

Studies in "The Voice of the Silence"

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3. – THE MIND OF THE RENOUNCER

The guiding principle in the Probationer's life is Discrimination between the Real and the Unreal. But these terms take on a special meaning for him; not the ordinary discrimination, between soul and sense, between mind and matter, between Beness and Being, but discrimination between Selflessness and Selfishness as ultimate cosmic principles. If he is bent on Liberation his discrimination follows one channel; if on Renunciation, it cuts a different canal. In the former case the neophyte's aspiration is for freedom from the world of erring humanity and entrance into the state of spiritual bliss. On the Path of Renunciation his whole concern is with Humanity – not with his own realization of Bliss ineffable, but with bringing the bliss of enlightenment to the minds of men. The knowledge necessary for spiritual Self- Realization is limited; but that necessary for the service of other souls is vast and complex. Esoteric Philosophy, advocating for its votaries the treading of the Path of Renunciation, requires that they obtain the latter knowledge.

The first necessary step shown in the second fragment of our textbook, "The Two Paths," is that of the Buddhi-yoga of the second chapter of *The Bhagavad-Gita*, with one important difference. It not only recommends seeking asylum in mental devotion and doing one's duty without caring for the fruits of action, but also adds – "Gain Siddhis for thy future birth."

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 Voice of the Silence*, ULT-edition p. 39]

To practise the most difficult art of doing good to others requires exceptional knowledge. It is not sufficient to gain "deliverance of mind from thralldom by the cessation of sins and faults."

Not cessation of sins, but something more; not suppression of vice but its elimination. The man who seeks and gains Mukti not only abandons humanity but leaves behind a particular set of his skandhas, which perforce

must attract him back to incarnated existence, be it in another manvantara. Among the weaknesses and the conditions to be overcome by the future Adept are not only "desires for possession and power" but also "duties which, however honourable, are still of the earth earthy." Here is a subtle difference in the evaluation of Duty from that which is ordinarily made, a difference which the future Renouncer has to note. The development of right renunciation at the early stages and for the Probationer consists in the Performance of duties; in not shirking them, but discharging them. In discharging them, however, he has to learn the lesson contained in the performance and develop the power which goes with that performance. Liberation comes by the payment of our debts to all duties. But unless effort along a special line is made the powers which follow that performance will not unfold in his consciousness, and the treading of the Path of Renunciation will be impossible.

There are two kinds of Siddhis – the one lower and psychic, the other higher and spiritual. When the Probationer is told, "Gain Siddhis for thy future birth," it is the powers of the second type that are meant – powers belonging to Buddhi-Manas. In the performance of duty one should have not only detachment from the lower personal self and from the results of actions, but also attachment to the higher egoic self, so that the field of Dharma-yagna, sacrificial service, widens. He who desires liberation discharges his duties in such a fashion as to create no new causes – exhaustion of Karma is his method. But he who aspires to tread the Path of Renunciation performs actions in such a manner as to create new opportunities to serve an increasing number of human minds. Each sacrificial action of his, naturally unfolding from his congenital duties, Karma-Dharma, is like a pebble thrown in a lake – the circles of Karma made by it grow and grow. But, the aspirant is thrown back into his old sphere if, through lack of knowledge and because of limited perception, in serving he does not unfold the spiritual Siddhis. Each sacrificial deed deepens the spiritual insight, provided that both in motive and in method it is according to the teachings of the Esoteric Philosophy. Occultism teaches how to turn the forces of evil to good and unless the Probationer on the Path of Renunciation learns this and thus gains Siddhis his success will be very distant. Therefore this is said:

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. 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. [*Voice*, p. 28]

The ordinary man has for his horizon his street; his insight is surface-deep and the points of his magnetic compass draw him to his appetites. He lives in his sense-created state, which looks to him like a real world but which is not any of the seven Worlds of Rest Eternal. His mind made subservient to his senses, and his senses to his appetites, he goes from death to death. The man who has begun to live, who recognizes that life being probationary, afflictions are opportunities, looks beyond his street. Modern education does give him some breadth of vision, but not the depth, and therefore the gap between his knowledge and his practice, between his mental and his moral life, between his sacred beliefs and his secular deeds. Theosophy educates the human mind to gain depth, to see below the surface, to penetrate into the very kernel of form. When the horizon of the student is broadened, when the insight of the practitioner has deepened, and therefore he has begun to live, he must secure the magnetic compass of the higher life. In navigation, by means of the magnetic compass the directive force of Earth, the great magnet, upon a freely-suspended needle is used and it is indispensable. Equally indispensable, nay more so, is the corresponding instrument to navigate the ocean of Samsara. The depth of insight develops Viveka-discrimination, and for the learning soul, that aspect of it which enables him to select ideas and aphorisms which, under Karma and for his particular stage, are necessary. The points of his magnetic compass show him the way to Sat – Truth. It is for the human mind to maintain the breadth and the depth gained by not allowing desires and fancies to exert their power of suggestion and to draw him away to Maya's realm. This has to be achieved by the mind blending itself with the Soul.

Daily, nay hourly, from the sphere of memory the dust rises and settles on the mind, taking away its capacity to reflect the Divine Ideas of Akasha. Therefore daily and hourly the mirror of the mind has to be dusted and study of the Esoteric Philosophy does it. Sustained effort to reflect Divine Ideas polishes the mind, transforming the mirror and giving it the superior capacity to reproduce, more and more accurately, the Living Images of Devas and

Dhyanis, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. These reproductions are the real points that draw the Chela-Soul to the Vajrasattva, the "Lord of all Mysteries."

It is during the process of brushing away the dust of illusions, of blending mind and soul, of soaring into the sphere of Sat, that the choice to tread the Path of Renunciation is confirmed, because we see the hidden meanings and the occult implications of that choice. The Great Choice comes at the end, when the knowledge concerning the two Ways is obtained:

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:

"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."

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:

"For others' sake this great reward I yield." – accomplishes the greater Renunciation.

A SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD is he.

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!

OM VAJRAPANI HUM.

[Voice, p. 46-47]

The student will do well to make use of *The Theosophical Glossary* and to reflect upon the terms (1) Pratyeka-Buddha; (2) Vajrapani; (3) Vajrasattva; and (4) Vajradhara.

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4. – THE VIRTUOUS MIND

Universal respect is paid to a man of virtue. A good-hearted man is admired, but so is a clever-minded man. In our modern civilization mental capacity and moral power are allowed to remain dissociated, education almost fostering the dissociation. A gentleman in clubland will not cheat at the card-table, but the same man will not hesitate to cut the throat of his friend who happens to be a business competitor. Most Occidental church-going people condemn polygamy and polyandry most severely, but they connive at adultery in both men and women. The orthodox Hindu, philosophizing, argues and proves that Brahman is in the heart of each, but he sees no illogicality in observing in practice the immortal doctrine of untouchability. We can go on multiplying instances to show how moral principles are set at nought by intelligent minds, even by so-called logicians and philosophers.

The integration of hands, head and heart is the central and fundamental teaching of *The Voice of the Silence*. Moral principles are not only to be acknowledged – all the world does that – they are to be applied. The value of the mental habit of looking for the underlying moral principle before any deed is done or any word spoken is not all recognized by the "educated and cultured." Occultism demands the constant practice of bringing into juxtaposition moral principles and intellectual doctrines. If it is immoral to cheat at the club, it is also immoral to cheat in the office; if polygamy is wrong, adultery is worse, for in the latter hypocrisy is present; if Brahman is in all men, then untouchability is false and its practitioner is an irreligious man. The man on the path of chelaship is called upon to consult his code of rules and laws at every turn. Like a lawyer he has his memory, but almost always the lawyer refreshes his memory and before acting consults his code-books. This the learner of Occultism is expected to do. "To sleep over a letter and to wait on a plan" is a rule because it gives the necessary time to refresh the memory and to search the scriptures. To seek the principles of action, both moral and mental, is essential, and even on the field of battle the Master Krishna thought it necessary to set them forth.

The general rule, the fundamental and foundational law to be always and ever kept in mind, is that of Brotherhood. If a thought or a feeling, a word or a deed, harms another soul, it is wrong. To the true practitioner H.P.B. gives this advice:

He must think of himself as an infinitesimal something, not even as an individual atom, but as a part of the world-atoms as a whole, or become an illusion, a nobody, and vanish like a breath leaving no trace behind. As illusions, we are separate distinct bodies, living in masks furnished by Maya. Can we claim one single atom in our body as distinctly our own? Everything, from spirit to the tiniest particle, is part of the whole, at best a link. Break a single link and all passes into annihilation; but this is impossible. There is a series of vehicles becoming more and more gross, from spirit to the densest matter, so that with each step downward and outward we get more and more the sense of separateness developed in us. Yet this is illusory, for if there were a real and complete separation between any two human beings, they could not communicate with, or understand each other in any way. [*Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge*, ULT-edition, p.138]

The Law of Brotherhood is intellectually recognized by all students, and earnest practitioners begin to make applications. But the influence of the race-mind is very strong, and so even practitioners are swayed by the difference between mental understanding and moral application. All Probationers are called upon to examine themselves by the light of their own Inner Ego and with the help of the divine virtues – the *paramitas*. Ordinarily, virtues are considered to be attributes of the heart; we do not usually speak of mind-feelings integration or yoga-union between mind and heart demands that the mind become virtuous. We have to learn to think of virtues and to use our reason and our intelligence, our discrimination and our discernment, in practising the *paramitas*, with which deals the third fragment of our textbook, called "The Seven Portals." It is from the point of view of the relation between mind and morals that we want to examine the golden Keys.

Because the mind is driven by human feelings and passions, it roams in the field of the senses, destroying them and itself. Therefore the injunction: "Thou shalt not let thy senses make a playground of thy mind." [*Voice*, p.54]

Before the mind can absorb the virtues the learner has to see within himself the difference between desire-mind and soul-mind. A bridge called Conscience exists as a third factor. Conscience is Antahkarana – the internal organ – and it is both the voice of experience accumulated in the world of matter and the channel of divine light streaming forth from the world of

Spirit. Conscience rightly activated bridges the gulf which ordinarily exists between mental and moral activities. Before the actual treading of the Path begins and the first of the divine *paramitas* can be correctly practised, the integration between head and heart is necessary.

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. [*Voice*, p. 53-54]

This does not imply that the art of separating the body from the mind is acquired; but it does mean that each time, if Dana- Charity is to be rightly expressed, an attempt has to be made to examine the relative position of body and mind, to live, be it but for a moment, in the eternal, to feel that something of ourself abides in all things and that all things are in the One Self. This preliminary to the exercise of the Dana-paramita brings to it the strength of the mind and of true ideas. As it is most difficult, almost impossible, to attune our mind to the mind of the whole of humanity, advantage is taken of the Chela-institution, and we are told to attune our mind to "the collective minds of Lanoo- Shravakas." The feeling of unity illuminates the mind; the enlightened mind uses the virtue of Dana, charity and love immortal, not sentimentally and sensuously, but Egoically.

What is true of Dana is equally true of Shila and of Kshanti; these form a triad, for love creates harmony, and without patience, harmony cannot be created. The balanced offspring, whether a word or an act, a poem or a picture, has for its father love and for its mother patience. When the child is created, its nature of perfection makes it a masterpiece, and there is Bliss "for ever after."

Similarly, the last three paramitas, Virya, Dhyana and Prajna, form a triad. When, with dauntless energy, the father pursues contemplation, the result is Prajna – full spiritual perception.

Between the two triads is the paramita of Viraga (Vairagya) without which neither can Maya-Illusion be conquered nor can Truth- Sat be perceived. Detachment, dispassion, indifference, is, in more than one sense, the most important of the virtues. And we are told:

Have mastery o'er thy thoughts, O striver for perfection, if thou would'st cross its [the middle portal's] threshold. [*Voice*, p. 64]

It is the mind which fructifies attachment to objects of sense. If the mind did not lend itself to the dictates of the desires and the passions there would be no attachment. Detached from the lower, it has within itself the power to attach itself to the higher.

Now, the gratification felt by the elemental beings who make up our desire nature is due to the interplay between them and the senses and the organs – the Gnyana-Indriyas and the Karma- Indriyas. Desire-perception leads to desire-action. Therefore we are told:

Stern and exacting is the virtue of Viraga. If thou its path
would'st master thou must keep thy mind and thy perceptions far
freer than before from killing action. [*Voice*, p. 62]

The action which is not pleasing to Ishvara and which kills the Soul is selfish action; its opposite is sacrifice; sacramental action is *yagna*. Any action, however trivial, can be transformed into a sacrament by the magic called Yagna (see *The Theosophical Glossary* under "YAJNA"). All the Karmas we inherit from the past form our duties, our Dharma; the Esotericist *has* to perform his Dharma, so that each performance becomes sacramental. But –

Before thine hand is lifted to upraise the fourth gate's latch,
thou must have mastered all the mental changes in thyself and
slain the army of the thought sensations that, subtle and
insidious, creep unmasked within the Soul's bright shrine. [*Voice*,
p.60-61]

The unwanted thoughts overpower the consciousness even before their presence is registered – that is the first stage. To oust them is difficult, but the effort brings the *Siddhi*, the power, of sensing their approach. In this second stage danger lies in keeping the mind vacant. It is important to learn to keep ourselves mentally engaged. It is necessary ever to have near at hand thoughts and things which would hold the mind steady and firm. "Possession in nine points of the law," it is said, and that is equally true of the mind possessing true ideas, which make it immune to attack from the enemy.

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. [*Voice*, p. 61]

It is through our thoughts, good and bad, that we bind ourselves to humanity, and to the universe. The thought-links are very powerful binders and Vairagya is detachment of our own mind from all thought-links. The thoughts of others bind us to them, in proportion as we are consubstantial with them. This law, however, works on the beneficent side as well: *thoughts* link us to the Supreme Self, to the Blessed Ones who live in the infinitudes of space or on earth. Our desires fill our world now; they impel us to think, to plan, to act; a void is the world of Spirit for the man of flesh. But when the higher choice is made and the resolve taken, the emptiness of the world of the senses is seen. Invocation of the higher, daily contact with the higher, sustained repose in the higher reveal how grand and blissful the plenum is. Detachment from the lower, cleaving to the higher, transfer the loves of the aspiring practitioner to a spiritual realm, and from there the *Maya* of the material universe looks like a play, a drama, a *lila*. The symbols of the vacuum and the plenum are excellent metaphysical ideas, contemplation on which strengthens the virtue of Vairagya.

Thou hast to study the Voidness of the seeming full, the fulness of the seeming Void. 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? [*Voice*, p.61]

Every effort to reach and to hold a new position in a higher world requires spiritual energy – Virya. The source thereof is in the spiritual pole of man's being. Bodily energy related to the prana-principle in man is but the lowest expression of Virya. Virya is called the semen of the Soul and it is activated by spiritual celibacy – Brahmacharya of the mind. The Chelas of the Great Gurus are real Brahmacharis – young learners gaining the strength of knowledge, who presently will enter the Great House of the Fathers of the Race. If the practice of bodily Brahmacharya is a difficult undertaking, much more difficult is Soul-celibacy, necessary for real one-pointedness, Dhyana. As in all else, unfoldment from within without is the law in Brahmacharya: inner psycho-spiritual celibacy makes the outer psycho-physiological celibacy possible. Those who try to practise the latter without a basis of the former fail – and worse than fail.

For attaining Dhyana-paramita the learner has to acquire the art of using energy for both offensive and defensive purposes. The consciousness has to attain a state wherein attacks from the lower regions do not touch it; and also in that state the movement towards the ultimate goal is steadily continued.

The Dhyana-state is static in relation to the lower, but dynamic in relation to the higher. In it the attacks from the astral light have to be met and warded off, while a steady rising in the Divine Astral or Akasha has to be attempted. This dual task is implicit in the following verses, arranged to facilitate the reader's understanding:

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 – Dhyana-Marga, "path of pure knowledge" named.

Ere thou canst settle in Dhyana-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.

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 Dhyana-Marga, these must mirror nought of Maya's realm illusive.

A task far harder still awaits thee: thou hast to feel thyself *all-thought*, and yet exile all thoughts from out thy Soul.

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.

The Dhyana Path, the haven of the Yogi, the blessed goal that Srotapattis crave.

The Probationer is on the shore of the Manasa-sarovara where, Occult tradition teaches, great Sages recorded what they had heard as the Vedas. He has to enter the Waters of Wisdom and dive deep and deeper till he sees the Naga, the Dragon-Lord of the Lake. He teaches, it is said, the mantram to the new Arhan who comes out into Myalba to repeat it, and it is –

PEACE TO ALL BEINGS

B. P. WADIA

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