

The Voice of the Silence

Translated by "H.P.B."

Selected Extracts

Compiled and rearranged by Daniel H. Caldwell

Introduction

During a trip to Fontainebleau, France in July, 1889, H. P. Blavatsky wrote the major part of the devotional, mystical work *The Voice of the Silence*, based on excerpts from an Eastern scripture, *The Book of the Golden Precepts*, which she had learned by heart during her training in the East.

At this time Annie Besant and Herbert Burrows visited H.P.B. Mrs. Besant gives a vivid account of how H.P.B. wrote the *Voice*:

"I spent a day or two at Fontainebleau with H. P. Blavatsky, who had gone abroad for a few weeks' rest. There I found her translating the wonderful fragments from 'The Book of the Golden Precepts,' now so widely known under the name of *The Voice of the Silence*. She wrote it swiftly, without any material copy before her. I sat in the room while she was writing it. I know that she did not write it referring to any books, but she wrote it down steadily, hour after hour, exactly as though she were writing either from memory or from reading it where no book was and in the evening made me read it aloud to see if the 'English was decent.' Herbert Burrows was there, and Mrs. Candler, a staunch American Theosophist, and we sat round HPB while I read. The translation was in perfect and beautiful English, flowing and musical; only a word or two could we find to alter, and she looked at us like a startled child, wondering at our praises—praise that any one with the literary sense would endorse if they read that exquisite prose poem." [Besant, Annie. *The Masters*. Adyar, Madras, India: Theosophical Publishing House, 1977, pp. 32–3.]

In the beginning of August, 1889, HPB went to Jersey, an island off the south coast of England. G.R.S. Mead, who went to visit her there, gives another account concerning the *Voice*:

"One day, shortly after my arrival, HPB came into my room unexpectedly with a manuscript and handed it to me, saying, 'Read that, old man, and tell me what you think of it.' It was the MS of the third part of the *Voice of the Silence*, and while I read she sat and smoked her cigarettes, tapping her foot on the floor, as was often her habit. I read on, forgetting her presence in the beauty and sublimity of the theme until she broke in upon my silence with, 'Well?' I told her it was the grandest thing in all our Theosophical literature and tried, contrary to my habit, to convey in words some of the enthusiasm that I felt. But even then HPB was not

content with her work and expressed the greatest apprehension that she had failed to do justice to the original in her translation and could hardly be persuaded that she had done well." [Some of Her Pupils. *In Memory of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky*. London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1891, pp. 31–5.]

To members of her Esoteric School, H.P.B. wrote in November 1889:

"Read the *Voice*,' I say. It was written for, and dedicated to you, by Masters' special orders. Therein you will find all your inquiries anticipated and answered." [Blavatsky, H.P. *Collected Writings*. Volume XII. Wheaton, Illinois: Theosophical Publishing House, 1980, p. 505.]

Selected Extracts

Of teachers there are many; the MASTER-SOUL is one, Alaya, the Universal Soul. Live in that MASTER as ITS ray in thee. Live in thy fellows as they live in IT.

All is impermanent in man except the pure bright essence of Alaya. Man is its crystal ray; a beam of light immaculate within, a form of clay material upon the lower surface. That beam is thy life-guide and thy true Self, the Watcher and the silent Thinker.

Thou hast to saturate thyself with pure Alaya, become as one with Nature's Soul-Thought. At one with it thou art invincible; in separation, thou becomest the playground of Samvriti, origin of all the world's delusions.

Thou hast to learn to part thy body from thy mind, to dissipate the shadow, and to live in the eternal. For this, thou hast to live and breathe in all, as all that thou perceivest breathes in thee; to feel thyself abiding in all things, all things in SELF.

Thou shalt not separate thy being from BEING, and the rest, but merge the Ocean in the drop, the drop within the Ocean.

So shalt thou be in full accord with all that lives; bear love to men as though they were thy brother-pupils, disciples of one Teacher, the sons of one sweet mother.

Help Nature and work on with her; and Nature will regard thee as one of her creators and make obeisance.

And she will open wide before thee the portals of her secret chambers, lay bare before thy gaze the treasures hidden in the very depths of her pure virgin bosom. Unsullied by the hand of matter she shows her treasures only to the eye of Spirit -- the eye which never closes, the eye for which there is no veil in all her kingdoms.

Then will she show thee the means and way, the first gate and the second, the third, up to the very seventh. And then, the goal -- beyond which lie, bathed in the sunlight of the Spirit, glories untold, unseen by any save the eye of Soul.

Three Halls, O weary pilgrim, lead to the end of toils. Three Halls, O conqueror of Mara, will bring thee through three states into the fourth and thence into the seven worlds, the worlds of Rest Eternal.

If thou would'st learn their names, then hearken, and remember.

The name of the first Hall is IGNORANCE -- *Avidya*.

It is the Hall in which thou saw'st the light, in which thou livest and shalt die.

If thou would'st cross the first Hall safely, let not thy mind mistake the fires of lust that burn therein for the Sunlight of life.

The WISE ONES tarry not in pleasure-grounds of senses.

This earth, O ignorant Disciple, is but the dismal entrance leading to the twilight that precedes the valley of true light -- that light which no wind can extinguish, that light which burns without a wick or fuel.

Shun ignorance, and likewise shun illusion. Avert thy face from world deceptions; mistrust thy senses, they are false. But within thy body -- the shrine of thy sensations -- seek in the Impersonal for the "eternal man"; and having sought him out, look inward: thou art Buddha.

Thy shadows live and vanish; that which in thee shall live for ever, that which in thee *knows*, for it is knowledge, is not of fleeing life: it is the man that was, that is, and will be, for whom the hour shall never strike.

The name of Hall the second is the Hall of Learning. In it thy Soul will find the blossoms of life, but under every flower a serpent coiled.

If thou would'st cross the second safely, stop not the fragrance of its stupefying blossoms to inhale. If freed thou would'st be from the Karmic chains, seek not for thy Guru in those Mayavic regions.

The WISE ONES heed not the sweet-tongued voices of illusion.

And having learnt thine own *Agyana*, flee from the Hall of Learning. This Hall is dangerous in its perfidious beauty, is needed but for thy probation. Beware, Lanoo, lest dazzled by illusive radiance thy Soul should linger and be caught in its deceptive light.

This light shines from the jewel of the Great Ensnarer, (Mara). The senses it bewitches, blinds the mind, and leaves the unwary an abandoned wreck.

The name of the third Hall is Wisdom, beyond which stretch the shoreless waters of AKSHARA, the indestructible Fount of Omniscience.

Seek for him who is to give thee birth, in the Hall of Wisdom, the Hall which lies beyond, wherein all shadows are unknown, and where the light of truth shines with unfading glory.

That which is uncreate abides in thee, Disciple, as it abides in that Hall. If thou would'st reach it and blend the two, thou must divest thyself of thy dark garments of illusion. Stifle the voice of flesh, allow no image of the senses to get between its light and thine that thus the twain may blend in one.

If through the Hall of Wisdom, thou would'st reach the Vale of Bliss, Disciple, close fast thy senses against the great dire heresy of separateness that weans thee from the rest.

Strive with thy thoughts unclean before they overpower thee. Use them as they will thee, for if thou sparest them and they take root and grow, know well, these thoughts will overpower and kill thee. Beware, Disciple, suffer not, e'en though it be their shadow, to approach. For it will grow, increase in size and power, and then this thing of darkness will absorb thy being before thou hast well realized the black foul monster's presence.

The ladder by which the candidate ascends is formed of rungs of suffering and pain; these can be silenced only by the voice of virtue. Woe, then, to thee, Disciple, if there is one single vice thou hast not left behind. For then the ladder will give way and overthrow thee; its foot rests in the deep mire of thy sins and failings, and ere thou canst attempt to cross this wide abyss of matter thou hast to lave thy feet in Waters of Renunciation. Beware lest thou should'st set a foot

still soiled upon the ladder's lowest rung. Woe unto him who dares pollute one rung with miry feet. The foul and viscous mud will dry, become tenacious, then glue his feet unto the spot, and like a bird caught in the wily fowler's lime, he will be stayed from further progress. His vices will take shape and drag him down. His sins will raise their voices like as the jackal's laugh and sob after the sun goes down; his thoughts become an army, and bear him off a captive slave.

Kill thy desires, Lanoo, make thy vices impotent, ere the first step is taken on the solemn journey.

Strangle thy sins, and make them dumb for ever, before thou dost lift one foot to mount the ladder.

Do not believe that lust can ever be killed out if gratified or satiated, for this is an abomination inspired by Mara. It is by feeding vice that it expands and waxes strong, like to the worm that fattens on the blossom's heart.

Kill out desire; but if thou killest it take heed lest from the dead it should again arise.

Having become indifferent to objects of perception, the pupil must seek out the *rajah* of the senses, the Thought-Producer, he who awakes illusion.

The Mind is the great Slayer of the Real.

Let the Disciple slay the Slayer.

Silence thy thoughts and fix thy whole attention on thy Master whom yet thou dost not see, but whom thou feelest.

Merge into one sense thy senses, if thou would'st be secure against the foe. 'Tis by that sense alone which lies concealed within the hollow of thy brain, that the steep path which leadeth to thy Master may be disclosed before thy Soul's dim eyes.

The light from the ONE Master, the one unfading golden light of Spirit, shoots its effulgent beams on the disciple from the very first. Its rays thread through the thick dark clouds of matter.

Now here, now there, these rays illumine it, like sun-sparks light the earth through the thick foliage of the jungle growth. But, O Disciple, unless the flesh is

passive, head cool, the soul as firm and pure as flaming diamond, the radiance will not reach the *chamber*, its sunlight will not warm the heart, nor will the mystic sounds of the Akasic heights reach the ear, however eager, at the initial stage

Let not thy "Heaven-born," merged in the sea of Maya, break from the Universal Parent (SOUL), but let the fiery power retire into the inmost chamber, the chamber of the Heart and the abode of the World's Mother.

Then from the heart that Power shall rise into the sixth, the middle region, the place between thine eyes, when it becomes the breath of the ONE-SOUL, the voice which filleth all, thy Master's voice.

'Tis only then thou canst become a "Walker of the Sky" who treads the winds above the waves, whose step touches not the waters.

Before thou set'st thy foot upon the ladder's upper rung, the ladder of the mystic sounds, thou hast to hear the voice of thy *inner* GOD in seven manners.

The first is like the nightingale's sweet voice chanting a song of parting to its mate.

The second comes as the sound of a silver cymbal of the Dhyanis, awakening the twinkling stars.

The next is as the plaint melodious of the ocean-sprite imprisoned in its shell.

And this is followed by the chant of Vina.

The fifth like sound of bamboo-flute shrills in thine ear.

It changes next into a trumpet-blast.

The last vibrates like the dull rumbling of a thunder-cloud.

The seventh swallows all the other sounds. They die, and then are heard no more.

When the six are slain and at the Master's feet are laid, then is the pupil merged into the ONE, becomes that ONE and lives therein.

He who would hear the voice of *Nada*, "the Soundless Sound," and comprehend it, he has to learn the nature of *Dharana*.

Unless thou hearest, thou canst not see.

Unless thou seest thou canst not hear. To hear and see this is the second stage.

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When the disciple sees and hears, and when he smells and tastes, eyes closed, ears shut, with mouth and nostrils stopped; when the four senses blend and ready are to pass into the fifth, that of the inner touch -- then into stage the fourth he hath passed on.

And in the fifth, O slayer of thy thoughts, all these again have to be killed beyond reanimation.

Withhold thy mind from all external objects, all external sights. Withhold internal images, lest on thy Soul-light a dark shadow they should cast.

Thou art now in DHARANA, the sixth stage.

Fix thy Soul's gaze upon the star whose ray thou art, the flaming star that shines within the lightless depths of ever-being, the boundless fields of the Unknown.

Thy Soul-gaze centre on the One Pure Light.

When thou hast passed into the seventh, O happy one, thou shalt perceive no more the sacred three, for thou shalt have become that three thyself. Thyself and mind, like twins upon a line, the star which is thy goal, burns overhead. The three that dwell in glory and in bliss ineffable, now in the world of Maya have lost their names. They have become one star, the fire that burns but scorches not, that fire which is the Upadhi of the Flame.

And this, O Yogi of success, is what men call Dhyana, the right precursor of Samadhi.

And now thy *Self* is lost in SELF, *thyself* unto THYSELF, merged in THAT SELF from which thou first didst radiate.

Where is thy individuality, Lanoo, where the Lanoo himself? It is the spark lost in the fire, the drop within the ocean, the ever-present Ray become the all and the eternal radiance.

And now, Lanoo, thou art the doer and the witness, the radiator and the radiation, Light in the Sound, and the Sound in the Light.

And now, rest 'neath the Bodhi tree, which is perfection of all knowledge, for, know, thou art the Master of SAMADHI -- the state of faultless vision.

Behold! thou hast become the light, thou hast become the Sound, thou art thy Master and thy God. Thou art THYSELF the object of thy search: the VOICE unbroken, that resounds throughout eternities, exempt from change, from sin exempt, the seven sounds in one, the

VOICE OF THE SILENCE.

Compassion is no attribute. It is the LAW of LAWS -- eternal Harmony, Alaya's SELF; a shoreless universal essence, the light of everlasting Right, an fitness of all things, the law of love eternal.

The more thou dost become at one with it, thy being melted in its BEING, the more thy Soul unites with that which IS, the more thou wilt become COMPASSION ABSOLUTE.

Now bend thy head and listen well, O Bodhisattva -- Compassion speaks and saith: "Can there be bliss when all that lives must suffer? Shalt thou be saved and hear the whole world cry?"

Thou shalt attain the seventh step and cross the gate of final knowledge but only to wed woe -- if thou would'st be Tathagata, follow upon thy predecessor's steps, remain unselfish till the endless end.

Thou art enlightened -- Choose thy way.