

THE SILENT PARTNER

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The Silent Partner

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I was born in a little town in southern Indiana. During my boyhood, religion was one of the principal interests of the people in this small community. There were no motion pictures, no theatres, and the talking machine was just making its appearance. Some enterprising man had bought one with ear-phones connected with the cylinder record by means of some sort of tube, so that three or four people could listen in at one time. The charge for each selection was five cents per person. It was a great experience to hear a machine talk.

The major entertainment for the male members of the community was provided by the saloon, which was well patronized, and by an occasional travelling show. At one of these entertainments, which I attended with my father, a girl, wearing a dress with a huge hoop-skirt, sang a song, and at the end of each verse, were the words, "I will never marry a drunkard." And I remember that a neighbor sitting next to my father said to him, "Harve, she will never find a husband around here." There was much sordidness in that little town, and the interest provided by the churches was the greatest redeeming feature of its social life.

There were, of course, in addition to the usual church services, revival meetings, and these were often held in tents to accommodate the people who came in from the surrounding farms. It was at these revival meetings that I got my deepest impressions of religion. There was an emotional intensity, and a flaming eloquence present in the evangelist that was absent from the regular minister's delivery. Then, too, the songs were usually of the type that stirred the audience to strong emotional activity. Simple tunes and simple words. I remember one in particular that was a great favorite. It ran on through all the human relationships:

"O father seek a home in that new bright world,
O father seek a home in that new bright world,
O father seek a home in that new bright world,
O father seek a home in heaven."

Then the mother, the brother, sister, uncle, cousin and so on.

Naturally, heaven was not the only theme, either of the songs or of the sermons. Hell played a big part in the religion of that time. Heaven was an actual place and so was hell, and the latter was painted in lurid colors, and with all the artistry of Dante's Inferno.

All this vivid presentation of religion made a profound impression on my childish imagination. I could not believe that I would be so fortunate as to go to heaven. I was so fascinated by the awfulness of hell that heaven could not attract my thoughts. I was magnetized by the danger, and lived in terror when these revival meetings were going on.

When I was about nine years old, I was helping an old man rive pickets for fencing. I asked him how old a boy had to be before he reached the “age of accountability,”--a phrase I had heard an evangelist use, to indicate that if death occurred before that age, the child would go to heaven regardless of the state of his soul, but if he died after that age had been attained without being “saved,” he would most certainly go to hell. The old man said eight years was considered the limit of freedom from “accountability,” and since I had passed that mark some months prior to the conversation, my heart sank within me as I realized the danger I was facing. I was sorry I had not died a year or two before reaching the deadline.

The devil was a very real individual to me, because he had been so graphically described, in both sermons, and prayers. Unconsciously I must have felt that the preachers who knew so well his characteristics and appearance must have seen him, and therefore knew that he was a terrible monster looking for boys who had not been “saved.” Since I had not been converted, I knew my fate. And I had no way of knowing for a certainty that I could ever be converted. My inability to get the feelings that evidently accompanied the shouting of those who were converted, made me feel that I was “predestined” to hell. To you, who perhaps have never known the type of religious teaching and exhortation of that time, it may seem incredible that any child could ever have gone through such torments. But I assure you that no words could ever portray the mental torture and sheer terror that accompanied such a belief.

But youth came, and with it the yielding to the temptations that beset the average boy, and these strange fears subsided, only to flare up occasionally when the idea of death was thrust into the foreground of my consciousness. Finally, however, when I was about twenty years old, a good, saint-like lady of the Methodist church talked to me so earnestly about my soul and my need of salvation, that I became “convicted” of sin and made a confession of faith in Jesus as my Saviour, and joined the church. But in my heart I knew I had not been converted in the style of the shouting converts of my earlier observations in camp-meetings. I didn’t have the “witness” of the holy spirit. And when the good friend began to talk to me about “entire sanctification,” as a privilege of the redeemed, I was sure I never could qualify for it, though I was just as sure that my dear old friend had it if anyone on earth did.

I was determined to get right with God, so I began to attend the meetings of a very forceful evangelist who was holding services in the little city where I then resided. It seemed to me that every word was directed to me personally, and that the man could not hit my case so perfectly unless he had either been informed by some person, or else he was being used by the Lord to convict me of my deep-dyed depravity. I felt that all my religious experience up to that time had been nothing but a lukewarm acceptance of Jesus as my Saviour, and was therefore really a grade lower than actual hypocrisy. For how could anyone look upon the face of the Saviour who had given his life for the salvation of the soul from hell, and not be completely humbled, penitent, and realize his utter unworthiness. It was a time of great emotional stress, and when I finally decided that the mourner’s bench was the place for me, I went, with grave misgivings as to whether this was sufficient humiliation for one so vile as I.

After this I learned to exhort a little at prayer meetings and the Epworth League, and the Captain of the Salvation Army, having heard of my earnestness, invited me to talk in her hall

occasionally. In short I felt that it was my duty, since I believed that hell was the destined lot of every unconverted person, to do my best to save souls.

About this time, I used to go frequently at night into the country, alone, with the determination to get some further divine assurance of my salvation, and to seek for a "sign." I was a good Bible student, and thoroughly familiar with the experiences of the prophets and heroes of Israel. I could see no reason why I should not receive signs of God's approval as well as did Gideon with his fleece, or Elijah with his water-soaked sacrifice in the contest with the priests of Baal, or Samuel and the Voice that spoke to him in the night. But many long prayers alone on the sage bush prairie that stretched around the little town where I then lived, failed to bring the desired vision.

After about two years of this I began to doubt, and I asked many disturbing questions of my dear old spiritual mentor who had started me on this religious experience. She said after one of these talks: "I am afraid you are ensnared by the wiles of the devil, who is seeking to destroy your faith in Jesus as your Saviour. If you begin to reason too much about God's plan of salvation, you will grow cold and finally become skeptical."

About this time I got hold of a copy of Emerson's essays, and that was the beginning of my downfall so far as the old religion was concerned. I began to read books and articles on the Higher Criticism of the Bible, and Thomas Paine's "Age of Reason" came my way and I got a new view of the Bible altogether. The result was the beginning of some twenty years of free thinking, or as it was more commonly called, agnosticism.

I could no longer believe in a personal God, nor a personal devil, nor a personal Saviour, as presented by Christianity. The whole system of the old theology that had once commanded my reverence, now became to me a monstrous and unnatural appeal to the superstitious fear in the heart of humanity. But I did not stop thinking about the fundamental principles of religion. I decided that there must be a true answer to the questions that kept thundering in my mind. One day it came clearly to me that my rejection of the old theology should be accompanied by a sincere effort to find some constructive idea or system of thought to take its place.

This decision led to some original thinking, and I have dwelt upon the experiences preceding this period of constructive mental work, to show how and why I finally formulated the essential ideas that constitute the basis of my present system of religion and philosophy. The method of working out the system was natural and broadly logical, and I have not had to make any fundamental changes in the earlier conclusions, but only to deepen and broaden them and carry them on to further issues.

For instance, it seemed to me that since science had shown that human life had constantly progressed, and that there was nothing in the evolutionary picture to show that man had ever "fallen" or become biologically depraved because of a divine edict expelling him from some mythical garden of perfection, then it was logical to assume that his sense of sin or the friction of wrong doing was the result of his self-consciousness, a power not present in animals. Hence the sense of guilt in the presence of violated law, instead of being an evidence of a "fall" or degradation, was really the sign of his superiority over the beasts who could have no sense of sin.

Again, while I could not accept the doctrine of the immaculate conception and virgin birth of Jesus, since biology knew of no principle by which a child could come into the world with only one parent, I *could* accept the idea that the generation of life is always the operation of divine and immutable law, thus making all children of the one Father-Mother principle of life.

While the dogma of the vicarious atonement violated my sense of justice, in that it implied that one man was made to suffer for the crimes and sins of another, I could see that love in the human heart leads to unselfish sacrifices and devotion, and thus ennobles human life. And by the same token it was clear to me that for an individual to seek safety through another's danger and suffering was sure to lead to the pious selfishness which I saw was a part of the christian character that had been so evident in the prayers and unctious pleadings of the most religious people I had known. Even my saintly old friend who started me on my religious experiences indulged in that sort of pleading with Jesus.

And so I went through the category of dogmas of the Protestant Christian religion: Resurrection is not true, but immortality may be. Hell is a monstrous lie, but the exact operation of the law of compensation as expounded by the great Emerson is true. Heaven is an artificial creation of the human mind, but the happiness resulting from a good life is the inevitable outgrowth of right thinking and noble living, and time and place have nothing essentially to do with it. It is a state of mind rather than a place.

Now you may ask what has all this to do with the title of this lesson--THE SILENT PARTNER. Just this. I had gotten away from the idea of a personal God. I could see no evidence of a personal will operating in the universe, but only changeless laws. Yet my own consciousness as an individual, was proof to me that there must be a principle of self-consciousness in the universe. My power to think and feel could only be derived from, and must be related to, some universal power that is mental, for the inorganic forms of matter are devoid of mental activity as we understand it in terms of personal will and choice. The question that naturally arose out of this line of reasoning is obvious: Is there any way by which the individual mind can commune or communicate with this Universal Mind or Spirit? My experience, conducted over a considerable time, of going to isolated places to seek some sign from God that He heard my prayer for recognition, convinced me that I need not hope for such personal response from the Deity. Yet the desire for communion with a higher power than myself persisted. I saw that mental contact with ministers, the repetition of the practices and responses of ritualistic forms of worship, partaking of the Lord's Supper or Eucharist, and so on, were not what I wanted, could not satisfy this innate longing for a personal contact with God.

This led finally to a very simple conclusion, namely, that the only place and the only way I could talk to God was to realize that He is an abiding presence within me. I began to see what Jesus meant when he referred to "the Father that dwelleth in me."

I conceived a simple explanation as to how he came upon this secret power. He was perhaps teased by the children of the village of Nazareth, and taunted about his birth for it was inevitable that the fact should become known to his playmates that Mary's husband was not his father. No doubt Jesus went to his mother in embarrassment and grief over these tauntings. She told him simply that God was his Father. He began to think that if God was his Father, then only one

conclusion was possible: He was the Son of God. The whole process drove him into solitary ways of life and he developed peculiar ways of thinking, that is, ways utterly different from his brothers and sisters, or to be accurate, half-brothers and half-sisters. He became obsessed with the idea of his divine parentage on the father's side. He conceived of himself as a superior being. His thinking about life was from an original basis and led to original conclusions. This idea of his divine origin stimulated his natural genius. He had found the Silent Partner.

If we search the Scriptures with the purpose of finding confirmation of this conception of Jesus as the Divine Entity within him, we will discover that the lesson is taught in one way or another by all the great Seers of Israel. It is only partially concealed in the story of Moses before the burning bush. It becomes still more openly expressed in Joshua: "Be thou strong and very courageous, for the Lord thy God *with(in) thee* whithersoever thou goest." The idea becomes still more simple and luminous in the Psalms of David. When Elijah ran away from his enemies to find safety in the mountains, in the depths of his discouragement he heard the "still, small Voice" of the Silent Partner within him, and never after that did he lose courage. Then, of course, it is the "pearl of great price," the very essence of all the teachings of Jesus, and the secret of his power.

PART II

So long as we regard the Party of the First Part in the divine contract between God and man, as a mystical, vague force without personal attributes, merely as cosmic energy; or as a personal God far removed from humanity and to be petitioned as an external entity who can grant or deny our requests, it is impossible to develop a sense of reality in connection with the idea of God as a Partner in the enterprise of life. It is not until we feel and know that the Father is within us as an actual Person, capable of hearing and understanding us as an intimate, personal Companion inseparable from our consciousness, that we can commune with Him and receive tangible evidence of His power and cooperation in all the affairs of life.

We realize, of course, that THE SILENT PARTNER does things for us regardless of whether we recognize the relationship or not. He gives us life, strength, consciousness and all the natural requirements of existence. We cannot so much as lift a finger without His cooperation, expressed through the machinery of our bodies and mental organization. What we think of prior to illumination as the natural processes of habit, the automatic activities of the body in vital chemistry, carried on while we are asleep as well as when we are awake; and our ability to think and plan and work, are all the result of the intelligence and power of the Silent Partner. These powers and functions are personal, and they arise out of this Inner Mind, without which we could do nothing.

This is distinct from the operation of universal laws in nature. Outside of us God is impersonal force and the cause of creation. There, law is absolute, pitiless, indiscriminating, changeless. However loudly we cry our prayers into space, our voice cannot reach the God who rules the universe as Principle, Law, Infinite Mind. We have to face the fact that so far as the universe around us is concerned, we need not expect special favors from it. We must grapple with law, make our adjustment to and use law or go down to defeat. There is no infinite auditorial nerve to hear our pleas for special advantages. No infinite heart to be touched to pity or mercy by our

sorrows and sufferings. No cosmic charity organization to feed defenseless and defeated old people, or to clothe, shelter and provide for innocent, hungry little children, who are victims of the selfishness and greed of a system that breeds poverty. No arrangements for protecting the savings of widows and old people and simple, hard working people, from the unscrupulous dealers in worthless "securities." No compassionate Supreme Dictator to step in and prevent cruel and selfish munition makers and other interests from using ambitious politicians as tools to foment and start terrible wars that destroy the flower of humanity's youth and manhood. In short, there is no personal God.

Yet the soul of man longs for communion with God, and has sought throughout the ages for means of contacting in a personal way the Source of his individual life. The organized religions of mankind have provided various means of approach, as old humanity, as new as the latest image in the nearby Cathedral. The dead, canonized into sainthood, is another, for untold millions of people pray to saints, believing they can obtain divine help in that way. Still others depend upon relics associated with holy people, and symbols such as the crucifix. Still others use a book, like the Jewish Bible and the Mohammedan Koran, as the way to reach and commune with God.

The Christians have a threefold God, one of whom is a Man; another a Holy Ghost; and then the Father. And one great church has also a Holy Mother who is regarded with as much reverence as her Son. There is, however, one thing in common with them all. They all are looking for God outside themselves, praying to an external image or imagined Person. And that is the great illusion of organized religion, the original maya of mankind. It is this illusion that we must turn away from before we can really know the Silent Partner. For as long as we look outside of and away from the God within, we make effectual denial of His abiding presence in the soul. And the infallible working of the Law is, that if we deny Him, He will deny us. For the secret place of the Most High, and the sacred Altar and Shrine of the Invisible, are within the soul of the individual.

Suppose that you, personally, turn away from the great illusion that any external God can hear you, and adopt the conception that the God within you is an actual Personality or Individual Entity Give Him a Name, as Jesus did. Not necessarily the same Name Jesus used, which was "the Father in me," but one that suits your own thought of what such a Silent Partner should be in power, intelligence and wisdom.

When I first realized this truth, I adopted a Name for the God within me--*The Master*. I began to think of the great Teacher, who first expressed this doctrine, and his disciples, as a dramatic representation of this relation between my conscious human mind and the Divine Self within me. The disciples, as figures in the drama, stood for the human self; the Teacher represented the Indwelling Master. Thus I had a picture that typified the relation existing between my conscious self and my God. I no longer thought of Jesus as a personal Saviour for Jesus had died and I could not talk with him. My personal Saviour was no longer a figure in a series of dramatic episodes which occurred long, long ago. My personal Saviour is here, within me, always with me, going wherever I go, the very core and substance of my being. Not a Saviour or Messiah whose work is to save humanity, but whose work is to teach me the laws of life, the way to power, the path to mastery. And from this conception it is but a simple and logical step to the conclusion that if every human on the earth should adopt and apply that principle, the kingdom

of heaven would become manifest at once. For no man can live with this ideal and still be selfish, cruel or unjust. Why? Because he sees the same God in others that he has found within himself.

It does not matter that my fellow man is ignorant of the God who makes His dwelling place within me. I know it, and reverence the Silent Partner in him, and even though he may act in an un-neighborly and unbrotherly manner toward me, I cannot descend to his level and return evil to him for the evil he would do to me. My Master tells me that if I do wrong I shall suffer wrong; that if I take the sword of material force to defend myself, I shall not only perish by the sword, but I shall in so doing, be rejecting the soul-force which is the mightiest power with which I deal. Hence, I am instructed to depend upon the Master within me to lead me in the path of peace, and to protect me from enemies who have not yet learned the truth of their own divine nature.

I have learned from experience, too, that when a situation arises where force must be used, that I can stand still and see it applied in the most wonderful ways to disarm or nullify the force that would be used to harm me. The arm uplifted to strike me--He, my Master, wards off the blow, or paralyzes the arm that would strike. I do not fear what man shall try to do to me, because I know a power that can overcome his wrath, and thwart his purpose to harm me.

I know with equal certainty that if trouble enters my world, it is because I have somehow left open the door of my protection, which is my constant and conscious unity with my Master. It is always the wilfulness and neglect of my human-mind self that is responsible for the trouble, and though I know I am often protected where I perhaps do not deserve it and still oftener when I am unconscious of being protected, still, I can see that if my human will was completely nullified, I would cease to learn the lessons that I must learn in order to attain complete conscious union with my Master.

I have learned also from experience, that when I go out on the plains or up in the mountains to be alone, the communion which I once vainly sought by looking for an external "sign" is so intimate and personal that it is much more satisfying than the nearest human friend could possibly provide, unless he or she had also awakened to the presence of God. I see signs all around me, in the flowers and the trees and the wonderful, interesting life of forest and plain. I know the same Universal Life that has come to be conscious of itself in me as Harvey Hardman, is in all these plants and insects and animals. We have a subtle language too, by which I can commune with the soul in them. We call it beauty, but it is really God. I feel a real kinship with all life, for I know it all comes from the same Source.

In every partnership, whether it be formed by a verbal understanding or expressed in writing, there are certain conditions which must be observed by both parties. In this association between my self and the Silent Partner, there are rules that I must obey, work that I must do, a code that I must respect. I do not expect Him to do for me what I can do for myself, for by the exercise of my sense-conscious faculties I grow and expand my human consciousness. So instead of throwing all the load on the Master in the performance of my professional duties, I do my intellectual best. I make notes of addresses I am to deliver. I study, and think things through, and get ready the best I know how, but when I go on the platform, I trust absolutely in the presence and inspirational power of the Master. And before I go, I have a talk with Him about the work to be done. I definitely name the qualities and mental and spiritual elements needed to enable me to

do my work well--poise, enthusiasm, logic, humor, graphic illustrations, and the power to carry conviction as to the truth of the great Law we teach.

It is a very personal relationship that I have with the Silent Partner of all my endeavors. My feeling of unity with Him is not less strong because He does not speak in audible tones to my physical sense of hearing. I can see the wisdom of this arrangement by which He remains the *Silent* Partner. If he gave audible commands, it would interfere with the free functioning of my human personality, and deprive me of the right and the values of personal choice and decision. My individuality would be destroyed, my will overpowered, and the Silent Partner would be the actual Ruler, the dominant power.

There is deep mystery in this fact, that I, the lesser self have power to rule, and in so doing to make mistakes. For if the wisdom of the Master should always prevail, I could do no wrong. But in the process I should lose my individuality as self-conscious mind. My I Am consciousness is supreme, and I can play the part of the Prodigal if I so decide. But I have learned by sad experience that the wiser course is to live in harmony with the "Father that dwelleth in me," to use the term that Jesus employed. The more completely I merge my human mind with *That I Am*, the more perfectly I shall live as the dominator of the conditions of my life, and rule my body and affairs with power and wisdom. The degree of my unity and cooperation with the Master measures the degree of my freedom and power. With Him I am strong; separated from Him in thought or belief, I am weak, the prey of discouragement and fear.

We can only know the Universal Father through the Son. We can reach out, as human personality, and touch the universe around us, harness its forces, acquire wealth, live in material comfort. That is the action of the little self. But when we finally awake to the fact that this is only the surface of our Possibilities; when we become discouraged, unhappy, weary of material things, we can turn to the Silent Partner within us--the Master--and find peace and companionship that satisfies our longing to know God. for even as our sense-conscious mind is in touch with the natural universe, so also is our Master Mind in touch with the limitless resources of the spiritual universe. And as we see this and live in close communion with the Master, the power and resources of the spiritual world are made available to us.

A word of caution and of instruction as to how to go about the process of establishing conscious union with the Master. First, He is as eager to work with you as you are to have the benefit of His power and intelligence, but He cannot violate your individual self-hood. That is the Law. Until you see the Law as the Lord, or as a Personal Indwelling Master or Silent Partner, you are "under the Law." That is, you reap what you sow with the same certainty that a farmer reaps what he sows in the soil.

When you personalize the Law, or think of the Inner Power as Father, or Master, or Major Personality, or Partner, this ideal in your mind takes shape in terms of experience. By holding before your mental vision the Ideal Man, the Inner Partner, you are gradually changed into that image, and become serene, strong, and courageous. Your intelligence develops, your faith in the Master grows strong and vital, your love for Him becomes deep and genuinely personal, and you are aware of a mysterious accession of poise and spiritual authority and power.

The way to this goal of self-union with the Divine Power is narrow, but it is plain. You start by accepting the simple idea that God must be in you as well as in the rest of the universe. He is identified in you as a Person. If you want scriptural verification, you will find it all through the Bible. Then, in your meditations (prayers) be as simple and direct as if you were talking to a human friend. This is your knock at the door of the Master. You will not hear a response. He will not say "Come in." But if you persist, you will begin to see results in your life. Some old problem that has long troubled you will suddenly clear up. Your tendency to worry, long a habit perhaps, will drop from your mind, and you will begin to wonder why you do not worry. Someone who was antagonistic and unkind, will either drift out of your life altogether, or else present to you the face of brotherly understanding, and may even go out of his way to help you or show you kindness.

In His own way the Master will give you ample proof that He has opened the door, admitted you, knows you, even as you will come finally to know Him. Do not tell other people about your secret work of getting acquainted with the Silent Partner. That is one of the great lessons of the Nazarene. Every one who goes far in the development of spiritual power, has observed the law of secret communion. In a prayer meeting you may be stimulated, even aroused to strong religious emotion; but that is not the way to get acquainted with the Master. Go alone. Commune with Him in secret, and He will reward you openly in many wonderful ways.

I am telling you about my own experiences because I am a Teacher. But I have my Secret Shrine and Altar of which I tell no one. No, not even you, Child of the Living Father. But if you open the door indicated, there is still another, and another. "My peace I leave with you; my peace I give you."