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Outreach

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Mission

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Outreach

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Editorial staff:
Gita Saraydarian
Helena Saraydarian
Vivienne Pierce
Nurhan Thompson

The Future is Ours... The Role of the Teacher

By Gita Saraydarian

*Lord,
give me understanding
so that I may lead people in the right
direction
and fulfill Your Will.*

(*Education as Transformation, Vol. II*, by Torkom Saraydarain, p. 385)

What a huge and important job the teacher has in the life of every single person he or she touches. The imprint a teacher makes on others lasts for a lifetime at the least. We all remember our teachers from childhood, the good ones and the bad ones. We remember how one of them inspired us to take up the study of a particular subject. We remember the one who injured us and wounded us deeply. We remember the encouragements, the feelings we had as we went from one class to another. Even if we forget what the teacher looked like and what he or she said to us in particular, we still remember the feeling that we had from that teacher.

The teacher in the spiritual field is just as important as the one who schooled us in our childhood. The spiritual teacher can help us see our True Self, or turn us off and injure us for many years. The spiritual teacher is the one who influences us to seek our souls, to understand about life, to learn about the laws of Nature and her principles. The spiritual teacher inspires us to grow up and stand on our own two feet.

In an ideal situation, which has actually happened in many people's lives, the teach-

er of our childhood and the spiritual teacher would have the same qualities. We see this particularly in the discussions about education and the requirements of teachers in the two volume set titled *Education as Transformation* by Torkom Saraydarian. The qualities of a good teacher would be the same no matter what the person is teaching. The path to the transformation of humanity is in the hands of those men and women who teach us, whether they are our parents, friends, formal school teachers, spiritual teachers, or even our ministers and leaders.

In this issue of "Outreach" we will look at the qualities that make up the spiritual teacher and how a person becomes a teacher. As we read through these pages, remember that the ideal teacher has these qualities — no matter what the position or the subject matter. In addition, what applies to the teacher also applies to the student. We are constantly exchanging our roles. We are all teachers and we are all students. We teach every time we come in contact with another person. We are even teaching our elementals to grow and learn and be disciplined! The same is true even with our pets.

We also learn every time we interact with others, with nature, even every time we notice how our elementals are behaving, and how our subconscious mind is playing tricks on us. In fact, most often we have opportunities to learn every minute. These opportunities are much more numerous than the opportuni-

ties to teach when we consider how awake and conscious we need to be in order to see what our lower bodies are doing. We need to learn before we can teach.

Torkom Saraydarian writes: “I was in a school in Asia and I entered the first degree of seven degrees. In the first degree they called me master. Everyone was master. In the second degree we became arhats, one degree lower. In the third degree we became disciples. By the seventh degree we were ignorants.... Now, everyone who reads a book becomes a master. They talk with a master, angels, spirits, UFO commanders in the sky bringing lots of messages. Wait a minute! Is it really real or are you hallucinating?” (*Talks on Agni*, Vol. 3, unpublished manuscript by Torkom Saraydarian.)

The story shows the most fundamental and essential quality of a teacher/student to be one of humility. Much has been written about the topic of being a teacher/disciple by Torkom Saraydarian in the five volumes of the *Leadership Series*, in the two volumes of *Education as Transformation*, in *Challenge for Discipleship*, in the *Ageless Wisdom*, and scattered throughout many of the other writings and lectures.

The basic foundation of being a teacher is to be a leader. A leader is someone who is able to lead himself or herself first and foremost. Leadership is not a position but a state of beingness where personal integration and a level of depth are visible. The person is naturally a few steps ahead and is able to teach by example and wisdom. A true leader has the power of wisdom and does not rely on the power of position. A teacher is not necessarily the perfect-

ed person but the person who is continuously striving toward perfection and is increasingly involved in service to others as a natural expression of his beingness. As we grow in our beingness, our field of service expands. A true teacher sees teaching as a path of service where learning and imparting knowledge are acts of wisdom that are the vertical and horizontal flow of the one energy.

Is there a perfect teacher? Most sane people do not look for the absolutely perfect individual. Most people know that human beings are fallible; they have human weaknesses. But most people are looking for integrity and virtue in the person who is teaching them. However, we have always had plenty of examples in our life and in history that show that many people position themselves in the role of the teacher and they do more damage than good. So what do we look for in the right teacher? How do we become good teachers? How do we become good students?

The whole experience of teaching others starts right at “home” with one’s own bodies. Our bodies and our homes are a tremendous schoolroom of constant learning and growing that a wise person utilizes in gathering wisdom and experience in life. “Introspection is so important. Introspection means watching yourself, meeting yourself where ever you really are. When you start looking at your relationships, at your discussions, at your debates, at your arguments, at your thinking and feeling when you are really yourself, you will suddenly hit the jackpot. It will tell you exactly where you are. Now you have found something. You are leaving that level and progressing to a higher and

higher level. If you do not find where you are exactly, it is impossible for you to progress — no matter how many universities you attend. The work is done not from outside; the work is done within yourself.” (*Ibid.*)

A key element to do the work from the inside is to develop understanding. Scientific meditation is the most essential way to develop deep understanding. The ancient Teacher Patanjali taught that one gains deep understanding of an object when he develops the ability to see it from four viewpoints: the form, quality, purpose, and cause. When we consistently observe any situation from these perspectives, gaining deeper and deeper insight about the situation, we will be able to develop understanding. “Ancient Teachers put a very strong emphasis on understanding. They thought that understanding was a rare quality developed over many years, and that he who had understanding had the key to life. One understands something when he sees the cause, the action, the motive power, and the goal of it and is able to relate these four factors.

“To develop understanding is not easy. You not only need the above factors, but you need an innate power to break the limitations found in your mental and emotional worlds. We do not understand certain things not because they are above our intelligence but because we cannot touch them due to our limitations and emotional walls built by our religion, culture, customs, knowledge, prejudices, and superstitions. Understanding cannot operate within these limits.

“Understanding leads to freedom, freedom from your limitations. As you

become freer, you come closer to facts and truth. Understanding is a process of seeing truth from all sides. Some of these walls are built before we are born. Some of them are built throughout our lives, at home, in school, at church, and in life. Some of them are needed for a certain time, but when they are imposed upon us when we need to grow, they turn into heavy obstacles on our path.

“In order to develop our understanding, we also need to increase our viewpoints and be open-minded. To be open-minded means not to reject, ignore, or deny things without thorough examination. Some people write book reviews without first reading the books, or they give opinions about things they have never studied. Understanding requires that you first examine the object or event you want to understand from as many viewpoints as are possible for you.”

“Understanding each other in the world is the only way to achieve peace and prosperity. But a person cannot understand someone else until he first understands himself.”

“Esoterically, understanding is only possible when the etheric heart, throat, and head centers key in with the corresponding centers or senses on the astral, mental, and Intuitional Planes. Understanding is a sign of integrity. Cleavages in your nature prevent understanding. As long as your consciousness is divided or not focused, the information coming from the senses of your various vehicles is incomplete, absent, or distorted and your consciousness will not be able to synthesize it.” (*Education as Transformation*, Vol. 2, by Torkom Saraydarian, pp.

385-387, 392.)

The Student

“...All life is like the links of an unending chain: Each link is a teacher and a student.

“In this concept, everyone is a teacher if he knows and can impart his knowledge, and everyone is a student if he is able to assimilate the knowledge of the higher links and meet the needs of the lower links.” (*Challenge for Discipleship* by Torkom Saraydarian, p. 3)

Let us now look at the basic qualities that characterize the teacher and the student. We will see in the following discussions how a good teacher is also a good student.

“If a student wants to learn, he must make himself ready to learn. Before he learns, there are lots of things he should do. He must:

1. Clean his body
2. Get rid of his negative way of feeling
3. Exercise control over his mouth
4. Make his mind disciplined and clear

“...Before this he will either distort any higher knowledge and use it for self-interest, which means against his true progress, or he will not be able to receive any higher knowledge although he will think he is receiving it. In the latter case, the ‘higher knowledge’ will give him deep disappointment during the time of real need or test.

“If a teacher imparts higher knowledge before the student is ready, the student’s consciousness will not grow, but his personality will puff up. This will create an imbalance in his system while

the consciousness remains empty.” (*Ibid*, p. 1.)

We see this happening all the time. Many times we see people who study the Teaching for many years but suddenly leave their studies, or live in a way that is not consistent with what they were studying. We also see people who have the knowledge of the Teaching from many angles, but their lives are not integrated and they do not show beingness at important junctures of their life. Or we see dedicated students abandon their courses and become very negative and cynical. Or, on the other extreme, we see people who are extremely judgmental and unforgiving as they rigidly apply the knowledge that they have learned to judge and condemn others. These and others are the many conditions that are visible when a person has been saturated with information but has not taken the time or has not been able to absorb and transform himself. When we do not absorb the Teaching and truly transform ourselves, we are full of ego, vanity, illusions, glamor, irritation, superiority feelings, and much more that are very easy to see. When we do not apply the Teaching to transform ourselves and do member that there are very good teachers and we owe them so much. There are strict rules given for teachers, and there are ways a student can protect himself from the bad ones. Bad teachers exist in all walks of life. As soon as you think you have heard all there is about the latest bad teacher, you hear of another and then still another.

“Again one may ask, ‘What if one goes to a wrong teacher, to one who exploits and uses him?’ The answer to this question is: Everyone is attracted

Healing Power of Music

Torkom Saraydarian composed and performed many pieces of sacred music. He has brought healing and balance to so many listeners. Here is a wonderful test that we can apply to our music.

“*Guard them against worthless music.* (Agni Yoga Society, *Community*, para. 116.) At the present, we do not have instruments to prove immediately whether music is worthy or worthless. However, we can say that music created by disciples or Initiates expands our consciousness, increases our compassion, and deepens our sense of beauty and responsibility. It nourishes the higher centers, such as the heart center, ajna center, and head center; it creates harmony within the electromagnetic sphere of the human body and builds communication lines between the brain and the Intuition Plane.

“Worthless music stimulates the lower centers — the base of spine center, the sex center, and the solar plexus. It exerts great pressure on the cells of the

body, causing tumors and cancer. It disturbs the brain cells and cracks the protecting veils around the glands, first causing great stimulation, then inertia, depression, and various nervous and glandular diseases. Contemporary rock music is of this type. Much of this music is inspired from the astral plane, produced by obsession, or composed while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.” ...

“Sacred or spiritual music is very elevating and has a sublimating influence upon the mind. One must choose and discriminate between types of music according to the following points:

“Who wrote it?

“Who is performing it?

“For what reason was it written?

“Does it deepen my sense of responsibility, or does it dull it?

“Does it make my love of learning increase?

“Does it make me handle my urges and drives more creatively?

“Is it increasing my joy of life as a whole?

“Am I more healthy, more uplifted and enthusiastic because of it?

“How does it affect my communication with other people?

“Does it increase my creativity and inspirations as a whole?

“Am I losing control of my thoughts, or am I having greater control over them?

“Do I like more sleep, or do I feel invigorated and fresh all day after six to eight hours of sleep?

“How is my hearing?

“How is my sex life — is it controlling me, or am I controlling it; or have I lost interest?

“Many similar questions can be formulated to study the effects of music and choose the type that helps most for creative and beneficial living.”

(*Education as Transformation, Vol. II* by Torkom Saraydarian, pp. 374-376).

The Future is Ours... Cont. from page 5

by what his own motives and intentions are. Everyone is attracted by the contents of his heart. If the heart, motives, and intentions are pure and right, even if a person goes to a wrong teacher, he learns right things, or he becomes the Teacher of the wrong teacher and brings transformation in the life of the teacher, in pure humility.

“Often Teachers need good students to shape them. If the wrong students are accepted by the right Teachers, it creates many problems in the Teachers’ lives. Out of their love, good Teachers accept more unready students than good students accept wrong teachers.

“Sometimes by karmic necessity the right student is attracted to the wrong teacher to learn about his few weak-

nesses, and then he can change his teacher. Whenever the heart is pure and the motive is right, it works for the advantage of the person.

“When you are led to a wrong teacher with a pure motive but without preparation, sometimes the wrong teacher helps you better than a right Teacher. The wrong teacher reveals to you all those elements in you about which you were unaware.” ...

“The right choice is always related to readiness. If readiness is accomplished to a certain needed degree, the choice will always be right.” (*Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.)

The Real Teacher

Continued on page 7

What are the characteristics of a real Teacher?

“He gives great value to simplicity, joy, love, enthusiasm, and beingness. His expressions are clear and simple and arranged according to the level of the student. He also expects simplicity and clarity from his students as far as their thoughts, words, and expressions are concerned.”

“A real Teacher creates an atmosphere of joy and love in which the assimilation of knowledge becomes possible. He is always enthused with his task and the subject he is teaching. This enables the student to absorb the Teaching. He always emphasizes the application of the Teaching through which transformation of the personality and the formation of a new beingness become possible.

“A real Teacher is not glamored by the knowledge or social position of the student....

“There is another quality of a real Teacher which can be known only by advanced students. This quality can be called by various names. You may call it ‘abundance’ or ‘depth.’ This quality shows that the Teacher is not a shallow or one-faceted being, but that he is multidimensional and his depth cannot be reached. He is always able to open new windows and doors within your being and make you meet different sides of his own being....

“A real Teacher encourages his student to strive and choose a field of service in which to apply his wisdom, knowledge, and attainments....

“A real Teacher does not create followers. Once the wings of his students

grow, he lets them fly away. Co-workers can be created when the Teacher lets his students work independently in their own fields.

“The real Teacher never looks at his students as if they were inferior to him. He looks at them as future heroes who will engage themselves in greater labor for humanity.

“A real Teacher sees his own growth in an advancing student and a good student sees in himself the growing beauty of the vision his Teacher awakened in him.”

“The Teacher provides those steps for which the heart of the student is ready.” (*Ibid.*, pp. 3-5.)

Morality and character are the most indispensable qualities of a teacher. If you see that this is lacking, be careful. A student and a teacher both need to develop the inner quality of faith and know that the values and principles in the Great Teachings of the world are not negotiable and can be applied to discern moral character. So many times we are afraid to call something by its name. If something does not look right, does not smell right, does not feel right, then very likely it is not right. In every book of the Teaching, moral character and purity of motive are emphasized over and over. A teacher is a human being with human frailties. But a person must see in his teacher the striving for purity and virtue. This is not false piety but the truly striving individual. Whether the field of teaching is that of academics or spiritual knowledge, the moral purity of the teacher is paramount. The virtues to cultivate are: “harmlessness, courage, universality, purity of body, purity of emotions,

purity of clear thinking, progressive-ness, joy, unselfishness, love.

“In the future, our universities will not grant a certificate to teach if the candidate does not demonstrate the above mentioned virtues.” (*Education as Transformation*, Vol. 2, by Torkom Saraydarian, pp. 369-370.)

“...A teacher can harm not only one but thousands through his bad example or through different vices....

“In the very near future, public opinion will proclaim that character is more important than learning, motive is more important than knowledge, example is more important than long lectures. A teacher is a builder, an architect. He can build a nation, a humanity. He has greater responsibilities than any other profession.” (*Ibid.*, p. 370.)

The Leader

The real teacher is a leader. The real student is becoming a leader in ever increasing levels.

“A Teacher is also a leader. A leader not only teaches but shows in a practical way how to live the life of discipleship.” (*Leadership*, Vol. 1, by Torkom Saraydarian, p. 235.)

“False leaders are under the influence of their separative interests, glamors, illusions, posthypnotic suggestions, hatred, and fear. Real leaders are above these things.

“The intention of the real leader is to free human beings from everything and from every level of slavery and provide those conditions in which such freedom can be perpetuated.” (*Ibid.*, p. 253.)

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CAVE CREEK AZ 85327-7068 USA

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The Future is Ours... *The Role of the Teacher*

The Voice

*His voice was like the elixir of life
His voice was like
colors of wonderful
and fragrant flowers.*

*His voice was the
healing breeze
of my heart.*

*Through His voice
I saw my God.*

*Through His voice
I saw my future.*

*Through His voice
I felt wholesome.*

*Through His voice
I reached to the stars.*

*It was a human voice,
so clear, so sincere,
so harmonious that
even when he scolded me,
I felt the cracking
of the walls
of my prisons.*

*His voice brought to me
light,
wisdom,
beauty.*

*His voice tuned up
my harp,
and brought me
the chalice of joy.*

The Ageless Wisdom, p. 161

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