

THE SPIRITUAL TEACHER OR GUIDE

*'Water needs an intermediary, a vessel, between
it and the fire, if it is to be heated correctly.'*

Rumi

Necessity for a Spiritual Teacher

Spiritual teachings are traditionally transmitted by the human exemplar, the teacher or guide. The teacher's significance as an instrument of the teaching is based on "function, not appearance." In the words of Ibn el Arabi: "People think that a teacher should display miracles and manifest illumination. But the requirement in a teacher is that he should possess all that the disciple needs." The journey to Truth begins with a guide who has travelled the path, and who can conduct or 'shepherd' others to the goal. Gurdjieff spoke of the importance of a teacher in the alchemical process of self-transformation:

The ideas are a summons, a summons toward another world, a call from one who knows and is able to show us the way. But the transformation of the human being requires something more. It can only be achieved if there is a real meeting between the conscious force which descends and the total commitment which answers it. This brings about a fusion. A new life can then appear in a new set of conditions which only someone with an objective consciousness can create and develop. But to understand this one must have passed through all of the stages of this development oneself. Without such experience and understanding the work will lose its effectiveness and the conditions will be wrongly interpreted; they will not be brought at the right moment and one will see situations and efforts remaining on the level of ordinary life and uselessly repeating themselves. (1)

A teacher is responsible for the proper application and integration of higher knowledge, according to the needs of the particular culture, circumstances, time period and individual student or group. The ordinary person is generally unable to recognize and take advantage of the developmental influences needed for spiritual growth. A genuine teacher knows the nature of these influences and to what measure they are to be used: "Only a teacher, someone who has attained 'sight,' can select from an individual's environment and from the repertoire of available techniques, a curriculum suitable to the task."

Many seekers are under the false impression that enlightenment can be attained by reading books and studying on one's own. The seeker needs human guidance because books and texts "while telling you what is needed, do not tell you when." There is a proverb: *'Words have to die if humans are to live.'*

Q: Many Westerners interested in Zen may not initially have access to a teacher. They do the best they can on their own – reading books, attending talks, perhaps meditating with a small group of like-minded people. Can one practice Zen authentically without a teacher?

A: Yes, up to a point. Books can certainly help one get started, but there comes a point when just reading books is not enough. You can't ask a book a question. The value of a teacher is that he or she has been through the whole process that the new student has yet to experience, so the teacher can perform important functions as a guide. (2)

Although spiritual traditions are unanimous that for the vast majority of humanity a guide is absolutely essential, it is acknowledged that spiritual progress and enlightenment is possible without the direct guidance of a living teacher, although it is emphasized that such cases are rare:

Q: Do we need an external guru, a spiritual teacher, when we have an inner guru?

A: Theoretically no. Practically, yes, except in very exceptional cases. We are conditioned to take, not to let go. Attachment to our self-image hinders us from surrendering to our totality.

Q: How can one look for a guru?

A: You cannot look for a teacher because you do not know what to look for. You cannot understand, cannot conceive of, a guide. You can only look for secondary functions, names, outer representations, magic, power, personality, etc. So you cannot find a teacher. All you can be is open to the teacher finding you. (3)

Although certain students may require more than one teacher at different phases of their spiritual journey, they must have only one teacher at a given time: "You can't eat two meals at a time, so to speak." Having two or more teachers simultaneously inevitably leads to confusion and the dissipation of focus and energy on the part of the student. "If you chase after other teachers like a weather vane turning with every fresh wind, you will succeed only in confusing yourself with no gain."

Q: Why isn't a student twice as well off with two teachers?

A: Actually he's worse off. Sooner or later he's bound to become confused, with the result that he will either neglect both teachers or drop them. The student who tries to serve two masters fails both. And he is the loser, for neither one will treat him as a serious aspirant. Lukewarm students invite a

lukewarm response from a teacher. Even within the same tradition teachers have different methods, depending on the training they themselves have received, their personalities, and the depth of their awakening. The first may tell you one thing and the other say what seems to be the opposite. They are not contradicting each other; if they are both spiritually developed each of their instructions are valid. But for the novice the seeming contradiction may pose problems of such an imposing nature that they discourage him and sap his energies. (4)

Navigating the hazards of the spiritual path, especially self-imposed barriers on the part of the student, is challenging and requires the guidance of an experienced teacher. A common human problem is attachment to externals and mistaking “the vehicle or container for the content,” thus requiring a mentor to monitor the pupil’s behaviour and direct attention according to actual possibilities. The teacher provides guidance and a starting point for the seeker in the process of ‘self-work.’ A student’s assumptions and preconceptions about the nature of spiritual development can also prevent learning. Hence the need for a perceptive teacher to point these barriers out to the pupil.

The problem for the seeker on the Way is not knowing where the Way is going. Thus the need for a guide. Arbitrary preconceptions about what form the teaching and practices will take hinder would-be learners from making a genuine start. Nevertheless, just because the goal is not what may be imagined by the beginner, that does not mean there is no such thing. Zen master Musho says that the trouble with many people is that they expect to be paid before they have done any work; this is the equivalent to expecting the Way to accord with one’s own imagination. (5)

Although a teacher in a human form is valuable for most seekers, ultimately life itself is our greatest teacher if a student is receptive to its impacts and challenges:

There is only one teacher. What is that teacher? Life itself. And of course each one of us is a manifestation of life; we couldn’t be anything else. Now life happens to be both a severe and an endlessly kind teacher. It’s the only authority that you need to trust. And this teacher, this authority, is everywhere. You don’t have to go to some special place to find this incomparable teacher, you don’t have to have some especially quiet or ideal situation: in fact, the messier it is the better. The average office is a great place. The average home is perfect. Such places are pretty messy most of the time – we all know this from firsthand experience. That is where the authority, the teacher is. (6)

Preparation and Permission to Teach

Before guiding others along the path to human completion, a teacher must have passed through the succession of developmental experiences which are essential to higher understanding. "A real teacher was asked how it was that he could teach, and he answered: I am what you will be: what you are I once was."

An individual may be prepared for a teaching task through a series of 'journeys,' and subsequently given permission to transmit the teaching into a specific place or culture. The teacher may be sent to a specific location and then wait years until a pupil is sent to them:

Certain individuals may be 'called' to make journeys, in order to acquire certain capacities. This call is the result of natural conditions. Such people are attracted, we might almost say 'imported,' to be a center of teaching when this is necessary, in order to fit them for their task. There are different varieties of such individuals. They are 'called' from one cultural area to another precisely when it is necessary for the teaching to be projected in an area of similar cultural background to their own. They become the instruments of the transmission of the teaching into a fresh culture. (7)

There are different levels of teachers, each fulfilling certain functions and responsibilities. Even though a person may have attained illumination, they are not permitted to teach until they have received, from their own mentor, permission to enrol students. In genuine mystical schools the teacher is actually taught how to be a teacher and will, in turn, have a number of disciples who eventually become full-fledged teachers in their own right.

In Zen, as in other Asian traditions, a disciple is ready to teach when his teacher says he is. This naturally places a great deal of responsibility in the hands of the master. If he is wise, with high standards, his seal of approval is the public's safeguard. If he is mediocre his disciple will leave much to be desired. A Zen master is a person of deep spiritual insight and wisdom who has experienced the emptiness and impermanence of all things, and whose lifestyle reflects such awareness. Zen master Dogen defined a master as one who is fully enlightened, who lives by what he knows to be the truth, and who has received the transmission from his own teacher. (8)

Many spiritual traditions stress the need for the teacher to be free from subjective reasons for seeking leadership, including a desire for attention and power. "As with any other specialization, teaching is a vocation, open only to those who are truly capable of discharging its functions." It is held that the desire to teach is disabling. A genuine teacher will teach only when the need and desire to teach is absent."

The mere desire to teach is regarded as a disability rooted in ambition developing before understanding is mature. One major Sufi says: "I had a desire to teach. I therefore ceased teaching until I became mature enough to do it properly, without the desire influencing my ability and therefore my duty to students. When the desire to teach left me, I started to teach." (9)

When teachers are free of all subjective motivations to teach they spontaneously offer each student the teachings most appropriate for their spiritual development:

Q: Does a sage have any responsibility to teach and help others?

A: The word responsibility is not at all suitable. Teaching comes out of love, compassion, out of thankfulness. There is no sense of duty in it, no desire to personally improve the world. It is free from all motivation. It is a mistake to think the teacher does something. Transmission cannot happen intentionally. When there is ripeness the candle lights up. But there are those who escape being citizens of the earth. The task is to come to a balance, to be in the world but not of it. (10)

Enlightened beings who possess the gift of teaching others can lead them to spiritual understanding by creating a perspective in which the teacher, the taught and the teaching merge into one unified whole:

Q: What is a teacher?

A: When you become established in truth you may or may not be a teacher. To be teacher takes a certain pedagogical gift, the capacity to perceive the mind directly so that the answer comes with the perfume of silence and unveils silence in the questioner. It is the capacity to see into the disciple and know instinctively in which way to present the teaching. There is no fixed teaching as there is no fixed disciple. In fact there is no teacher, for the teacher is identical with what is taught. The disciple takes himself for an ignorant person with something to acquire. When he meets the nothingness of the teacher and the teaching, he is brought to a letting go of his desire to be somebody who is enlightened, spiritual, religious, and so on. He is brought back to himself. (11)

The spiritual guide exists for a specific purpose and a limited time. A teacher fulfils their educational and spiritual mission when they "work themselves out of a job."

The teacher is by his nature transient, operating upon the disciple for the necessary length of time, then moving on. The teacher himself is neither permanent nor immortal. He is not an idol to be worshipped, but truly exists only in action. Indeed, were he venerated as and for himself, he

might be said to have failed in his task, for there is a limit to the dynamism possible in such a relationship. At some moment there would have to be an end to the disciple's development, since it would be implicit in his standing with such a teacher that he could not aspire to the latter's level. The process, not the person who leads and inducts it, is primary, and its end is self-perfection. (12)

As soon as possible a real teacher will dismiss the student, who becomes autonomous and continues the process of self-development on his or her own. The job of the mentor is to teach or coach the pupil until they are sufficiently advanced on the Way to be able to progress on their own:

The teacher's role is to render himself superfluous to the learner, by helping him to escape from the toils of lesser ideas and of the shallow mind. Until that moment comes, like a guide to a path which is invisible to the learner, the teacher is followed with absolute trust. The great Sufi Abdul-Qadir of Gilan stresses that this is like the role of the wet-nurse, who has to cease suckling the infant when it is able to eat solid food. When secondary and low-level attachments have vanished, the Seeker goes into a relationship with objective Reality. At this point there is no further need of the disciple relationship. (13)

A teacher does not necessarily teach continuously, have regular or frequent meetings, or concentrate the teaching community in only one place. "Such teachers may or may not be publicly known, and may have very few students, and from time to time none at all." For instance, many of the great classical Sufi masters, whose teachings have had the greatest effect, commanded audiences of only a few. The Sufi teacher al-Ghazali is reported to have said: "People tend to want to study under famous teachers. Yet there are always people not considered distinguished by the public who could teach them as effectively."

An important psychological concept, traditionally rooted in the East but relevant to spiritual seekers of all stripes, is the role of the teacher as an "instrument rather than a name." This emphasis on the message rather than the messenger is one of the characteristics of authentic spiritual teachings. "There is not a single authentic portrait of any of the spiritual teachers of most of Asia before the nineteenth century European influence and interest in personality."

It is a misconception that every person who has experienced higher reality is invariably a guide capable of helping others along the same way. Not all sages or realized beings are teachers and some exist, according to tradition, in order to exercise functions imperceptible to humanity at large.

Outer Form and Appearance

There is no such thing as an archetypal teacher with a common pool of typical characteristics. Rather, teachers manifest a wide range of appearance and behaviour. “When it is time to be serious, we will be serious. When it is time to work through what looks like ordinary things, we have to do so.” A real teacher has attained an inner unification of personality that is expressed through a diversity of ways. For instance, to avoid attack and interference from the people of the world, spiritual teachers may, at times, have to assume a disguise and “cover themselves in a rug.”

There is no uniform behaviour amongst the Masters. One may eat and sleep well, another will fast and sit up all night. One may spend time with people, another holds himself aloof. One will be found dressed in rags and another in silks and linen of high quality; one is silent, another speaks animatedly. One will conceal his saintship, another will show it publicly. (14)

The wide variation in the appearance and behaviour of teachers is due to the fact that they are fulfilling their function as a spiritual guide by adapting their teaching to the individual needs of their students and the requirements of ‘time, place and people.’ As outer circumstances change, the form and presentation of their instruction also changes.

Many people who lack discernment are impressed with the outer appearance, superficial characteristics and behaviour of a teacher and disregard the inner content and quality of the teacher as a source of learning for the student. A real teacher is often very different from what the untrained and indiscriminating seeker thinks a teacher should be like. A teaching master may possess none of the exterior characteristics which one would expect and may teach in unexpected channels and ways. Rumi: *‘Do not look at my outward shape, but take what is in my hand.’*

A true spiritual teacher does not have anything to teach in the conventional sense of the word, does not have anything to give or add to you, such as new information, beliefs, or rules of conduct. The only function of such a teacher is to help you remove that which separates you from the truth of who you already are and what you already know in the depths of your being. The spiritual teacher is there to uncover and reveal to you that dimension of inner depth that is also peace. (15)

Historically women have been proportionately under-represented as recognized spiritual teachers. Some explanations for this fact have been offered in the literature:

Proportionate to their number, the number of women teachers in the Sufi Tradition has been very small. One of the reasons is that some of the characteristics required of a teacher do not come easily to women in general. For

instance, the capacity to be cold, dispassionate, clinical in certain situations, and not to allow any subjective emotion to cloud their judgment, and to be able, if necessary, to maintain a cold and even callous face to people they are teaching. These aspects are generally foreign to the makeup of a woman. This is all the more difficult because such qualities have to be learned by a teacher. The person who makes the best teacher has a warm heart, which under necessary circumstances, he or she can switch off. This partly explains why the proportion of women teachers is small. (16)

The Teacher and the Teaching

The teacher and students are involved in a complex structure of activities and interactions which together constitute an esoteric school. The whole process – teacher, teaching and taught – is a single phenomenon. The continuity of the Teaching is guaranteed and maintained through the being, knowledge and actions of its teachers as they project and diffuse spiritual teachings among humanity, and through people’s involvement and devotion to the Teaching.

A real School provides a mandate to individuals to teach and ensures that they are properly performing their teaching role. A teacher is given permission and the authority to initiate the teaching process and guide others on the Path through a ‘chain of transmission.’ “There is a continuing chain of inductor and inducted, linked always by the relation between an unforced authority and a willing submission, and stretching back across the centuries.”

The nature and level of the connection between a teacher and an esoteric school determines the quality of energy and knowledge made available to the teacher. Gurdjieff elaborated on this idea in talks to his students:

There are also various possibilities as regards the teacher’s situation in relation to the esoteric center, namely, that he may know more or he may know less about the esoteric center, he may know exactly where the center is and how knowledge and help was or is received from it; or he may know nothing of this and may only know the man from whom he himself received this knowledge. In most cases people start precisely from the point that they know only one step higher than themselves. And only in proportion to their own development do they begin to see further and to recognize where what they know came from. The results of the work of a man who takes on himself the role of a teacher do not depend on whether or not he knows exactly the origin of what he teaches, but very much depends on whether or not his ideas come *in actual fact* from the esoteric center and whether he himself understands and can distinguish *esoteric ideas*, that is, ideas of objective knowledge, from subjective, scientific, and philosophical ideas. (17)

The degree of illumination of a real teacher may be invisible to the ordinary person and perceptible only to the enlightened. The functions and abilities of such a teacher may not be readily apparent to others who lack a “larger perspective” of the actual teaching process. A teacher’s knowledge is ultimately derived from direct inner experience of a spiritual nature. One of the characteristics of teachership is the ability to teach others from the vantage point of a more comprehensive awareness:

The guide teaches from a position which is at times ‘in the world’ because he has to maintain contact with his environment. He follows the ‘arc of ascent’ to learn; and when he has completed the ‘arc of descent’ he is among the people. He is now transmuted. This means that although his outward form and even a part of his essence may be visible, his whole depth only unfolds to those who are developed enough to understand and perceive it. There is more than an analogy here with teaching or leading in other fields; because leadership in more ordinary things is a ‘shadow’ or distortion of the essence of ‘teachership.’ If you are teaching a child, or a student, something which you know and he does not, you have to draw yourself to what you call ‘his level,’ and pull him up, slowly. Again, you have to withdraw from involvement, in order to see things objectively. As in the ordinary, so in the extraordinary: hence the teacher is in a way (or in what seems to be many ways) apart, or has been set apart, from the mass. He does not belong to the mass, and yet he does. His relationship to the mass is like that of the refined gold compared with the ore. (18)

As part of the teaching, a higher element uniting the teacher and student stands outside conventional time and space. “The Guide is responsible for relating the individual’s progress to that of the total needs of humanity.”

Guides and spiritual benefactors “descend” from higher consciousness in order to contact people according to their level of understanding, and “emerge” from the most basic ground of experience to contact people who are alienated from it. Guides teach through fostering particular relationships among people, and between people and the environment. Their guidance is followed through life conduct as well as mental disposition. (19)

A teacher’s power and success are supported from the higher energies that flow through their work and guide their teaching enterprises:

The Sufi master organizes studies, each according to his type, and he also plans the outward formulae according to which the school will function in the world. This may take any seemingly worldly shape. He will also protect his disciples from calamity; though, since many disasters are averted by the *Baraka* (spiritual force) of the master, his followers will be unable, until they in their turn become illuminated, to understand just what a

burden he carries on their behalf. According to this point of view, it is because of this that, when he comes to realize it, the disciple-turned-Sufi feels gratitude towards his Teacher to the end of his days. During the novitiate, however, he is unable to understand the sacrifices and services of the Master, and must only assume that they are there. (20)

Transmission of Spiritual Energy

Some of the world's greatest spiritual masters, such as Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi of India, taught their disciples principally through silence and the emanation of spiritual power:

Q: Why does not Bhagavan go about and preach the Truth to the people at large?

A: How do you know I am not doing it? Does preaching consist in mounting a platform and haranguing the people around? Preaching is simple communication of Knowledge; it can really be done in silence alone. What do you think of a man who listens to a sermon for an hour and goes away without having been impressed by it so as to change his life? Compare him with another who sits in a holy presence and goes away after some time with his outlook on life totally changed. Which is the better, to preach loudly without effect or to sit silently sending out inner force? (21)

The interaction and transmission of divine energy from master to disciple is one of the cornerstones of the spiritual journey. The feedback or exchange of energy between teacher and student occurs on many levels. Nonverbal communication is used to contact and awaken the inner being or essence of the person. Telepathic interchanges between a master and disciples enables "heart to call to heart." In one sense the teacher acts as a bridge or intermediary between the student and the higher dimensions of spiritual reality:

One must understand the nature of the feeling that exists, in living mystical traditions, between teacher and taught. The Master becomes a living metaphor for the perfection of the Absolute. He seems for the disciple at once the stepping-stone to divinity and, as a self-realized man, divinity made flesh. At the same time there exists in both the conviction that between them the transmission of a quality, indefinable yet unmistakable, can take place, through which the disciple will be permanently altered. When this transmission has occurred, the disciple is in no doubt about what he has gained, nor will the departure or death of the Master diminish one iota of it: he has been flooded by a perception of the Absolute so clear that almost nothing he can do will make him lose it, especially since all he does is done only in its light. In him, therefore, the fact of the teacher and the fact of the divine merge

into an inextricable whole, fusing with his own essence to produce a new level of being. (22)

Spiritual progress requires the presence of a subtle spiritual energy called, in the Sufi tradition, '*baraka*,' which is passed on from a teacher to the individual or group. '*Baraka*' means blessing, power or sanctity. The interaction with this force binds the members of a spiritual community together and influences their lives in many ways:

The teacher transmits to the pupil the baraka he himself receives from his own master. This baraka works on the pupil according to the time, place and need and the circumstances in which he finds himself. If the baraka is to produce a specific effect on the person, then it is possible that the effect can only be created if the person is in a certain geographical region and in a certain time relationship with the teaching. (23)

A spiritual teacher may pass on part of their mystical experience to some of their disciples who, on the basis of past experience and degree of receptivity, are ready for such a development. The projection of spiritual power into the being of the student usually takes place during the process of 'initiation.' The practice of mutual concentration exercises allows a teacher to transmit a taste of enlightenment to certain pupils. "The mutual-concentration exercise interchange between teacher and pupil enables, among other things, the teacher to provide the means of 'stilling,' and also the necessary range of subtle stimulus to help the pupil to his development."

A teacher can transmit an energy, influence or potential to a student over a vast distance when both are on the same "wavelength." "There are many different types and qualities of energy. They are transmitted and received in different ways by different methods, and they are for use in different situations." It is said that when a disciple is correctly attuned to higher Reality through the energy of an esoteric school, they can come into communication with all previous teachers of that tradition, even across time and space:

You must not take it for granted that to teach a person one needs his physical presence. One can be taught by any number of different ways, each equally efficient, provided that the teacher and the pupil have a strong enough bond established. With that, time and distance are of no importance. (24)

Certain disabling personal and psychological characteristics of the student can effectively prevent the transmission of spiritual energy or *baraka* from teacher to student:

In one aspect, Baraka is expressed through expansion and contraction. This is achieved through a special mind-body relationship and interaction. Baraka cannot enter the mind of the seeker until his thoughts have undergone a change that will allow him to be receptive to its influence.

It is possible to cut a person off from Baraka – indeed a great many people are thus cut off. This state is called that of “being veiled.” People who concentrate on any one doctrinal belief are heavily “veiled” by that belief. The encouragement of the Baraka force is called “removing the veils.” (25)

Individual Characteristics of the Student

The task of the teacher is to prescribe the course of studies for each pupil, indicating what a student should do and should not do. “Someone might know better than the individual themselves as to the course which they should pursue.”

When you look at a child, you notice that it has three kinds of qualities: those which help its progress, such as eating instinctively; those which could harm its future, such as eating poisonous things; and those which are neutral. In respect to higher teaching and learning, the adult human being is the same. He can acquire valuable nutrients in knowledge. He can acquire dangerous ones, while thinking they are good for him. He can take in irrelevant ones, thinking nothing or thinking that they are significant. Like the parent, the Teacher knows which are which. (26)

The teacher must ensure that the teaching is presented in such a manner as to accord with the pupil’s needs, background and abilities. “The instructions given to pupils differ according to the temperaments of the individuals and according to the spiritual ripeness of their minds. Therefore there cannot be any instructions *en masse*.”

The onus is very much on the teacher to make sure that the student has a sufficient background of information, knowledge and experience so that he can benefit from the teaching itself. The teaching, too, must be presented in a volume, quality and manner which will correspond with the pupil’s needs, abilities and previous thinking, as well as with the teaching’s own minimum requirements for its effective expression. Without all these conditions, real teaching is not possible. It is the teacher, not the student, who assesses the condition of the student and prescribes his studies. Without adequate supervision over the curriculum and the student’s exposure to study-materials, progress is inadequate. (27)

The teacher guides each student according to their needs and possibilities, rather than staring at a fixed predetermined point. “The guide must be able to determine the capacity of the disciple and will have to deal with this disciple in accordance with his potentiality.”

Since individuals vary greatly in their capacities and aptitudes, Zen masters must use different methods and teachings for different individuals in dif-

ferent circumstances. And so Zen styles and expressions vary greatly, from the most enigmatic and irrational koans to the plainest and most understandable instructions. (28)

An important function of the teacher is making students aware of the effects of the 'filter of conditioning' so that it can be removed. "The director knows by the behaviour of the student what the condition of his secondary or 'commanding' self is at any given time." The teacher must overcome the student's expectations and fixed biases and provide what the pupil really needs. "The disciple is the last person who is likely to know what it is that he needs, irrespective of what he wants."

Each teacher has his own method, usually patterned on his Guru's teaching and on the way he himself has realized, and his own terminology as well. Within that framework adjustments to the personality of the disciple are made. The disciple is given full freedom of thought and enquiry and encouraged to question to his heart's content. He must be absolutely certain of the standing and competency of his Guru, otherwise his faith will not be absolute nor his action complete. (29)

The Teacher-Student Relationship

The nature of the relationship between a spiritual teacher and student has been compared to that between a teacher and pupil in ordinary life. There are both similarities and differences:

Let me clarify the differences between the master-disciple relationship (in a Zen context) and the teacher-student relationship (in a secular setting). In the ideal teacher-student relationship the student respects the teacher as the possessor of a certain body of knowledge or of a skill that the student would like to acquire, while the teacher values the student for his eagerness and his ability to absorb this knowledge. Their relationship is largely impersonal and limited; what sustains it is their common interest in a particular study. The master-disciple relationship of Zen is deeper and more personal because it is grounded in karmic affinity. What moves the disciple in the direction of the master is not the master's knowledge, but his compassion, enlightened wisdom, character and warm personality – traits born of long discipline and training. The disciple senses that it is through these qualities that he will be able to complete himself and eventually come to full awakening. (30)

Some have claimed that the true teacher-student relationship is a mirror image or analogue to God's relationship with humanity. "The special form of friendship and love which grows be-

tween teacher and pupil is simultaneously a bond of friendship between man and God and an exact counterpart of God's relationship with mankind."

In order for learning and real progress to occur the teacher and student must be in a state of "receptivity" and spiritual contact. The pupil must be harmonized and attuned to the teacher, by achieving a balanced attitude: neither rejecting nor servile. "There is and must be a very clear distinction between love, respect and affection for a teacher and a cult of personality." In the words of Hakim Sanai: *'The teacher who allows his disciple to sit in his shadow when they should be making every effort to sit in the sunshine, is not carrying out his duty correctly.'*

In authentic spiritual schools, the teacher is regarded as an instructor or conductor of knowledge, and personality worship is discouraged. Some of the psychological characteristics which hinder the teacher-student relationship have been identified. These include such things as personal pride, greed disguised as aspiration, lack of commitment and extravagant attitudes toward the teacher.

As in any specialized field of knowledge, the student must accept the teacher's expertise and authority in order for real learning to occur. It is not always possible for a student to accurately assess and understand all the words and actions of a teacher, who is by definition at a higher level of development. "If a student imagines that something said or done by his teacher is a shortcoming when it is not, and this student maintains publicly that his teacher has deficiencies, the results will be undesirable for everyone."

The guide, after all, is the person who has made the journey that the novice wants to make. He not only knows what the novice wants to know, he is what the novice wants to become. As a result, the disciple, once accepted by the teacher, cannot judge the latter's words or actions: he must trust him. In practice, this means his total acceptance of the fact that his teacher knows better than he what he should do, the pace at which he should progress, the exercises he should perform and the disciplines he should undergo. If the disciple does not accept this, there is no point in his sitting at a teacher's feet. He will reject the only truly valuable thing the teacher has to offer. Theories, arguments, dissertations can all be found in books; the impact of one person on another is quite a different matter. It is this acceptance of what amounts to the teacher's omniscience, certainly in the matter of the pupil's development, that is the basis for the surrender that the novice must make: it is precisely for this reason that he is not a student but a disciple. (31)

The proper attitude on the part of the student is crucial to the success of the teacher-student relationship. Honouring and respecting the teacher benefits the disciple not the teacher. Trust and belief in the teacher implies a positive attitude and posture which develops a higher capacity in the student. "People who cannot trust are themselves not trustworthy, and therefore cannot be entrusted with important things."

The relationship with your teacher is the most important and complex relationship you can ever experience in life. It cannot be judged by ordinary social standards alone. You may try to evaluate and analyze whatever your teacher does and try to relate to that according to your own convictions, but you won't get very far. You may even end up more confused. Sometimes everything seems just how it should be, and other times your expectations are not met at all. What is called for is a leap of faith. You have to let go of all your notions and take the teacher for what he or she is completely. This is called surrender and it has to be with a true master. (32)

The concept of submission and obedience to a spiritual guide is widely misunderstood. "At some moment in many ordinary endeavours we place ourselves in the hands of others; when we learn to swim, when we have a suit made, when we learn a foreign language, or when we obtain treatment for a health problem. Spiritual studies are no different." Gurdjieff stressed that obedience and subordination to the instructions and directions of a teacher must be a conscious decision on the part of the disciple, not based on fear, desire to please, or other motives:

The most difficult thing here is that it is necessary to obey someone, to submit to someone. If a man could invent difficulties and sacrifices for himself, he would sometimes go very far. But the point here is that this is not possible. It is necessary to obey another or to follow the direction of general work, the control of which can belong only to one person. Such submission is the most difficult thing that there can be for a man who thinks that he is capable of deciding anything or of doing anything. Of course, when he gets rid of these fantasies and sees what he really is, the difficulty disappears. This, however, can only take place in the course of work. (33)

Although trust and obedience are essential in the relationship between a teacher and a student, there may come a point when the student is unable to continue working with a teacher and needs to find a more compatible guide:

A healthy skepticism need not be corrosive of essential trust and wholehearted practice. Students will not feel a need to question credentials if they are deepening their insight under severe and compassionate guidance. However, if they feel strain, or become troubled by the relationship, or repeatedly find themselves in situations of moral or psychological ambiguity with their teacher, they should simply exercise their normal critical faculties. After practicing wholeheartedly and giving the teacher the benefit of the doubt, a student may reach a point where it would be wise to seek another guide or another group. In any case, the teacher need not be confused with the teaching. The fact that a teacher turns out to have deep flaws, or that the chemistry of the relationship between student and teacher has not

worked well, need not vitiate the promise of Zen training or preclude the possibility of training under another guide. (34)

The teacher-student relationship fulfills its greatest promise when both transcend the roles of 'teacher' and 'pupil':

The relationship between teacher and disciple is quite magical. The teacher never takes you for an ignorant person, never takes you for a disciple, because he does not take himself for a teacher. To take oneself for a teacher is a restriction, and to take yourself for an ignorant person, a disciple, is a restriction. The moment you become free from this restriction there is a current, a current of oneness. You should feel yourself really free from the teacher, because the teaching is that you become free, free from yourself, from what you are not. To feel yourself, in the highest sense, absolutely free, you must not be bound to anything or anyone, or any institution. It is quite simple. Being free is freedom from everything. Affection never binds you. In affection there is freedom. (35)

Choosing a Teacher, Selecting a Student

The first real step in the spiritual life of an intending disciple is to find a guide on the Path. This initiates the teacher-student relationship: "He is a Master who may teach without it being totally labelled teaching; he is a student who can learn without being obsessed by learning."

Q: how does the teacher overcome the fixed but unperceived biases of the student?

A: Let us look at the relative positions of the teacher and the student. The student regards the teacher as someone who has a quantity of something, and will give him a part of it. Or he may look upon him as someone who knows a method of achieving something. The teacher sees the student as someone who is eligible for gaining a portion of something. In another sense he looks upon him as someone who can achieve something. Each in its own way, the attitudes of the two have a connection. The problem of the teacher is greater than the problem of the student. One reason for this is that the student is anxious to learn but seldom realizes that he can learn *only under the conditions which make this learning possible*. (36)

It is difficult for the seeker to know at which point in the spiritual journey a guide becomes absolutely necessary. "The stage at which the guidance can take effect is seldom, if ever, perceptible to the learner. Those who say 'I am ready to learn,' or 'I am not ready to learn' are as often mistaken as they are correct in their surmise." In some cases, according to esoteric

tradition, there occurs a moment of recognition in which teacher and student understand that they are destined to work together. Real teachers also discourage would-be disciples who lack the preparation and inner capacity to understand higher truths.

It is said that the teacher discovers the student, and not the other way around. One of the problems of the would-be disciple is recognizing a genuine teacher, which requires a certain degree of inner perception and refinement.

You cannot choose your teacher by logic. The reason is that logic does not extend into the field in which the teacher is operating. That is why it is better for the teacher to choose you. The so-called “choice” of a teacher is not a choice at all. What happens is this: The would-be disciple approaches the potential teacher and opens his heart to him. This means that he allows himself to become receptive to what the teacher is *saying and doing*. He must absorb something of the whole entity, the wholeness, the personage of the teacher *and his works*. Then a contract can be made. There is a recognition in the mind of the disciple that this is the teacher for him. (37)

Traditional spiritual teachings provide useful descriptions of some of the essential qualities of a genuine enlightened teacher:

Q: What are the distinctive characteristics of a Guru by which one can recognize him?

A: The Guru is one who at all times abides in the profound depths of the Self. He never sees any difference between himself and others and is quite free from the idea that he is the Enlightened or the Liberated One, while those around him are in bondage or the darkness of ignorance. His self-possession can never be shaken under any circumstances and he is never perturbed. (38)

A real teacher does not pursue or advertise for potential students, but rather offers and indicates a teaching for those who are open and receptive. The promising student will often feel an inner response to the teacher independent of his or her outward appearance or behaviour:

Q: How can I find a Guru whom I can trust?

A: Your own heart will tell you. There is no difficulty in finding a Guru because the Guru is in search of you. The Guru is always ready; you are not ready. You have to be ready to learn; or you may meet your Guru and waste your chance by sheer inattentiveness and obstinacy.

Q: Must I not examine the teacher before I put myself entirely into his hands?

A: By all means examine! But what can you find out? Only as he appears to you on your own level.

Q: I should at least expect him to be a man of self-control who lives a righteous life.

A: Such you will find many – and of no use to you. A Guru can show the way back home, to your real self. What has this to do with the character or temperament of the person he appears to be? The only way you can judge is by the change in yourself when you are in his company. If you feel more at peace and happy, if you understand yourself with more than usual clarity and depth, it means you have met the right man. (39)

Potential students must learn to develop trust and faith in their teacher in order to be real disciples on the Path. The relationship between a teacher and a student is one of mutual respect and responsibility:

The basis of the relationship between a Master and a student in the Tradition is quite clear. It is an agreement between two people, under which the pupil accepts to learn. The Master undertakes to teach, and takes the responsibility for guiding the pupil. It is a free association, and this is what gives it its strength. If both parties to the agreement do not fulfil their promise, then the activity between the two will not function. (40)

In order for the teacher and student to work together effectively there must be an affinity and congruence between the two and a mutual understanding of the principles of self-work:

In work of this nature there can be no sort of criticism, no sort of “disagreement” with this or that person. On the contrary, all work consists in doing what the leader indicates, understanding in conformance with his opinions even those things that he does not say plainly, helping him in *everything* that he does. There can be no other attitude towards the work. A most important thing in the work was *to remember that one came to learn* and to take no other role upon oneself. At the same time this does not mean that a man has no choice or that he is obliged to follow something which does not respond to what he is seeking. If a man has begun to work with a leader whom he cannot follow, then of course, having noticed and realized this, he ought to go and seek another leader or work independently, if he is able to do so. (41)

There is always an element of uncertainty in choosing a spiritual teacher as the seeker is entering unknown and unpredictable territory:

How do you know whether you have found the right teacher? You have to follow your own intuition. Only a heart-to-heart connection makes true communion possible. What is required is faith in your teacher's realization and his ability to help you accomplish the Way. Approaching a teacher, you walk on uncertain ground. Nobody has any idea what is going to happen. A true teacher lives in the present moment and responds to the living situation. Because it is so unpredictable it never feels safe. There are people who say that students need to feel safe with a teacher, but with a true master, there is always risk involved. How can you feel safe with someone who carries a double-edged sword, giving and taking life without blinking an eye? (42)

Role and Function of the Teacher

The function and role of a teacher is much like that of a 'herdsman' who guides others with the power of certainty. "As a shepherd he can look after the external needs of the flock; he has the inner qualities to cater for their essential progress." The spiritual influence of a teacher on his or her students has been compared to that of a parent of a young child:

The teacher fulfils the dual roles traditionally ascribed to a father and a mother. Alternately he is the strict, reproving father who prods and chastens and the gentle loving mother who comforts and encourages. When the student slackens his effort he is coaxed or goaded, when he displays pride he is rebuked; and conversely, when he is assailed by doubt or driven to despair he is encouraged and uplifted. An accomplished teacher thus combines stern detachment with warm concern, flexibility, and an egolessness that can never be mistaken for weakness . . . Because his words are charged with the force and immediacy of his liberated personality, what he says has the power to rejuvenate the student's flagging spirit and reinvigorate his quest for enlightenment despite pain, frustration or temporary boredom. (43)

The presence of a teacher is the bridge between the relative incapacity of the student and the finished product of a realized being. The student must learn how to learn, wanting higher knowledge is not enough. A paramount concern of the real or true sage is to entrust spiritual knowledge only to those who are properly prepared and can benefit from it. The teacher must make clear to the student "that this knowledge cannot endure together with competitiveness, boasting or a desire for power." The role of the teacher is to open possibilities in students and guide their spiritual development by providing the necessary 'nutrients' at the most useful time:

The teacher's mission is to be in the service of those who can learn. He does not exist to please or displease anyone. To accord with the preconceptions of

others as to appearances is irrelevant to his functions. He works in accordance with the prospects of his students and the possibility of maintaining the continuation of the community of the Wise. He does not hand out formulas nor does he insist upon the performance of mechanical procedures. His knowledge, on the contrary, makes it possible for him to prescribe apposite studies for suitable people, at an indicated time, in the proper place. (44)

An individual who has attained a state of integration or 'completeness' is able to perceive the barriers that prevent ordinary people from reaching such a state of development. He or she can then construct a teaching method, based on a combination of theory, practice and daily living, designed to facilitate arrival at this state of spiritual maturity:

Q: How does one view the role of the guide in relation to the learner? Is he the source of knowledge, which he imparts; does he conduct the Seeker to places and experiences which cannot otherwise be reached?

A: The process is like a journey. The teacher follows the path and knows it well. Then, in the case of each and every disciple, he retraces the way with him. This is allegorized as starting a circle with a point, which then describes a complete revolution and ends with the point, which is itself part of the circle. The teacher is also likened to the activity of a seed, which becomes a plant and which gives rise to another seed, which has to complete the cycle. (45)

According to tradition, an enlightened teacher may exercise their teaching function in ways that are unsuspected by most students. "When you first meet him, he may seem to be very different from you. He is not. He may seem to be very much like you. He is not." The teacher may employ a variety of methods to connect with the inner consciousness of the student:

- Instruct and benefit the pupil whether they know it or not at the time.
- Say or do things which seem inconsistent or even incomprehensible to the student.
- Work on the basis of a rightly guided intuition which is in harmony with the essence of the Path or Way.
- Intentionally challenge or upset the pupil for their own good.
- Prescribe studies, activities and exercises whose importance can only be realized in hindsight.
- Unfold the path of enlightenment slowly and in stages which accord with the student's needs and potentiality.

One of the most important functions of a spiritual teacher is to test students who report purported higher states of consciousness in order to determine if the experiences are genuine or products of the imagination or self-deception:

It is frequently claimed that genuine enlightenment ought to be self-validating and therefore no need for testing should arise. But self-deception is as strong here as in other realms of human behaviour, even stronger perhaps because of the very nature of enlightenment. It is all too easy for a novice to mistake visions, trances, hallucinations, insights, revelations, ecstasies, or even mental serenity for awakening. The oceanic feeling experienced by certain types of neurotics has likewise been confused with enlightenment since it conveys a sense of oneness with the universe. For all these reasons, and especially because the danger to the personality resulting from such self-deception is real, Zen teaching has always insisted that awakening be tested and confirmed by a master whose own enlightenment has, in turn, been sanctioned by an enlightened master. (46)

The spiritual guide performs the role of a teacher only until the student reaches spiritual maturity and is independent and autonomous, free and liberated:

The teacher's aim is not to control the lives of his students but to make them strong enough to lead their own lives with awareness, equanimity and compassion. While it is also said in Zen that the teacher stands in place of the Buddha, this really means that he manifests the awakened Buddha-nature common to all. In any case, the authority of a teacher over his students extends for a limited period only. When they have completed their Zen training, approached his level of understanding, and "graduated," his authority over them ceases. What remains is the disciple's deep respect and gratitude towards their teacher. (47)

Ways and Methods of Teaching

The way a teaching is presented is predicated on the teacher's own experience and understanding. A teacher, having completed the spiritual journey, has an overview which students lack and can therefore devise effective methods which will work for each pupil:

The most basic teaching is that the teaching itself is produced by the teacher as a consequence of his own experience. As soon as he has had the ultimate experience, he can see from that viewpoint how to bring it to others. He has become a teacher. Now, if in order to bring it to others he has to do or say things which do not seem to be spiritual or even relevant to those who cannot in any case judge, he will always find a way to bring the teaching to those who are open to understanding. (48)

The course of spiritual study is not fixed or constant. The wisdom and intuition of a living teacher determines how the teaching is projected. The instructor's task is to assess the pupil's potential and monitor, and help to conduct, the learner's progress:

The development and application of Sufism as a study will be organized and projected by the Sufi exponent (1) in light of his own experience rather than by means of repetitious doctrine, (2) in accordance with the actual potential of his students and not by speaking into a void, as it were, and (3) adapted to prevailing circumstances without cleaving to tradition for its own sake. The Sufi's position is that he is someone who has experienced something, who sees how to impart it almost from moment to moment. He structures his method, almost instinctively, so as to help to achieve the desired end. This formulation constitutes the only development and application in which he is interested – indeed, in which he is competent. What is said and done is always subordinate to, and commanded by, a perception of what the learner needs at a given time or place, and under the prevailing circumstances, in order to arrive at similar perceptions. (49)

In order to teach effectively, the instructor must understand the psychological makeup of the student. "You have to understand their shortcomings, problems, negativity, positivity, the ups and downs, and use whatever technique applies to that situation." To avoid conditioning and indoctrination, the teacher must provide the "right stimulus at the right time for the right person." And, in order for the teaching to be effective and properly digested, it must be presented to the student in a step-by-step fashion that takes into account an individual's capacity and level of understanding:

Ummon Bun'en Zenji taught by the model of a box and its lid. There must be a perfect fit. Reading the record of his instruction, we find a wide variety of styles. Each of his responses, however, like each of the responses of every authentic master, is cued to the time, the place, and the circumstances of the encounter. Included in the latter would be the exact nature of the student's need. You don't feed a baby a red pepper, no matter how hungry it may be. (50)

The way in which a teacher instructs may not always be comprehensible to the students. One of the challenges of communicating an esoteric teaching is to "convey experiences which are not like anything that the ordinary person undergoes in life." The subtle aspects of a spiritual teaching require the presence of an "expert" to intervene at critical times to ensure proper development. This process is analogous to the preparing of a meal by a master chef:

Consider the method of seasoning a certain dish. The pot is put on the fire, together with some of the ingredients. Little by little, other items are added. As they cook, they release their substances and flavour, contributing to the total effect. In addition to this, certain spices are used. These condiments

are not merely dumped into the stew, they are measured out and put into the pot at certain stages of the cooking. This sort of technique is familiar to all cooks. There is an additional technique, however, which is less familiar. This is it: an individual condiment is not added all at once. It is measured into several portions. Each portion is added at a different time. The result is that each portion of the same condiment is giving off a flavour slightly different in accordance with its stage of cooking. Such a condiment may, therefore, contain more than one 'flavour.' It is working with subtleties of this rarefaction that distinguishes the prowess of the accomplished cook. (51)

A teacher provides both individuals and groups with appropriate materials, exercises and experiences for the purpose of study and assimilation. "Learning, in education and teaching in general, requires expert guidance from outside, if that guidance does not exist inside the learner." The teacher mediates the elements of learning, such as focus, balance, and the weight given to different impacts and experiences:

Q: What are the roles of rituals and beliefs and studies for the Sufi?

A: To be a Sufi and to study the Way is to have a certain attitude. This attitude is produced by the effect of Sufi teachers, who exercise the instrumental function in relation to the Seeker. Rituals and beliefs, and studies, can only have an instrumental effect suitable for Sufi progress when they are correctly used, and by people who are not affected by them in the customary manner. This has been very clearly laid down by Abul' Hasan Nuri, over a thousand years ago: "A Sufi," he says, "is one who is not bound by anything nor does he bind anything. This means that he does what he does from free choice and not from compulsion or conditioning. Equally, he is not attached to things and does not bind others to him." (52)

Traditionally, teachers have employed multiple ways of communicating the essence of their teaching to their students and followers:

Rinzai, an early Chinese Zen master, analyzed how to teach his disciples in four ways. Sometimes he talked about the disciple himself; sometimes he talked about the teaching itself; sometimes he gave an interpretation of the disciple or the teaching; and finally, sometimes he did not give any instruction at all to his disciples. He knew that even without being given any instructions, a student is a student. Strictly speaking, there is no need to teach the student, because the student himself is Buddha, even though he may not be aware of it. (53)

Unless traditional teaching methods are employed with skill and insight, they can become subtle barriers blocking the spiritual progress of the student:

Q: What do you think of traditional disciplines?

A: There are many traditional disciplines but these cannot be used in a systematic way. As a teacher one has all these forms at one's disposal. But all these techniques still keep alive the I-image. They keep you in the subject-object relationship. Real tradition occurs when the one you call a teacher is completely without image. He or she does not live in the restriction of being a 'teacher' with something to teach, set ways of teaching, and disciplines. In his openness he brings you to freedom from your image. In this there is direct transmission; otherwise, you become stuck in forms and disciplines which can only lead to inflexibility and conditioned states. (54)

References

- (1) G.I. Gurdjieff *Views from the Real World: Early Talks of Gurdjieff* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1973), pp. vi-vii.
- (2) Philip Kapleau *Awakening to Zen* (New York: Scribner, 1997), p. 253.
- (3) Jean Klein *Who Am I?* (Dorset, England: Element Books, 1988), p. 104.
- (4) Philip Kapleau *Zen Dawn in the West* (New York: Anchor Press, 1979), p. 35.
- (5) Thomas Cleary *Rational Zen* (Boston: Shambhala, 1995), p.193.
- (6) Charlotte Beck *Everyday Zen* (San Francisco: Harper, 1989), p. 16
- (7) Idries Shah *The Commanding Self* (London: Octagon Press, 1994), pp. 187-188.
- (8) Philip Kapleau *Zen Dawn in the West* (New York: Anchor Press, 1979), pp. 30-31.
- (9) Idries Shah *A Perfumed Scorpion* (London: Octagon Press, 1983), pp. 163-164.
- (10) Jean Klein *Who Am I?* (Dorset, England: Element Books, 1988), p. 118.
- (11) Jean Klein *Who Am I?* (Dorset, England: Element Books, 1988), pp. 105-106.
- (12) Peter Brent "Learning and Teaching" in *The World of the Sufi* (Idries Shah, ed.) (London: Octagon Press, 1979), p. 220.
- (13) Idries Shah *Learning How to Learn* (London: Octagon Press, 1983), p. 120.
- (14) Idries Shah *Seeker After Truth* (London: Octagon Press, 1983), pp. 22-23.
- (15) Eckhart Tolle *Stillness Speaks* (Vancouver: Namaste Publishing, 2003), p. ix.
- (16) Omar Ali-Shah *Sufism for Today* (New York: Alif Publishing, 1993), pp. 60-61.
- (17) P. D. Ouspensky *In Search of the Miraculous* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1949), p. 202.
- (18) Idries Shah *The Commanding Self* (London: Octagon Press, 1994), pp. 34-35.
- (19) Thomas Cleary *Rational Zen* (Boston: Shambhala, 1995), pp.193-194.
- (20) F.X. O'Halloran "A Catholic Among Sufis" in *The Sufi Mystery* (N.P. Archer, ed.) (London: Octagon Press, 1980), pp. 27-28.
- (21) Ramana Maharshi *The Spiritual Teachings of Ramana Maharshi* (Boston: Shambhala, 1988), p. 49.
- (22) Peter Brent "The Classical Masters" in *The World of the Sufi* (Idries Shah, ed.) (London: Octagon Press, 1979), p. 25.

- (23) Rafael Lefort *The Teachers of Gurdjieff* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1973), pp. 56-57.
- (24) Rafael Lefort *The Teachers of Gurdjieff* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1973), p. 79.
- (25) Desmond Martin "A Session with a Western Sufi" in *The Elephant in the Dark and Other Writings on the Diffusion of Sufi Ideas in the West* (Leonard Lewin, ed.) (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1973), pp. 148-149.
- (26) Idries Shah *Knowing How to Know* (London: Octagon Press, 1998), pp. 59-60.
- (27) Idries Shah *Knowing How to Know* (London: Octagon Press, 1998), pp. 45-46.
- (28) Garma Chang *The Practice of Zen* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), p. 161.
- (29) Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj *I Am That* (Durham, North Carolina: Acorn Press, 1982), pp. 460-461.
- (30) Philip Kapleau "The Private Encounter with the Master" in *Zen Tradition and Transition* (Kenneth Kraft, ed.) (New York: Grove Press, 1989), pp. 48-49.
- (31) Peter Brent "Learning and Teaching" in *The World of the Sufi* (Idries Shah, ed.) (London: Octagon Press, 1979), p. 214.
- (32) Dennis Merzel *Beyond Sanity and Madness* (Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle, 1994), pp. 99-100.
- (33) P. D. Ouspensky *In Search of the Miraculous* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1949), p. 240.
- (34) Martin Collcutt "Problems of Authority in Western Zen" in *Zen Tradition and Transition* (Kenneth Kraft, ed.) (New York: Grove Press, 1989), p. 204.
- (35) Jean Klein *Open to the Unknown* (Santa Barbara: Third Millennium Publications, 1992), p. 81.
- (36) Idries Shah *Learning How to Learn* (London: Octagon Press, 1983), p. 128.
- (37) O.M. Burke *Among the Dervishes* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1975), pp. 101-102.
- (38) Ramana Maharshi *The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi* (New York: Samuel Weiser, 1978), p. 97.
- (39) Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj *I Am That* (Durham, North Carolina: Acorn Press, 1982), pp. 272-273.
- (40) Omar Ali-Shah *The Sufi Tradition in the West* (New York: Alif Publishing, 1994), p. 59.
- (41) P. D. Ouspensky *In Search of the Miraculous* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1949), p. 374.
- (42) Dennis Merzel *Beyond Sanity and Madness* (Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle, 1994), pp. 62-63.
- (43) Philip Kapleau *The Three Pillars of Zen* (New York: Anchor Books, 1989), p. 96.
- (44) Idries Shah *Learning How to Learn* (London: Octagon Press, 1983), p. 194.
- (45) Idries Shah *Knowing How to Know* (London: Octagon Press, 1998), pp. 315-316.
- (46) Philip Kapleau *The Three Pillars of Zen* (New York: Anchor Books, 1989), p. 99.
- (47) Philip Kapleau "The Private Encounter with the Master" in *Zen Tradition and Transition* (Kenneth Kraft, ed.) (New York: Grove Press, 1989), p. 65.
- (48) Djaledin Ansari "Basic Teachings of the Sufis" in *Sufi Thought and Action* (Idries Shah, ed.) (London: Octagon Press, 1990), p. 207.
- (49) Idries Shah *Neglected Aspects of Sufi Study* (London: Octagon Press, 1990), pp. 49-50.
- (50) Robert Aitken "Foreword" in *On Zen Practice II* (Taizan Maezumi and Bernard Glassman, eds.) (Los Angeles: Zen Center of Los Angeles, 1976), p. xii.

(51) Idries Shah *The Commanding Self* (London: Octagon Press, 1994), p. 89.

(52) Idries Shah *Seeker After Truth* (London: Octagon Press, 1985), p. 24.

(53) Shunryu Suzuki *Zen Mind, Beginners Mind* (New York: Weatherhill, 1973), p. 77.

(54) Jean Klein *Who Am I?* (Dorset, England: Element Books, 1988), p. 109.