

A Recent Conversation with the Mahātmās

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Probably on account of the possibility of my life closing at any time, the two Mahatmas who are known to be behind the Theosophical Movement, and the personal Instructors of HPB and myself, have visited me several times latterly (in the presence of witnesses, being plainly visible, audible and tangible to all), with the object of giving me some final instructions about things that They wished me to, while I am still in my physical body. It may be that my Karma will allow me several years of life still, but the critical state of my health makes it imperative that I arrange certain matters now.

It is natural enough, since I have been working under the guidance of the Mahatmas during the last thirty-one years, that They and I should have some last words together; words of counsel on the part of the Teachers in reference to Theosophical matters, and of humble endeavor to carry out Their will, on the part of the pupil; “For the night cometh when no man can work.” Fortunately this refers to the physical body only, for as regards work in the other bodies, there is no “night”, but only the earnest endeavor that must be concentrated in the work, no matter in what body we may be functioning at the time.

The interview which I am about to describe had for its object the course I should pursue in the present crisis, brought about by the could resting upon one of our most respected members, and indeed one who had given faithful service to the Society for many years; but who it has recently been discovered, has been giving our teachings of which we could not approve.

Some of the members of the Society have formed themselves into two groups. The one, with an exaggerated moral sense, believes that the Teachers of mankind cannot employ agents that are not above the weakness of the physical body, and contact with whom would be supposed to morally taint Them.

The other party (who, if we make a careful study of history must be regarded as having some knowledge and common sense on their side) considers that these invisible Teachers, in order to reach the masses and especially to penetrate to the very depths of human society, are forced to employ agents or messengers, who possess many of the failings of mankind; but that they must also possess a high standard of ideals and spirituality, at least enough to enable them to be useful instruments for conveying the lofty precepts and high teachings which it is incumbent upon them to give out, in order to carry out the will of Those who employ them.

The principal members of the two parties were rather started recently by the statement of Mrs Annie Besant (made privately, but now generally known) that she thought that she must have been under a glamour, in supposing that she had worked with Mr Leadbeater, while he was giving such harmful teachings, — under the guidance, and in the presence of, the Mahatmas. I wished to make my own mind easy about the matter, so I asked the Mahatmas this question: “Is it then true that Mrs Besant and Mr Leadbeater *did* work together on the Higher Planes, under your guidance and instruction?” *Answer.* (Mahatma M.) “Most emphatically yes!” *Question.* “Was she right in thinking that because Mr Leadbeater had been giving out certain teaching that were objectionable, he was not fit to be your instrument, or to be in your presence?” *Answer.* “No. Where can you find us perfect instruments at this stage of Evolution? Shall we withhold knowledge that would benefit humanity, simply because we have no perfect instruments to convey it to the world?” *Question.* “Then it is not true that they were either of them mistaken or under a glamour?” *Answer.* “Decidedly not. I wish you to state this publicly.”

I can give no better examples than the founders, to corroborate what the Mahatma said, for in spite of our manifold shortcomings and physical weaknesses, They did not hesitate to employ us as Their instruments, because They saw in us the capacity of becoming loyal, true workers. As for myself, you know well what an imperfect instrument I have been, and so far as HPB was concerned, you know that a Master once wrote through her hand and referred to her “unfortunate, rotten old body” (See “Old Diary Leaves,” Vol. II.).

In the principal discourses which I recently gave at the International Congress at Paris and the London and Chicago Conventions, I discussed this matter freely, for the sense of it oppressed my mind, and I felt that it would be most unwise to allow the Society to take a stand, which seemed to me to be an extreme one, concerning ideals that were impossible to realize at our present stage of development. In my Paris address I said: “some years ago I wrote an article on ‘Asceticism,’ in which I told about the rebuke that was administered to me at Bombay, by a Master, when upon being asked to name the one of all the then members of the society in India, whom I thought the brightest, spiritually, I named one whose devotion to the society was great, and whose personal conduct was irreproachable; but I was told that I should have selected a certain person who although a drunkard, was spiritually advanced within.”

No sensible person would say that one addicted to drunkenness or sexual excesses is more likely to be an accurate teacher or wise counselor than one who leads a decent life; quite the contrary, but it means that now and again appears a person who, despite moral falling, can serve as a channel for high teachings. Yet the very fact of his moral taint would naturally put us on our guard for fear that we might fall into the trap of our own credulity, and take the teachings without proper scrutiny.

The Mahatmas wished me to state in reference to the disturbances that have arisen because we deemed it wise to accept Mr Leadbeater's resignation from the Society, that it was right to call an Advisory Council to discuss the matter; it was right to judge the teachings to which we objected as wrong, and it was right to accept his resignation; but it was not right that the matter should have been made so public, for we should have done everything possible to prevent it becoming so, for his sake as well as for that of the Society.

He said it should be the sacred duty of every Theosophist, if he finds a brother guilty of a wrong, to try to prevent that Brother from continuing in his wrong-doing, and to protect others from being contaminated by that wrong so far as it is possible; but it is also his duty as a Theosophist to shield his Brother from being held up *unnecessarily* to general public condemnation and ridicule.

I shall now close this article with the first direct message from the Masters Themselves sent through me to the society as a whole.

“Let those who believe in our existence, and that we are behind the Theosophical Movement, also that we shall continue to employ it as an agency for the uplifting of mankind, know, that we are sometimes forced to employ imperfect instruments (because of the lack of perfect ones) for our work; therefore, cease from such turmoil and strife, and from causing such disturbance in the Unity of Brotherhood, and thus weakening its strength; but instead, work together in harmony, to fit yourselves to be useful instruments to aid us, instead of impeding our work. We who are behind the Theosophical Movement are powerless, sometimes, to prevent the checks and disturbances that must unavoidably arise, because of the Karma of individual members; but you can aid us much by refusing to take part in such disturbances, and by living true to the highest possible ideals of theosophy. Should any event bring forth seeming injustice, have faith in the Law, that never fails to adjust matters. Cease rushing headlong into strife, or taking part in dissensions! Hold together in brotherly love, since you are part of the Great Universal Self. Are you not striving against yourselves? Are not your Brother's sins your own? Peace! Trust in us.”

H. S. Olcott.
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