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## A Reflection on *the Voice of the Silence*, No. 18

“Have patience, candidate, as one who fears no failure, courts no success.”

—*The Voice of the Silence*

Patience has long been recognized as a virtue, but in today’s fast-paced digital world of instant everything, it seems to be viewed by some as a quaint throwback to a slower pre-digital era. Worse still, others consider it an obstacle to their restless pursuit of personal ambition. On the other hand, there may a few who, lacking dreams and motivation, cloak their slothful state with the respectable robes of patience and prudence.

Many traditional ways of doing things have been washed away by the powerful digital tsunami, but we can rest assured that patience is still a *sine qua non* of the spiritual life. It is mentioned more than once in the Mahatma Letters. In Letter 47, KH reminds Sinnett that “[the] great man is he who is strongest in the exercise of patience.” Anyone who has embarked upon the path of self-transformation knows that it is not the journey of a single day. Patience and fortitude are indispensable elements in that process.

When we are very young, our patience is a finite resource. To a young girl the three-hour drive to grandma’s house may seem unbearable, but by the time she graduates from high school, the thought of four years at a university seems quite manageable. In this sense, patience has a quantitative aspect—it grows. As adults, we have more patience than we did as children. Also, some people have more of it than others. This may or may not be a good thing. If the house you are in is going up in flames, it may not be the best moment to display stoic patience. With respect to Proverbs 19:2, haste does not always make waste.

So, we learn to bide our time while working towards a goal or waiting for an expected outcome, whether it is learning to play the piano or waiting for the waitress in a crowded restaurant to bring us a menu. By comparison, the patience of the spiritual disciple has a distinct *qualitative* difference; it is not based on results or reward or personal satisfaction. It arises from a sublime detachment that allows one to do the right thing *because* it is the right thing to do. The Bhagavad Gita agrees: “Without concern for results, perform the necessary action.” As aspirants on the spiritual path, we may or may not see our efforts come to fruition, but it really doesn’t matter. We do the right thing and leave the outcome to Karma.

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