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4. WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD'S TEACHERS?

M-4.1. The surface traits of God's teachers are not at all alike. 2 They do not look alike to the body's eyes, they come from vastly different backgrounds, their experiences of the world vary greatly, and their superficial "personalities" are quite distinct. 3 Nor, at the beginning stages of their functioning as teachers of God, have they as yet acquired the deeper characteristics that will establish them as what they are. 4 God gives special gifts to His teachers, because they have a special role in His plan for Atonement. 5 Their specialness is, of course, only temporary; set in time as a means of leading out of time. 6 These special gifts, born in the holy relationship toward which the teaching-learning situation is geared, become characteristic of all teachers of God who have advanced in their own learning. 7 In this respect they are all alike.

M-4.2. All differences among the Sons of God are temporary. 2 Nevertheless, in time it can be said that the advanced teachers of God have the following characteristics:

I. Trust

M-4.I.1. This is the foundation on which their ability to fulfill their function rests. 2 Perception is the result of learning. 3 In fact, perception *is* learning, because cause and effect are never separated. 4 The teachers of God have trust in the world, because they have learned it is not governed by the laws the world made up. 5 It is governed by a power that is *in* them but not *of* them. 6 It is this power that keeps all things safe. 7 It is through this power that the teachers of God look on a forgiven world.

M-4.I.2. When this power has once been experienced, it is impossible to trust one's own petty strength again. 2 Who would attempt to fly with the tiny wings of a sparrow when the mighty power of an eagle has been given him? 3 And who would place his faith in the shabby offerings of the ego when the gifts of God are laid before him? 4 What is it that induces them to make the shift?

A. Development of Trust

M-4.I.A.3. First, they must go through what might be called "a period of undoing." 2 This need not be painful, but it usually is so experienced. 3 It seems as if things are being taken away, and it is rarely understood initially that their lack of value is merely being recognized. 4 How can lack of value be perceived unless the perceiver is in a position where he must see things in a different light? 5 He is not yet at a point at which he can make the shift entirely internally. 6 And so the plan will sometimes call for changes in what seem to be external circumstances. 7 These changes are always helpful. 8 When the teacher of God has learned that much, he goes on to the second stage.

M-4.I.A.4. Next, the teacher of God must go through "a period of sorting out." 2 This is always somewhat difficult because, having learned that the changes in his life are always helpful, he must now decide all things on the basis of whether they increase the helpfulness or hamper it. 3 He will find that many, if not most of the things he valued before will merely hinder his ability to transfer what he has learned to new situations as they arise. 4 Because he has valued what is really valueless, he will not generalize the lesson for fear of loss and sacrifice. 5 It takes great learning to understand that all things, events, encounters and circumstances are helpful. 6 It is only to the extent to which they are helpful that any degree of reality should be accorded them in this world of illusion. 7 The word "value" can apply to nothing else.

M-4.I.A.5. The third stage through which the teacher of God must go can be called "a period of relinquishment." 2 If this is interpreted as giving up the desirable, it will engender enormous conflict. 3 Few teachers of God escape this distress entirely. 4 There is, however, no point in sorting out the valuable from the valueless unless the next obvious step is taken. 5 Therefore, the period of overlap is apt to be one in which the teacher of God feels called upon to sacrifice his own best interests on behalf of truth. 6 He has not realized as yet how wholly impossible such a demand would be. 7 He can learn this only as he actually does give up the valueless. 8 Through this, he learns that

where he anticipated grief, he finds a happy lightheartedness instead; where he thought something was asked of him, he finds a gift bestowed on him.

M-4.I.A.6. Now comes "a period of settling down." 2 This is a quiet time, in which the teacher of God rests a while in reasonable peace. 3 Now he consolidates his learning. 4 Now he begins to see the transfer value of what he has learned. 5 Its potential is literally staggering, and the teacher of God is now at the point in his progress at which he sees in it his whole way out. 6 "Give up what you do not want, and keep what you do." 7 How simple is the obvious! 8 And how easy to do! 9 The teacher of God needs this period of respite. 10 He has not yet come as far as he thinks. 11 Yet when he is ready to go on, he goes with mighty companions beside him. 12 Now he rests a while, and gathers them before going on. 13 He will not go on from here alone.

M-4.I.A.7. The next stage is indeed "a period of unsettling." 2 Now must the teacher of God understand that he did not really know what was valuable and what was valueless. 3 All that he really learned so far was that he did not want the valueless, and that he did want the valuable. 4 Yet his own sorting out was meaningless in teaching him the difference. 5 The idea of sacrifice, so central to his own thought system, had made it impossible for him to judge. 6 He thought he learned willingness, but now he sees that he does not know what the willingness is for. 7 And now he must attain a state that may remain impossible to reach for a long, long time. 8 He must learn to lay all judgment aside, and ask only what he really wants in every circumstance. 9 Were not each step in this direction so heavily reinforced, it would be hard indeed!

M-4.I.A.8. And finally, there is "a period of achievement." 2 It is here that learning is consolidated. 3 Now what was seen as merely shadows before become solid gains, to be counted on in all "emergencies" as well as tranquil times. 4 Indeed, the tranquility is their result; the outcome of honest learning, consistency of thought and full transfer. 5 This is the stage of real peace, for here is Heaven's state fully reflected. 6 From here, the way to Heaven is open and easy. 7 In fact, it is here. 8 Who would "go" anywhere, if peace of mind is already complete? 9 And who would seek to change tranquility for something more desirable? 10 What could be more desirable than this?

II. Honesty

M-4.II.1. All other traits of God's teachers rest on trust. 2 Once that has been achieved, the others cannot fail to follow. 3 Only the trusting can afford honesty, for only they can see its value. 4 Honesty does not apply only to what you say. 5 The term actually means consistency. 6 There is nothing you say that contradicts what you think or do; no thought opposes any other thought; no act belies your word; and no word lacks agreement with another. 7 Such are the truly honest. 8 At no level are they in conflict with themselves. 9 Therefore it is impossible for them to be in conflict with anyone or anything.

M-4.II.2. The peace of mind which the advanced teachers of God experience is largely due to their perfect honesty. 2 It is only the wish to deceive that makes for war. 3 No one at one with himself can even conceive of conflict. 4 Conflict is the inevitable result of self-deception, and self-deception is dishonesty. 5 There is no challenge to a teacher of God. 6 Challenge implies doubt, and the trust on which God's teachers rest secure makes

doubt impossible. 7 Therefore they can only succeed. 8 In this, as in all things, they are honest. 9 They can only succeed, because they never do their will alone. 10 They choose for all mankind; for all the world and all things in it; for the unchanging and unchangeable beyond appearances; and for the Son of God and his Creator. 11 How could they not succeed? 12 They choose in perfect honesty, sure of their choice as of themselves.

III. Tolerance

M-4.III.1. God's teachers do not judge. 2 To judge is to be dishonest, for to judge is to assume a position you do not have. 3 Judgment without self-deception is impossible. 4 Judgment implies that you have been deceived in your brothers. 5 How, then, could you not have been deceived in yourself? 6 Judgment implies a lack of trust, and trust remains the bedrock of the teacher of God's whole thought system. 7 Let this be lost, and all his learning goes. 8 Without judgment are all things equally acceptable, for who could judge otherwise? 9 Without judgment are all men brothers, for who is there who stands apart? 10 Judgment destroys honesty and shatters trust. 11 No teacher of God can judge and hope to learn.

IV. Gentleness

M-4.IV.1. Harm is impossible for God's teachers. 2 They can neither harm nor be harmed. 3 Harm is the outcome of judgment. 4 It is the dishonest act that follows a dishonest thought. 5 It is a verdict of guilt upon a brother, and therefore on oneself. 6 It is the end of peace and the denial of learning. 7 It demonstrates the absence of God's curriculum, and its replacement by insanity. 8 No teacher of God but must learn, and fairly early in his training, that harmfulness completely obliterates his function from his awareness. 9 It will make him confused, fearful, angry and suspicious. 10 It will make the Holy Spirit's lessons impossible to learn. 11 Nor can God's Teacher be heard at all, except by those who realize that harm can actually achieve nothing. 12 No gain can come of it.

M-4.IV.2. Therefore, God's teachers are wholly gentle. 2 They need the strength of gentleness, for it is in this that the function of salvation becomes easy. 3 To those who would do harm, it is impossible. 4 To those to whom harm has no meaning, it is merely natural. 5 What choice but this has meaning to the sane? 6 Who chooses hell when he perceives a way to Heaven? 7 And who would choose the weakness that must come from harm in place of the unfailing, all-encompassing and limitless strength of gentleness? 8 The might of God's teachers lies in their gentleness, for they have understood their evil thoughts came neither from God's Son nor his Creator. 9 Thus did they join their thoughts with Him Who is their Source. 10 And so their will, which always was His Own, is free to be itself.

V. Joy

M-4.V.1. Joy is the inevitable result of gentleness. 2 Gentleness means that fear is now impossible, and what could come to interfere with joy? 3 The open hands of gentleness are always filled. 4 The gentle have no pain. 5 They cannot suffer. 6 Why would they not

be joyous? 7 They are sure they are beloved and must be safe. 8 Joy goes with gentleness as surely as grief attends attack. 9 God's teachers trust in Him. 10 And they are sure His Teacher goes before them, making sure no harm can come to them. 11 They hold His gifts and follow in His way, because God's Voice directs them in all things. 12 Joy is their song of thanks. 13 And Christ looks down on them in thanks as well. 14 His need of them is just as great as theirs of Him. 15 How joyous it is to share the purpose of salvation!

VI. Defenselessness

M-4.VI.1. God's teachers have learned how to be simple. 2 They have no dreams that need defense against the truth. 3 They do not try to make themselves. 4 Their joy comes from their understanding Who created them. 5 And does what God created need defense? 6 No one can become an advanced teacher of God until he fully understands that defenses are but foolish guardians of mad illusions. 7 The more grotesque the dream, the fiercer and more powerful its defenses seem to be. 8 Yet when the teacher of God finally agrees to look past them, he finds that nothing was there. 9 Slowly at first he lets himself be undeceived. 10 But he learns faster as his trust increases. 11 It is not danger that comes when defenses are laid down. 12 It is safety. 13 It is peace. 14 It is joy. 15 And it is God.

VII. Generosity

M-4.VII.1. The term generosity has special meaning to the teacher of God. 2 It is not the usual meaning of the word; in fact, it is a meaning that must be learned and learned very carefully. 3 Like all the other attributes of God's teachers this one rests ultimately on trust, for without trust no one can be generous in the true sense. 4 To the world, generosity means "giving away" in the sense of "giving up." 5 To the teachers of God, it means giving away in order to keep. 6 This has been emphasized throughout the text and the workbook, but it is perhaps more alien to the thinking of the world than many other ideas in our curriculum. 7 Its greater strangeness lies merely in the obviousness of its reversal of the world's thinking. 8 In the clearest way possible, and at the simplest of levels, the word means the exact opposite to the teachers of God and to the world.

M-4.VII.2. The teacher of God is generous out of Self interest. 2 This does not refer, however, to the self of which the world speaks. 3 The teacher of God does not want anything he cannot give away, because he realizes it would be valueless to him by definition. 4 What would he want it *for* ? 5 He could only lose because of it. 6 He could not gain. 7 Therefore he does not seek what only he could keep, because that is a guarantee of loss. 8 He does not want to suffer. 9 Why should he ensure himself pain? 10 But he does want to keep for himself all things that are of God, and therefore for His Son. 11 These are the things that belong to him. 12 These he can give away in true generosity, protecting them forever for himself.

VIII. Patience

M-4.VIII.1. Those who are certain of the outcome can afford to wait, and wait without anxiety. 2 Patience is natural to the teacher of God. 3 All he sees is certain outcome, at a time perhaps unknown to him as yet, but not in doubt. 4 The time will be as right as is the

answer. 5 And this is true for everything that happens now or in the future. 6 The past as well held no mistakes; nothing that did not serve to benefit the world, as well as him to whom it seemed to happen. 7 Perhaps it was not understood at the time. 8 Even so, the teacher of God is willing to reconsider all his past decisions, if they are causing pain to anyone. 9 Patience is natural to those who trust. 10 Sure of the ultimate interpretation of all things in time, no outcome already seen or yet to come can cause them fear.

IX. Faithfulness

M-4.IX.1. The extent of the teacher of God's faithfulness is the measure of his advancement in the curriculum. 2 Does he still select some aspects of his life to bring to his learning, while keeping others apart? 3 If so, his advancement is limited, and his trust not yet firmly established. 4 Faithfulness is the teacher of God's trust in the Word of God to set all things right; not some, but all. 5 Generally, his faithfulness begins by resting on just some problems, remaining carefully limited for a time. 6 To give up all problems to one Answer is to reverse the thinking of the world entirely. 7 And that alone is faithfulness. 8 Nothing but that really deserves the name. 9 Yet each degree, however small, is worth achieving. 10 Readiness, as the text notes, is not mastery.

M-4.IX.2. True faithfulness, however, does not deviate. 2 Being consistent, it is wholly honest. 3 Being unswerving, it is full of trust. 4 Being based on fearlessness, it is gentle. 5 Being certain, it is joyous. 6 And being confident, it is tolerant. 7 Faithfulness, then, combines in itself the other attributes of God's teachers. 8 It implies acceptance of the Word of God and His definition of His Son. 9 It is to Them that faithfulness in the true sense is always directed. 10 Toward Them it looks, seeking until it finds. 11 Defenselessness attends it naturally, and joy is its condition. 12 And having found, it rests in quiet certainty on that alone to which all faithfulness is due.

X. Open-Mindedness

M-4.X.1. The centrality of open-mindedness, perhaps the last of the attributes the teacher of God acquires, is easily understood when its relation to forgiveness is recognized. 2 Open-mindedness comes with lack of judgment. 3 As judgment shuts the mind against God's Teacher, so open-mindedness invites Him to come in. 4 As condemnation judges the Son of God as evil, so open-mindedness permits him to be judged by the Voice for God on His behalf. 5 As the projection of guilt upon him would send him to hell, so open-mindedness lets Christ's image be extended to him. 6 Only the open-minded can be at peace, for they alone see reason for it.

M-4.X.2. How do the open-minded forgive? 2 They have let go all things that would prevent forgiveness. 3 They have in truth abandoned the world, and let it be restored to them in newness and in joy so glorious they could never have conceived of such a change. 4 Nothing is now as it was formerly. 5 Nothing but sparkles now which seemed so dull and lifeless before. 6 And above all are all things welcoming, for threat is gone. 7 No clouds remain to hide the face of Christ. 8 Now is the goal achieved. 9 Forgiveness is the final goal of the curriculum. 10 It paves the way for what goes far beyond all learning. 11 The curriculum makes no effort to exceed its legitimate goal. 12 Forgiveness is its

single aim, at which all learning ultimately converges. 13 It is indeed enough.

M-4.X.3. You may have noticed that the list of attributes of God's teachers does not include things that are the Son of God's inheritance. 2 Terms like love, sinlessness, perfection, knowledge and eternal truth do not appear in this context. 3 They would be most inappropriate here. 4 What God has given is so far beyond our curriculum that learning but disappears in its presence. 5 Yet while its presence is obscured, the focus properly belongs on the curriculum. 6 It is the function of God's teachers to bring true learning to the world. 7 Properly speaking it is unlearning that they bring, for that is "true learning" in the world. 8 It is given to the teachers of God to bring the glad tidings of complete forgiveness to the world. 9 Blessed indeed are they, for they are the bringers of salvation.

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