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PROLOGUE to *THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE*, No. 5

According to H. P. Blavatsky, the three Fragments that comprise *The Voice of the Silence* are derived from *The Book of Golden Precepts*, “some of which are pre-Buddhistic while others belong to a later date.” In her introduction, she states that the latter work “contains about ninety treatises,” of which she knew thirty-nine from memory. Of those thirty-nine, she chose only three to put before the world in that marvelous book known as *The Voice of the Silence*.

The title page states that the book is “For the daily use of Lanoos (Disciples).” As such, it uses the familiar metaphor of the Path as a way of symbolizing the disciple’s progression through a series of stages, described by one commentator as “the first lying beneath one’s feet and the last glimmering hardly discernible through the mists of the far distance.”

The three Fragments are titled “The Voice of the Silence,” “The Two Paths,” and “The Seven Portals.” The first two are of a preparatory nature and lead to the third. In his insightful book of essays *The Creative Silence*, Rohit Mehta suggests that we might better see the continuity of these Fragments if we frame them as “The Stage of Preparation,” “The Stage of Discovery,” and “Treading the Path.” Although *The Creative Silence* is out of print, a digital copy is available at www.theosophical.org/online-resources/books.

In Fragment I, the disciple is told that before he can hear the ONE, he must cease “to hear the many.” This involves becoming proficient in the practice of Dharana, described by HPB in the glossary as “the intense and perfect concentration of the mind upon some interior object, accompanied by complete abstraction from everything pertaining to the external universe, or the world of the senses.” Such a requirement further explains why *The Voice* is for “the few.”

In Fragment II, the disciple is urged to examine his motives for embarking upon this journey. He is told about the Open Path versus the Secret Path, the Path of Liberation versus the Path of Woe. He is urged to further sharpen his sense of discernment so that he can distinguish “the real from the false, the ever-fleeting from the everlasting.”

Finally, in Fragment III, the disciple is forewarned of “trials passing speech,” of steep paths that wind uphill, and the need for an “adamantine will.” Although *The Voice* does not gloss over the difficulties, it couples these stern warnings with gentle notes of encouragement such as “hold firm,” “lose not courage,” and “each sincere attempt wins its reward in time.”

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