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A Reflection on *the Voice of the Silence*, No. 13

“Become one with Nature’s Soul-Thought.”

—*The Voice of the Silence*

The word *nature* appears thirteen times in *The Voice of the Silence*—the preface and glossary notwithstanding—and the shades and nuances of meaning it carries vary with the context. Considering the importance that the concept of nature plays in Theosophical literature (the index of *The Secret Doctrine* contains over 90 references to nature, while that of *The Key to Theosophy* contains 23), an examination of how it is used in *The Voice* is not a mere academic exercise, but a useful step to gaining greater appreciation and understanding of HPB’s wonderful spiritual guidebook.

For a frame of reference, we may first consider what philosophers throughout history have said about nature. Although they have attributed a variety of meanings to it, *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* says that “three seem especially worthy of note.”

1. Everything that there is in the physical world of experience . . . the universe and its contents, in short.
2. The living world (past and present) as opposed to the non-living.
3. That [view] which sees everything, especially the organic world, set off against humans and the consequences of their labors.

For another perspective, we might refer to the *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, which defines nature as: “the inherent character or constitution of a person or thing; disposition, temperament; a creative and controlling force in the universe; natural scenery.”

For still another frame of reference, we may consider three statements by Blavatsky:

1. Everything in the Universe, throughout all its kingdoms, is conscious. (*The Secret Doctrine*)
2. When we speak of the Deity and make it identical, hence coeval, with Nature, the eternal and uncreate nature is meant, and not your aggregate of flitting shadows and finite unrealities. (*The Key to Theosophy*)
3. Nature may err, and often does. (*ibid.*)

Which of these definitions or meanings of nature are applicable to *The Voice of the Silence*? We will continue this discussion in next month’s essay.

David P. Bruce is the National Secretary of the Theosophical Society in America.