



TEACHERS AND GUIDANCE

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ABSTRACT

“Teachers and Guidance” provides a cautionary note about understanding the nature of spiritual teachers, in order to avoid an insidious form of attachment. The ultimate teacher resides within, and this is what a true spiritual mentor guides you to. Teachers who seek not followers, and live as an example of wisdom and understanding are perhaps the teachers to hold our attention. Choose well your teacher.

On the pilgrimage of meditation we are often unsure of ourselves and consequently lose sight of our true nature. This lack of direction produces confusion and a sense that something is missing. We often cover up this lack with busyness, various addictions and create a cosmetic persona to present to the world, yet deep down we know we are fooling ourselves. Our struggles derive from a misperception about who we are, as we remain ignorant of our true nature as boundless interconnected consciousness. Most of us, however, do know intuitively that we are much more than the external postures and cosmetics we apply to life, and we are led to seek out spiritual teachers. We do need wise teachers to guide our steps, yet must be aware that this is a major arena for attachment to work its subtle power of illusion.

We look for a spiritual teacher who has all that we do not feel in ourselves, and when we find one, we think this is our point of completion. This is an illusion. Although it is valuable to have a person in our life who portrays God-like qualities as an example, remember, that this is only an example of what we all have inside of ourselves, and we must do our own work of cultivating those qualities from within. No teacher can do it for us. We must also be aware of the imperfections in teachers and recognize the same imperfections in ourselves and take the steps of personal responsibility to transcend any weakness in the teacher and in ourselves. We must be aware that many teachers are not

in touch with their own true nature, so how can they be in touch with ours? The danger of continuing to seek external guidance and dutifully sit at the feet of teacher after teacher, is that the tendrils of attachment to the external grow deeper, and so we become further separated from our own true Grace. There are a number of things we often lose sight of in this search for a spiritual teacher.

There is the Teacher and there is the Teaching. We need to realize from the outset that the ultimate teacher is our Godself within, our own inner consciousness and light of mindfulness, and this is where our faith and trust must be guided. The experience of teaching is to communicate revelation of Truth through the teacher's personal experience of it. Such revelation is the birthright and point of liberation for all. There is calm assurance and strength in this, for it is not a debate of contrasting religious principles or an arena for intellectual sophistry. It is a tapestry of Truth, so richly woven that the threads and shape of what is communicated appeals to some recognition in the listener. The meaning of any teaching is to see the potential in all human beings, and to encourage the light to freely come forth, to liberate it. As a teacher the responsibility is to be the example of that which is taught.

A teaching that is worth listening to is clear, direct and gentle, with a foundation in joy, as must be the vehicle that it is expressed through, as the energy that comes through the teacher is a very important aspect of any teaching. Simplicity in life is cultivated from within and this garden spreads outwards in the same manner as a teaching, for only in this way can the inner experience of Truth be communicated and then received by the inner level of Truth within the listener. Teachings spring from this inner simplicity and do make tidal waves, for there is nothing in the teacher to deter the clear beacon of Truth. No advantage is sought or financial price exacted, no limits are placed on who is connected to inner Truth. This is in contrast to the many teachers who do exact a price and do seek advantage. Your personal liberation does not come through the guidance of teachers such as these. Teachers, who are able to remind you of all that you already have within you, choose to stand at a meeting point of past, present and future, and from this stance, communicate what they know through a joyful and awakened heart. You will know them when you meet them for they have simplicity, and are strangers to artifice and intellectual manipulation. These men and women gather unto

themselves Universal energies that support the expression of mindfulness, of inner consciousness. This is communicated through frequencies that precede the word, gently filtering Truth through the resistance of the receiver. So without knowing why, you find Truth in what is said and take it in to your own life, thereby changing your design for living. The teachers of Truth may appear to be very different to the teachers we have become accustomed to. When the opportunity arises to be taught by these simple men and women of Grace, treasure every moment of their gentleness and connection to you, and then pass this on to others through your own changed example.

The manner of teaching places the alertness of the listener, of the taught, on a new plateau, yet there is one paramount question. It is "What does this Teacher want of me?" If it is devotion to the teacher, a sizeable portion, if not all, of your income, commitment to patterns of action that serve the teacher - then quietly pack up your belongings and leave. Such a teacher seeks your connection to the vehicle, and not to the Truth of the teaching. Then there are teachers who seek only to bring you to an acquaintanceship, then lasting friendship, with the deep memories of Truth and Grace within you. Hold on to what is communicated. For it will be an unflinching portrayal of Truth that will surface inner negativity and repressed shadow material. This surfacing provides a great source of wisdom, as you bring light and self-acceptance to shadow material rather than remain in denial and judgement of yourself.

In true teaching there is a fundamental recognition that the ultimate teacher lies within everyone, and that hierarchy and authority serve only those who seek to place themselves in the authority of hierarchy. Each person ultimately does their own work of spiritual evolution. A teacher may provide guidance by presenting home truths that the ego may resist, but also must be available to give counsel to transcend such resistance. Yet individuals must always reach for the light of awakening by themselves. This makes a hierarchy of self-appointed masters totally unnecessary, as it is within oneself that liberation lies, and herein lies the teacher that is to be awakened. A true master knows this and is recognized rather than self-appointed.

The teacher who guides us to experience our true nature, to point us in the direction of wholeness and completion, is the kind of teacher I hope we can all meet and learn from. Our quest is internal, and guidance to touch our true eternal nature is wise

guidance, for then the external search of lifetimes comes to an end. Yet we are often unable to light the lamp of mindfulness that is inside us, mostly because we do not take the steps of meditative practice that provide the fuel to light the internal flame. And so we remain in ignorance of our true internal nature, of our freedom, relying instead on external proclamations of those we take on as teachers. We must see deeply into what is involved in teaching to realize that this external reliance is a misconception about the reality of ourselves.

A wise teacher guides you to investigate the "I" of your true nature, so that you may come to rest in the teacher within. That is what a good teacher encourages you to experience, and furthermore such a teacher has the humility to show you that there is a student in him, in her. This is so our attachment to an external teacher may fall away as we internalize the essence of the teaching. As we go back into ourselves, we learn to see the true beauty and goodness in others, and all that we interconnect with. We can then perhaps begin to understand the teachings of the Buddha and other Masters about Awakening. The Buddha said:

"How amazing that all living beings have the basic nature of awakening, yet they do not know it. So they drift on the ocean of great suffering lifetimes after lifetimes."

A wise teacher provides the methods, teachings and meditations, that act as navigational points, so that we do not drift on the ocean of suffering, and she redirects our energies away from external manifestation to the essence of our true nature.

What else must we be careful about in the choice of a teacher? Let us think about pundits of Truth who frequently speak of evolution to a New Species of Superbeings, through the activation of latent cellular memory. This teaching, variously composed in our modern era, carries the connotation that only some of us are capable of stepping away from our existing state of being. There is a misconception underlying all such notions. The activation of cellular memory is first of all to remember what we all are and have within us, and this is then established as the foundation for species evolution. If one

thinks in these terms then the personality pull to notions of "Superbeings" as opposed to mere mortals is avoided.

It is a twist of ego that posits that a small select few will achieve Superhuman qualities and be distinct from the rest of *homo sapiens*. Unfortunately, spiritual leaders of different shades of quality frequently hold out to their followers a promise of "Superdom," which may explain why they have followers in the first place, as this is quite an inducement! Leadership in Truth, however, is designed to bring forth leadership in all. The task before a teacher is to appeal to, and serve, the completeness in all human beings. The true leader seeks no followers, provides no false promises, and serves only Universal Truth. It is not to belong to groups and organizations with varying degrees of inclusiveness and exclusiveness that the path of awakening leads one to. It is to belong primarily to the Universe of Truth. From this standpoint one's affiliation to a religious organization then serves, for there emerges a clear understanding of priorities. To be bound to a group or spiritual leader through conventions, promises or fear of being left out, imprisons the soul's true expression. As a child of the Universe, freedom from all such attachment is to be enjoyed. For the seeker who follows the path of Universal Truth, spiritual leadership is instrumental in providing certain directions and signposts. With this clarity the maelstrom of ego-attachment to exclusivity becomes redundant and does not intrude on any teaching.

The teachers and gurus who seek to bind followers to them with secrets of the mysteries, and with different patterns of inclusiveness, are themselves not free of the ego domain. That which is created by, and through, them carries the energy of karma, of establishing dependency on the teacher rather than the freedom to enjoy Universal Truth. There are many such teachers and they serve an important function. It is to recognize them as a lesson of false direction and inappropriate teaching, that then propels the seeker after Truth further along the path of awareness. Teaching and creation in the metaphysical require freedom from all negative aspects of karma, so that the teacher and the one taught mutually experience the innocence and joy of freedom.

There is a sacredness to all this that cannot be preconceived. Sanctity does not belong to oneself, rather it connotes a sense of stewardship rather than ownership. It is not possible to own sanctity, to make of sacred trust a personal property. It is a

stewardship for humankind that one holds lightly, without thought of anything other than that this blessing has purpose. The purpose of sanctity is to bring to others what has been brought to oneself. This is how knowledge from the mountaintop of mystical experience can be recognized and shared, through example, speaking and writing in a simple and straightforward way about the difference sanctity makes in one's own life. It is to speak of goodness, simplicity, emptiness and fullness, as the presence of inner consciousness – the energy of mindfulness - fills one with purpose, and issues forth when one is aligned with presence, to the extent that without thought or effort one speaks, writes and communicates.

Often you will not know what to say or communicate until the words come to you. This allows everything to flow from your state of alignment, and thus you speak from the heart rather than talk, often with great intelligence, from the head. This happens when you allow yourself to be a portal or doorway for the energies of alignment, and then the most amazing transformative energies come through your voice, eyes and presence. Rather than calculate and organize your intellect, trust your alignment with the heart. This is an act of innocence. If we can somehow maintain a sense of innocence despite our intelligence, then our gifts of communication and skills of presentation serve the extension of heart energy. Then we walk a straight path from the heart rather than a crooked path from our head and intellect. That is the state to speak from – not because of knowledge but because of innocent trust in the heart.

This is a state arrived at in many different ways. Whether it is through symbolic focus, meditation or spontaneous experience does not matter, for the thing about sanctity is that one's life is changed by feeling it deep within oneself. The vitality of breath brought in to the body takes on a new and simpler design. Breathe in, breathe out: Universe in, Universe out. The movement of the Universe to one and from one is the regular rhythmic pattern of conscious breathing. It is Living Breath. Sanctity is thus not analyzable, to be broken down into constituent components and scrutinized. It is a state of being One, and from this Oneness there emerges an obvious delight to communicate from this state of being to others. In this way does the Truth and Grace of Universal Love extend outwards.

One has to be continually vigilant within oneself to permit this to take place and ensure that one is not co-opted into the manipulations of those that feel the need to teach, and view themselves as ministering unto lesser beings. Manipulation appears in a multitude of forms, some of which are exceedingly subtle and others blatantly obvious, and it is nothing other than expression based on denial. Denial of Truth, denial of freedom, denial of sanctity. The range of manipulation runs the entire spectrum through emotion, sexuality, personality, judgement and control and always represents a trade-off. The desire for personal control over others is traded off against the sanctity of being Grace. There is much in leadership that draws on the dictates of personal control and manipulation, all of which excludes sanctity.

What is to replace manipulation? It is true emptiness within, the personal knowledge of interconnectedness, and the extension of this to the individuals or events formerly subject to manipulation. This emptiness is filled with the gentleness of Grace because one consciously allows it to happen. In this manner one sees clearly how damaging manipulation is, for if one successfully manipulates so that individuals and events are pulled into one's personal orbit of control, then the opportunity for one's own growth and freedom is denied. Illusion then settles in more firmly and becomes one's perspective on reality, whereas true emptiness allows one's being and perceptions to fill with Love and interconnectedness, thus denying occupancy to the energies of manipulation and control. This is the conscious choice that brings teaching into alignment with sanctity, rather than with manipulation.

There is the journey, by different paths, to the realization of Oneness within. Some paths have such a purity and clarity that they resonate like a bell within one's body. These same paths can become obtuse dead ends through the ego dictates of particular teachers. Throughout it all, one learns who may guide and what path it is one is to be guided along. The clue is always one's body and the resonance within of cellular Truth to Universal Truth. If this is not experienced from a teaching, or a particular teacher, then it is time to move on, being thankful for what lessons one has learned.

Teachers who seek not followers, who live simply by example and respect the teacher within one, are perhaps the teachers to hold one's attention. However, teachers who try to lure you into their personality precepts and individual concerns, are creating in

the metaphysical from an impure foundation. Be aware, discerning and respectful of the Truth that your body communicates to you, and be vigilant towards all paths and teachers that carry the energy of ego and personality. The key is emptiness, so that Divine Grace and being at one with everything constantly fill you. You will discern those teachers who do not allow this to take place within themselves. You know through clear resonance in your body, when it is that you are presented with someone who approaches from the mountaintop of inner experience. Their radiance is felt physically. The resonant bell of one's body rings, an energy focus of radiating warmth is felt within the center of the chest, the tone of attunement is gently heard within one's ears. The appeal to the body's senses is also to the simplicity of the one who teaches.

All this is readily discernible and its lack indicates the presence of self-serving teachers who do not foster humankind's spiritual evolution. It is straightforward to recognize simplicity and compassion in the one who teaches, as it is for you to recognize the teacher as having something of value to you. Look well to the lifestyle and manner of the teacher. Simplicity speaks where greed confounds. Structures of expensive initiations, and costly seminars, that finance luxury for a self-assumed eminence are based on greed. One who thrusts their teaching upon you, and requires continual acknowledgement of their status may not command your attention for too long. One's teacher must be fearless, still and free, and know from personal experience the meaning of compassion. Those that express fear about the rest of the world, of being exposed to scrutiny - have nothing to teach you.

Your Master, your guru, your ultimate teacher is within. It is your Godself, your energy of mindfulness, and it is gentle. A true teacher guides you to this without seeking personal recompense. When one knows that there is no secret, that the mystery of Grace is within and available to all, then one discerns the false teachers who profit by playing on one's fears and desires. They do not offer liberation. Freedom of the spirit cannot be experienced, when fear and desire in the teacher circulates to fear and desire in the taught. The path offered by such teachers is a most dangerous illusion, for one may believe that steps are being taken on the spiritual journey, whereas they are strides that stumble into the realms of ego-attachment, steps that fall into the depths of karma. It may

be necessary for this fall to be experienced, so that one learns and can eventually choose the appropriate path for one's journey into Grace.

From an assumed hierarchy of authority some spiritual teachers often presume to provide directives for what followers must do, where they must go in order to advance spiritually. If one is aware of the chain of command from directive to the assumption of authority, then it is easy to say "No" to these imposters. In this manner one frees oneself from the exclusivity inherent in levels of initiation or the teacher's pronouncements as to one's spiritual advancement. That is one level to consider. There is, moreover, a deeper and more dangerous level that enmeshes teacher and follower in a pathological dance of karma. When the teacher presumes to issue spiritual dictums to the follower, the teacher then assumes responsibility for the follower's karma. The dictum is made from a location within the teacher's karma, and is securely connected to a locale in the follower's karma. What then ensues is an intertwining dance, with devotion and dependency being exchanged and tied into the illusion of spiritual authority. There is no liberation at all possible in this.

Be happy when you find a teacher who acknowledges the teacher in you and the student in him; who presents clear options and maps for your journey into the experience of your true nature; who guides you to remove ignorance and false identifications so you do not rest in illusion; and who encourages and supports you to take full responsibility for your spiritual quest. This is quite different to the karmic death dance that unites many followers to their spiritual leaders.

Choose well your teacher.