans of dialogue, there are some in which the student questions the master in order to clarify his understanding of Buddhism. In others, we see that although the student has experienced enlightenment, his vision is not yet quite clear. In order to clarify and deepen his vision the student visits various masters. In yet another kind of koan, monks or priests who have already had a clear enlightenment experience further train themselves by visiting a number of masters and having Dharma combat with them. The custom of studying under various masters and engaging them in Dharma combat helps the priests or monks (or laymen) to become better teachers themselves. A koan is not an explanation or illustration of a thought or an idea. If you regard a koan in this way, you lose its real meaning. Koans deal with the essence of the Dharma, with the realization that all sentient beings are the Buddha. And this fact is the ground of our being. In other words, we use the koan as an expedient means to perceive and demonstrate our buddhahood, which, in essence, is inexpressible. (31)

Some koans are brief, enigmatic exchanges between a teacher and student which are highly charged with spiritual energy and insight:

- When Chao-chou came to study Zen under Nan-ch’uan, he asked, “What is the Tao (or the Way)? Nan-ch’uan replied, “Your everyday mind, that is the Tao.”
- A monk asked Hsuan-sha, “I am a newcomer in the monastery; please tell me how to go on with my study.” “Do you hear the murmuring stream?” “Yes, master.” “If so, here is the entrance.”
- A monk asked Tung-shan, “Who is the Buddha?” “Three *chin* of flax.”
- A monk asked Chao-chou, “What is the meaning of the First Patriarch’s visit to China?” “The cypress tree in the front courtyard.”
- A monk asked, “All things are said to be reducible to the One, but where is the One to be reduced?” Chao-chou answered, “When I was in the district of Ch’ing I had a robe made that weighed seven *chin*.”
- Said a Zen master, “If you have a staff, I will give you one; if you do not have a staff, I will take one away from you.”

- Te Shan said, "If you cannot answer I shall give you thirty blows; if you can answer, I shall also give you thirty blows."
- Dōgen Zenji was instrumental in bringing his first disciple Ejō Zenji, to enlightenment by giving him the koan, "One thread going through many holes."
- When a monk said to Chao-chou, "What do you say to one who has nothing to carry about?" To this Chao-chou replied, "Carry it along."
- Emperor Wu asked Bodhidharma, "What is you teaching?" Bodhidharma replied, "Vast emptiness and nothing that can be called holy."

Other koans are broader in scope and often drawn from discourses, sermons, traditional records of interactions between a master and student, or teaching stories:

Master Huang Po said in his sermon, "All the Buddhas and sentient beings are nothing but one's mind. From the very no-beginning-time this Mind never arises and is not extinguished. It is neither blue nor yellow. It has no form or shape. It is neither existent or nonexistent, old or new, long or short, big or small. It is beyond all limitation and measurement, beyond all words and names, transcending all traces and relativity. It is here now! But as soon as any thought arises in your mind you miss it right away! It is like space, having no edges, immeasurable and unthinkable. Buddha is nothing else but this, your very mind!" (32)

Jōshū asked a travelling monk, "Have you ever been here before?" The monk replied, "Yes. I have." Jōshū said, "Have a cup of tea." Jōshū asked another visiting monk, "Have you ever been here before?" The monk said, "No." Jōshū said, "Have a cup of tea." An attendant monk asked Jōshū, "Why do you say, 'Have a cup of tea' to one who had visited before and the same thing to one who has come to see you for the first time?" Jōshū called the attendant's name. The attendant replied, "Yes, sir." Jōshū said, "Have a cup of tea." (33)

Some Zen teachers have suggested koans suitable for Western practitioners drawn from familiar Western sources, including "the writings of Aristotle, Shakespeare, Dostoevsky, Hesse, Nietzsche, Chekhov, Camus, Beckett, Henry James, Schopenhauer, Goethe, and many others." Zen master Sokei-an Sasaki, working in the United States, even recommended Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* for this purpose.

Some critics have suggested that traditional Zen koans are "artificial problems imposed from the outside by the teacher." They argue that koans arising from the practitioner's own actual life situation may be more relevant and meaningful, better reflecting the complexities of contemporary life:

Undoubtedly the best koan is one that naturally grows out of one's life situation. For example, a Buddhist might be gripped by the following problem: "If all beings without exception are intrinsically perfect, as the Buddha proclaimed, why is there such imperfection, so much pain and suffering in the world?" Or a believer may question intensely: "If I am fundamentally a Buddha, why do I act like anything but one?" Those driven by the need to dispel a fundamental contradiction between their faith in the truth of the Buddha's pronouncement and the evidence of their senses have a natural koan. Similarly, if the question "Where did I come from when I was born and where will I go after I die?" gripped one constantly, it could be another natural koan. I emphasize "could" because not everyone would be motivated to resolve the matter of birth and death. A natural koan is a personal perplexity that gives one no rest. (34)

A koan has been likened to "a finger pointing to the moon." They are temporary frameworks or expedient means, which serve a purpose. They are a means to an end and not the end itself. "The koan is useful as long as the mental doors are closed, but when they are opened it may be forgotten." The significance of a koan is in the effect it has on the mind of the person who receives and works with it. "No matter how mysterious or how senseless a koan appears to be, there is always something deep behind it – the strange remarks always imply *something*."

Koans cannot be understood through intellectual study – only through direct experience. "Because koans cannot be theorized about in the abstract, they compel us to feel and act, not merely to talk and think. They liberate us from the snare of language, which fits over experience like a straitjacket; they pry us loose from our tightly held dogmas and prejudices; they empty us of the false notion of self and other that distorts our inner vision and our view of the world."

It is axiomatic that the awakening experience and direct perception of Zen realization cannot be explained or understood as they really are by means of intellectual interpretation or conceptual thought, because they are not in the domain of ideation. For this reason, no theoretical discussion of koans will convey the genuine enlightenment of Zen. In order to benefit from the use of koans, it is necessary to employ them for the purpose and in the manner in which they were designed. (35)

Koans have been likened to blueprints or patterns which reveal a hidden design and order underlying the events and experiences of everyday life. They embody universal spiritual principles leading to a perception of ultimate reality. Koans point to deeper, timeless truths beyond the limits of the rational, logical mind:

Every koan is a unique expression of the living, indivisible Buddha-nature which cannot be grasped by the bifurcating intellect. Despite the incongruity of their various elements, koans are profoundly meaningful, each pointing to man's Face before his parents were born, to his real Self. To people who cherish the letter above the spirit, koans appear bewildering, for in their phrasing koans deliberately

throw sand in the eyes of the intellect to force us to open our Mind's eye and see the world and everything in it undistorted by our concepts and judgments. (36)

Students are advised not to choose their own koans. Rather, they should be assigned by an experienced teacher who can judge the aspirant's background, temperament, capacity and aspiration. The teacher gauges the state of mind of the student in order to decide what help is required to awaken him or her to realization.

To fully understand a koan it is helpful to know the history, background and context which gave birth to it:

When reading Zen koans, we often come across the statement that a monk was immediately enlightened after hearing a certain remark, or after receiving a blow from his Zen master . . . This may give the impression that "Enlightenment" is very easy to come by. But these "little" koans, often consisting of less than a hundred words, are merely a *fraction* of the whole story. Their background was seldom sketched in by the Zen monks who first wrote them down, because the monks did not think it necessary to mention their common background to people who were brought up in this Zen tradition and knew it clearly. The monks thought that nobody could be so foolish as to regard "Enlightenment" as immediately attainable merely by hearing a simple remark or by receiving a kick or a blow, without previously having had the "preparedness" of a ripened mind. To them it was obvious that only because the mental state of a Zen student had reached its maturity could he benefit from a Master's kicks and blows, shouts and cries. They knew that this maturity of mind was a state not easily come by. It was earned with tears and sweat, through many years of practice and hard work. Students should bear this in mind and remember that most of the Zen koans they know *are only the highlights of a play and not the complete drama*. These koans tell of the fall of ripened "apples," but are not the *biographies* of these apples, whose life stories are a long tale of delights and sorrows, pleasures and pains, struggles and bitter trials. The Zen master shakes the apple tree and the ripened fruit falls; but on the swaying branches the unripened fruit will still remain. (37)

The attitude with which the student approaches the koan is all-important: "To work on koans we must have utmost faith that they are indeed resolvable on their own terms and that they are in their own way intensely meaningful. A koan is a question of life and death, of our own spiritual life and death. Working on a koan is to work on oneself."

Knowledge, reasoning and previous experience have to be abandoned in order to decipher the meaning of the koan; the student can only find the answer by merging and 'becoming one' with it. Only then is it possible to demonstrate the spirit of the koan. "Intellectual gymnastics, no matter how superior or refined, could never solve a koan; in fact, a koan is given to force a student beyond intellection."

The discriminating intellect is the worst enemy when attempting to penetrate and understand the "meaning" of the koan. D.T. Suzuki: "There is no room in the koan to insert an intellectual interpretation. The knife is not sharp enough to cut the koan open and see what are its contents. For a koan is not a logical proposition but the experience of a certain mental state."

The very language of a koan is intended to befuddle ordinary or conventional thinking. For example, the koan: "Walk without feet." The linguistic impossibility implied in the koan is designed to awaken the intuitive, non-rational mind. The intellect by itself is incapable of unlocking the koan:

According to Zen teaching, there is really no way to comprehend koans except through themselves. Although the actual experience of koans open up intellectual understanding, intellectual understanding alone does not open up the actual experience of koans. As maps, koans show something: Just reading the map is not making the journey, but without reading the map there is no direction. The ordinary mind has no real conception of mental freedom as it is experienced in Zen, so the koan seems impenetrable until we follow its guidance. (38)

The system of koan exercises is predicated on the creation and subsequent breakthrough of a 'great doubt,' which is a doubt without content, the pure sensation of "doubt." As one Zen master put it, "Where there is great doubt, there will be great awakening; small doubt, small awakening; no doubt, no awakening."

Listen to these words of an ancient Zen master: "Zen does not consist merely in reciting a koan. The main thing is to arouse the 'doubt-sensation.' But even this is not enough. You must break right through it. If you cannot seem to do so you must put forth all your strength, strain every nerve, and keep on trying." What is this doubt-sensation? It is a burning perplexity, a fundamental question that gives you no rest. For example, if all beings are inherently flawless and endowed with virtue and compassion, as the Buddha declared, why is there so much hatred and selfishness, violence and suffering everywhere? This basic question can be pondered whenever you find yourself free to do so – at home, at work, anytime. Or an inquiry like "Who am I?" – strictly speaking, "*What* am I? -- is a way of bringing to keener intensity this same basic doubt. (39)

A student truly understands a koan when he understands the enlightened state of mind of the master who originally presented the koan to their own disciples. According to Alan Watts, "the student is then expected to show that he has experienced the meaning of the koan by a nonverbal demonstration which he has to discover intuitively."

When a koan is solved the mind moves from ignorance and delusion to an inner awareness of living truth. With the resolution of the koan one realizes that the "answer" was there all the time. "Through these koans the student comes to realize that existence, animate and inani-

mate, visible and invisible, is Buddha-nature itself. Things no longer appear to exist separately and independently, but are seen to be one." The teacher, through the intermediary of the koan, reveals the essence of Buddhism through a mind-to-mind transmission:

A koan is an account of an incident between a master and one or more disciples which involves an understanding or experience of enlightened mind . . . Often what makes the incident worth recalling is that the disciple's mind, if only for an instant, transcends attachment and logic, and he catches a glimpse of emptiness or Buddha-nature. At that moment there is a "transmission" of Mind between master and disciple. Once, after the Buddha gave a sermon to his senior disciples, he picked up a flower and silently held it up before the assembly. All the monks except one were mystified. Mahakasyapa alone knew the Buddha's meaning; he smiled, saying nothing. Thus the Buddha transmitted to Mahakasyapa the wordless doctrine of mind. Although this incident preceded the rise of Ch'an by over a thousand years, it exemplifies the spirit of koans. (40)

Only when the intellect is transcended is it possible to enter a new realm in which the intuitive mind is brought into play. Self-realization brings about an acceptance of things as they are, of life just the way it is. The establishment of higher consciousness or satori is independent of conditions and surroundings and reveals the inter-dependency of all life: "Our satori must have a new fresh outlook on the world and humanity; it must prove itself useful and valuable in our daily life not only as an individual but as a world citizen, as a member in a system of infinite complexities which contains every conceivable existence, non-sentient as well as sentient."

Zen is neither psychology nor philosophy, but is an experience charged with deep meaning and laden with living, exalting contents. The experience is final and its own authority. It is the ultimate truth, not born of relative knowledge, that gives full satisfaction to all human wants. It must be realized directly within oneself; no outside authorities are to be relied upon. Even the Buddha's teachings and the master's discourses, however deep and true they are, do not belong to one so long as they have not been assimilated into one's being, which means that they are made to grow directly out of one's own living experiences. This realization is called satori. (41)

## References

- (1) D.T. Suzuki *Essays in Zen Buddhism* (New York: Grove Press, 1961), pp. 239-240.
- (2) Albert Low *To Know Yourself* (Boston: Charles E. Tuttle, 1997), pp. 227-228.
- (3) D.T. Suzuki *Essays in Zen Buddhism* (New York: Grove Press, 1961), p. 245.
- (4) Thomas Cleary *Rational Zen* (Boston: Shambhala, 1995), p. 183.
- (5) Idries Shah *Knowing How to Know* (London: Octagon Press, 1998), p. 141.
- (6) D.T. Suzuki *Essays in Zen Buddhism* (New York: Grove Press, 1961), p. 245.

- (7) Idries Shah *The Way of the Sufi* (London: Octagon Press, 1984), pp. 80-81.
- (8) Idries Shah *Learning How to Learn* (London: Octagon Press, 1983), p. 290.
- (9) John Glubb "Idries Shah and the Sufis" in L.F. Rushbrook Williams (ed.) *Sufi Studies: East and West* (London: Octagon Press, 1974), p. 141.
- (10) Ali Sultan "Emulation and Cycles of Study" in *New Research on Current Philosophical Systems* (London: Octagon Press, 1982), p. 24.
- (11) Idries Shah *Learning How to Learn* (London: Octagon Press, 1983), pp. 205-206.
- (12) Idries Shah *The Sufis* (London: Octagon Press, 1984), p. 309.
- (13) Stuart Litvak *Unstress Yourself* (Santa Barbara: Ross-Erikson Publishers, 1982), p. 166.
- (14) Qalander Siddiqi "Finding, Losing – and Finding – the Way" in N. P. Archer (ed.) *The Sufi Mystery* (London: Octagon Press, 1980), p. 7.
- (15) Omar Ali-Shah *The Sufi Tradition in the West* (New York: Alif Publishing, 1994), pp. 221-222.
- (16) Omar Ali-Shah *The Sufi Tradition in the West* (New York: Alif Publishing, 1994), p. 220.
- (17) Idries Shah *The Sufis* (London: Octagon Press, 1984), p. 294.
- (18) Idries Shah *Knowing How to Know* (London: Octagon Press, 1998), pp. 18-19.
- (19) Idries Shah *A Perfumed Scorpion* (London: Octagon Press, 1983), p. 180.
- (20) Chawan Thurlnas "Current Sufi Activity: Work, Literature, Groups and Techniques" in Idries Shah (ed.) *Sufi Thought and Action* (London: Octagon Press, 1990), pp. 86-87.
- (21) Idries Shah *Learning How to Learn* (London: Octagon Press, 1983), p. 118.
- (22) Robert Ornstein *The Psychology of Consciousness* (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), pp. 254-255.
- (23) Fritz Peters *Boyhood with Gurdjieff* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1972), p. 10.
- (24) Idries Shah *The Sufis* (London: Octagon Press, 1984), pp. 199-200.
- (25) Chawan Thurlnas "Current Sufi Activity: Work, Literature, Groups and Techniques" in Idries Shah (ed.) *Sufi Thought and Action* (London: Octagon Press, 1990), pp. 77-78.
- (26) Idries Shah *Special Illumination: The Sufi Use of Humour* (London: Octagon Press, 1983), pp. 10-11.
- (27) Nancy Wilson Ross (ed.) *The World of Zen: An East-West Anthology* (New York: Vintage Books, 1960), p. 186.
- (28) Giovanna de Garayalde *Jorge Luis Borges: Sources and Illumination* (London : Octagon Press, 1978), pp. 75-76.
- (29) Robert Ornstein *The Nature of Human Consciousness* (San Francisco: W.H. Freeman and Co., 1973), p. 274.
- (30) Idries Shah *A Perfumed Scorpion* (London: Octagon Press, 1983), pp. 168-169.
- (31) Hakuyu Taizan Maezumi and Bernard Tetsugen Glassman (eds.) *On Zen Practice II* (Los Angeles: Zen Center of Los Angeles, 1977), p. 68.
- (32) Garma C.C. Chang *The Practice of Zen* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), p. 18.
- (33) Eido Shimano "Zen Koans" in Kenneth Kraft (ed.) *Zen: Tradition and Transition* (New York: Grove Press, 1989), p. 77.
- (34) Philip Kapleau "The Private Encounter with the Master" in Kenneth Kraft (ed.) *Zen: Tradition and Transition* (New York: Grove Press, 1989), p. 62.
- (35) Thomas Cleary *No Barrier: Unlocking the Zen Koan* (New York: Bantam Books, 1993), p. xiii.

- (36) Philip Kapleau *The Three Pillars of Zen* (New York: Anchor Books, 1989), p. 70.
- (37) Garma C.C. Chang *The Practice of Zen* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), pp. 49-50.
- (38) Thomas Cleary *No Barrier: Unlocking the Zen Koan* (New York: Bantam Books, 1993), pp. xiv-xv.
- (39) Philip Kapleau *Zen Dawn in the West* (New York: Anchor Press, 1979), p. 106.
- (40) Sheng-Yen "Zen Meditation" in Kenneth Kraft (ed.) *Zen: Tradition and Transition* (New York: Grove Press, 1989), p. 40.
- (41) William Barrett (ed.) *Zen Buddhism: Selected Writings of D.T. Suzuki* (New York: Anchor Books, 1956), p. 150.