

Comments on "The Voice of the Silence" *by Clara Codd*

Part 1

I think this is the most sublime and splendid scripture that ever was written. Everybody has a favourite. Dr. Arundale, I remember, liked *At the Feet of the Master*, that was his beloved, and Dr. Besant *The Bhagavad Gita*, and I heard Mr. Jinarajadasa say that his favourite was *Light on the Path*. Well, my favourite by a long way is *The Voice of the Silence*. I think there is such a wonderful compassionate note about it. The difference between *At the Feet of the Master* and the other three is that the other three are mystical treatises, but *At the Feet of the Master* is ascetical. These three describe the sublime states of consciousness or try to do so. *At the Feet of the Master* does not describe that at all. It just gives us plain rules for every day living. It is like the Christian Imitation of Christ. It tells us how to live, but does not describe states of consciousness. H.P.B. says that she knew certain treatises by heart when she was in Tibet, and she has picked out what she thought would help us most. I often wonder nowadays where the others are, and if they are safe now that the Communists have come into Tibet. She also talked about the Gurus, the teachers. They do not know very much more than do their disciples, and they all have their own methods, but beyond the Himalayas, among the trans-Himalayan School, there is only one method. And she told us that these books were written by the great Arhats of the Buddha when they emigrated into Tibet, and if I remember rightly, C.W. Leadbeater told us that quite a number of these precepts were written by the great teacher Aryasanga. They were written in a sort of cryptic language, picture language, that you could read in many different tongues. I wonder if some of them are written in what is called the Senzar, because H.P.B. says she studied the Senzar when she was in Tibet, and the Senzar is the sacred root of Sanskrit, and it was brought over from Venus by the Great Adepts, six and a half million years ago. I suppose it is a language hardly anyone knows except in certain esoteric schools, but Sanskrit is a derivative from the Senzar, and I expect that is why it is called the Devanagari, God language, Deva language. It is the sacred language in the East, like Latin used to be in the West. She says at the end of the preface, I have done my best to preserve the poetical beauty of the language and imagery which characterizes the original. C.W. Leadbeater told us that she was helped in doing this by the Master Hilarion, the one who wrote *Light on the Path*. He helped H.P.B. and it is the most beautiful language. When you remember that H.P.B. didn't know English very well, yet she managed to put it in the most splendid words. The Master must have helped her; she could not have done it by herself.

We do not see God with our physical eyes, but with our inner spiritual apprehension.

The first part is called The Voice of the Silence and it is explained on the first page. He who would hear the voice of Nada, which H.P.B. Says you can translate as the soundless sound or the Voice of the Silence. Compare that with Light on the Path: Hold fast to that which has neither substance nor existence. Listen only to the voice which is soundless. How on earth can one talk about that! Evidently it is the awakening and the apprehension within ourselves which answers to something very deep in the universe and is the Soundless Voice. It reminds me of the passages in the Bible, Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. We do not see God with our physical eyes, but with our inner spiritual apprehension. Said St. Paul, These things are spiritually discerned, To the other people it is all foolishness. So you and I cannot discern it with our minds, but only with our spiritual nature when it wakes up. She begins with these words, These instructions are for those ignorant of the dangers of the lower **Iddhi**.: Iddhi is the Pali word for the Sanskrit Siddhis, or psychic powers in man. There are two sorts of psychic powers - the undeveloped psychism which peasantry and all animals have. All animals are psychic. That is often to be seen with dogs and horses and cats - they see things which we cannot see. So can some of the peasantry, but it is not under the control of the will. It is spontaneous, and as a man develops the manas, the lower mind, that is shut out. That is the reason why we people of the Fifth Root Race have not got that psychic power. The lower ranks of evolution have, but it comes back again on a higher level, under the control of the will and the understanding. The lower Iddhi must not be mistaken for the real Wisdom. And then she says, He who would hear the Voice of Nada, the Soundless Sound - there is a lot in these first two sentences - and comprehend it, he has to learn the nature of Dharana. Dharana is the intense and perfect concentration of the mind upon some one Interior object accompanied by complete abstraction from everything pertaining to the external Universe, or the world of the senses. There is a lifetime of evolution in that. But I think you will see the point when I come on to the three Halls. It is an interior concentration so complete that you are out of touch with the world and the senses in the sublime state of consciousness called Samadhi, which is what the Christian saints call Ecstasy. It is so complete that the meditator is in a stage of deep trance, so very complete that if you were to run a needle into him he would not feel it. All response to the universe lessens and lessens and lessens, the breathing alters, and the heart beat is much slower. It just comes down to a point sufficient to keep life in the body and no more, because the consciousness of the man is gone, is in another world. In that state we can hear the soundless voice. Patanjali says that when the mind is perfectly still, not rippled by world affairs, it will reflect the glory of the Self.

The Voice of the Silence says, Having become indifferent to objects of perception - . I call it slowly breaking the bars of the case which keep the soul a prisoner, and we can do it in a lot of little ways. I remember Dr. Besant telling us that if she

found herself getting too fond of a thing she gave it away. If she liked something very nice to eat she didn't have it. These are very small things but you see they are breaking the chains: One of the Upanishads says; When all the bonds of this heart are broken, then this mortal puts on immortality. We have to become indifferent to the objects of perception. The pupil must seek out the Rajah of the senses, the Thought Producer, he who awakens illusion. Of course that is the Manas. H.P.B. Says nearly every man is ruled entirely by desire, which he mistakes for will. We want to do things and we do them. Now the Rajah of the senses is the pure intelligence. So instead of doing what we want to do and being ruled by desire, we do what our pure intelligence discerns, that is viveka, the right thing to do. This is the Rajah of the senses. All the same he awakens illusion. He is the thought producer. He produces thought-forms which we take for reality and none of those thought-forms are reality. As the Master puts it in one letter, We all of us fill our current in space with the hosts of our thought-creations. We are hemmed in with them. This is the Hall of Illusion and I will come to that in the three Halls.

Then the Voice of the Silence uses a very pregnant sentence, The Mind is the great Slayer of the Real. So in order to really understand the real we have to reach a point where thought actually drops away. Our mind ceases making all these thought-forms. It is like a mirror lake. And then it says Let the Disciple slay the Slayer - get the control of it. Then she says something rather wonderful: When to himself his form appears unreal, as do on waking all the forms he sees in dreams, when he has ceased to hear the many, he may discern the One - the inner sound which kills the outer.

Sankaracharya says that when we are dreaming it seems very real, but when we wake up it is no longer real. When this world becomes a dream and the other world becomes real - it sounds almost impossible; doesn't it? But St. Teresa describes it. She writes: I look down on the world from a very great height and I care very little what people say or know about me. The Lord has now made my life a kind of sleep for almost always all I see seems to me as in a dream. Nor have I any great sense of pleasure or pain. There was only one time in my life when I experienced that! When I came out of prison! I think it was because I had not said a word and had been hemmed in for a month. But for three days after I came out of prison everything looked to me like a cinemetograph. It didn't look real. I suppose this is going from the unreal to the real I never felt quite like that again, but I remember it today.

Then and not till then will he forsake the region of sat, the false. Do not let us call it exactly the false - the phenomenal universe. What is the derivation of the world phenomenon? It means the appearance only - do you notice that this world and the other are full of appearances which change and change and change, and never stop changing? To come unto the realm of Sat, the true. Plato would have called it passing from the phenomenal world to the noumenal world, because behind every passing illusion that changes and changes and changes there is

the eternal reality. I remember Krishnaji telling us that always he looked beyond, beyond, beyond. So before the soul can see, the harmony within must be attained, and the fleshly eyes be rendered blind to all illusion.

Now we come to the three Halls. I think this is what psychoanalysts would call our subconscious and super-conscious self.

This earth, Disciple, is the Hall of Sorrow (H.P.B. Says that there is no hell anywhere comparable to a man-bearing planet) wherein are set along the Path of dire probations, traps to ensnare thy Ego by the delusion called Great Heresy: the illusion of separation, thinking we are separate beings. We, all of us, have got this feeling, this is I. Descartes said: I think, therefore I am. That is because we have a principle in the mind called the Ahamkara - that is the I-making faculty. The I-making faculty has a special function in nature. H.P.B. Says that this delusion is like the eggshell around the chicken, that is the protection for many many lives. The I-making faculty is establishing an identity. Presently it will become safe to break the periphery and it will still remain a centre without a periphery, but not until the hour is ripe. So do not let us blame ourselves for having Ahamkara because that is what it is for. This earth, O ignorant Disciple, is but the dismal entrance leading to the twilight (this is the astral plane) that precedes the valley of true light - that light which burns without a wick or fuel. She says this about the First Hall, the Hall of Ignorance. Happiness is not to be attained on earth. I think we may as well give up wanting it. Let it come or let it go. I remember Carlyle said something like that: Why all this bother about happiness. Blessed is he who has found work; let him ask no other happiness.

She said: It is not to be found on earth. Here we have the dark entrance hall alone, and only on opening the door into the real living place, into the reception-room of life, shall we see the light, whether in heaven, in Nirvana, in Swarga, it is all the same. The name does not matter. But as to the Divine Principle it is one and there is only one light, however differently it may be understood by various earthly darkneses. So let us wait patiently for the day of our real, our best birth.

This is when the spiritual consciousness, that will endow us with happiness for ever and ever, awakes in us. The reason why men want to be happy is because they have a dim remembrance of that.

Give up thy life, if thou wouldst live. Does not this remind us of the words of the Christ - He that surrendereth his little life will find it unto life eternal. Now we can't give up our life and say we won't have it. It is what I said about breaking the bars of the cage - get loose about things. Do not let the mind hold you and come attached to you, no matter whether it concerns people or things or events. That is why two of the qualities for initiation are tolerance and cheerfulness. I like to put them in my own words. One is letting people be what they are and not wanting them to be different and the other letting events be what they are.

.....the first step in occultism is to realize that we are ceaselessly self-deceived...

Three Halls, O weary pilgrim, lead to the end of toils. Three Halls will bring thee through three states into the fourth, and thence into the seven worlds, the worlds of rest eternal.: Sankaracharya calls them four states of consciousness. These correspond to the Three Halls. First of all, there is the state of consciousness, Jagrat which is this world. That is very concentrated and very small. It is the one we are employing at this moment, and she calls that the Hall of Ignorance. 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. It is called the Hall of Ignorance, because all we are concerned with is changing phenomena and we do not see the noumena. She says the first step in occultism is to realize that we are ceaselessly self-deceived - ceaselessly. The next step is to realize that this can be overcome by effort, but it is a long, long effort. She said that to achieve this is greater than to tell the future or command the elements. It really means that we must reach the Divine Consciousness of the Ego within. So that is the First Hall, the Hall of Ignorance.

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.

The Hall of Learning is what Sankaracharya calls the dream consciousness . It is the Astral Plane, the Psychic World, in which we find ourselves when we pass through the gateway of sleep, and through the gateway of death. I have often said that the gateway of sleep and the gateway of death and the gateway of very deep meditation is the same gateway. It is the gateway to the psychic world. H.P.B. Says it is the world of mediums and astral sights. No blossom picked in that region and brought down to earth is without a serpent coiled round it. It is the world of the great illusion. If we see and hear things on the Astral Plane we should not always take them for gospel truth.. Nine out of ten psychics are mediums. One who taught me a great deal about that is a friend of mine with whom I often stay in Durban. She is half Swede and half Scotch and was born psychic. She told me herself that she had found out that nearly all astral sights and sounds are liars. St.Paul calls them lying spirits. The Astral Plane is crowded with them. We cannot help peopling our currents in space. We do it subconsciously and spontaneously, creating thought-forms all the time. We might have what is called deep aspirations and wishful thinking, they all make forms, and nature spirits will ensoul them. They do not mean us any harm, but they have not any morals; they are tricky things. For instance, suppose we have a subconscious desire to be something wonderful and lovely. Along comes a nature spirit and ensouls that thought. Perhaps we see it and take it for something exclusive and the nature spirit will tell us, not meaning any harm, but it can't help itself, all the things we want to hear - O my child, you are especially called of God to do something wonderful. So many psychics have come and told me this. C.W. Leadbeater told us always to mistrust anything from the other side

which flatters us. So this friend of mine told me that she saw a very beautiful lady who came and sat on her bed and looked at her and said, We need you, you must come to us. So she said I don't believe a word you say, go away. Then, being a nature spirit who can change its form in a second, instead of being a beautiful lady, it turned into a creature with a funny face and a scowl. I want you to realize that the astral place is not the real plane of the truth. It is the plane of all our desires and wishful thinking, of all our ideals and thoughts. Of course, one great help in the practice of meditation is the development of the imagination - the image-making faculty. To control the imagination will lead us to the gateway of Heaven. But the uncontrolled imagination will play the dickens with us. Nine out of ten people are under the control of the uncontrolled imagination. Perhaps you hear a knock in the dark, and at once picture a burglar. Probably there is no burglar there. Patanjali calls that fancy. And most of us are governed by the uncontrolled imagination. Many people are ill because of that. But the controlled imagination is a creative faculty. The Master tells us to create a picture of Him and to forget our body completely if we can. If we can do that He will send His Voice, that means He will radiate through that picture, or it will be your own Higher Self that will make it become alive, but you must remember as you make the picture it is not a reality.

Alexandra David-Neel in a book about Tibet, tells how the guru, the lama, taught her. She made vivid thought-forms, so strong that they materialized. Then said the abbot to her, You created that, destroy it. Now H.P.B. also says that we make mental conceptions and that as we go on these mental conceptions enlarge and simplify. We are all prisoners. We are imprisoned in a cell with only the five windows of the senses by which to see the world. Then we have skylights which are the conceptions we make from those sense perceptions. Through these we glimpse Reality, and the Reality shines back to us. As we go on the skylights get bigger and bigger and wider and wider, till one day we escape from the little prison and come face to face with the whole sky.

Part 2

The Third Hall is Wisdom. I had an artist in Johannesburg paint me a picture of the three halls. The brown arch is the Hall of Ignorance, the flowery one the Hall of Learning, the Zone of Light is the Hall of Wisdom. This is beyond the lower plane, beyond the Kama-Manas. This is Buddhi-Manas, the Hall of Wisdom. That is the Hall of real bliss and understanding and power, beyond which lies the shoreless waters of Akshara.

Shankaracharya calls the third hall dreamless sleep, because no memory of forms can be brought back from it, only a feeling of intense bliss. Some of us at night sometimes succeed in getting to the Third Hall when we are free of our bodies. It is also the plane of Devachan after death. If you do succeed in reaching that when you are out of your body at night you will not bring back any images, but you will bring back an extraordinary sense of lightness, freedom and bliss. I am sure you have had that, some of you.

Beyond that is what Shankaracharya calls the Fourth, the Turiya stage. That is only reached by very experienced yogis and saints. It is the world of Samadhi, and beyond this stretches the shoreless waters of Akshara, the indestructible Fount of Omniscience. Madame Blavatsky says that when our pituitary body and pineal gland meet there will be born in us omniscience. I think of the Hall of Learning or the psychic world, the subconscious world of the psychoanalyst and the Hall of Wisdom the superconscious world. Dr. Volgeysi, the Hungarian Psychoanalyst, says that some form of meditation is a necessity for the modern man. He finds he does his best with his evolved patients by getting them in touch with their superconscious self instead of digging around in the subconscious.

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. Think of all the people in the world who do that: money, wealth, sex, all these things, they think that is the sunlight of life. It is stupefying because it is so extraordinarily beautiful: I once saw a glimpse of it myself. I know why they call it the Astral Plane, because it shines like iridescent jewels. Everything is so beautiful, and if you listen to the voices they stupefy you. Seek not for thy Guru in those mayavic regions. There is no guru that talks to you from the Astral Plane. I know this because so many people have come to me in life and told me that they have a Master and he said this, that and the other. But it was only some guide or spook on the Astral Plane. They can even take the appearance of the Master. I know quite a lot of fake masters in the world. There are three real Masters that are always getting faked, the Master K.H., the Master Morya, and the Master The Prince. I remember Mrs. Besant said that there was one thing they could not fake and that is the expression of the eyes. The people on the other side can take any shape they like - they can pick a picture of you or anybody else from your aura.

Seek for Him who is to give thee birth (that is the birth of the Christ consciousness) in the Hall of Wisdom, the Hall which lies beyond, wherein all 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.

Now you see what the real aim of the inner life is? To become in tune with the Infinite within ourselves. The Voice of the Silence calls that the one Master, and I remember C.W.Leadbeater telling us that he can do even more for you than the Master outside can do for you, much more. If thou would'st reach it and blend the two, thou must divest thyself of thy dark garments of illusion.

And then it says, If through the Hall of Wisdom thou would'st reach the Vale of Bliss (this is Nirvana) close fast thy senses against the great dire heresy of Separateness that weans thee from the rest. One thing was just as important to the Lord as another and just as dear. Even an abandoned man was just as important to Him as an Archangel. I think the Christ tried to tell us that when he talked about the one sheep that was lost. You and I think this matters and that matters and this doesn't matter, this person counts and that person doesn't count, but in the eyes of the Lord there is no such thing.

I will not talk about the Sounds because C.W.Leadbeater himself didn't quite know what they really meant or symbolised. Thou has to hear the voice of thy inner god in seven manners. The first is like the nightingale's sweet voice, and the second like the silver cymbal. But when the six are slain and laid at The Master's feet, that is the divinity within us, then the pupil is merged into the One, becomes that One and lives therein.

True occultism is the renunciation of self, unconditionally and absolutely, in thought as well as in action.

There is a little now of what you might call advice of how to do that. Before that path is entered, thou must destroy thy lunar body, cleanse thy mind-body, and make clean thy heart. That means kill out all the clutching desires, get above them. Ere thy Soul's mind can understand, the bud of personality must be crushed out, the worm of sense destroyed past resurrection. And this is what H.P.B. Says about that - True occultism is the renunciation of self, unconditionally and absolutely, in thought as well as in action. Not for himself but for the world he lives. No sooner is a chela accepted than his personality must disappear, and he has to become a mere beneficent force in Nature. It is all very well to talk about this, but it takes a lot of doing. And then she said. It is impossible to employ spiritual force if there is the slightest tinge of selfishness remaining in the operator. The powers and forces of spirit lend themselves only to the pure in heart, and this is Divine magic.

Thou can't not travel on the Path before thou has become the Path itself. We sometimes picture this path as something outside ourselves that somebody puts us on and leads us along, but The Path is really the rapid growth and development of our own spiritual nature. That is why it is unique in every single person, and no one treads the Path exactly like somebody else. H.P.B. Says the main requisite for acquiring self-knowledge, the knowledge of our divinity, is pure love. So The Voice of the Silence makes a great point of that all the way through. Let thy soul lend its ear to every cry of pain like as the lotus bares its heart to drink the morning sun. But let each burning human tear drop on thy heart and there remain; nor ever brush it off until the pain that caused it is removed.

These tears, O thou of heart most merciful, these are the streams that irrigate the fields of charity immortal. And then it says, Kill out desire; but if thou killest it, take heed lest from the dead it should again arise. Kill love of life. Love of life makes us not willing to die. But the Master in His letter to Mr. Sinnett, calls the body the fantasmal self. It does not feel a bit fantasmal to you and me. But if thou slayest Tanha, let this not be for thirst of life eternal, but to replace the fleeting by the everlasting.

When all the desires of this heart are broken, then this mortal puts on immortality.

And then it says Desire nothing. That reminds me of a wonderful saying in the Upanishads: When all the desires of this heart are broken, then this mortal puts on immortality. There is another saying Those who ask nothing, but only love, Thou in their heart abidest forever, for this is THY very home.

Chafe not at Dharma, nor at Nature's changeless laws. The Christians would call this accepting the Will of God. Everything that happens is, from a Christian mystical standpoint, the Will of God, therefore it is to be accepted with joy. Mr. Judge put it in this rather clever way: Look on every event as just what you would have desired.

Then it says: 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 the portals of her secret chambers. I often think the secret knowledge that the Masters possess is the extraordinary knowledge of Nature, inner and outer, of the laws which govern the whole of the Nature of the universe, every kingdom in it. What can you and I do to begin to learn that tremendous knowledge? Just scratch away at the outside at first, by observing Nature and observing life and learning from it. I have learnt more from observing life than I ever learnt out of any book. Observe life and people, and if you want to know what you yourself are, if you can do that without getting self-centred, watch the reactions of other people to you. That will show you.

There is something wonderful about comradeship, because such a lot of people want comradeship, they want friends, they want affection, they want love. Krishnamurti once said, What most people want is a little bit of affection. Everybody wants it. Many people do not go the right way about getting it. Some even try to see if they can buy it. But do you know what real comradeship is? When you are doing things with your whole heart and somebody else is too, at once there springs up a wonderful thing called comradeship; but you cannot have comradeship between a person doing something with a whole heart and someone else doing it with half a heart. You see what I mean. The real basis of comradeship is whole heartedness. That is what Light on the Path calls >The partnership of Joy, and also pain. It is a path which is inherent in the Nature of things - we do not make it.

Silence thy thoughts and fix thy whole attention on thy Master, whom yet thou dost not see, but whom thou feelest. Long before you ever see The Master, you feel Him. You come into what we might call telepathic communication with Him, and do not think only of the Master as exterior to yourself, but the Master as within your heart, yourself, your divinity.

Long and weary is the way before thee, O Disciple. It is no good to say it is not long and weary. One single thought about the past that thou has left behind will drag thee down and thou wilt have to start the climb anew. Let us stop a minute on that thought. Could we throw the past overboard? Many people live in the past. They go round and round and round, why did I do this? and, why didn't that happen? It is not only futile, but it is also very enervating to the Soul. That is why the Master said to Mr. Judge in one letter : Regard yourself with the complete impersonality of a stranger and do not be led into either anxiety or remorse. Because both these will prevent you. It is as if your psychic force was being pinned to the past, or being fixed on the future, and then you have not enough power to deal with the present.

Kill in thyself all memory of past experiences. (That is what Krishnaji did.) Look not behind or thou art lost. Do not believe that lust can ever be killed out if gratified or satiated, for this is an abomination inspired by Mara. It is not by giving way that we satisfy a desire. It will arise again still stronger and want some more. You'll find that out. So we have got to endure the pain of it clamouring at us until it ceases.

And then it says something very lovely here - >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. Isn't it lovely! Just picture it! You and I have got an imperishable link with our divinity. H.P.B., in The Secret Doctrine., Says that the Deva Hosts take that ray, the Sutratma, and put it into the brain of the new baby at the moment called quickening before birth. She says it looks like a wedge of light going into the baby's brain. That ray is always there. It will take us home to Devachan after

death, and when we think thoughts like this and we aspire, it shines and glows and expands. Aspiration is a call to the Ego. Presently he will be aware and put more of himself down. So the ray shines on us from the very first. Its rays thread through the thick dark clouds of matter and they are dark. I remember C.W. Leadbeater talking about this. He said we have simply no idea how dark is the world atmosphere around us. Therefore we have to stand steadily and patiently and wait until the light comes and aspire towards it.

Unless the flesh is passive, head cool, the Soul as firm and pure as the flaming diamond. Further on The Voice of the Silence calls is the diamond soul. The diamond soul I think is the soul that has one intention that never wavers, no matter what happens, inner or outer, what darkness is pressing on us. That one intention is steady, like a little burning spark. (Unless) the Soul is as firm and pure as a flaming diamond, the radiance will not reach the chamber, its sunlight will not warm the heart, nor will the mystic sounds of the Akashic heights reach the ear, however eager, at the initial state.

So then it says: Withhold thy mind from all external objects, all external sights. Withhold internal images, lest on thy Soul-light a dark shadow they should cast. When we get beyond even internal images, then our thoughts drop away of themselves.

And now thy self is lost in Self, thyself unto Thyself, merged in that Self from which thou first didst radiate. We came in from Him and we go back to Him. 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 becomes the All and the eternal radiance.

Then this is a lovely bit - Behold! Thou hast become the Light, thou hast become the sound, thou art thy Master and thy God. I think this was what Krishnamurti meant when he said that there is no God except a man glorified. 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.

That is the end of the first part, called The Voice of the Silence.

Part 3

The Two Paths

This is a very interesting part of The Voice of the Silence because it indicates something of very deep occult importance. It is called The Two Paths, and says: Quoth the Teacher: the Paths are two; the great Perfections three; Six are Virtues (these are the Paramitas) that transform the body into the Tree of Knowledge. And then it says: Alas, alas, that all men should possess Alaya, be one with the great Soul, and that possessing it, Alaya should so little avail them! Says the Pupil; O Teacher, what shall I do to reach to Wisdom? O Wise one, what, to gain perfection? And the Teacher says: Search for the Paths. P.W. Martin, in that wonderful book Experiments in Depth, advises everybody to search the Scriptures because the Scriptures were all written by men who knew what they were talking about.

Head-learning is just intellectual appreciation; Soul-Wisdom is really knowing in your Soul.

But, O Lanoo, be of clean heart before thou startest on thy journey. Learn above all to separate Head-learning from Soul-wisdom. That is not too difficult to see. Head-learning is just intellectual appreciation; Soul-Wisdom is really knowing in your Soul. And then a simile is used. Ignorance is like unto a closed and airless vessel; the soul is a bird shut up within. The real divinity in us, of course, is not born yet, it is shut in very, very firmly in the illusions and ignorance of life - The Hall of Ignorance. It warbles not, nor can it stir a feather; but the songster mute and torpid sits, and of exhaustion dies. Unless you feed it, unless you give it daily food, thought and aspiration. That is what the soul is like because it is held a prisoner. In the first part of the book, it spoke about setting the bird free, and breaking the bars of the cage one by one, and teaching him to fly. He has two wings to fly with - thought and feeling. Krishnamurti calls it thought-feeling, all in one, because those are inseparable. They are human powers. H.P.B. Says that we cannot reach divinity without the development and purification of these human powers. Our controlled or clear thought and our pure selfless emotion - these are the two wings with which we fly. Many people think we can fly with only the mind. But the faculty of the mind is merely the form builder; the emotions are the live giver. Or, to use another simile, the mind builds the engine of achievement, but the steam which makes it go are the emotions. Some people can build a very good engine, but it doesn't go because there is not enough steam. And other people have too much steam jetting out all around them with a very defective engine. If you have both fully developed, fully controlled, you can rise to enormous heights. I am still keeping the simile of the soul being like a bird when it is set free. This is my favourite simile - like a lark. Have you ever watched a lark? It flies higher than any other bird, and it goes up by degrees, higher and higher. At last it gets so high you cannot see it, but very often you can hear it. Now I've been told, but I do not know whether it is true, that when a lark is very

high, he rests on the air on his two wings. I think that is a very good simile for the first of the mystic states - what the Christian Church calls the Prayer of Quiet, when the mind is absolutely steady and the emotions all quiet.

Our controlled and clear thought and our pure selfless emotion - these are the two wings with which we fly.

The Voice of the Silence goes on to say: But even ignorance is better than Head-learning with no Soul-Wisdom to illuminate and guide it. H.P.B. Says that the real devil in man is the unilluminated mind. And the Master says in One of His letters that most of the evil in this world, at least nine-tenths of it, is man-created, not God-created: natural evils, like an earthquake.

The book further says: For mind is like a mirror; it gathers dust while it reflects. Seek, O Beginner, to blend thy Mind and Soul. That really means to build the Antahkarana., the aspiring mind. This is how H.P.B. describes the Antahkarana - It is Manas purified of egotism - pure, selfless, aspiring thought. She says it builds a bridge to bring down the Buddhi. When the Buddhi and the Manas are one, we have passed over the bridge.

Then it says: Within thy body - the shrine of thy sensations - seek in the impersonal for the Eternal Man. The Eternal Man is our divinity. Let us stop for a moment of thought on the words the impersonal because it sounds such a cold word; but I came across a saying of the Master D.K., The real impersonality is perfect love. Think that out. There is so much in that. The real impersonal man is not sitting up there disregarding people. It is perfect love. And having sought Him out, look inward; Thou art Buddha.

Shun praise, O Devotee. Praise leads to self-delusion. Most people love praise. I like it myself - but it is really delusion, and is not a good thing for us, because it leads to self-delusion. It causes us to get a greater idea of our own importance than is really true. Of course, the other thing is true - somebody is always blaming us and pointing out our faults. We then go to the other extreme - an inferiority complex. Neither of them is real. Why do people praise us? It is their own reaction. We have done something that pleases them, therefore they praise us. Somebody blames us. We have done something they do not like, so they quite unjustly blame us. Both are absolutely unreal. It says a little further on - Thy body is not thy Self. Thy Self is in itself without a body, and neither praise nor blame affect it. There is a lovely saying in one of the Upanishads that the Self is not affected by anything that affects the body or the personality. Praise or blame does not mean anything to the real man. Now supposing we have been praised and we feel pleased and congratulate ourselves. The Voice of the Silence says that self-gratulation is like unto a lofty tower, up which a haughty fool has climbed. Thereon he sits in prideful solitude and unperceived by any but himself. That is quite amusing, the way The Voice of the Silence puts it. The people who have only Head-learning say: Behold I know. Many people are like that, they

always know, nobody else knows, they do not listen to anyone else. The other ones that have hear-learning, they say in humbleness: Thus have I heard.

To return to the Two Paths: **The Path** is one, Disciple, yet in the end, twofold. At one end, bliss deferred... The first one leadeth to the goal (that is, liberation), the second to Self-Immolation. But then it says a little further on that these Paths are called the Open and the Secret Paths. The first Path leads to Nirvana, the glorious state of absoluteness, the bliss past human thought. Thus the First is liberation. The Second Path is renunciation, and is called the Path of Woe. These Two Paths are described by Mrs. Besant in *In the Outer Court*. She says one goes round and round and the other one goes straight up the mountain side. These two paths are also very clearly described by Subba Rao in his *Esoteric Writings*. Let us talk about them because these two paths are very important. They also make us understand the function of World-Teachers when they come. This is what Subba Rao says; This philosophy (that of the Southern Indian School) recognises the existence of two paths, the Open and the Secret. He says that the Open way is the one trodden by the vast majority of mankind, and it is also the one recommended by Sankaracharya to his followers. The vast mass of mankind goes slowly round the mountain. That Path is the gradual, safe, natural, slow development of the spirit by successive lives of virtue.

The other road, says Subba Rao, is the precipitous path of occultism, through a series of initiations. Initiations mean a new life, a new beginning. Another way in which we can understand the word is - forcible openings of the consciousness, not natural ones. It is the short and quick path, artificially helped from outside. Can you see the dangers and the risks on that? From this, says Subba Rao, it must not be concluded that Adeptship and initiation are a mistake.....The Adept Hierarchy is as strictly a product of Nature as a tree is. It has a definite and indispensable purpose and function in the development of the human race. This function is to keep open the upward Path, through which descends the light and the leading without which the way for the race would be much longer. It is a way of developing certain souls who can come back and help the whole of mankind by making it shorter and more understandable to them. That is why it is called the Path of the Buddhas of Compassion.

The end of these paths is the same, absorption into the Eternal Life. But if we go the long way, when we are caught up into Paranirvanic bliss it will mean oblivion of the world of men. We shall go on to a new development, tremendous and wonderful, in which we shall no longer remember being down here.

If you go the short path and belong to the Buddhas of Compassion as they are called, when you reach Paranirvanic bliss you refuse to go on, and this is a subject I want to talk about. This is the Path of Initiation which you hear about in the Theosophical Society. We used to think that every one goes by that path but they do not. Subba Rao said that this Path is only suitable to certain natures. Do we belong to it? I think a large number of Theosophists do, and that is why they

are in the Theosophical Society. Probably it was chosen by our own egos at the beginning of evolution. If you belong to this Path, says Subba Rao, you need not seek it because it is always seeking you. We are all in the Theosophical Society, that is the first step. I will not say that every Theosophist belongs to this Path but I think a large number do. Now what is that Path? It is a sort of intensive development, to produce very quickly guides and leaders for the vast majority of men. It is on that Path that we must have the watchful care of a guru because it is an eminently dangerous path. All shortened processes of progress are dangerous. The Master says that in a letter. He says that they never force the pace, either with the individual or with the race, because to force the pace is to create monsters. It is dangerous to force the pace. That is why we have to have a care of a guru on this path. We pass through a series of initiations which take place on successive planes of nature.

The first initiation takes place on the Astral Plane and then we are put in touch with our Monad, our divinity, by a very wonderful ceremony. It is just possible that anybody who passed through that would remember something because we can remember from the Astral Plane. The second initiation takes place on the mental plane. I do not think many people would remember that, not in their physical brain consciousness. The third takes place on the higher mental plane and the fourth on the Buddhic plane. The first two are given by one of the Adepts deputed by the Great King of the World. But the third and the fourth are given at Shambala by the King Himself. The last, which makes a man a full Adept, the Aseka, no one gives it to Him, He takes it Himself. Now this is the part I want to come to. This is what Subba Rao says: This Path is eminently dangerous to those who do not hold the talisman which ensures safety. This talisman is a perfectly unselfish, self-forgetting, self-annihilating devotion to the spiritual good of mankind, a self-abnegation which is not temporal, but must have no end for ever. Some long time ago Mrs. Besant told us that because of the needs of the world, the Master would bring some of us back to immediate incarnation who were not yet initiates on the Path. Then we would have to renounce our Devachan, go without it, which a number of people would not really be able to do. The Society has fashions and I remember everybody going about saying that they were coming back to immediate incarnation. Dr. Besant heard them and she said; Oh, oh, my dears, you cannot decide that yourselves. The force which leads you into Devachan is so tremendous that it takes the power of an Adept to short-circuit it and bring you back, and He will not do that unless it is worth His while. So it is the Master's business whether any one of us comes back to immediate incarnation or not. But this is the point I want to make - if the power that would lead us into Devachan is so tremendous, so that no one can go against it, how a million times greater must be the power that is drawing the Aseka Adept into Paranirvana? Where does He get the power to be able renounce it again and again, many, many times, and still remain here? I can see where He gets it. We enter the Path through the gateway of the first initiation. C.W. Leadbeater tells us seven lives lie between the first initiation and the Arhat. We need not take that quite too literally, because H.P.B. Says that seven years is

said to be the time of probation, but it might be seven lives or seven minutes, according to the person. Just roughly speaking, seven lives. Seven more lives between the Arhat and the Aseka Adept; fourteen lives in all, and during all those fourteen lives He has practised that self-annihilation, self-abnegation which has no end forever, and so built it into Himself, that He again and again renounces Nirvana. And why does He renounce it? In order to come back and help us, and everyone else in this world. So that is why they are called the Buddhas of Compassion. The Two Paths are what the Voice of the Silence talks about in this middle portion, and it clearly is written for those who follow the Second Path. Quite a number of yogis reach the open path, but they never come back. The Secret Way leads also to Paranirvanic bliss - but at the close of Kalpas without number; (Kalpas mean tremendous ages) Nirvanas are gained and lost from boundless pity and compassion for the world of deluded mortals. But it is said, The last shall be the greatest. Samyak Sambuddha, the Teacher of Perfection gave up his Self for the salvation of the World, by stopping at the threshold of Nirvana - the pure state. I think that is our way too.

Thou hast the knowledge now concerning the two Ways, says The Voice of the Silence. Thy time will come for choice, O thou of eager Soul, when thou hast reached the end and passed the seven Portals. The Bodhisattva who has won the battle, yet says in His Divine Compassion: >for others' sake this great reward I yield.: A Saviour of the World is He.

Behold! The goal of bliss and the long Path of woe..... Thou canst choose either, O aspirant, to Sorrow throughout the coming cycles! What must we do?

The person who really treads the Path is the immortal self within but we have to find the beginning of that Path in a physical incarnation; we cannot find it after death. We have to begin at the lowest point. The ego might feel that he has come to a point where he could begin the Path, and in order to begin it he has to gain the co-operation of his brain-mind. The Pali Scripture says one of the ways of finding the Path is hearing or reading about it. Of course, another way that is very rare is to be born into the company of wise yogis who are already on the Path. But the most normal way for you or me is reading or hearing about it. That is the point you and I have reached, we hear and we read about it. I wonder if we realize what extraordinary good karma that is. Supposing we had never heard or never read, we might drift for several lives. In fact that was what the Lord Buddha was a little afraid of, so He told His monks when he sent them out, There are hundreds of young men in the world, O Bikkus, whose minds are only lightly covered with the dust of worldliness. If only somebody would tell them, and if only someone would help them to see, they would gladly seek the Path. H.P.B. said the same thing. She said there were large numbers of people who were very near the spiritual consciousness, but they do not know it, and because they do not know it they make no effort in this life to reach it and so life drifts by. So the point we have reached - we have heard and we have read and so we can co-operate with our egos. How does the ego reach us? Perhaps it brought us into

the Society; or to a meeting, in order that we might understand and co-operate with him. There are two sorts of people. There are some people who come to a theosophical meeting and hear the speaker talking about the Path and poetically and intellectually get very fired and think It's wonderful and because their ego is not taking part, they simply forget about it. On the other hand, if the real self wants us to start on the Path he won't let us forget, he will keep on at us, so to say. But then we might refuse to listen to him, or might be too stupid to listen to him. That is exactly what Mr. Sinnett did - if I might quote him as an example. I do not feel it is quite fair to him, but The Master said in a letter that to which the inner self has longed to bind himself, the outer self, the man of flesh has not ratified. The chains of life are still as strong as steel. But the Master could not do it for him. He could only give him big hints, and in The Mahatma Letters we will see that Mr. Sinnett again and again just blindly goes past the hint that the Master gave him. In a way it is quite sad. Still he will have a chance in another life because the Master says in one letter Your personality is yours, but your essence is ours. In another life his ego will have another try and he will succeed. But, let us go back to that part of The Voice of the Silence where it tells us to live to benefit mankind is the first step. H.P.B. once said that once a man is an accepted pupil, his personality has to disappear forever. He has to become a mere beneficent force in Nature. So the Voice that can be heard in the Masters' world is a genuine desire to live to benefit mankind. It really includes all others.

Part 4

The Voice of the Silence says there are three steps on this Path. The second step is to practise the six glorious virtues. These are what are called the *Paramitas*. The first one is *dana* and that is often translated charity, but I am sure it is not really the best translation. Charity has a queer connotation with most of us. It is associated in our minds with giving things away that we do not want, but that is not real charity. If we go into the derivation of the word charity - it comes from the Latin word *caritas* meaning dear, so the charitable man is the man to whom all things are dear, and that is exactly what the word *Dana* means, because *da* is the Sanskrit for give, so *dana* means the spirit of giving. On the outgoing path we are taking everything, but on the return path, the spiritual man in us grows by giving. He could not do otherwise - he is the essence of it. I think these *Paramitas* are very similar to the noble eightfold path of the Buddha and also to what I call the noble eightfold path of the Christ - that is, the eight beatitudes. The second one is morality - it is translated that. But there again I think we have a wrong connotation. Occult morality has got nothing whatever to do with man-made morality, which generally concerns itself with sexual codes which, after all, differ in different nations at different times of history. I think the real occult morality is absolute purity of heart which is being wholehearted - not a divided self. If thine eye be single, said the Christ, thy whole body should be full of light. Singleness - singleness of heart is a pure heart. Even if you love somebody else completely and wholly it is a pure love.

...if we had real patience we would fear no failure and would not court any success.

And then the next one is *Kshanti* - *patience*. One of the Christian saints, St. Catherine of Sienna, thought this was the greatest of all the virtues. She said it was the root of all the others. So think about patience. Do you remember how *The Voice of the Silence* puts it? Have perseverance, have patience, candidate, as one who fears no failure, courts no success. Isn't that wonderful when you think of it? You know all of us are a little anxious; we fear failures, we try to get success as quickly as possible. Now if we had real patience we would fear no failure and would not court any success. We do not want to set out to achieve anything, to be something. This is what Krishnaji is trying to tell us. People talk about initiations, about being one with the Master and all sorts of things, but what they are really thinking, only they don't realize it, is their own personality being a success and being one with the Master. Now that never can happen. Your personality has to disappear entirely. And then in another verse, Have perseverance, candidate, as one who doth forever more endure. We must gain the courage of our immortality. The Master Hilarion said, Courage does not really belong to the physical body. It belongs to the immortal self, who knows himself to be immortal. H.P.B. Says just the same - She gave her people a meditation, thinking of the unity of life in terms of space and in terms of time, and said that it had three effects. First of all it makes a substratum of memory in our lower self

which does not cease either in dreaming or waking, and its outer manifestation is courage. With the memory of universality all dread vanishes during the dangers and trials of life. And secondly it was a continued attempt at an attitude of mind to all existing things which is neither love, nor hate, nor indifference. Can you see what that is? It really means not to have personal love, personal indifference. So what therefore is the frame of mind? It is having that charity, *dana*, to be one to whom all things are dear. And then, H.P.B. Says it gives you greater ease in practising the virtues because all the virtues are the outcome of intuitive identification with others, known or unknown to the personality. Practising virtues by themselves has always struck me as an unnatural proceeding. But if you are that inner thing, that intuitive identification with all others then therein are all the virtues. The lack of virtue arises really from too much self. It is a very simple thing. The Master also said - The personality becomes discouraged, because it thinks time is short. The Eternal Man is never discouraged because he knows he is immortal. We must identify ourselves with the immortal man: The man for whom the hour will never strike.

People come and talk to me like this: Why didn't I hear about these things years ago? I'm too old now.

Do not be hypnotized by your body. You are not old inside. There is a great truth in the saying that the last thoughts before you die, the last thoughts before you sleep, are so important. That is exemplified in the story of the good thief on the cross. His last thought was of the Christ saying to him, Today thou shalt be with me in Paradise. And don't you see why? If you have the right intention even at the last minute before you die, you have a golden thread that will lead you through death, and through birth and never desert you because that intention is a temporary identification with your immortal self. So this is why Patanjali says, the right use of the will is the constant effort to stand in spiritual being. We could think so much about that. People do not know what Will is. It has nothing to do with ordering people around. That is arrogance! It is the constant steady effort to stand in spiritual being, even if you only do it in imagination to begin with. So particularly when the day of death comes you will remember. To the higher self death does not matter, birth does not matter. I remember that when H.P.B. started her E.S.class, she said she hoped that some of them would attain spiritual consciousness before they died, and then they would pass between birth and death in full consciousness. But even if we do not, we can have that immortal trust, that immortal faith.

Thy shadows live and vanish (that is our personalities) that which in thee shall live for ever, that which in thee knows (for it is knowledge) is not of fleeting life: it is the Man that was, that is, and will be, for whom the hour will never strike.

Going back to the subject of the First Step - To live to benefit mankind says *The Voice of the Silence*. Step out from sunlight into shade to make room for others. Did you ever think of that? Because it is quite natural for us if we see a bit of

sunlight to step into it. Did you ever think of stepping out of it so that someone else could have it? I remember H.P.B. talking about that. She said that if it is necessary you should give food to another man who is starving and starve yourself. It is better to die yourself than to let the other die.

I think this is a lovely verse Out of the furnace of man >s life, and its black smoke, (think of man's life and all its darkness, ignorance and misery) winged flames arise, flames purified that, soaring onward, >neath the Karmic eye, weave in the end the fabric glorified in the three vestures of the Path. So out of ordinary life, and its troubles, and sorrows, arises that which makes the future God.

Let us go on with the fifth and six virtues. H.P.B. Says *virya* - dauntless energy and patience means fighting the Tamasic *guna*, and the physical body has a preponderance of that. It is the physical body that generally makes us slack. Then contemplation and vision, and lastly, the third step which will not come until the end. To reach Nirvana's bliss, but to renounce it, is the supreme, the final step, the highest on renunciation's path. And then supposing this is too high for us in one life. If the doctrine of the Heart is too high-winged for thee, If thou needest help thyself and fearest to offer help to others - then, thou of timid heart, be warned in time: remain content with the >Eye Doctrine of the Law, (that is the religious life). Hope still, for if the Secret Path is unobtainable this day, it is within thy reach tomorrow. Learn that no efforts not the smallest - whether in right or wrong direction - can vanish from the world of causes.... Thou canst create this day thy chances for thy morrow.... Take then as much as merit hath in store for thee, O thou of patient heart. Be of good cheer and rest content with fate. Such is thy Karma, ... the destiny of those who, in their pain and sorrow, are born along with thee, rejoice and weep from life to life, chained to thy previous actions. And then it tell us what to do. Act thou for today and they will act for thee tomorrow. If we do the best to help and cheer, to make people happy, souls coming back next life will do their best to make us happy and that will give us an opportunity to rise to spiritual realms in another life.

The first duty of every theosophist is to his duty by every duty.

'Tis from the bud of renunciation of self that springeth the sweet fruit of final liberation. So says *The Voice of the Silence*. Follow the wheel of life; follow the wheel of duty to race and kin. The first duty of every theosophist is to do his duty by every duty. I know of people who think they can leave their families and their family obligations and go off and be an occultist, but you just cannot do that. They are making a great mistake because there is nothing in that ordinary life which hinders our being an aspirant and an occultist. H.P.B. told us that one could be a soldier walking up and down in front of a sentry box, (Can you imagine a duller life than that?) And yet be a pupil of the Master, an occultist, because, it is not the circumstances in your life in the very least that affects it, it's your attitude. Do not despise life and what is around you. We must understand life. How are we going to understand and hear the voice of God, and the Voice of

the Master, except through the events of daily life? Someone once asked Mrs. Besant, How do I know what the Master wants me to do? She said, If you have really given your heart to Him, absolutely, watch your circumstances because you have given Him a certain right, not to alter your Karma because he is one with it, but to rearrange it a little. Therefore watch what comes up in front of you, watch your circumstances. H.P.B. Says just the same thing. She calls it A Chela's daily life ledger. In a letter to a private person she asks, Have you ever thought of thinking about the events that happen to you, and reading their message? Sometimes the most insignificant event is the one that is full of the greatest meaning. She said that and then also this - a wonderful remark, that to a man who is wholly dedicated to the Master's work, a real chela, nothing in this life happens without its due significance - nothing. There are no insignificant happenings in His life. Now do not go about looking for something extraordinary and wonderful. There is nothing in the universe that is insignificant. I think that is the real meaning of St.Peter's vision where the Lord told Him that nothing is common or unclean. Nothing is insignificant, or does not matter. Exhaust the Law of Karmic Retribution. Gain Siddhis for thy future birth. And a little later on it says, The deva-sight and deva-hearing are not acquired in one short birth. Give light and comfort to the toiling pilgrim, and seek out him who knows still less than thou; who in his wretched desolation sits starving for the bread of wisdom,...without a Teacher, hope or consolation. The Master says in one of His letters, That the Theosophical Society is not an academy of occultism. The spiritual suffering and ignorance of the world need help, light and illumination. That is what we live for.

Someone once asked H.P.B. if she thought she could teach the whole world Theosophy. Yes, she said, if we had enough people we could do it. And I think we should not go about teaching them something we think they have got to know. We must find out how to illuminate and widen a rather narrow mind, how we can warm and inspire a seeking heart. Here is something for us to remember.

And if he falls even then he does not fall in vain; the enemies he slew in the last battle will not return to life in the next birth that will be his. But if thou wouldst Nirvana reach or cast the prize away (that is the Secret Path) let not the fruit of action and inaction be thy motive, O thou of dauntless heart.

There is no trial that spotless purity cannot pass through.

I will close now with words which are ascribed to H.P.B. but they are not H.P.B.'s words, they are Annie Besant's words. They are generally printed on a card with the letters H.P.B underneath, but it is not right. When I was the General Secretary of the Australian Section, I used to browse in all the old magazines, and I came across an article by Dr. Besant about H.P.B. and she closed the article with these words; they are her words. I never thought they sounded like H.P.B. They sound like Mrs. Besant -

There is a road straight and narrow, beset with perils of every kind, but yet a road and it leads to the heart of the Universe. I can tell you how to find those who will show you the Secret Gateway which leads inward only and closes behind the neophyte for evermore. There is no danger that dauntless courage cannot conquer. There is no trial that spotless purity cannot pass through. There is no difficulty that a strong intellect cannot surmount. For those who win inwards there is reward past all telling, the power to bless and save humanity. For those who fail there are other lives in which success may come.

Many people fail, but as a Master said, For this life their sun has set, but there are other lives in which it will rise again. What have you and I to do? To listen to the voice of our own divine selves and obey it, and that is the source of all happiness. You will really know happiness if you obey your own inner god.

Our wills are our own, we know not how.
Our wills are ones to make them Thine.

Alfred Tennyson

Part 5

NOW we come to the third fragment - The Seven Portals, which I think is another way of stating the Six *Paramitas*. You notice that they are very much the same, and begin with lovely words. *Acharya*, the choice is made. Now hast thou rent the veil before the secret path. Thy servant here is ready for thy guidance. And then the teacher replies, 'Tis well, *Shravaka*. Prepare thyself for thou wilt have to travel on alone. The teacher can but point the way. The path is one for all, the means to reach the goal must vary with the pilgrims.

...the teacher can only point the way, we shall have to travel it alone...

Let us consider that. We always think the teacher can tell us exactly how to tread the way and save us much trouble, but the teacher can only point the way, we shall have to travel it alone, especially in the beginning. It is then we feel more alone. Dr. Alexis Carroll in that book of his called *Reflections on Living* says, This path begins in mists of earth and ends in the light of heaven. It always begins in the mists of earth. Everybody feels they do not really know the way; they are just groping after something and they feel very much alone. But all the steps we have apparently to take by ourselves. However, (1) the mists clear as time goes on, and our deepening sensitivity increases, because, as the Master said to Laura Holloway, gradually, the mists will clear - your attraction to us becomes stronger. That happens as we go along. Then H.P.B. says it is right for any one who dedicates his heart to any one of the Great Teachers to try to reach Him consciously. But this cannot be done by dragging Him down here. It can only be done by rising to the plane where the consciousness of the Teacher resides. It does not begin with visions exactly, it begins with a kind of telepathic rapport.

The Voice of the Silence says, The Path is one for all. That means that the goal is our own divinity, the means to reach the goal must vary with the pilgrims. The disciple is told to thread his way through the *Paramitas*, six in number, noble gates of virtue leading to *Bodhi* and to *Prajna* the seventh step of wisdom - spiritual knowledge. Be of good cheer disciple; bear in mind the golden rule. Once thou has passed the gate *Shrotapatti*, once thy foot hath pressed the bed of the Nirvanic stream in this or any future life; thou hast but seven other births before thee, O thou of adamant will. And then says the disciple, Yea, Lord, I see the Path; its foot in mire, its summit lost in glorious light Nirvanic. Does not that remind us of the Hindu story about the soul of man being like a lotus flower, having its roots in the mire, and only above the water opening its petals to the sun? So the path begins in the mire of Earth, and its summit is in glorious light Nirvanic. It is like slowly coming out of the mists into the sunshine, slowly coming out of the unreal into higher illumination, into the Real. Put it any way you like. It is such a tremendous thing to do, that it really takes many lives. It is not something you can do in five minutes. It is not something you can do in five minutes. It is a very gradual soul growth. And each of the Portals, which are really the *Paramitas*, are opened with a golden key.

The first one is *Dana* the key of charity and love immortal. The Sanskrit *da* means give. It is the spirit of the disciple on The Path. Then *Shila*, the key of harmony in word and act, the key that counterbalances the cause and the effect, and leaves no further room for karmic action. That is something the disciple on The Path has to deal with - his karma.

We cannot perceive the truth and conquer illusion unless we learn to stand steady, no matter which pair of opposites sweeps over us.

The Third Portal is *Kshanti* Patience sweet that nought can ruffle. The Fourth is *Vairagya*, indifference to pleasure and to pain, illusion, conquered, truth alone perceived. We cannot perceive the truth and conquer illusion unless we learn to stand steady, no matter which pair of opposites sweeps over us. The Master says in a letter, Our chelas are taught to be as indifferent to psychological pain as to physical pain. We all have psychological pain, disappointment, pangs of jealousy, all sorts of things like that. Can we be patient, steady, and put up with psychological pain? St. Therese of Lisieux said, If you can bear the pain of not being pleased with yourself, you will provide an acceptable home for Jesus. What is it that really gives us that pain? Number One again, the *Ahamkara*. If we were free of that we would not suffer. Therefore that is why the Lord Buddha told everyone that the root of all the world's sorrow was desire, personal desire.

The next *Paramita* is *Virya*, the dauntless energy that fights its way to the supernal Truth, out of the mire of lies terrestrial. H.P.B. Says that we are ceaselessly self-deceived, and that to fight our way to Reality is a greater achievement than to know the future or to command the elements. Purpose and will are energy. A large number of people are deficient in that. Think about it. Some people insist upon going up Mt. Everest. Imagine what an enormous amount of will and purpose they had to do that tremendous thing.

Then comes *Dhyana*. That is a state of meditation - whose golden gate once opened the *Naljor* toward the realm of *Sat* eternal and its ceaseless contemplation. *Naljor* means the Holy One. The last one *Prajna*, the key to which makes of a man a God creating him a *Bodhisattva*, son of the *Dhyanis*. Such to the portals are the golden keys. Then *The Voice of the Silence* goes on For, O Disciple! before thou wert made fit to meet thy Teacher face to face, thy Master light to light, what wert thou told? That means the inner god and the outer Master. Before thou canst approach the foremost gate (that is that gate of Initiation) thou hast to learn to part thy body from thy mind, to dissipate the shadow and to live in the eternal.

Before thou standest on the threshold of the Path; before thou crossest the foremost gate, thou hast to merge the two into the one and sacrifice the personal to Self impersonal, and thus destroy the path between the two - *Antahkarana*. H.P.B. Says the *Antahkarana* is that part of our mind which inspires and is really

formed of man as purified of egotism. This builds the bridge to the Divine Mind and allows the passage of the consciousness to a higher plane.

Hast thou attuned thy heart and mind to the great mind and heart of all mankind?...Hast thou attuned thy being to humanity's great pain, O candidate for light? (Many very sensitive people, if they see humanity's great pain are hurt so much they must get away and forget it. *The Voice of the Silence* tells us to stay on until the cause is removed. That is another pain we have to put up with.) Thou hast? Thou mayest enter.

When we enter the first gate, of charity, of love and tender mercy, and then pass on to the second gate the way is very verdant and happy. All monks and nuns know that. When they begin the contemplative life first of all they are full of joy and happiness, they have what the Catholic Church calls Many Consolations. At first we feel stimulated and happy, but as we go on that disappears. The last thing that happens before the final union of the Soul with God, is what St. John of the Cross calls the Dark Night of the Soul. It means a complete darkness, not only of the senses, but even of the mind. What a tremendous courage and steadiness a soul must have to stand that! St. Catherine of Siena was in complete darkness for nine years. And when she finally came through she developed interior locutions and talked to God. Where wert thou, Lord, in the midst of all this foulness? she asked, and He replied, Daughter, I was in thy heart.

The more thou dost advance, the more thy feet pitfalls will meet, The Path that leadeth on is lighted by one fire - the light of daring, burning in the heart. Courage you see. That reminds me of the Rosicrucian way of putting it: To know, to dare, to will, and to be silent. The more he fears, the more that light shall paleso beware, disciple, of that lethal shade But once thou hast passed the gate of *Kshanti* step the third is taken. Thy body is thy slave. Now for the fourth prepare, the portal of temptations which ensnare the *inner* man.

The best beginning is to observe and to understand the phenomena around us on the physical plane.

And then we go to the gate of *Vairagya*. Thou has to saturate thyself with pure *Alaya*, become as one with Nature's Soul-thought. Isn't that a lovely word, Soul-thought? This knowledge is the *Gupta Vidya* of the great Brotherhood but it is not knowledge which you can put into books. It is Nature's Soul-thought - the awakened, sensitive response of the Adept's whole inner man to the thoughts and laws of being and of everything around him. So what can you and I do to enter that gate? The best beginning is to observe and to understand the phenomena around us on the physical plane. Quite a number of people go through life without ever looking. Having eyes they see not, and having ears they hear not. They bury themselves in books. I do not want you to despise books - do not think that, but see if you can observe, and understand and come into

sympathetic response with all life around you; the trees, the birds, the sky, the stars and people. You reach a point where you suddenly become aware that instead of only observing the outside, or what I once heard described as, Becoming clairvoyant to the atmosphere of souls. So we might be alongside a person and know quite a lot about him without even saying a word.

The real person to know, if you can hear him, is that Hidden Light within you.

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. There is our life-guide - everyone wants to know where it is. People come and ask me if I could introduce them to some great one who would tell them what to do. The real person to know, if you can hear him, is that Hidden Light within you. The watcher and the silent thinker, the victim of the lower Self. It is often the victim because what it wants us to do we do not hear, we let the lower self take command. Thy Soul cannot be hurt but through thy erring body; control and master both, and thou art safe when crossing to the nearing >gate of balance..

Thy Soul-gaze centre on the one pure light, the light that is free from affection, and use thy golden key.... Ere thou canst settle in *Jnana-marga* and call it thine, thy Soul has to become as the ripe mango fruit: as soft and sweet as its bright golden pulp for others' woes, as hard as that fruit's stone for thine own throes and sorrows, O conqueror of weal and woe. Over and over again, *The Voice of the Silence* talks like that, and that is why it is the great scripture of compassion.

The inner growth of all of us is greater than we can know or realize...

And then it says If thou hast tried and failed, O dauntless fighter, yet lose not courage: fight on, and to the charge return again and yet again. Mrs Besant told us that there was no failure except in ceasing to strive. Remember, thou that fightest for man's liberation, each failure is success. We might ask what we are fighting for. Is it to get along ourselves and generate splendid karma, and all the rest of it? *The Voice of the Silence* puts it in this way Remember, thou who fightest for man's liberation, each failure is success, and each sincere attempt wins its reward in time. The holy germs that sprout and grow unseen in the disciple's soul - We will stop a minute on that. The master told Mr. Sinnett Your spiritual progress is far greater than you can know or realize, and you do well to understand that that in itself is more important than its registration on the physical brain. Do not be always hypnotized by your physical brain. The inner growth of all of us is greater than we can know or realize, and this is what *The Voice of the Silence* calls the holy germs. They grow unseen in the disciple's SoulBut when the hour has struck they blossom forth.

Now it gets to the Seventh Portal. Know, conqueror of sins, once that thou hast crossed the seventh path, all nature thrills with joyous awe and feels subdued. No one can achieve that without lifting the whole world with him. If we help to lift the whole world, it lifts us.

Once a man has reached the seventh portal, though he may wander away for lives, the Voice of the Silence remains within him. And some day somewhere with desperate cries on the part of his deserted lower self, he will return.

A newly made Initiate gives the blessing of the Brotherhood to the world. Mrs. Besant said that this blessing is felt by everybody. A little child playing in the sun would feel a thrill of joy, a sufferer in the hospital would feel his pain lessened for a second. Everybody would feel it, though they would not know what it was. That is what *The Voice of the Silence* says, Once, that a Sowani hath crossed the seventh path, all Nature thrills with joyous awe and feels subdued. The silver star now twinkles out the news to the night blossoms, the streamlet to the pebbles ripples out the tale; dark ocean waves will roar it to the rocks surf-bound, scent laden breezes sing it to the vales, and stately pines mysteriously whisper: A Master has arisen, a Master of the Day. The day means the day of Brahma, the Adept who turns back becomes a stone in the Guardian Wall. 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 art enlightened choose thy way. You can imagine how he chooses it. The whole of Nature responds, Harkfrom the deep unfathomable vortex of that golden light in which the Victor bathes, all nature's wordless voice in thousand tones ariseth to proclaim:

Joy Unto you - O men of Myalba. (2)

A Pilgrim has turned back from the other shore

A new Arhan (Saviour) is born.

References

1. A clairvoyant who accompanied H.P.B. on her European tour in 1881. She was joint author with Mohini of *Man: A Fragment of Forgotten History* by Two Chelas, published 1885.
2. Myalba is hell, and is this earth. H.P.B. Says there is no hell comparable to a man-bearing planet.

Part I- The Theosophist, August 1974 (appeared in The Light Bearer issue of Spring 1999)

Part II- The Theosophist, September 1974

Part III- The Theosophist, October 1974

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