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H.P.B. AND THE PRESENT CRISIS

IN THE

THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

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## H.P.B., AND THE PRESENT CRISIS IN THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

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HAVING with the deepest sorrow and regret read the unjustifiable attack made by W. Q. Judge on Annie Besant, I think it my duty as one of the oldest members of the T. S., and as one intimately acquainted with its leaders and inner history, to come forward and place before its members a few facts known to me which I have hitherto kept to myself.

The six years spent with Madame Blavatsky, during which I lived with her in the closest intimacy, have enabled me to be cognisant of much that is unknown to others. I deeply feel the necessity of giving to the members of the Society some of H. P. B.'s own words to me, which may elucidate a few of the perplexities caused by recent events.

During H. P. B.'s residence in Würzburg and Ostend she was in continual correspondence with several Europeans and Americans, who were under her tuition at that time. I knew that Mr. Judge was one of her pupils. I had met him for the first time at Enghien, as mentioned in my "Reminiscences of H. P. B.," and feeling a personal friendship for him, I asked H. P. B. whether he would be the one to replace her when she left us—her reply was *no*, he would never be her successor; she had a high opinion of his knowledge as a lawyer, also of his remarkable executive faculties and his power of organisation (all of which she sensed beforehand, because they had not yet come into play), yet, from an occult point of view he would never progress much in this life, having failed in one of the trials placed in his path on the occult road. Then she added: "Poor Judge, he is his own worst enemy," Another day she called me into her room and showed me a letter, written by W. Q. Judge to her. It began with his own handwriting, which suddenly changed into the handwriting of H. P. B., and so perfect was the imitation, that I could not detect a single flaw; then he went on with his own handwriting again to the end of

the letter. I looked at H. P. B. aghast and said, "But surely this is a very dangerous power to possess," to which she replied, "Yes, but I do not believe Judge would use it for wrong or evil purposes." This I have repeated to W. Q. Judge, and he has denied it. Colonel H. S. Olcott has said to me that he possesses a letter written by W. Q. Judge, containing imitations of several signatures.

H. P. B. always told me that her successor would be a woman, long before Annie Besant had become a member of the T. S. She made various attempts with different people, hoping to find one, but was quite unsuccessful, so that she became terribly depressed and downhearted, saying, "There is nobody left to take my place when I am gone." It was only when Annie Besant joined the movement that her hopes revived, for she seemed to feel that in her she would find a successor. H. P. B. told me this, but I had been so discouraged by the previous failures, that I was determined to be on my guard and not accept Annie Besant unless entirely convinced of her disinterestedness of purpose and of her integrity. I thought it just possible that she might be an ambitious woman entering the Theosophical Society with the thought of governing and getting all into her own hands, so I watched her narrowly, criticising her every action from that point of view. But as I noticed her life of daily self-sacrifice and continued endeavour to overcome her failings and shortcomings, how she took herself with an iron hand to task, and how with indomitable will-power she overcame one obstacle after another, I was obliged to confess to myself that my surmises had been both unjust and wrong.

One day I saw Annie Besant enveloped in a cloud of light—Master's colour. He was standing by her side with his hand over her head. I left the room, went quickly to H. P. B., and finding her alone, told her what I had witnessed, and asked her if that was a sign that Master had chosen Annie Besant as her successor. H. P. B. replied, "Yes," and that she was glad I had seen it.

Again, one evening I accompanied Annie Besant to a small hall in London, where she lectured to workmen, when suddenly the Master was by her side, and she spoke with an eloquence which I had never heard from her lips before; it came flowing from her like a torrent of spiritual force. I may add that I have since then here in India had repeated proof of her being in direct communication with Master,

During the last year of H. P. B.'s life, when living in Avenue Road, Annie Besant used to spend some time every evening with H. P. B. to receive occult teachings. One day she was told by H. P. B. to go to America, and on the evening of her departure H. P. B. called me to her room. After a few words of salutary advice to myself, she informed me that Annie Besant had gone to America, to bear a message from H. P. B. to the American Section, and also to become better acquainted with W. Q. Judge, as on account of his power of organisation, he would be most useful in the exoteric work of the Society, and therefore it would be well for them to work together. H. P. B. then, turning to me, said: "Master really communicates directly with Annie Besant, her development in this life is a very rapid one, it is the sudden bursting through the shell of all the development and knowledge gained in her previous lives of occultism." H. P. B. continued: "Annie is soon coming very near to Master, and you may rely on her." H. P. B. then went on to speak of her other pupils, but there my lips are sealed.

In confirmation of what I have here stated, I will quote from a letter, written by H. P. B. to W. Q. Judge, dated March 27th, 1891, of which I have a copy in my own possession. In this letter H. P. B. speaks of Annie Besant as "*the soul of honour and uncompromisingly truthful,*" and describes her heart as "one single unbroken diamond, . . . transparent so that anyone can see how filled to the brim it is *with pure, unadulterated theosophy and enthusiasm.*" "UNSELFISHNESS AND ALTRUISM," continues H. P. B., "is Annie Besant's name, but with me and for me she is Heliodore, a name given to her by a Master, and that I use with her, it has a *deep meaning.* It is only a few months she studies occultism with me in the *innermost* group of the E. S., and yet she has passed far beyond all others. She is not psychic nor spiritual in the least—all intellect,\* and yet she hears Master's voice when alone, sees His Light, and recognises his voice from that of D——. Judge, *she is a most wonderful woman,* my right hand, my successor, when I will be forced to leave you, my sole hope in England, as you are my sole hope in America." The italics in the above quotation are all H. P. B.'s own and not mine. In this letter H. P. B. also thought it necessary to warn Mr. Judge when in Annie Besant's presence against light and irreverent talk about occultism and the

\*H. P. B. told me that it was through the intellectual plane that Annie Besant would pass on to the spiritual plane.

Masters, and generally against "the slightest exaggeration or deviation from fact," to quote her own words.

It is strange that W. Q. Judge, having this letter in his possession, should attempt in his pamphlet to belittle the merits of Annie Besant, by hinting that she has had but five years of training, when H. P. B. distinctly tells him how rapidly she has progressed, also that he lays such great stress upon her not being a teacher, whereas H. P. B. calls her her successor.

Mr. Judge at one time acknowledged this letter, having read out a portion of it to a small gathering of our members in Avenue Road, shortly after H. P. B.'s decease. I also know that some of the American members of the Theosophical Society are aware of the existence of this letter.

W. Q. Judge in his pamphlet refers to the very important part he has played in America in connection with the Theosophical movement, especially in the formation of the Esoteric Section, or, as it has later been called, the Eastern School of Theosophy. I have in my possession the copy of a letter from H. P. B. to an American lady, asking her if she would take the Headship of the Theosophical movement in America, because H. P. B. then feared the Society would collapse in America, as there was *nobody to work for it*. The lady refused the offer made to her.

I mention in my "Reminiscences" that H. P. B. had already spoken to me about the Esoteric Section when I was with her in Ostend; subsequently in England she asked me to draw out some rules, but finding the task a very difficult one, I advised her to apply to W. Q. Judge, as he in his capacity of lawyer would have a wide experience to help him. She did so, and after having received the draft of the proposed rules from W. Q. Judge, H. P. B. discussed them freely with almost everybody who came to visit her; even a young member, who had just joined the Society, was asked to read them over carefully and give his opinion concerning them. He complied with her wish and made a suggestion as to the alteration of one of the rules, which H. P. B. acted on. Then as regards W. Q. Judge's statement of having been a member of the Inner Group of the E. S. since 1891, it may be of interest to the members of the Theosophical Society to learn the circumstances under which he forced his way into that group, namely by producing one of those messages which Annie Besant has since repudiated as not being genuine, and it was on the authority of the same message, that we members of the Inner Group permitted him

to enter without taking the usual Pledge. As far as I am personally concerned, this message has always puzzled me, having been told by H. P. B. of W. Q. Judge's previous failure in occultism; and with regard to W. Q. Judge as a teacher, I cannot help saying that ever since I have known him I have not received any teachings from him which I had not previously learnt from H. P. B., whereas through Annie Besant I have learnt much that was unknown to me before.

I have always with pleasure listened to W. Q. Judge's lectures, for he has a great faculty of presenting abstruse truths in a clear language, and H. P. B. had a high appreciation of his ability, as many of her letters to him bear witness, but this does not alter the facts previously mentioned.

H. P. B. had undoubtedly a sincere affection for W. Q. Judge, though he did not always prove himself worthy of it. I know how bitterly she felt in Würzburg that he did not take up her defence against the attacks of the Psychical Research Society. When he read that book in which she was so cruelly accused and trampled upon, surely, had he possessed the devotion for her which he now blazons forth before the world, he would have flown to her side, and tried through his great ability, his devotion, and his presence, to heal some of the wounds of that bleeding heart. I can never forget those days of agony for H. P. B., and how she felt herself deserted by all those who had professed such devotion to her. As she pathetically said one day: "If there was only one man, who had the courage to come forward and defend me as he would defend his own mother, if thus scurrilously attacked, the whole current of the Theosophical Society would be changed." It was a critical moment for the Society, and H. P. B. was left alone in her agony and despair. True I was with her and did the little I could for her, and H. P. B. never forgot it. I shall always remember with gratitude the trust and confidence shown to me in so many ways, and I will be witness to her words and wishes as long as life is in me.

H. P. B. used to wear a signet-ring, to which she attached great importance. She had often said to me that this ring was to be handed over to her successor, and that the properties attached to it were very magnetic. When after H. P. B.'s decease in London, I was informed that the ring had been given to Annie Besant by her express directions, I knew that Annie Besant was her successor.

Soon after the cremation of H. P. B.'s body I was astounded

to hear that phenomena were being produced by W. Q. Judge. H. P. B. had distinctly told me that the day for phenomena was past. I shall never forget the bright, happy expression of her face, and how glad she was to be relieved from producing phenomena; she said it was like an intolerable weight lifted from off her shoulders. She then proceeded to say that Master had explained to her that the Theosophical Society had passed through the physical phase—that of its formation; and through the psychical phase—that of occult phenomena; and was now entering into the intellectual phase, before reaching the spiritual. I asked her: "But will the Masters, then, never communicate to persons through precipitated writing?" And she replied, "In some very rare cases, yes; when an order has to be given and the person is so dense that no other means of communication can be used." Thus imagine my utter astonishment when I heard of letters being freely received, coming like a kind of avalanche through W. Q. Judge. It seemed to me as if a psychic whirlwind was passing through the Society, and I was powerless to do anything, and could only wait patiently and note every event as it happened, knowing that as in the past it would be in the future—that nothing wrong can ever occur in the Theosophical Society without its being brought to light; every bud must blossom out either for good or evil. H. P. B. also seemed to have a presentiment that a crisis was coming upon the Society: she often told me that troublesome times were in store for us, and that there would probably be a general upheaval of the whole Theosophical Society not long after her death—and her prediction has now unfortunately come true.

On my way to India in October, 1893, Annie Besant informed me on the steamer that a terrible trial was awaiting her, that Master had told her directly that the communications received by her from W. Q. Judge and purporting to come direct from the Master were not genuine, and that she was further told that the Theosophical Society had to be cleared of this deceit, and that she would probably have to take action in the matter. Annie Besant felt the agony of this very much, and her whole heart went out in pity to W. Q. Judge, never upbraiding him for the deceit practised on herself, although she keenly realised the ignoble part she had been made to play, having been the channel through which others had been deluded. I asked her whether she would act at once: her reply was that her orders were to wait till she saw the evidence. We then arrived at Adyar for the Convention, and there found a few of the

members in a great state of commotion. The charges were being discussed among them, and there was a general wish to make them public at once. A committee was formed, at which I was present, and after some discussion Annie Besant said that she considered that it would not be fair to bring forward these accusations publicly against W. Q. Judge when he was not there to defend himself. She then offered to take the matter into her own hands, Colonel Olcott urging her to do so, saying that as such serious charges were brought against the Vice-President of the Theosophical Society, it was absolutely necessary for the good repute of the Society that he should clear himself entirely of these charges.

All the members of the Theosophical Society know the result ; how W. Q. Judge persuaded the Committee to dismiss the case without going into the evidence, and thus got out of the dilemma in which he had been placed, without ever clearing himself, for these charges still remain unanswered, casting a slur on the Theosophical Society, because the evasive replies he has sent to *The Westminster Gazette* and *New York Sun* can in no sense be called satisfactory.

I met W. Q. Judge in New York on his return to America from the European Convention, and was shocked to see the change in his personal appearance ; insomnia and suffering had left their mark on him, and he looked terribly dejected. It seemed to me that the lesson had been such a severe one to him that spurious messages would be a thing of the past. I told him that under these conditions I would willingly work with him in the future, and later on, when *The Westminster Gazette* articles first came out, I also wrote to him in this sense. I was under the impression that his object in preventing the charges being made public, was that he thought that it would bring about a collapse of the whole Theosophical Society. I may probably be severely blamed for my attitude in thus submitting without protest to the hushing up of the affair, but I really believed in the sincerity of W. Q. Judge's repentance, and, remembering all his past work and devotion to the cause, I was not going to turn my back on a brother. Besides, I thought that the work of the Society could not be seriously affected by the failings of an individual member, and I hoped that the past experience would prove to members that without truth and honesty there is no chance of the Theosophical Society making its way in the world.

My hopes were rudely dispelled when W. Q. Judge issued



his circular, accusing Annie Besant and Professor Chakravarti of the practice of black magic, and in consequence deposing the former from the headship of the Esoteric School of Theosophy. This circular was issued to the members of the Esoteric School of Theosophy only, marked "strictly private," and this was to my mind a not very honourable course of action, because had W. Q. Judge really believed Annie Besant guilty of such evil practices, it would have been his imperative duty as Vice-President of the Theosophical Society to warn the whole Theosophical Society and not only the members of the Esoteric School of Theosophy, and place them on their guard against two such dangerous members. W. Q. Judge had absolutely no right in deposing Annie Besant from the headship of the Esoteric School of Theosophy, because at the Convention in London, July, 1894, Annie Besant having felt that she could no longer work conscientiously with W. Q. Judge, the Esoteric School had been divided into two sections, W. Q. Judge remaining at the head of the American and Annie Besant at the head of the European and Indian Sections, with entire separation, no member being permitted to join the section outside his own country. This was a very arbitrary arrangement, and many members expressed their dissatisfaction, some in America saying that they were no better than bales of goods to be cast whither the heads pleased to throw them. Having once made this compact, both Annie Besant and W. Q. Judge were bound to keep it, unless through the agreement of both parties it was altered, and therefore it was distinctly a breach of faith for W. Q. Judge to send the above-mentioned circular to the members of Annie Besant's school without her knowledge and consent, especially when she was thousands of miles away, and those members of her school who unhesitatingly accepted W. Q. Judge's circular were not only endorsing his accusation against Annie Besant without waiting to hear what she had to say in her defence, but also acted dishonestly towards their own leader in obeying an order given by the head of another section, to which they did not belong.

I indignantly repudiated W. Q. Judge's order as coming from H. P. B.'s Master. The shocking charges against Annie Besant and Professor Chakravarti, for which there is not the least shade of evidence, were very revolting to my mind, and I could hardly believe it possible that W. Q. Judge could use such an ignoble method of trying to extricate himself from his

own painful position by attributing such crimes to others. The honourable character of Professor Chakravarti is well known here in India, and defence of him is entirely superfluous. At the Indian Convention in December, 1894, a universal vote of confidence was given to him by unanimously electing him on the Council and Executive Committee of the Indian Section. W. Q. Judge's ridiculous charges were treated with well-deserved contempt.

Still more surprising does W. Q. Judge's reference to Mr. Chakravarti become to me when I remember that in February, 1894, at Allahabad, Annie Besant and I both received letters from Mr. Judge advocating the nomination of Mr. Chakravarti as President of the Theosophical Society. Mr. Chakravarti himself had also received a letter from W. Q. Judge urging him to accept this important position, an offer which he immediately and entirely refused. Thus W. Q. Judge offered the Presidentship of the Theosophical Society to a man whom he alleges to be an agent of black magicians; as in his pamphlet, page 6, he asserts that "Master's Agents" were secretly watching Mr. Chakravarti in America in the autumn of 1893, believing him to be under evil influences.

Any sensible person reading W. Q. Judge's circular must be struck by some startling assertions. I have just mentioned the agents which the Master, according to W. Q. Judge, is in the habit of using to watch suspected individuals, and then repeating to W. Q. Judge the information thus dishonourably *acquired*. I consider it sacrilege to suppose that *H.P.B.'s Master* can make use of *spies*.

On page 8, W. Q. Judge states that the plan of the Black Magicians was "to have Colonel Olcott resign when he (Judge) had been cut off, the Presidency then to be offered to her" (Annie Besant), and that "she was made to believe that it was the Master's wish for her not to oppose." As a matter of fact, during last winter I heard Colonel Olcott offer to resign the Presidentship in favour of Annie Besant, but she positively refused to accept it.

On page 11 is the following assertion: "I also state on the same authority that H. P. B. has not reincarnated." During the summer of 1893 W. Q. Judge informed me that he had been told by Master that H. P. B. had been reincarnated. Mrs. Archibald Keightley also confirmed this statement, telling me that she had seen and conversed with H. P. B. in her new body. This autumn Mrs. Keightley said to me that she had

been mistaken in her vision. It is curious, however, that W. Q. Judge, the great occultist he pretends to be, can have been mistaken on so important a point.

On page 7 of his pamphlet Mr. Judge further asserts: "Now, then, either I am bringing you a true message or the whole Theosophical Society and E. S. T. is a lie." How is it possible to believe this in face of the above contradictions?

I need not enter into further discrepancies; the whole pamphlet goes to prove that W. Q. Judge has been mainly prompted by personal ambition and desire to get the whole of the Theosophical Society into his own hands; and in order to do this he must get rid of Annie Besant; and so in his pamphlet he not only makes her out to be an irresponsible being, a victim of "Black Magicians," but also accuses her of actually practising the black art on himself and two other persons, one of whom suffered in health thereby. Thus he tries to incapacitate her for any further work in the Society, for what honest man or woman would consent to associate or work together with one whom they believed could be capable of such iniquity. One has only to trace out the events in the life of Annie Besant to see that she has none of the vices or failings which might attract evil forces to her, so as to influence her to practise the black arts. Further, nobody who reads Annie Besant's reply to these charges, and contrasts her calm and dignified behaviour with W. Q. Judge's desperate attempts at self-enthronement, can be left in doubt which of the two has kept true to the cause to which they both have pledged themselves.

If we are blindly to accept W. Q. Judge's circular, what would be the result? That we should be expected to obey any message given to us by the Head of the E. S. T., as W. Q. Judge claims to be, without using our moral judgment as to whether it is a true message or a false one. It must never be forgotten that in all progress in the spiritual life the faculty of discrimination is of the most vital importance, and if this be atrophied by the habit of blind obedience the aspirant will soon find himself at the mercy of varied and opposing forces, between which he will be unable to distinguish. Therefore, our common sense must never be left out in the cold, because then the door is open to all kinds of slanders, and any member may follow W. Q. Judge's example and accuse his neighbour of black magic. This severs the tie of brotherhood completely, for in the heart of each will lurk the thought that his fellow-

member may at any moment bring up such an accusation against him. Nor can we leave the interests of the members of the Theosophical Society who are not Esotericists, and the general public out of regard, nor forget the dangers which must accrue if, under a pledge of secrecy, slanders are to be circulated against individuals, of which the people concerned may perhaps never become aware.

Another result of the policy of implicit obedience to, and blindly following, a leader is that the Theosophical Society, of which the E. S. T. is the palpitating heart, would no longer be a free Society, it would become a church, with its dogmas, articles of faith and its pope, all liberty of action would by degrees be quelled, we should have missed our vocation, and there would only be one sect more added to the numerous sects already in existence. It would be in direct opposition to H. P. B.'s teachings, and I therefore emphatically refuse to believe that H. P. B.'s Master has issued such an order as W. Q. Judge's circular, or worse still, that he, like a detective, uses agents to spy upon the movements of others.

It has been a most painful task to write these pages, and if W. Q. Judge had been merely a private member of the Theosophical Society I should never have issued it, because in a Brotherhood like the Theosophical Society we have no right to bring the failings of a private member before the world, but W. Q. Judge holds a high official position, namely, that of Vice-President, with the possibility of being elected some day President of the whole Society. It was therefore plainly my duty to place before the public these facts, for the acts of a high official affect the whole Society, and the slightest suspicion of fraud or unfair dealing has to be cleared up or else the Society suffers.

CONSTANCE WACHTMEISTER.