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Subject: Are you a Teacher
Are you a Student

BY

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THE TEACHER AND THE STUDENT.

By Manly P. Hall.

In nature's wonderful economy everyone and everything has its place and blessed is the person who finds his place in the plan. Each individual has a work to do, no two alike, each one purely individual, purely self-supporting, spiritually if not physically, but each one dependent to a certain degree upon the fact that they realize that they will be supported or at least proper environments built around them through the cooperative, coadjunition of their fellow creatures. The success of the entire plan of any great organization depends upon the working of each unit and many a great enterprise has gone to pieces through the lack of cooperation of one minute unit. It is the same in all works, whether they be spiritual, philosophical or material. A perfect understanding of our own position, a willingness to acquiesce and give a little that the entire may go on more smoothly, a readiness to recognize superiority whether it be in quoting Scripture or driving rivets, all these things should be in the consciousness of individuals. They should realize that no matter how great or how small they may be, they have their place and the fact that they are existing at all is proof certain that they are, in part at least, filling their appointed position; and their greatest glory should not be to fill other peoples' shoes but to be worthy examples of having lived up to and properly carried on the labors of their own life.

In spiritual enterprises two great problems are confronted which ofttimes inhibit, through no directly malicious means but rather through thoughtlessness and ignorance, the success of the entire. The first is the way in which the teacher views his pupil or followers; and the second is how the followers view and consider the teacher. In this article we are going to take up that problem in as simple as way as possible, hoping that it will assist in the removing of difficulties in some lives and bring a more fundamental realization of the oneness of things and of the close proximity of the Ideal to the real.

First of all, let us take up the teacher and his position in distinction to his students' and analyze the instructor's place in the great plan; how he should fill it and what motive should inspire him.

1. A teacher is one who, feeling that his own experience, study or research has revealed certain ideals, theories or truths to his own consciousness, desires to communicate these to others whose lives, thoughts and ideals have not made possible their first-hand understanding of the particular thing which he has investigated.

2. A teacher of spiritual truth is no better, greater or more privileged than the least of his students but is merely endeavoring to promulgate certain facts which have come under his inspection that he may spread knowledge, spirituality or philosophy, and dispel ignorance which is eternally combatting and limiting man's growth and narrowing his viewpoint of life. A teacher in the public schools whose specialty is arithmatic is not made of any better sod than the pupils who receive his or her instruction but is merely one qualified to inform them of certain things which when they learn them and apply them will make them equally great in that thing with their instructor. Any teacher who expresses through their thoughts, actions or ideas a feeling of superiority, of loftiness and great distance from the common herd, have removed all opportunity to really teach humanity, for, like the teacher in the common schools, his or her success depends upon winning and deserving the confidence of the pupils.

3. No honest teacher of spiritual philosophy who knows enough to understand its principles ever places the possessive thought or word upon whatever knowledge he may possess. The real teacher knows that he is only an instrument and that while he may instruct some he must still in childish simplicity seek instruction himself. When the instructor forgets this and fails to realize that only those who have learned to take orders are worthy to give them, he loses his opportunity for spiritual greatness.

4. The teacher should try in his life and habits to express the truths which he believes in, for if he does not try to profit by them himself he cannot expect other mortals to seek to learn them. When he fails to bow beneath the law that he advocates for another he leaves the impression in the mind of the world that he believes himself to be greater than the law, and no real teacher can even for a moment hold such a thought.

5. Those who are truly great are those who are truly simple and those doctrines which help the world the most come in simple words from simple people of simple lives, and their plainness and purity gives them a power which verbosity can never impart. The greater the teacher the less conspicuous, the less assertive, he will be, for he realizes that a battle won with dissension is a battle lost.

6. A person in the position of a teacher, who is gifted in some way, has perhaps won the respect of admiring followers. If he then abuses that respect or uses it for the gratification of selfishness or egotism or prostitutes it by using it as a blind for the furtherance of some other specific end, such a person is unfit to associate with decent people and is a disgrace to any teaching that he may represent. The true teacher has no strings upon his teaching, they are what they seems to be and he is what he seems to be. When this is not the case, beware, for there is little to learn and much to lose by becoming involved in teachings based upon secretiveness, darkness and hidden things. The masters of light do not work in such ways.

7. A teacher has no right to demand respect or confidence, he has no right to demand that others serve him, take care of his needs, nor has he the privilege of claiming a reward for his works. His is the privilege to labor, the greatest privilege in all the universe; the privilege of those he helps is to assist him, and when the teacher and the student work together, in spirit and in truth, a bond is built between them which no power of man can sever.

8. The true teacher claims nothing, professes nothing, but lets his works express his power. Those who are always telling of their various accomplishments do so because no one else has perceived anything to talk about. Those who know, need not tell it, for their thoughts, their actions and their lives are the proof of their knowledge and that proof speaks louder and more tangibly than any word of theirs. The sweetness and benevolence which marks the master needs no words to describe it. It is a balm of Gilead to all whom he meets and man and beast alike love him for what he is, not what he says he is. The masters speak not for themselves but for others. Nor do they claim to be the omnipotent messengers of the divine. They just serve mankind and let the world judge the value of their works.

9. The teacher who in his teaching forgets that he himself is a student does not go far, for the master knows that in everyone he speaks to there is a lesson that he does not know and that every listener who attends his speeches knows something that he has not learned. Therefore, regardless of who it is, the teacher should listen to the simplest of his pupils for words of truth which the soul of the master alone can comprehend.

10. The teacher must not become egotistic. Flattery lurks like a venomous serpent to destroy those who are before the eyes of the world Mushy people gush over the teacher and fall upon his neck to weep. He is told that he is the god incarnate, that he is a master and the greatest that ever existed, and many other similar things. If he listens to these and believes them, he is lost beyond recall. The master judges the ignorance which gives birth in the minds of others to such thoughts, realizing that only his God knows what he really is. Thousands of wonderful workers in the vineyards of the Lord have been ruined by the worship and adoration of their followers which has turned their heads until they really think they are something important. Let the teacher beware of this danger for it is more subtle than the serpent and more deadly than hemlock.

11. A teacher of truth must not try to please the world, for the world is only pleased when follies are recommended or vices excused. The teacher must realize that unless he teaches that which rings true to his own realization he is unfit to claim discipleship for knowledge. Please not man, but God, and your own higher self.

Wherever truth goes and man seeks to awaken the closed eyes of his brothers, he will be fought by those who do not wish to see. Let him not be discouraged in his work for he is but a disciple of his Christ and they nailed that Master to the tree. Can the student expect a better fate, for surely the disciple is not greater than his master. They stoned the prophets and cast them into the arena and burned them in Nero's gardens, and in every religion of the world the teacher is persecuted; therefore be glad, the persecution shows that you have done something worth doing, for if all men liked you it would prove that you were a slave to vice and not virtue as the world loves vice alone and is thoughtless unto death.

But the true teacher works for the work alone not for applause or public acclaim. The drainman wins the glory that the seer will never know. The master does the work his students will not do, cleans out the dark and smutty places while those more gentile receive the plaudits of the world. But those who work for glory, work to no avail, for today they glorify and tomorrow they crucify... that is the thankfulness of a thoughtless people. The master works that the generations to come shall not suffer from that thoughtlessness.

12. The teacher never blames, for he realizes that it is not in his power to judge. He helps and instructs when he can, but will not condemn the one who condemns him, always forgiving even though his life shall be the forfeit. By this he is known to all humanity as one who is striving to reach the state of conscious union with the divine.

13. The harmless life of the Master has won for him the confidence of all things who love him for the sweetness of his soul, the broadness of his vision, the depth of his thought, the softness of his heart, and the strength of his hand. And as the teacher today seeks to follow in the footsteps of those divine ones of old, let him too realize that the teacher's work for the pupil is to live for him, to help him to grow and to do the best that is in him, and that the joy of the master is in selflessness.

What a pupil should be.

As the master has his duties to man, so man has his duties to those who seek to serve in whatsoever way they can. In this day when the world is filled with dishonesty and religion cloaks many a scoundrel beneath the shelter of a holy name, we cannot blame people for being suspicious, of doubting and fearing. But the pupil is not privileged to doubt, for he knows that all things are of God in the ultimate. And if he has found the glory of a truth he loves or if he is still uncertain in his choice, still he has certain duties which he must not overlook and which, if not properly shouldered, will bring sorrow and loss to the seeker after spiritual light.

1. Where many students gather together there are sure to be conflicting thoughts, some who think one way and some another, and from this is born a great confusion which often destroys harmony and harmony's death is the ruination of works. The student must remember that when he comes to one whom he believes knows, he is not there to express his opinion or promulgate his philosophy but to hear that which another has to say. Those who come to argue, to discredit, to tear down, to pick flaws in, and to express their own superiority over the work of a brother creature prove conclusively that they are not students of anything but are merely egotists trying to find someone else to agree with them. People who come with axes to grind and for the sake of what they can get out of it instead of what they can give, will never gain.

2. Pupils who worship their teacher will always lose him. The pupil must work for God, not God's messenger, and those who make idols shall live to see them crumble while those who live for the ideal shall live to see it prosper. Respect, cooperation and willingness to do the thing that should be done, not in the name of each other but of God, is the attitude the student should hold.

3. The student must be practical and carry his philophy and religion into his home and his life and apply it to the living problems of existence. We have too many theorists in occultism, too many worshippers of personalities who will serve Jones because they love him but will do nothing for Smith because they do not. All true workers love all work, not only their own but every other, and no student of the Wisdom Religion will tear down a work that is doing good. He will fearlessly unveil fraud, deception and perversion but never out of jealousy and spite will he injure another.

4. It ill behooves a student to praise his own work or the philosophy he is in. Let his life praise the work, not his love. His teacher needs no other championing than the regeneration of the pupil. Those who place their teacher upon pedestals and gather around to defend are only burying the one they love under a mountain of fanaticism. The only true way of defending a work is by proving its merit to the world through individual application. He should cooperate with the thing he feels is worth while for if it is really of value it is worth applying and if it is not worth applying it is not worth knowing. It is the duty of the student to overcome those things in himself which upset and destroy the beauty of the teaching. Thoughtless gossip, malicious slander, and petty jealousies are the things which have killed every great teacher who has come into the world. They have been worried to death, pestered to death and dunned to death by nothing but a series of unimportant, personal, trivial things in which people who claim to be spiritual and godlike still refuse to give a point or overlook an unimportant trivial. The master brings the truth as he has seen it while the pupil's duty is to receive it in the same brotherly way that the teacher seeks to give it. For know you that the Truth only lives in the souls of men and the pupil is the one who must decide the fate of the teacher, his master, and his God.

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