

DO THE MASTERS GUIDE US?

By L. W. Rogers •

The views of many Theosophists about the relationship between the Masters and the members of the Theosophical Society, as well as their relationship to their pupils seem to be vague and often a bit fantastic judging from letters received and conversations heard at theosophical gatherings. An opinion often expressed is, "Oh, everything will come out all right. The Masters will see to that." Or, "It does not matter which plan is followed. The Masters will not let us wreck the Lodge." One would think from the expressions heard that many members hold the view that the Masters are looking after us just as a nurse cares for a toddling infant.

Such an attitude of mind is not merely opposite the truth, but also is so injurious that an emphatic statement on that subject will be useful. In a chapter on the Dark Powers in *The Masters and the Path*, C. W. Leadbeater points out the harm that may be done by holding such an attitude:

We might think: "Surely our Masters will save us from any such downfall as that." They will not, because They cannot interfere with our liberty; we must learn to stand alone.

Those last sixteen words ought to be memorized by every member; there is a world of wisdom in them. We must learn to use our own judgment. We must rely upon ourselves. Otherwise we will be merely automatons and as useless in evolution as wooden images.

Dr. Annie Besant has also emphasized the same fact. She points out that the further we advance in evolution the less the Master has to do with the pupil and the more he is left to himself to make his own decisions. Even in the very rare instances in which the Master gives an order, the recipient is left alone to work it out the best way he can. It was like this in Dr. Besant's work when she was told by her Master to start a college in India. She was an initiate but that did not count in such a matter. It is the Higher Self, not the personality, which participates in the initiation. The ceremony of initiation does not immediately cause any change in the personality. On the physical plane the disciple has no better judgment than before. He will tend to make the same sort of mistakes that were made before initiation and the Master will no more step in to prevent it than before—in other words, *not at all*.

• L. W. Rogers was President of the Theosophical Society in America from 1920-31.

If you have known a person very well for a number of years before initiation and for the same period of time afterward, you must be aware that you can see no difference in their abilities before and after that great event. You do not learn by observation that something remarkable has occurred to them. You can know it only because someone who is still further along in evolution passes on the information.

Initiation means a great deal on the inner planes but nothing at all on the physical plane in terms of sound judgment and clear thinking regarding material affairs. We have to develop those qualities for ourselves, of course, and it is just because we *must* have the opportunity to do it that the Master does not interfere. At times we may be inclined to take our responsibilities too lightly; we may even imagine that the Masters will protect us when we are faced with a difficult situation. In these instances, we need to recall the emphatic words of Bishop Leadbeater:

THEY WILL NOT, BECAUSE THEY CANNOT INTERFERE WITH OUR LIBERTY; WE MUST LEARN TO STAND ALONE.

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