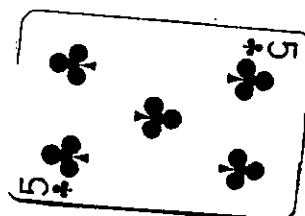
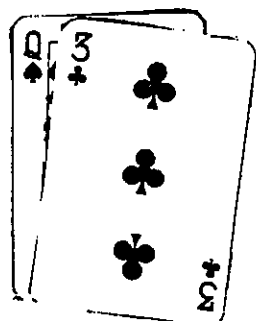
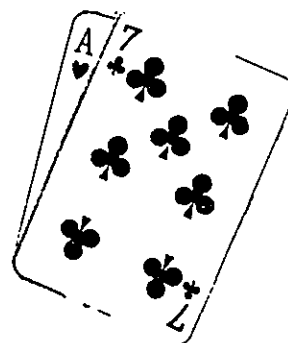
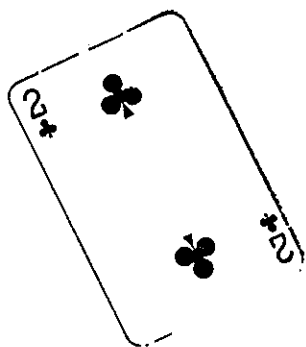


K. PAUL JOHNSON'S HOUSE OF CARDS?

A CRITICAL EXAMINATION
OF JOHNSON'S THESIS ON
THE THEOSOPHICAL MASTERS
MORYA AND KOOT HOOMI

by

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Comments on K. Paul Johnson's Books

"Essentially, Johnson's thesis is this: The Mahatmas to whom Blavatsky referred were historical human beings, men of flesh and blood rather than the ascended spirit being[s] of later neo-Theosophy, and they, and Blavatsky, were involved in what amounted to a network of political-cum-religious conspiracies. . . .The myth, or "masks", of the Mahatmas was, Johnson argues, established to conceal the real identities and purposes of the men. . . .However, the problem Johnson faces, given the elaborate concealment and mythologizing in which (if his hypothesis is correct) Blavatsky and her Masters engaged, is to establish coherent and historically convincing evidence for his thesis. . . .He is caught in something of a trap: if there was a secret conspiracy, there is unlikely to be any direct evidence of it. . . .The research is virtually beyond criticism; Johnson has explored, uncovered and documented both major pathways and obscure byways and dead-ends of Theosophical and occult history with a zeal and enthusiasm for detail which is otherwise almost unknown in writers of Theosophical history, and conspicuously lacking in previous writers on Blavatsky. . . .Does the author satisfactorily establish his thesis? Inevitably not, but through no fault of his own. The case he makes out is coherent and well-documented; it depends, however, on substantial conjecture, rather than on soundly documented history. . . .Two relatively recent studies of Blavatsky. . . [by Meade and Fuller] make no less use of speculation and conjecture. . . without the degree of supporting evidence which Johnson employs. . . ."---**Gregory Tillett** [Quoted from Tillett's book review of Johnson's *In Search Of The Masters in Theosophical History* (Fullerton, California), January, 1991, p. 154.]

"*In Search Of The Masters: Beyond The Occult Myth*. . . [is] highly speculative with numerous unwarranted conclusions not supported by evidence. . . .[and is based on] poor research methodology. . . [Johnson's book makes for] interesting reading but only creates another 'myth' concerning the Masters."---**Daniel H. Caldwell** [Quoted from Caldwell's *The Occult World Of Madame Blavatsky*, 1991, p. 326.]

". . . My aim has never been to *identify* the Masters (as Mr. Johnson pretends to do), but simply to make clear H.P.B.'s *relationship* with them, whoever they are. . . .His [Johnson's] way of thinking is a constant denigration of any other source than those giving credibility to his version of fact---Mr. Johnson's propensity is to elude, and even to leave unquoted the positive testimonies (of direct witnesses) in order to be able to adopt a diametrically opposed point of view relying on indirect sources he more or less arbitrarily links with the subject. The thesis of this author is certainly sustained by highly sophisticated (and remarkably well-documented) *suggestions*, however, they are never *demonstrations*, but an incredible 'house of cards'. . . ."---**Noel Richard Nafarre** [Commenting on Johnson's book *In Search Of The Masters in Theosophical History* (Fullerton, California), April 1993---July 1993, p. 170.]

"[Johnson]. . . has marshaled an impressive body of evidence to show that the Theosophical masters are neither disembodied spirits nor are they fictions but are specific historical personages whose identities were disguised for various reasons."---**James Burnell Robinson**, University of Northern Iowa [Quoted from the back cover of Johnson's *The Masters Revealed: Madame Blavatsky and the Myth of the Great White Lodge*.]

"Notwithstanding the reservations that a theosophical student might have, there is no doubt that Johnson has done his research, has examined records and archives and has followed up clues in H.P.B.'s handwriting. It must also be said that his handling of the information he has discovered is objective, and the conclusion he comes to as to the possible identity of the theosophical Masters, notably Morya and Koot Houri, is well justified. . . ."---**Geoffrey Farthing** [Quoted from Farthing's book review of *The Masters Revealed* in *The Theosophical Journal* (London), May/June 1995, p. 19.]

"Johnson's evidence for identifying the Masters is so weak that he seems to make whatever connections he can, however remote and inappropriate. . . .The parallels between Ranbir Singh and Morya are exceedingly tenuous. . . .Johnson's observation that 'much of the evidence that Thakar Singh was the basis for K.H. is circumstantial' is a vast understatement. There is no real evidence, but only a few circumstantial coincidences and a good deal of Wonderland logic. . . .*The Masters Revealed* is a record of historical research with a flawed thesis that dooms it to frustration. Johnson has performed a valuable service in bringing together information about the context of Blavatsky's life. He has raised an interesting, though probably objectively unanswerable, question about who Blavatsky's teachers were. But he has not revealed H.P.B.'s Masters. He has not touched the mystery."---**John Algeo** [Quoted from Algeo's book review of Johnson's *The Masters Revealed in Theosophical History* (Fullerton, California), July, 1995.]

"What I like most about the book is that Johnson is covering new territory. Moreover, he is grounding Theosophical claims in actual history. There is no question in my mind that Johnson's studies---this one in particular---will become the benchmark by which other works in Theosophy will be appraised."---**David Christopher Lane**, Mount San Antonio College, Walnut, California. [Quoted from the back cover of Johnson's *Initiates Of Theosophical Masters*.]

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A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF JOHNSON'S THESIS ON THE THEOSOPHICAL MASTERS MORYA AND KOOT HOOMI

by

Daniel H. Caldwell

PART I

In this paper I will give a critique of K. Paul Johnson's thesis relating to H.P. Blavatsky's Masters Morya and Koot Hoomi. Johnson has presented his views on the subject in three books: *In Search Of The Masters* (privately published, 1990); *The Masters Revealed* (State University of New York Press, 1994); and *Initiates Of Theosophical Masters* (State University of New York Press, 1995). Johnson has also summarized his thesis on these two Masters in an article titled "Imaginary Mahatmas" and published in the Summer, 1993 issue of *Gnosis Magazine*.

To set the stage, I quote three extracts from Dr. Joscelyn Godwin's Foreword to *The Masters Revealed*. These extracts outline succinctly Johnson's argument:

"The principal Masters in question were Koot Hoomi and Morya, supposedly residents of Shigatse in Tibet...." (p. xv)

"The theme of this book is that HPB's Masters were not the Himalayan sages whom she invented to distract her co-workers...." (p. xviii)

"Mr. Johnson's suggestion---and he makes it clear that it is no more than that---is that the Mahatmas Morya and Koot Hoomi are fictitious Tibetan personae that conceal well-documented historical figures: Ranbir Singh and Thakar Singh." (p. xviii)

Johnson in his own Introduction to *The Masters Revealed* summarizes this hypothesis as follows:

"Thakar Singh Sandhanwalia, founding president of the Amritsar Singh Sabha, corresponds in intriguing ways to clues about Koot Hoomi's identity in the writings of Olcott and HPB....

"Maharaja Ranbir Singh of Kashmir has many correspondences to Morya as described by HPB....

"Although much of HPB's portrayal of Morya and Koot Hoomi was designed to mislead in order to protect their privacy, enough accurate information was included to make a persuasive case for their identities as these historical figures...." (pp. 5-6.)

Although Godwin tells the reader that Johnson is only making a "suggestion," Johnson himself claims he is presenting "a persuasive case." Elsewhere in the same book, even Johnson writes "that K.H. was Thakar Singh is *a suggestion* which will meet vigorous resistance due to its unwelcome implications...." Italics added (p. 172) My understanding of these words leads me to believe that there is a considerable difference between a "suggestion" and "a persuasive case." Has Godwin misunderstood Johnson's claim or has Johnson inadvertently misstated his own position?

On *Alt.Religion.Eckankar* (an Internet discussion group), Johnson has posted a message (dated July 15, 1996) in which he writes:

"If I can prove to the satisfaction of many scholars that Mme. Blavatsky fictionalized her Masters, and that the personae of Morya and Koot Hoomi are covers for other people, that does not detract one iota from the truth of the spiritual principles enunciated by her or the alleged Masters. But it does pull the rug out from under Alice Bailey, Elizabeth Clare Prophet, C.W. Leadbeater, and others who claim to have been in subsequent telepathic contact with the very people who can be shown to have been fictionalizations of quite different people." Italics added.

Is Johnson now claiming he has *proven* "to the satisfaction of many scholars" his thesis concerning M. and K.H.? Apparently Johnson's claim has evolved into something much more substantial than a mere "suggestion."

When Johnson writes that "...much of HPB's portrayal of Morya and Koot Hoomi was designed to mislead in order to protect their privacy, [but] enough accurate information was included....", the reader should be aware that this is Johnson's *claim* and *interpretation*. And in this claim, Johnson makes a number of assumptions. A few of these assumptions are: (1) HPB gave out both misleading as well as accurate information about these Masters. (2) Johnson *believes* that he can tell when the information is misleading or when it is accurate. How does Johnson discern between the two kinds of information? What criteria does Johnson use to judge if a piece of information is "misleading" or "accurate"?

On *Theos-Roots* (an Internet Theosophical discussion group), Johnson has written about various criticisms directed toward his books. One excerpt reads: "The general Theosophical attack against my work has seemed opposed not just to my particular hypotheses, but to the entire enterprise of identifying the Masters." [October 16, 1995 e-mail posting.] I can only speak for myself. In *my* criticisms of his thesis, I have never objected to Johnson's "enterprise of identifying the Masters." I believe this is a worthwhile historical project; I see nothing wrong with this endeavor. Johnson is to be commended on his efforts in this direction. No doubt, Johnson has devoted a great deal of hard work, time and money to his research. But having said this, I am opposed to Johnson's *particular* hypotheses about the Masters Morya and Koot Hoomi for various reasons which I will present in this paper.

One of my criticisms is that K. Paul Johnson ignores the majority of the evidence and testimony concerning the Masters Morya and Koot Hoomi. In fact, much of this *ignored* evidence and testimony can be used to refute Johnson's hypotheses. A well-known physicist, the late Dr. Richard Feynman, once made some important comments which I believe are relevant and applicable to Johnson's presentation of his thesis on the Masters:

"Details that could throw doubt on your interpretation must be given, if you know them. You must do the best you can---if you know anything at all wrong, or possibly wrong---to explain it. *If you make a theory, for example, and advertise it, or put it out, then you must also put down all the facts that disagree with it, as well as those that agree with it . . .*" Italics added.

Unfortunately, Johnson did *not* follow Feynman's advice when writing his three books on the Theosophical Masters. Hence, a reader---unacquainted and uninformed about early Theosophical history---will *not* be in a good position to judge the validity of Johnson's hypotheses.

Let me explain. Richard Hodgson's 1885 Society for Psychical Research Report (charging HPB with fraud and declaring that her Masters were fictional) may appear convincing if one only looks at what Hodgson presents in the pages of his Report. But if you start searching for more evidence *outside* this Report, you may begin to doubt the soundness of Hodgson's charges. For example, in dealing with the testimony pertaining to the existence of HPB's Masters, Hodgson omits or downplays Colonel Henry S. Olcott's testimony about these Masters. Unless one consults other sources, the reader of Hodgson's Report would never know the extent of Olcott's *close encounters* with the Masters Morya and Koot Hoomi. Hodgson violates the Feynman rule. It is my opinion that Hodgson is not dealing with this issue of the Masters in a fair and impartial manner. Hodgson's Report does *not* provide its readers with vital details and information concerning HPB and the Masters. In other words, Richard Hodgson omits or downplays evidence that might show that his hypotheses about H.P.B. and the Masters have serious deficiencies. *I believe this same criticism can be made of Johnson's presentation of his thesis on the Theosophical Masters.*

Let me illustrate my criticism of Johnson's thesis with the following example. Colonel Olcott gives a firsthand description of an encounter with the Master Morya. He states that this Master came on horseback to the Bombay Theosophical Society headquarters:

"[I] had visit in body of the Sahib [Morya]!! [He] sent Babula to my room to call me to H.P.B.'s bungalow, and there we had a most important private interview...." (Extract from Olcott's handwritten diary for Tuesday, July 15, 1879.)

In a letter to A.O. Hume, Olcott describes this same July 1879 meeting in greater detail:

"This same Brother once visited me in the flesh at Bombay, coming in full day light, and on horseback. He had me called by a servant into the front room of H.P.B.'s bungalow (she being at the time in the other bungalow talking with those who were there). He [Morya] came to scold me roundly for something I had done in T.S. matters, and as H.P.B. was also to blame, he *telegraphed* to her to come, that is to say, he turned his face and extended his finger in the direction of the place she was in. She came over at once with a rush, and seeing him dropped to her knees and paid him reverence. My voice and his had been heard by those in the other bungalow, but only H.P.B. and I, and the servant *saw* him." (Extract from a letter written by Colonel Olcott to A.O. Hume on Sept. 30, 1881. Quoted in *Hints On Esoteric Theosophy, No. 1, 1882, p. 80.*)

In the spring of 1884, Olcott was interviewed by certain members of the Society for Psychical Research (London) and was asked about his Bombay encounter with the Master Morya:

"MR. MYERS [speaking to Colonel Olcott]: We want now an account of seeing your Teacher in the flesh.

COLONEL OLCOTT [in reply]: One day at Bombay I was at work in my office when a Hindu servant came and told me that a gentleman wanted to see me in Madame Blavatsky's bungalow---a separate house within the same enclosure as the main building. This was one day in 1879. I went and found alone there my Teacher. Madame Blavatsky was then engaged in animated conversation with other persons in the other bungalow. The interview between the Teacher and myself lasted perhaps 10 minutes, and it related to matters of a private nature with respect to myself and certain current events in the history of the Society.....

MR. MYERS [asking Olcott another question]: How do you know that your Teacher was in actual flesh and blood on that occasion?

COLONEL OLCOTT [replies]: He put his hand upon my head, and his hand was perfectly substantial; and he had altogether the appearance of an ordinary person. When he walked about the floor there was noise of his footsteps....He came to our place on horseback....

MR. MYERS [with another question]: Was that the only occasion on which you have seen him in the flesh?

COLONEL OLCOTT: No; I have seen him at other times.

MR. MYERS: Have you seen him three or four times in the flesh?

COLONEL OLCOTT: Yes, more than that, but not under circumstances where it would be evidence for others.

MR. MYERS: And about how many times [have you seen him] in the astral body?

COLONEL OLCOTT: Oh, at least 15 or 20 times.

MR. MYERS: And his appearance on all those occasions has been quite unmistakable?

COLONEL OLCOTT: As unmistakable as the appearance of either of you gentlemen."

(Extracts from the interview Olcott had with members of the London S.P.R. Committee. Quoted from *First Report Of The Committee Of The Society For Psychical Research, Appointed To Investigate The Evidence For Marvellous Phenomena Offered By Certain Members Of The Theosophical Society*, 1884, pp. 45-48.)

In the above accounts, Olcott says that the Master Morya came "in the flesh" and "on horseback." Furthermore, Morya's voice "had been heard by those in the other bungalow." How does K. Paul Johnson explain this Bombay incident of July, 1879? Is this "Brother" somehow to be identified with Ranbir Singh, the Maharaja of Kashmir? Or is this "Brother" the Morya "persona"? Or is this "Brother" someone else?

To begin with, Johnson ignores this incident in his three books. Readers of Johnson's books are not given the details on this and *similar* meetings Olcott had with this Master. In correspondence, Johnson has told me that he does *not* believe that this "Master" visiting T.S. Headquarters was Ranbir Singh, who would have had to travel a considerable distance from Kashmir to visit HPB and Olcott in Bombay. *Then who was this "Master"?* Johnson has *not* attempted to explain Olcott's accounts of this event.

As previously stated, Johnson believes that the Mahatma Morya is a *fictitious* Tibetan persona that conceals a well-documented historical figure---Ranbir Singh, the Maharaja of Kashmir. In light of this assertion, what is a historian to conclude about Colonel Olcott's testimony of the Master Morya riding up on horseback to Bombay T.S. Headquarters in July,

1879? I maintain that Olcott's account has *some* relevance (if not *considerable* relevance) in assessing the validity of Johnson's hypothesis that the *real* flesh and blood person behind the *fictional* Morya "persona" was Maharaja Ranbir Singh.

Johnson may complain that this particular criticism of his thesis is not of any great importance. But Johnson has likewise criticized authors for ignoring relevant evidence. I will mention only one example. In reviewing a Blavatsky biography by Noel Richard-Nafarre, Johnson points out that:

"While Richard-Nafarre refers to all these sources, he never mentions any discrepancies, thus evading the challenges of explaining them. Evasion is also found in selective use of Albert Rawson's testimony. . . . Richard-Nafarre ignores this evidence. . . presumably because it conflicts with other sources he prefers." (Quoted from Johnson's book review in *Theosophical History*, Oct. 1992-Jan. 1993, p. 159)

Last year, I again asked Johnson whether this man who rode up on horseback to T.S. Headquarters could be Maharaja Ranbir Singh. And in a public e-mail posting on *Theos-Roots* (Oct 16, 1995) Johnson replies:

"I don't regard it as impossible, but implausible. [I] could not find evidence as to Ranbir's whereabouts at the time, but at any rate he was unlikely to travel alone."

Yes, I agree with Johnson that the monarch of a kingdom would probably not travel alone but in fact would travel with his guards, servants, etc. If Ranbir Singh traveled all the way from Kashmir to Bombay, his visit should be documented in historical records such as the various Indian newspapers, etc. So a perceptive reader might ask: Is something wrong here? Is Johnson's hypothesis (about Ranbir Singh/Morya) untrue? Or is something wrong with Colonel Olcott's testimony?

Johnson in his e-mail comments (Oct. 16, 1995) also says that this July 1879 account of Morya coming to see Olcott is "of little use in providing a historical identification." He goes on to point out:

If you want to use it as weight against another identification [like Johnson's own Ranbir Singh identification??]....fine. But it lacks much weight when there is no confirmation of the account...."

To begin with, the name "Morya" is a pseudonym or an initiate name and is *not* the "birth name" of this particular Master. Many years ago, I knew a man whose name was Sarmad; but this was not his birth name. Sarmad was his initiation name which he received when he became a Sufi. Most of his friends only knew him as Sarmad; I can't even remember his real name. So when Johnson writes that this July 1879 encounter is "of little use in providing a historical identification" of Morya, I would agree that Olcott's account does *not* tell us the birth name of Morya. But unless Johnson has some other good reason for discounting this narrative, *Olcott's testimony places the physical man known by his "pseudonym" Morya at 108 Girgaum Back Road, Bombay on July 15, 1879.* And if the real flesh and blood Morya was at Bombay on that particular July day while Maharaja Ranbir Singh was residing in Kashmir, cannot one reasonably conclude that Ranbir Singh has no "connection" whatsoever to the Master Morya?

In the latter part of Johnson's comment quoted above, he writes: "[the account] . . . lacks much weight when there is no confirmation of the account." What does Johnson mean? Confirmation of the account by finding some document that will lead to the Master's "real name"? Or does Johnson imply by "confirmation of the account" that there should be some other person

or persons (non-theosophical??) who saw the Master at Girgaum Back Road on that date?

Would Johnson take HPB's testimony as "confirmation of the account"? HPB in an 1886 letter to Franz Hartmann wrote:

"When we arrived [in India], and Master [Morya] coming to Bombay bodily, paid a visit to us at Girgaum....Olcott became crazy. He was like Balaam's she-ass when she saw the angel!...." (*The Path*, New York, March, 1896, p. 370)

On p. 10 of *The Masters Revealed*, Johnson refers to this same H.P.B. quote, but paraphrases it: "...Olcott met one [Master] in person at Bombay..." Johnson neither gives the name of the Master nor elaborates on this reference to a Master in Bombay. In another section of *The Masters Revealed* (p. 144-145), Johnson, in hope of finding an additional fragment of evidence to "lend support to the identification of Ranbir Singh as the prototype for Morya", quotes some words from an 1890 letter written by H.P.B. Johnson writes: "...H.P.B. refers to Olcott's having met two Masters in person, 'one in Bombay and the other in Cashmere.'" Johnson then makes a comment on the latter part of HPB's words:

"Olcott's only trip to Ranbir's kingdom was his 1883 journey to Jammu, but according to his own account of his visit there, he met no Mahatma, spending all his time in the company of the maharaja."

It would seem that Johnson wants to infer that HPB's own words somehow support his hypothesis of "the identification of Ranbir Singh as the prototype for Morya." But what Johnson does *not* comment on are the other words of HPB: "one [Master] in Bombay". *Who was this Master?* Johnson is silent on this question. But from HPB's own letter of 1886 and Olcott's accounts of 1879, 1881 and 1884, it is obvious (at least to me) that the Master in Bombay was Morya. HPB's "confirmation" of Olcott's account is probably unsatisfactory for Johnson, but note well that Johnson is not hesitant to quote HPB when her words might support *his* speculation.

Johnson again writes to me in his Oct. 16, 1995 e-mail:

"...my procedure [used in his books] was to comb through the Theosophical literature looking for clues that are specific enough to point to specific prototypes or identifications for the Masters. Passages such as the one you cite [Olcott's 1879 account] are not useful in that way. I have said that passages such as the one you cite could be used as 'disproof' of ANY identification one could make, and therefore that their evidentiary value is weak."

If I understand Johnson, then he is saying that accounts of meetings with a Master similar to the 1879 Bombay account have little evidentiary value because such accounts do *not* point to a specific historical identification of the Master.

Then near the end of his posting (Oct. 16, 1995), Johnson points the finger at me:

"You...assume the accuracy of accounts [of meetings with the Masters] by the Founders [Olcott and H.P.B.] even when there is no evidence to confirm them. *This will only fly with a Theosophical audience.*" Italics added.

The intended meaning of the clause "even when there is no evidence to confirm them" is somewhat vague. Does Johnson mean "evidence" that is given by non-theosophical witnesses? Or evidence found in non-theosophical, historical sources? What kind of "evidence" confirming the accuracy of the accounts by the Founders would *fly* with a *non*-Theosophical audience? Johnson appears to be asserting that the 1879 account and similar ones are *not* confirmed by such

evidence.

But in *his own* published writings has K. Paul Johnson also assumed the accuracy of accounts by the Founders even when there is no evidence to confirm them?

Furthermore, has Johnson used only accounts of a Master where the historical identification of the Master has been specific and documented? *Or has Johnson quoted and used accounts similar to the 1879 one*---where there is nothing that would help us to identify the real name of the Master; or where there are no independent records or neutral witnesses (other than Olcott, HPB or some other Theosophical witness)---*to validate his own thesis?*

I will now examine in some detail *four* accounts given by Henry Olcott of his meetings with the Masters and see how K. Paul Johnson uses these same accounts by Olcott to support his own thesis.

(I) OLCOTT'S ACCOUNT OF MEETING OOTON LIATTO.

Johnson devotes a chapter of his work *The Masters Revealed* (pp. 59-62) to Olcott's encounter with Ooton Liatto and another unnamed Adept. Johnson identifies Ooton Liatto with the Theosophical adept Hilarion Smerdis. He writes:

"... in May 1875, HPB's scrapbook noted that Hilarion and a companion 'passed thro[ough] New York & Boston, thence thro[ough] California and Japan back.' . . . A recent discovery by Joscelyn Godwin provides intriguing evidence for the visit to New York by Hilarion mentioned in HPB's diary [scrapbook?] in 1875....A letter from Olcott...describes meeting an adept....at 433 West 34th Street." (pp. 59-60)

Here are relevant extracts from Olcott's letter (dated late 1875 or early 1876):

"...I was reading in my room yesterday (Sunday) when there came a tap at the door---I said 'come in' and there entered the [younger] Bro[ther] with another dark skinned gentleman of about fifty....We took cigars and chatted for a while....[Then Olcott relates that a rain shower started *in* the room. Olcott continues the account:] They sat there and quietly smoked their cigars, while mine became too wet to burn....finally the younger of the two (who gave me his name as Ooton Liatto) said I needn't worry nothing would be damaged....I asked Liatto if he knew Madam B[lavatsky]....the elder Bro[ther]...[said] that with her permission they would call upon her. I ran downstairs---rushed into Madams parlour---and---there sat these same two identical men smoking with her and chatting....I said nothing but rushed up stairs again tore open my door and---the men were not there---I ran down again, they had disappeared---I . . . looked out the window---and saw them turning the corner...." (Olcott's account is given in full in *Theosophical History*, Jan., 1994.)

Commenting on Olcott's story, Johnson makes the following *highly significant* admission:

"The names Ooton Liatto and Hilarion Smerdis have been equally impossible to find in biographical and historical reference books. While both may be pseudonyms, there is little doubt that two real adepts visited Olcott in New York." (p. 62)

What are Johnson's conclusions about Olcott's testimony?

- (1) Johnson accepts the accuracy and truthfulness of Olcott's account.
- (2) Johnson believes that two *real* adepts visited Olcott in New York City. Note the phrase: "...there is little doubt [at least in Johnson's mind]...."
- (3) Johnson also admits that the two names were not located in any biographical and historical reference books; both names "may be pseudonyms."
- (4) Johnson accepts the account *at face value* even though there is only Olcott's account of this particular visit. (Johnson also cites HPB's testimony from her scrapbook that Hilarion was in New York in May, 1875.)

How does this account by Olcott in 1875-76 *significantly* differ from the one given by Olcott of the Master Morya coming to Bombay headquarters in 1879? When criticizing Johnson's thesis, I cited the 1879 account of Morya as evidence that Olcott had met in Bombay a *real* adept whose pseudonym was "Morya". In reply, Johnson did not hesitate to point out the following:

- [1] "[The July 1879 account is]...of little use in providing a historical identification...If you want to use it as weight against another identification...fine. But it lacks much weight when there is no confirmation of the account."
- [2] "...I have said that passages such as the one you cite [the July 1879 account] could be used as 'disproof' of ANY identification one could make, and therefore that their evidentiary value is weak."
- [3] "You...assume the accuracy of accounts by the Founders even when there is no evidence to confirm them. This will only fly with a Theosophical audience."

Could not one reasonably apply these three points to Johnson's own conclusions regarding Olcott's account of Ooton Liatto? Johnson's point [3] could be reworded: "You, Paul Johnson, assume the accuracy of this 1875-1876 account by Olcott even when there is no other evidence to confirm it. This will only fly with a Theosophical audience!"

To rebut Johnson's *dismissive* attitude toward the evidentiary significance of Olcott's account of Morya visiting him in Bombay, one can take Johnson's own summarizing sentences to the chapter on "Ooton Liatoo" and rephrase them as follows: "The name Morya has been impossible to find in biographical and historical reference books of 19th century persons. While it may be a pseudonym, there is little doubt that a real adept visited Olcott in Bombay on July 15, 1879."

Going to the heart of Johnson's thesis, if we can reasonably conclude that the Adept Morya ("in the flesh...and on horseback") visited Olcott in Bombay, what impact does this account by Olcott (and *similar* accounts by Olcott and other witnesses) have on Johnson's speculation that Morya is a fictitious Tibetan persona? If Johnson regards it as "implausible" that Ranbir Singh was actually in Bombay on that July 1879 day, then is it not fair to suggest that Johnson's own hypothesis is just as doubtful?

(II) ACCOUNT OF OLCOTT'S MEETING WITH A MAHATMA ON AUGUST 4, 1880

In Johnson's book *In Search Of The Masters*, a chapter is devoted to Jamal ad-Din 'al-Afghani, "a Muslim politician, political agitator, and journalist" (as described in *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th Edition). Johnson writes on p. 193 of that chapter:

"In light of available knowledge of Afghani's comings and goings in India, can he be

connected to the Founders of the Theosophical Society? The evidence is intriguing if not convincing. The first problem is that Olcott rarely identifies adepts when they appear in his narrative, beyond the fact of their status as such. Thus, on August 4, 1880, [Olcott tells us that] 'a Mahatma visited H.P.B., and I was called in to see him before he left. He dictated a long and important letter to an influential friend of ours at Paris, and gave me important hints about the management of current Society affairs...' [*Old Diary Leaves*, Volume II, 1972 printing, p. 208]"

Johnson omits the following picturesque detail from Olcott's account: "...I left him [the Mahatma] sitting in H.P.B.'s room...." Johnson's commentary on Olcott's narrative is as follows:

"*Although there is no stated identity of this Mahatma*, the mention of Paris rings true, since Afghani was indeed to proceed to Paris, where he must have had an influential friend from the evidence presented." Italics added.

What is Johnson's assessment of this account by Olcott?

- (1) Johnson accepts the accuracy and truthfulness of Olcott's testimony.
- (2) Johnson is willing to believe that a Mahatma in his *physical* body visited both Olcott and HPB on August 4, 1880.
- (3) Johnson also admits that there is "no stated identity of this Mahatma"; not even a pseudonym.
- (4) Johnson accepts the account at face value even though there is only Olcott's account.

How does this account by Olcott *significantly* contrast with the account given by Olcott of the Master Morya coming to Bombay headquarters in 1879? In accepting this August, 1880 account, does Johnson heed his own advice to me? "You [Daniel Caldwell]...assume the accuracy of accounts by the Founders even when there is no evidence to confirm them. This will only fly with a Theosophical audience."

In an April 7, 1993 letter to Paul Johnson (a letter I wrote at his request for information, input and criticism), I informed him:

"But had you consulted Olcott's actual handwritten diary for August 4, 1880, you would have discovered that Olcott identifies this 'Mahatma' as Morya....Now with this new piece of information at your disposal, are you still willing to accept Col. Olcott's testimony of this encounter with a Master [*now identified as Morya*] at face value?"

Subsequently, Johnson dropped this August, 1880 account from the chapter on Afghani in his next book *The Masters Revealed*.

The diary entry in Olcott's handwriting reads:

"M here this evening & wrote to Fauvety of Paris. He says 5000 English troops killed in Afghanistan in the recent battle. . . ."

I conclude that Fauvety is the "influential friend of ours at Paris" to whom Morya "dictated a long and important letter." I would further suggest that Morya dictated this letter to H.P.B. who wrote it in French to Monsieur Charles Fauvety, President of the Society for Psychological Studies, Paris. See HPB's *Collected Writings*, Volume II, pp. 500-507 for a letter dated Bombay, August 5, 1880 written to Charles Fauvety and signed by "H.P. Blavatsky, Corresponding Secretary of the New York Theosophical Society."

Apparently, Johnson is *still unwilling* to accept Olcott's testimony that Morya was in Bombay on Aug. 4, 1880. *But in his first book, Johnson was quite ready to speculate without any*

concrete evidence that Afghani was the Mahatma sitting in HPB's room. But when I provided him with a piece of evidence indicating that the Mahatma in question was Morya, Johnson simply drops the account from his next book. Is Johnson guilty here of the same kind of evasion for which he accused Noel Richard-Nafarre? [See p. 5 of this paper.] Had I not provided him with that crucial piece of evidence, would Johnson have repeated the incident in *The Masters Revealed* with the same speculation that this Mahatma was Afghani?

I will summarize what I consider to be the significance of this August, 1880 narrative by paraphrasing Johnson's own summary of the Ooton Liatto account: "The names M. and Morya have been equally impossible to find in biographical and historical reference books of 19th century persons. While both may be pseudonyms, there is little doubt that a real adept visited Olcott and H.P.B. in Bombay on August 4, 1880."

Once again, is it "implausible" that Maharaja Ranbir Singh is the Adept in H.P.B.'s room dictating a letter to Monsieur Fauvety? And if it is unlikely that this Adept is the Maharaja of Kashmir, then is it not fair to suggest that Johnson's hypothesis concerning Ranbir Singh/Morya is also unbelievable?

(III) OLCOTT'S ACCOUNT OF MEETING A MASTER AT THE GOLDEN TEMPLE IN AMRITSAR ON OCTOBER 23, 1880.

In *The Masters Revealed*, p. 149, Johnson tells us:

"Describing a visit to the Golden Temple in Amritsar on 23 October 1880, [Olcott]. . . writes: '...at a shrine where the swords, sharp steel discs, coats of mail, and other warlike weapons of the Sikh warrior priests are exposed to view in charge of the akalis, I was greeted, to my surprise and joy, with a loving smile by one of the Masters, who for the moment was figuring among the guardians, and who gave each of us a fresh rose, with a blessing in his eyes....' [*Old Diary Leaves*, volume 2, pp. 254-255, 1974 printing.]"

In his remarks on this event, Johnson admits that this Master was "unnamed by Olcott." Furthermore, Johnson puts H.P. Blavatsky on the witness stand by quoting from her *Caves And Jungles Of Hindustan* (p. 209, 1975 edition) where she writes:

"Our new friend was a native of Amritsar, in the Punjab, and had been brought up in the 'Golden Temple'....Our *sannyasin* was...a regular *Akali*, one of the six hundred warrior-priests attached to the 'Golden Temple' for the purposes of divine service and the protection of the Temple....His name was Ram-Ranjit-Das. . . ."

Johnson then assumes that Olcott and Blavatsky are describing the "same character":

"It is apparent from *Old Diary Leaves* and *Caves and Jungles* that the same character is described by both as a Sikh officiating at the Golden Temple, in which he plays a supervisory role." (p. 151.)

Does Olcott state that this unnamed Master was a Sikh officiating at the Golden Temple? Olcott's own words are: "...I was greeted, to my surprise and joy, with a loving smile by one of the Masters, *who for the moment was figuring among the guardians....*" Italics added. Does Olcott's words signify that this Master was *one of the guardians*? Johnson, at least, wants to believe this: "It is apparent. . . ."

Then Johnson makes another assumption that Olcott's "unnamed" Master is "Thakar Singh Sandhanwalia, first president of the Singh Sabha" and "a sirdar from Amritsar." Johnson writes: "Seeking in and around Amritsar for a Sikh hereditary nobleman and religious functionary in 1880, one might find dozens of names to choose from." On p. 154, Johnson gives his reasons for choosing Thakar Singh from the "dozens of names to choose from."

But Johnson does *not* produce one *non-theosophical* historical record that would even suggest that Blavatsky's "regular Akali" or Olcott's "unnamed Master" at the Golden Temple was, in fact, Thakar Singh Sandhanwalia. Where was Thakar Singh on October 23, 1880? Johnson presents no primary source document to indicate his whereabouts on that day. Then Johnson makes another assumption that Thakar Singh is actually the Theosophical Mahatma Koot Hoomi (K.H.). An equation of these assumptions would look as follows:

Unnamed Master = Regular Akali = Officiating Sikh = Thakar Singh = Mahatma Koot Hoomi

In *The Masters Revealed* (p. 154), Johnson tells the reader that:

"K.H. dates one of his earliest letters from 'Amritas Saras' (the Golden Temple) and refers to it as his home, but he makes it appear that he is only rarely there on visits from Tibet."

Johnson is referring to a letter (dated Oct. 29, 1880) from Master K.H. to A.P. Sinnett. In this letter, K.H. informs Mr. Sinnett:

"the other day...I was coming down the defiles of [the] Kouenlun [mountains]---Karakorum you call them. . . .I...was crossing over to Ladakh on my way home....So I determined to emerge from the seclusion of many years and spend some time with her [HPB who was then in Amritsar]. I had come for a few days, but now find that I myself cannot endure for any length of time the stifling magnetism even of my own countrymen. I have seen some of our proud old Sikhs drunk and staggering over the marble pavement of their sacred Temple...I turn my face homeward to-morrow." (Extract from *The Mahatma Letters*, Letter No. 5 in the new chronological edition; No. 4 in the older editions).

One can deduce that Koot Hoomi was at the Golden Temple on or about Oct. 29, 1880. But in this same letter, KH tells Sinnett that he had received a message from Sinnett on Oct. 27th "about thirty miles beyond Rawalpindi" and "had an acknowledgment wired to you from Jhelum" a few hours later. Where are these two towns located in India? As the crow flies, Rawalpindi is located approximately 180 miles northwest of Amritsar; and Jhelum is about 120 miles northwest of Amritsar.

Was Koot Hoomi at the Golden Temple at Amritsar on October 23, as Johnson asserts? To begin with, the October 23rd date that Johnson gives for Olcott's encounter with a Master is wrong. If one *carefully* reads Olcott's account, the day of the meeting is October 26th. This date is confirmed by Olcott's own handwritten diary where the entry for October 26th reads:

"...In the afternoon we went to the Golden Temple again & found it as lovely as before. Saw some hundreds of fakirs & gossains more or less ill-favored. A Brother there saluted H.P.B. and me & gave us each a rose."

Furthermore (according to Mahatma Letter No. 5) on Oct. 26, 1880, Koot Hoomi was *hundreds of miles north of Amritsar*, and the next day (Oct. 27th) he was near Rawalpindi. Subsequently K.H. traveled to Amritsar and visited the Golden Temple.

No doubt, Johnson denies the veracity of what I have just quoted from the Mahatma's

letter. However Johnson will quote selectively from *The Mahatma Letters* when some piece of information might support *his* hypothesis but when confronted with information (even in the same Mahatma letter) that negates his speculation, Johnson labels the latter statement "disinformation", *i.e.* as the dictionary defines the word: "false information deliberately...spread...in order to...obscure the truth." Notice Johnson's comment above: "...but he [KH] *makes it appear* that he is only rarely there [in Amritsar] on visits from Tibet." Italics added. By this *ingenious* method, Johnson can discount any evidence that might conflict with his own hypothesis. I suspect this "method" is akin to Johnson's "Wonderland logic" that Dr. John Algeo illustrates in his book review of *The Masters Revealed* (see *Theosophical History*, July, 1995, p. 244).

What are Johnson's conclusions concerning these statements about a Master at the Golden Temple on Oct. 23 (actually Oct 26), 1880?

(1) Johnson accepts the accuracy and truthfulness of Olcott's account. He also accepts Blavatsky's account.

(2) Johnson believes that a physical Master was seen by Olcott and Blavatsky at the Golden Temple on that Oct. 1880 date.

(3) Johnson admits that the Master is "unnamed by Olcott."

(4) Johnson accepts the testimonies at face value even though there are only the statements by Olcott and Blavatsky.

But for confirmation of his thesis, Johnson does *not* cite one historical document that would verify that Thakar Singh was the "unnamed Master"; he does *not* give one source that would substantiate that Thakar Singh was in Amritsar on Oct. 26, 1880. Instead Johnson just piles one assumption on top of another; a careless reader might conclude that Johnson has really proven something.

Regarding the inclusion of this account in *The Masters Revealed*, Johnson's own criticism directed toward me could aptly be paraphrased: "You, Paul Johnson, assume the accuracy of this Oct. 1880 account by the Founders even when there is no other evidence to confirm it. This will only fly with a Theosophical audience."

The interested reader might compare what I have said above concerning this 1880 account with Dr. Algeo's section on "Kuthumi/Thakar Singh" (pp. 243-244) in his *Theosophical History* review.

(IV) OLCOTT'S ACCOUNT OF MEETING MASTER KOOT HOOMI IN NOVEMBER, 1883 ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF LAHORE, INDIA.

Colonel Olcott's account of meeting the Master K.H at Lahore is to be found in the third volume of Olcott's *Old Diary Leaves*:

"I was sleeping in my tent, the night of the 19th, when I rushed back towards external consciousness on feeling a hand laid on me. The camp being on the open plain, and beyond the protection of the Lahore Police, my first animal instinct was to protect myself from a possible religious fanatical assassin, so I clutched the stranger by the upper arms, and asked him in Hindustani who he was and what he wanted. It was all done in an instant, and I held the man tight, as would one who might be attacked the next moment and have to defend his life. But the next moment a kind, sweet voice said: 'Do you not know me? Do you not remember me?' It was the voice of the Master K.H. . . . I relaxed my hold on his arms, joined my palms in reverential salutation, and wanted to jump out of bed to show him respect. But his hand and voice stayed me, and after a few sentences had been exchanged, he took my left hand in his, gathered the fingers of his right into the palm, and stood quiet beside my cot, from which I could see his divinely benignant face by the light

of the lamp that burned on a packing-case at his back. Presently I felt some soft substance forming in my hand, and the next minute the Master laid his kind hand on my forehead, uttered a blessing, and left my half of the large tent to visit Mr. W.T. Brown, who slept in the other half behind a canvas screen that divided the tent into two rooms. When I had time to pay attention to myself, I found myself holding in my left hand a folded paper enwrapped in a silken cloth. To go to the lamp, open and read it, was naturally my first impulse. I found it to be a letter of private counsel. . . On hearing an exclamation from...[Brown's] side of the screen, I went in there and he showed me a silk-wrapped letter of like appearance to mine though of different contents, which he said had been given him much as mine had been to me, and which we read together. . . .The next evening. . .we two and Damodar sat in my tent, at 10 o'clock, waiting for an expected visit from Master K.H. . . .We sat on chairs at the back of the tent so as not to be observed from the camp: the moon was in its last quarter and had not risen. After some waiting we heard and saw a tall Hindu approaching from the side of the open plain. He came to within a few yards of us and beckoned Damodar to come to him, which he did. He told him that the Master would appear within a few minutes, and that he had some business with Damodar. It was a pupil of Master K.H. Presently we saw the latter coming from the same direction, pass his pupil. . .and stop in front of our group, now standing and saluting in the Indian fashion, some yards away. Brown and I kept our places, and Damodar went and conversed for a few minutes with the Teacher, after which he returned to us and the king-like visitor walked away. I heard his footsteps on the ground. . . .Before retiring, when I was writing my Diary, the pupil lifted the *portiere*, beckoned to me, and pointed to the figure of his Master [K.H.], waiting for me out on the plain in the starlight. I went to him, we walked off to a safe place at some distance where intruders need not be expected, and then for about a half-hour he told me what I had to know. . . .There were no miracles done at the interview. . .just two men talking together, a meeting, and a parting when the talk was over. . . ." (pp. 37-39, 43-45, 1972 reprinting.)

On p. 155 of *In Search Of The Masters*, Olcott's account of meeting the Mahatma K.H. is given. Johnson then assures us on p. 242 that: "K.H. did *indeed* visit Olcott, Damodar and Brown on the edge of Lahore." Italics added. Here we see that Johnson is quite ready to believe that Olcott's testimony can be taken *at face value*. Johnson is saying, in effect: Yes, Henry Olcott actually did meet "Koot Hoomi." Of course, it was Thakar Singh.

In Johnson's second book *The Masters Revealed*, several pages (pp. 157-160) are again devoted to describing K.H.'s two visits to Lahore in November, 1883. Then in his latest book *Initiates Of Theosophical Masters*, Johnson recounts W.T. Brown's and Damodar Mavalankar's meetings with the Master K.H. at Lahore and Jammu (see pp. 35-41).

William T. Brown gives the following narrative of his meetings with the Master K.H.:

"...Lahore has a special interest, because there we saw, in his own physical body, Mahatma Koot Hoomi himself. On the afternoon of the 19th November [1883], I saw the Master in broad daylight, and recognized him, and on the morning of the 20th he came to my tent....On the evening of the 21st, after the lecture was over, Colonel Olcott, Damodar and I were sitting outside the *shamiana*, (pavilion or pandal), when we were visited by Djual Khool (the Master's head Chela, and now an Initiate), who informed us that the Master was about to come. The Master [KH] then came near to us, gave instructions to Damodar, and walked away. On leaving Lahore the next place visited was Jammu, the winter residence of His Highness the Maharajah of Cashmere....At Jammu I had another opportunity of seeing Mahatma Koot Hoomi *in propria persona*. One evening I went to the end of the 'compound,' (private enclosure) and there I found the Master awaiting my

approach. I saluted in European fashion, and came, hat in hand, to within a few yards of the place on which he was standing....After a minute or so he marched away, the noise of his foot-steps on the gravel being markedly audible...." (Quoted from W.T. Brown's pamphlet *Some Experiences In India*, 1884, pp. 15-17.)

Concerning this pamphlet by W.T. Brown, Johnson comments as follows in his *Initiates Of Theosophical Masters*, p. 35:

"Brown described his background and his experiences with the Theosophical Masters in a report to the Society for Psychological Research which was never published during his lifetime. Recently published for the first time, it makes claims about his encounters with Koot Hoomi that are so specific as to have possibly raised concerns in the minds of Olcott and HPB. Although Brown's testimony would seem to be of great value to the TS, it remained unpublished for reasons unknown. One might speculate that its details about the Masters were considered too indiscreet for public consumption, especially in the wake of the Coulomb scandal."

This paragraph by Johnson shows that he is *not* familiar with many source documents. *Contrary to what Johnson writes*, Brown's 19-page pamphlet *Some Experiences In India* was first published in 1884. I have a photocopy of an original copy which I obtained some twenty years ago. Brown's pamphlet has also been reprinted at least three times *before* the 1991 "publication" to which Johnson makes reference. Brown's experiences were *not* written in a report for the S.P.R; the pamphlet was "printed under the authority of the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society." Without obtaining a copy of the original, Johnson could have consulted the following sources for correct information on the Brown pamphlet:

(1) Dr. James Santucci reprinted Brown's pamphlet in the July-October, 1991 issue of *Theosophical History*. Johnson quotes from Brown's pamphlet using as his source this 1991 reprint. But in his introductory remarks on the Brown pamphlet, Dr. Santucci states:

"W.T. Brown's *Some Experiences in India*, first published in 1884, comes by way of the archives of the Society of Psychological Research. Our gratitude is extended to the S.P.R. for allowing the pamphlet to appear in this issue. . . .The pamphlet. . . is very rare." (p. 185)

(2) Sylvia Cranston in her 1993 biography of H.P.B. gives the following bibliographic citation: "Brown, W.T., *Some Experiences In India*, London, England, Printed under the authority of the London Lodge of the T.S., 1884." The Cranston book is listed in the bibliography to Johnson's *Initiates Of Theosophical Masters*.

(3) In my book *The Occult World Of Madame Blavatsky* (which is listed in Johnson's bibliography), I quote from Brown's pamphlet and my endnote (p. 308) reads: "William T. Brown, *Some Experiences In India*, London, The London Lodge of the Theosophical Society, 1884. . . ."

(4) In the book *Damodar And The Pioneers Of The Theosophical Movement* compiled and edited by Sven Eek, one can find the same 1884 publication information about Brown's pamphlet on p. 570 with the additional fact that "the text was reprinted in *The Canadian Theosophist*, Vol. XXVIII, June, 1947." The Eek book is listed in the bibliography to Johnson's *Initiates Of Theosophical Masters*.

(5) Most of Brown's pamphlet was reprinted in K.F. Vania's *Madame H.P. Blavatsky, Her Occult Phenomena And The Society For Psychological Research*, 1951, pp. 166-174.

(6) Extracts from Brown's pamphlet were reprinted as Appendix VII in the *First Report Of The Committee Of The Society For Psychological Research, Appointed To Investigate The*

Evidence For Marvellous Phenomena Offered By Certain Members Of The Theosophical Society, 1884, pp. 83-84. These extracts give Brown's account of meeting the Master K.H. at Lahore and Jammu.

There are at least a half dozen other documents which would have alerted Johnson that what he wrote regarding Brown's "Report" is full of errors. Some readers may think I am making a mountain out of a molehill, but Johnson's *misinformation* about Brown's pamphlet is a pretext for Johnson to hint at some sort of cover-up:

"[Brown's Report]. . . makes claims about his encounters with Koot Hoomi that are so specific as to *have possibly raised concerns in the minds of Olcott and HPB*. . . Brown's testimony. . . remained unpublished for reasons unknown. One might speculate that its details about the Masters were considered *too indiscreet for public consumption*, especially in the wake of the Coulomb scandal." Italics added.

"One might speculate"? Indeed, Johnson seems quite eager to speculate on the basis of what turns out to be his own blunder.

A brief extract from the testimony of Damodar K. Mavalankar is given below:

"...[in Lahore] I was visited by him [Mahatma KH] in body, for three nights consecutively for about three hours every time....[in Jammu] I had the good fortune of being sent for, and permitted to visit a Sacred *Ashram* where I remained for a few days in the blessed company of several of the much doubted MAHATMAS....There I met not only my beloved Gurudeva [K.H.] and Col. Olcott's Master [Morya], but several others of the Fraternity. . . ." (Quoted from *Damodar And The Pioneers Of The Theosophical Movement*, 1965, pp. 335-336.)

On Damodar's account, Johnson remarks:

"Damodar had genuinely met Koot Hoomi outside Lahore and at the palace of Ranbir Singh [at Jammu], and had gone so far as to publish an account of this exploit in *The Theosophist*....This is one of the great *true* [italics added] Mahatma stories of Theosophical history...." (*Initiates of Theosophical Masters*, p. 40)

What are Johnson's conclusions concerning these testimonies?

(1) Johnson accepts the correctness and truthfulness of the accounts by Olcott, Damodar and Brown.

(2) Johnson is willing to believe that a real Master in his *physical* body visited the three Theosophists.

(3) Although Johnson knows that "Koot Hoomi" is a pseudonym, this fact does not keep Johnson from believing that a real Master visited Olcott, Damodar and Brown.

(4) Johnson accepts the accounts at face value even though these accounts are by Theosophists. (Johnson elsewhere even asserts that Damodar was a liar and deceiver yet Johnson is inclined to believe Damodar when the latter's testimony agrees with Johnson's speculation.)

Johnson's acceptance of these accounts contradicts the three points he brought up in reply to one of my criticisms. What non-theosophical audience/scholar would accept the testimony of Olcott and two other Theosophists "when there is no other [independent/non-theosophical] evidence to confirm" these accounts?

As in the October, 1880 account already reviewed, Johnson cites no historical records that would even suggest that Thakar Singh was at Lahore and Jammu on the same dates that Olcott, Damodar and Brown were. Apparently Johnson just *assumes* Thakar Singh was at those locations

on those days; he further *assumes* that Thakar Singh was Koot Hoomi.

It seems to me that Johnson accepts these various accounts at face value because the events happened in the *general* vicinity of where Thakar Singh lived. Johnson is saying in effect: Since I believe KH was really Thakar Singh and since these events took place in localities relatively near to where Thakar Singh lived, therefore I will assume

Isn't this more a leap of faith on Johnson's part than a conclusion based on careful historical research?

In *The Masters Revealed* (p. 160), Johnson writes about the Sikh Sirdars that provided traveling accommodations for Olcott, Damodar and Brown at Lahore. Johnson quotes a passage from the January, 1884 supplement to *The Theosophist* which reads:

"His Highness Raja Harbans Singh *and other Sirdars* [Johnson's emphasis] sent their conveyances to bring the party to their quarters...."

Johnson then comments on this *Theosophist* extract:

"Most intriguing in all this are the references to 'other Sirdars'....The lack of any mention of Thakar Singh's name seems inevitable if he was indeed the Master K.H."

In his previously mentioned book review, Dr. Algeo provides the following remark on Johnson's statement:

"By that sort of logic every text that lacks mention of Thakar Singh becomes evidence of his identity with Kuthumi....."

Algeo then cites a relevant quote from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and goes on to say:

"Lack of evidence thus becomes evidence. By [such] Wonderland logic [that Johnson uses], anything can be proved." (p. 244)

In light of Johnson's own handling of the four accounts by Olcott cited above, why does Johnson dismiss the July, 1879 narrative in which Morya rides up on horseback to Bombay T.S. Headquarters to visit with Olcott and H.P.B.? To briefly review, Johnson says that he ignores (or evades??) Olcott's 1879 account for the following reasons:

[1] "[The July 1879 account is]...of little use in providing a historical identification...If you want to use it as weight against another identification...fine. But it lacks much weight when there is no confirmation of the account."

[2] "...I have said that passages such as the one you cite [the July 1879 account] could be used as 'disproof' of ANY identification one could make, and therefore that their evidentiary value is weak."

[3] "You...assume the accuracy of accounts by the Founders even when there is no evidence to confirm them. This will only fly with a Theosophical audience."

But if one accepts Johnson's threefold line of reasoning, would not one have to also dismiss the accounts cited by K. Paul Johnson himself as evidence that real, physical adepts visited Olcott, Blavatsky and other Theosophists in New York City, Amritsar, Lahore and Jammu?

PART II

"In all, about nine or ten persons testified to having seen the Mahatmas: Annie Besant, Henry Olcott, Damodar Mavalankar, Isabel Cooper-Oakley, William Brown, Nadyezhda Fadeyev, S.R. Ramaswamier, Justine Glinka and Vsevolod Solovyov. Franz Hartmann said that while he never actually saw them, he felt their presence." Marion Meade in her biography *Madame Blavatsky, The Woman Behind The Myth*, 1980, p. 497.

I remember reading this statement by Meade some fifteen years ago and exclaiming to myself, "Oh Marion Meade, you haven't done your homework!" Off the top of my head, I could count *at least* twenty-five people who testified to having seen the Mahatmas during H.P.B.'s lifetime. And despite Meade's statement to the contrary, Hartmann had testified that he had actually seen one of the Mahatmas. Apparently Meade had never carefully read two of the titles listed in her own bibliography: Geoffrey Barboroka's *The Mahatmas And Their Letters* (1973) and Franz Hartmann's *Report Of Observations*, etc. (1884); both titles prove Meade didn't know what she was writing about concerning Hartmann.

It is a historical fact that more than twenty five people testified to having seen the Mahatmas during H.P.B.'s lifetime. Whether these testimonies are true or not, of course, is another question and issue. But how does K. Paul Johnson in his three books handle these testimonies? I have already shown in Part I that Johnson uses what can be called a "double standard" in assessing some of these accounts. In reply to my criticism that Johnson ignored certain testimonies of Olcott's encounters with the Master Morya, Johnson outlined what constitutes in reality a *higher* standard for assessing evidence and pointed out that I was not following it. Yet within his own previously published writings, Johnson uses a *lower* standard of assessment and accepts "at face value" at least four accounts by Olcott. *It is my contention that by Johnson's own use of this lower standard, the other accounts by Olcott of meeting the Master Morya in Bombay and elsewhere should also be accepted at face value.*

As also related in Part I, Johnson devotes pp. 59-62 of *The Masters Revealed* to Henry S. Olcott's 1875-76 meeting with Ooton Liatto and another Adept. In summarizing this account, Johnson writes that ". . . there is little doubt that two real adepts visited Olcott in New York." (p. 62) I should tell the reader that I also agree with Johnson's estimation of Olcott's testimony. Therefore, in light of Johnson's *own criteria and standards* as illustrated in this Ooton Liatto incident and the three other accounts discussed earlier in this paper, I submit for consideration the following additional incidents involving the Master Morya.

In a Sept. 30, 1881 letter addressed to A.O. Hume, Olcott relates what had just happened three days before:

"...on the night of that day [Sept. 27th, 1881] I was awakened from sleep by my *Chohan* (or Guru, the Brother [Morya] whose immediate pupil I am)....He made me rise, sit at my table and write from his dictation for an hour or more. There was an expression of anxiety mingled with sternness on his noble face, as there always is when the matter concerns H.P.B., to whom for many years he has been at once a father and a devoted guardian. . . ." (Quoted in *Hints On Esoteric Theosophy, No. 1*, 1882, pp. 82-83.)

This incident occurred while Colonel Olcott was staying at Colombo, Sri Lanka. Is this

Brother Morya (dictating notes to Olcott) a good example of Johnson's "fictitious Tibetan persona"? Or is this Brother a *real* adept and Master (similar to the *real* adept Ooton Liatto whom Johnson is willing to believe visited Olcott in New York)?

In *The Mahatma Letters*, Morya himself refers to this visit:

"O[lcott]'s memo...was written on the 27th [of Sept., 1881]....K.H. thought of asking me to go and tell O[lcott] to do so....At the same time as I delivered my message to O[lcott], I satisfied his curiosity as to your [Sinnott's Simla Theosophical] Society and told [Olcott] what I thought of it. O[lcott] asked my permission to send to you these notes which I accorded...." (Letter No. 29 in the chronological edition; also Letter 29 in the 2nd and 3rd editions.)

In his diary for Jan. 29, 1882, Colonel Olcott pens this brief entry of another encounter with the same Master:

"M[orya] showed himself very clearly to me & HPB in her garden....she joining him they talked together...."

Using Johnson's own "Ooton Liatto" criteria and standards, could we not accept this account at face value as evidence of the *real* Master Morya visiting Olcott and HPB at Bombay T.S. headquarters?

Here is a joint statement by seven Theosophists (including Olcott) narrating another visit Master Morya made to the T.S. Headquarters at Bombay:

"We were sitting together in the moonlight about 9 o'clock upon the balcony which projects from the front of the bungalow. Mr. Scott was sitting facing the house, so as to look through the intervening verandah and the library, and into the room at the further side. This latter apartment was brilliantly lighted. The library was in partial darkness, thus rendering objects in the farther room more distinct. Mr. Scott suddenly saw the figure of a man step into the space, opposite the door of the library; he was clad in the white dress of a Rajput, and wore a white turban. Mr. Scott at once recognized him from his resemblance to a portrait [of Morya] in Col. Olcott's possession. Our attention was then drawn to him, and we all saw him most distinctly. He walked towards a table, and afterwards turning his face towards us, walked back out of our sight...when we reached the room he was gone....Upon the table, at the spot where he had been standing, lay a letter addressed to one of our number. The handwriting was identical with that of sundry notes and letters previously received from him...." The statement is signed by: "Ross Scott, Minnie J.B. Scott, H.S. Olcott, H.P. Blavatsky, M. Moorad Ali Beg, Damodar K. Mavalankar, and Bhavani Shankar Ganesh Mullapoorkar." (Quoted from *Hints On Esoteric Theosophy*, No. 1, 1882, pp. 75-76.)

From Olcott's diary for Jan. 5, 1882, I quote extracts (never before published) concerning this event witnessed by the above-named individuals:

"Evening. Moonlight. On balcony, HPB, Self, Scott & wife, Damodar....[etc]...M[orya] appeared in my office. First seen by Scott, then me....Scott clearly saw M's face....M left note for me on table in office by which he stood...."

In this case, we have not only Olcott's word but testimony by six other people. Compare this account with the Ooton Liatto case.

To summarize the significance of these three just-quoted testimonies, I will again paraphrase Johnson's own summary of the Ooton Liatto incident: "The names M. and Morya have been equally impossible to find in biographical and historical reference books of 19th century people. While both may be pseudonyms, there is little doubt that a real Mahatma visited Olcott and others in Colombo and Bombay." This is my estimation of these three accounts. Since I am using Johnson's own "Ooton Liatto" criteria to assess the evidence, will Johnson now be willing to agree with my assessment of these incidents?

What additional light do these three accounts shed on Johnson's hypothesis concerning the Morya persona? Can a merely "fictitious Tibetan persona" be walking around and interacting with Olcott as well as being seen by six other witnesses? Furthermore, can the Mahatma Morya in these accounts be identified with Ranbir Singh? Is it plausible that the Maharaja of Kashmir was in Bombay and Colombo on these dates?

I would suggest that these accounts are simply more evidence showing the improbability and downright absurdity of Johnson's hypothesis concerning Ranbir Singh/Morya. It is my opinion that these accounts and other similar ones indicate that Johnson's Ranbir Singh hypothesis doesn't even begin to address and explain much of the Theosophical evidence/testimony concerning Morya.

I also believe that the evidence I have quoted helps to support the soundness of Dr. Algeo's observation that:

"The parallels between Ranbir Singh and Morya are *exceedingly tenuous*....There is no evidence that Ranbir was in fact the model for Morya's virtues or *anything else* in connection with him." Italics added.

In the preceding pages, I have cited Colonel Olcott's various meetings with Morya. Let us now turn our attention to Olcott's narrative of meeting Maharaja Ranbir Singh at Jammu in late November 1883. Olcott gives this account in the third volume of his *Old Diary Leaves* beginning in a chapter titled "Reception by the Maharajah of Kashmir":

"I broke up camp the next day---November 21 [1883]---and left Lahore for Jammu, the lower capital of H.H. the . . . Maharajah of Kashmir [Ranbir Singh], whose invitation to visit him I had accepted. . . . We reached. . . Jammu. . . and were brought on two of the royal elephants, a distance of two miles, to the huge bungalow that the Maharajah keeps for his more important guests. . . . The next morning, at 10-30, the . . . Minister. . . brought me word that His Highness begged the honour of my presence at the Palace. . . . The Maharajah [Ranbir Singh] came soon and received me with an air of kindness and stately courtesy that showed beyond doubt that I was welcome. In compliment to him I wore the woollen dress of the better class in the Punjab. . . . His first expression to Pandit Gopinath, my interpreter, was one of pleasure to see me in his national costume. A carpet and back-bolster had been spread for him on a slightly raised platform, before which we were to sit on the carpeted floor: but he dragged the bolster from there, placed it on the floor, motioned me to sit beside him, called me his elder brother, and proceeded with the conversation, which he opened with the usual exchange of compliments and good wishes.

He was a man of noble presence, with an intellectual face and the splendid eyes of the Hindu, which by turns can be full of pathos, blaze with anger, or penetrating with intelligent interest. His personality fitted the kingly office perfectly I found him to be a thoughtful Vedantin, well acquainted with philosophical systems. He fully believed in the existence of living Mahatmas, and trusted in them to do for India all that her karma made possible, but no more. He gently broached the subject of his own ill-health, said he knew of my cures and of the recent prohibition to continue the practice, but asked if I

would not at least relieve the acute pain he was then suffering from. I consented, of course, and on his removing his turban, did what I could for him with mesmeric healing passes. . . . When the audience closed he begged me to visit him twice a day during my stay, that we might talk of the high religious themes which equally interested us. . . . I went twice to the Palace the next day, and resumed the Vedantic discussions and even the mesmeric passes. His Dewan (Prime Minister) was present with other officials, including the Chief Justice, and after the free Eastern fashion, dipped into the conversation from time to time. . . . In the afternoon the Maharajah presided at games and a series of animal combats, and took me to his pavilion and placed me at his side. . . . I went twice to the Palace. . . [another] day and found myself increasingly welcome to His Highness. He showed me every courtesy, discussed the Vedanta philosophy with evidently deep interest, and gave me a pressing invitation to accompany him the next time he should go to his Kashmirian capital, Srinagar. . . . At the Maharajah's request I had been giving him some mesmeric passes every day, which seemed to do him good, or, at least, he said they did. He now began to deplore my necessary departure, and begged me to select somebody at his Court to whom I should be willing to give him over for future treatment. . . . I told him frankly that the only person whom I would recommend as his psychopath was his youngest son, Prince Amar Singh, who was then a handsome, honest-looking youth. His Highness approving of my choice, I showed the young Prince how to treat his father. . . . The Maharajah [Ranbir Singh] died a few years later [in 1885], and was succeeded by his eldest son, whom was away at Srinagar at the time of my visit to Jammu, and whom, therefore, I did not meet. . . . The day fixed for my departure having come, the Maharajah, finding me obdurate about prolonging my visit, consented to receive me in audience for the leave. So I went to the Palace for the last time [on November 29, 1883]. . . . We found His Highness, with his Prime Minister (Dewan), his Treasurer, and other officials, seated cross-legged on the floor, with a number of piles of woolen stuffs placed before him in a row: one pile much bigger than the rest. Through the able interpreter, Pandit Gopinath, he and I fell into conversation about my departure and hoped-for-return, after which, on a signal from the Maharajah, a high official pushed the big pile over towards me, with the request that I should accept the articles as His Highness' khillat (complimentary present). . . . According to custom, I touched the presents, made a respectful salutation, by joining my palms and holding them edgewise to my forehead, which the Maharajah [Ranbir Singh] returned; we then rose and, saluting the officials in turn, left the audience-chamber, having seen the noble face of our host for the last time. No other reigning Indian Prince whom I have met has left so pleasant impressions on my memory. . . ." (Volume III, pp. 41-60.)

Johnson quotes part of the above narrative on pp. 156-157 of his *In Search of the Masters*. Immediately following this account by Olcott, Johnson comments as follows:

"Where does this lead in the quest for the historical Master M.? Either [1] Olcott is deliberately hiding the fact of *his previous acquaintance* with Ranbir Singh *under another persona*, or [2] *the Master M. was someone else*. Another possibility [3], *perhaps the most likely*, is that HPB had so befuddled Olcott that he was quite confused as to the identities of the Masters. Undoubtedly, he would be under orders to conceal their identities. . . ." (p. 157.) Brackets and italics added.

In regards to Possibility [3] which Johnson says is "perhaps the most likely" explanation, I ask Johnson to explain how Henry S. Olcott could be so confused over the identities of the Masters that the Colonel could not plainly *see* and *recognize* that Maharaja Ranbir Singh either *was* or *was not* the same person as the Master Morya whom Olcott had seen on numerous

occasions at Bombay and elsewhere.

Concerning Possibility [1], what does Johnson mean or imply by Olcott's "*previous acquaintance with Ranbir Singh under another persona*"? How is Johnson's "Ranbir Singh under another persona" to be related to Olcott's testimony of being visited numerous times by the Master Morya?

"Where does *all of this* lead in the quest for the historical Master M.?"

Taking a commonsense, down to earth approach to Olcott's testimony, I would suggest that Johnson's Possibility [2] is *the most likely* explanation. I would conclude that Master Morya "was someone else" other than Ranbir Singh. In other words, Olcott had met two *separate* "flesh and blood" human beings---one man known as Morya and the other man known as Maharaja Ranbir Singh.

Johnson's thesis that a *fictional* Morya "persona" was a "cover" for the *real* Maharaja Ranbir Singh is *not* supported by the *totality* of Olcott's testimony. Yet in his latest book *Initiates of Theosophical Masters*, Johnson is still insisting that "*substantial* [??] evidence suggests that 'Master Morya' of Theosophical tradition may be a fictionalization of the maharaja. . . ." (p. 3) Italics added.

"I Was There"

"All knowledge of the past which is not just supposition derives ultimately from people who can say 'I was there' . . ."

John Carey. *Eyewitness to History*.
Harvard University Press, 1987.



The Master Morya



The Maharaja Ranbir Singh of Kashmir

Will The Real Morya Please Take His Turban Off.

**Two real flesh and blood men
or
one "Persona" and one Maharaja?**

PART III

I will now turn to other testimonies of encounters with the Master M. and see how Johnson grapples with these additional accounts. Johnson presents S. R. Ramaswamier's story of meeting the Mahatma Morya on pp. 25-30 of *Initiates Of Theosophical Masters*. Johnson tells us:

"S. Ramabadra Ramaswamier was a clerk from Tirunelveli in South India, on leave after a nervous breakdown. Following HPB on her travels, on October 5 [1882] he allegedly went from Darjeeling into Sikkim and penetrated twenty miles beyond the border, where he claimed to have met the Master M...." (p. 25.)

Johnson's narrative is a rehash of what he had previously written on pp. 246-249 of *In Search Of The Masters*.

I give an excerpt from Ramaswamier's October, 1882 account:

"...I suddenly saw a solitary horseman galloping towards me from the opposite direction. From his tall stature and the expert way he managed the animal, I thought he was some military officer of the Sikkim Raja...But as he approached me, he reined the steed. I looked at and recognized him instantly. . . . I was in the . . . presence of...my own revered *Guru* [Morya]. . . . The very same instant saw me prostrated on the ground at his feet. I arose at his command....He wears a short black beard, and long black hair hanging down to his breast...He wore a yellow mantle lined with fur, and on his head...a yellow Tibetan felt cap...I had a long talk with him. He told me to go no further, for I would come to grief. He said I should wait patiently if I wanted to become an accepted *Chela*...Before he left, two more men came on horseback, his attendants I suppose, probably *Chelas*, for they were dressed...like himself, with long hair streaming down their backs. They followed the Mahatma, as he left, at a gentle trot...." (Quoted from Sven Eek's *Damodar And The Pioneers Of The Theosophical Movement*, 1965, pp. 295-297.)

What is Johnson's estimation of Ramaswamier's account? In his 1990 book *In Search Of The Masters* (p. 247), Johnson comments that:

"The height and horsemanship are reminiscent of Ranbir Singh, one prototype for Master M. *But what could he have been doing in Sikkim?* [Italics added.] Not only does this tale distract the reader from the geographical circumstances [Kashmir] of the real [??] M. [Ranbir Singh], it also makes him seem someone who can wander at will and has no obligations at home."

Let us look closer at Johnson's question: "But what could he [the Maharaja of Kashmir] have been doing in Sikkim?" Where is Sikkim in relation to Kashmir? Looking at a map of India, one observes that Sikkim is located on the far northeastern side of India while Kashmir is located on the far northwestern side. *IF* the "real M" is Ranbir Singh, then I would agree that Ramaswamier's account is hard to accept at face value. Obviously, Ranbir Singh has obligations at

home as monarch of his kingdom and cannot be wandering around on the other side of India! Therefore, it is not surprising that Johnson tries to cast doubt on Ramaswamier's testimony. I would suspect that if Ramaswamier's encounter had taken place in the vicinity of Ranbir's palace in Jammu, Johnson would have used the account to support his Ranbir Singh hypothesis. But if one is willing to accept Ramaswamier's testimony *at face value* (as Johnson was with Olcott's "Ooton Liatto" account), then I contend that this Sikkim account can be considered another piece of evidence *against* Johnson's hypothesis.

In *Initiates Of Theosophical Masters*, Johnson "explains" Ramaswamier's experience as follows:

"Blavatsky's biographer Marion Meade interprets this as the hallucination of a madman, rather than a role played under direction of real Masters. Ramaswamier's account is indeed inherently preposterous [why??], but a closer look [by Johnson] reveals it to have been inspired by HPB and her Masters....After Ramaswamier's death in 1893, one of his sons published the letters he received from the Masters, intending them as proof that his father had been deceived by HPB. The eloquence of Ramaswamier's report [about meeting Master Morya] raises the question of how much of it HPB may have written for him. That an elaborate scheme of deception was indeed being engineered is apparent from these letters. . . ." (pp. 25 & 28.)

In other words, Johnson believes that Ramaswamier was neither a victim of hallucination (as Marion Meade had asserted) nor a dupe of HPB's confederates (as Richard Hodgson had suggested); instead, Ramaswamier was an accomplice to H.P.B.'s frauds. He lied about meeting Morya in Sikkim; and HPB probably wrote (at least part of) his account.

Johnson contends that "Ramaswamier's account is indeed inherently preposterous." Preposterous as compared to what? Is Ramaswamier's account any more "preposterous" than the "Ooton Liatto" account which Johnson accepts "hook, line and sinker"?

In passages not found in Johnson's 1995 book but to be found in his earlier 1990 work, Johnson adds these details:

"...it seems clear [to Johnson at least] that HPB had found in Ramaswamier a willing accomplice. The goal of the operation was to distract attention from the Punjab and Kashmir, so as to confuse observers intent on finding the Mahatmas...It is impossible [??] to tell from these passages [in M.'s letters to Ramaswamier] whether Ramaswamier was deceived in Sikkim by a bogus Mahatma or whether he was a willing partner in the deception. The latter seems much more likely in light of the peculiar aspects of his story involving the Master's voice and coincidental meetings...." (pp. 246 & 249).

With regard to Morya's and Koot Hoomi's letters to Ramaswamier, the "authors" of these letters write as though Ramaswamier actually believed in the reality of the Masters and that he had encountered Master Morya in Sikkim. In one of these letters, Koot Hoomi writes to Ramaswamier:

"You cannot go to Tibet. I am not the only master there, nor is M[orya the "Boss"] . . ."

In a letter from Morya, Ramaswamier is told:

"Ramaswamier. . . must travel from town to town along the line to Allahabad, and preach Theosophy and Vedantism. Every one must know he is my chela, and that *he has seen* me in Sikkim. . . ."

In another letter, the Master M. writes:

"...we thank you. Return now home, and whatever trouble may seem to brood over you, *remember I am with you.*" Italics added.

The Master M. counsels Ramaswamier in another letter:

"Happy is he who crosses the great gulf between *himself* and *us*---unscared with doubt and free from the pollution of suspicion."

In light of the content of these letters, I would conclude that Ramaswamier *believed* in the existence of the Masters and also *believed* he had met the Master Morya in Sikkim. Does it make any sense that Ramaswamier would be receiving Mahatmic letters with such advice, etc. when (*according to Johnson*) Ramaswamier knew that he had himself lied about his encounter with Morya in Sikkim? (See *Letters From The Masters Of The Wisdom*, Second Series, Letters 48-56.) I also think it would be easier for a *skeptical* reader to believe that Ramaswamier "was deceived in Sikkim by a bogus Mahatma" than to accept Johnson's new speculation that "he was a willing partner in the deception."

Regarding Johnson's reference to "peculiar aspects" like "the Master's voice" heard by Ramaswamier, quotations could be given from Olcott's accounts in which the Colonel testified he also heard "the Master's voice" when the Master was *not* physically in Olcott's presence. *Would such a "peculiar aspect" in Olcott's testimony lead Johnson to conclude that Olcott was also an accomplice?* Is Johnson willing to label Olcott as a liar and confederate of HPB's, too?

In the above excerpt, Johnson writes: "The goal of the operation was to distract attention from the Punjab and Kashmir, so as to confuse observers intent on finding the Mahatmas...." This is, of course, Johnson's *own interpretation* of the events in order to safeguard his hypotheses on M. and K.H. This is Johnson's method of "explaining away" or discounting any evidence that contradicts his hypothesis about Ranbir Singh/Morya. As I said in Part I, Johnson will quote information from various sources in support of his hypothesis, but if other "facts" (even in the same document) negate his speculation, he will devalue the latter and label it as "disinformation." By this method one can "prove" almost anything.

But readers of Johnson's books may not be aware that S. Ramaswamier had testified that he had also seen the Master Morya at Bombay T.S. Headquarters the previous year. *Henry Olcott was also a witness to this December, 1881 encounter* and pens the following words to A.O. Hume:

"I am glad to be able to send you the testimony of still another witness who has seen my *Chohan* [Morya], and under most favourable circumstances....I never saw the Brother looking more splendid than he did to-night in the bright moonlight. Mr. R[amaswamier] is a Brahman of the highest caste (his brother or cousin is, I believe, chief priest to the Maharajah of Travancore), and he is intensely interested in Occultism." Olcott's letter is dated Dec. 28, 1881. (*Hints On Esoteric Theosophy, No. 1, 1882, pp. 71-72.*)

Attached to this letter is an account signed by H.S. Olcott, Damodar K. Mavalankar and S. Ramaswamier testifying that they had seen:

"a man upon the balcony...leaning against the balustrade, and with the moonlight shining full upon him. He was dressed in white, and wore a white *Fehta* [turban] on his head. His beard was black, and his long black hair hung to his breast. Olcott and Damodar at once recognized him as the 'Illustrious' [Morya]. He raised his hand and dropped a letter to us.

Olcott jumped from the carriage and recovered it....It was a message to Ramaswamier, in reply to a letter (in a closed envelope) which he had written to the Brother a short time before we went out for the ride...." (p. 72)

Using Johnson's own "disinformation" tactic, could we not suggest that Ramaswamier was HPB's accomplice in this Bombay incident, too? And were Olcott and Damodar also confederates of HPB in this event? If Johnson can accuse Ramaswamier of giving false testimony, why not implicate Olcott and Damodar (as well as Ramaswamier) in a scheme to dupe and bamboozle A.O. Hume and the readers of Hume's *Hints on Esoteric Theosophy*, No. 1?

Earlier in this section I quoted the following comments by Johnson on Ramaswamier's meeting with Morya in Sikkim:

"The height and horsemanship are reminiscent of Ranbir Singh, one prototype for Master M. But what could he have been doing in Sikkim? Not only does this tale distract the reader from the geographical circumstances of the real M., it also makes him seem someone who can wander at will and has no obligations at home."

Could not one take these "suggestive" remarks and apply them to Ramaswamier's, Olcott's and Damodar's account of Dec. 28, 1881?

"The turban and beard are reminiscent of Ranbir Singh. *But what could the Maharaja of Kashmir have been doing in Bombay?* Not only does this Bombay tale *distract* the reader from the geographical circumstances of the real M., it also makes him seem someone who can wander at will and has no obligations at home."

And such Johnsonian remarks could be applied to all of Morya's appearances to Olcott and others at Bombay. If Johnson is ready to accuse Ramaswamier (who had known HPB for only a year or so) of being a liar and HPB's accomplice, why isn't Johnson willing to accuse Olcott (who had known HPB for some seven years and had a *vested, longtime interest* in HPB's work, etc.) of being a liar and HPB's confederate, too?

But if Olcott can be considered an accomplice to HPB's alleged shenanigans, what non-theosophical reader or scholar would be foolish enough to accept Olcott's four accounts presented in Part I of this paper and accepted by K. Paul Johnson at face value as evidence of real adepts and masters?

Johnson has stated on *Theos-1* that Dr. Gregory Tillett (author of *The Elder Brother: A Biography Of Charles Webster Leadbeater*) and Dr. David Christopher Lane (author of *The Making Of A Spiritual Movement: The Untold Story Of Paul Twitchell And Eckankar*) have changed their opinions from believing HPB's Masters were *entirely* fictional to accepting (more or less) Johnson's thesis about M. and K.H. If Johnson's assertion is correct, I would strongly urge Tillett and Lane to re-evaluate their new positions. In light of what I document in this paper, these two scholars may want to return to their former views.

In summary, it would appear that Johnson wants to use *some* of Olcott's testimony on the Masters to buttress his own thesis, but would prefer to downplay or omit *other* testimony by Olcott that is not consistent with and, in fact, contradicts his conjectures. Although he accused Mr. Richard-Nafarre of "evading evidence," is Johnson not guilty himself of ignoring evidence and testimony "presumably because it conflicts with other sources he prefers"? Furthermore, Johnson is quite willing to accuse Ramaswamier of lying when the latter's testimony of meeting Morya in Sikkim contradicts Johnson's speculations. *But Olcott's testimony of the Master Morya coming to Bombay on numerous occasions also runs counter to Johnson's conjectures.* Is "something" wrong with Olcott's Bombay testimony? Is Johnson willing to entertain the

possibility that Olcott might also be giving false testimony? But if Olcott is lying about the Master's appearances at Bombay, who (except Johnson??) would be foolish enough to accept Olcott's other testimony about adepts visiting him in New York, Amritsar, and Lahore?

Let it be clearly understood, I am *not* suggesting that Olcott lied about any of his meetings with the Adepts. In fact, I agree with Johnson that Olcott encountered real adepts in New York, Amritsar and Lahore. But I would go further and maintain that the remaining encounters Olcott had with adepts at Bombay, Colombo and elsewhere should also be taken at face value. *In other words, if one wants to be consistent in one's thinking on the subject, why accept some of Olcott's testimony on the Masters while rejecting or at least ignoring the rest of it?* Of course, Johnson has a thesis that he is obliged to defend. He has committed himself to certain identifications of the Masters M. and K.H. Has Johnson painted himself into the proverbial "corner"?

At the very least, I would suggest that these Sikkim and Bombay accounts are simply *more evidence* showing the implausibility and irrationality of Johnson's hypothesis on Ranbir Singh/Morya. It is my opinion that these various testimonies refute Johnson's thesis. Johnson's conjectures with their contorted "reasoning" do *not* account for the majority of the Theosophical evidence/testimony concerning Morya. His hypothesis is not a credible explanation when the bulk of evidence is carefully considered.

PART IV

On p. 6 of *The Masters Revealed*, Johnson pens these words about his thesis on the Masters:

“Although much of HPB’s portrayal of Morya and Koot Hoomi was designed to mislead in order to protect their privacy, enough accurate information was included to make a persuasive case for their identities as these historical figures. In 1880, the Mahatmas’ letters were full of geographical references to Punjab and Kashmir. But in the next few years, a cover story about their residence in a Tibetan ashram was promoted and a number of false testimonies concocted as a diversionary tactic.”

I would remind the reader that this so-called “cover story” is Johnson’s “invention” used by him to “explain away” any evidence/testimony contradictory of his thesis on M. and K.H. Continuing Johnson’s narrative:

“Mahatma Letters gave instructions for this deception, for instance, telling HPB’s young Indian disciple Mohini Chatterji, ‘Make it as strong as you can, and have all the witnesses at Darjeeling and Dehra.’ ”

Johnson adds more details on Mohini Chatterji’s alleged “deception” in *Initiates Of Theosophical Masters*, p. 42:

“Mohini’s article ‘The Himalayan Brothers---Do They Exist?’ [originally published in *The Theosophist*, December, 1883]. . .represents part of a well-orchestrated scheme to shore up faith in the Masters. Mohini reports on two independent proofs of the existence of a Tibetan brotherhood called the Koothoompas or ‘men of Koot Hoomi.’ One account is from a Tibetan peddler in Darjeeling, the other from a Brahmacharin at Dehra Dun. The letter from KH directing Mohini to write the article is quite specific: ‘I want you, my dear boy, to write an account for the *Theosophist*, of what the pedlar said, and the Dehra Brahmacharia. Make it as strong as you can, and have all the witnesses at Darjeeling and Dehra. But the name is written Koothoompa (disciples of Kut-hoomi) tho’ pronounced Kethoomba. Write and send it to Upasika [HPB, editor of *The Theosophist*], Allahabad.”

On the next page, Johnson writes:

“Damodar was the chela who met real Masters in Lahore and Jammu; Ramaswamier and Mohini were willing tools in a scheme to simultaneously prove the adepts’ existence and distort their identities. This explains KH’s peculiar emphasis to Mohini: ‘Make it as strong as you can, and have all the witnesses at Darjeeling and Dehra.’ Why ‘have’ the witnesses anywhere in particular, except to mislead readers as to the whereabouts of the Mahatmas?”

Clearly, Johnson wants to conclude that K.H.’s words (“Make it as strong as you can, and have all the witnesses at Darjeeling and Dehra.”) are evidence that K.H. is telling Mohini to

concoct these accounts and to pretend that there was a number of witnesses involved. Johnson is reading something suspicious into K.H.'s use of the word "have". Could not the word "have" simply mean in this context: "include"? "Make it [the article] as strong as you can, and have [i.e. include] all the witnesses at Darjeeling and Dehra." K.H.'s statement appears to me to be offering good advice to Mohini instead of giving instructions to fabricate bogus testimonies. The reader should examine the entire K.H. letter to Mohini and judge the context. See *Letters From The Masters Of The Wisdom*, Second Series, Letter 59.

K.H. begins Letter 59 with these words:

"My good boy, --- *can write* as well as speak, and *lying* is still easier on paper than in oral communications. Unless he is shown *as a liar*, he will remain for ever powerful in mischief. . . ."

The name of the person is deleted in the printed version of this letter and replaced with ---; he was an enemy of HPB's and Olcott's. Then in the next paragraph, K.H. urges Mohini to write the article on the two accounts. Are we to believe that K.H. writes to Mohini about an "enemy" who is *a liar*, but in the next paragraph of the same letter the Master *encourages* Mohini to lie, too?

From Mohini's article "The Himalayan Brothers---Do They Exist" (reprinted in Appendix B in *The Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, Second Series), I give below some relevant extracts:

"The evidence now laid before the public was collected by me during the months of October and November 1882, and was at the time placed before some of the leading members of the Theosophical Society, Mr. Sinnett, among others. The account of Bro. Ramaswamier's interview with his 'guru' in Sikkim being then ready for publication, there was no necessity, in their opinion, for the present paper being brought to light. But since an attempt has been made in some quarters to minimize the effect of Mr. Ramaswamier's evidence by calling it most absurdly 'the hallucinations of a half-frozen strolling Registrar,' I think something might be gained by the publication of perfectly independent testimonies of, perhaps, equal, if not greater, value, though of a quite different character. With these words of explanation as to the delay in its publication, I resign this paper to the criticism of our skeptical friends. Let them calmly consider and pronounce upon the evidence of the Tibetan peddler at Darjiling, supported and strengthened by the independent testimony of the young Brahmachari at Dehradun. The persons who were present when the statements of these persons were taken, all occupy very respectable positions in life---some in fact belonging to the front ranks of Hindu society, and several in no way connected with the Theosophical Movement, but on the contrary quite unfriendly to it. . . ."

Several pages later in the article, Mohini writes:

"The witnesses in this case [of the Tibetan peddler] were Babu Nobin Krishna Bannerji, Deputy Magistrate, Berhampore; M.R. Ry. Ramaswamiyer Avergal, District Registrar, Madura (Madras); the Goorkha gentleman spoken of before; all the family of the first-named gentleman; and the writer. . . ."

Concerning the second account "of the young Brahmachari at Dehradun", Mohini says:

"A young Bengali Brahmachari . . . was residing then [at Dehradun] at the house of my

grandfather-in-law, the venerable Babu Devendra Nath Tagore of the Brahmo Samaj. . . [This young Bengali] gave most unexpectedly, in the presence of a number of respectable witnesses, the following account. . . The above statement was on several occasions repeated by the Brahmachari in the presence (among others) of Babu Dwijender Nath Tagore, of Jorasanko, Calcutta; Babu Cally Mohan Ghose of the Trigonometrical Survey of India, Dehradun; Babu Cally Cumar Chatterji of the same place; Babu Gopi Mohan Ghosh of Dacca; Babu Priya Nath Sastri, Clerk to Babu Devendernath Tagore, and the writer.”

What is Johnson suggesting about these witnesses? That Mohini invented fictitious witnesses or that Mohini attached the names of real people to these two “bogus” accounts?

As already stated, Mohini’s account was first published in the December, 1883 issue of *The Theosophist*. This Theosophical magazine had numerous subscribers all over India. This article was *public knowledge* not only to the Theosophists but to anyone who might read the magazine including skeptics of the Theosophical Society.

Some of the witnesses named in Mohini’s article were members of the Theosophical Society but also included were relatives of Mohini as well as other individuals. *In my own Theosophical research, I have run into several of the names mentioned by Mohini.* To name just one person referred to in Mohini’s account, Debendranath Tagore (as his name is spelled in the 15th edition of *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*) was “a Hindu philosopher and religious reformer, active in the Brahmo Samaj (Society of Brahma) that purged the Hindu religion and way of life of many abuses. [He was] born into a princely, wealthy, land-owning family. . . .” His son was the famous Bengali poet and mystic Rabindranath Tagore.

It is hard for me to believe that these two published accounts were simply fabricated by Mohini when we have more than nine people who were witnesses. If Mohini concocted these accounts, why didn’t any of these people come forth publicly and protest Mohini’s fraudulent use of their names? There were skeptics of Theosophy in India, and these skeptics would have had a field day with such a fraud. It would appear that K. Paul Johnson is the first person to “discover” Mohini’s alleged deception.

PART V

Towards the end of the chapter titled "Maharaja Ranbir Singh of Kashmir" in *The Masters Revealed*, Johnson tells his readers that "several additional fragments of evidence lend support to the identification of Ranbir Singh as the prototype for Morya." (p. 144) Johnson then details four "fragments of evidence" to support his identification. I will deal with two of these in this section.

Johnson writes:

"Just before his death, Olcott had visions of the astral form of a Master. When he asked 'Who is there?' it answered 'Cashmere.' But, oddly, his secretary then recorded Olcott's response as 'Oh! That is the name I always gave K.H.' Reference to a maharaja by the name of his kingdom is a standard usage in Olcott's writings, so it would seem this reverses the identities of M. and K.H. However, it is possible that the secretary misunderstood Olcott, or that he was in a confused state at the time."

Apparently, Johnson believes Colonel Olcott could *not* have said that "Cashmere" is "the name I always gave K.H." How does Johnson explain away these reported words of Olcott? Johnson speculates that possibly "the secretary misunderstood Olcott" or Olcott "was in a confused state" on his deathbed. Neither of Johnson's alternative explanations are true. It is Johnson who either is misinformed or is "in a confused state." Olcott's reported words are consistent with other known facts. There are a number of primary source documents which show that K.H. was known as "Cashmere" ("Kashmir" or other variant spellings) especially during the years 1875-1878 when H.P.B. and Olcott were living in New York City.

In an 1881 letter, Olcott tells Mr. Hume:

"I have also personally known ---- since 1875. He is of quite a different, a gentler, type, yet the bosom friend of the other [i.e. Master Morya]." (Quoted from *Hints On Esoteric Theosophy, No. 1*, 1882, p. 83.)

Unfortunately, the name is deleted in the printed version of the letter, but from references in this letter and other documents, it can be reasonably concluded that ---- is Koot Hoomi. Olcott's statement indicates that the Colonel had known K.H. since 1875.

In a letter dated January 12, 1881, William Q. Judge in New York, writing to "H.P.B. and Co. . ." in Bombay, says:

"Now I would be very much pleased could I know from whom it [the note] came, whether Kashmir or M. or who of all the long list of great ones. . . I was highly favored with a picture of the latter. . . ."

Annie Besant adds a footnote to clarify Judge's reference to "Kashmir" and "M." Her footnote reads: "The Masters K.H. and M." In other words, "Kashmir" is the Master K.H. while "M." is the Master Morya. (Quoted in Annie Besant's *The Case Against W.Q. Judge*, 1895, pp. 37-38.)

In refuting a critic of Madame Blavatsky's, W.Q. Judge (in his 1892 article "Madame Blavatsky in India") brings up the following point:

"... I may be allowed to say that it [i.e., the name 'Koot Hoomi'] was not originally 'Cotthume,' but was one [i.e., another name 'Kashmir'] that I and others in New York were perfectly familiar with. . . ." (See W.Q. Judge's *Echoes Of The Orient*, Vol. III, p. 203.)

In a January, 1882 letter to Olcott, the Master Morya tells the Colonel:

"K.H.'s conditions are changed, you must remember, he is no more the 'Kasmiri' of old." (*Letters From The Masters Of The Wisdom*, Second Series, Letter 35.)

In a January 6, 1886 letter, Madame Blavatsky, writing to Olcott, informs him :

"... Countess [Wachtmeister is] here, and she sees I have almost *no books*. Master and Kashmiri [are] dictating in turn [portions of the *Secret Doctrine* manuscript]. . . ." (Quoted in Boris de Zirkoff's *Rebirth Of The Occult Tradition*, 1977, p. 23.)

Also during this same month (January, 1886), Dr. William Hubbe-Schleiden received a note from the Master M., which reads in part:

"... the 'Secret Doctrine' is dictated to Upasika [H.P.B.] partly by myself & partly by my Brother K.H." (Quoted in Boris de Zirkoff's *Rebirth Of The Occult Tradition*, 1977, p. 16.)

Collating information from these two letters, H.P.B.'s reference to "Master" is to "M." (Morya) and her reference to "Kashmiri" is to "K.H." (Koot Hoomi).

Even William Emmette Coleman, one of H.P.B.'s most hostile critics, knew that:

"Towards the latter part of her stay in America, H.P.B. introduced to Messrs. Olcott and Judge an adept called 'The Kashmiri Brother.'" A few lines later, Coleman adds that "... he (K.H.) was known in America as 'The Kashmiri Brother.'" (Quoted in *Theosophy Exposed Or Mrs. Besant And Her Guru*, 1893, p. 26.)

As the evidence shows, Olcott's reported words on his deathbed are neither misquoted nor confused as Johnson would have us believe. Moreover, this particular "fragment of evidence" presented by Johnson does *not* lend support to his attempted "identification of Ranbir Singh as the prototype of Morya." *In fact, this piece of evidence has nothing to do with Ranbir Singh/Morya.*

I will now consider Johnson's other "fragment of evidence". Johnson writes:

"Another striking reference to Kashmir is in a humorous drawing of Olcott by HPB, which shows him being interrogated by a Mahatma, who is identified in the drawing as 'Saib Morya' but in the caption underneath as 'Saib Kashmere.' "

Johnson's endnote to this statement refers to: "Mary K. Neff, comp., *Personal Memoirs Of H.P. Blavatsky*, p. 221." Turning to p. 221 of Neff's book, one sees the 'humorous drawing of Olcott by HPB'. This drawing (which has been enlarged for our purposes) is reproduced on page 34 of this paper. Johnson asserts that the "Mahatma" interrogating Olcott is identified *both* as "Saib Morya" and as "Saib Kashmere." This, Johnson argues, lends support to the

“identification of Ranbir Singh [of *Kashmir*] as the prototype for Morya.” Johnson seems to be giving us another equation:

‘Saib *Kashmere*’ = ‘Saib Morya’ = Ranbir Singh of *Kashmir*

Unfortunately for his argument, Johnson has *misread* the drawing. If you *carefully* study the sketch, you will notice that the Mahatma interrogating Olcott in the foreground is identified as “Saib Kashmere.” In the background we see H.P.B. sitting on an elephant and another turbaned Master standing by the elephant. The Master standing in the background is identified as “Saib Morya.” Contrary to what Johnson asserts, this drawing shows *two* different Masters. Olcott gives a description of this drawing in Volume I of *Old Diary Leaves*. He writes about an artistic “production of H.P.B.’s” which had been misplaced. The Colonel goes on to describe *from memory* this sketch of H.P.B.’s:

“It is a caricature representing my supposed ordeal of initiation into the school of adepts, and most comical picture it is. In the lower foreground I stand with a Hindu *feh*ta (turban) as my only article of dress, undergoing a catechetical examination by Master K.H. [identified in the drawing as ‘Saib Kashmere’] In the lower right-hand corner a detached hand holds in space a bottle of spirits, and a bony bayadere, who looks like a starved Irish peasant in a time of potato-blight, is dancing a *pas de fascination*. In the upper corner H.P.B., wearing a New Jersey sunhood and Deccanee men’s turn-up shoes, and carrying a bell-shaped umbrella with a flag marked ‘Jack’ streaming from its point, bestrides an elephant and holds out a mammoth hand to ‘control the elements’ for my helping, while another Master [identified in the sketch as ‘Saib Morya’] stands beside the elephant watching my ordeal. A funny little elemental in a cotton nightcap and holding a lighted candle, says, ‘My stars! What’s that?’ from a perch on K.H.’s shoulder, and a series of absurd questions and answers written below my Interrogator’s book, complete the nonsensical satire. From this description the reader may judge the joviality of H.P.B.’s temperament at that period, and of the kindly license allowed us in our dealings with the Teachers. . . .” (p. 416, 1974 printing.)

H.P.B.’s drawing, Olcott’s description of the sketch, and the other documents quoted in this section provide evidence that in the New York days (late 1870s) Blavatsky, Olcott and Judge knew of *two* Masters---one named “Kashmir” and the other “Morya”. The other documents I have cited above show that later in India and elsewhere, “Kashmir” was also known as Koot Hoomi (KH). Clearly, this second “fragment of evidence” does *not* support Johnson’s “identification of Ranbir Singh as the prototype for Morya.”

As outlined in this section, the erroneous statements made by Johnson reveal his apparent unfamiliarity with many relevant primary sources and his carelessness in researching and collating various historical facts. Unfortunately, Johnson’s books are marred by numerous mistakes of this kind which show that Johnson has not properly done his homework.



PART VI

WHO'S PULLING WHOSE LEG? OR HOW CAN YOU TELL WHEN IT IS "DISINFORMATION" OR NOT?

On p. 6 of *The Masters Revealed*, Johnson writes:

"In 1880, the Mahatmas' letters were full of geographical references to Punjab and Kashmir. But in the next few years, a cover story about their residence in a Tibetan ashram was promoted and a number of false testimonies concocted as a diversionary tactic. . . ."

But Johnson assures the reader that:

"H.P.B did *indeed* have connections in Tibet; the Bengali explorer Sarat Chandra Das, who spent more than a year there, was on *intimate terms* with Olcott. Under the authorization of the Panchen Lama's prime minister [Sengchen Tulku], Das obtained a large number of authentic texts which he *seems* to have forwarded to HPB via Olcott for use in her writings. But this rather indirect link to the court of the Panchen Lama *had nothing to do with* Morya and Koot Hoomi, although HPB made elaborate efforts to portray the Indian Mahatmas as residents of Shigatse." (p.6) *Italics added.*

Later in the same book in the chapter titled "Sengchen Tulku" (pp. 198-206), Johnson elaborates on HPB's "connections in Tibet." He points out that in *The Theosophist* for 1882, H.P.B. writes about a Buddhist correspondent identified as "the Chohan-Lama of Rinch-cha-tze (Tibet), the Chief of the Archive-registrars of the secret Libraries of the Talay and Tashi-Lhunpo Lamas-Rimpoche---also a member of our Society. . . .From. . . [him] we have already received the promise. . . ." (Quoted from H.P.B.'s *Collected Writings*, volume III, p. 398.)

Concerning HPB's reference to this Buddhist correspondent, Johnson comments:

"It seems likely that her [H.P.B.'s] claim of a connection to the court of the Panchen Lama (also called the Tashi or Trashy Lama) *is based on reality* [*Italics added.*]. This is supported by Olcott, who writes in *Old Diary Leaves* [Volume 4, p. 6, 1975 printing] of 'the Tashi Lama (whose Master of Ceremonies one of our own revered Mahatmas is).' " (p. 198.)

Who was this "Chohan-Lama" with whom HPB claimed to be in contact? Johnson speculates that this "mysterious correspondent of HPB" was Sengchen Tulku, who was "in charge of the Tashilhunpo library. . . .He was also head of the Ngag-pa or Tantrik college at Tashilhunpo." (p. 202)

Johnson goes on to say:

“The minister [Sengchen Tulku] authorized Das to take ‘over two hundred volumes, manuscripts or block-prints’ back to India. Sengchen Tulku’s desire for cultural exchange with the West *may well have led him* to sympathize with the Theosophical Society and authorize Das to share Tibetan scriptures with its founders [Olcott and Blavatsky].” Italics added.

On pp. 191-193 of *The Masters Revealed*, Johnson quotes Colonel Olcott’s impressions of Sarat Chandra Das. I give excerpts from Olcott’s narrative:

“Sarat Babu is a most interesting man to talk with. . . .He actually lived thirteen months at Teslu Lumpo [Tashilhunpo, Shigatse, Tibet], in the household of the Tashi Lama, the second in rank in the Lamaic hierarchy; made the journey thence to Lhasa under favorable auspices; saw and talked with the Dalai Lama, or Supreme Pontiff, and brought back [to India] manuscripts, printed books, and other souvenirs of his memorable journey. He was good enough to give me one of the soft silken scarfs that the Tashi Lama, at a reception, laid across his hands. . . .” (Olcott is writing of his first meeting with Das at Darjeeling, India in June, 1885; *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. 3, pp. 265-267, 1972 printing.)

“[In July 1887]. . . I made a return call on that wonderful explorer of Tibet, Sarat Chandra Das. . . who showed me the priceless MSS. and printed books he had brought back from Lhasa. . . .Sarat Chandra saw many of these primitive volumes in the great Library of the Teslu Lama and was actually permitted to bring some of them back to India with him. In his possession at Darjeeling I have seen them; and this makes me feel confident that when the Great Teachers of the White Lodge see that the auspicious moment has arrived, these long-lost treasures will be rescued from obscurity and brought before the literary world, to enrich us with their contents. . . .” (This was written by Olcott *after* H.P.B.’s death; *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. 4, p. 4, 1975 printing and *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. 5, p. 8, 1975 printing.)

Commenting on Olcott’s narrative, Johnson speculates:

“One cannot but wonder if *The Stanzas Of Dzyan* [in HPB’s *The Secret Doctrine*] and *The Voice Of The Silence* were based on ‘long-lost treasures rescued from obscurity’ by Das and ‘brought before the literary world, to enrich us with their contents’ by HPB.” (p. 193)

And on p. 204, Johnson again surmises:

“While to some extent Ranbir Singh may account for her access to new material, there *is ample reason* [??] to believe Sengchen Tulku and Sarat Chandra Das played a comparable role in HPB’s life. The timing of her claim. . . to a correspondent in Tibet . . . [is] *curiously coincidental* with Das’s second journey [to Tibet]. HPB’s 1882 pilgrimage to Darjeeling also *seems* to point to the Das/Sengchen connection.” Italics added.

Collating his remarks on the Tibetan scriptures allegedly given to HPB, we find that Johnson wants to believe that Das gave certain Tibetan manuscripts to Blavatsky. Furthermore, these MSS purportedly constitute the actual texts for H.P.B.’s *Stanzas Of Dzyan* and *The Voice Of The Silence*. Apparently, Olcott was the intermediary who took the MSS from Das and forwarded them to Blavatsky.

I am struck by the vague, speculative nature of Johnson's statements. Does Johnson provide us with any solid evidence that would support these speculations? As far as I can tell, he offers no specific, direct evidence; instead he gives only "curiously coincidental" *suggestions* and *possibilities*.

Did Johnson try to locate the papers of Sarat Chandra Das? Did he research Olcott's handwritten diaries that might shed more light on Olcott's meetings with Das? Did Johnson try to locate any correspondence between Olcott and Blavatsky that might mention these Tibetan manuscripts? Or any correspondence between Olcott and Das or between Blavatsky and Das? Who translated these manuscripts for HPB? Did Das send English translations to HPB and keep the original manuscripts? Where are these manuscripts today? Are they preserved somewhere in India? Are there published inventories of the books and manuscripts Das brought back from Tibet? Did Johnson research the Sarat Chandra Das collection of Tibetan manuscripts? *Why would Das or Olcott keep "silent" about the true origin of these manuscripts* (supposedly given to HPB and then published by her in *The Secret Doctrine* and *The Voice of the Silence*)? There are many other questions that arise as one thinks about Johnson's assertions. Unfortunately, K. Paul Johnson does *not* answer these questions in his book. He seems content just to *speculate* and *insinuate* instead of doing the necessary research in order to verify or falsify his hypotheses.

Throughout all three of his books, Johnson indulges in *excessive* speculation and constantly violates the historical rule of "Give evidence." Jacques Barzun and Henry F. Graff write on this kind of *speculation-spinning* in their classic work *The Modern Researcher*:

"...the rule of 'Give evidence' is not to be violated without impunity. No matter how possible or plausible the author's conjecture, it cannot be accepted as historical truth if he has only his hunch to support it. What would be more than adequate for village gossip does not begin to be enough for history. . . . The writer. . . [may have] found his hypothesis consistent with the facts he had gathered, and from this consistency he deduced confirmation. He may be imagined as saying: ' . . . certain facts can be made to support my view, therefore my view is proved.' But proof *demand*s *decisive evidence*; this means *evidence that confirms one view and excludes its rivals*. . . . [The author's] facts will fit his view *and* his critic's *and* several other possible views as well. To say this is to say that they support none of them in such a way as to discriminate between truth and conjecture. In short, mere consistency is not enough, nor mere plausibility, for both can apply to a wide variety of hypotheses. The commandment about furnishing evidence that is decisive leads us, therefore, to a second fundamental rule: in history, as in life critically considered, *truth rests not on possibility nor on plausibility but on probability*. Probability is used here in a strict sense. It means the balance of chances that, *given such and such evidence* [italics added], the event it records happened in a certain way; or, in other cases, that a supposed event did not in fact take place. . . ." (Fourth edition, 1985, pp. 174-175.)

In his *Theosophical History* review (p. 241), Dr. Algeo mentions Johnson's penchant for speculation spinning and cites an example. In a single paragraph, Johnson attempts to make a connection between Ranbir Singh and Morya using the following "possibility-plausibility" qualifiers: "it is not unlikely . . . may have . . . it seems possible that . . . perhaps . . . would have made . . . could have found . . . may have made . . . might have been . . ." (*The Masters Revealed*, p. 136)

Algeo's example reminds me of what William Kingsland once wrote about Richard Hodgson's similar predilection for speculation spinning on HPB and the Masters:

" . . . Hodgson is no doubt entitled to form what opinions he likes; but where is the proof

in all this mass of suppositions? . . . There is a vast difference between a *might have been* and a *was*. In the one case we are entitled to reserve our judgment; but we are certainly *not* entitled to level accusations of fraud as if we had definitely proved the case. If we are to say *was* we must have very definite proof . . . One reads with ever-increasing disgust these conjectural phrases with which almost every page [of Hodgson's Report] is freely besprinkled: 'it may have been'---'there is nothing which might not have been'---'it might well have been'---'it would appear'---'it is possible'---'what seems to have happened'---'probably'---'I think'---'we may suppose'---'she might have'---'cannot be regarded as at all unlikely'---'there might have been'---'she may have'---etc. etc. . . . Is it any wonder that in the end Hodgson succeeded in persuading himself that all these suppositions were what really happened, . . . and rejects as 'unreliable', or else as 'deliberate lies', every scrap of evidence offered for the genuine explanation? . . ." (*The Real H.P. Blavatsky*, 1928, pp. 276-277.)

Unfortunately, Johnson's three books are also chock-full of such "conjectural" rhetoric. And I fully agree with Algeo's statement that:

"The rhetoric of . . . [Johnson's] presentation disguises the weakness of the evidence, perhaps even from Johnson himself." (Quoted from *The American Theosophist*, Late Spring/Early Summer 1995, p. 12.)

Returning to the subject of the manuscripts allegedly given to HPB, Johnson raises interesting *possibilities* about these Tibetan writings but he goes no further. Would Johnson be willing to consider *another* possibility? Could the Master Morya (whom witnesses testified came repeatedly to Bombay T.S. Headquarters) have given HPB the manuscripts or copies of the same from which she made her translations of *The Stanzas Of Dzyan* and *The Voice Of The Silence*? But apparently the Master M., coming to visit HPB and Olcott at Bombay, *does not* and *cannot* exist in Johnson's own version of Theosophical "reality."

I have asked David Reigle (whom Johnson mentions on pp. 203-204 of *The Masters Revealed*) for his opinion on whether Sengchen Tulku was possibly Olcott's "Master of Ceremonies." From his knowledge of Tibetan history, etc., Reigle is of the opinion that Sengchen Tulku was *not* Olcott's "Master of Ceremonies." Reigle also believes that Johnson's assertion about Das giving Blavatsky certain Tibetan MSS is highly implausible. See the Appendix (pp. 42-43) of this paper for some of Reigle's criticisms of Johnson's speculation about Sengchen Tulku, Sarat Chandra Das, Olcott and H.P.B.

With regard to HPB's remarks on "the Chohan-Lama," Johnson seems quite willing to *admit* that Madame Blavatsky actually knew about and was referring to a real person residing at Tashilhunpo, Shigatze, Tibet. Johnson is also ready to *concede* that Olcott had access to reliable information on the Tashi Lama's "Master of Ceremonies." In other words, Johnson believes that Blavatsky and Olcott are telling the "truth."

I would like to contrast these admissions by Johnson with his opposing view on two other documents.

In a letter to A.P. Sinnett (dated Oct. 9, 1882), H.P.B. recounts her visit with Masters K.H and M. in Sikkim:

"Oh the blessed blessed two days! It was like the old times....The same kind of wooden hut, a box divided into three compartments for rooms, and standing in a jungle on four pelican's legs....the same eternal 'gul-gul-gul' sound of my Boss's [Morya's] inextinguishable chelum pipe; the old familiar sweet voice of your KH (whose voice is still sweeter and face still thinner and more transparent)....." (*The Letters Of H.P. Blavatsky To A.P. Sinnett*, 1925, p. 38)

In a letter to Sinnett (received Oct., 1882), Master K.H. himself describes this same visit:

"I do not believe I was ever so profoundly touched by anything I witnessed in all my life, as I was with the poor old creature's [HPB's] ecstatic rapture, when meeting us recently both in our natural [physical] bodies...Even our phlegmatic M[orya] was thrown off his balance, by such an exhibition---of which he was chief hero. He had to use his *power*, and plunge her into a profound sleep, otherwise she would have burst some blood-vessel...in her delirious attempts to flatten her nose against his riding mantle besmeared with the Sikkim mud!...." (*The Mahatma Letters*, Letter No. 92 in the new chronological edition; Letter No. 54 in the 2nd and 3rd editions.)

According to Johnson's theories of "cover-up" and "disinformation," H.P.B.'s visit with these two Masters in Sikkim never happened. Blavatsky and "Koot Hoomi" were *lying* to Sinnett. But if one is willing to accept Johnson's assertion that HPB's Sikkim meeting with the Masters did *not* happen, then why should one be so foolish as to believe that Blavatsky and Olcott are telling the truth when they write about the "Chohan-Lama" and the Tashi Lama's "Master of Ceremonies"?

HPB's reference to the "Chohan-Lama" appears in the January, 1882 issue of *The Theosophist* for the *public* to read. But why should this "claim" by HPB be taken at face value? If one is willing to believe what Johnson has written about H.P.B. giving out "disinformation" (i.e. lies) about the "real" Masters and inventing "imaginary" Masters in far away Tibet, *why should one believe HPB is telling the truth in this Jan. 1882 statement?* And how did Olcott know that one of the Mahatmas was the Tashi Lama's "Master of Ceremonies"? Was Olcott himself reporting from downtown Shigatse or Tashilhunpo? *Following Johnson's line of "reasoning"*, HPB simply fed Olcott some "disinformation." The Colonel believed H.P.B.'s "lie" and naively repeated it years later in the pages of *Old Diary Leaves*.

I personally don't give credence to Johnson's "hodge-podge" hypothesis about "disinformation". But I am delighted that Johnson admits the *veracity* of Olcott's and HPB's statements about "the Master of Ceremonies" and "the Chohan-Lama." In 1989, I wrote an article (still in rough draft) titled "Will The Real Koot Hoomi Please Stand Up." In this essay I quoted Olcott's reference to the Tashi Lama's "Master of Ceremonies." I suggested that the Master of Ceremonies might possibly be Koot Hoomi. I listed extracts from various documents which lead me to this conclusion. Will Johnson be willing to acknowledge the *truthfulness* of these excerpts, too? Or will he label them as "disinformation"? *But if these extracts are "disinformation", why not the two statements by Olcott and H.P.B.?*

The excerpts are as follows:

"...my venerated GURU DEVA [Koot Hoomi]...holds a well-known public office in Tibet, under the TESHU LAMA." (Damodar K. Mavalankar in *The Theosophist*, April, 1884. See *Damodar And The Pioneers Of The Theosophical Movement*, 1965, p. 340.)

"According to Theosophical statements, Koot Hoomi is a Brahmin. . . .He was...educated in Europe, and attended Professor Fechner's lectures. He became an Adept, and took up his residence in Thibet, where he is relic-bearer to the Teschu-Lama, an office in Thibet resembling that---say of Cardinal Vicar, in the Roman Catholic Church. . . ." (Quoted from the October, 1884 unpublished draft of the S.P.R.'s *First Report*. . .*On Phenomena In Connection With The Theosophical Society*, p. 16.)

"There is beyond the Himalayas a nucleus of Adepts, of various nationalities; and the Teschu lama knows them, and they act together, and *some of them are with him and yet*

remain unknown in their true character even to the average lamas....My Master [M.] and K.H. and several others I know personally are there...." (H.P.B. in an 1886 letter to Franz Hartmann, *The Path*, March, 1896, p.370. Italics added.)

"In about a week---new religious ceremonies, new glittering bubbles to amuse the babes with, and once more I will be busy night and day, morning, noon, and evening...." (Koot Hoomi in Letter No. 68 in the new chronological edition of *The Mahatma Letters*; Letter 16 in the 2nd and 3rd editions. This letter was written in the latter part of July, 1882. Documentation is available to show that a large religious festival occurred at Tashilhunpo during this same period of time.)

"Within the cloister of Tashi-Lhunpo and Si-Dzang, these powers, inherent in every man, called out by the few, are cultivated to their utmost perfection. Who, in India, has not heard of the Panchen Rimpoche, the *Hutugtu* of the capital of Higher Tibet? His brotherhood of Khe-lan was famous throughout the land; and one of the most famous 'brothers' was a *Peh-ling* (an Englishman) who had arrived one day during the early part of this century, from the West...." (H.P.B. in *Isis Unveiled*, 1877, Volume II, p. 618, Boris de Zirkoff's *Collected Writings* edition.)

"...the Teshu Lama at Tchigadze...is an *Avatar* of Tson-kha-pa...*De jure* the Teshu Lama is second after the Dalai Lama; *de facto* he is higher.... While the former (Dalai Lamas) are addressed as 'Jewel of Majesty,' the latter enjoy a far higher title, namely 'Jewel of *Wisdom*,' as they are high Initiates." (H.P.B. in *The Theosophical Glossary*, p. 247.)

CONCLUSION

In summary, K. Paul Johnson has devoted a great deal of time and effort in researching various portions of H.P. Blavatsky's life and the historical identities of her Masters. Johnson's books should be read by every Theosophical and occult student who is interested in learning more about Madame Blavatsky's life and the true nature of Blavatsky's Mahatmas. Johnson's books are also a gold mine of biographical information on various people whom Madame Blavatsky knew. His three titles have been quite controversial in Theosophical circles but that's good if the controversy prods Theosophists to reexamine their beliefs and assumptions.

Unfortunately, Johnson's books are marred by numerous serious mistakes and inaccuracies. Furthermore, I am convinced that A. P. Sinnett's assessment of Richard Hodgson's "method" of handling the evidence about H.P.B. and the Masters *also applies* to Johnson's own "modus operandi" in researching the same subject:

"... he merely staggers about among the facts, ignoring one [fact] while he is framing a hypothesis [A], incompatible with it, to explain another [fact], and then attempting to get over the first fact by suggesting alternative hypothesis [B] incompatible with the second [fact]. The multiplication of theories on this principle *ad nauseam* is not legitimate argument. . . ." (A.P. Sinnett, *The "Occult World Phenomena" And The Society For Psychical Research*, 1886, pp. 32-33.)

All in all, Johnson's "identifications" of the two Masters don't withstand a critical analysis of the *sum total* of evidence and testimony concerning the adepts involved. I believe that anyone who carefully studies the evidence and seriously thinks thorough the issues involved will reasonably conclude that Johnson's so-called "persuasive case" about the Masters M. and K.H. is nothing but a "*house of cards*." Even as "suggestions", Johnson's conjectures on these two Masters are highly implausible and dubious when carefully scrutinized in light of all the known facts.

Appendix: Comments by David Reigle on Johnson's "Sengchen Tulku" Chapter

The drift of K. Paul Johnson's chapter on "Sengchen Tulku" in his *The Masters Revealed* is that H. P. Blavatsky used Tibetan manuscripts, released by Sengchen Tulku and brought out by Sarat Chandra Das, in her later works, particularly in the series of eleven articles now published as "The Mystery of the Buddha" in *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. 14. Johnson cites from Das's *Autobiography* the fact that Sengchen presented Das with forty volumes of Tibetan manuscripts upon the latter's departure for India after his first trip to Tibet in 1879. He omits to cite, however, Das's note on p. 27 of the same book, "I made a present of these books to the Government Bhutia (Tibetan) Boarding School." It would have been difficult, of course, for Blavatsky to access these manuscripts at this school.

Das made a second trip to Tibet in 1881, staying through 1882, during which he obtained more manuscripts. Johnson writes, "This marked the beginning of Das's most fruitful period in Tibet, as within a few weeks he began a search for the Sanskrit books in the Tashilhunpo library with Sengchen's permission." (p. 202) A more careful reading of Johnson's sources shows that it was not the Tashilhunpo library which Das searched in, but Sengchen's personal library: "The minister [Sengchen] graciously insisted that I should take up my quarters in his residence, Puntso khangsar, where he offered me the library with an attached waiting-room and bath-room." (*Journey to Lhasa and Central Tibet*, p. 108) Thus Johnson's statement in the following paragraph, "He [Sengchen] was in charge of the Tashilhunpo library," there used by Johnson to identify Sengchen with Blavatsky's "mysterious correspondent" who was "the Chohan-Lama of Rinch-cha-tze (Tibet) the Chief of the Archive-Registrars of the secret Libraries of the Dalai and Ta-shu-hlumpo Lamas-Rimboche," is not correct.

Nonetheless, what books did Das find in Sengchen's library? Johnson continues, "He [Das] soon found several [Sanskrit books] with copious annotations in Tibetan, which caused him great delight." (p. 202) Johnson's footnote here refers to Das's *Journey to Lhasa and Central Tibet*, p. 112. There we find: "After breakfast I returned to my studies, and, with the permission of the minister [Sengchen], commenced a search for Sanskrit books in his library." A few lines later, Das describes his finds: "To-day I discovered three Sanskrit works written in the Tibetan character. They were the *Kavyadarsha*, by Acharya Sri Dandi; the *Chandra Vyakarana*, by Chandra Gomi; and the *Svarasvat* [*sic*] *Vyakarana*, by Acharya Ami. I was transported with joy when I saw that they contained explanations in Tibetan." Johnson is not a Sanskrit scholar, so did not cite these titles; nor, it seems, did he try to find out what they are, and therefore whether they could have been sources for Blavatsky. The *Kavyadarsha* is a well-known book on how to write elegant *kavya*, or ornate poetry, in Sanskrit. The *Chandra Vyakarana* and the *Sarasvati Vyakarana* are both Sanskrit grammars, offering alternatives to Panini's famous grammar, the *Ashtadhyayi*. These, it appears, would have been of little help to Blavatsky.

Further information on Sengchen's library is found in Das's account of his first trip to Tibet, when Das stayed in the same library room of Sengchen's "*Phuntsho-khang-sar* (the perfected or fully furnished new house)." (*Autobiography*, p. 58) Das describes: "The north and east walls of my room were concealed by pigeon-holed shelves, containing about three hundred volumes of Tibetan manuscripts." (*Autobiography*, p. 59) Das's account in following pages makes it clear what these three hundred volumes were: "The Grand Lama . . . engaged spies to watch our movements. Two monks used to come to our lodgings, and, under pretence of examining the Tibetan Scriptures in the library, used to stay for many hours watching us." The Tibetan Scriptures are, of course, the Kangyur and Tengyur. Indeed, the three above-mentioned Sanskrit books, which due to their subject-matter were transcribed rather than translated into Tibetan, are found in the Tengyur, the collection of expositions by Indian authors.

The Kangyur, the collection of the Buddha's word, includes the "Books of Kiu-te." It is somewhat misleading, however, to say that the Books of Kiu-te refer to the Kangyur, as Johnson copied (p. 203) from the incomplete statement found in Sylvia Cranston's biography of Blavatsky, *HPB* (Johnson's citation of p. 83 must be corrected to pp. 386-87). The incomplete quotation from my

book, *The Books of Kiu-te*, was sufficient for Cranston, who wished only to show that the Books of Kiu-te were no mere figments of Blavatsky's imagination. For Johnson, however, who is attempting to trace doctrines in Blavatsky's writings to sources in the Tibetan Scriptures, it is not sufficient. Reference to my book would have shown him that the Books of Kiu-te are the Tibetan Buddhist tantras, comprising some twenty only of the Kangyur's one hundred or so volumes (numbers vary according to edition). As to these, Blavatsky's own statement is that her sources were among the secret Books of Kiu-te, distinguishing them from the publicly known volumes.

Johnson's following statement that Blavatsky's access to the Kangyur, rather than through Das may have been through Ranbir Singh, who "had this translated by his scholars into Sanskrit," (p. 203), is again based on a misapprehension of the facts through not following out his sources. His statement that in the *pathshala* of Leh the Buddhist Kangyur and Tengyur were translated from Tibetan into Sanskrit (p. 134), based on Sukhdev Singh Charak's *Life and Times of Maharajah Ranbir Singh (1830-1885)*, p. 255, is much like reading that 300 people went on an expedition to Mt. Everest, and then assuming that all 300 reached the summit. Whatever small fragments may have been completed by Ranbir's translators, none of them are known to scholars today. In the nearly two hundred years since scholarship on the Tibetan Scriptures began outside of Tibet with Csoma de Koros, only a handful of texts have ever been translated from Tibetan into Sanskrit, for the simple reason that only a handful of translators have ever had the expertise to do so. Yet during this time a large number of the Sanskrit originals of the Tibetan Scriptures have been discovered, and it is these which were to command the attention of Das.

Das founded the Buddhist Text Society of India in 1892. About this Johnson writes: "Olcott seems to imply that Das is in direct communication with the Great Teachers of the White Lodge. If publication of the texts in Das's possession depends on the will of those Teachers, then the work of the Buddhist Text Society and that of the TS must be directed by the same Masters." (p. 193) But again he does not follow through and tell us what texts were published by the Buddhist Text Society. What Das considered to be one of his major finds in Tibet was Kshemendra's *Avadana-kalpalata* in Sanskrit and Tibetan, obtained in Lhasa. He began publishing this in installments in 1888, before the existence of the Buddhist Text Society; so it was published in the Bibliotheca Indica series by the Asiatic Society, Calcutta. Its publication was not completed until 1918, the year after his death. It consists of 108 *avadanas*, or stories illustrating the conduct of a bodhisattva, of which four were translated into English by his brother Nobin Chandra Das and published in 1895 as *Legends and Miracles of Buddha, Sakya Sinha, Part I*.

The first text Das published through the Buddhist Text Society was the *Bodhi-patha-pradipa*, in Tibetan and English in their *Journal* for 1893. This famous work by Atisha, found in the Tengyur, is said by Tibetan tradition to be the basis for all the *lam-rim*, or graded path, literature written in Tibet, including Tsong-kha-pa's magnum opus, the *Lam-rim-chen-mo*. It has been translated into English several times since. Then followed a period of collaboration with other pundits on Sanskrit originals of Tibetan Scriptures, utilizing Sanskrit manuscripts from Nepal. Another Tengyur work, the *Madhyamaka-vritti* by Chandrakirti, was published 1894-7. This is a commentary on Nagarjuna's fundamental work establishing the truth of emptiness, the *Madhyamaka-karika*, parts of which were published by S. C. Vidyabhushan in *Journal of the Buddhist Text Society of India*, 1895-1898. From 1896 to 1900 Das co-edited the first printed (though incomplete) Sanskrit editions of four major Kangyur works, the *Samadhi-rajya Sutra*, the *Karuna-pundarika*, the *Suvarna-prabha[sottama] Sutra*, and the *Lankavatara Sutra*. The latter two have been translated into English in 1970 by R. E. Emmerick, and 1932 by D. T. Suzuki, respectively. Das also published the first two parts of an important Tibetan historical work, Sum-pa Khan-po's *Pag Sam Jon Zang*, on the history of Buddhism, in 1908.

Johnson has apparently opened the eyes of many Theosophists to a large number of historical sources previously unknown to them. The doctrinal questions regarding Blavatsky's sources, however, raised by his "Sengchen Tulku" chapter, can only be answered by ascertaining the teachings of the Tibetan Scriptures; and neither Johnson nor the Theosophists have yet done this.