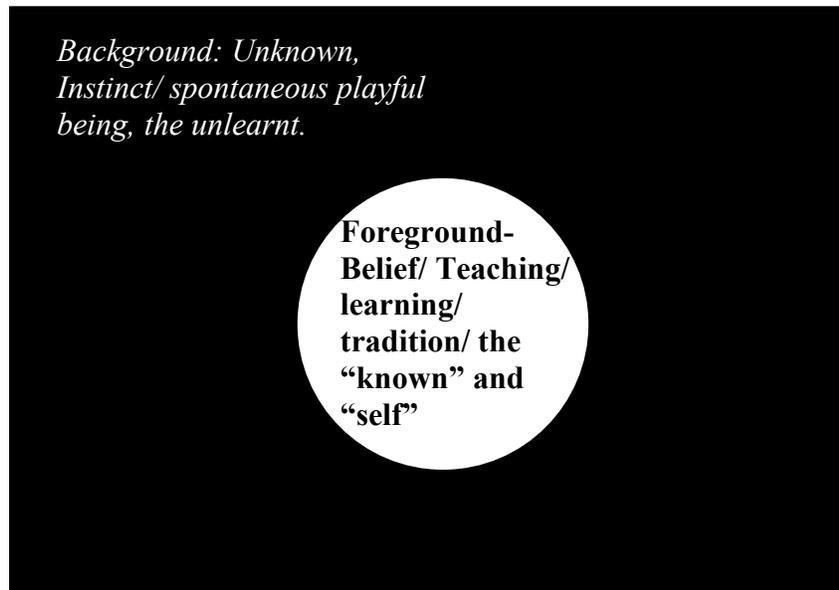


Old Dogmas and new tricks: Teaching, Dogma and tradition, differentiated from instinctual playing and un-learning:-

In other articles we have looked at the nature of the often dominating duality of the student-teacher dynamic. In this article I want to look at how we can identify the process of something moving from a taught methodology or traditional “lineage” as opposed to something that is occurring in the moment that is utterly without dualism. In many ways this is a different rendition of Non-duality and duality, or Taoist instinctual sense and Confucian dogma. It might also be the difference between the nature of the indigenous reality and the colonial mentality, all these equate, and another way of putting this is the background and the foreground.



When we look into any tradition or expression from the perspective of never having seen it before we may think “how refined”, “how perfect”, “how clear” “how beautiful”, yet behind the things that are produced by the tradition there is also a level of commitment and focus on an art or tradition often totally driven by willfulness. This is hidden in the background and is important in order to uphold the tradition as passed down from the those who have gone before. This is most perfectly illustrated in Japan where many of the Zen arts are practised and diligently passed down from one generation to the next in unbroken lines.

However within these and other traditional expressions the fundamental premises are seldom actually looked at or questioned by successive generations. It is for this reason that these methods continue, yet can transmute into practices that are completely devoid of a feeling for and understanding of the art itself. This is something that I have experienced in the study of oriental medicine, but it is also acutely understood by many people who go to study in traditional cultures.

The problem lies in the belief that one culture has it all “right” and the other has it all “wrong”. It is true that the modern westerner often possesses a colonial “I am” and “I’m right” attitude that immediately blocks any process of seeing what there is around him or her. However another important aspect is that the modern westerner may come to the culture with the total child-like view that it’s “all new”. It is very difficult for a person to be open to this when tied into tradition. Questions from the open newcomer will be the key questions and will come from innocence.

Hence this comes down to whether we let’s say “Eastern” teaching (though this is a metaphor), is intrinsically important, meaning does it have a fundamental Non-dual basis or does it draw us further towards duality and unrest. In almost all cases of teacher-student situations there will be a deeply embedded process of duality which means that a person will be learning a tradition rather than the fundamental roots of what learning in its true sense is all about, which is really un-learning. Just because something comes from ancient tradition doesn't mean it forms clarity, just as much as some ideal formed yesterday. Time has no relevance here as realization of the real is timeless. So both the traditional and the modern can have “self” and dualism, and both the ancient and the new can express timeless clarity or non-duality.

As far as teaching goes let’s use this metaphor: A student walks into a classroom limping on one leg. The teacher immediately offers him a crutch, which we might call “education”, “method”, “attitude” or “my way” or “technique”. The student quickly finds that with the crutch he/ she can do things almost exactly the way his teacher can, he/she can follow and shadow without a problem. He may even become very useful to the teacher as an extension of his/ her hand, making parting from the teacher very difficult as a pattern of dependency has formed. However one day, many years after, when this student is now in the position of a teacher, a friend might ask him: why do you carry around that old crutch, do you still need that? The student/teacher didn’t even realize he was holding the crutch and immediately starts to question it. He lets it go, and inevitably finds that he still has a limp.

The problem is that whatever is imprinted, “carved” or “moulded” by a teacher is a manifestation of the egoic expression of the teacher attempting to put his “brand onto the product”. This is simply the idea that the teacher believes him or herself to be so powerful that it is not only their “responsibility” for the “product” to have a good branding, but that he/she must check that this product isn’t defective so he or she doesn't create a “monster” by mistake. This unfortunate state of affairs is the way of the dualist teacher, so enmeshed within his/her own pathology and suffering that it is passed directly on to whoever is being “taught” and so the process continues. Religious dogma and ideologies and the like are spread in exactly the same way and of course the highly judgmental attitude of being able to deduce if someone has “got it” or not.

Therefore what can we do to return to sense? What is the answer, if we are being stifled by all tradition, teaching, lineage and all the “known” world, where do we find the freedom? As always the freedom is the background to this process. This dualism we might call the foreground of life. Teaching is like a fashion, it comes and goes. What is

background is always at the root and remains intact. It requires no “respect” or “acknowledgement”, no naming or blaming, just what it *is*. The process of “true” education is very much like the healing process where gradually ripeness occurs. This ripening process has no force involved and in fact is encouraged when there is no-force, no intention to change and no requirement of the so-called student. In this case the so-called teacher no longer has this role but is simply a pointer/signpost back to the other aspect of Oneness, i.e. the student, the true nature of the emptiness from which “self” is emanating. Once this is deeply realized there is a fundamental shift to a situation of just being what there is. There is a deep authenticity in this that comes from no teacher and cannot in fact be taught. The pointer is simply a pointer to what is, and neither requires nor asks for a reward or recognition.

The nature of this is the expression of an unconditional process of “teaching”, it is non-dual by nature. Often in traditional societies the fundamental premises are forgotten and then layer upon layer of archaic information is build up and the moment and the instinct are lost. In the modern world we are so caught up in being a “self” and in the ownership of things and ideas that we can be impenetrable and are only ripened by natural events that strip away layers when a tolerance limit/breaking point is reached. This shows the rigidity of the “self”.

What is useful or interesting in the western approach is the innocence of the child, where as the ancient East holds the other key quality which can be the passed on realization of the fundamental premise of anarchic Oneness. When these are met there is something else that occurs. Instead of looking at the art of a tradition and trying to follow it by rote, there is an explorative playful attitude that is less serious to the whole expression, a lightheartedness in the approach and a carefree attitude, whatever the interest area. There is an understanding not of a right or a wrong, not of “good or bad music” but simply music that is liked in that moment and that which isn’t. There is no future or past, just what’s going on now, no tables or charts, just what is felt in the moment. The books and maps of the old texts are seen as interesting and to be felt and uncovered experientially, not absolutes to be passed down absolutely, as this passing down would not then be the essence, just the echo of the past. Of course I am just using “ancient-Eastern” and “modern-western” as total metaphorical concepts but the point is that the Yin quality and Yang quality are both backed by Oneness and both express this in key qualities. The yin express this in the truth of the understanding of un-learned nature clearly expressed such as with the Taoists, the dis-ease of the tradition is actually to miss the essence of this and follow rules or ideals about it without question. Yang may be grasping and impetuous in dis-ease, but is by nature spontaneous and immediate. Both are of the same source.

The essence is always an unlearning and a playfulness. It is not about details but about the whole. It isn’t about the foreground but about the background inclusive of the foreground. This cannot be taught because it is No-thing. It cannot be grasped because it is just being what is. It cannot be owned, bought or sold because it is simply impossible to split up and barter with.

If we take all the art and knowledge in the world and put it on a big computer, then ask ourSelf the question, “what do I need?” the end product will be a totally bare computer screen. If we consider that teachers, teaching, tradition and dogma are crutches and software added-on this is a more accurate picture. For many people this will come as a poke in the ribs, suggesting that all teaching is “wrong” or “bad” - how could I be so arrogant! But the key problem with this kind of judgment is that it is already spring-loaded, just as a religious person will immediately rise to the call of his/her ideology so the pupil will always defend his/her teacher. There is a deep weakness and brittleness to the teaching process that in itself proves that it cannot live long in human history. That which is truly essential requires no defense. In nature things that endure are things that are vital. That which isn't will eventually be let go of, including the body, the expression and all material things. What remains is the source from which these things originated, the Oneness that is known as the background to all life. When we finally really want to engage with something it isn't because of a teacher but because intrinsically it is always within, and is expressed without, it's as simple as that. If this is not present then there is nothing that can be done about it. What is sought is so easy and obvious that it cannot be fathomed by the analytic mind.

When we look at tribal cultures, though there may well be traditional belief systems and customs more foundational to those cultures, they relate to very simple practical and directly instinctual ways of being. Food, shelter, weaving, direct connection of material to hand, hand to hand, and hand to earth are all primary. These are simple living expressions of the nature of the human-animal that have no judgment, no process that can be taught. In nature animals express the nuances of their expressions directly, without cause and without the requirement for teaching. What looks to humans like teaching as they watch a bird feed its young, is an anthropomorphization of an innate and totally non-causal process of nature unfolding. The same is true of the tribal societies where people are not taught a trade because their fathers or mothers did it before them and so they continue to do it now, but because naturally this is who/what they are. The fact that tribes-people “know” the natural doctors amongst them, just as they know weavers or singers, shows profound instinctual sense. This is all part of the process of realizing the nature of what is in spontaneous feeling/acknowledgment, what is basically and directly useful rather than what we want or try to be. There is no “trying” or making sacrifices, no competition, judgment, teaching or being taught, no traditional keeping up appearances, or of keeping the “flame” of a tradition alive without remembering or feeling its original instinctual essence. The art is art for now, the food is food for now, the story is from right this moment, there is nothing else. There is a perfect example in an article by the BBC of the Amondawa tribe from Amazon who have no word or use for the laughable notion of time: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-13452711>

The nature of how children play should continue into adulthood but is cut short because of society and its ideological dilemmas and hierarchical power stories. However it is children who are our most perfect teachers, as they will never assume this role. This is brilliantly described by Alison Gopnik (please see <http://www.alisongopnik.com/default.htm>). Play is literally the occurrence of spontaneous creativity, it has no cause, no mental-emotional psychological add-on and no

reason why, it just happens. It is art for art's sake, that's all, and is also directly practical in every way imaginable. By nature, nature is a playful celebration of life, life and death do not hold serious conclusions and are one. The revolution is an ending of the dogma not only of establishments that are dogmatic in the way of traditions and belief systems, but also those upheld so dearly by the so-called atheist in the halls of Newtonian dualistic science and the like. None of it can really be trusted by the direct sense and intuitive process, it is still based on theory and ideas simply because subject and object are broken off from one another and the roots of these two are not acknowledged, like accepting only parts of a tree but not its roots. All these need to be left behind in the revolution. The revolution is when there is a letting-go of the past dogmas and also of what they have formed in the present, rigid ways of viewing the world within dualism.

When teachers start to question firstly what they are teaching and, more deeply, what *is* expressing, then the dynamic changes. It is no longer a situation of a hierarchical parent teaching a child, instead it is the simple expression of doing what is enjoyed that inspires a deep process within another to un-learn. There is no attempt to clone the teacher's persona and so nature takes over. It is never about the instruction of a teacher, but always about what allows for relaxation, a dropping away of contractions because they are not needed and a realization that what one is originally, limp and all, is actually a perfectly expression of what there is and requires no alteration. When we learn to walk without crutches spontaneously and without belief then there is peace. This is expressed here by UG Krishanmurti:- <http://www.conscious.tv/nonduality.html> (please see the interview called "Calamity Consciousness").

The revolution is already starting. In Portland Oregon a group of people calling themselves "trackers" have formed what can only be described as a revolution towards re-connection to instinct and recognition of tribal-family sense. A growing number of people worldwide are "un-learning" and moving back to a way of being that is more essential and closer to the natural-animal nature which we are. Please visit <http://trackersearch.com/>, and notice the keen awareness of the programmes to encourage us to explore the true nature of what is being expressed through a person, not just an attempt to layer on ideas. In these ways, as we un-learn ourselves back to nature there begins a process which can truly lead to a unified understanding and re-connection to the feet and earth of reality. This is not about finding a "programme that suits you", but rather, what by nature is being expressed through you. It is irrelevant what one can take or use, or can do something with, but simply about what is. It isn't about being a member or fitting in, it's about knowing the true meaning of feeling "at home", and so a situation of life borne from that sense is bound to suit.

In a version of the Tao Te Ching it suggests "follow only the ancient ruts". Commonly misunderstood, this line is not to suggest that we follow old traditions but rather that we in fact notice the tracks of these traditions and see where they lead or in fact what their "origin" is, what forms them. We become trackers, seeing old tracks, but in this very moment. There need not be solemn procession or austere attitude, there just needs to be interest in what's going on now. It's not even to do with being appropriate because what is appropriate is already imbued within the moment, it isn't "learned", it is simply an

interest for what's really and truly happening. The tracking of the old tracks has nothing to do with finding a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow or finding the answer, because the tracks lead no-where, they are in fact in and of themselves the end of the search, there is no place that the old tracks have not covered. The old tracks are found to be that of our own feet seeking for the origin and finding it only when the seeking stops. It is only what we need and what is really and truly basic which is key. Any type of add-on, be it the Newtonian theories of science, or the witch doctor's egoic idea of curing evil with ritual sacrifice, all are old tracks that are adhered to without moment-to-moment sense and are too weighty for moment-to-moment living. It's not food or shelter, or breathing or feeling or sensing, it is abstract, mental-emotional, religious and it's all tradition. What is truly "quantum" is beyond the known.

This then is not related to teaching or to learning in any way at all. It is about playing, and un-learning the nature of "self", it is an unravelling and an un-covering and underneath No-one is found. The end of the road is always a shocker!

David Nassim
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