

Introductory Study Notes On
THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE

By Gaile V. Campbell

SECOND EDITION

The Department of Education
The Theosophical Society in America

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Foreword

The Voice of the Silence by H. P. Blavatsky is a classic of Theosophical literature. It has many depths of meaning and is a never-ending source for study, meditation and spiritual inspiration. There can be no single interpretation to *The Voice*, and not all students will agree upon any one approach. Students who wish to understand something of its profound spiritual teaching must undertake their own search and discovery.

We are grateful to Gaile V. Campbell for providing these *Study Notes*, which we hope will help open the door to this precious gem of wisdom for new students. However, students are advised to purchase their own copy of *The Voice of the Silence*, as this study guide does not replicate the valuable introductory material or the glossary, both of which contain information important to understanding the text. Also, the reader is assumed to already have a basic knowledge of Theosophical philosophy and terms. Again, this study guide is not meant to be the definitive approach to *The Voice*, but simply the fruit of one student's labor of love. After students have gone through this entire study guide, they are encouraged to expand upon the ideas presented here and come to their own realizations as to the deeper meaning of *The Voice*. Many of the books listed in the bibliography are worth reading as they will provide the reader with further insights and depth of understanding.

Ms. Campbell passed away in 1990 at the age of 86 in her home at Calgary, Canada, but this online edition will assure that her contribution lives on. Not much is known about her except for that she was an ardent student of Theosophy, and also an artist whose paintings often appeared in the galleries of Vancouver and Toronto. The first edition of *Study Notes* was published by the Theosophical Society in America's Department of Education in 1969, but it was not widely distributed. I felt that it would be useful to publish an updated second edition. Errors in citations found in the first edition have been corrected and a more complete bibliography added. Some of the original commentary has been amplified slightly to provide greater context. In other cases, a few obsolete references have been deleted. Where the word *man* appears in the text, it should be interpreted in the non-gender specific sense as indicating the human being or human race. I have chosen to take the actual verses of *The Voice* from the 1992 edition published by The Theosophical Publishing House in Wheaton, Illinois.

David P. Bruce
Director of Education
June 2008

Preface

The Voice of the Silence was one of the last works written by Madame H. P. Blavatsky, affectionately known as "HPB." She tells us that the contents of the little book were derived from *The Book of the Golden Precepts*, a work which is read by all mystic students in the esoteric schools beyond the Himalayas. The original precepts are engraved on thin oblongs. Copies are very often on discs or on plates, and are generally preserved on the altars of temples. They are written sometimes in the Tibetan language, but mostly in ideographs. To read the preface in its entirety would greatly inform those seeking to understand better her work.

The Voice of the Silence is an invaluable source of spiritual guidance, for it tells the aspirant how to begin preparing himself for traveling the Great Unknown. Whether or not the aspirant is ready to take specific steps on this road matters little, for the important thing is to become acquainted with the signposts which will guide the disciple along the pathless path at some future time in this life or in the next. To understand the rules will add much to the student's knowledge of spiritual science.

—Gaile V. Campbell
1969

Introduction

Each Fragment has been divided into sections. It might be advisable (but not essential) to have the same edition of *The Voice of the Silence* (Theosophical Publishing House, 1992) that was used in preparing this study guide. If the edition used herein cannot be obtained, the additional research to be done by the student will, in any case, prove rewarding.

The three Fragments contained in this book could be summed up as follows:

- Fragment One, called “The Voice of the Silence,” points out the way, the method, by which an aspirant may begin to prepare himself for meditation and discipleship.
- Fragment Two, called “The Two Paths,” shows the importance of study, purification of the lower vehicles, and devotion in obtaining wisdom, and the choice between two Paths.
- Fragment Three, called “The Seven Portals,” reveals seven keys which open into a life of responsibility and service which, it is said, will eventually lead the disciple into union with his higher or inner Self.

Study Notes on *The Voice of the Silence* — Fragment One

THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE

Lesson 1

VOICE:

- 1. These instructions are for those ignorant of the dangers of the lower IDDHI.**

See HPB's footnote in the glossary of *The Voice of the Silence* for an explanation of the word *iddhi*. The lower psychic faculties reveal the previously undetected presence of a vast and complicated network of nonphysical life, including kingdoms of devas and nature spirits, some of them adverse to humanity, as HPB tells us further on.

As HPB goes on to say, there are two kinds of *siddhis* (abnormal powers)—the spiritual and the psychic. The spiritual powers may be uncommon and abnormal, but they are powers with which we shall become better acquainted in the future when we have learned to use them, not only for ourselves, but also for the benefit of humanity.

The third Object of The Theosophical Society clearly advocates that those who wish to learn should “investigate the unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in humanity.” The term “latent powers” relates not only to varieties of extrasensory perception but to the authentic and deeper powers of the human spirit.

VOICE:

- 2. He who would hear the voice of *Nada*, “the Soundless Sound,” and comprehend it, he has to learn the nature of *Dhāranā*.**

In his book *Letters That Have Helped Me*, Jasper Niemand describes *dharana* as “selecting a thing, a spot, or an idea to fix the mind on.” Judith Tyberg, in *Sanskrit Keys to the Wisdom Religion*, describes it as “the intense and steady mental concentration directed to some subject of thought with the mind and heart absolutely freed at the time from the disturbances of sense attractions.” Concentration, therefore, is requisite and must be given exclusively to the chosen object and not to the restless activity of the three lower vehicles—the physical, astral (emotional) and lower mental bodies.

Meditation should be practiced without causing strain to the body. When Annie Besant was first instructed by H. P. Blavatsky, Dr. Besant began to meditate with great intensity, and her teacher interrupted her by saying, “My dear, you do not meditate with your blood vessels.” For those of us who are learning how to meditate, it is

suggested that we begin by learning how to protect ourselves from the forces that constantly bombard our vehicles from without. And so we learn to withdraw into the center of our being, a place wherein no other foot has trod, and acquaint ourselves with the deep silence, wherein dwells the real "I." This is most sacred ground.

VOICE:

- 3. Having become indifferent to objects of perception, the pupil must seek out the *rajah* of the senses, the Thought-Producer, he who awakes illusion.**
- 4. The Mind is the great Slayer of the Real.**
- 5. Let the Disciple slay the Slayer.**

As we are told, the mind is the *rajah*, the ruler of the senses, and must be controlled. One of the most effective systems for gaining control of the mind is the ancient spiritual science of Yoga. The fact that this requirement is listed early on in *The Voice* should be an indicator as to its importance. A prominent early Theosophist, Ernest Wood, elaborates on this further in his book *Practical Yoga*:

In yoga we are to go beyond thought, and to know things not in their juxtapositions but in their relations to primal unity. And so to learn to *still* the mind is the *first* daily exercise the disciple undertakes, for confusion of thought, which is constant movement and change taking place in the mental body, is not the ideal atmosphere in which true meditation can take place.

VOICE:

For: —

- 6. When to himself his form appears unreal, as do on waking all the forms he sees in dreams;**
- 7. When he has ceased to hear the many, he may discern the ONE—the inner sound which kills the outer.**

This "inner sound which kills the outer" may be explained this way: if we will listen to the voice of wisdom, we will become increasingly the master of ourselves and our life, and then "the inner sound" (the first step in Buddhic consciousness) will put a stop to the outer clamor which directs the feverish activities of our everyday life. Just as a blind man has no sense of color, when we awaken to a higher and broader life, we perceive for the first time the crushing yet entirely unsuspected limitations under which we have previously been living.

It has been said that life is a school and we are in this world to learn. We begin in kindergarten to learn our ABC's of life. Then, in the course of time, we later graduate

with full knowledge of the world and ourselves, with the added knowledge of what lies behind this powerful and inherent human urge *to know*:

VOICE:

**8. Then only, not till then, shall he forsake the region of *Asat*,
the false, to come unto the realm of *Sat*, the true.**

Asat is a Sanskrit term meaning that which is “not real” or “does not endure.” Tyberg’s *Sanskrit Keys to the Wisdom Religion* says that the term is generally used to describe the “illusory or *māyāvi* realms of the manifested universe, to the shadowy or reflecting side of nature, and to the vehicles and bodies through which the Self evolves.”

Until we are able to hear the inner voice of conscience and look upon life from the standpoint of the higher planes, we have no real grasp of the truth underlying this complexity of manifestation, which surrounds us on all sides on the lower planes.

VOICE:

**9. Before the soul can see, the Harmony within must be
attained, and fleshly eyes be rendered blind to all illusion.**

It is said that there is a perpetual strain between the astral (emotional) and the mental bodies, between the desires and the mind; neither of these bodies is in tune with the Ego (a Theosophical term for the higher Self) or prepared to act as its vehicle. The Ego, while enmeshed in the personality, finds it difficult to learn when the mental and astral bodies are in a state of confusion and out of harmony with the higher Self. And so, the acquiring of knowledge is made more difficult and the Ego gains but a limited view of things to be learned.

This is one of the first lessons in seeking to tread the Path: subduing the personal self or personality so that the channel between it and the Ego becomes opened and widened. The mind must be free to study, for it is the bridge linking the lower, perishable part of the human being to the immortal Ego. It is only when personal and selfish desires cease to have influence that the cacophony of voices from the outer world will no longer be in control of our destiny.

VOICE:

**10. Before the Soul can hear, the image (man) has to become as
deaf to roarings as to whispers, to cries of bellowing
elephants as to the silvery buzzing of the golden firefly.**

To be able to hear the “still small voice,” one must learn to become very quiet. As long as we are busy reacting to outer stimuli, we remain deaf to the “soundless sound” mentioned in verse 2. We have to become deaf to the outer sounds before we can hear the inner sounds. It has been found that shortly before going to sleep—or the first thing in the morning before we get caught in our daily routine—one is better able to settle down to a few minutes of quiet meditation. As one writer has said: “He who learns the secret of being naught but a channel, and who abides *still* within the secret place, can pass through many a crisis without undue shattering or pain.”

As *The Voice* tells us, dharana (intense concentration) will assist in producing this stillness, and then the disciple will remain unshaken by all external things.

Paul Brunton, author of many esoteric books says, “Refer inwards to the Overself, until the habit becomes first thought and second nature, weakening the strength of disharmonious and unpleasant emotions which are ever attacking us from without.”

VOICE:

11. Before the soul can comprehend and may remember, she must unto the Silent Speaker be united just as the form to which the clay is modeled, is first united with the potter’s mind.

It is written that before the soul can fully comprehend the drift of all the *tuition* which comes to it from without, and the *intuition* which comes to it from within, another harmonizing process must take place, in which the mind gradually becomes attuned to the spiritual will (Atma)—*which gives direction* to his life. We must never allow ourselves to become discouraged and feel that we are not ready or not sufficiently advanced to begin real study. A lay chela (a probationary disciple) once wrote:

I believe it to be absolutely true that the slightest attention seriously paid to the instructions will generate results within the spiritual principles of those who render it—causes capable of producing appreciable consequences in a future state of existence; that the smallest result establishes a tendency in the direction of spiritual achievement.

It has also been said that it is difficult for the soul to tread the Path for the first half of the journey while it is endeavoring to unite itself more and more with the Buddhi (spiritual soul)—but all the work is done under the direction of the Atma, the seventh principle in the human constitution. The metaphor of “the form to which the clay is modeled” suggests a similar relationship between our physical form, the soul, and the “Silent Speaker” that is worth ruminating on.

VOICE:

12. For then the soul will hear, and will remember.

13. And then to the inner ear will speak—

THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE

And say: —

14. If thy soul smiles while bathing in the Sunlight of thy Life;

The “Voice of the Silence” is a mystical (and paradoxical) term used to designate the higher Self—that mysterious part of us which is immortal and beyond the realm of normal, daily consciousness.

You will note that the higher Self and its vehicles are all operating in this world of illusion where humanity learns the necessary lessons that will help guide it on the return journey to the world of Spirit, our original home.

The poetic imagery of “the Sunlight of thy Life” refers to those happy times in life when fortune smiles upon us, when we feel that all is right with God and the world.

VOICE:

. . . if thy soul sings within her chrysalis of flesh and matter;

The three vehicles that constitute the personality (physical-emotional-mental) are, in truth, a chrysalis from which a butterfly is gradually formed. Metaphorically, the soul’s residence in the physical body corresponds to the caterpillar state.

The soul should endeavor to realize that it is independent of these temporary vehicles. Once the soul *knows* where it is going and what it should do, it is released in great measure from doubt and fear.

VOICE:

. . . if thy soul weeps inside her castle of illusion; if thy soul struggles to break the silver thread that binds her to the MASTER; know, O disciple, thy Soul is of the earth.

To understand the conditions by which we may advance and make real progress, we should not allow ourselves to indulge in fits of depression, sadness, or self-pity for these emotions deplete our energy. We will cease to pander to the insatiable demands of the personality if we desire to set ourselves free from the innumerable ties that bind us to things that have no lasting value, which prevent us from climbing upward into more rarefied air, the natural place of spirit. The “silver thread” or cord is the emblem

of purity, which links the soul to its divine counterpart. If we are to graduate into a higher state of existence, then we have to work at strengthening this link between this world and the next by the daily practice of spiritual disciplines.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are the two kinds of *siddhis* (abnormal powers) and how are they different?
2. In the early stages of learning meditation, it is suggested that we protect ourselves from “adverse forces.” Give some examples of forces that would otherwise distract the novice.
3. In your own words, explain the meaning of “Before the soul can hear . . .”
4. Why is the soul characterized as being “of the earth” in verse 14?
5. Consider how the words “indifferent,” “deaf,” and “blind” relate to the attainment of dharana?

The maturing, self-evaluating person reaches a point when he feels there is more to himself than he has thus far come to know. There begins an internal groping, probing, unwinding stage, not unlike the struggles and emergence of the “new born” butterfly from the chrysalis, or the unfoldment and appearance of the freshly blossomed flower. This is not a process of short duration for a human being; it is a search that continues throughout our lives—if we have but the interest and motivation to know ourselves and others better. (Francis Knowles, *Discovery*)

Study Notes on *The Voice of the Silence* — Fragment One

Lesson 2

VOICE:

**15. When to the World's turmoil thy budding soul lends ear;
when to the roaring voice of the great illusion thy Soul
responds; when frightened at the sight of the hot tears of
pain, when deafened by the cries of distress, thy soul
withdraws like the shy turtle within the carapace of
SELFHOOD, learn, O Disciple, of her Silent "God," thy
Soul is an unworthy shrine.**

The "budding soul" suggests the evolutionary progress of the soul. There are two great stages in the soul's evolution: first the way of forthgoing and second the way of return. During the many lives comprising the former, the development of personality takes place, along with the accumulation of karma, as it pursues its restless and often reckless career in seeking satisfaction from a myriad of desires in the external world. Upon its return journey, the soul gradually turns its back upon the things that tend to hold back its progress. At this stage of evolution it proceeds to perfect itself. The description of the soul that is frightened and unresponsive to human suffering suggests those meek souls who, in their ignorance, are afraid of taking on responsibility, have no sense of the oneness of life, and cannot face up to their karma, therefore tending to withdraw from life into a psychological cocoon, just as the tortoise withdraws into its hardened shell at the least sign of danger.

VOICE:

**16. When waxing stronger, thy Soul glides forth from her
secure retreat; and breaking loose from the protecting
shrine, extends her silver thread and rushes onward;
when beholding her image on the waves of Space she
whispers, "This is I," — declare, O Disciple, that thy soul
is caught in the webs of delusion.**

Being "caught in the webs of delusion" refers to the self-deception associated with the personal nature. It has been said, "The personality is not the true Self, and Theosophy teaches that it must not be allowed to set itself up as a candidate for immortality and try to entrench itself against the ravages of use and time that beset all material things." Voluntary evolution is a deliberate training of oneself in the nobler qualities of character; involuntary evolution belongs to the lower stages of evolution. When the spiritual entity breaks loose from every particle of matter, only

then will it enter upon the Eternal and Unchangeable. In the *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, the existence of the silver thread is implicit within the following passage: “Every mortal has his immortal counterpart, or rather his Archetype, in heaven. This means that the former is indissolubly united to the latter, in each of his incarnations, and for the duration of the cycle of births” (14:51). In *Isis Unveiled*, Blavatsky states, “When the shining thread which links the spirit to the soul, from the moment of the birth of a child, is violently snapped . . . the disembodied entity is left to share the fate of the lower animals [and] to gradually dissolve into ether” (1:315).

VOICE:

17. **This Earth, Disciple, is the Hall of Sorrow, wherein are set along the Path of dire probations, traps to ensnare thy EGO by the delusion called “Great Heresy.”**
18. **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.**

Here “twilight” represents the astral and the lower mental planes, whereas the “light which burns without a wick or fuel” points to the more rarified region of the the higher Self. Compare this to Stanza 3, sloka 6 of *The Secret Doctrine* where it says, “The root of life was in every drop of the ocean of immortality, and the ocean was radiant light . . .” (1:29).

VOICE:

19. **Saith the Great Law:—“In order to become the KNOWER of ALL SELF thou hast first of Self to be the knower.” To reach the knowledge of that Self, thou hast to give up Self to Non-Self, Being to Non-Being, and then thou canst repose between the wings of the GREAT BIRD. Aye, sweet is rest between the wings of that which is not born, nor dies, but is the AUM throughout eternal ages.**
20. **Bestride the Bird of Life, if thou would’st know.**
21. **Give up thy life, if thou would’st live.**

During the evolutionary stage in which humanity awakens, man becomes the thinker and knower. For some millions of years on this earth, human beings have been acting and creating causes stamped with their individual characteristics, as well as racial and national causes that must be worked out in useful experience.

The “Great Bird” of which *The Voice* speaks, is an esoteric symbol containing the implication of time, since it is proceeding through space. Those individuals who have passed the third initiation are sometimes referred to as the Hamsa or swan, because they have risen above selfish desire and are therefore no more under the pull of the earth. A yogi who bestrides the Hamsa is not affected by karmic influences. *The Voice* advises, “The Self of matter and the SELF of Spirit can never meet. One of the twain must disappear; there is no place for both” (vs. 56). And so, there can be no hedging of one’s bets, no straddling the fence.

The word AUM—often spelled OM—is used at the commencement of every good work or thought, because it is a word of power, symbolizing Divine Creation.

VOICE:

**22. 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.”**

The state of “rest eternal” is reached when the individual consciousness is merged in the Universal Consciousness. The “seven worlds” (i.e., seven planes of being) suggest worlds of rest eternal—the seven sub-planes of the Atmic plane, into which the Arhat begins to ascend.

The three states of consciousness, or the three Halls, may be described as follows:

- JAGRAT (Waking): We are in this state when we are going about our daily business on the physical plane, with all our faculties attuned to the endless stimulations and sensations provided by the material world.
- SVAPNA (Dreaming): This state is not the result of physiological changes taking place in the brain (lower mind) but the true experiences of the soul while away from the physical body working and learning in the realm of the astral and mental planes. It is one of the subjective states found in yoga.
- SUSHUPTI (Deep sleeping): This is a state of deep dreamless sleep, out of which the candidate awakens to remember nothing because he has gone into a second sleep, having emerged into the next set of planes, to be conscious for a time at that higher level—this last experience being too sublime an experience to recall at the physical level. In yoga it is considered to be a state of indescribable peace and bliss.

The student may read more about these states in Jasper Niemand’s book *Letters That Have Helped Me*, where he states:

The three qualities are lower than a state called Turya, which is a high state capable of being enjoyed even in the body. Therefore in the state there exists none of the three qualities, but there the soul sees the three qualities moving in the ocean of Being beneath. This experience is not only met with after death, but, as I said, it may be enjoyed in the present life, though of course consciously very seldom.

VOICE:

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

24. The name of the first Hall is IGNORANCE—*Avidya*.

Avidya is a Sanskrit term that literally means “non-knowledge,” but is generally translated as ignorance; remove the prefix “a” and it becomes *vidya*, which means wisdom or sacred knowledge. In Sanskrit words, adding the prefix “a” to a word changes the meaning to denote something that is the opposite.

VOICE:

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

The Hall of Ignorance is a metaphor for the phenomenal world of the senses and of terrestrial consciousness only.

VOICE:

26. The name of Hall the second is the Hall of Learning.

It is the Hall of probationary learning. We are all together on this planet to learn, and those who wish to travel more speedily do not wait to be tested. These souls are called self-starters; they *will* themselves to go the right way about things, and do not wait to be prodded by life.

VOICE:

In it thy Soul will find the blossoms of life, but under every flower a serpent coiled.

It may be suggested that each “flower” plucked in this desire-world holds a necessary experience for the soul who desired it. When a person is filled with a strong desire for some particular thing, that object must then hold some special lesson locked up within it for that person. *The Voice* tells us that we can create our

chances for tomorrow, and for our next incarnation, by sowing the right seeds now, today, for future harvesting. For as we sow, so shall we reap.

VOICE:

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

The Hall of Wisdom is a metaphor for the higher mental plane, “beyond which stretch the shoreless waters of Akshara,” which, according to the glossary, is the “region of spiritual consciousness beyond which there is no longer danger” for those who have succeeded in reaching it. Candidates for the path of yoga in the Raja Yoga schools are always trained to purify themselves mentally and emotionally. A Master can move through these lesser worlds in safety, but neophytes leave themselves open to great danger if they meddle with the astral substance before they have cleansed themselves from all impurities.

The teachings of Patanjali, the great Indian authority on yoga and concentration, make the first two steps moral ones requiring definite progress in these before the practices leading to the *siddhis* or yogic powers are taken. For, as *The Voice* says, “These instructions are for those ignorant of the lower *iddhi*” [*siddhis*]. The dangers occur when we start to cultivate these potent powers within ourselves before we are ready or worthy to possess them, for the channel must be clean, else it attracts strong, adverse, psychic influences from without. Ernest Wood has called these first steps “The Ten Commandments,” and has translated them as the five restraints: “Thou shalt not injure, lie, steal, be inconstant, greedy; and five observances: Thou shalt be clean, content, self-controlled, studious and devoted.”

VOICE:

28. 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.

This means that if we become too involved with the transitory objects of this earth, we become entangled and blinded to the things that really matter, such as the promptings of conscience—the “still small voice” that whispers from within.

VOICE:

29. 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 candidate does not linger too long in the plane of illusion, but like the bee he takes the honey (experience and knowledge) and moves on, refusing to become intoxicated by the scent of countless blossoms temptingly displayed before him on the lower planes.

HPB explains the word "Guru" in this manner: "The Initiate who leads the disciple through the Knowledge he imparts to his spiritual, or second birth, is called the Father, Guru, or Master." And so the Ego that wishes to be assisted by a Master must vivify the link between the lower self and higher Self.

The assistance that an authentic Guru gives would naturally be of a very high order that concerns the most unselfish part of human nature. The Master would not be concerned with the region of illusion, the mayavic regions. As the old adage goes, "When the pupil is ready, the Master appears."

VOICE:

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

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

32. 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.

This could mean the *second birth*—when only the innocent and pure in heart may find union with the inner Self. Madame Blavatsky mentions this in *The Secret Doctrine*: "For Jesus states repeatedly that he who 'shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child shall not enter therein'" (2:504). The child-state suggests utter selflessness, devoid of personality, and final union with the One. "The Hall which lies beyond" is a poetic metaphor for a state of spiritual consciousness, wherein shadows are unknown, where ignorance and doubt exist no more. But what is meant by shadows? In his book of essays *The Creative Silence*, Rohit Mehta says that the absence of shadows in the Hall of Wisdom means that "here we no longer deal with idols and images. The realm of indirect perception has been left behind—the mind's processes of comparison and contrast are no more—for here the 'light of truth shines with unfading glory'" (p. 44-45).

VOICE:

33. 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.

“That which is uncreate” refers to the immortal, higher Triad of Atma-Buddhi-Manas, as distinguished from the lower personality with its temporary vehicles of consciousness. These vehicles are created anew for each incarnation, while the upper Triad carries over from one incarnation to the next.

VOICE:

And having learnt thine own *Ajnana*, 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.

The disciple who is aware of the enchantment of the lower planes (the physical-astral-lower mental) knows that these realms are a training ground, or school, for the growth of the soul. It is through a variety of earthly experiences while embodied in a house of flesh that the soul “goes to school” and increases its store of wisdom.

The Voice continues to speak of this deceptive light.

VOICE:

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

Mara is a demon, an Asura, or Satan as the Christian world knows him; he represents the personification of evil. Translated, the word means, “That which kills” i.e., that which kills the soul, that which hinders our spiritual progress. In esoteric philosophy Mara is the personification of the kind of temptation that can blind the mind to all reason; thus progress is delayed. Mara is also referred to as “the great tester” and plays an important role as a teacher of humanity.

VOICE:

35. The moth attracted to the dazzling flame of thy night-lamp is doomed to perish in the viscid oil. The unwary Soul that fails to grapple with the mocking demon of illusion, will return to earth the slave of Mara.

A wise man knows that a hot flame can burn, without putting his hand into it; only a fool must make this test. The law of karma, which brings to men the experience that they have given to others, is this benefactor and ultimate liberator, not an instrument of vengeance or punishment, as many believe. Those who commit violent and thoughtless deeds need a violent kind of experience to awaken them to the consequences of such a way of life. When, through karmic retribution, a person has suffered greatly, he or she will begin to reform, thanks to the law of karma, which is always educative, never punitive.

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. What is the significance of the three halls?
2. What is the silver thread?
3. How do we go about acquiring true knowledge?
4. In what ways do our physical senses deceive us?

There is a road, steep and thorny, beset with perils of every kind, but yet a road, and it leads to the very heart of the Universe; I can tell you how to find those who will show you the secret gateway that opens inward only, and closes fast 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 strong intellect cannot surmount. For those who win onwards 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. (Blavatsky, *Collected Writings* 13:219)

Study Notes on *The Voice of the Silence* — Fragment One

Lesson 3

VOICE:

36. Behold the Hosts of Souls. Watch how they hover o'er the stormy sea of human life, and how exhausted, bleeding, broken-winged, they drop one after another on the swelling waves. Tossed by the fierce winds, chased by the gale, they drift into the eddies and disappear within the first great vortex.

The imagery of swelling waves and fierce winds suggests life on the astral and physical planes, where the greater part of humanity exists without a pattern of life to follow, or a star by which to steer its course. The difficulty is an overly deep engrossment in the lower self, this being the cause of the world's misery. Here is a footnote from Letter 68 of *The Mahatma Letters* regarding Mara and the host of souls. "This Mara, as you may well think, is the allegorical image of the sphere called the 'Planet of Death' — the *whirlpool* whither disappear the *lives* doomed to destruction" (fn. p. 195). HPB says: "These are the useless drones who will perish by the millions during the fifth round." This means the closing of the door to further progress in this Manvantara. *The Theosophical Glossary* describes a Manvantara as "a period of manifestation, as opposed to Pralaya (dissolution, or rest), applied to various cycles, especially to a Day of Brahma, 4,320,000,000 Solar years."

VOICE:

37. 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.

True benefit may only be experienced once we have reached the third spiritual stage, the place of serenity—the "Vale of Bliss." This serenity is the goal of bliss to which *The Voice of the Silence* is directing the candidate; he or she is told that it can be reached by first passing through the Hall of Wisdom. The heresy of separateness means that we cannot progress on the Path without the spirit of brotherhood and of cooperation; without the opportunity to pass through this planet, this school of learning, where other men and women together with our own actions create circumstances to test us, we would never graduate to higher planes.

VOICE:

38. 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.

It would be wise not to use our Heaven-born force of the Logos for selfish purposes. A footnote in *The Voice* says the fiery power is Kundalini, which also means "world mother," one of the mystic Yogic powers, and that it is Buddhi which is considered as an electro-spiritual force, a creative power which when aroused into action can as easily kill as it can create. In the seventeenth-century book *Le Comte de Gabalis*, we are told that it is possible for the saints to have attained union with God through their devotion and prayer motivated by a constant desire and aspiration to come closer to God's law. This dedication and constancy liberated a spiritual force in these men and women—a living flame that acted through the Divine in man, with or without the conscious effort of the finite mind. We can thus in safety set free this great power of Kundalini once we are united with the higher Self. But to try to tamper with the power of Kundalini before one is ready is to court disaster.

VOICE:

39. 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.

Only when the Guru finds that the chela is ready for serious development will advice for arousing Kundalini be given under direct supervision; otherwise it can be a very dangerous procedure, having a serious and disruptive effect on the psychic nature. Kundalini rises through the various force-centers known as the chakras until it reaches the center between the eyebrows, when the chela is blessed with Divine power. The fourth chakra is centered in the heart. The raising of the fire is referred to as being "Christed" when the Kundalini has been brought into action. This is a state of spiritual power also called the "Seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost" in the Christian system. It has been said that the symbol of the human being is a tree; imagine then this tree as being suddenly lit up by seven colored lights. This is the deeper meaning of our Christmas tree: the chakras are the lights and the star crowning the topmost peak is the Star of Initiation, the coming into a state of great spiritual power. *The Secret Doctrine* tells us that, once having arrived at this advanced state, we must go still further, and must part from the six principles in order to center ourselves entirely in the seventh.

VOICE:

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

In the glossary of *The Voice*, Blavatsky tells us that *Kechara* ("sky-walker" or "goer") is a Yogi who has become as one formed of the wind, as "a cloud from which limbs have sprouted out" after which he comprehends the meaning of the Cosmos and its workings. The phrase, "whose step touches not the waters," refers to one who can travel in the astral body, symbolized by the ever-changing waters. At this stage, the Yogi is delivered from all the physical ills of life, from the galling power of fate, the reckless caprice of fortune, and the gloom of death. As we learned earlier, the Yogi bestrides Hamsa, the swan, out of time and space.

VOICE:

**41. 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.**

Before a candidate may begin to function at this high level, he must raise his consciousness to the seventh Principle, so that it begins to move on the Atmic or Nirvanic Plane, and there prepare for the fifth initiation, that of the Adept. The mystic sounds may be translated as the sounds heard in the mysterious Voice of the Silence, the voice of pure conscience; these sounds cannot be heard with the physical ear, for they are secretly giving guidance from the spiritual plane.

Let us go still further in trying to understand the meaning of "the ladder of mystic sounds." These sounds are also called "steps" or "stages," by which the pilgrim slowly mounts this mystic ladder, gradually disengaging from the clutches of the ever demanding personality (the lower self), which is a vehicle attuned to the outer world of sensation.

This lower vehicle, if properly directed, can be used when under control by the higher Self. Krishnamurti, in his little book *At the Feet of the Master*, speaks of the body as the animal upon which we ride, and that it must be cared for, kept clean and fed, but not pampered, for selfish desires and cravings are but trappings to be dispensed with, once the great return journey is begun. Purity of motive demands that we travel lightly and learn to develop the power of non-attachment.

* The Higher Self

VOICE:

42. **The first is like the nightingale's sweet voice chanting a song of parting to its mate.**
43. **The second comes as the sound of a silver cymbal of the Dhyānīs, awakening the twinkling stars.**
44. **The next is as the plaint melodious of the ocean-sprite imprisoned in its shell.**
45. **And this is followed by the chant of Vina.**
46. **The fifth like sound of bamboo-flute shrills in thine ear.**
47. **It changes next into a trumpet-blast.**
48. **The last vibrates like the dull rumbling of a thunder-cloud.**
49. **The seventh swallows all the other sounds. They die, and then are heard no more.**

The student may obtain a little more information as to the full esoteric meaning of these steps or stages through further research in *The Secret Doctrine* by Helena P. Blavatsky and *First Principles of Theosophy* by C. Jinarajadasa. It is said that these sounds heard by the soul could be likened to the "music of the spheres," the sound of the "whirling orbs in space." The occultist believes that the twelve signs of the Zodiac and the seven planets form a sounding board and strings of "Apollo's seven-stringed lyre." Evidently the mystic enters into a rhythmic vibration as the Heaven-World is entered, and it is then that the sounds of the Inner World are heard. This, I believe, is referred to as "the Awakening."

And in reference to "the ocean sprite imprisoned in its shell," perhaps Oliver Wendell Holmes has helped to explain this concept in his poem "The Chambered Nautilus." He tells how the nautilus exemplifies progress in the evolutionary plan as it constantly builds section after section—each larger than the one before—in a spiral shell, until at last it emerges into the open, having found its freedom. The word "ocean" refers to the primordial ocean of space, *Akasha* (water) being the third principle in the material cosmos on which *Narayana*, the self-born spirit moves. The Dhyanis are called the Seven Sons of Light, stars that watch over the Seven Sacred Planets of the Earth-Chain. In Geoffrey Barborcka's book *The Divine Plan*, the author comments: "Just as . . . one Dhyani having particular surveillance over one globe and likewise over one Race—in similar manner the Dhyanis of the Seven Sacred Planets act as 'primaries' over the seven principles of man, one Planetary Dhyani for each principle" (p 247). *The Vina* represents the astral plane. In reference to the sentence, "The seventh swallows all the rest," we have already learned that the six must be

finally merged into the One. The number *seven* is used constantly, for we are living in a sevenfold world, and to arrive at perfection, we have to conquer, or refine, the intermediate planes, steps up which we must mount, to reach the more spiritual ones. To further expand on this number seven, let us recall the seven stages of human development. The teeth of a child appear in the seventh month; they are shed at 7 years; at twice 7 puberty begins; at three times 7 the mental and vital powers are developed; at four times 7 full strength has developed; at five times 7 the desires are most developed. *The Secret Doctrine* contains the answers, but whether or not they are understood depends upon our spiritual development.

VOICE:

**50. 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.**

Once the chela has subdued the senses and obtained control over the lower vehicles through the power of spiritual will, then he or she is ready for service. The chela will then be useful to those who are in charge of the Great Evolutionary Plan. The spark (the Atma) will have become as one with the Flame (the Paramatma).

VOICE:

**51. Before that path is entered, thou must destroy thy lunar
body, cleanse thy mind-body and make clean thy heart.**

The "lunar body" is the astral form, the body of desire, which is part of the temporal man and not the companion of the immortal Self. Once nothing of earth's pleasures can tempt him, then only may the union of mind, the higher mind, and spirit take place. J. C. Street, the author of *The Hidden Way Across the Threshold* writes:

Who elevates himself, isolates himself. Any man who is brave enough to step aside from all conventionalities of the time and age, and, if need be, to sever ties of former friendships and companionship—confessing that he desires to be free from darkness of the past and to have some infallible guide in matters of Spirit, Soul, and Truth in the subjective world, if he can devote time, patience, and silent meditation to the work, will find a new world, a height of comprehension and newness of life of which he never dreamed (p. 249).

VOICE:

**52. Eternal life's pure waters, clear and crystal, with the
monsoon tempest's muddy torrents cannot mingle.**

Life's pure waters are likened to a hidden sacred spring, which, once tasted, causes those who find it to thirst no more.

VOICE:

**53. Heaven's dew-drop glittering in the morn's first sun-beam
within the bosom of the lotus, when dropped on earth
becomes a piece of clay; behold, the pearl is now a speck
of mire.**

For countless centuries in the East, the lotus has been regarded as a symbol of spiritual consciousness. This sacred flower has its roots deep in the mud of earth (the physical world); its stem rises up through the muddy water (analogous to the emotional-desire nature), where the blossom, the end product of growth, then opens to the rays of the sun, symbolizing the spiritual Self giving forth its perfume, which is a symbol of radiant service of the disciple in the three worlds. We, as we struggle ever upward, are endeavoring to shake off the thick coating of clay. "Heaven's dewdrop" is pure spirit, or pure consciousness, before it has become involved in the things of earth. Dew has been mentioned in Sanskrit as *DYU*, meaning "brilliant"—a "drop from Heaven" or "sap of the Supreme Spirit." It is interesting to note that the word *dew* is Cornish for God, and that the French word for God is *Dieu*.

VOICE:

**54. 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 real-
ized the black foul monster's presence.**

The language here is quite dramatic, but that is necessary sometimes to make a point. Let us read what C. W. Leadbeater, in *The Chakras*, has to say on the subject.

Thought flies like lightning through the subtle matter of the mental plane, so the thought of the whole world on a certain subject may easily gather in one spot, and yet be accessible and attractive to every thinker on that subject. Astral matter, though so far finer than physical, is yet denser than that of the mental plane; the great clouds of "emotion-forms" which are generated in the astral world by strong feelings do not all fly to the one-world-center, but they do coalesce with other forms of the same nature in their own neighborhood, so that enormous and very powerful "blocks" of feelings are floating about almost

everywhere, and a man may readily come into contact with them and be influenced by them.

And so this would, I believe, refer to the black, "foul monster's presence."

VOICE:

**55. Before the "mystic Power" can make of thee a god, Lanoo,
thou must have gained the faculty to slay thy lunar form
at will.**

Author Roy Mitchell, in *Through Temple Doors*, says

One of these forces, we have seen, is that serpent-force, as it is called, that in all esoteric schools is depicted as rising out of the earth, passing through the legs into the body and lying coiled around the epigastric plexus, etc. Pythagoras says of the Babylonian Magi (Ma'ji), that they called the magnetic currents of the earth serpents, and that they possessed the power to direct them. The incorporeal fire of the inner man they called the Celestial Lion. These two, the ascending Serpent and the descending Lion, they said generated by their meeting the farces that freed the candidate.

Also, in the book *Le Comte de Gabalis* we note that the lion represents the lower side of human nature, that throughout antiquity this symbol represented nature and the ungoverned passions of humanity; so the king of the beasts, the lion, must be conquered before spiritual development is possible. Thus the first labor of the Greek Hercules (a Savior) was to slay the lion, which symbolized his lower nature.

VOICE:

**56. The Self of matter and the SELF of Spirit can never meet.
One of the twain must disappear; there is no place for
both.**

The aspirant wishing to attain must choose between the life of the world and that of the Spirit. It is useless and vain to endeavor to unite the two, for *there is no room for both*. Once the chela knows which path he wishes to take, he must then proceed with a firm step. Consider this bit of advice left by those who have preceded us: When we think we are progressing, we may be at a standstill, and when we think we are not progressing, we may be making wonderful strides ahead:

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. What happens to those souls without a star to guide them?
2. What name is given to the “fiery power,” the “heaven-born,” and the “world-mother”?
3. Name some of the things a candidate must do before he may begin treading the Path.
4. What is one of the great stumbling blocks to union with the Self?

Come hither, you that walk along the way;
See how the pilgrims fare that go astray:
They caught are in an entangling net,
'Cause they good counsel lightly did forget:
'Tis true they rescued were, but yet you see,
They're scourged to boot. Let this your caution be.

—John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*

Study Notes on *The Voice of the Silence* — Fragment One

Lesson 4

VOICE:

- 57. Ere thy Soul's mind can understand, the bud of personality must be crushed out, the worm of sense destroyed past resurrection.**
- 58. Thou canst not travel on the Path before thou hast become that Path itself.**

Figuratively speaking, the Path involves the crucifixion of the lower self, thereby setting free the higher Self that we may follow the road of service or return to the Source, according to *The Voice*. The footnote reads:

This "Path" is mentioned in all the Mystic Works. As Krishna says in the *Jnaneshvari*: "When this path is beheld . . . whether one sets out to the bloom of the East or to the chambers of the West, *without moving*, O holder of the bow, is the *traveling in this road*. In this path, to whatever place one would go, *that place one's own self becomes*." "Thou art the path," is said to the adept guru, and by the latter to the disciple after initiation. "I am the way and the Path," says another MASTER.

VOICE:

- 59. Let thy Soul lend its ear to every cry of pain like as the lotus bares its heart to drink the morning sun.**
- 60. Let not the fierce Sun dry one tear of pain before thyself hast wiped it from the sufferer's eye.**
- 61. 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.**

Compassion is essential for the spiritual disciple. We cannot close our eyes or turn a deaf ear to the suffering of either man or beast. Like the lotus flower that opens its heart to the morning sun, so must we open our hearts to those struggling beside us in the darkness; thus may our own pain be shared and softened in self-forgetfulness. But it is not all pain and loneliness, for as we progress on the Path we begin to feel a great joy in our heart at coming so close to the heart of Nature and our fellow travelers. We are now touching the Real, that which will take us beyond the unreal, perishable things of this life.

VOICE:

62. These tears, O thou of heart most merciful, these are the streams that irrigate the fields of charity immortal. 'Tis on such soil that grows the midnight blossom of Buddha more difficult to find, more rare to view than is the flower of the Vogay tree. It is the seed of freedom from rebirth. It isolates the Arhat both from strife and lust, it leads him through the fields of Being unto the peace and bliss known only in the land of Silence and Non-Being.

The souls with the merciful hearts are those who never rest; they have chosen to follow the path of love and service for the sake of suffering mankind. Not only are these dedicated men and women working out their own karma, but also they are acutely aware of the suffering of others, and the pain weighs heavily upon them as they scale the mountain toward Arhatship and illumination. Once they have reached that stage and are "bestride the Bird of Life," no more earthly suffering can be experienced, for they are outside the realm of time and space. At that point, they have become *selfless*.

VOICE:

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

64. Kill love of life, but if thou slayest *tanhā*, let this not be for thirst of life eternal, but to replace the fleeting by the everlasting.

Those who have set their minds on the Path and fixed their eyes on the summit are aware of the obstacles that will waylay them. And so the warrior learns to be prepared. The word *tanhā* means the love of life, the desire to gratify the senses; these are ties which bind and which must be gradually severed. Krishnamurti's little book *At the Feet of the Master* is of great help in understanding some of the qualifications needed for treading the Path that leads toward initiation.

VOICE:

65. Desire nothing. Chafe not at Karma, nor at Nature's changeless laws. But struggle only with the personal, the transitory, the evanescent and the perishable.

An aspirant, once he has chosen the road he wishes to travel, accepts it cheerfully, knowing that the Great Law is always *just*. The real struggle is with the personality, which is ever trying to obtain self-satisfaction through the senses, and

with Mara the tempter who will be up to all his tricks; these become more subtle as the aspirant advances, for he (Mara) knows that the mind of the pilgrim is on guard and aware of his presence. A fourteenth-century book of Christian mysticism, *The Cloud of Unknowing*, offers this advice to the aspirant: "Look ahead now and never mind what is behind; see what you still need, and not what you have; for this is how meekness is most quickly won and defended" (p. 118).

VOICE:

66. Help Nature and work on with her; and Nature will regard thee as one of her creators and make obeisance.
67. 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.

It is written, "Nature is conquered by obedience." All the forces we use in modern life, such as electricity, hydraulics, jet propulsion, and solar power are examples of our working with nature, with the Great Law. We are told again and again that if we work *with* the laws of Nature, and not *against them*, we eventually gain mystic powers not known to the ordinary person. Patanjali speaks of these in the third section of the *Yoga Sutras*. These powers are to be used exclusively for assisting the Great Evolutionary Plan and not for selfish personal gain.

Nature is composed of life as well as matter, consciousness as well as form, and it is through sympathetic feeling that we become attuned to the life that dwells with other forms, whether it be of the human, animal, or plant kingdom. Life evolves and progress through a myriad of forms from the simple to the complex. This may seem strange to some, but Theosophy affirms that "everything in the Universe, throughout all its kingdoms, is CONSCIOUS: *i.e.*, endowed with a consciousness of its own kind and on its own plane of perception" (*The Secret Doctrine*, 1:274). Therefore, individuals who desire to be of service to mankind may hasten their evolution by putting their already gained knowledge into practice, thus hastening their progress. The aspirant begins to build in the invisible realms, by giving attention to the inner needs, by listening to the wee small voice of the inner Self. It is said that once an individual yearns to serve, it is instantly known, and that he must learn to heed the "Voice of the Silence" within himself, which will guide him in all he should do. These few words explain it to perfection: "Let go, and let God."

In *The Dialogues of G. de Purucker*, the author points out that initiation is self-conferred: "When one has gone ahead to the point where he is ready to receive more, he will know it himself. Otherwise he is not ready to receive it . . . I know in my life I have half a dozen times had to wait years and struggle to reach a certain point. Then when I reached there, I knew from the inward burst of illumination that I was ready to receive, and I received." (1:45).

VOICE:

68. 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.

"The means and way," as well as the "gates," will be fully explained in the Third Fragment of *The Voice* (lesson 10).

VOICE:

69. There is but one road to the Path; at its very end alone the "Voice of the Silence" can be heard. 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.

At this stage of the Path, the disciple has to throw off in earnest the cruder and unrefined part of his nature so that he may travel the path more safely. As the disciple climbs the mountain into more rarefied planes, he may easily overlook or forget the weaknesses that have not as yet been completely rooted out of the personal

nature. If ignored, these shortcomings will inevitably cause critical problems when least expected. An automobile with a minor wheel alignment problem may seem to drive adequately at slower speeds, but when traversing winding roads at much higher speeds, this slight mechanical flaw becomes more pronounced and even dangerous. Similarly, character flaws that would seem relatively minor to the man or woman of the world become serious—even hazardous—to the disciple who blithely continues to ignore their presence while scaling the further rungs of the ladder. The adage “the bigger they are, the harder they fall” is supported not only by examples from the world of sports, politics, and commerce, but also by sad and unfortunate instances of spiritual teachers that have fallen into ignominy and disrepute.

VOICE:

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

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

Disciples who make up their mind to rid themselves of their weaknesses and cultivate all that is noble and fine within themselves, will at first meet with much resistance and become discouraged. It is inevitable that both the good and bad qualities will be brought into activity by the desire for rapid spiritual progress. This always happens when a person sincerely enters upon the spiritual Path, and it will have to be dealt with. Such a person is well advised to undertake a study of Yoga. In *Practical Yoga*, Ernest Wood wrote, “Yoga in active life consists of body-conditioning, self-study, and attentiveness to God. These are the three things to be practiced in everyday life, as yoga in the midst of action” (p. 46).

VOICE:

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

At this stage of progress, our task is to endeavor to fix our attention on the higher Self, giving less and less thought to the lower self. In his book *Thought Forces*, Prentice Mulford writes,

None of us can expect to believe and live up to new laws, principles or methods of life all at once. Though convinced of their truth there is an unyielding, stubborn part of us which is hostile to them . . . That part is our lower mind. There is a supreme power and ruling force which pervades and rules the boundless universe, you are a part of this power. You as a part have the faculty

of bringing to you by constant silent desire, prayer or demand, more and more of the qualities, belongings, and characteristics of this power.

VOICE:

73. 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 "Soul's dim eyes" refers to the soul's gradual awakening to the eternal verities. To "merge into one sense thy senses" is to lose oneself completely, by a constant effort to merge in the true Self all our offerings of each day. "Seek first the Kingdom of God, and its righteousness; and all these things will be added unto you." Mara's hosts have less effect upon us if we make a habit of entering our secret chamber and communing with our Divine Self.

VOICE:

74. Long and weary is the way before thee, O Disciple. One single thought about the past that thou hast left behind, will drag thee down and thou wilt have to start the climb anew.

To be in the position of having to "start the climb anew" refers to the need to gain control of one's thoughts, whether it is in relation to our daily meditation or to our life as a whole, which we are endeavoring to refine. To lose the thread is to lose the rhythm—that dynamic force which has been built up through constant repetition. So it stands to reason that when this rhythm has been broken we must begin all over again. But wise aspirants do not waste precious time bemoaning the fact that time has been lost; they pick up where they left off and continue on their way.

VOICE:

75. Kill in thyself all memory of past experiences. Look not behind or thou art lost.

The Bible tells us that once a man has put his hand to the plow and stops to look back, he is not fit for the Kingdom of Heaven. The Buddha listed doubt as one of the Ten Fetters that bind us to the world of samsara. In the classical Yoga of Patanjali, doubt is listed as one of the obstacles to Self-realization. Before the candidate makes the commitment to tread the Path, he or she may entertain some measure of doubt—questions as to the value of treading the Path, whether one is ready for it, whether

one will make the sacrifices necessary—but once begun in earnest, it is fatal to harbor to such doubts. The prospective candidate must deliberate upon and answer such doubts satisfactorily *before* making the commitment to forge ahead. After one has begun treading the Path, one single doubtful glance backward will only serve to delay one's progress.

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. What must the disciple learn to do in order to travel the Path?
2. Name the acts of compassion a chela must perform in order to understand humanity's great suffering.
3. What act generates the seed of freedom from rebirth?
4. What are the things the disciple must try to "kill out" in himself?
5. If the disciple works along with Nature, how does she reward him?
6. If the disciple enters occult life before he has prepared himself for it, what will delay his progress?

Come hither, you that walk along the way;
See how the pilgrims fare that go astray:
They caught are in an entangling net,
'Cause they good counsel lightly did forget:
'Tis true they rescued were, but yet you see,
They're scourged to boot. Let this your caution be.

—John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*

Study Notes on *The Voice of the Silence* — Fragment One

Lesson 5

VOICE:

76. 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.

He who is seeking the Light must ever be on guard against the traps and pitfalls which lie in wait for him as he labors up the sacred mountain, and the most dangerous of them is self-conceit, closely followed by vanity and false pride. For, as we are told over and over again, the higher we climb the harder we shall fall if we err. As we grow in understanding and compassion, we become increasingly sensitive; it is this heightened degree of sensitivity that makes us so painfully aware of our shortcomings and mistakes, and thereby causes acute suffering to the aspirant. But as he progresses he becomes less and less attracted to the things of this earth, for he is beginning to sense the strength of the spirit and the peace of the soul as he keeps his eyes fixed upon the pinnacle of the mountain. It is then that Satan (Mara) is said to heave a sigh of relief for he has one soul less to tempt and taunt, and so leaves the weary but victorious pilgrim to proceed unmolested for the remainder of the journey. He knows that his work is done and that the only enemy now will be those of the pilgrim's own making—pride and the misuse of spiritual power.

If Mara and his servants of darkness did not test and challenge those who desired to enter the realm of the gods, then we should have but weaklings to watch over us and rule the worlds. Chelas are warned before they take their first step on the Path that it will not be easy, that it will be very difficult; for the ultimate struggle takes place not on some external battlefield in the world, but within the subjective field of one's own consciousness. Mara knows this, and he is terrible in his testing, only giving up when—"Calm and unmoved the pilgrim glideth up the stream that to Nirvana leads. He knoweth that the more his feet will bleed, the whiter will himself be washed. He knoweth well that after seven short and fleeting births Nirvana will be his . . ." (*The Voice*, vs. 297).

One version has it that this prince of darkness, Satan, was given this job of trying souls, because of past disobedience, and only by their resistance to him, could he hope to regain step by step his place in the Hierarchy of Angelic Beings. Marie Corelli speaks thus of the fallen Angel on page 458 of her controversial novel *The*

Sorrows of Satan: "Arise, Lucifer, Son of the Morning! One soul rejects thee;—one hour of joy is granted thee! Hence, and arise!" And so, we look upon the opposing forces as the unconscious quickener, making possible the birth of the spiritual nature in man.

VOICE:

**77. The rose must re-become the bud born of its parent stem,
before the parasite has eaten through its heart and drunk
its life-sap.**

To linger and move about aimlessly at the foot of a mountain poses little danger, but when one has made the effort to climb halfway up the mountain, to linger and waste time is risky and hazardous. The aspirant's job is to hasten the union with the higher Self before the lower self should deprive the aspirant of the will needed to strive forward to the pinnacle of Self-realization. The meaning of the statement that "the rose must re-become the bud" can be gleaned from the following lines from the Stanzas of Dzyan: "I have clothed myself in thee, and thou art my vehicle to the day 'be-with-us,' when thou shalt re-become myself . . ." (7:7).

VOICE:

**78. The golden tree puts forth its jewel-buds before its trunk
is withered by the storm.**

The "golden tree" represents the enlightened human being, and the jewels his seven centers (the chakras). Let us read what Roy Mitchell has to say about them in his book *Through Temple Doors*:

If—remember that the nerves run through the body and out to its surface at every point—we imagine the nerves as dissected from the body and maintained *in Situ* we would only have a vastly intricate mesh-replica of the general form of the body. This the Hermetic writers said was the outer and physical manifestation of an inner mesh they called The House of Net, the house of which Toth-Hermes was master. That is to say, that of a subtler grade of matter than the nerves, and corresponding in every detail of shape and position to them, is another mesh, a true one of which the physical nerves are only the image. This, they said, is the core or armature of the double, that subtle body which is the central factor in all mystery systems, the body of the resurrection.

Further on he says:

To the clairvoyant eye, however, the true nerves are said to be radiant with life and color and the coursing energies we know only by their effects are described as being luminous currents passing to and fro along the real Nadis of the subtle

body. Where we have a thread of nerve fibre, the subtle mesh shows a shining thread; where there is a plexus or ganglion—called also a lotus jewel—there is in the inner body a bright, starry centre. This is why the etheric double has been called, time out of mind, the astral or sidereal body, as having a starry radiance.

“Before its trunk is withered by the storm,” suggests that the disciple should begin working on his vehicles in order to regain his Godhead before this Manvantara comes to an end, when the long “sleep” (Pralaya) overtakes him. These great cycles may be compared to our seasons in which spring brings forth life and winter withdraws it again into her bosom. Those souls who are indifferent to the calling of their Higher Selves, HPB refers to as “laggards:”

As the laggards in a race struggle and plod in their first quarter while the victor darts past the goal, so, in the race of immortality, some souls outspeed all the rest and reach the end, while their myriad competitors are toiling under the load of matter, close to the starting-point. Some unfortunates fall out entirely, and lose all chance of the prize; some retrace their steps and begin again. (*Isis Unveiled*, 1:346).

VOICE:

79. The pupil must regain *the child-state he has lost*, 'ere the first sound can fall upon his ear.

The “child-state” could mean that the personality has no more influence over the individual (the Ego) and that he stands before the Master in all his purity, innocent of any evil. Then, and then only, is the aspirant ready for further spiritual knowledge. There is also another meaning for the child-state, which is that “Little Ones” in the Gospels refers to the initiates of whom Jesus was one. Paul is referred to in the Talmud as “Little One.” *The Voice* again refers to the “sound.” The sound that falls upon the ear of the aspirant may be referred to as the sevenfold mystery of initiation. Orpheus, according to *The Secret Doctrine* (2:529), was a great teacher; he taught harmony and was usually depicted with a seven-stringed lyre, a symbol of the sevenfold mystery.

VOICE:

80. 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.

The higher Self is ever shedding its beneficent beams on the disciple, and it is for the aspirant to be on the alert to catch the flashes of inspiration through his intuition.

To still the mind and to keep it as limpid as a mountain stream is one of the lessons that *The Voice* tries to impress upon us.

VOICE:

81. 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 Akāshic heights reach the ear, however eager, at the initial stage.

“The mystic sounds,” or melody heard by the ascetic at the beginning of his cycle of meditation, comes from the Akashic heights, the primary substance of which ether is one of the lower manifestations in our solar system. Air is the Great Breath in Akasha, and it is that which gives rise to this feeling of touch (the inner touch) to which *The Voice* refers in the next few paragraphs.

VOICE:

82. Unless thou hearest, thou canst not see.

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

In *Talks on the Path of Occultism*, we learn that unless the candidate is responsive to the inner voice, and that unless he understands the spiritual laws and looks upon things with the eyes of spirit, he will never see the outer things as they really are. To alternate between meditation and life experience requires a balanced interplay of the inner and the outer. The *Cloud of Unknowing* suggests that there are two lives to be lived simultaneously—one of contemplation and the other of an active nature, the active nature being the lower, and contemplative the higher. “It is the nature of the active life both to be begun and ended in this life. Not so, however, of the contemplative life, which is begun in this life and shall last without end” (2: 137). “Higher” and “lower” in this context are not pejorative terms; both aspects are necessary, but “higher” and “lower” fulfill different functions.

VOICE:

84. 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.

In order to become acquainted with the inner Self, the aspirant must learn to withdraw within and give his/her whole attention to the Voice, which abides in the silence. The following may be of interest in getting to understand the inner meaning of the “senses:”

- *Sight* — a symbol of perception of the truth by the intellect or the soul.
- *Hearing* — the intuitive perception of the truth from within the soul.
- *Smell* — a state wherein the aspirant learns something from that inner condition.
- *Taste* — a state in which the aspirant *begins to know* something of this inner state.
- *Touch* — he is now *in touch* with this inner state or condition; he now knows. When a man or woman *knows*, he or she becomes the Law.

VOICE:

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

This rather dramatic language refers to the necessity of eliminating all undesirable thoughts from one’s mental field.

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

87. Thou art now in DHĀRANĀ, the sixth stage.

Every sense on this plane (the sixth stage) has to be silenced before the next plane (the seventh stage) may be reached. It is this seventh stage that is the most spiritual and is the source of *intuition*. In the opening passage of *The Voice*, if you remember, is this admonition: “He who would hear the voice of Nada, the soundless Sound, and comprehend it, he has to learn the nature of Dharana.” When Dharana is reached and mind ceases to function in relation to the things of the external world, when we have closed it out and entered into our own secret chamber, then the seventh sense can be reached. As men and women progress in their evolutionary pilgrimage, the intuitive powers increase, and they rely less and less upon the finite mind for assistance, for they are beginning to receive instruction straight from the Source, from the Over-self.

VOICE:

88. 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 Upādhi of the Flame.

Passing from concentration (Dharana) to meditation (Dhyana), the aspirant enters the Buddhic consciousness. This state is then "Thyself." The lower mind (manas) has been silenced; the mind-principle has been raised to the plane of Buddhi, so that now the two are "like twins upon a line." The star that "burns overhead" is the star of initiation, "the Three in One."

VOICE:

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

As explained in the footnote of *The Voice*, Dhyana is the last stage before the final one on this earth, unless the candidate becomes a full Mahatma. The Raja Yogi, the author says, is yet spiritually conscious of the workings of his higher principles, but one step more, and he will be *merged into the One*. This is Samadhi, that "state in which the ascetic loses complete consciousness of every individuality including his own" for he has become the ALL.

VOICE:

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

91. 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.

As we begin to realize that the personality is merely the egocentric 'I,' and we begin to raise our center of consciousness to the higher Self, there comes a stage when we discover, as a fact of experience, that that our consciousness is 'you' not 'I'. This may sound like nonsense to the rational mind, but many mystics of various religious traditions have had extraordinary experiences in which the sense of

personal self melted away and was replaced by a very real sense of being part of something much bigger and expansive, and it is in such transcendent experiences that the lower self becomes lost in the higher Self. In other words, we have used the lower mind-vehicle to reach the higher. We cannot possibly attain to spiritual freedom without the help of the lower self, but first we must discipline and train it to serve the needs of the Ego, or Soul.

VOICE:

- 92. 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.**
- 93. Thou art acquainted with the five impediments, O blessed one. Thou art their conqueror, the Master of the sixth, deliverer of the four modes of Truth. The light that falls upon them shines from thyself, O thou who wast disciple, but art Teacher now.**

The “five impediments” are the knowledge of misery and truth regarding human frailties, oppressive restraints, and the absolute necessity of separation from all ties of passion, and eventually of desire. The Four Noble Truths, as taught to the world by the Lord Buddha, were: 1) Sorrow, 2) Sorrow’s Cause, 3) Sorrows Ceasing, and 4) the Way.” Buddha endeavored to show mankind how to have a hand in its own Karma, thus helping to prevent much blundering along the way, sowing thistle-seed and forever reaping thistles. The Four Noble Truths may be found in Sir Edwin Arnold’s *The Light of Asia* (p. 183-188).

VOICE:

And of these modes of Truth: —

- 94. Hast thou not passed through knowledge of all misery— Truth the first?**
- 95. Hast thou not conquered the Maras’ King at Tsi, the portal of assembling—truth the second?**
- 96. Hast thou not sin at the third gate destroyed and truth the third attained?**
- 97. Hast not thou entered *Tau*, “the Path” that leads to knowledge—the fourth truth?**

HPB says in a footnote that “. . . the four modes of truth are, in Northern Buddhism: *Ku*, suffering or misery; *Tu*, the assembling of temptations; *Mu*, their destructions; *Tau*, the path.”

VOICE:

**98. 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.**

The name Buddha comes from the word *Budh* meaning “to awaken” and signifies “the Enlightened One”; this includes every soul who has vanquished ignorance and achieved supreme wisdom. The ascetic has become one with the ALL, he has returned from whence he came. He *met* himself on the path, he *taught* himself on the path, and he *became* that path, all a part of himself.

VOICE:

**99. Behold! thou hast become the light, thou has 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

100.

Om Tat Sat

Aum Tat Sat is one of the Great Truths of the Hindus. The word *Aum*, sometimes pronounced *Om*, is used at the beginning and end of every good work or thought, because it is a word of power, symbolizing Divine Creation (*Tat* means “That”). Therefore “Aum Tat Sat” means “That which is Real.”

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. What role does Mara play in our daily lives?
2. What is the meaning of the golden tree and its jewel-buds?
3. What is the difference between a Manvantara and a Pralaya?
4. What does “child-state” mean?
5. Why is a balanced interplay of activity and contemplation necessary?
6. How is the lower self necessary in helping us to attain enlightenment?

Study Notes on *The Voice of the Silence* — Fragment Two

THE TWO PATHS

Lesson 6

VOICE:

101. And now, O Teacher of Compassion, point thou the way to other men. Behold, all those who knocking for admission, await in ignorance and darkness, to see the gate of the Sweet Law flung open!

This Second Fragment opens with the Guru (teacher) addressing the candidate who is nearing the summit of the Path, where he will have to make a choice; and the question arises: will the disciple go onward into Nirvanic Bliss, heedless of those left behind floundering in their ignorance, or will he turn back from the threshold and help humanity? This is the choice of the two Paths.

VOICE:

The voice of the Candidates:

102. Shalt not thou, Master of thine own Mercy, reveal the Doctrine of the Heart? Shalt thou refuse to lead thy Servants unto the Path of Liberation?

The candidate is not as yet too sure which Path he should take. It is said that, as the Lord Buddha sat under the Bodhi tree on the morning following his illumination, he doubted whether the world would understand the knowledge he wished to impart to it. Suddenly he heard a voice as of the earth in pain which cried: "SURELY I AM LOST, I AND MY CREATURES: O SUPREME, LET THY GREAT LAW BE UTTERED" (Book the Seventh, *The Light of Asia*, p.153).

VOICE:

Quoth the Teacher:

103. The Paths are two; the great Perfections three; six are the Virtues that transform the body into the Tree of Knowledge.

The two Paths, writes HPB, are defined thus: "The open Path is one taught to the layman, the exoteric and the generally accepted; while the Secret Path is one the nature of which is explained at initiation." The Secret Heart of things is revealed in

the esoteric doctrine, touching on the inner mysteries. “‘The Tree of Knowledge’ is a title given to those who have attained to the height of mystic knowledge.” The tree also represents man—with his roots deep in the mire of earth-life subjecting him to the ravages of time, while his branches stretch heavenward, ever aspiring toward the Godhead. There is a tree in ancient symbolism depicted with its roots in heaven, and its branches stretched down toward earth. This tree suggests spiritual union; having passed beyond the need for earthly sustenance, it showers its fruits upon all who need spiritual guidance. There is no more thought of self; at this stage *the whole of humanity is part of himself*.

VOICE:

104. Who shall approach them?

105. Who shall first enter them?

106. Who shall first hear the doctrine of two Paths in one, the truth unveiled about the Secret Heart? The Law which, shunning learning, teaches Wisdom, reveals a tale of woe.

The “two Paths in one” are explained as the open (exoteric) and the closed (esoteric), or what are sometimes referred to as the head and the heart doctrine. The first is further explained as being the path of head-learning, while the doctrine of the Secret Heart is the path taken by a future savior of mankind. The two paths are one to begin with, but they separate when the choice between the two has to be made, whether to enter the well-earned Bliss, free at last from the world’s turmoil, or to turn from the threshold where victory is within grasp, to return to help the world. “The Law which . . . teaches Wisdom reveals a tale of woe.” It is not an easy Law, for there is much sacrifice required, in fact, a complete renunciation of the personal self is necessary in order that the disciple’s vehicles be rendered absolutely pure to receive the guiding power of the Supreme. The “tale of woe” teaches that the great suffering of mankind is due to ignorance, and this causes humanity’s great pain.

VOICE:

107. Alas, alas, that all men should possess Alaya, be one with the great Soul, and that possessing it, Alaya should so little avail them!

We are told that each one of us is a ray of Alaya, a spark of Divinity. We are all linked to the Universal Soul (Alaya), also called the Oversoul by Ralph Waldo Emerson and Paul Brunton. We are all linked to the Universal Soul, the Master Soul or Atma. “Each man,” says HPB, “having a ray of it in him, and being supposed to be

able to identify himself with, and to merge himself into it." Every animate and inanimate thing possesses a spark of this Light, which will one day (in some future Manvantara) be fanned into a great flame, as the Divinity enshrined within expresses itself more and more. Then indeed, will there be a veritable heaven on earth. To possess the seed (potential) of Divinity within us, and yet do nothing about it, is what is being deplored here in verse 107.

VOICE:

108. Behold how like the moon, reflected in the tranquil waves, Alaya is reflected by the small and by the great, is mirrored in the tiniest atoms, yet fails to reach the heart of all. Alas, that so few men should profit by the gift, the priceless boon of learning truth, the right perception of existing things, the Knowledge of the non-existent!

Alaya, the Universal Soul, is the root and basis of all; invisible and incomprehensible to human eye and intellect, it can reflect only its own reflection, not itself. The finite mind, we are told, cannot grasp the occult meaning of these mysteries. We must learn to still our thinking before we may know the incomprehensible, as paradoxical as that may sound. The moon, according to the *Secret Doctrine*, is a former living planet, the literal mother of our planet earth, from which its substance was derived.

The reader may have noticed by this time that there is much repetition in *The Voice*, purposely so, in order to impress a truth upon the mind.

VOICE:

Saith the pupil:

109. O Teacher, what shall I do to reach to Wisdom?

110. O Wise one, what, to gain perfection?

111. Search for the Paths. But, O Lanoo, be of clean heart before thou startest on thy journey. Before thou takest thy first step learn to discern the real from the false, the ever-fleeting from the everlasting. Learn above all to separate Head-learning from Soul-Wisdom, the "Eye" from the "Heart" doctrine.

"No occult progress is possible for man while he is extremely ignorant," so say the authors in *Talks on the Path of Occultism*. They go on to say that, however much one may be intellectually developed in other areas, without knowledge of the Path and the Truth, it is not possible to advance in the realm of the occult.

Theosophy tells us of the great destiny awaiting us all, and so it is absolutely necessary that we put our knowledge into practice and begin to fan that inner flame. In Patanjali's specific sense, Yoga is the magic wand, a process by which we can change ourselves, that is to say, to get our lower vehicles under control, so that they leave us free to proceed on the Path unmolested. Yoga is a system whereby perfect harmony is established between the lower self and the Ego, or higher Self.

VOICE:

112. Yea, ignorance is like unto a closed and airless vessel; the soul a bird shut up within. It warbles not, nor can it stir a feather; but the songster mute and torpid sits, and of exhaustion dies.

The Ego, the soul, has to be cultivated like anything else, and it needs the pure air of spirit, the atmosphere of aspiration and of high thought in which to grow; for not to aspire to greater heights is to remain earth-bound, burdened with mundane and pedestrian thoughts that cannot rise to the level where angelic influences are felt.

VOICE:

113. But even ignorance is better than Head-learning with no Soul-Wisdom to illuminate and guide it.

"Head-learning" alone is not enough for the pilgrim on the Path. Let us read what J. Krishnamurti says in *At the Feet of the Master*:

The wisdom which enables you to help, the will which directs the wisdom, the love which inspires the will—these are your qualifications. Will, Wisdom and Love are the three aspects of the Logos; and you, who wish to enroll yourselves to serve Him, must show forth these aspects in the world. (p. 71)

VOICE:

114. The seeds of Wisdom cannot sprout and grow in airless space. To live and reap experience the mind needs breadth and depth and points to draw it towards the Diamond Soul. Seek not those points in *Maya's* realm; but soar beyond illusions, search the eternal and the changeless SAT, mistrusting fancy's false suggestions.

The aspirant needs pointers, intuitional ideas, to draw him upward. Paracelsus referred to them as the "Primordial Essence," a spiritual force, invisible, incomprehensible, which is invested with the original power of life, without form—the matrix of all created things. They are the seeds out of which all creatures have

grown. These points, or ideas, must be of an intuitional nature, and they must be free of illusion.

VOICE:

**115. For mind is like a mirror; it gathers dust while it reflects.
It needs the gentle breezes of Soul-Wisdom to brush
away the dust of our illusions. Seek O Beginner, to blend
thy Mind and Soul.**

The mind must be free from cluttered thinking if it is to receive spiritual guidance, just as the photographer's plate is prepared to receive an impression. HPB says that the metaphor of dust on the mirror represents the accumulated prejudices, illusions, and fancies that cloud our astral and mental bodies. These, she says, are obstacles to our progress.

VOICE:

**116. 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.**

If we are serious about treading the Path, we do not waste much time on the trivialities that make up most popular forms of entertainment. Time is precious and not to be wasted. Just as an athlete in training for competition will curtail socializing and other diversions of time and energy, the true aspirant will approach the Path with the same degree of seriousness and dedication that a professional athlete does when in training. We all have our allotted time during an incarnation to do with as we please: we are free to idle in the market place and fritter our time away in frivolities and vacuous pursuits, or we make the decision to shoulder our karma bravely as we place our feet firmly on the path leading home.

VOICE:

**117. Shun praise, O Devotee. Praise leads to self-delusion.
Thy body is not self, thy SELF is in itself without a body,
and either praise or blame affects it not.**

Many people have been spoiled by undue praise, for it often leads to pride, and as the saying goes, pride goeth before a fall. The personality must take a back seat if the disciple wishes to cultivate the inner Self. To repeat as often as we can, “Not my will, but Thine be done, O Lord,” is a good practice.

VOICE:

118. Self-gratulation, O disciple, 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.

The simile of a tower is indeed a good one, for pride does tend to shut an individual away from the rest of humanity. But do not confuse this pride of isolation with the genuine need for solitude, to study and meditate without interruption or distraction. Temporary periods of solitude are absolutely necessary in our spiritual development, but that is very different from the feeling of separateness and aloofness fostered by pride. We cannot possibly go down into the crowded marketplace and teach others until we ourselves have acquired some measure of wisdom and gained control over ourselves. For this, we need to set aside a few minutes each day for self-reflection and meditation, along with time to read books such as *The Voice of the Silence* and other spiritual guidebooks.

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. Which Path belongs to the Doctrine of the Heart?
2. What is the Sanskrit word for the Universal Soul?
3. What does the word "yoga" mean?
4. Do does the symbol of an ivory tower represent?

The time arrives in human evolution, however, when the thrust of Spirit, the call and pressure of the awakened Monad-Ego, so affects the personal man that he experiences both dissatisfaction with existing limitations and aspires to peaks of high achievement. Slowness of progress and paucity of attainment irk awakened man. Ego-impelled, he then determines to travel swiftly, to achieve mightily, to conquer self or die.

—Hodson, Geoffrey. *The Path to the Masters of the Wisdom*

Study Notes on *The Voice of the Silence* — Fragment Two

Lesson 7

VOICE:

119. False learning is rejected by the Wise, and scattered to the Winds by the good Law. Its wheel revolves for all, the humble and the proud. The "Doctrine of the Eye" is for the crowd, the "Doctrine of the Heart" for the elect. The first repeat in pride: "Behold, I know," the last, they who in humbleness have garnered, low confess, "thus have I heard."

"The good Law" plays no favorites; it judges both the innocent and the guilty with utmost impartiality, carefully weeding out all that is in opposition to a soul's growth. False learning is knowledge without wisdom. True knowledge leads to wisdom, and there is wisdom in being humble, for by learning the lessons of humility, we facilitate the soul's further growth. Those who are inflated in their great opinion of themselves are not able to see the misery of the world, and so will not be of use in helping the Great Evolutionary Plan.

VOICE:

120. "Great Sifter" is the name of the "Heart Doctrine," O disciple.

The "heart doctrine" is called the "Great Sifter" because, as we work in the world in the manner in which it directs, the mistakes we make are gradually sifted out and removed through the faculty of the intuition. We can take a creative part in shaping our own karma and become the captain of our soul, if we wish to do so. And so we are no longer slaves to our personality.

VOICE:

121. The wheel of the good Law moves swiftly on. It grinds by night and day. The worthless husks it drives from out the golden grain, the refuse from the flour. The hand of Karma guides the wheel; the revolutions mark the beating of the Karmic heart.

If we learn to understand that the Law is absolutely just, then we thoroughly understand the meaning of *cause and effect* and refuse to bemoan our fate. Karma is often depicted as a form of retribution for past misdeeds, but it may be more

appropriate to view it as a friend coming to teach us a much-needed lesson. To know where we err is to make a change for the better, as this extract from John Blofield's *The Wheel of Life* points out: "Hell is very real, make no mistake. To be in hell means to be shut off from knowing the Truth, from knowing that it is closer than hands or feet, that the Wheel is of your own making and is spinning at your own behest through your own ignorance, and giving it life." This thought must have caused many a thoughtful individual to change their pattern of living.

VOICE:

122. True knowledge is the flour, false learning is the husk. If thou would'st eat the bread of Wisdom, thy flour thou hast to knead with Amrita's clear waters. But if thou kneadest husks with Maya's dew, thou canst create but food for the black doves of death, the birds of birth, decay and sorrow.

"True knowledge" teaches immortality of the soul while "false learning" is merely the empty outer husks of intellectual knowledge. There are those who enjoy ostentatious displays of knowledge that they have acquired. This is not the case for those who are too busy *putting into practice* what they have learned. "Amrita's clear waters" is the Elixir of Life, the water of immortality. "The birds of birth, decay and sorrow" speak of many future incarnations of suffering, until mankind realizes its ignorance and begins to seek true knowledge, which reveals a Path that will set all free. Once humanity begins to set into motion constructive causes—the effects of adverse karma will begin to cease.

VOICE:

123. If thou art told that to become Arhan thou hast to cease to love all beings—tell them they lie.

124. If thou art told that to gain liberation thou hast to hate thy mother and disregard thy son; to disavow the father and call him "householder"; for man and beast all pity to renounce—tell them their tongue is false.

125. Thus teach the Tirthikas, the unbelievers.

Candidates who are advancing rapidly must not despise and ignore those who are as yet undeveloped. If they should feel superior in any way to others, they would find themselves in great danger of losing ground that had been gained by many years of hard work. Brahman monks were called *Tirthikas*, unbelievers, because they did not follow the precepts of Buddha.

VOICE:

126. If thou art taught that sin is born of action and bliss of absolute inaction, then tell them that they err. Non-permanence of human action, deliverance of mind from thralldom by the cessation of sin and faults, are not for "Deva Egos." Thus saith the "Doctrine of the Heart."

Inaction does not belong in the life of the disciple on the Path. Discipleship is not an excuse to escape from the world, whether it is a literal withdrawal into some remote and uninhabited area, or a psychological pulling back from the rest of humanity. Action involves the application of knowledge to daily life, out of which comes experience and understanding. The "Deva Egos" are reincarnating Egos who aspire to help the world. It is said that there is not an overabundance of Egos ready for special teaching and training. Perhaps an earnest desire to be of future service to humanity will inspire some aspirants to begin self-training; this inner resolve will automatically place their feet upon the Path, and their journey is begun.

VOICE:

127. The Dharma of the "Eye" is the embodiment of the external, and the non-existing.

The word "Dharma" may be translated as meaning "duty" or "belief," or a chosen way of life, a path.

VOICE:

128. The Dharma of the "Heart" is the embodiment of Bodhi, the Permanent and Everlasting.

The Doctrine of the Heart is the teaching of wisdom enabling the disciple to understand his or her place and work in the Great Evolutionary Plan.

VOICE:

129. The Lamp burns bright when wick and oil are clean. To make them clean a cleaner is required. The flame feels not the process of the cleaning. "The branches of a tree are shaken by the wind; the trunk remains unmoved."

"The Lamp" (the soul) is able to spread its radiance in the world if the lower vehicles are clean and free from agitation. "The flame" (the Atma) being a part of Divinity cannot possibly experience anything of a lower nature. We have to raise ourselves up to that plane or state.

VOICE:

130. Both action and inaction may find room in thee; thy body agitated, thy mind tranquil, thy Soul as limpid as a mountain lake.

In order to forget the personality and progress more rapidly, both the daily activities and inner development must come under the influence of the higher Self, helping to prevent the mistakes so easily made by the lower self.

VOICE:

**131. Would'st thou become a Yogi of "Time's Circle?" Then,
O Lanoo:—**

"A yogi of Time's circle" is one who is willing to remain in this world in order to help humanity. To seek liberation solely for one's self is to ignore the suffering of others. But, says *The Voice*, there is free choice.

VOICE:

132. Believe thou not that sitting in dark forests, in proud seclusion and apart from men; believe thou not that life on roots and plants, that thirst assuaged with snow from the great Range—believe thou not, O Devotee, that this will lead thee to the goal of final liberation.

It is written that self-denial without good works is of no value. Solitude has value in that it allows for a period of self-searching very necessary to those who are seeking to tune in to the higher Self and listen to the Voice of the Silence. But to withdraw from the world's turmoil merely to vegetate and live a life of ease would certainly delay the soul's growth.

VOICE:

133. Think not that breaking bone, that rending flesh and muscle, unites thee to thy "silent Self." Think not, that when the sins of thy gross form are conquered, O Victim of thy Shadows, thy duty is accomplished by nature and by man.

To govern the body is necessary, but to torture it with ascetic practices is foolish. It is more important that we learn to overcome the cravings of the lower nature, which stand in the way of spiritual development. Before the ship of the soul can enter the sea of wisdom, the anchor of personality must be dislodged from the earth,

allowing it to sail forth in freedom upon the chartless waters of Akshara, the region of full spiritual consciousness.

VOICE:

134. The blessed ones have scorned to do so. The Lion of the Law, the Lord of Mercy, perceiving the true cause of human woe, immediately forsook the sweet but selfish rest of quiet wilds. From Aranyaka He became the Teacher of mankind. After Julai had entered the Nirvana, He preached on mount and plain, and held discourses in the cities, to Devas, men and gods.

“The Lion of the Law” is one who has conquered himself. The Lion represents the lower nature, which has been subdued by the immortal Self, and this allows the Solar Force to free the candidate from life as an ordinary man or woman. The candidate has become an extraordinary individual able to wield the scepter of power for good.

Aranyaka is a forest dweller. Julai is the name for Tathagata, a title applied to every Buddha, which means “he who has followed in the steps of his predecessors.” “Devas, men and gods” all seek to bathe in the strong and beautiful auras of the Enlightened Ones. The Devas, Gods, and Chohans—being rulers of principalities, Dominions and Thrones, etc., of the heavenly states—are the conscious, intelligent Powers in Nature which ever seek to serve the Buddhas. We are told that Gautama the Buddha went into the forest to meditate, and there He seated Himself under a Bodhi tree resolving to attain illumination. Let us read what *The Light of Asia* has to say:

“Then he arose—radiant, rejoicing, strong—
Beneath the Tree, and lifting high his voice
Spake this, in hearing of All Times and Worlds:

MANY A HOUSE OF LIFE
HATH HELD ME—SEEKING EVER HIM WHO WROUGHT
THESE PRISONS OF THE SENSES, SORROW-FRAUGHT;
SORE WAS MY CEASELESS STRIFE:

BUT NOW,
THOU BUILDER OF THIS TABERNACLE—THOU!
I KNOW THEE! NEVER SHALT THOU BUILD AGAIN
THESE WALLS OF PAIN,
NOR RAISE THE ROOF-TREE OF DECEITS, NOR LAY
FRESH RAFTERS ON THE CLAY;
BROKEN THY HOUSE IS, AND THE RIDGE-POLE SPLIT:

DELUSION FASHIONED IT!
SAFE PASS I THENCE—DELIVERANCE TO OBTAIN.”

—Arnold, Sir Edwin. *The Light of Asia*, Book the Sixth.

VOICE:

**135. Sow kindly acts and thou shalt reap their fruition.
Inaction in a deed of mercy becomes an action in a
deadly sin.**

At the Feet of the Master advises the aspirant to do right for the sake of right, and work for the sake of work, without any desire to see the results or outcome of those actions. As disciples on the spiritual path, this frame of mind trains us to become increasingly selfless and humble. And it is also our duty, continues the author of that spiritual guidebook, to interfere in cases of cruelty to either man or beast. And, to carry this still further, he suggests that we feel for those people who are guilty of cruel acts, for those people have created very bad karma for themselves. If they can be shown the error of their ways, some good will have been accomplished.

VOICE:

Thus saith the Sage.

**136. Shalt thou abstain from action? Not so shall gain thy
soul her freedom. To reach Nirvana one must reach Self-
Knowledge, and Self-Knowledge is of loving deeds the
child.**

H. P. Blavatsky says in *The Key to Theosophy* that “Theosophy is the quintessence of duty,” as it teaches us to realize our own inner powers, how to cultivate them, and thereby attain wisdom—not for self, but in order to help mankind.

VOICE:

**137. Have patience, Candidate, as one who fears no failure,
courts no success. 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.**

Students who are trying to do good work, but find the opposing forces too great, will not be disappointed or lose courage if they understand that all effort put forth into spiritual work produces a proportionate result, although the result may be unknown to them. And so, regardless of success or failure, the aspirant to godlike wisdom pushes on.

VOICE:

**138. Have perseverance as one who doth for evermore endure.
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.**

We are told that our personalities (shadows) come and go, do some work, learn some lessons, and then vanish, that only the Ego (soul) endures forever. This means that we can continue to learn and improve life after life, and so any good work that is done by a disciple—even if he comes into the work late in life—is carried over into the next incarnation where the impulse to continue the work will be felt at an early age. There is also great benefit derived from the stay in Devachan (Heaven), where the disciple continues his work, develop his will, and transforms all his experiences into eternal concepts and faculties which reflect his Divine Nature. Much of the above information was taken from *First Principles of Theosophy* by C. Jinarajadasa.

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. Why is discrimination so necessary when acquiring knowledge?
2. Which doctrine assists us in steering our own karmic course?
3. What does *a Yogi of Time's Circle* mean?
4. When is an ivory tower necessary?
5. What does "*Lion of the Law*" mean?
6. Why is *action* necessary to gain our freedom?

Plug thy low sensual ear, which stuffs like cotton
Thy conscience and makes deaf thine inward ear,
Be without ear, without sense, without thought,
And hearken to the call of God, "RETURN!"
Our speech and action is the outer journey,
Our inner journey is above the sky
The body travels on its dusty way;
The spirit walks, like Jesus, on the sea.

—The Mystic Way

Study Notes on *The Voice of the Silence* — Fragment Two

Lesson 8

VOICE:

139. If thou would'st reap sweet peace and rest, Disciple, sow with the seeds of merit the fields of future harvests. Accept the woes of birth.

Karma, as we know, is created by our daily thoughts and actions; so if we wish to “reap sweet peace and rest,” we must learn to govern our thinking in order to set into motion those causes that will bring us peace of mind, rather than adverse conditions which would tend to slow down our spiritual progress.

VOICE:

140. Step out from sunlight into shade, to make more room for others. The tears that water the parched soil of pain and sorrow, bring forth the blossoms and the fruits of Karmic retribution. Out of the furnace of man's life and its black smoke, winged flames arise, flames purified, that soaring onward, 'neath the Karmic eye, weave in the end the fabric glorified of the three vestures of the Path.

141. These vestures are: Nirmanakaya, Sambhogakaya, and Dharmakaya, robe Sublime.

The Voice repeatedly admonishes the disciple to forego his own peace and rest in order to help other seekers find their way. By assisting others, the disciple helps them to eventually teach in their turn; thus *more room is made for others*. Of pain and sorrow, we are never given more than we can bear, as the Lords of Karma are just. Once the lessons of human existence have been learned, the disciple can look forward to a rich harvest, for the slightest effort to raise himself *is known* and beneficent forces rush to help him.

The student is advised to refer to HPB's glossary note 34 for Fragment Three, where additional information is given on the three vestures.

VOICE:

142. The *Shangna* robe, 'tis true, can purchase light eternal. The *Shangna* robe alone gives the Nirvana of destruction; it stops rebirth, but, O Lanoo, it also kills—compassion. No longer can the perfect Buddhas, who

**don the Darmakaya glory, help man's salvation. Alas!
shall SELVES be sacrificed to *Self*; mankind, unto the
weal of Units?**

**143. Know, O beginner, this is the *Open PATH*, the way to
selfish bliss, shunned by the Bodhisattvas of the "*Secret
Heart*," the Buddhas of Compassion.**

A footnote in the glossary of *The Voice* says the "*Shangna Robe*" is a metaphorical reference to the acquiring of wisdom that accompanies the destruction of the personality once Nirvana is entered. Literally, it is the robe of the neophytes (candidates). The stopping of rebirth means the balancing of karma and the destruction of personality by quenching all desire, including that of life itself, in order to merge into the ALL. This advice, of course, is meant for the disciple who is nearing the peak of attainment. "*Selfish bliss*," as *The Voice* states, may appear to be selfish from our point of understanding, but actually nothing can possibly be selfish on the higher planes, for as consciousness ascends to those rarefied planes, it necessarily becomes more refined, selfless, and universal in scope. And so we may understand the meaning as one who seeks union with the ALL, instead of remaining behind to help others. But having found that bliss through many incarnations of suffering, that soul has surely earned the peace it sought. The choice of whether to enter Nirvana or to forsake it is a matter of our own choosing.

VOICE:

**144. To live to benefit mankind is the first step. To practice
the six glorious virtues is the second.**

There is a reference to these virtues at the beginning of the Second Fragment (verse 103) that tells of the six glorious virtues transforming the body into the tree of knowledge, one of the systems that can bring out the godlike qualities in an aspirant. These six transcendental virtues, the Paramitas, are listed as: charity, morality, patience, energy, contemplation and wisdom.

VOICE:

**145. To don Nirmanakaya's humble robe is to forego eternal
bliss for *Self*, to help on man's salvation. To reach
Nirvana's bliss, but to renounce it, is the supreme, the
final step—the highest on Renunciation's Path.**

What greater sacrifice can a man or woman make than to lay down his or her life for humanity? A potential savior of the world gladly sacrifices the lower self in order

to serve the higher, because such an act is not experienced as a hardship or privation but as a moment of indescribable and intensely sublime joy.

VOICE:

146. Know, O Disciple, this is the *Secret PATH*, selected by the Buddhas of Perfection, who sacrificed The SELF to weaker Selves.

Toward the end of the Third Fragment, the warrior who nears victory is petitioned, "Can there be bliss when all that lives must suffer? Shalt thou be saved and hear the whole world cry?" These are indeed telling words, which cannot fail to reach the hearts of all those who contemplate a life of service.

VOICE:

147. Yet, 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. Hope still. For if the "Secret Path" is unattainable 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. E'en wasted smoke remains not traceless. "A harsh word uttered in past lives, is not destroyed but ever comes again." The pepper plant will not give birth to roses, nor the sweet jessamine's silver star to thorn or thistle turn.

If we should find that the "doctrine of the heart" is too difficult for us to follow, we must not despair. We are well advised to just keep on working and learning, for the life of the personality is just one day in the greater life of the soul. One day, whether in this incarnation or the next one, we shall reach the position where the "ideal" will be perfectly natural and comparatively easy to do. No sincere effort passes unheeded by the Silent Watcher within.

Geoffrey Barborka writes in *Man's Potent Force*: "The remarkable thing is that at any moment along the pathway of life an individual has the power of choice—he has the ability to hew a new pattern for himself—if he so chooses!" (p.47) We must never, ever, think that anything is impossible to us, for there is nothing impossible to the Divine Self within. Students frequently ask, "Would the Divine Self within be interested in our everyday problems?" It has been written that there is nothing that happens in this world without the Divine Self knowing about it, because we live and move and have our being in that One Self. Therefore, it stands to reason that our

daily problems, whether small or large, are known, and it is up to us to turn to the source of Wisdom, where Knowledge is unadulterated and Love is all-embracing.

VOICE:

148. Thou canst create this "day" thy chances for thy "morrow." In the "Great Journey," causes sown each hour bear each its harvest of effects, for rigid Justice rules the World. With mighty sweep of never erring action, it brings to mortals lives of weal or woe, the Karmic progeny of all our former thoughts and deeds.

If we take advantage of the opportunities and challenges provided by this "day" (our present incarnation), we then lay the groundwork for the opportunities and challenges of the "morrow" (our next incarnation). The "Great Journey" refers to the grand, aeonian journey of our soul's cyclical descent into the worlds of matter and the corresponding ascent to conscious union with the Divine Source. We are all making this long pilgrimage, and in time we shall all become Self-realized beings, fully conscious of our true spiritual nature.

VOICE:

149. 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 Karma of the cycle of thy births, 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.

150. Act thou for them today, and they will act for thee tomorrow.

When we offer assistance where help is truly needed, and give our comfort and encouragement to those who suffer, we are assisting our fellow pilgrims who, in turn, may help us in *our* time of need. We must be "of good cheer," no matter where we find ourselves in this incarnation, for the fabric of our present incarnation has been woven by our actions in previous lives; we cannot change the past but we can certainly determine how we shall meet the present. It serves no purpose to weep and moan about our present lot in life. The wise ones will buckle down and put their hands to the loom, and begin to weave their future destinies with confidence.

VOICE:

151. 'Tis from the bud of Renunciation of the Self, that springeth the sweet fruit of final Liberation.

To work with no thought of personal gain but for the advancement of all is to taste “the sweet fruit of final Liberation.” The temporal self, or the personality, must no longer have the power to control our every desire.

VOICE:

152. To perish doomed is he, who out of fear of Mara refrains from helping man, lest he should act for Self. The pilgrim who would cool his weary limbs in running waters, yet dares not plunge for terror of the stream, risks to succumb from heat. Inaction based on selfish fear can bear but evil fruit.

The disciple who hesitates to help his brother because he is uncertain as to whether or not he should, lacks confidence in himself. If confronted with a soul in distress, we must immediately do something about the situation. The joining of hands, the washing of one another’s wounds, rejoicing in our neighbor’s good fortune—these acts are prompted by the true spirit of brotherhood. Each time a deed of mercy is performed, a link of earthly bondage is weakened.

VOICE:

153. The selfish devotee lives to no purpose. The man who does not go through his appointed work in life—has lived in vain.

Selflessness, we learn, is the keynote of a disciple’s life. A disciple is one who is practicing the disciplines that will allow the Divine Spark within to shine forth in all its splendid glory. From the standpoint of discipleship, not to have learned this basic spiritual truth during this lifetime is to have wasted much valuable time; but then, all is not lost, for we can begin this work anew in the next life.

154. Follow the wheel of life; follow the wheel of duty to race and kin, to friend and foe, and close thy mind to pleasures as to pain. Exhaust the law of Karmic retribution. Gain Siddhis for thy future birth.

The Lords of Karma, we are told, see that each person is given the conditions that are best suited to their growth and the particular work needed for their progress. The man or woman who performs his or her daily duties well will gradually be entrusted with more important ones. The individual who makes the best of the available opportunities will facilitate the creation of new opportunities. Conscientious workers are greatly needed by those who are guiding the destiny of our planet earth. To exhaust our karma in this life, we have to face up to conditions and not fight or resist

them, because they are of our own making. We must try to make right all inharmonious conditions in our immediate surroundings and in our relationships with others. To gain merit for our next life, we are ever on the alert to be of assistance to those who are in need of help, whether it be of the physical kind or spiritual. We should also be ever ready to treat with care the animal and plant kingdoms. This may sound very demanding, and it is, because the path of discipleship sets very high standards. If it was easy, we would have all reached enlightenment by now.

VOICE:

155. If Sun thou can'st not be, then be the humble planet.

**Aye, if thou art debarred from flaming like the noon-day
Sun upon the snow-capped mount of purity eternal, then
choose, O Neophyte, a humbler course.**

Lasting work is built in secret, for it is done alone with but one witness—the higher Self. If we cannot attain in this life, we shall at least have gained much ground, enabling us to be of some assistance in the evolutionary plan. The spiritual momentum we generate in this life will carry forward to the next. We are told that there are times when, unbeknown to him, a Neophyte is used for some special work. Sometimes we may not know how useful we are as channels, and in some future life we may wonder why we are suddenly blessed. We will have earned that blessing because nothing comes to us by accident.

VOICE:

**156. Point out the "Way"—however dimly, and lost among
the host—as does the evening star to those who tread
their path in darkness.**

All the great teachings advise those who have had the good fortune to have acquired a measure of spiritual knowledge to be ever ready to pass what they can to others. By raising those around us, we raise ourselves. HPB once said that every person who draws the breath of life affects the mental and moral atmosphere of the world, and helps to color the day for those about him by what he says and does.

VOICE:

**157. Behold Migmar, as in his crimson veils his "Eye" sweeps
over slumbering Earth. Behold the fiery aura of the
"Hand" of Lhagpa extended in protecting love over the
heads of his ascetics. Both are now servants to Nyima left
in his absence silent watchers in the night. Yet both in
Kalpas past were bright Nyimas, and may in future**

“Days” again become two Suns. Such are the falls and rises of the Karmic Law in nature.

HPB, in her footnote, states that *Migmar* is Tibetan for the planet Mars; *Lhagpa* is Mercury, and *Nyima* is the Sun. She also tells us in *The Secret Doctrine* that “Every heavenly body is the temple of a god, and the gods themselves are the temples of GOD” (1:578). A philosopher once wrote, “Each of these stars is a religious house.” Evidently we owe more than we imagine to the planets of this solar system. Each different race, having been born under the influence of a certain planet, receives from that planet help, instruction, and certain characteristics. The planet Mercury, according to *The Secret Doctrine* (Stanza 1:2 of Anthropogenesis), receives seven times more light and heat from the Sun than does the earth; perhaps this is the reason for the ascetic receiving added strength and protection. All life is flux and change: nations rise and fall, and beggars change places with kings. It seems intended that *all* life should experience expansion of consciousness. Planets are also subject to this karmic law, and so may “in future ‘Days’ again become two Suns.”

VOICE:

158. Be, O Lanoo, like them. 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, and the bread which feeds the shadow, without a Teacher, hope, or consolation, and—let him hear the Law.

The Teacher now tells the candidate how to assist those who are in need of spiritual guidance.

VOICE:

159. Tell him, O Candidate, that he who makes of pride and self-regard bond-maidens to devotion; that he, who cleaving to existence, still lays his patience and submission to the Law, as a sweet flower at the feet of Shakya-Thub-pa, becomes *Srotapatti* in this birth. The Siddhis of perfection may loom far, far away; but the first step is taken, the stream is entered, and he may gain the eyesight of the mountain eagle, the hearing of the timid doe.

The “sweet flower” laid at “the feet of Shakya-Thub-pa” (another epithet for the Lord Buddha) is an offering of service to the Teacher. Some people find the Ancient Wisdom easy to digest, for they, fortunately, have known and worked with the Great

Law in former lives. They may expect to recover more speedily the acquired knowledge of previous existences, for the learning they undergo in this life is initially a recapitulation of earlier work done in previous incarnations. "The eyesight of the mountain eagle" and "the hearing of the timid doe" are representative of inner faculties that are being slowly developed by those who are aware that "to hear and see" need not necessarily refer to actions of the physical sense organs. Consider this biblical passage (I Cor. 2:9): "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."

When "the first step is taken," few disciples look back, because it is the inner Self that has made this decision, and this inner Self is a formidable opponent of the lower self.

VOICE:

160. Tell him, O Aspirant, that true devotion may bring him back the knowledge, that knowledge which was his in former births. The deva-sight and deva-hearing are not obtained in one short birth.

True devotion means living in such a way as to cultivate only those things in ourselves that will bring to fruition the innate powers of the Ego, the Eternal Self. The true student will, at every step of the way, admit no compromise between right and wrong. The path he treads is razor sharp; there are no half measures. "For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it." Everything the disciple does *must be right*, for to become one with the great Evolutionary Plan and to assist in the great work, he must be utterly pure in heart and mind. This means adopting an attitude of complete selflessness, having no ulterior motives for self-glorification or self-advantage.

VOICE:

161. Be humble, if thou would'st attain to Wisdom.

162. Be humbler still, when Wisdom thou hast mastered.

In an article entitled "The Mystery That Is Man," Gordon Plummer assures us that "A man of eager mind who can grasp concepts of thought utterly beyond the average is the more humble, because he is more aware of the limitless extent of the unknown. The circumference of his circle, his horizon of thought, is so much vaster and for that reason he stands in reverent awe before the presence of the Unknown" (*Theosophia*, Winter 1963-64).

VOICE:

- 163. Be like the Ocean which receives all streams and rivers.
The Ocean's mighty calm remains unmoved; it feels
them not.**

The candidate must remain calm as he moves among the disturbing influences of this world, permitting none to agitate him. In this manner he trains his lower vehicles to respond solely to the commands of the higher Self.

VOICE:

- 164. Restrain by thy Divine thy lower Self.
165. Restrain by the Eternal the Divine.**

The higher Self, or Ego, should be allowed to control the lower self. The Ego, then, may more easily come under the influence of the Monad, the Divine Self. See *First Principles of Theosophy* by Jinarajadasa, Chapter 6.

VOICE:

- 166. Aye, great is he, who is the slayer of desire.
167. Still greater he, in whom the Self Divine has slain the
very knowledge of desire.**

Pupils who are seeking to overcome their weaknesses must constantly guard the lower vehicles from being caught in the net of unwanted habits. Cleanliness—not only outwardly but also inwardly—is necessary if the pupils wish to refine their lower natures.

VOICE:

- 168. Guard thou the Lower lest it soil the Higher.**

The Divine spark within each one of us can do nothing for us unless we first make ourselves ready for its unfoldment by entertaining only those thoughts and emotions that merge the lower self with the higher Self.

VOICE:

- 169. The way to final freedom is within thy SELF.
170. That way begins and ends outside of Self.**

Salvation or attainment rests solely with the individual, as we have free choice either to lift ourselves out of ignorance or remain unenlightened. Verse 170 points out that our release from karmic mistakes and ignorance of our divinity may be

obtained only by reaching outward, by identifying ourselves with all that lives, and thereby gradually freeing ourselves from the confines of our lower nature.

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. Why must man learn to govern his thinking?
2. What are the six glorious virtues?
3. What must man learn to do in order to gain merit?
4. What is the meaning of the "Great Journey"?
5. Why are spiritually advanced persons more humble?

Truth is within ourselves; it takes no rise
From outward things, whatever you may believe.
There is an inmost center in us all,
Where truth abides in fullness; and around,
Wall upon wall, the gross flesh hems it in,
This perfect, clear perception—which is truth.
A baffling and perverting carnal mesh
Blinds it and makes all error: and, to KNOW,
Rather consists in opening out a way
Whence the imprisoned splendor may escape,
Than in effecting entry for a light
Supposed to be without.

—Robert Browning, "Paracelsus"

Study Notes on *The Voice of the Silence* — Fragment Two

Lesson 9

VOICE:

171. Unpraised by men and humble is the mother of all Rivers, in *Tirthika's* proud sight; empty the human form though filled with Amrita's sweet waters, in the sight of fools. Withal, the birth-place of the sacred rivers is the sacred land, and he who Wisdom hath, is honoured by all men.

“Amrita’s sweet waters” is the essence of Life itself. To all those who seek her out, she confers Immortality. The few who have received enlightenment are sought and honored by all mankind. The Tirthikas, according to the footnote in the glossary of *The Voice*, are Brahmanical sectarians beyond the Himalayas who are called infidels by the Buddhists. The adjective “proud” could be translated as meaning “selfish.”

VOICE:

172. Arhans and Sages of the boundless Vision are rare as is the blossom of the Udumbara tree. Arhans are born at midnight hour, together with the sacred plant of nine and seven stalks, the holy flower that opens and blooms in darkness, out of the pure dew and on the frozen bed of snow-capped heights, heights that are trodden by no sinful foot.

These sages, whose numbers are usually small, are sometimes called Children of Light. The “sacred plant” represents humanity, which has its roots deep in mother earth, using the nourishment for its growth, while the branches reach heavenward, aspiring ever upward toward its rightful place in the hierarchy of glorious beings. The symbol of man is either a tree or a flower, and the branches or the petals give further information as to his growth in the vast mystery of the Great Evolutionary Plan. Speaking further about these sages, Paracelsus wrote:

They live in various parts of the world, and do not meddle with politics; their business is to do as much good to humanity as it is in their power, and to drink wisdom from the eternal fountain of Truth. Their number is small. Some live in Europe, others in Africa, but they are bound together by the harmony of their souls, and they are therefore as one. They understand each other,

although they speak in different tongues, because the language of the sages is spiritual perception. (Hartman, 338)

VOICE:

173. No Arhan, O Lanoo, becomes one in that birth when for the first the Soul begins to long for final liberation. Yet, O thou anxious one, no warrior volunteering fight in the fierce strife between the living and the dead, not one recruit can ever be refused the right to enter on the Path that leads toward the field of Battle.

Before final liberation is achieved and Arhatship is won, there are many births to be lived through. The Master K.H. once said, "There are only two kinds of people, those who know and those who do not know." In esoteric writings, the first are metaphorically referred to as "the living" and the latter as "the dead."

VOICE:

174. For, either he shall win, or he shall fall.

175. Yea, if he conquers, Nirvana shall be his. Before he casts his shadow off his mortal coil, that pregnant cause of anguish and illimitable pain—in him will men a great and holy Buddha honour.

176. And if he falls, e'en 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.

A disciple must not give in to feelings of discouragement or depression if his progress seems slow, because long before he become aware of it, the physical brain, as well as the subtle emotional and mental vehicles, are slowly becoming organized and sensitized to the higher vibratory rate of spiritual consciousness. If one has enough faith in the powers of the higher Self, he or she will realize that there is activity of a fundamental and spiritual nature going on, even though it may be totally unperceived by the personal nature. All the disciple has to do is to sow the right seed and water the plant daily; the rest is in the hands of the higher forces—the Divine Self. The candidate who thinks he is traveling at too slow a pace may, in fact, be doing very useful work on the inner planes. All effort produces results, even if we cannot visibly see those results. The disciple should not be concerned with seeing the results of his work or validating his personal progress, for that brings the focus of attention back to the personal self, and that is counter-productive. If we do not realize our highest spiritual aspirations in this life, we shall no doubt carry forward

into the next incarnation all we have learned and made our own, for nothing is lost or overlooked in the greater scheme of things.

VOICE:

**177. But if thou would'st Nirvana reach, or cast the prize
away, let not the fruit of action and inaction be thy
motive, thou of dauntless heart.**

A disciple does not tread the path of holiness in order to gain his own salvation; his motive is a much grander one than that.

**178. Know that the Bodhisattva who liberation changes for
Renunciation to don the miseries of "Secret Life," is
called, "thrice Honoured," O thou candidate for woe
throughout the cycles.**

In this context, "woe" means the taking on of the sorrows of the world, as do the Saviors, until the end of this cycle. All great men and women have the welfare of humanity at heart; they have become, sometimes unknown to themselves, channels through which the higher powers can do their work on earth.

VOICE:

**179. The PATH is one, Disciple, yet in the end, twofold.
Marked are its stages by four and seven Portals. At one
end—bliss immediate, and at the other—bliss deferred.
Both are of merit the reward: the choice is thine.**

The Path becomes twofold after the disciple has reached enlightenment. He now has to choose between liberation for himself, which is the negation of births and deaths for himself, or returning to this dark planet again and again in order to hasten the enlightenment of humanity, in this way helping to shorten the cycle of darkness.

VOICE:

**180. The One becomes the two, the *Open* and the *Secret*. The
first one leadeth to the goal, the second, to *Self-Immola-
tion*.**

The Path is one, on up to the very pinnacle, when it suddenly branches out into two more paths. The warrior has to choose, and must not be criticized if the choice should be liberation. But the soul that chooses to forego its own freedom in order to return to help the world is lauded by all of Nature from mineral to Angel.

VOICE:

181. When to the Permanent is sacrificed the Mutable, the prize is thine: the drop returneth whence it came. The *Open* PATH leads to the changeless change—Nirvana, the glorious state of Absoluteness, the Bliss past human thought.

182. Thus, the first is LIBERATION.

In order for an aspirant to acquire godlike wisdom, he gradually casts aside all earthly desires, realizing that all things of this earth pass away in time. He sees that he has been living under a delusion of separateness and that only things of the spirit are eternal. And so, he seeks the path leading to “the changeless change” —but then, is this the choice of his soul?

VOICE:

183. But Path the Second is—RENUNCIATION, and therefore called the “Path of Woe.”

184. That *Secret* Path leads the Arhan to mental woe unspeakable; woe for the living Dead, and helpless pity for the men of Karmic sorrow, the fruit of Karma Sages dare not still.

The “Path of Woe” describes the suffering that arises from deep compassion for humanity. The disciple sees all the pain and sorrow of the world that have been brought about by human ignorance. Handel’s *Messiah* elaborates on the sufferings of a great Savior, Jesus. There have been many saviors and there will be more before this cycle is completed. It is thought by many that the life of an Arhan is total sadness. Since humanity must learn through pain and anguish, great souls have to descend to humanity’s level in order to be understood, but their inner selves are linked with the inner planes and therefore are in two places at once, working among mankind and having their main existence among the angels. Therefore, knowing what mankind is missing, an Arhan has cause to weep, for at his great stage of advancement he sees very clearly what humanity could be doing to avoid its misery.

But once a person suffering abject misery cries out for help and assistance, there is help forthcoming; for these great souls are ever waiting to be of assistance and to teach what they know. Suffering, therefore, seems to be a necessary catalyst until we seek to know; to learn to know ourselves is the beginning of true knowledge and the end of suffering.

VOICE:

185. For it is written: "teach to eschew all causes; the ripple of effect, as the great tidal wave, thou shalt let run its course."

As we sow, so shall we reap; we must see that the seeds are all good, that the fruit and the flower be useful to our spiritual progress. Whatever cause is set in motion returns to the creator of that cause.

VOICE:

186. The "Open Way," no sooner hast thou reached its goal, will lead thee to reject the Bodhisattvic body and make thee enter the thrice glorious state of Dharmakaya which is oblivion of the World and men for ever.

There is no selfishness attached to the Dharmakaya state, to the one who chooses to enter Nirvana. But the one who dons the Nirmanakaya robe, who renounces Nirvana, is greatly needed by the hierarchy in order to help fill the reservoir of spiritual force for use by the Adepts.

VOICE:

187. The "Secret Way" leads also to Paranirvanic bliss—but at the close of Kalpas without number; Nirvanas gained and lost from boundless pity and compassion for the world of deluded mortals.

188. But it is said "The last shall be the greatest," *Samyak Sambudda*, the Teacher of Perfection, gave up his SELF for the salvation of the World, by stopping at the threshold of Nirvana—the pure state.

The warrior, although refusing to enter "Paranirvanic bliss" in order to return to assist suffering mankind, may claim his reward at the close of numerous Kalpas (cosmic cycles) when his work is completed. "Samyak Sambudda" is another name for the Lord Buddha, who is said to be able to move to other globes of our planetary chain.

VOICE:

189. Thou hast the knowledge now concerning the two Ways. Thy time will come for choice, O thou of eager Soul, when thou hast reached the end and passed the seven Portals. Thy mind is clear. No more art thou entangled in

**delusive thoughts, for thou hast learned all. Unveiled
stands truth and looks thee sternly in the face. She says:**

- 190. "Sweet are the fruits of Rest and Liberation for the sake
of *Self*; but sweeter still the fruits of long and bitter duty.
Aye, Renunciation for the sake of others, of suffering
fellow men."**

"The seven portals" are fully explained in the Third Fragment. The aspirant to godlike wisdom is now nearing the crucial part of his journey. He has been given what knowledge he is able to hold and understand at his level of consciousness. Now the mind of the aspirant should be much clearer than before, as he has stood face to face with Truth and learned knowledge of the "two Ways."

VOICE:

- 191. He, who becomes Pratyeka-Buddha, makes his obeisance
but to his *Self*. The Bodhisattva who has won the battle,
who holds the prize within his palm, yet says in his
divine compassion:**

- 192. "For others' sake this great reward I yield"—
accomplishes the greater Renunciation.**

- 193. A SAVIOR OF THE WORLD is he.**

To give up one's life that others might live is the ultimate sacrifice. But in so doing, the Bodhisattva unites himself with the World Soul whose will it is to raise the consciousness of all that live and make up the life of this planet earth.

VOICE:

- 194. Behold! The goal of bliss and the long Path of Woe are at
the furthest end. Thou canst choose either, O aspirant to
Sorrow, throughout the coming cycles! . . .**

- 195. OM VAJRAPANI HUM.**

The aspirant to sorrow has of his own free will turned his back upon his own liberation and will now return to shoulder the sorrows of the world. A friend and dedicated Theosophist, who has left this earthly plane, once said that "Om vajrapani hum" might be translated to mean "Truth fallen into thy two hands."

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. Where is the birthplace of the sacred rivers?
2. Who are the “living” and the “dead”?
3. Name the Path which leads to the *changeless change*.
4. Which Path leads to renunciation?

Starting upon the long journey immaculate; descending more and more into sinful matter, having connected himself with every atom in manifested *Space*—the *Pilgrim*, having struggled through and suffered in every form of life and being, is only at the bottom of the valley of matter, and half through his cycle, when he has identified himself with collective Humanity. This, *he has made in his own image*. In order to progress upwards and homewards, the “God” has now to ascend the weary uphill path of the Golgotha of Life.

—*The Secret Doctrine*, 1:268

Study Notes on *The Voice of the Silence* — Fragment Three

THE SEVEN PORTALS

Lesson 10

VOICE:

196. "UPADYA, the choice is made, I thirst for Wisdom. Now hast thou rent the veil before the secret Path and taught the greater Yana. Thy servant here is ready for thy guidance."

"Upadya" means a spiritual preceptor, a Guru, or Master, who takes pupils who wish to travel the Path and whom he believes can be trained to be of some special service. The greater Yana, as HPB explains it, is one of two schools of learning in Buddhism: the Mahayana (the greater Yana) is called the great vehicle, the Hinayana, the smaller vehicle. Today, the term "Theraveda" is used in place of the "Hinayana" as the latter is perceived to be pejorative by its practitioners.

And now the Upadya, the Teacher, is about to tell the aspirant what lies ahead of him.

VOICE:

197. '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.

"Shravaka" refers to a listener, one who sits at the feet of his Teacher, absorbing such spiritual knowledge as he may be able to understand, after which he is told to go forth and test the knowledge himself in his daily life. The child cannot sit at the knee of its mother all his life! Although the Path is one for all, we each follow it at our leisure, in our time, and in our own particular way. We all belong to one of the seven rays, and would therefore approach the Path differently—being drawn to particular work and to a special Teacher, on that ray. This may be the reason why we have free choice, allowing us to follow the needs and aspirations of our own souls. Even within the same ray-type, the teaching is adapted to individual needs. We read that a Master may send one of his pupils into seclusion and another out into the world. And again, he may give one the satisfaction of knowing that he is being taught and leave another without that knowledge for a great length of time. And so, the answer is: study and

work for the sake of acquiring wisdom for its own sake, and not for some special reason of your own. A sincere aspirant never looks for the results.

VOICE:

198. Which wilt thou choose, O thou of dauntless heart? The Samtan of "eye Doctrine," fourfold Dhyana, or thread thy way through Paramitas, six in number, noble gates of virtue leading to Bodhi and to Prajna, seventh step of Wisdom?

The aspirant is asked which of two methods he is going to choose. The *Paramitas* are six transcendental virtues: charity, morality, patience, energy, contemplation, and wisdom. "Samtan" is a Tibetan word meaning a state of meditation; "fourfold Dhyana" denotes four steps taken in meditation. We came across the four modes of truth in the first Fragment—symbolized by the words Ku, Tu, Mu, and Tau. The "Eye Doctrine" is said to mean dogma, the dead-letter form for those who are content with exoteric formulas.

VOICE:

**199. The rugged Path of fourfold Dhyana winds on uphill.
Thrice great is he who climbs the lofty top.**

**200. The Paramita heights are crossed by a still steeper path.
Thou hast to fight thy way through portals seven, seven
strongholds held by cruel crafty Powers—passions
incarnate.**

The "Paramita heights" are said to have seven portals through which the candidate has to struggle with temptation, and this can only be done in the world of people, in the stream of life where our karma has placed us. It is said that both the "fourfold Dhyana" (four stages in meditation) and the "Paramitas" are necessary to the well-rounded spiritual life. The former deals mainly with meditation and the second with our actions and motives. The refining of our personality is most important, as it influences the inner man at all times. Both action and inaction must find room in us, a time for working at what we have learned, and a time for contemplating the truth of what we know. Our lower nature does not die easily; it has an elemental consciousness of its own and also wishes to live.

VOICE:

**201. Be of good cheer, Disciple; bear in mind the golden rule.
Once thou hast passed the gate Srotapatti, "he who the
stream hath entered"; 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 adamantine
Will.**

The first gate teaches charity and compassion, and with these two rules we begin our journey; we enter the stream of life in preparation for a life of altruistic service. Once we have taken this step, it is said that we then have only seven more incarnations, and maybe less, before we attain to Selfhood. Whether this period of seven incarnations should be taken literally is a matter of some debate among esoteric students. A little handbook of great value as we begin the journey is *At the Feet of the Master*. The teacher continues:

VOICE:

**202. Look on. What see'st thou before thine eye, O aspirant to
god-like Wisdom?**

The aspirant answers:

VOICE:

**203. "The cloak of darkness is upon the deep of matter;
within its folds I struggle. Beneath my gaze it deepens,
Lord; it is dispelled beneath the waving of thy hand. A
shadow moveth, creeping like the stretching serpent
coils. . . . It grows, swells out and disappears in
darkness."**

Once the aspirant begins to tread the Path in earnest, both the best and the worst tendencies in his nature rise to the surface, and the age-old struggle between good and evil forces is on. To know our strengths and our weaknesses is half the battle. Much of the lower nature may be refined with good actions and faith in the Self, which is ever with us—but not seen. This faith can dispel doubt and fear if we but allow it to. Faith is a key that opens all doors. When a person decides to hasten his progress, he makes a decision that changes his whole life. At a time like this, the disciple needs the kind and understanding thoughts of others, for he is no longer living by the superficial conventions of his social environment. This tends to increase his difficulties. But those who know that this is a deep and very personal gearing of a soul eager to tread a new path, despite the obstacles, stand by and defend the disciple's right to do what he feels he must. This is true brotherhood. The Guru continues:

VOICE:

204. It is the shadow of thyself outside the Path, cast on the darkness of thy sins.

The disciple answers:

VOICE:

205. "Yea, Lord; I see the PATH; its foot in mire, its summits lost in glorious light Nirvanic. And now I see the ever narrowing Portals on the hard and thorny way to Jnana."

The first few portals appear wide and easy of access, but the rest stretching into the distance look narrow; this causes the disciple to feel discouraged. The word *Jnana* could mean understanding, knowledge, or enlightenment. His guide goes on to say:

VOICE:

206. Thou seest well, Lanoo. These Portals lead the aspirant across the waters on "to the other shore."

"The other shore," a phrase that is used frequently, has two meanings: one is that between life and death there is a river or ocean and souls are ferried across to the other shore after death; the second meaning is that when a soul steps out from general evolution, which it has completed, and begins the life of an Adept, that soul chooses to return from the other shore in order to help mankind.

VOICE:

Each Portal hath a golden key that openeth its gate; and these keys are:—

207. 1. DANA, the key of charity and love immortal.

"Dana" does not mean mere charity in the sense of giving alms; it is utter readiness to give of one's self, and to forgive those who do not understand our motives. To sacrifice our time, energy, and thought to this end is to learn charity in the universal sense.

VOICE:

208. 2. 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.

"Shila" is right conduct, right action, and using our environment—in which karma has placed us—in order to close our karmic account as quickly as possible.

Thus, the aspirant acquires added freedom and opportunity to serve without thought of self.

VOICE:

209. 3. KSHANTI, patience sweet, that nought can ruffle.

“Kshanti” means a state of indifference to the world’s barbs and criticism. This is not a feeling of self-righteousness but one of peace, brought about through the knowledge that no *thing* can hurt the Divine Self within, with which the aspirant is endeavoring to link himself.

VOICE:

210. 4. VIRAGA, indifference to pleasure and to pain, illusion conquered, truth alone perceived.

“Viraga” or “Vairagya” means utter desirelessness, working for the sake of obtaining wisdom in order to be prepared for some special service in the great evolutionary plan. There will be no personal glory in this, for as the aspirant progresses, he becomes more and more impersonal, being moved mainly by the vision of a new world where ignorance has no place.

VOICE:

211. 5. VIRYA, the dauntless energy that fights its way to the supernal TRUTH, out of the mire of lies terrestrial.

“Virya” is that strength and energy that carries each one of us forward, according to our faith and effort, and at our own pace. No man or woman can tell where he or she stands; to desire to know would be mere vanity. The true disciple struggles on in humility without worrying about his personal progress.

VOICE:

212. 6. DHYANA, whose golden gate once opened leads the Narjol toward the realm of Sat eternal and its ceaseless contemplation.

“Dhyana” is a state attained through meditation. Only in silence can the aspirant hope to receive guidance, which is of an intuitional nature. It is true that even amid the turmoil of the marketplace, a person may receive enlightenment; but for the student, the disciple, there are rules to be followed. The word “Narjol” means a saintly person.

In regard to the first six of the Paramitas, Rohit Mehta observes that the first three are oriented toward the outer while the second group of three points to the inner.

The outer instruments [Paramitas] deal with the pattern of behavior, while the inner instruments deal with the source or the background of behavior. In other words, these instruments deal with the structural and the functional, the form and the life, aspects of the movement of the spiritual pilgrim on the Path of Perfection. Just as life and form must co-exist, similarly the inner and the outer instruments must remain together. The one is tangible, the other is intangible. The pattern or behavior is something tangible, while the background or the source of behavior is something intangible. But let not the spiritual pilgrim commit the mistake of regarding the intangible as unreal. Without the presence of the intangible background—the Source—the tangible pattern of behavior becomes only an empty form. This is one of the greatest pitfalls on the Path of Perfection. (*The Creative Silence*, p. 127)

VOICE:

**213. 7. PRAJNA, the key to which makes of a man a god,
creating him a Bodhisattva, son of the Dhyanis.**

“Prajna” is a state where Wisdom has become a part of the life behind the form; this quality makes the Bodhisattva. “Dhyanis” are Divine intelligences.

VOICE:

214. Such to the Portals are the golden keys.

According to *The Secret Doctrine* there are seven keys of interpretation to every symbol and allegory. In the September-October 1963 issue of *The Canadian Theosophist* R. Machell writes, “It is a very old idea that man passes through various gateways on the path of evolution, and that each gate has its key. The keys have to be found, and then they have to be turned in the lock before the gate can be opened” (p. 82).

VOICE:

**215. Before thou canst approach the last, O weaver of thy
freedom, thou hast to master these Paramitas of
perfection—the virtues transcendental six and ten in
number—along the weary Path.**

**216. For, O disciple! Before thou wert made fit to meet thy
Teacher face to face, thy MASTER light to light, what
wert thou told?**

It stands to reason that if a pupil wishes to make contact with his Master, he must first endeavor to refine and purify his vehicles through practice of the *perfections*, as little conscious contact can be made between a coarse personality and a spiritually refined Being. To meet the Master "light to light" expresses a wonderful idea. When the pupil comes into touch with his Master's consciousness, it is said that their auras blend and make a wonderful light!

VOICE:

217. Before thou canst approach the foremost gate 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.

To be able to "part the body from the mind" is to forget the lower self in an effort to rise and link up with the higher mind, which is the bridge which links the two, the finite and the infinite. "To live in the eternal" is to be able to judge things always from the standpoint of the eternal.

VOICE:

218. Thou shalt not let thy senses make a playground of thy mind.

Uncontrolled thinking can delay spiritual progress.

VOICE:

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

220. 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.

The disciple of today realizes that to stand alone, indifferent to what is going on in other parts of the world, is impossible; he knows that personal involvement is imperative. And so he quietly and consistently goes about the business of preparing himself, not only for his own growth but to be ready to serve the spiritual needs of his fellowman. In serving others, the disciple serves his higher Self.

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. Why is it necessary for a disciple to practice the Paramitas?
2. Give the names of the two schools of learning in Northern Buddhism. Why is the term "Hinayana" no longer used by practitioners of that school?
3. Why is it that when an aspirant decides to tread the Holy Path of Attainment the best and worst in his nature rise to the surface?
4. Give the name of the golden key that opens the gate of Desirelessness.
5. Interpret the meaning of the Shila key.

Go, seize fast hold of the skirt of knowledge,
For learning will convey thee to everlasting abodes.
Seek nought but knowledge if thou art wise,
For it is neglectful to remain without wisdom.
From learning there will come to thee perfection as regards religion and
the world.

—*Sadi's Scroll of Wisdom*

Study Notes on *The Voice of the Silence* — Fragment Three

Lesson 11

VOICE:

221. 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.

First, we learn about love and kindness at our mother's knee, and then we are taught our ABC's in elementary school. Later we are taught at high school and perhaps in the university—but the greatest of all teachers is the Universal Soul, which is ever present behind the scenes of events, as we know them. The karma that each soul brings with him into each incarnation is at work bringing to him those things that he has nurtured, and keeping from him those things that he has avoided. And so, karma is a very personal and just thing, yet at the same time very impersonal. Since we are interconnected at some level with all that lives, we are at all times affecting and coloring the whole in subtle and even unperceived ways by our thoughts and our actions. And so, our individual karma is interwoven with the karma of the whole planet.

VOICE:

222. 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*.

It is possible for a person, during this lifetime, to get in touch with the Higher Manas (Mind) through the *Antahkarana*—the bridge between the lower mind and the higher. The hold that the reincarnating Ego has over its lower vehicles is normally only very partial, but when the Ego and the lower personality are in harmony, the bridge between the two ceases to exist, for the lower has "let go" and become an integral part of the Higher Manas.

VOICE:

223. Thou hast to be prepared to answer Dharma, the stern law, whose voice will ask thee at thy first, at thy initial step:

224. "Hast thou complied with all the rules, O thou of lofty hopes?"

225. "Hast thou attuned thy heart and mind to the great mind and heart of all mankind? For as the sacred River's roaring voice whereby all Nature-sounds are echoed back, so must the heart of him 'who in the stream would enter,' thrill in response to every sigh and thought of all that lives and breathes."

"Dharma" refers to a person's own special work, the path chosen by him which may lead to service according to his talent and spiritual awareness. To enter upon the pathless Path is to lose all personal identity in order to identify with the overall Plan. "The sacred River's roaring voice" is said to be the keynote of Nature. In the glossary of *The Voice*, HPB points out that it "is a well known fact in physical science as well as in occultism, that the aggregate sound of Nature—such as is heard in the roar of great rivers, the noise produced by the waving tops of trees in large forests, and that of a city heard in the distance—is a definite, single tone of quite an appreciable pitch." Each one of us gives off vibrations created by a color and a sound, as do the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms.

VOICE:

226. Disciples may be likened to the strings of the soul-echoing *Vina*; mankind, unto its sounding board; the hand that sweeps it to the tuneful breath of the GREAT WORLD-SOUL. The string that fails to answer 'neath the Master's touch in dulcet harmony with all the others, breaks—and is cast away. So the collective minds of *Lanoo-Shravakas*. They have to be attuned to the Upadhy's mind—one with the Over-Soul—or, break away.

At first the pilgrim ventures forth on the Path eagerly and joyfully, but the vision may soon fade, resulting in a general sense of weariness and loss of heart. Should this happen, the teachings will come to the pilgrim's aid, reminding him that "no effort, not even the smallest, is ever lost," for during the short period of earnest effort he put forth in the beginning, he made great strides forward. If for some reason he cannot continue at this pace, it is a pity, but, as *The Voice* continues to stress, the smallest effort is never lost and will bear fruit in lifetimes to come. We are taught not to be affected by moods, as they waste the soul's precious time. If we mistakenly fall into ignorance, we do not sit and weep, but immediately rise and use the golden keys.

VOICE:

227. Thus do the "Brothers of the Shadow"—the murderers of their Souls, the dread Dad-Dugpa clan.

The pilgrim wearing the badge of love and charity is now allowed to pass the first gate.

VOICE:

228. Hast thou attuned thy being to Humanity's great pain, O candidate for light?

229. Thou hast? . . . Thou mayest enter. Yet, ere thou settest foot upon the dreary Path of sorrow, 'tis well thou should'st first learn the pitfalls on the way.

The candidate is asked whether he is prepared to sacrifice all his time and life in order to help humanity. If he is, then he may enter, for all who enter must serve. "The pitfalls on the way" are mainly qualities of a personal nature, ones that he is aiming to replace with impersonal and universal ones. The disciple realizes that he cannot place his foot upon the Path before he has learned the rules. As *The Voice* repeats, he has to become the Path itself before he is worthy of serving. Once the aims are understood and put into practice, all changes; the Path becomes clear, and the pilgrim, guided by his staff of knowledge, proceeds with radiant happiness.

VOICE:

230. Armed with the key of Charity, of love and tender mercy, thou art secure before the gate of Dana, the gate that standeth at the entrance of the PATH.

We have learned about the Golden Keys. *Dana*, the key of Charity and Love, means not only the giving of alms and donations to worthy causes, but actual participation in the work of compassion. The giving of oneself in service is one of the keys to spiritual progress. As it says in *At the Feet of the Master*, "To feed the poor is a good and noble and useful work; yet to feed their souls is nobler and more useful than to feed their bodies. Any rich man can feed the body, but only those who know can feed the soul. If you know, it is your duty to help others to know" (pp. 17-18).

VOICE:

231. Behold, O happy Pilgrim! The portal that faceth thee is high and wide, seems easy of access. The road that leads therethrough is straight and smooth and green. 'Tis like a sunny glade in the dark forest depths, a spot on earth

mirrored from Amitabha's paradise. There, nightingales of hope and birds of radiant plumage sing perched in green bowers, chanting success to fearless Pilgrims. They sing of Bodhisattvas' virtues five, the fivefold source of Bodhi power, and of the seven steps in Knowledge.

The disciple must be in harmony, not only with the great purpose of the Master, but also with his brother disciples. He will be given work to do, then tested, and if found wanting he will be overlooked until such time as he has learned the fundamental lesson in working in harmony with others and in performing excellently with what he has. "Lanoo-Shravakas" are those who have entered willingly upon the path of serious discipleship.

VOICE:

232. Pass on! For thou hast brought the key; thou art secure.

"The Brothers of the Shadow," or the Red Caps, are usually called black magicians; they use their considerable innate powers for selfish purposes. A footnote by HPB says,

The *Bhons* and *Dugpas*, the sect of the "Red Caps," are regarded as the most versed in sorcery. They inhabit Western and Little Tibet and Bhutan. They are all Tantrikas. It is quite ridiculous to find Orientals who have visited the borderlands of Tibet, such as Schlagintweit and others, confusing the rites and disgusting practices of these people with the religious beliefs of the Eastern Lamas, the "Yellow Caps," and their *Narjols* or holy men.

VOICE:

233. And to the second gate the way is verdant too. But it is steep and winds up hill; yea, to its rocky top. Grey mists will overhang its rough and stony height, and all the dark beyond. As on he goes, the song of hope soundeth more feeble in the pilgrim's heart. The thrill of doubt is now upon him; his step less steady grows.

234. Beware of this, O candidate! Beware of fear that spreadeth, like the black and soundless wings of midnight bat, between the moonlight of thy Soul and thy great goal that loometh in the distance far away.

The "moonlight" of the soul is said to shine with a reflected light from the Logos, and nothing must be allowed to come between, else the soul will be left in darkness.

VOICE:

235. Fear, O disciple, kills the will and stays all action. If lacking in the Shila virtue,—the pilgrim trips, and Karmic pebbles bruise his feet along the rocky path.

Doubt as to how to progress paralyzes the pilgrim's slightest effort. So he meditates on the wisdom of the key of Shila, which teaches harmony of word and act and which counterbalances cause and effect. Thus, with a mind refreshed, he proceeds.

VOICE:

236. Be of sure foot, O candidate. In Kshanti's essence bathe thy Soul; for now thou dost approach the portal of that name, the gate of fortitude and patience.

"Kshanti," the key of patience and fortitude, opens the third gate. And as *The Voice* tells us, steady enthusiasm is needed, for spasmodic enthusiasm is apt to weaken the disciple's efforts in the long run. A short-lived burst of enthusiasm will spur us on for the moment, but how far will it carry us? We need to sustain our steady progress up the mountain with a sublime patience that does not look for quick and easy results. To use the analogy of the runner, what is needed is not the psychology of the runner who does only short sprints, but the very different attitude of the marathon runner who paces himself for the long haul.

VOICE:

237. Close not thine eyes, nor lose thy sight of Dorje; Mara's arrows ever smite the man who has not reached Vairagya.

Mara's arrows (the temptations that the disciple must overcome) are ever waiting to smite (entice or test) the candidate who has not as yet risen above personal desire. The disciple's talisman (Dorje) is his fixed attention on the Logos, the Supreme Buddha of "the Diamond Heart," in whose all enveloping love the pilgrim bathes. The aspirant who continues to struggle upward, indifferent to all obstacles, is lovingly protected by the higher intelligences which, when necessary, ward off evil forces. Assistance is sometimes given to an earnest pilgrim who has not as yet overcome entirely his indifference to pleasure and to pain (Vairagya).

VOICE:

238. Beware of trembling. 'Neath the breath of fear the key of Kshanti rusty grows: the rusty key refuseth to unlock.

239. 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. The more one dares, the more he shall obtain. The more he fears, the more that light shall pale—and that alone can guide. For as the lingering sunbeam, that on the top of some tall mountain shines, is followed by black night when out it fades, so is heart-light. When out it goes, a dark and threatening shade will fall from thine own heart upon the path, and root thy feet in terror to the spot.

The only fear in all the world, said the Stoic philosopher Antoninus, “. . . is that he himself should fail to use to the full all his virtues and powers for good.” Fear, they say, is a form of selfishness. And so, when we become less self-centered, we begin to destroy the cause of our misery. “The light of daring” is the will to begin and to follow through. To do, to dare—is a motto written across the warrior’s shield. “TRY,” said one of HPB’s Teachers. This encouragement was not meant only for the few, but also for those who felt an urge to begin acquainting themselves with the “steps” and “virtues” and other soul-equipment necessary to an earnest aspirant.

VOICE:

240. Beware, disciple, of that lethal shade. No light that shines from Spirit can dispel the darkness of the nether Soul, unless all selfish thought has fled therefrom, and that the pilgrim saith: “I have renounced this passing frame; I have destroyed the cause: the shadows cast can, as effects, no longer be.” For now the last great fight, the final war between the *Higher* and the *Lower Self*, hath taken place. Behold, the very battlefield is now engulfed in the great war, and is no more.

Self-doubt is that “lethal shade” which paralyzes the will and prevents the disciple’s further progress. We are told that all adverse forces are of our own making; they are our only enemies. But once we face up to them, and know them for what they are, they lose their power over us, for to withdraw our attention from them is to deprive them of life force that gives them a life of their own. The “battlefield” is within ourselves, where the higher and the lower are struggling for supremacy, sometimes referred to as the “sacred war.”

VOICE:

241. But once that 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 do ensnare the inner man.

Kshanti teaches the aspirant patience and calmness, thus preventing his being thrown off balance. The forces of evil (ignorance) are always waiting for an opportunity to undermine the foundations of Good. This is their job. The pilgrim is now about to face the "Portal of temptations."

VOICE:

242. Ere thou canst near that goal, before thine hand is lifted to upraise the fourth gate's latch, thou must have mustered all the mental changes in thy Self and slain the army of the thought sensations that, subtle and insidious, creep unasked within the Soul's bright shrine.

At this stage the aspirant is ever mindful of the subtle movements of mind. Watchfulness is the keyword here, lest upon nearing the goal, the pilgrim relax his hold upon the lower self, which is ever on the alert for opportunities to lure him back to his old ways. The temptations of the mind are even greater than those of a more physical nature.

VOICE:

243. If thou would'st not be slain by them, then must thou harmless make thy own creations, the children of thy thoughts, unseen, impalpable, that swarm round humankind, the progeny and heirs to man and his terrestrial spoils. Thou hast to study the voidness of the seeming full, the fullness of the seeming void.

The Voice says that the disciple must not allow any thought of *self* to enter his consciousness at this critical stage. If we do not want to be imprisoned or influenced by the base and dark thoughts of others, which fill the atmosphere, we must counteract them by generating positive ones. In *Isis Unveiled*, H. P. Blavatsky speaks of unseen forces that seek to trip up the pilgrim on his way: "In the East they are known as the 'Brothers of the Shadow.' Cunning, low, vindictive, and seeking to retaliate their sufferings upon humanity, they become, until final annihilation, vampires [and] ghouls" (1:319). These pernicious influences can only be effective where there is weakness. Purity of heart and mind (purpose) is the shield that protects the warrior from these adverse forces.

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. Name some of the golden keys.
2. Give the name of the first key, in Sanskrit.
3. Give the name of the last key, in Sanskrit.
4. What is the "Antahkarana"?
5. Why is it important to learn the rules before entering upon the Path?
6. What are the effects of fear upon the candidate?
6. What is the meaning of the "sacred war"?

When a man has mastered himself, he is perfectly at ease in cold, in heat, in pleasure or pain, in honor or in disgrace.

—Bhagavad Gita

Study Notes on *The Voice of the Silence* — Fragment Three

Lesson 12

VOICE:

O fearless Aspirant, look deep within the well of thine own heart, and answer. Knowest thou of Self the powers, O thou perceiver of external shadows?

“The Heart Center” writes H. Rhodes Wallace in her book *How to Enter the Silence* “is the center for regeneration. This, the dark incubating chamber where the synthesis of emotion and will is consummated. This, the Altar where consuming fires transmute disease and poverty into life and munificence. This, the Transition Center from life to life” (p. 111).

VOICE:

244. If thou dost not—then art thou lost.

We must learn the needs of the higher Self just as we know about those of the outer personality. The needs of the inner Self must necessarily be of a spiritual nature; there are virtues to be acquired and specific keys to be used before we can stand face to face with our true Self. Mabel Collins says in her book *Through Gates of Gold*:

The god, given his right place, will so inspire and guide this extraordinary creature, so educate and develop it, so force it into action and recognition of its kind, that it will make you tremble when you recognize the power that has been awakened within you.

VOICE:

245. For, on Path fourth, the lightest breeze of passion or desire will stir the steady light upon the pure white walls of Soul. The smallest wave of longing or regret for Maya’s gifts illusive, along *Antahkarana*—the path that lies between thy Spirit and thy self, the highway of sensations, the rude arousers of *Ahankara*—a thought as fleeting as the lightning flash will make thee thy three prizes forfeit—the prizes thou hast won.

246. For know that the ETERNAL knows no change.

As you may have already noticed, there is constant repetition as to being pure in thought and constant in action; to lose the rhythm is to backslide. And so, the disciple is constantly reminded to keep his eyes on the goal. The *Antahkarana* is the bridge, the highway between the higher Self and the lower self, which, if neglected, is weakened by gnatlike thoughts that prevent the disciple's consciousness from crossing the bridge. The Eternal does not fluctuate; it is silent, deep, and changeless.

VOICE:

247. "The eight dire miseries forsake for evermore. If not, to wisdom, sure, thou can'st not come, nor yet to liberation," said the great Lord, the Tathagata of perfection, "he who has followed in the footsteps of his predecessors."

248. Stern and exacting is the virtue of Vairagya. If thou its path would'st master, thou must keep thy mind and thy perceptions far freer than before from killing action.

Buddhists list the eight dire miseries as malice, sloth, pride, doubt, desire, delusion, ignorance, and future lives. C. W. Leadbeater observes in *Talks on the Path of Occultism*, Vol.2 that it may seem strange to list "future lives" as one of the dire miseries. He explains that this is because earthly life is misery when compared with the sublime joys of the higher planes. *Vairagya* is the fourth gate, indifference to pleasure and to pain. To kill all action would be to stop progress, to stop improving; this would indeed prevent the disciple from reaching his goal.

VOICE:

249. 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.

To saturate oneself in "pure Alaya" is to blend utterly with pure thought, for God-Consciousness is everywhere. Every bush is afire with God; strike a stone and it will reveal a spark. If the fire of the sun were to be extinguished we would all perish; if the fire of spirit that animates man was to be continually neglected, it too could go out; this would be a spiritual death. HPB says that *Samvriti* is only "relative truth."

VOICE:

250. 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, the victim of thy lower Self. The 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."

The soul's progress is prevented only by the disciple's neglect of his karmic duties, the quality of his thoughts and actions, and in not fully understanding the knowledge which each golden key possesses. The personality perishes after each incarnation; a new garment (body) is ours at each new birth. The Ego lasts through whole series of human incarnations but the Monad lasts longer. The "Gate of Balance" is the Parmita of Kshanti, "patience sweet, that naught can ruffle."

VOICE:

**251. Be of good cheer, O daring pilgrim "to the other shore."
Heed not the whisperings of Mara's hosts; wave off the
tempters, those ill-natured Sprites, the jealous Lhamayin
in endless space.**

In the glossary of *The Voice*, the Lhamayin are described as "elementals and evil spirits adverse to men." They are said to be envious of humans and their bodies (mental, emotional and physical), which are given them to use in the process of advancing to higher spheres. The Lhamayin, or elementals, have the power to instill fear in a pilgrim but nothing more; the pilgrim has to know this before he starts on his journey lest he be thrown off course by Mara's hosts of tempters.

VOICE:

**252. Hold firm! Thou nearest now the middle portal, the gate
of Woe, with its ten thousand snares.**

The "middle portal" as we have already learned is called *Vairagya*, and the aspirant is endeavoring to fit the key to the lock of "indifference to pleasure and to pain." Here temptation has a thousand forms, and Mara will use them all. The role of temptation is necessary and enables only the strong to pass through these portals, which lead to spiritual riches and powers beyond imagining.

VOICE:

**253. Have mastery o'er thy thoughts, O striver for perfection,
if thou would'st cross its threshold.**

At this point, a candidate could imagine that he or she was progressing very well when they were not, or they could also imagine that they were failing when in truth

they were succeeding! And so, the advice to aspirants at all times is to have complete mastery over their thoughts.

VOICE:

**254. Have mastery o'er thy Soul, O seeker after truths
undying, if thou wouldst reach the goal.**

**255. Thy Soul-gaze centre on the One Pure Light, the Light
that is free from affection, and use thy golden Key.**

The description "free from affection" means that before the pilgrim is able to cut himself asunder from the pull of earth, he must have acquired a universal sense of love—the kind which does not differentiate, and embraces all beings. In truth, nothing is really separated, for all beings and all things abide in the One.

VOICE:

**256. The dreary task is done, thy labour well-nigh o'er. The
wide abyss that gaped to swallow thee is almost
spanned.**

Even at this great height the soul still labors, and temptations may still lurk around the corner. But the soul bravely pushes on with eyes fixed upon the goal.

VOICE:

**257. Thou hast now crossed the moat that circles round the
gate of human passions. Thou hast now conquered Mara
and his furious host.**

As the disciple nears spiritual victory, care must be taken that the lower vehicles are not overstrained for they are necessary to attain the final victory.

VOICE:

**258. Thou hast removed pollution from thine heart and bled
it from impure desire. But, O thou glorious combatant,
thy task is not yet done. Build high, Lanoo, the wall that
shall hedge in the Holy Isle, the dam that will protect thy
mind from pride and satisfaction at thoughts of the great
feat achieved.**

The warrior is well on the way now, having overcome much in his lower nature; but there are still temptations, those of the mind being especially subtle. And so, the aspirant is cautioned to "build high the wall that shall hedge in the Holy Isle." This

Isle can be explained as an area of metaphysical forces—a center of power gradually built up which becomes the focus of the soul’s activities. This is sometimes called the “Ring-Pass-Not” and reflects the ultimate limits of understanding possible to any individual by reason of his evolution.

VOICE:

259. A sense of pride would mar the work. Aye, build it strong, lest the fierce rush of battling waves, that mount and beat its shore from out the great World Maya’s Ocean, swallow up the pilgrim and the isle—yea, even when the victory’s achieved.

Even at this high level, there can still exist a subtle sense of pride at having progressed this far—and pride being a personal attribute, belongs to the things of the earth and must therefore be left behind.

VOICE:

260. Thine “Isle” is the deer, thy thoughts the hounds that weary and pursue his progress to the stream of Life. Woe to the deer that is o’ertaken by the barking fiends before he reach the Vale of Refuge—Jnana Marga, “path of pure knowledge” named.

Woe to him who is sidetracked by passing thoughts, which delay the pilgrim from reaching the “Isle” wherein dwells the Self. Once this holy isle is reached, nothing can come near or harm the victorious pilgrim. The “hound” yelping at the heels of the deer represents conscience, ever goading the pilgrim on in the divine quest of Selfhood. No person can ever truly rest until he has placed his foot on the path of return. Divine unrest will plague him until his eyes search for the summit of the holy mountain. The following passage from Francis Thompson’s poem “The Hound of Heaven” describes this vague yearning and unrest.

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
 Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.
 Up vistaed hopes I sped;
 And shot, precipitated,
Adown Titanic glooms of chasmèd fears,
From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.

VOICE:

261. 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.

Jnana Marga is the path of *true knowledge*. When the pain of others and their needs become more important than our own—and all other life which Mother Nature holds dear—then the heightened sensitivity of our soul will be an indication that we are ready to serve.

VOICE:

262. Make hard thy Soul against the snares of *Self*; deserve for it the name of "Diamond-Soul."

263. For, as the diamond buried deep within the throbbing heart of earth can never mirror back the earthly lights, so are thy mind and Soul; plunged in Jnana Marga, these must mirror nought of Maya's realm illusive.

"Diamond Soul" is an appellation meaning perfection, a title that is commonly given to the Supreme Buddha. It is also given to those whose whole personality has been merged in Jnana Marga (true knowledge), thereby becoming one with the sixth and seventh Principles, Atma and Buddhi.

VOICE:

264. When thou hast reached that state, the Portals that thou hast to conquer on the Path fling open wide their gates to let thee pass, and Nature's strongest might possess no power to stay thy course. Thou wilt be master of the sevenfold Path; but not till then, O candidate for trials passing speech.

The trials and difficulties are not so great as to be impossible to overcome. These further trials are of a kind unknown to the personality and only known to the Ego, or higher Self. For, in this pilgrimage of the soul, after the lower self is first conquered, the Ego must go on to scale further heights, ones unknown to the personality. But if the first part of the journey has been well understood and has provided the pilgrim with the necessary spiritual knowledge and strength, the rest of the climb will be worthwhile, whatever the cost.

VOICE:

265. Till then, a task far harder still awaits thee: thou hast to feel thyself ALL-THOUGHT, and yet exile all thoughts from out thy Soul.

266. Thou hast to reach that fixity of mind in which no breeze, however strong, can waft an earthly thought within. Thus purified, the shrine must of all action, sound, or earthly light be void; e'en as the butterfly, o'ertaken by the frost, falls lifeless at the threshold—so must all earthly thoughts fall dead before the fane.

The candidate has now reached the stage where any random thought would mar further progress. As *The Voice* says, "The mind is the great slayer of the Real. Let the disciple slay the slayer." Once having arrived at this stage of deep meditation, any thought would stir the steady flame and mar further progress—for in the Silence, "The Eternal knows no change."

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. Name the eight dire miseries.
2. What is the meaning of the "other shore?"
3. Name the key to the Middle Portal.
4. What is meant by the "Holy Isle?"
5. What does Jnana-Marga mean?

The race of mankind has its foothold on the earth in physical life. And the feet with which he stands or move on earth must be washed in the blood of the heart before he can stand in the presence of the Masters. The higher self is that which stands, keeping its hold upon the physical life by dominating its bodily form. And when it has acquired power and strength by standing amid the turmoil of this lowest field of action, it desires to make the great essay, and finds it can only do so by destroying those weeds which grow richly in the two lower fields of its nature. It is not grief or sorrow or suffering which makes the heart of the Warrior bleed; he has taught himself to endure these unshaken. It is the drawing out of the heart the source of evil and expunging it. This is like drawing the very life-blood, and often it may seem too great a strain upon the whole nature to be endured.

Mabel Collins, *Our Glorious Future*

Study Notes on *The Voice of the Silence* — Fragment Three

Lesson 13

VOICE:

Behold it written:

267. "Ere the gold flame can burn with steady light, the lamp must stand well guarded in a spot free from all wind." Exposed to shifting breeze, the jet will flicker and the quivering flame cast shades deceptive, dark and ever-changing, on the Soul's white shrine.

Here steadiness of mind leads to the Virya Portal, where the Will, the dauntless energy, fights its way to the supernal truth. "To reach this Fount of overcoming power," says Helen Rhodes Wallace in *How to Enter the Silence*, "requires the high potential of love toward God. Thus we are challenged at the very outset to produce a motive power adequate to climb the spiritual heights. The new world to which he seeks admittance is guarded by law . . . It cannot be bought, nor cajoled, nor intimidated nor commanded. Man earns it by placing his own life in sacrifice" (p. 179).

VOICE:

268. And then, O thou pursuer of the truth, thy Mind-Soul will become as a mad elephant, that rages in the jungle. Mistaking forest trees for living foes, he perishes in his attempts to kill the ever-shifting shadows dancing on the wall of sunlit rocks.

At this critical stage, the mind-body may rise up and resist as never before, for it is a struggle to the death. The candidate, if not fortified with unshakable self-confidence, might imagine all kinds of obstacles blocking the way, where there are, in fact, none at all. A lack of faith and a groundless fear can undo much good work.

VOICE:

269. Beware, lest in the care of Self thy Soul should lose her foothold on the soil of Deva-knowledge.

270. Beware, lest in forgetting SELF, thy Soul lose o'er its trembling mind control, and forfeit thus the due fruition of its conquests.

271. Beware of change! For change is thy great foe. This change will fight thee off, and throw thee back, out of the Path thou treadest, deep into viscous swamps of doubt.

“Deva-knowledge” refers to knowledge of the Divine Presence underlying all manifestation. There is a measure of danger here, wherein the candidate desires to know how far he has progressed on the Path, because curiosity of this kind may cause the candidate to lose his foothold on the Path. There is another warning for those who are nearing the goal, and that is to *keep the rhythm*, not to change the basis, the essential attitude, with which they started. They must be constant, ever building the upward spiral, for to falter now would break the rhythm and the work would have to be started all over again. But if this *should* happen, the aspirant is advised not to moan and resort to self pity, but endeavor to pick up the rhythm again without any waste of time, and before long he is on his way again.

272. Prepare, and be forewarned in time. If thou hast tried and failed, O dauntless fighter, yet lose not courage: fight on and to the charge return again, and yet again.

273. The fearless warrior, his precious life-blood oozing from his wide and gaping wounds, will still attack the foe, drive him from out his stronghold, vanquish him, ere he himself expires. Act then, all ye who fail and suffer, act like him; and from the stronghold of your Soul, chase all your foes away—ambition, anger, hatred, e’en to the shadow of desire—when even you have failed. . .

The fearless warrior fights on, no matter what the cost now, for he is too far along the Path to turn back. Better to fall fighting than to turn back in fear. For his foes, which he has well nigh conquered, will not return to taunt him in the next incarnation. His battle will be won when once again he treads the Path. *The Voice* stresses the fact that not the smallest effort is ever lost, that we can create this day (in this incarnation) chances for the morrow (our next life).

VOICE:

274. Remember, thou that 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, their stalks wax strong at each new trial, they bend like reeds but never break, nor can they e’er be lost. But when the hour has struck they blossom forth.

As you may have observed, *The Voice* repeats over and over again that if the candidate should fail, nevertheless, he has gained ground. Failure is possible, but it is not for naught if the candidate tries again and refuses to give up. All the effort put forth in learning to work with compassion and understanding and selflessness has already become a part of himself. Nothing—no one—can deprive a soul of those things that it has earned, for those things which it has earned through self-sacrifice are inviolable. “The holy germs” (to use Plato’s term) are spiritual ideas and aspirations.

VOICE:

275. But if thou camest prepared, then have no fear.

276. Henceforth thy way is clear right through the *Virya* gate, the fifth one of the Seven Portals. Thou art now on the way that leadeth to the Dhyana haven, the sixth, the Bodhi Portal.

277. The Dhyana gate is like an alabaster vase, white and transparent; within there burns a steady golden fire, the flame of Prajna, that radiates from Atman.

With dauntless energy the pilgrim pushes on, for now he is nearing the end of his journey and victory is at hand. He enters the fifth gate of Virya, leaving behind the plane of illusion. He is now about to enter the sixth gate of Dhyana, after which there is only one more to enter. *Dhyana* is the “Bodhi Portal”; here is where perfect Wisdom exists. The “alabaster vase” indicates the Buddhic body or sheaths wherein burns a steady golden light; the lamp has been lit.

VOICE:

278. Thou art that vase.

279. Thou hast estranged thyself from objects of the senses, traveled on the “Path of seeing,” on the “Path of hearing,” and standest in the light of Knowledge, Thou hast now reached Titiksha state.

280. O Narjol, thou art safe.

Having created a Buddhic body, a body of Light, the candidate is no more entangled in the meshes of his lower self, for he is now blessed (through his own efforts) with perfect indifference to pleasure and to pain. The suffering of earth through ignorance has come to an end. The “Titiksha state” (supreme indifference) has been reached, and the Narjol (one who has attained through contemplation) is allowed to pass on in safety. For as the fairy tales tell us, only the few brave ones are

able to scale the mountain peak and enter the impregnable abode that lies at the summit. But will they wish to stay?

VOICE:

281. Know, Conqueror of Sins, once that a Sowanee hath cross'd 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."

A Sowanee (a Srotapatti) is one who practices Sowan, the first path in Dhyana. Geoffrey Barboroka says in *The Divine Plan*, "Srotāpatti is the *state* of entry into the current leading to the 'Ocean,' hence the first of the four paths to Nirvana" (p. 437). Therefore, a Sowanee is one who has entered the current leading to Nirvana. The "silver star" is the Star of Initiation. "Master of the Day" is one who is safe in the present evolutionary cycle; one who has attained to victory over himself during this cycle of rounds and races, and is ready to enter into other existences beyond our ken. When a soul rises to this great height of attainment, all sentient beings and the matter which make up mother earth sense a stirring of new life; the earth has received a new impetus; another savior is born who will bring peace and love and thus assist the Hierarchy in speeding up the evolution of the planet.

VOICE:

282. He standeth now like a white pillar to the west, upon whose face the rising Sun of thought eternal poureth forth its first most glorious waves. His mind, like a becalmed and boundless ocean, spreadeth out in shoreless space. He holdeth life and death in his strong hand.

283. Yea, He is mighty. The living power made free in him, that power which is HIMSELF, can raise the tabernacle of illusion high above the gods, above great Brahma and Indra. Now he shall surely reach his great reward!

The symbol of the East is often used to typify the position of the Great White Brotherhood. The adjective "white" is a time-honored symbol that has often been used to indicate purity and spiritual qualities. It has nothing to do with skin color or ethnicity. The "tabernacle of illusion" is man; only through human effort can a soul

reach Self-Knowledge. There is no other way to reach union with Divinity than through understanding, and a human being is the only creature made in the image of God and, therefore, *able to seek* and to find union with Him. The daring pilgrim has traveled far, and there is no limit to the height to which he may now rise. He will be able to leave this dark planet behind him and go on his glorious way. Brahma and Indra represent great creative forces—gods.

REVIEW QUESTIONS :

1. What is the meaning of Deva-knowledge?
2. Name the sixth gate.
3. Why is “rhythm” necessary to spiritual progress?
4. What is the Titiksha state?
5. What is the Srotapatti state?

Through great cycles of time successive incarnations in gross matter may yet be his lot; but he no longer desires them, the crude wish to live has darted from him. When he takes upon him man’s form in the flesh he does it in the pursuit of a divine object, to accomplish the work of “the Masters,” and for no other end.

—*Light On The Path*

Study Notes on *The Voice of the Silence* — Fragment Three

Lesson 14

VOICE:

284. Shall he not use the gifts which it confers for his own rest and bliss, his well-earn'd weal and glory—he, the subduer of the great Delusion?

Again, *The Voice* repeats the great choice facing the candidate. Will he claim his well-earned reward—or—turn his back upon the prize?

VOICE:

285. Nay, O thou candidate for Nature's hidden lore! If one would follow in the steps of holy Tathagata, those gifts and powers are not for Self.

286. Would'st thou thus dam the waters born on Sumeru? Shalt thou divert the stream for thine own sake, or send it back to its prime source along the crests of cycles?

If he would follow in the steps of Buddha, all the powers that will be bestowed upon him must be used in selfless service. These powers, of course, are really self-bestowed, i.e., earned through a pure and dedicated life. All this power lies dormant within the sleeping blossoms, which are our chakras. We are told that Mount Meru or *Sumeru*, is called the Mount of the Gods, a source from which flows all spiritual knowledge, and which continues to flow into and through every member of the Brotherhood and must eventually reach every possessor of the Divine Spark. And so, in order to carry on the great work, the candidate is ever on the alert in watching and awaiting opportunities to pass on the knowledge he has gained. Thus the stream continues to flow freely for all who seek to quench their thirst for spiritual knowledge.

VOICE:

287. If thou would'st have that stream of hard-earn'd knowledge, of Wisdom heaven-born, remain sweet running waters, thou should'st not leave it to become a stagnant pond.

Once the candidate has contacted the Divine Source, and it has started to flow freely through him, it would be unwise to block it off by any selfish motive. He should be constantly aware that he is but an instrument for its passage to the world.

288. Know, if of Amitabha, the "Boundless Age," thou would'st become co-worker, then must thou shed the light acquired, like to the Bodhisattvas twain, upon the span of all three worlds.

Amitabha is the "un-measurable, blazing, splendour in boundless space" which manifested in Gautama Buddha and in other "Sons of Light." "The Bodhisattvas twain" in one sense refers to the two Great Brothers, the Lord Gautama and the Lord Maitreya, who represent the middle principle in the Hierarchy, the former dealing with the higher worlds, and the latter turned downwards to deal with the personalities of the lower planes. The "span of all three worlds" refers to the terrestrial, astral, and spiritual planes. This may have something to do with the three-crowned headdress worn by the popes, signifying their knowledge of, and rulership over, the three planes. These symbols are very ancient and have been known only to the few.

VOICE:

289. Know that the stream of superhuman knowledge and the Deva-Wisdom thou hast won, must, from thyself, the channel of Alaya, be poured forth into another bed.

290. Know, O Narjol, thou of the Secret Path, its pure fresh waters must be used to sweeter make the Ocean's bitter waves—that mighty sea of sorrow formed of the tears of men.

The "stream of superhuman knowledge" refers to the Wisdom of the Gods, Deva-Wisdom. This super-knowledge creates a "super-man." He is now a shepherd seeking his flock. His eye is single, with no other thought but to help suffering mankind climb out of darkness into light.

VOICE:

291. Alas! when once thou hast become like the fix'd star in highest heaven, that bright celestial orb must shine from out the spatial depths for all—save for itself; give light to all, but take from none.

292. Alas! when once thou hast become like the pure snow in mountain vales, cold and unfeeling to the touch, warm and protective to the seed that sleepeth deep beneath its

bosom—'tis now that snow which must receive the biting frost, the northern blasts, thus shielding from their sharp and cruel tooth the earth that holds the promised harvest, the harvest that will feed the hungry.

He who has attained to the position of a Shining One must, like a star, shed his beneficent rays upon all mankind, asking nothing in return. The aspirant is unfeeling only in the sense that he has learned, by focusing his mind upon the spiritual Self, to withdraw unnecessary attention from himself. And so, when trouble comes his way, he is not affected in the way an unenlightened person would be, for he understands that suffering is brought about by wrong thought and wrong action. An aspirant is glad to face up to his bad karma, for then he can begin to replace it with good. He is ever mindful of the deity in man, and therefore ever eager to assist his brothers in regaining their godhead.

VOICE:

293. Self-doomed to live through future Kalpas, unthanked and unperceived by man; wedged as a stone with countless other stones which form the "Guardian Wall," such is thy future if the seventh gate thou passest. Built by the hands of many Masters of Compassion, raised by their tortures, by their blood cemented, it shields mankind, since man is man, protecting it from further and far greater misery and sorrow.

In the glossary of *The Voice*, HPB describes the Guardian Wall as "... the wall of protection. It is taught that the accumulated efforts of long generations of Yogis, Saints, and Adepts, especially of the Nirmanakayas—have created, so to say, a wall of protection around mankind, which wall shields mankind invisibly from still worse evils." *The Secret Doctrine* says that all the evils are man-made, ever since man became Man, and was able to think. And so it is suggested that we should endeavor to raise our thinking in order to weaken the attraction of these lower forces.

VOICE:

294. Withal man sees it not, will not perceive it, nor will he heed the word of Wisdom . . . for he knows it not.

295. But thou hast heard it, thou knowest all, O thou of eager guileless Soul. . . . and thou must choose. Then hearken yet again.

Man is slow to see the Light. We are still dazzled by this world of illusion with its myriad enticements. But in time, the circus of this life will begin to pall, and we will look for something more stable. The awakened ones know that the sublime joys of the spiritual life outweigh the temporary pleasures of worldly existence.

VOICE:

296. On Sowan's Path, O Srotapatti, thou art secure. Aye, on that Marga, where nought but darkness meets the weary pilgrim, where torn by thorns the hands drip blood, the feet are cut by sharp unyielding flints, and Mara wields his strongest arms—there lies a great reward *immediately* beyond.

In the above verse, the word "Marga" refers to the path of holiness. Only the most selfless and dedicated can tread this path, for it demands *all that you are*, and no half measures. To give up all is to gain all. The reward awaiting the inner man cannot be imagined by ordinary men.

VOICE:

297. Calm and unmoved the Pilgrim glideth up the stream that to Nirvana leads. He knoweth that the more his feet will bleed, the whiter will himself be washed. He knoweth well that after seven short and fleeting births Nirvana will be his. . . .

298. Such is the Dhyana Path, the haven of the Yogi, the blessed goal that Srotapattis crave.

The candidate arrives at this state not only through selfless deeds of love and charity, but also by the Path of Dhyana (meditation), through which he steadily works his way upward to the Buddhistic plane.

VOICE:

299. Not so when he hath crossed and won the Aryahata path.

300. There Klesha is destroyed for ever, Tanha's roots torn out. But stay, Disciple . . . Yet one word. Canst thou destroy divine COMPASSION? Compassion is no attribute. It is the LAW of LAWS—eternal Harmony Alaya's SELF; a shoreless universal essence, the light of everlasting Right, and fitness of all things, the law of love eternal.

“Klesha” is love of the pleasures of this earth, and “tanha” is the desire to live in physical form. Compassion stands here as an abstract impersonal law whose nature is absolute harmony.

VOICE:

301. 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.

To become “Compassion Absolute” is to feel the utter need to communicate this compassion to all mankind so that they also may learn to feel merciful and tender toward their brothers and all the other kingdoms of nature.

VOICE:

302. Such is the Arya Path, Path of the Buddhas of perfection.

The “Arya Path” is the original knowledge as taught by the Aryans, and as followed by Buddha and the Master Jesus.

VOICE:

303. Withal what mean the sacred scrolls which make thee say?

304. “OM! I believe it is not all the Arhats that get of the Nirvanic Path the sweet fruition.”

305. “OM! I believe that the Nirvana-Dharma is entered not by all the Buddhas.”

Even an Arhat could fail on the Nirvanic Path, for he must continually practice the Virtues and keep in mind that it is not *he* that is in a state of becoming but the Divine Self within, which is gradually taking over. And so humility is more necessary as he advances on the Path. They say that the Nirvanic Path is not entered by all the Enlightened Ones, as many prefer to remain in the lower realms in order to influence the souls of men.

VOICE:

306. “Yea; on the Arya Path thou art no more Srotapatti, thou art a Bodhisattva. The stream is cross’d. ‘Tis true thou hast a right to Dharmakaya vesture; but Sambhogakaya is greater than a Nirvani, and greater still is a Nirmanakaya—the Buddha of Compassion.”

The pilgrim (Srotapatti) who first entered the stream has now become a Bodhisattva, a potential Buddha. He is told that once he has attained to the *Dharmakaya* vesture (state) he has a right to renounce all relations with earth life and merge with the Universal Consciousness. But he is also earnestly entreated to consider the two other states or bodies, the *Sambhogakaya* and *Nirmanakaya*. The *Sambhogakaya* is the same, says HPB, but with the additional luster of three perfections, one of which is entire obliteration of all earthly concerns. And the *Nirmanakaya* is the ethereal form which one would assume when, leaving his physical, he would appear in his astral body—having in addition all the knowledge of an Adept. The Bodhisattva develops it in himself as he proceeds on the path. Having reached the goal and refused its fruition, he remains on earth as an Adept; and when he dies, instead of going into Nirvana, he remains in that glorious body he has woven for himself, invisible to uninitiated mankind, to watch over and protect it.

VOICE:

**307. 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?”**

The warrior listening to his heart, which is now in tune with all suffering men and creatures, cannot turn a deaf ear to their cry for help. One senses all through *The Voice* an undercurrent of pleading, of hope, that when the pilgrim finally reaches his goal, he will not forget the sufferings of the world.

VOICE:

308. Now thou hast heard that which was said.

**309. 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.**

The *Theosophical Glossary* translates Tathagata as “he who is, like his predecessors (the Buddhas) and successors, the coming future Buddha or World-Saviour.” To “wed woe” is to remain to help this “dark planet” earth “until the grass itself be enlightened.”

VOICE:

310. Thou art enlightened—Choose thy way.

311. Behold, the mellow light that floods the Eastern sky. In signs of praise both heaven and earth unite. And from the four-fold manifested Powers a chant of love ariseth, both from the flaming Fire and flowing Water, and from sweet-smelling Earth and rushing Wind.
312. Hark! . . . from the deep unfathomable vortex of that golden light in which the Victor bathes, ALL NATURE's wordless voice in thousand tones ariseth to proclaim:
313. JOY UNTO YE, O MEN OF MYALBA.
314. A PILGRIM HATH RETURNED BACK "FROM THE OTHER SHORE."
315. A NEW ARHAN IS BORN. . . .
316. *Peace to all beings.*

HPB writes, "*Myalba* is our earth—pertinently called 'Hell,' and the greatest of all Hells, by the esoteric school." And she goes on to say, "The esoteric doctrine knows of no hell or place of punishment other than a man-bearing planet or earth." And so, we have followed the earnest pilgrim step-by-step, from first setting foot on the path to his final enlightenment, and willing sacrifice.

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. What does the "Sacred Stream" represent?
2. What is the "Guardian Wall"?
3. The pilgrim advances through action and inaction. Explain this.
4. What is meant by "Compassion Absolute"?
5. What is the "Arya Path"?
6. Which "vesture" is chosen by an Arhan or saviour?

I should like to end this series of lessons on *The Voice of the Silence*—which it is believed was one of HPB's last works—by quoting the following passage. Her message in essence is timeless, and is as a clarion call to present day Theosophists everywhere.

There is a road, steep and thorny, 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 that leads inwards only and closes fast behind the neophyte for evermore.

There is no danger that dauntless courage cannot conquer, there is no trial that spotless purity cannot pass through, no difficulty that strong intellect cannot surmount. For those who win onwards, 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.

—*The Secret Gateway*, H.P. Blavatsky

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