

*Selections from*  
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## HIT THE MARK

“Having taken the bow, the great weapon, let him place on it the arrow, sharpened by devotion. Then, having drawn it with a thought directed to that which is, hit the mark, O friend,—the Indestructible. OM is the bow, the Self is the arrow, Brahman is called its aim. It is to be hit by a man who is not thoughtless; and then as the arrow becomes one with the target, he will become one with Brahman. Know him alone as the Self, and leave off other words. He is the bridge of the Immortal. Meditate on the self as OM. Hail to you that you may cross beyond the sea of darkness.”

MUNDAKA UPANISHAD

Archery has always been in vogue, whether in nations civilized or among people of barbarous manners. We find Arjuna, prince of India, the possessor of a wonderful bow called Gandiva, the gift of the gods. None but its owner could string it, and in war it spread terror in the ranks of the enemy. Arjuna was a wonderful archer too. He could use Gandiva as well with his right as with his left hand, and so was once addressed by Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita* dialogue as “thou both-handed.” The bow figures in the lives of the Greek heroes, and just now the novelist Louis Stevenson is publishing a book in which he sings the praises of a bow, the bow of war possessed by Ulysses; when war was at hand it sang its own peculiar, shrill, clear song, and the arrows shot from it hit the mark.

Archery is a practice that symbolizes concentration. There is the archer, the arrow, the bow, and the target to be hit. To reach the mark it is necessary to concentrate the mind, the eye, and the body upon many points at once, while at the same time the string must be let go without disturbing the aim. The draw of the string with the arrow must be even and steady on the line of sight, and when grasp, draw, aim, and line are perfected, the arrow must be loosed smoothly at the moment of full draw, so that by the bow’s recoil it may be carried straight to the mark. So those who truly seek wisdom are archers trying to hit the mark. This is spiritual archery, and it is to this sort that the verse from the Mundaka Upanishad refers.

In archery among men a firm position must be assumed, and in the pursuit of truth this firm position must be taken up and not relaxed, if the object in view is to be ever attained. The eye must not wander from the target, for, if it does, the arrow will fly wide or fall short of its goal. So if we start out to reach the goal of wisdom, the mind and heart must not be permitted to wander, for the path is narrow and the wanderings of a day may cause us years of effort to find the road again.

The quality of the bow makes a great difference in the results attained by the archer. If it is not a good bow of strong texture and with a good spring to it, the missiles will not fly straight or with sufficient force to do the work required; and so with the man himself who is his own bow, if he has not the sort of nature that enables him to meet all the requirements, his work as a spiritual archer will fall that much short. But even as the bow made of wood or steel is subject to alterations of state, so we are encouraged by the thought that the laws of karma and reincarnation show us that in other lives and new bodies we may do better work. The archer says too that the bow often seems to alter with the weather or other earthly changes, and will on some days do much better work than on others. The same thing is found by the observing theosophist, who comes to know that he too is subject from time to time to changes in his nature which enables him to accomplish more and to be nearer the spiritual condition. But the string of the bow must always be strung tight; and this, in spiritual archery, is the fixed determination to always strive for the goal.

When the arrow is aimed and loosed it must be slightly raised to allow for the trajectory, for if not it will fall short. This corresponds on its plane with one of the necessities of our human constitution, in that we must have a high mental and spiritual aim if we are to hit high. We cannot go quite as high as the aim, but have to thus allow for the trajectory that comes about from the limitations of our nature; the trajectory of the arrow is due to the force of gravity acting on it, and our aspirations have the same curve in consequence of the calls of the senses, hereditary defects, and wrong habits that never permit us to do as much as we would wish to do.

Let us hit the mark, O friend! and that mark is the indestructible, the highest spiritual life we are at any time capable of.

## TWO LOST KEYS THE BHAGAVAD-GITA—THE ZODIAC

It has never been admitted by Orientalists that there existed a key to the *Bhagavad-Gita*, other than a knowledge of the Sanskrit language in which it is written. Hence our European translators of the poem have given but its philosophical aspect.

But it is believed by many students of theosophy—among them such an authority as H.P. Blavatsky—that there are several keys to the noble poem, and that they have been for the time lost to the world. There has been no loss of them in the absolute sense, since they are preserved intact in many rolls and books made of polished stones hidden and guarded in certain underground temples in the East, the location of which would not be divulged by those who know. No search has been made by the profane for these wonderful books, because there is no belief in their existence; and for the sincere student who can project his mental sight in the right direction, there is no need for such discovery of the mere outward form in which those keys are kept.

There is also a key for the Zodiac. The modern astrologers and astronomers have lifted up their puny voices to declare regarding the probable origin of the Zodiac, giving a very commonplace explanation, and some going so far as to speak of the supposed author of it, not that they have named him or given him a distinct place in history, but only referred to the unknown *individual*. It is very much to be doubted if these modern star-gazers would have been able to construct anything whatever in the way of a Zodiac, had they not had this immemorial arrangement of signs ready to hand.

The *Bhagavad-Gita* and the Zodiac while differing so much from each other in that the one is a book and the other the sun's path in the heavens are two great storehouses of knowledge which may be construed after the same method. It is very true that the former is now in book shape, but that is only because the necessities of study under conditions which have prevailed for some thousands of years require it, but it exists in the ideal world imbedded in the evolutionary history of the human race. Were all copies of it destroyed tomorrow, the materials for their reconstruction are near at hand and could be regathered by those sages who know the realities underlying all appearances. And in the same way the Zodiac could be made over again by the same sages—not, however, by our modern astronomers. The latter no doubt would be able to construct a path of the sun with certain classifications of stars thereon, but it would not be the Zodiac; it would bear but little relation to the great cosmic and microcosmic periods and events which that path really has. They would not apply it as it is found used in old and new almanacs to the individual human being, for they do not know that it can in any way be so connected, since their system hardly admits any actual sympathy between man and the Zodiac, not yet having come to know that man is himself a zodiacal highway through which his own particular sun makes a circuit.

Considering how laughable in the eyes of the highly-educated scientific person of today the singular figures and arrangement of the Zodiac are, it is strange that they have not long ago abolished it all. But they seem unable to do so. For some mysterious reason the almanacs still contain the old signs, and the moon's periods continue to be referred to these ancient figures. Indeed, modern astronomers still use the old symbology, and give

to each new asteroid a symbol precisely in line with the ancient zodiacal marks so familiar to us. They could not abolish them, were the effort to be made.

The student of the *Bhagavad-Gita* soon begins to feel that there is somewhere a key to the poem, something that will open up clearly the vague thoughts of greater meanings which constantly rise in his mind. After a while he is able to see that in a philosophical and devotional sense the verses are full of meaning, but under it all there runs a deep suggestiveness of some other and grander sweep for its words. This is what the lost key will reveal.

But who has that key or where it is hidden is not yet revealed, for it is said by those who know the Brotherhood that man is not yet in the mass ready for the full explanation to be put into his hands. For the present it is enough for the student to study the path to devotion, which, when found, will lead to that belonging to knowledge.

And so of the Zodiac. As our acquaintance, through devotion and endeavour, with the journey of our own sun through our own human zodiac grows better, we will learn the meaning of the great pilgrimage of the earthly luminary. For it is impossible in this study to learn a little of ourselves without knowing more of the great system of which we are a copy.

For Atman is the sun,  
The Moon also it is;  
And the whole collection of stars  
Is contained within it.