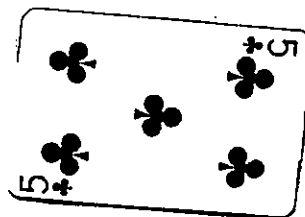
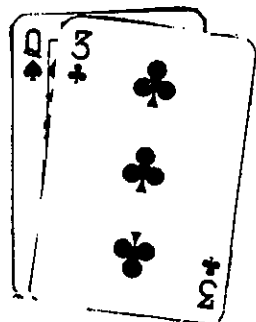
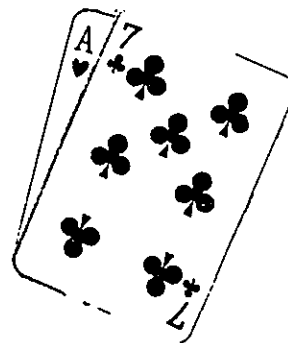
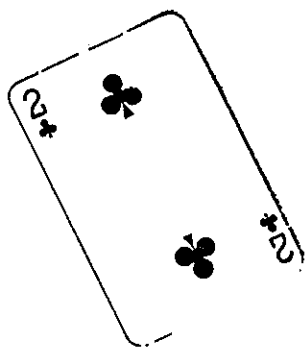


# K. PAUL JOHNSON'S HOUSE OF CARDS?

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

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Daniel H. Caldwell

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# Comments on K. Paul Johnson's Books . . . .

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"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.]

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"*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.]

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". . . 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.]

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"[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*.]

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"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.]

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"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.]

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"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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# K. PAUL JOHNSON'S HOUSE OF CARDS?

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

by

Daniel H. Caldwell

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### 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 34<sup>th</sup> 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 26<sup>th</sup>. This date is confirmed by Olcott's own handwritten diary where the entry for October 26<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup>, 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?*

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## 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