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A Reflection on *The Voice of the Silence*, No. 6

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

—*The Voice of the Silence*

One of the most persistently powerful illusions to which human beings remain susceptible is the notion that death is something to be feared. The reality of death—in all its forms—is evident enough, but most people prefer not to think about it. Whether their outlook on life is religious or secular, spiritualistic or materialistic, everybody agrees that death is inevitable, yet we seldom talk about it. But not talking about death is not going to make it go away. To understand the process of death, we need to ask what it is that actually dies. What is it that comes to an end? *The Voice of the Silence* refers to the self of matter and the Self of Spirit, a juxtaposition that points to a profound paradox of human existence—mortal frames of flesh infused with the vibrant life of immortal spirit: one is temporal, the other timeless; one is finite, the other infinite; one is subject to a multitude of limitations, the other a storehouse of unlimited potential. Whichever of these two realities we identify with will ultimately influence our attitude towards death.

As individuals it is quite normal to view life from a limited perspective; we become immersed in the flow of our life, along with its particular set of circumstances, its unique challenges, its golden opportunities. To see with the eyes of the soul, however, is to view life through a much broader lens, one that reveals our deep inner connection to our neighbors, our community, and indeed, all of humanity. But how often does that happen? In the same way that the smudged lens of a telescope obscures our vision, the existence of inner conflict and personal bias prevents us from perceiving the world as it really is. To see things as they truly are requires a transcendence of the personal self. If we are in a state of psychological turmoil, we tend to see the whole world as being in conflict. If we are selfish and egotistical, we tend to see those qualities mirrored in the behavior of others.

The Voice of the Silence encourages us to identify with the self of Spirit, for that is our true identity. The personal self, we are told, has no more real substance than does a “shadow.” When we identify with the self of Spirit—that immortal spark within each and every one of us—we no longer dread the prospect of dying. Death then is seen as the end of a chapter, not the end of the book. “Thy shadows live and vanish: that which in thee shall live forever . . . is not of fleeting life.”

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