



THE PRASNOTTARA.

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PUBLISHED AT
THE HEAD QUARTERS OF THE INDIAN SECTION T. S.,
BENARES.

PRASNOTTARA, THE GAZETTE OF THE INDIAN SECTION of the THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, containing notices of the movements of Theosophy in India and the workings of the Indian Section, is published at Benares, India, on or before the 15th of every month. Two-thirds of it is devoted to religious and philosophical subjects explained in the light of Theosophy and to Questions and Answers for the elucidation of the intricacies of religious customs and manners of the Hindus &c. A new volume begins with the January number.

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THE PRASNOTTARA.

Vol. XI. } BENARES, DECEMBER, 1901. { Serial
No. 12. } No. 131.

NOTES AND NEWS.

We are sorry to note that Mrs. Annie Beasant suffered greatly from malarious fever. She is free from the fever but still very weak. Hope she will be restored to her former strength very shortly.

—:O:—

We are glad to note that our Bro S G. Pandit of Ahmedabad is here and is helping us a good deal in the office work which was in arrears.

—:O:—

NEW MEMBERS.

We have an increase of members during the month of November by 31.

—:O:—

THE DISPENSARY.

The result of the Dispensary work is as noted below :—

Months.	Nos. of new patients.	Reurrence of old patients.	Total Nos.	Number cured.
From 15th to 31st July.	19	9	28	10
August ...	37	63	100	82
September	75	125	200	49
October ...	84	250	334	52
November	72	192	264	40
	<u>287</u>	<u>639</u>	<u>926</u>	<u>183</u>

So the percentage of cures is 63 3.

—:O:—

VISITORS.

Number of visitors during the month was 9

BRANCH ACTIVITIES.

Madura :—Report for the month of September 1901. There are 34 members and 22 sympathisers. The library consists of 465 English, 305 Sanskrit, 112 Tamil, and 17 Miscellaneous volumes. 201 volumes have been used in the current month. Lectures were delivered, three on "the Astronomical Evidences Regarding the Antiquity of the Vedas," one, on "Love" and one on "the Astral Plane, when the average attendance was 27. Meetings were also held every Sunday for the study of the Gita, when about 27 attended. A Pandit expounds the Srimad Bhagavata on Saturdays and Sundays in the Hall of Theosophy.

Madura :—Report for October 1901. Two more sympathisers came in this month. Twenty English and two miscellaneous books were added to the library. The library issued 129 volumes. Four lectures—one on the "Astral Plane", and three on the "Theory of Evolution"—were delivered. Average attendance 32. Average attendance, at three Sunday meetings held for study of the Gita, was 32. The Pandit continues his exposition of the Bhagavata on Saturdays and Sundays.

Karachi :—September. Two Sunday (public) lectures were delivered in Gujarati. The Reading class held three meetings for the study of "the Outer Court." The Lotus Circle (children's) met thrice, when lectures were delivered in Gujarati on the "Evils of Gambling," "Obedience to Parents" and on "Devotion to Guru." Average attendance 19 at lectures, 14 in reading class, and 11 in the Lotus Circle. In the Training Class two lectures were given in Gujarati and one in English.

Calcutta :—August and September 1901. Four meetings were held in August when Pandit Upendra Chandra Goswamy of Dacca gave lectures on subjects connected with Shri Krishna. Rs. 11 were sent to the Central Hindu College. In September, one special and five ordinary meetings were held. Average attendance of members 22 as against 18 last month. In the first two meetings Pandit Upendra Chandra Goswamy explained the Srimad Bhagavata. In the next two the Gita and Ancient Wisdom were read and explained by Bros. Rajendra Lal Mukerji and Hari Charan Roy respectively. At a special meeting Babu Purnendu Narayan Sinha, President of Bankipur T. S., gave an interesting lecture showing the relations of the Gopis and Rishi Patnis to Shri Krishna. Under the guidance of Bro. Bireswar Banerji a class has been formed for the study of the Theosophical manuals on Mondays and Tuesdays. Rs. 14 were sent to the College. Rs. 15-8 were given in charity.

Surat:—Report for 3rd quarter of 1901. Sunday lectures were given regularly. Average attendance of members 20, and of sympathisers 14. Daily classes were held for the study of the Yoga Vasishtha and the Bhagavata when the President with some members and visitors used to attend. Two new members joined. Number of members up to date 93.

Hooghly:—Report for 3rd quarter of 1901. Strength 10. Sunday meetings are held. Average attendance of members 4 and of sympathisers 4. The "Avatâras" and "Ancient Ideals" were read, and also portions of the "Ancient Wisdom." Several articles from Theosophical journals and Hindu Shastras were studied.

Bhavnagar:—Letter from Branch Secretary dated 31st October 1901, says: "After repeated attempts we have been fortunate enough to rent rooms for our meetings. Till now no regular meetings were held. Now the members in a body have agreed to hold regular meetings and classes for special study and occasional lectures. The rooms were formally opened on the Dasarâ day—October 22nd. The names of office-bearers are as follows:—

President: Mr. Dulerây Mahipatrây Ozâ.

Vice-President: Principal Jamsedji N. Unwalla M. A.

Secretary and Treasurer: Balavantrây Parmânanddas Ozâ.

Librarian: Gopalji Odhavji.

The public are very enthusiastic about the forthcoming visit of our revered Mrs. Besant.

Delhi:—Indraprastha T. S. Letter of Secretary dated 9th November 1901 says: The branch was re-organised by Lala Bala Krishna Das, who took charge of the secretaryship in June. Present strength 9. Regular Sunday meetings are held at the Secretary's place. The members attend very regularly whenever they are in Delhi. Average attendance 7, besides a few sympathisers at times. A class, consisting of three members, meets every alternate day for studying standard works on Theosophy. Monthly income Rs. 8-4 annas. The nucleus of a small library has been formed. The Chief Theosophical Magazines are subscribed for by the Secretary and lent out to members. "Miss Lilian Edger, M. A., kindly responded to our invitation and visited the branch in the beginning of October. She stayed for 9 days, gave three public lectures; held meetings for conversation; and daily classes for members, when she explained and gave notes on some of the very important chapters of the Ancient Wisdom. She strengthened the

branch and gave an impetus to the work. Her stay, in the history of the Branch, has been a period of great activity, and served to unite the members into a closer bond than ever." During her stay, at the suggestion of Bro. Sawan Mull of Jallandar, and with the approval of Miss Edger, a Theosophical book-stall was opened. Rs. 100 were subscribed for the same on the spot, and further support was promised. Bro. Radha Mohan and Lala Rama Saran Das are in charge of the book-selling work.

Penukonda :—The branch has elected new office-bearers as follows :

President.—M. R. Ry., R. Hanumantha Rao Garu.

Vice-President.—M. R. Ry., V. Chakravartti Iyengar.

Secretary and Treasurer.—M. R. Ry., C. V. Shanmukha Mudaliar
Avergal, Overseer, P. W. D.

Bangalore :—Report for the 3rd quarter of 1901. Strength 41 members and 17 sympathisers. 19 meetings were held. The study of the "Gnana Vasishtham" was continued. Owing to the illness of the Pandit the meetings were discontinued for some time.

Namakal :—Report for the third quarter of 1901, ending September 30th :—Strength 7. Daily reading classes were held in which "The Path of Discipleship," "The Self and Its sheaths," "Four Great Religions" were completed, and "Avatâras" is being studied. The Bhagavad Gîtâ with Shri Shankarâchârya's and Shankarananda's commentaries is read and explained by Bro. T. A. Kuppuswamy Iyer on Sundays. Attendance of members 6, regular. Journals are received as usual. The Branch owes nothing on account of annual dues.

Salem :—3rd quarter of 1901. Strength 34 members and 43 sympathisers. 11 weekly meetings were held, when the Secretary, Mr. Venkata Row, explained the Gîtâ. There is a good Theosophical library which is well utilized. Several journals, dailies and weeklies, are subscribed for.

Ludhiana :—Third quarter of 1901. Sunday meetings were regularly held for the study of "Man and His Bodies" and "Karîna" at the house of the Secretary, Babu A.C. Bisvas, who conducted the meetings. Mrs. Besant kindly visited the branch in September and gave two lectures : (1) Death and After, (2) Prârabdha or Destiny. She also presided at the annual distribution of prizes of the local Bâla Bodhini Subha. On Sept. 23rd she was invited by the leading members of An-jumân-i-Islamia to give a lecture at the Islamia school on "Mahomedan Regeneration" which was largely attended and much appreciated by the educated Mahomedans. Her presence and work was, as ever, very helpful.

Kanigiri:—The Olcott Theosophical Society reports that owing to the transfer of President T. Varadarajulu Naidu Garu to Peddapur, Mr. T. Kristnaswamy Aiyar Garu was elected president of the Branch T. S. on 14th October, 1901.

Karkal:—The strength of the branch continues the same as in the preceding quarter, viz. 20. The Theosophical manuals are being studied and thoroughly discussed. Useful lectures are also delivered, and subjects from Hindu Śāstras as well as portions of the texts are explained by Śāstris. The members are earnest and enthusiastic, and the branch seems to have a bright prospect before it.

Karnool:—During the third quarter of 1901 the branch hold regular Sunday meetings, morning and evening, from 7 to 8. A Sanskrit Pundit was employed to explain the Bhagavad Gītā and Panchadas'i with commentaries. Average attendance 14. The regular weekly branch meeting is held for the study of the Theosophical manuals. Besides, a meeting for boys is held every Sunday when the president of the branch T. S. reads and explains to them the Rāmāyana. "The Story of the Great War" has already been finished. The boys take a lively interest in the meetings. The average attendance of boys is 30.

Hyderabad. (Deccan):—Report for the third quarter of 1901.—Meetings are being regularly held on Fridays and Sundays, as usual. The books now under study are :

- (1) The Science of the Emotions.
- (2) Ancient Ideals in Modern Life.

The following two lectures were delivered to the public : On the 29th July 1901, at the People's Hall, Secunderabad, " The Mission of Human Life " by Jehangir Sorabji. On 14th July 1901, at the local Branch Hall by Pandit Śūrya Nārāyan Rāo, B. A. on " Vedantism." The Secunderabad morning lectures are continued with good result.

Belgaum:—Report of visit of Branch Inspector, Mr. R. Jagannathia. The Belgaum Branch was formed on 5th July 1901. From that date up to his departure on 8th July, Mr. R. Jagannathia, Branch Inspector, was present in Belgaum working in connection with the formation of the Branch. In addition to daily interviews with all comers he delivered 5 lectures at the Branch rooms. His services in Belgaum cannot be too highly praised.

An account of the work done by Bro. K. Narayan Swami Aiyer at the Hyderabad Theosophical Society.

Bro. Narayanswami Aiyer, the Provincial Secretary of the Indian Section of the Theosophical Society, Southern India, arrived in Hyderabad on the 18th October 1901. From the very first day of his arrival he delivered for five consecutive days discourses on, (1) The mode of working a Branch. (2) The three bodies of man.

These discourses were delivered at the Hall of the local Branch.

Commencing from the 25th October five lectures were subsequently delivered at the Young Men's Improvement Society rooms, the following being his subjects :—(1) Science and Religion harmonised: (2) Power of Thought. (3) The universal character of the Hindu worship of God. (this was delivered for two days); (4) Theosophy and Hinduism.

He then commenced a series of three lectures at the Branch Hall, on the following subjects: (1) On the state of man after death and the Funeral ceremonies after death. (2) Sandhya-vandanam. (3) The rationale of the Yagnopavitam.

One more lecture was delivered to the Hindu and Parsee communities at the Perozbai Hall on the "The best way to worship God." It was quite an unprecedented thing for a Hindu lecturer to speak to the Zoroastrians on the merits of their Religion, a very nice comparison being carried out between the essential principles of the Hindu and Zoroastrian Religions.

Bro. Narayanswami has done very good work in Hyderabad; and the same may be said of his work in Secunderabad where he has revived a half-dead Branch with some 20 members to begin work. In Secunderabad also he delivered about 8 or 9 lectures which were very much appreciated by the public. In the "People's Hall" at one time there were some 500 or 600 persons to hear him. Altogether his work in Hyderabad and Secunderabad was very satisfactory and in fact he has infused new life into members of the two Branches of the Deccan.

Some E. S. meetings were held with very valuable information and instruction.

He left Hyderabad for Aurungabad with a view to form, if possible, a Branch there. Aurungabad has not yet been touched by Theosophy.

He was given his travelling expenses by the Hyderabad Branch.

He left on the 22nd November after remaining here 35 days.

HYDERABAD DECCAN, }	JEHANGIR SORABJI,
24th November 1901. }	<i>Secy. Hyderabad Theosophical Society.</i>

The "Dharmālaya T. S." Bombay held a social gathering on the Dasara Holiday (October 22) which corresponds to the Durgā Pooja of Bengal. Since the foundation of the Dharmālaya T. S. in March last, the members are in the habit of gathering together on Hindu holidays. This time several Parsi Brothers from the Blavatsky Lodge were also present. The Secretary Bro. G. B. Vaidya explained to the assembly the importance of the Day, saying how the Pandavas finished their exile on this day and became ready to fight for their kingdom, how the military classes in days of yore recommenced their work of marching against an enemy on this auspicious day, and how in certain places buffaloes are killed even to this day in honour of Durgā, which observance symbolised the killing of the beast in man for the attainment of the Divine. It was, as he said, a Theosophical gathering held on a Hindu Holiday. The "Gold leaves" (leaves of the tree, Śāmi on which Arjuna hung up his weapons during their exile.) exchanged on this occasion resembled the human heart in form, and so the exchange of such leaves symbolised the exchange of hearts by friends and relatives who thus promised to love each other as brothers. In the assembly there were representatives of five religious bodies in Bombay, and all were pleased with the happy idea of bringing together men of various sects in a mixed gathering to show that Brotherhood of all creeds could be practically manifested even on religious and festive occasions without any distinction. The Hall was decorated with pictures of the Crescent, the Buddha, the Trimurti, Ganeshji, Zoroaster, Christ, Guru Nanak, H. P. B., Mrs. Besant, and Col. Olcott, all of which were garlanded in the Hindu fashion. Bro.

Vimādalā and Bro. Soonāwālā of the Blavatsky Lodge congratulated the Dharmālaya Lodge on the success of the gathering held on a Hindu Holiday. Bro. R. P. Kamat, Secretary of the Blavatsky Lodge, spoke a few words of advice to the boys of the Bāla Dharmālaya which is an association of students conducted under the guidance of the Dharmālaya T. S. Bombay. Then "gold leaves" were distributed, and the assembly dispersed after Pansupari. We hope this example will be followed by all our Lodges to hold cosmopolitan gatherings on important holidays of persons of various creeds.

—:O:—

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Q.—To the Editor Prasnotara.

Will you please refer to any Shloka in the Bhāgbat to show that Shri Krishna was under six or seven years of age when Rāsh Lila took place ?

U. S.

If in the Rāsh Lila what is described in Shloka 26 of 10, xxxiii be merely the innocent play of a child as an attempt has been made to show in the May 1901 number of the Prasnotara, then why should the question of the Raja in the next three Shlokas and the answer to it by Shuka admit (प्रतीपं) the contrariness of the (आचरित्) action to Dharma, (शुश्रूषितं) censurable nature and the (धर्मव्यतिक्रमः) the outstepping of the bonds of Dharma, though explaining on different grounds than the writer in the Prasnotara, saying that these things are no faults in the great ones as they are like fire that consumes everything, but ordinary persons should not attempt these things even in thought but act only according to the injunctions of the great ones i.e. not according to their examples.

U. S.

Ans. U. S's. difficulty in finding consistency in the argument adduced by the writer in the Prasnotara with that of the Bhagabat will vanish if the explanation given in Page 189 lines 15, 16 and 17 be taken into consideration. "They (these words) are used only in their technical sense according to the Hindu code of morality—and any such conduct cannot but be blamed by the Hindu

Society." The above clearly shows that the writer is at one with the author in making Shri Krishna guilty of transgressing Dharma; but what the writer attempted to prove was that "these words do not at all here mean actual sexual intercourse" as is generally supposed; and in support of his contention the writer has quoted Manu VIII 356 and 357.

"By speaking with another's wife in a pilgrimage, in the forest, in a solitary place, at the confluence of two rivers, a man becomes guilty of adultery."

"By presenting scents, garlands, by joking, by embracing, by touching the ornaments by touching the clothes, by sleeping in the same bed, by eating together, with another's wife—a man becomes guilty of adultery."

The above Shlokas show that even such conduct as is described in Bhagbat (leaving aside the ideas imputed to the words) is *blamable* in the Hindu Society (if it be not so in others, the members of which therefore to make the accusations relevant take the words not in the Hindu sense but in the sense in which they are taken by themselves). Hence since the writer also holds that Shri Krishna's conduct was not consistent with the rules of the Hindu society he is at one with the author—Suka Deva and Parikshit.

This act has been called a "child's play" because He behaved like a child in fully participating in the enjoyments of the Gopinis although He knew He was acting the part of a player giving satisfaction to the audience, Himself remaining unmoved. This might be made more clear if it is said when a child plays with his doll, he ascribes actions to the doll and thinks of certain events happening to the doll for which he either weeps or laughs (as if) in full sympathy with the feelings of the doll, but knowing full well he is quite unaffected by the events ascribed to them. This can be proved by the observation that when an elderly person happens to peep over the actions of the child and the child discovers this intrusion he then immediately throws off his actings and laughs with the observer. Here Shri Krishna's act could have been proved to be identical if we had a competent observer to peep over

His action in the Rāsh Lila, or the playful dance in a circle. The only difference lies in this—in the child's play the dolls remain unaffected, whereas in the case of the Gopinis they were not so; they were fully enjoying Shri Krishna's company—but that cannot alter the nature of Shri Krishna's act—the playing the part of a child or more properly the part of an actor. This will perhaps remove the doubt of U. S.

D.

—:O:—

CAN JUSTICE & MERCY BE RECONCILED?

(In Continuation from page 246).

Ans.—In my former article I simply said how Mercy and Justice can be wedded. In this article I shall try to shew how this is practically carried out in laws, human and divine.

In my last article I compared the dispensation of justice to a gift, in the way of giving rewards or punishments. As such, justice also is said to require three elements for its perfection; and these elements, as noted before, are देश (Deśa) काल (Kāla) and पात्र (Pātra). These three elements, viz. the place, the time of executing the order, and the condition of the person under trial, must always be taken into consideration; and when that is done, Justice is said to be wedded to mercy. Virtually when these elements are not taken into consideration a judgment becomes defective like an indiscriminate gift, producing harm instead of good. Let us therefore try to have a clear notion of these elements.

The word पात्र means the donee. In this connection, however it means *the person under trial*; and this person must first of all be ascertained. So that in awarding judgment (i) the proper person might be dealt with. For else, even though the judgment were otherwise correct on the stated facts, still the proper person being not found out, vitiation of justice would result. (ii) In delivering judgment the nature of the person under judgment must also be taken into consideration.—This is the second sub-element under Pātra. For in determining the quality and quantity of the decree the same quantity and quality cannot indiscriminately be

awarded to all. Suppose there are similar thefts committed by a boy, a man, a woman, a cultured man, and a ruffian; here the same punishment cannot be given in each case; and unless the punishment is regulated according to the nature of these persons, it cannot produce the desired effect—which it should produce in all cases—viz., the good of the person punished or rewarded. Let us take an ordinary example. Suppose we have equal quantities of iron, silver and gold, and we want to make some vessels out of each. Evidently we must hammer the metals into plates. But the amount of force required in beating out the metals should not be the same in all the cases. It must vary with the nature of the metal. Hence the same amount of punishment cannot produce the desired effect on different human natures, even in cases where the acts are identical.

A disregard of these elements makes a judgment abortive. In Hindu Law, not only were these differences taken into consideration, but the caste propensities also were given their due weight in all decisions. Hence the same crime a Sûdra and a Brâhmana was punished differently. This may sound strange to modern ears, which would fain ascribe all such differences to the dominant spirit of Brâhmanic selfishness. But is it not a fact that a slight touch will cure a Brâhmana of a fault which would call for persistent hammering ere any impression was produced on a Sûdra so as to lead him out of the evil? This fact, and not partiality on the part of the Brâhmana legislators, led to the well-known difference in the punishments awarded to a Brâhmana and a Sûdra criminal. The modern democratic notion of the *equality* of man has been productive of great evil, as witness the disasters and terrible crimes of the French Revolution. Truly are men equal, or very nearly so—in the material elements which go to form their “coats of skin,” but, coupled with this equality, we find great divergences in the moral natures of men, often so powerful that they leave their permanent impress on the features of the physical frame itself. Hence when the moral nature is not taken into consideration, justice becomes perverted owing to disregard of the element of the nature of the Pâtra—the subject of

judgment. Similarly, when proper care is not taken in identifying the person under judgment great injustice ensues. Thus in our law courts judges without taking sufficient care to determine the right transgressor and the respective liabilities of the litigants try to make a compromise of the case. And this is done in order to save time at the expense of justice. Moreover, the higher authorities too, do not try to find out whether substantial justice is done to the litigants, but look only to the number of cases decided, and he is the happy judicial officer who can clear his file by what means he chooses. This strikes at the very root of justice. This confusion becomes worse confounded by the intentionally perverse plouiding of the lawyers.

Now let us take the element of time. When the judgment is arrived at the punishment is awarded without delay. No time is allowed before the enforcement of the judgment. A decree is passed,—then, the amount is to be realised all at once, even though the debtor may be incapable of paying the sum. Thus the refusal to give time so as to admit of the debt being paid off by instalments defeats the judgment or decree of its object. On the other hand, the permission given at times to pay debts by small instalments extending over a long period, also obstructs the course of justice; for such permission is often secured by untruthful statements of inability to pay, thus keeping off the creditor whose position is no better than that of the debtor himself. Hence the need of attention to the time element.

The element of place I cannot properly illustrate in human justice. So I leave it to others to work it out for themselves.

Having noted the importance of these three elements in human justice, let me consider how these are taken into consideration in the administration of Divine Justice.

The identification of the person under divine justice is done by the Lords of Karma, who ascertain the facts from the Âka-shic Records, the secret pictures of "Chitra-Gupta." Thus there is no mistake made in the identification of the person. Moreover

the lawyer's artifices to hood-wink are out of place and unavailing, as the judge is capable of seeing for himself and without mistake. When the facts are determined the judgment is awarded according to the nature of the person under judgment.

As regards the time element, the decree, is not enforced at once; but is dealt out in such a way that the person judged may be benefited by it. The decree is dealt out in parts. One portion is to be submitted to in the ensuing life. The portion that cannot be enforced in the forthcoming physical life of the soul goes to make up his Sanchita Karma. Out of the latter again a certain portion only is selected which can well be sustained in each earth-life. The fruition of this Sanchita Karma is sometimes spread over innumerable lives, in order to enable the ego to gain completely a great variety of experience, and to benefit by it. This intention of benefiting the ego is what I call *mercy*. When the time element is thus settled we are in a position to take up the *element of place*. This fixes the nationality wherein the ego would be able best to reap the fruits of his peculiar Karma. After this comes the determination of the family and parentage of the ego for its ensuing birth. When all these are definitely settled, the ego is sent out to meet his own Karma, —not in the sense of being punished, but in the sense of gaining experience, and knowing for himself what is best for him. The utmost care taken for the benefit of the person dealt with is what I mean by *mercy*. Justice is the enunciation of a decree based on the facts described. Mercy is the enforcement of the decree to the best advantage of the judgment-debtor. Mercy is therefore subservient to justice, and softens the hardship we draw on ourselves by our Karma. The proper selection of time, place and person in the enforcement of justice is the chief means of expression of Mercy. Hence to be just and merciful we shall have to give to each his *exact due* in appropriate *time* and *place*. This wise discrimination will soften the hardness of Justice, and will make him appear as an affectionate father instead of as a cruel and stern disciplinarian. The absence of this *wisdom* makes hu-

man justice defective. May we try to remove this defect by the cultivation of real knowledge and wisdom which is expected of every Theosophist.

D.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Q.—LVI. (a) In the October and preceding numbers of the "Prasnottara" explanations have been given of the Rāsa Līlā of Shri Krishna. I regret I have not been convinced as thoroughly as I should have desired.

Personally I am not inclined to believe that all the stories of Krishna's childhood are *literally* true. It must be admitted that the Hindus as a nation have taken them to be literally true, probably through *ignorance*. It must also be admitted that this literal interpretation has *done* society great *harm*. Sects are found here and there where the priests pretend to be the *representatives* of Shri Krishna for the time being and take indecent liberties with the females of their disciples with the knowledge and toleration of the latter.

Mrs. Besant would be doing an immense good to the community at large if she could induce her London friends to read and investigate the Astral Records upon this point and publish the results for the benefit of *those* who would admit that *testimony*. It might at least help a number of honest and good thinking men to decide their line of action. I do not suppose any serious harm will come out of the matter, and I would request my Hindu brothers who accept such a testimony as reasonable for the time being, to join me in requesting her to grant this favour.

(b) Another difficulty is that all the Puranas—works composed by different writers—have taken literal interpretations and sometimes imputed very absurd and foolish conduct upon the part of Shri Krishna. For instance it is stated in Bhabishyottara Purana that Krishna's wife Satyabhama got enamoured of her step-son Samba and forgot herself. For this act Krishna cursed innocent

Samba with leprosy. This action on Shri Krishna's part I do not understand if it be *true*. I believe the whole thing to be false and invented to explain the immigration of sun worshippers into India.

(c) Shrimad Bhagwat is said to have been written by a pious sage. It is meant to be a popular work. Why did this sage credited with provision, because of while writing upon the future state of society in Kali-yuga, and composing a work for the Kali people, write facts in a way which he must have known, would be taken *literally and misinterpreted* by the people. Who is responsible for all the bad Karma done through ignorant but literal and common-sense interpretation of the Shrimad Bhagwat. To say that the work was meant to preserve sacred truths under the *garb* of figure of speech is not quite satisfactory.

(d) Take another fact. Why does Shri Krishna forget all the *Gopis* after he leaves Brindaban after having been so free with them. In his later life Shri Krishna acts as an ordinary though wise man. You find nothing immoral about him. His many wives were the result probably of the then social custom. Can a person who shows so much regard to the belief of the ignorant as shown in Bhagavat-Gita III-20-21-23-24-25-26 act in a way that can give the least ground to the people for being misled? I suppose nature never wants such *miracles* as the killing of the demons by Shri Krishna. All these disappear in Shri Krishna's later life. It is quite possible He may have been a very lovely and affectionate child and in that state of society it was quite possible for Him to have gained the pure affection of the Braj females. He may have been free with them as a boy might be with his mother. But beyond this I think the whole story is made up and not worth supporting. The killing of the demons might be exaggeration of very simple accidents in ordinary life when they concern a fondling of a lord of a community as Nanda was, and who was the fondling of the whole village. Some of them might be distorted versions of the way in which Kansa's intrigues to get at the Divine Child were frustrated. Kansa himself seems to have been what one

may see in an ordinary ignorant Zamindar of the present day. The story of raising Gobarthan must be an unfounded fable. For tremendous down-pour from its top will necessarily deluge the people by over-flooding the ground below. Otherwise the houses would be as safe as the ground below a hillock. Under such circumstances I do not see the advantage of the hill over the house in such a case.

As this matter has now been moved I pray for more *light* to clear up my doubts.

We perhaps should not subordinate our reason to vague explanations which do not seem reasonable to us.

P. B. N.

Ans. In Q. No. LVI P. B. N. has done away with the story of the Shâstras and depended entirely on the astral vision of our London members. But I think in both the cases the statements are either to be taken on authority or rejected, as no reason can be assigned for the facts. As brother P. N. B. has discarded the authority of the Shâstras similarly I know some of our friends discard the statements made in the "Story of Atlantis." The testimony in either case is convincing only to the few; and for that reason the writer has based his grounds on reason and human nature, accepting of course the stories to be *literally true*, (not in the sense they are ordinarily interpreted).

P. B. N. says that this literal interpretation has done much harm; but I believe the harm is done not so much by believing the stories to be true as by the vitiated natures of the subsequent followers—the priests—who unrighteously and without any foundation call themselves *representatives* of Shri Krishna.—This corruption is not due to belief in the stories but to the depraved moral natures of the priestly class, who fraudulently work upon the minds of their innocent followers.—In such a case the frauds are to be discarded but not the stories which have a great bearing on the physical and moral natures of man.

In the above P. B. N. has assumed the story to be entirely false as he cannot understand the action of Shri Krishna. Why?

Do not such things happen at present? Are not there women to-day susceptible to the influence of some of the lower emotions? And do not some men forgetting their duties yield to their lower nature? Are all men divine? If not, what is the impossibility in the story? As regards the conduct of Shri Krishna in cursing his son Sâmba—even that is quite intelligible. For men are expected to have better control over their lower natures. The women are generally emotional and that is their weakness. If in their weakness, they happen to go out of the right path they are to be helped by man who should not on any account take advantage of such weakness. But in case men do take such a mean advantage, they are the proper persons to be punished. Shri Krishna surely did well in cursing his son.

The author of the Bhâgabat is not at all responsible for the wrong use made of his book by the present generation of men. The book is not at all a fictitious one. It contains statement of facts; it seems to me that there is no harm, while writing a history, in giving out real facts. The sages in former days had not the polish which would lead them to conceal the truth for fear of offending any one or of exposing the true state of things. Just as in law books acts called obscene are described, and in law courts such facts are stated, so also the sages who had to deal with matters of fact, unhesitatingly stated what they knew to have happened. If the author of the Bhâgabat be blamed for writing the book then the modern publishers of that book and the Government which does not stop such publication are even more to be blamed.—Such a spirit would lead us to a renewal of the age of the Inquisition—which is nowhere tolerated. Hence the author did nothing wrong, provided the book contained statements of facts which had occurred.

Ans.—In the later life of Shri Krishna we do not find his childish freaks because He was no longer a child. The playfulness of a child and youthful merriment become the earlier part of man's life—When a man enters the actual bustle of the world he has little time to attend to such things.

This will be clear to the questioner if he simply studies the life of any man, who has to pass through all the stages of human life—infancy, childhood, boyhood, youth, manhood and old age. And right conduct would be that which is appropriate to each particular stage. To expect youthful frolics in the ripe years of manhood is simply unnatural. On the above grounds I believe that Shri Krishna behaved exactly as we should expect a man naturally to do.

As for his miracles—whether they were necessary or not can well be illustrated from what our revered H P. B. did in the early days of the T. S. movement. She had to convince earnest sceptics as to the reality of higher, though invisible, forces and forms of matter. When that work was finished, she took to writing her philosophical work the Secret Doctrine. Her work is taken up by Mrs. Besant. She shows none of her predecessor's miracles, because that stage of the Society's life is gone and those demonstrations of childhood need not be repeated.

Now we have to convince the philosophical and the rational. Hence the necessity of lectures and books. As that is done we have to take to practising what has been taught; and that has been begun by the E. S. T. department. Shri Krishna had to do all these works. 1st. conviction by miracles, 2nd. reasonable demonstrations, 3rd. actual discipline—The nature of Kansa has not been properly understood by P. B. N. Neither Sishupal, Jara-sangha nor Kansa were petty tyrannical Zamindars—The simple way in which they were met and killed may lead us to suppose that they were common men, but it was not so. Really a war is decided by the fate of the hero, and if that hero could be met in a single combat where is the good of the unnecessary slaughter of innocent men?

If any body could have done that the Boer war would have ceased long ago. Compare in this connection how the diplomatic skill of Lord Dufferin avoided a Burmese war by capturing King Thebaw. It requires more than a common hero's courage to do such extraordinary things. But the ease with which success is

won cannot determine the real strength or weakness of the opponent. But as we have no present-day history to prove the authority of these events it is better to leave the matters to be judged by each individual for himself.

As regards the reasonableness of holding the Gobardhan. I think it would be clear if P. B. N. could think only a part of the hill was raised giving shelter in the middle, far high up the plain where the houses were built. D.

Ans. (a) In question No. LVI P. B. N. says that the stories of Krishna's childhood are not *literally* true. That such *literal* interpretations are due to *ignorance* and productive of much *harm*. Now, following the querist's mode of interpretation and way of reasoning, we have these alternatives: either the stories are literally true, or they are not. If the former, they are evil; and therefore cannot belong to a beneficent God, and hence are not worth the trouble of further investigation. If *not* literally true, there is some hidden meaning, and P. B. N. admits this. So in either case no further questioning remains. And our brothers of the clearer vision—whether in London or in India—may well be left to follow their own course without interruption from us. And thus we may also save our tiny feet from risking too much in waters beyond our depth. P.

Ans. (b) "Puranas have taken literal interpretations"—of what? Is it not that the stories are there in the Puranas and we have got to interpret them? How, then, can we talk of the Puranas as interpreters? Then, again, the querist himself admits that the stories related in the Puranas are not meant to be taken in their literal meaning. Why then does he try to interpret literally, and thus get himself to call the texts hard names? P.

Ans. (c) There is no good thing that is not some time, or by some body, misused. And the Bhāgavata is no exception. This is a necessary condition of all things at a certain stage of evolution. And the world is passing through that stage. It is only when the lesson of a world-period has been fully learned that complete accord is reached. It is only in the peace of Pralaya that all

the pairs of opposites are merged in unity, and things cease to be, with their two polarities. The sage who does an action free from *śrī* (personal attachment) generates no Karma that can bind him. That some should misunderstand is a necessity of the case. "They will get pain in return. And by pain they will learn to know better hereafter. The pious ones will benefit. Besides, there is hardly "common sense" in interpreting a thing literally, which it is admitted cannot bear that interpretation. Here again, by the querists' admission, there are only two alternatives for him. Either the Bhāgavata was written by a sage or it was written by a bad man. If the latter, we should not study it; for thus we would be doing worse than wasting our time. If the former, surely we never can think it possible for him to have written indecent things. And if we see indecency, it may be due to our want of knowledge or goodness, or both. P.

Ans. (d) P. B. N. himself answers this question in a way that ought to satisfy him when he says that the Gopies were the women of the village who came to fondle their little prince. One would hardly expect the history of such women to form an integral part of the story of the prince's life; there can be reference made to them only when describing the infant child.

It is hardly right to say that nature *never* wants such miracles. Does the querist mean to say that she always follows one uniform round without the least variation in details? If that were so, then surely we should have continuous good harvests or continuous famines. And why fight shy of "miracles" so called? There is no going *against* natural law which is the expression of the will of God. But we have to remember that there are planes of nature other than the physical; and their laws, when known, can sometimes be used to counteract the undesirable action of certain physical laws. The steam engine rushing through the jungle with a tremendous velocity is a *miracle* to the savage; because he does not know. It is no miracle to the engineer who guides it, for he understands the laws of the energy which is locked up in steam. Thus it is always *our ignorance* that gives rise

to "miracle." The wise god sees nature's forces working everywhere; although there may be different combinations of these forces in different places or at different times, giving rise to different results.

P.

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STRAY THOUGHTS ON THE BHAGABAT GĪTĀ.

(*Second Series.*)

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CHAPTER III.

(*The first series have appeared in book form, to be had of the T. P. S., Benares.*)

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The very first effect of the realisation of the true nature of the Ego in man even though arrived at through intellectual discrimination—the first dawning on the mind of the aspirant of the real nature of the I in him as the uncaused spectator of the Prakritic drama has a tendency of creating a sense of aversion towards all actions which apparently lead to the mergence of self-consciousness in man and to make it lose itself in phenomenal things. We feel very naturally a shyness as regards actions which so to say decentralise the I notion by projecting it in the transient forms of the three worlds. We fight shy of all actions which seem to threaten the consciousness of the spectator in us. Hence we see Arjuna so perplexed at the divine guide exhorting him to fight while at the same time explaining and holding up the exalted state of consciousness appertaining to the silent watcher in man.

The third Chapter of the Gītā gives us therefore the *raison d'être* of Karma Yoga—the reason why it must be followed—its utility and place in the evolutionary scheme. The first and the initial mistake into which the aspirant naturally falls is that of confounding Karma with the inner life—the real man. From the standpoint of the illuminated self there is no Karma. In the man who

has come to know himself and is content with himself, no action exists. For him there is nothing to be done so far as he himself is concerned and hence he has no purpose which can be fulfilled by the manifested universe. Gîtâ III, 17, 18. For he lives in the Eternal while Karma belongs to the plane of phenomena.

It is only when we identify ourselves with our vehicles, when we seek for the expression of our individual life in and through actions, that the mergence of the Ego with the forms and energies contained in the sheaths takes place, with their inevitable consequence—pleasures and pains. Really and truly these activities which we in our ignorance ascribe to the I in us are due to the great evolutionary acting through Prakriti or Nature. These forces of which we shall have to speak more fully presently are the results of the involution of the life of Iswara in matter and form for the purpose of unfoldment of Being and Self-consciousness. In our ignorance we fall into the error of confounding the true actor with the uncaused spectator साक्षी and impute to this centre actions which proceed from the divine energy infolded in matter कूटस्थ. The divine energy called sometimes the life waves of the Logos vitalising matter with the seeds of divine life and divine potency and subsequently building matter thus differentiated into organisms, impels everything to activity thereby wooing out the germinal powers of the Divine Centre in man. Viewed thus as activities of the sheaths, as external stimuli, they belong from the stand-point of the developed Ego not to the Ego but to the external world, just as the food which a man takes and the process of assimilation may be said to be external to and independent of the inner consciousness. Thus regarded actions are no more to be sought than avoided. Like ripples in a mighty ocean they affect not the true being—they touch not the innermost sources of life. So the man who is contained in Self, who centred in the Self, revels in it, has got no dread of actions. Gîtâ III, 17, 18. He is not affected by these ; centred in himself, able to sustain his consciousness without the help of the upadhis to reflect himself, for him truly no action exists.

But the case becomes different with the baby Ego—the Ego whose inner powers of self consciousness, existence and bliss are yet unmanifested. It is still under the dominance of Prakriti : it is still like the foetus within the womb of Nature and requiring the nurture of Prakriti in developing its latent powers. As already said the Law of Karma has its justification in such Egos and we do well to let go the absolute standpoint of the emancipated consciousness and try to understand the functions of Karma as affecting us in the lowly levels in which we normally live, move and have our being.

One of the foremost and, it may be said, the most important function of Karma lies in drawing out the latent powers of the Divine Seeds of the embryonic man by synchronous vibrations from without. It is as though the Divinity without and within the sheaths of man were wooing out the powers of self-conscious existence of the germinal Divinity within. The vibrations from the external world affect the undeveloped bodies of the baby Ego and produce thereby modifications in these by rousing these into responsive vibrations. Those vibrations to which the bodies can respond generate similar vibrations in these, and what is more, tend to throw out all constituents in these bodies which stand in the way of the responso. Thus harmony is gradually established between the external forces and the particular body. The baby Ego which by the necessities of its being is attached to these bodies—these wombs of growth, and which during the earlier stages of evolution is dependent on these bodies for consciousness and existence, is thus brought into contact with the external stimuli, and the harmonious vibrations generate in it a sense of pleasure. The elements of existence, consciousness and bliss lying involved in these vibrations go to evoke in the Ego the consciousness of existence and bliss, the bodies serving the important function of transmitting or, what is more, transmuting these vibrations into proper constituents of growth. The harmonious vibrations thus affect the inner consciousness and produce in it the modification of pleasure. The Ego is in turn roused from its state of absoluteness and unconsciousness to a recognition of the pleasur-

able and harmonious nature of the vibrations, and in the recognition there is an out putting of the life of the Ego—a downpouring so to say of its inner latent powers.

In the very recognition there takes place within the Ego a definite formulation of its own being;—the abstract and apparently unconscious being of the Divine Seed passing into a state of concreteness and becoming. Mathematically speaking the Ego thus passes from its latent absoluteness into a kinetic state. The life within longs to mingle with the Divine life without, the pulsations of which it faintly recognises, and in this longing—in this out-putting—it accentuates the pleasurable vibrations and accelerates and vivifies it with its own life. It fecundates its own womb with its manifesting powers and thereby colours the upadhi with a tinge of its own. The upadhi is thus subjected to the working of two distinct sets of forces. There is the impulse and stimulation from the divine life without and there is also the down pouring of the life of the Ego. Thus influenced there is a consequent re-arrangement in its constituents which leads to a harmonious adjustment making the body more susceptible to the stimuli and yet more plastic to the touch of the Ego within. The upadhi thus evolves in the development of the powers of co-ordination and adaptation, developing definite lines of activity and, what is more, evolving special organs and senses later on. So the Upanishad says: "it wanted to see and eyes came; it wanted to hear and the ears came." The higher spirillæ of consciousness, the higher possibilities of vibrations with which the constituent atoms of the body were involved by the action of the sacrifice of Brahmā or the first life wave—the higher potencies of the spirit lying dormant in matter are thus roused into activity and manifestation. They open out grander vistas of knowledge and bliss and bring the Ego into contact with higher planes of being. Thus a vibration from the physical पृथिवी (earth element) would under suitable conditions re-manifest the vibrations of the element water अणु involved in it, and so on till the divinity acting in matter is reached. Herein lies the possibility and guarantee of evolution. Truly evolution is re-finding. We shall have to refer to this anon.

