

MYSTICISM IN “THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE”

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TRANSACTIONS

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TRANSACTION No. 61

The Voice of the Silence, translated and annotated by H. P. Blavatsky, is a mystic treatise belonging to the trans-himalayan tradition. It has been the subject of a large number of commentaries and explanations which are still insufficient.

This paper was delivered at the Indian Institute of World Culture by Susruva, who is a student of Theosophy of long standing, on White Lotus Day in 1981.

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MYSTICISM IN “THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE”

The term Mysticism defies definition. There are many definitions given in the books dealing with the subject. But, defining a thing means limiting it, crucifying by putting the idea on the Procrustean bed for the sake of verbal formulation, thus imprisoning reality within the framework of words. Is Truth then a picture to be framed or a fish to be caught in the network of words? If words reveal, don't they also hide? As an example, let us take the word “God”. It has become very archaic now. It ought to be dropped by those who do not need it for moral support, says Edmund Wilson. This word has already meant far too many things in several ages of history for too many kinds of people. But the one thing common to all the various meanings is its anthropomorphic idea: for man cannot get away from the trap of creating God in his own image! It is only to free him from this snare or delusion that mystics in all ages are born.

If words are traps, do ideas fare better? Not so, it seems, according to Sri Krishna's hint in II Chapter of the *Gita*, where it is pointed out that even the holy scriptures are not without pitfalls for the layman:

“When thy heart shall have worked through the snares of delusion, then wilt thou attain to high indifference as to those doctrines which are already taught or which are yet to be taught. When thy mind, liberated from the vedas shall be fixed immovably in contemplation, then shalt thou attain to devotion.”

These lines remind one of that Athenian gadfly, Socrates, who pricked the doctrines of the Sophists and who compared himself to a midwife as, by his dialogues, he was only eliciting knowledge already in the possession of Man.

In St. Luke's Gospel we see the Lord Jesus giving a similar counsel to his disciples, to whom he was able to reveal mysteries, while to the laity he spoke in parables, so that the difficult meanings would be masked. The implication obviously is that Truth cannot easily be put into words. No wonder that when Pontius, the Pilate, asked Jesus: “What is Truth?”, the Lord kept mum.

There seems then a sense in which these Masters are pointing to an escape hatch from the conventional grooves in which the Scriptures are formulated, thus suggesting a way out for the earnest aspirant to step out of the picture frame. Such a state of freedom then is Mysticism.

COSMIC INTELLIGENCE

When man goes beyond the imitations of thought, word and action, thus rising above doubt and delusion, says Sri Krishna, he can “abandon attachment” and be independent of possessions (the Sanskrit word used is “Niryogakshema”), but possessed of Self:

“The Vedas” concern is only with the three gunas. Be without them, O Arjuna, freed from duality, ever firm in purity, independent of possessions, but possessed of Self.

“Established in Yoga; O despiser of wealth, perform actions, having abandoned attachment and having become balanced in success and failure; for balance of mind is called Yoga.”

By yoga is meant union with the divine intelligence, Mysticism, the state of the cosmic mind, skill in action, or by whatever phrase you may like to call such a state, it is only by gaining the state of cosmic intelligence that free action can be performed, unfettered by the mind, “the Thought-Producer, he who awakes illusion.

Yes, these words recall us that our study is the “Voice of the Silence”, *Gita*. - However, we have in some measure caught the gist of what Mysticism” is without a definition In this state, the gulf between man's intrinsic and instrumental, or rather the spiritual and the material ends disappears, and

neither the ordinary routine of individual life nor the aspirations for universal kinship exhibits contradictions any longer. These are resolved into a harmony, which is but the projection of spiritual illumination into the world of human relationships and values. The mystic denies the physical, boundaries which separate man from man, subject from self, the outer world from the inner reality; and how beautifully all this is expressed in the *Voice* :

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

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

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

" 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"

As the mystic rehabilitates the principle of harmony in all things, the actual world will be reconstructed on the basis of the participation by the entire community in the eternal values of the individual's spiritual life; or to use the Aurobindonian phrase, to make 'life divine' Thus, the realisation of each person in all and all in each, in the widest and deepest sense of the phrase, must be the goal of society and religion alike. The mystic vision, embodied in the *Voice*, eternally sheds its rays upon our life and experience which in turn constantly renews our love and thought for universal brotherhood with ever growing brilliance.

This uncompromising unitive basis of exposition in the *Voice* implies that we have come forth from unity and return to unity, which is evident in Madame Blavatsky's definition of humanity in the Key: "as an emanation from divinity on its return path thereto." When the segregated mind is freed from the heresy of separateness, which constitutes so much of competitive human life, it can recover its unity with the Universal Mind, so aptly illustrated in the *Voice*:

" His mind, like a becalmed and boundless ocean, spreadeth out in shoreless space. He holdeth life and death in his strong band.

" 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 Brahm and Indra."

"GRANDEST THINGS"

Before quoting further from this precious gem of a book, let us trace its genesis which, according to the author herself, is from "a very old book" from which the many volumes of Kiu-ti were formed.

As she remarks in the Preface :

"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."

G. R. S. Mead, one of her immediate pupils and the last of her private secretaries, when the manuscript of the *Voice* was handed to him by Madame Blavatsky, saying: "Read it, old man, and tell me what you think of it", declared after perusing it: It is the grandest thing in all our. Theosophical literature." Surely, none can gainsay this verdict. According to Dr. Annie Besant, who happened to be in Fontainebleau, where this book was written during July-August 1889, HPB wrote it swiftly, without any material copy before her. Let us listen to her own words:

"She wrote it down steadily, hour after hour, exactly as though she were writing

either from memory or from reading it where no book was. She produced the manuscript in the evening... and asked myself and others to correct it for English, for she said that she had written it so quickly that it was sure to be bad. We did not alter in it more than a few words, and it remains a specimen of marvellously beautiful literary work, putting everything else aside... The book is a prose poem, full of spiritual inspiration, full of food for the heart, stimulating the loftiest virtue and containing the noblest ideals—It is its own best testimony lo th6 whence it came.”

As to the manner and method of her work, we shall quote from Cot' Olcott:

“I worked with Madame Blavatsky for several years and know all about it. She is a steam engine at writing and when I tell you that in Writing *Isis Unveiled*, with its large number of extracts from ancient writings, she had access but to a small book-case of ordinary books, you will believe me when I tell you that she reads as clearly in the astral light as from the open pages.”

Regarding the contents of *The Voice of the Silence* which, as the title page indicates, are “Chosen Fragments from the BOOK OF THE GOLDEN PRECEPTS for the daily use of Lanoos —Translated & Annotated by “H.P.B.,” William Kingsland asserts that the Tashi Lama of Tibet endorsed it “as being the only true exposition in English of the Heart Doctrine of Mahayana Buddhism Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdup certifies: “There is adequate internal evidence in HPB’s works of her intimate acquaintance with the higher *lamaistic* teachings, into which she claimed to have been initiated.”

Having stayed for some considerable time in different Tibetan and Nepalese monasteries HPB had learnt the *Golden Precepts* “thirty-nine by heart” in she herself admits, out of the ninety distinct little treatises. This is confirmed by Master K.H.’s advice to A.P. Sinnett: “Read the book of *Kiu-te* and you will find in it these laws. She might translate for you some paras, as she knows them by rote.” (Letter 49)

UNIVERSAL CAUSATION

The fundamental principles of these Precepts were established by the Prajnaparamita Sutras which were later systematised by Nagarjuna, whose main work, *Mulamadhyamika Sastra* opens thus:

“The perfect Buddha
The foremost of all teachers I salute;
He has proclaimed
The Principle of Universal Relativity.”

The Madhyamika School seeks to show us the world of wisdom of voidness and inconceivability, where the restrictions of our minds are removed. It relates the Middle Way to interdependent causation or “universal causation as Blavatsky points out in the *Key*, the essence of the Buddha’s awakening, freeing it from the realistic view in so far as it is void, and freeing it from the nihilistic view in so far as it is nominal. Says the *Voice*:

“Thou hast to study the voidness of the seeming full; the fullness 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?”

The world of interdependent causation is a practical aspect of the voidness. As we have to be in the practical world, we have to grasp the voidness through this interdependent world, even as we grasp the fullness in the positive and actual world of universal causation. As a concrete example of the Middle Way of thinking, let us take the first of the six Paramitas of Perfection, namely, *Dana* — the key of charity and low immortal”. It consists of three factors of which the decisive natures are inconceivable — giver, gift and receiver — “the pure threefold circle,” representing the interdependence of the three

factors as in forming a circle. The act of giving, which is supreme, void and inconceivable, is carried out in the practical world of interdependence and . becomes purified. This is the perfection of *Dam*— a nonrealistic, and non-nihilistic practice of the Middle Way in which the negative, supreme, and void truth is grasped by means of the practical phase of universal causation.

Likewise with the other paramitas and the last Prajna, “the key to which makes of a man a God, creating him a Bodhisattva, son of the Dhyani” is not a wisdom transcending the practical world. The Madhyamika system aims at a systematic interpretation of the perfect wisdom advocated in the “Prajnaparamita Sutras ” as the wisdom with the significance of the Middle Way. The *Voice*, affirming this Middle Way, asserts the identity of the empirical and absolute truths, showing the absolute truth of the voidness by affirming—that is, negating the non- existence of—the interdependent world as the material construction of the absolute voidness. The affirmation of the real absolute truth of the nominal interdependent world by criticising the nihilistic view is seen in the later Vijnanavada or Yogachara school founded by Asanga and Vasubandhu.

Thus, the empirical world of interdependent causation, which was thought to be imaginary and was denied absolute reality by Nagarjuna, who was the stronghold of the Madhyamika School, was regarded by the Yogachara system as being made up of dependency caused things which are affirmatively recognised to be the. Absolute reality. The world of universal causation, from which stems human solidarity, (the “ golden pillars ” in HPB’s words) is one actual existence, the empirical world being the substratum of identification of the empirical and the absolute world.

ALAYA VIJNANA

The one actual existence of the world of interdependent causation is called the fundamental consciousness—*Vijnana*—denoting our active mental world, the Universal Mind, which is caused interdependently. The term *Alaya* occurs in the *Voice* in a dozen places, meaning “ Great Soul ”, “ Master Soul ”, “ Universal Soul ”, “ Nature’s Soul-Thought ” etc., etc. Being the collective or group soul, it is reflected in every kingdom of nature, as the *Voice* affirms:

“ 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!”

The collective or group soul—the term used is the “ Over-Soul ”—is noticed in this verse: .

“ 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 WQHLD-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 Upadhyaya’s mind—one with the O\ter-Sotil—or, break away.”

It is from this Universal Mind that man derives his individual mind, which like the monkey is ever shifting from branch to branch, like the Same “exposed to Shifting breeze” is flickering and ever-changing. Not only is the mind to be kept steady, but the *Voice* emphasises:

“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 Samvritti.”

Further, it goes on to say that every one of mil *M* ray from the Alaya.

“ 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”....

BUTTERFLY FROM THE CHRYSALIS

It is this realisation, which comes to every matured, self-evaluating person, when he feels that there is more to himself than he has known so far is a biological being. There begins an internal groping, probing in the initial stage, similar to the struggles and emergence of the butterfly from the chrysalis/ or the unfoldment of the freshly blossomed flower. As observed in the early pages of the *Voice* :

“ __ if thy soul sings within her chrysalis of flesh and matter,”

it is a process of search going on continuously, if only the aspirant hat an interest and motivation to know himself and others better, thus the *Voice* is the *vade mecum* for every, mystic student who is engaged in the search for Reality, as it triggers the “spiritual spark”, latent in all of us. Once the power emerges from its “*muladhara*” stage, shall we say, it gradually becomes the dominant factor in human life, enhancing the vital powers of love and will, associated with the region of the heart (the *Anahata* stage, as the *Yoke* puts it) rather than those of reason and perception attributed to the head:

“Let not the “Heaven-born”, merged in the sea of Maya, break from the Universal Parent, but let the fiery power retire into the inmost chamber, the chamber of the Heart and the abode of the World’s Mother.”

As the footnote explains the “ power ” and the “ Mother ” are names given to Kundalini, “ an electro-spiritual force, a creative power which when aroused into action can as easily kill as it can create.” It is to warn the student of the dangers of awakening the serpent that the *Voice* was written, says HPB at the –outset One has ever to remember that the moment of puberty in the spiritual realm is far more perilous than in the physical level

How does HPB rescue the devout student commencing his odyssey from the roaring waters of his passion, representing the fabled Charybdis and the Scylla of his pride and self- regard? In the opening verse of the *Voice*, she advises him to learn the nature of *Dharana*, the sixth stage of the Ashtanga Toga prescribed by Patanjali. The poem starts *in medias res*, bypassing the earlier five limbs-yama, niyama, asana, pranayama and pratyahara – which are in fact indirect aids in the aspirant’s search for Reality, because their realm of application is external. If the first two limbs eliminate the disturbances caused by uncontrolled emotions and desires, the next two-asana and pranayama eliminate the distractions arising from the physical body. The fifth, pratyahara, detaches the sense organs from the mind thus cutting off the external world, like the snapping of telephone wires, thus releasing the mind from outside impressions. Having outgrown his extrovertedness, the student is ready to study the *Voice* which, it may be noted, is “Dedicated to the Few.” He is concerned only with his own mental world as the verse adjures:

“Withhold thy mind from all external objects, all external sights. Withhold internal images, lest on thy soul a dark shadow they should cast.”

And the next verse says :

“ Thou art now in Dharana, the sixth stage.”

Similarly does one of the great Vedantic scriptures, the *Brahma Sutras*, commence abruptly with, the adverb “*atha*” meaning “Thereafter.”

It is worthwhile to study Shankaracharya’s comment on this, as *H* throws light on the technique of the *Voice*:

“.....something has to be pointed out as the prerequisite after which it is taught that the deliberation of Brahman can proceed, They are discrimination between the eternal and the non-eternal, dispassion for the enjoyment of the fruits (of work) here and hereafter; a perfection of such practices as control of the mind, control of the senses and organs, etc., and a hankering for liberation. Granted the existence of these, Brahman can be deliberated on. Therefore, by the adverb *atha* is enjoined the succession to a

perfection of the practices mentioned.”

Obviously, the adhikar or the privilege to study either the *Voict* or the *Brahma Sutras* comes only after the student has fitted himself by fulfilling the necessary qualifications. He must be ready to practise the last three limbs or realms of *sadhana*, namely, *dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi*. Sash an aspirant is expected to have outgrown his extrovertedness, inclining to be mere introvert, and plunging into his psychological inner realms.

STRUCTURE OF THE “VOICE”

The triple aspect of *dharana*, *dhyana*, *samadhi*-summed up in the one word *sanyama*—froms the main theme of the First Fragment, which opens the Gates of Gold to the Mystic Path leading to the One Reality, whose dual aspects as HPB affirms in the *Secret Doctrine*, constitute the manifested universe. At the outset it strikes the Centripetal note stressing that one “ tea to lean the nature of *Dharana*”, for which the Mind, “the Slayer of the Real”, has to be transformed in its mode of functioning. This Fragment is concerned only with the “road to the path” not *the Path itself*, being probationary by nature, and is therefore, dealing with the stages by which the consciousness divests itself of the “dark garments of illusion”:

“ Stifle the voice of flesh, allow no image of the sense to get between its light and thine, that thus the twain may Mend in one. And having learnt thine own agnyana. flee from the Hall of Learning. This hall is dangerous in its perfidious beauty, is needed but for thy probation.”

The Three Halls, the ladder of the seven mystic sounds and the Four Modes of Truth—all described in detail in this Fragment point out the steps of enlightenment. Time and again, the difficulties, the weariness, the unremitting watchfulness, the need for discipline and the purification of thoughts are stressed: ..

“Before the “mystic power” can make of thee a God, Lanoo, thou must have gained the faculty to slay thy lunar form at will.”

“ Ere thy Soul’s mind can understand, the bud of personality must be crushed out; the worm of sense destroyed past resurrection.”

The student is assured of the goal—

“ beyond which lie, bathed in the sunlight of the Spirit, glories untold, unseen by any save the eye of Soul.”

From the very first the disciple is aided, as

“The light from the ONE MASTER, the one unfading golden light of Spirit, shoots its effulgent beams on the Disciple _____ ”

“ Now here, now there, these rays illumine it, like sun-sparks light the earth through the thick foliage of the jungle growth. But, O Disciple, unless the flesh is passive, head cool, the Soul as firm and pure as flaming diamond, the radiance will not reach the *chamber*; its sunlight will not warm the heart, nor will the mystic sounds of the Akasic heights reach the ear, however eager, at the Initial stage.”

Hope is thus mingled with despair; but finally to draw the aspirant on, there is the picture of ,that happy state, “the state of faultless vision” when consciousness has reached the ultimate stage of *Samadhi*, fully centred in the changeless, undifferentiated, all-inclusive Miss of the Real:

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

THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE.- Om Tat Sat.”

Even the Second Fragment entitled “The Two Paths” is still in the admonitory stage, throwing a strong light on the dual nature of life, expressed in an infinite variety of ways, such as the Eye and Heart doctrines, the paths of bliss and woe, the open and secret paths, head learning and soul wisdom, liberation and renunciation, etc. etc. All through this section, one hears the cries of pain and distress, lifted up by the shining tears of compassion for the sufferings of humanity. While head-learning engenders the notion of possession and encourages egotism, compassion helps to free the mind from the dust of false ideas and aids it in its search for true Wisdom.

“—even ignorance is better than head-learning with no Soul-wisdom to illuminate and guide it.

“ It seeds of Wisdom cannot spread and grow in airless space soar beyond illusions, search the eternal and the changeless SAT, mistrusting fancy's tee suggestions.”

“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.”

In the upward journey of the mind-search for reality, which is the main theme of the Second Fragment, it is easy enough to get out of the illusions arising out of ignorance, but only to fall into the worse pitfall of pride, which assert:- “Behold, I Know.” On the other hand, they who in humbleness have garnered, low confess: Thus Have I Heard.” The admonition goes a step further in a few verses later:

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

Be humbler still, when Wisdom thou hast mastered.”

LOVING DEEDS

The aspirant may feel that the mind is freed “ by the cessation of sin and faults ” and by absolute inaction. Such an ideal of a quietist self-perfection may lead to the *Pratyeka* goal, but not to the mystic ideal producing true wisdom, the equilibrium of full perfection that fuses Light and Darkness, Spirit and Matter¹ into one. The World-Saviours held their position in manifested life, accepting all its woes :

“ The Lion of the Law, the Lord of Mercy (Buddha), 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 (Buddha) had entered the Nirvana, He preached on mount and plain, and held discourses in the cities, to Devas, men and Gods.”

To fix and hold the attention on the real, immortal centre is not to be inactive but to sow kindly acts, for

“ Inaction in a deed of mercy becomes an action in a deadly sin.”

“Inaction based on selfish fear can bear but evil fruit.”

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

The union of Mind-insight and Heart-compassion gives the aspirant the power “to live to benefit mankind,” the capacity, “to practise the six glorious virtues” and the talent to radiate them from centre to circumference as a benediction to all.

A special feature of the second fragment is the exposition on the Path of Renunciation which is not to be found in any other teachings with such clear formulations of its functions and objectives. One of HPB'S

missions seems to be not only to point to this forgotten truth, ever since the passing away of buddha's teachings from the land of his birth, but further, to arouse in as many hearts as possible the aspiration to tread the Path of Renunciation. To walk this Mystic Way is the renouncing not only the world of matter but the world of spirit as well; not of life in form only but also of life eternal. It is freedom from the bondage of passion which every emancipated mind enjoys but further it is the acceptance of the bondage of compassion which the liberated soul (muktha) does not accept.

Once again as in the first section, here too encouragement is given, when the high-winged task seems almost impossible of achievement.

"Hope still. For if the "Secret Path" is unattainable this "day" it is within thy reach tomorrow", Learn that no effort, not the smallest can vanish from the world of causes. Even wasted smoke remains not traceless."

"Thou canst create this "day" thy chances for the "morrow"...."

"Take then as much as merit hath in store for thee, O thou of patient heart. Be of good cheer and rest content with fate."

And just as the principle of working with' nature purifies the- desires, so in like manner, the technique of following the wheel of duty of friend and foe clears obstacles. Whether important or insignificant, "the noonday sun" or "a star lost among the host". Each one can, by his actions, serve as an example and a help to others. Ever and anon recurs the theme of the heart humility that accepts all, without desire for the fruits of actions.

THE "GUARDIAN WALL"

It is only in the third fragment that the aspirant is brought on to The Path proper, which is Only the second of the paths described in the previous fragment, namely, the Path of Renunciation. The Path has seven levels of enlightenment, seven stages of heart unfoldment. The virtues are to be regarded not as marking successive stages, but as indicating simultaneous operation. as the activity of one involves the others too. When there is true love (*Dana*) 'there is to be found integrity and harmony in relationship (*Shila*) acceptance of whatever may come (*Kshanti*), and indifference (*Viraga*) whether love or recompense be offered' or not However, there is courage (*Virya*) to overcome obstacles, as love casts out fear. There is also the insight to understand from within and not from without (*Dhyana*) and finally, there is love's supreme transforming power (*Prajna*). The sewn principled human being unfolds, each in his own degree, every principle successively in the practice of the Paramitas, but in a dual way, either good or bad.

Still, the final mystic realisation, by the subduing of the great heresy of separateness is regarded in this Section as but a half-success. Only when it is melted into renunciation is there fulfillment:

"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."

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

"Alas! When once thou has 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."

Scientists tell us of the constant shower of meteors and comets bombarding the earth every moment, which would have converted this planet into yet- another moon but for the Van Allen belt of

radiation in the ionosphere protecting the earth and its inhabitant. A similar safeguard on the psychological and spiritual planes afforded by these mystic self-realised souls is detailed in the *Voice* thus :

“ 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.

“ Self-doomed to live through future Kalpas, unthanked and unperceived by men; 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 I sman, protecting it from further and far greater misery and sorrow.”

Throughout the ages, tradition records the existence of men of surpassing excellence, being developed far beyond the capacities of ordinary men. Of such stuff were made the Rishis, sages, a Christ, a Pythagoras or a Plato within the potentialities of humankind, to whom Shankaracharya refers in the “Viveka Chudamani”:

“The great and peaceful ones live regenerating the world like the coming of spring, and after having themselves crossed the ocean of embodied existence, help those who try to do the same thing, without personal motives.”

“ This desire is spontaneous since the natural tendency of great souls is to, remove the suffering of others just as the ambrosia-rayed (moon) of itself cools the earth heated by the harsh rays of the sun.”

In Greek mythology Minerva is stated to be born in full panoply with helmet and shield, signifying protection; even as in Hindu myth we have Karna born with “kavacha” (coat of mail) and kundala, embodying sacrifice.

SYNTHESES OF WISDOM AND COMPASSION

Abandoning all forms of selfishness and humbling all self-assertion, mystics of all ages have dissolved them in a wider glory of the spiritual realisation of a grander sad a boundless unity. And as St. Martin remarked “ All mystics talk the same language, for they come from the same country.” The mystic feeling comes as an intimation and a hope that grows into a vision and a fulfilment. We read most charming description of such mystic experience, when we were in school, but it is only now that we get its full import. The passage is from Wordsworth’s “Tintern Abbey”:

“ And I have felt

A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought.
And rolls through all things.”

Here in a few lines is expressed the mystic's participation in the real, eternal life of Nature; and Nature's exultant declarations come to us in all great music, when the aspirant, to use words of the *Voice* :

"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."

The mystic has made a synthesis of wisdom, power and love; and this is not only the mystic way but also the crown of human evolution, the fulfilment of life, "the sacrifice of the personal to Self impersonal," and the entrance into the free creative life of the Real. The highest conceivable power—the true mystic's goal is to *become* a Being of Compassion, an embodiment of the Law of Brotherhood. Says the *Voice*:

"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"

"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."

This emphasis on love and compassion as essential parts of wisdom finds its strongest expression in the ideal of the Bodhisattva:

"Now bend they 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?" "

Complementary to this is the intellectual and' speculative side, the Madhyamika school of thought referred to in the earlier part of this lecture. The "voidness" dwelt upon is far from being the nihilist statement for which it is mistaken. It means only that all concepts about reality formed by the human mind are ultimately void, analogous' to Shankara's theory of *maya*. Reality or emptiness, itself is not a state of mere nothingness, but is the very source of life and the essence of all things :

"—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."

"True enlightened wisdom (*bodhi*)," says Fritjof Capra in *The Tao of Physics*, "is seen in the Mahayana as being composed of two elements, which D. T. Suzuki has called the ^M two pillars supporting the great edifice of Buddhism." They are *prajna*, which is transcendental wisdom, or intuitive intelligence, and *karma*, which is love or compassion."

Against such a background, Life becomes omnipresent, not a *Being*, however big; for 'being' implies limitation.

"The conceptions of a Personal God as changeless and infinite, are unpsychological and what is worse, unphilosophical." (*Secret Doctrine* I. 2fn.)

Although there is no *one* being such as the sectarian god, the ocean of life is made up of an infinitude of living beings of every grade and degree of knowledge and power. The manifested Whole is a Unity of units, each sustained by the Universal Spirit, *Alaya*. A patient, persevering study of the *Secret Doctrine* shows man's place in the universe as the architect, the builder and the renovator of the world as also the fact that his responsibility never ceases. Man and the Universe are one. Universal causation and human solidarity are not mere rhetoric. Man, considered as a spiritual host, as "the Army of the Voice" "the luminous sons of the Manvantaric dawn" (*Book of Dzyan*) is present at the birth of the world from *Matrisadma*, the matrix of abstract space. Man is concerned with the translation from the abstract ideal of Parashunapanna to the gross, concrete physical world through the stage of the Universal Mind, guiding his descent from plane to plane, till the lowest is reached. Here starts the struggle, as many human monads have failed to become self-conscious, to "follow the wheel of duty to race and kin, to friend and foe, and close the mind the pleasures as to pain", so as to be co-workers with nature. Thus was produced the problem of good and evil, with all its resulting pain and sorrow. It is in

this predicament that we have been here for centuries on this planet divided into two classes: those grasping this mystic truth and recognising their responsibility as their “neighbour’s keeper” and those who are so deeply immersed in personal, selfish interests, blind to their higher destiny.

The Secret Doctrine details the account of cosmogenesis and anthropogenesis and did HPB record it just to satisfy our intellectual curiosity? And, we not content with it are looking forward to the III and IV volumes. This was not her purpose, as she specifically observes: “it is written in the service of humanity”, being primarily a message, and not knowledge. Her end and aim was to hasten a reform in the heart and mind of the race. As stated in the preface that both Secret Doctrine and Voice come from the same source. The association of the Stanzas of Dzyan, giving the metaphysical truths of cosmos and man, with the Golden Precepts of the Voice of the Silence fittingly proves that it is only through the assimilation and practice of the mystic principles underlying this gem of a book that the whole significance of the divine life outlined in the Secret Doctrine may be realised.