

Title

The Voice of the Silence

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About this eBook

“The Voice of the Silence” by H. P. Blavatsky; Translated and annotated by “H. P. B.”

Being Chosen fragment from the “Book of the Golden Precepts.”
For the daily use of Lanoos (Disciples)

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THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE

Preface

The following pages are derived from "The Book of the Golden Precepts," one of the works put into the hands of mystic students in the East. The knowledge of them is obligatory in that school, the teachings of which are accepted by many Theosophists. Therefore, as I know many of these Precepts by heart, the work of translating has been relatively an easy task for me.

It is well known that, in India, the methods of psychic development differ with the Gurus (teachers or masters), not only because of their belonging to different schools of philosophy, of which there are six, but because every Guru has his own system, which he generally keeps very secret. But beyond the Himalayas the method in the Esoteric Schools does not differ, unless the Guru is simply a Lama, but little more learned than those he teaches.

The work from which I here translate forms part of the same series as that from which the "Stanzas" of the *Book of Dzyan* were taken, on which the *Secret Doctrine* is based. Together with the great mystic work called *Paramartha*, which, the legend of *Nagarjuna* tells us, was delivered to the great Arhat by the Nagas or "Serpents" (in truth a name given to the ancient Initiates), the "Book of the Golden Precepts" claims the same origin. Yet its maxims and ideas, however noble and original, are often found under different forms in Sanskrit works, such as the *Dnyaneshwari*, that superb mystic treatise in which Krishna describes to Arjuna in glowing colours the condition of a fully illumined Yogi; and again in certain Upanishads. This is but natural, since most, if not all, of the greatest Arhats, the first followers of Gautama Buddha were Hindus and Aryans, not Mongolians, especially those who emigrated into Tibet. The works left by Aryasanga alone are very numerous.

The original *Precepts* are engraved on thin oblong squares; copies very often on discs. These discs, or plates, are generally preserved on the altars of the temples attached to centres where the so-called "contemplative" or Mahayana (Yogacharya) schools are established. They are written variously, sometimes in Tibetan but mostly in ideographs. The sacerdotal language (Senzar), besides an alphabet of its own, may be rendered in several modes of writing in cypher characters, which partake more of the nature of ideographs than of syllables. Another method (*lug*, in Tibetan) is to use the numerals and colours, each of which corresponds to a letter of the Tibetan alphabet (thirty simple and seventy-four compound letters) thus forming a complete cryptographic alphabet. When the ideographs are used there is a definite mode of reading the text; as in this case the symbols and signs used in astrology, namely the twelve zodiacal animals and the seven primary colours, each a triplet in shade, i.e. the light, the primary, and the dark — stand for the thirty-three letters of the simple alphabet, for words and sentences. For in this method, the twelve "animals" five times repeated and coupled with the five elements and the seven colours, furnish a whole alphabet composed of sixty sacred letters and twelve signs. A sign placed at the beginning of the text determines whether the reader has to spell it according to the Indian mode, when every word is simply a Sanskrit adaptation, or according to the Chinese principle of reading the ideographs. The easiest way however, is that which allows the reader to use no special, or any language he likes, as the signs and symbols were, like the Arabian numerals or figures, common and international property among initiated mystics and their followers. The same peculiarity is characteristic of one of the Chinese modes of writing, which can be read with equal facility by any one acquainted with the character: for instance, a Japanese can read it in his own language as readily as a Chinaman in his.

The Book of the Golden Precepts — some of which are pre-Buddhistic while others belong to a later date — contains about ninety distinct little treatises. Of these I learnt thirty-nine by heart, years ago. To translate the rest, I should have to resort to notes scattered among a too

large number of papers and memoranda collected for the last twenty years and never put in order, to make of it by any means an easy task. Nor could they be all translated and given to a world too selfish and too much attached to objects of sense to be in any way prepared to receive such exalted ethics in the right spirit. For, unless a man perseveres seriously in the pursuit of self-knowledge, he will never lend a willing ear to advice of this nature.

And yet such ethics fill volumes upon volumes in Eastern literature, especially in the Upanishads. "Kill out all desire of life," says Krishna to Arjuna. That desire lingers only in the body, the vehicle of the embodied Self, not in the *SELF* which is "eternal, indestructible, which kills not nor is it killed" (*Katha Upanishad*). "Kill out sensation," teaches *Sutta Nipata*; "look alike on pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat." Again, "Seek shelter in the eternal alone" (*ibid*). "Destroy the sense of separateness," repeats Krishna under every form. "The Mind (*Manas*) which follows the rambling senses, makes the Soul (*Buddhi*) as helpless as the boat which the wind leads astray upon the waters" (*Bhagavatgita II. 70*).

Therefore it has been thought better to make a judicious selection only from those treatises which will best suit the few real mystics in the Theosophical Society, and which are sure to answer their needs. It is only these who will appreciate these words of Krishna-Christos, the "Higher Self": —

"Sages do not grieve for the living nor the dead. Never did I not exist, nor you, nor these rulers of men; nor will any one of us ever hereafter cease to be." (*Bhagavatgita II. 27*).

In this translation, I have done my best to preserve the poetical beauty of language and imagery which characterise the original. How far this effort has been successful, is for the reader to judge. —

"H.P.B."

Fragment I: The Voice of the Silence

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

He who would hear the voice of *Nada*², "the Soundless Sound," and comprehend it, he has to learn the nature of *Dharana*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.

The Mind is the great Slayer of the Real.

Let the Disciple slay the Slayer.

For: —

When to himself his form appears unreal, as do on waking all the forms he sees in dreams;

When he has ceased to hear the many, he may discern the *ONE* — the inner sound which kills the outer.

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

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

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 fire-fly.

¹ The Pali word *Iddhi*, is the synonym of the Sanskrit *Siddhis*, or psychic faculties, the abnormal powers in man. There are two kinds of *Siddhis*. One group which embraces the lower, coarse, psychic and mental energies; the other is one which exacts the highest training of Spiritual powers. Says Krishna in *Shrimad Bhagavat*: —

² The "Soundless Voice," or the "Voice of the Silence." Literally perhaps this would read "Voice in the *Spiritual Sound*," as *Nada* is the equivalent word in Sanskrit, for the *Sen-sar* term.

³ *Dharana*, is the intense and perfect concentration of the mind upon someone interior object, accompanied by complete abstraction from everything pertaining to the external Universe, or the world of the senses.

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 modelled, is first united with the potter's mind.

For then the soul will hear, and will remember.

And then to the inner ear will speak —

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And say: —

If thy soul smiles while bathing in the Sunlight of thy Life; if thy soul sings within her chrysalis of flesh and matter; if thy soul weeps inside her castle of illusion; if thy soul struggles to break the silver thread that binds her to the *MASTER*⁴; know, O Disciple, thy Soul is of the earth.

When to the World's turmoil thy budding soul⁵ lends ear; when to the roaring voice of the great illusion thy Soul responds⁶ 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.

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 delusion⁷.

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"⁸.

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.

Saith the Great Law: — "In order to become the *KNOWER* of *ALL SELF*⁹ 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*¹⁰ throughout eternal ages¹¹.

Bestride the Bird of Life, if thou would'st know¹².

Give up thy life, if thou would'st live¹³.

Three Halls, O weary pilgrim, lead to the end of toils. Three Halls, O conqueror of Mara,

⁴ The "great Master" is the term used by Ianoos or chelas to indicate one's "Higher Self." It is the equivalent of Avalokiteswara, and the same as Adi-Budha with the Buddhist Occultists, ATMAN the "Self" (the Higher Self) with the Brahmins, and CHRISTOS with the ancient Gnostics.

⁵ Soul is used here for the Human Ego or Manas, that which is referred to in our Occult Septenary division as the "Human Soul" (Vide the Secret Doctrine) in contradistinction to the Spiritual and Animal Souls.

⁶ *Maha Maya* "Great Illusion," the objective Universe.

⁷ Sakkayaditthi "delusion" of personality.

⁸ Attavada, the heresy of the belief in Soul or rather in the separateness of Soul or Self from the One Universal, infinite SELF.

⁹ The *Tatwagyane* is the "knower" or discriminator of the principles in nature and in man; and *Atmagyane* is the knower of ATMAN or the Universal, ONE SELF.

¹⁰ *Kala Hamsa*, the "Bird" or Swan (Vide No. 11). Says the *Nada-Bindu Upanishad* (Rig Veda) translated by the *Kumbakonam Theos. Society* — "The syllable A is considered to be its (the bird Hamsa's) right wing, u, its left, M, its tail, and the Ardha-matra (half metre) is said to be its head."

¹¹ Eternity with the Orientals has quite another signification than it has with us. It stands generally for the 100 years or "age" of Brahma, the duration of a Kalpa or a period of 4,320,000,000 years.

¹² Says the same *Nada-Bindu*, "A Yogi who bestrides the Hamsa (thus contemplates on Aum) is not affected by Karmic influences or crores of sins."

¹³ Says the same *Nada-Bindu*, "A Yogi who bestrides the Hamsa (thus contemplates on Aum) is not affected by Karmic influences or crores of sins."