

# Sri Krishna as the 'I' of the Gita.

BY L. N. GARDE.

We of all climes and ages believe that we have come here into this world from Him whom we call God or the Divine, although most of us do not always remember the fact. We seem too often to forget what we ourselves really are and whence we have come and whereto we are going. It is only the highly enlightened and wide awake who cannot rest satisfied with what they ignorantly or superficially are or have, and seek sincerely to go beyond all superficialities and ignorance to what they really are and to the Original Source that they have come from and to the Real Purpose that they are here for. That Reality, in one word, is the Divine as we call it. And the Divine is ŚRĪ KṚṢṆA, the Divine Singer of the *Gītā*. He is the Lord of Creations and all creatures whether of this divine land or lands beyond the seas, which, too, must be divine in their essence and ultimate purpose, in spite of all mad rationalism that has overtaken the world of to-day. Him the world seeks and Him the *Gītā* reveals if one has the faith in and the aspiration for and the perfect opening to the Influence and the Presence and the Guidance within. This Influence and Presence and Guidance within is ŚRĪ KṚṢṆA, The Divine in the *Gītā*.

To know a thing is to know its heart, for in the heart are gathered together all the strings of consciousness that are outwardly spread over in all directions. Every human being can, if he cares, realize that fact in himself and know his heart to be a greater reality than his mind and his senses and their conceptions and perceptions, although the average human mind ignores it more than anything

else, being always led by mind to ignorance and fed by its self-sufficient arrogance. To know *Gītā*, then, is to know its heart.

The *Gītā* is spread over in seven hundred verses which form its frame. Of these, only one verse is uttered by Dhṛtarāṣṭra, the original source of all trouble in so far as he could not control his sons from recklessly pursuing a path that led ultimately to his and their utter ruin, which every mind blinded by its senses and their passions ultimately and inevitably meets. He in anguish puts a question here to Sañjaya the right-minded as to what was happening in the war and what the consequences of it all. Sañjaya states what he saw and heard of the war. He makes a report with a few remarks at the end. His utterances besides the report are forty-one in all. Within this frame is set that most important conversation that ŚRĪ KṚṢṆA and Arjuna had at that most critical moment in the history of the nations of the world that met there in that greatest of the wars ever fought on this terrestrial plane of our existence.

The report begins with a statement, full of significance for the world of to-day, from Arjuna the hero, the bravest of the brave and the most righteous of men, who finds himself in this crisis utterly devoid of himself, of his power and nature and his warlike mood, his mind and his senses having suddenly collapsed at the thought of the terrible consequences of a horrible war entailing a most frightful slaughter of all his kith and kin and giving to the world as its result a degeneration of the worst type, according to Arjuna. The statement Arjuna

makes at that moment is the expression of the highest and the loftiest of motives by which the most righteous and generous and chivalrous man of action can be inspired. And yet we find him here, in his own statement, utterly broken and hurled into a deep and gaping chasm of ignorance and powerlessness to confront a war that threatened to tear away from him all that he held dear and near to him, and without which he would lose all charm for the fight, the assured victory and the prospect of a vast empire where the Right was to be enthroned to rule over the Might. He, therefore, now seeks for a law of action beyond all that he up till then knew, beyond his mind and his senses and his outlook. He seeks it of Śrī Kṛṣṇa who is his most intimate friend and guide and here his charioteer as well. This statement, which forms the foundation of the *Gītā*'s teaching, together with the queries put by him from time to time, as also his realization of and submission to the Truth he had so long forgotten cover as many as eighty-four verses of the *Gītā*.

One has to ponder over the deep significance of the very first verse of the *Gītā*, the utterance of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, before he can enter into the spirit in which Sañjaya submits his report of the great war as well as of the conversation that Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna had on that occasion. Dhṛtarāṣṭra stands for the average human mind blinded by its senses and their passions, blind to the very truth of its existence. His symbolic character is as true and real as his historicity. The mind thus blinded is averse to the spirit of Sañjaya the right-minded, whose historic character is as true as its symbolic significance to the average human mind of all ages and climes. Stilling of the senses and the turmoil of the mind and the dispassionate seeking of truth alone are the distinguishing traits of Sañjaya's

character and this enables us perfectly to realize the significance of the statement of Arjuna, the foundation on which the whole structure of the *Gītā* stands. The highest and the loftiest motive, perfectly humanitarian and ethical and patriotic, is the distinguishing trait of Arjuna's character, which, though so noble and so highly enlightened, fails completely in that hour of crisis, for lack of that One Thing with which all dead matter comes to life and without which all living matter comes to become a lifeless nothing. This is the significance of Arjuna's depression and utter despondency at the very commencement of the fight and on that foundation and to that despondency and to that most surprising culmination of the loftiest and the highest motives of patriotism, racialism, kith-and-kinism, ethicism and humanitarianism the *Gītā* is addressed, and the charioteer is revealed as the Divine Śrī Kṛṣṇa, whose historicity as the centre of that Great War is as true as His immanence within each and every being, guiding it all the time, though in disguise, hidden and almost unknown, seeing and guiding all from behind the veil according to their nature, unseen and unheeded. The despondency that overtook Arjuna and brought him face to face with the catastrophic character of all ego-bound nature, whether good, bad or indifferent, brings him on his knees before Śrī Kṛṣṇa, whom he till then knew only as his wise and helping friend and not as the Guide and the Teacher. And the teaching of the *Gītā* begins really where Arjuna with folded hands recognizes in Śrī Kṛṣṇa His Teacher and His Guide, and bows his head at His feet and surrenders himself to His care. This is the spirit in which Arjuna was addressed in the *Gītā* by the Divine, and this is the spirit in which the *Gītā* may be understood by those who seek Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

This teaching of the Divine covers five hundred and seventy-four verses

and gives the knowledge of what man really is, of the law that should guide him in his life to fulfil the purpose to which the Divine within is secretly leading, and of the Love that alone can make him live and work in that knowledge.

But the teaching is as complex and comprehensive (सर्वशास्त्रमयी गीता) as it is simply and briefly stated. To know man is to know a whole world of worlds of complexities with its endless complexity of principles and forms and movements the most persevering mental seeking to know all which has always come and must inevitably come, even for the vastest intelligence and the keenest philosophical insight, to utter in despair that the thing is unknowable. To find out the law that guides and informs this complex cosmic action full of diversities and discords and contradictions and their originative motives and their ultimate purposes is a thing so baffling even in its most superficial aspect that the most accurate scientific investigation is bound to fail and admit its uninvestigable character. And to find that Love which binds the unknowable of the vastest intelligence with the 'uninvestigable' of the greatest scientific accuracy is, to say the least of it, to discover the 'undiscoverable'. It is only the surrendering attitude of Arjuna that receives that knowledge and that Law of action and that love which fills all knowledge and action with the immortal Love of the Divine—the Original unfathomable Ocean of Love from which have sprung all these various manifestations of Itself. This is the Knowledge, the Action, the Love that falls to the lot of him who seeks as Arjuna sought, with the Divine before him as the very embodiment of All-knowledge, All-action and All-love, *sat-chit-ananda*, the Ever living Blissful Presence, the 'I' of the *Gītā*.

There are many verses in the *Gītā*, in the body of the teachings of

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, where Śrī Kṛṣṇa speaks of तद्ब्रह्म (That Reality), which actually means that that Reality is not present before the seeker, as one finds it in all metaphysical doctrines and philosophical speculations, intellectual systems and mental formulas. They are all necessary and even in the teaching of the *Gītā* they form an essential part, having an indispensable utility in the training of the mind of the seeker. But that is not the Presence of the Divine, the 'I' (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) of the *Gītā*. That Reality (तद्ब्रह्म) is 'That' and not 'I', the Divine Presence in the front. Thus all those verses in the teaching of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, although so very important as a passage through, do not indicate the living Presence as is revealed in the heart of the *Gītā* speaking directly to the heart of the seeker. We have therefore to separate those verses dealing with "That Reality" and the approaches to It, after we have utilized them to their full purpose, from those which deal with the still greater 'Myself' standing before the seeker as the Divine Guide, the *Guru* (Teacher), the Divine within and around and above. And this seems to be the process involved in the *Gītā*, of arriving at union with the Divine Śrī Kṛṣṇa in complete surrender of the seeker to effect a complete union with the Divine.

This 'I', then, with all its 'Mine's' and 'Me's', is the most secret word of the *Gītā* the very key of unfolding the secret vaults of treasures lying hidden in the heart of the *Gītā*.

In order to learn anything of this 'I' of the *Gītā*, we are afraid, we may have to unlearn many I's before we are able to approach this Greater I, the Living Presence of the Divine addressing Himself as 'I'. We are the I's of all our 'mines', the 'I' forming the centre and the 'mine's' and 'not-mines' the circumference. There is an endless variety of these I-formed circles

throughout the universe. In the *Gītā* itself we have such four I's, the four types of consciousness with their four types of eyes looking at things in their own various ways. The very first eye that we meet is the blind eye of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, the external mind that sees and lives for nothing beyond its sense-objects, which it calls by the word 'मायकाः' (mine,s), the characteristic word of the lower physical mind. We have, then, of course, by the divine grace of the *Guru*, the discriminating conscious 'I' of Sañjaya the high-minded, who sees what is wrong and what is right, what is mortal and what is immortal, what is divine and what is undivine, and deplores the one and pleads for the other. Thirdly, we have the still more perfect conscious 'I' of Arjuna the inner-minded, who, crossing over all externalizings of nature, looks straight into the inmost and the uppermost 'I' within and above represented in history by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Divine in manifestation. This the inmost and the uppermost 'I' of all creation and the Creator, at once within each and every being and above all beings and becomings and guiding them all to their Destiny within Himself is the Divine Singer of the Divine Song, the *Gītā*.

This secret word 'I' of the *Gītā* conceals behind it the inmost 'I' of us all, the Divine who is within and above all. It is not revealed to any external mind blinded by the forces of the lower external nature nor to any mental vision directly except as a reflection of what is altogether beyond it, but to one who goes through his perfectly purified mind and entirely silenced

senses to what is beyond mind and surrenders himself, simply and wholly at His feet. To him He is ever present in the *Gītā* directly speaking to him of Himself and leaving nothing to be told (अज्ञेयतः), ever ready and willing to impart to him the knowledge, the law of action to guide and the love to move the knowledge to action and the action to knowledge and both to one perfect Harmony of Knowledge, Action and Love, the three attributes of the One, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Divine.

In conclusion, therefore, we may say that the 'I' (अहम्) of the *Gītā* stands for Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, not only remotely indicative of the Divine who appeared ages ago but denoting the living presence behind,—as living to-day as on the day the message was given, the Divine Himself living and consciously and directly speaking to those who seek Him in the *Gītā*. In the *Gītā* He for ever manifests Himself as the 'I' and through this 'I' is He revealed to all who seek Him in faith. The 'I' is the figure, the voice, of the Reality, the Divine always present behind. All those verses speaking in the first person of the Supreme Person are the very heart of the 'Gītā' and 'I', the Divine Himself, within it. The thing is more of the heart than of the mind and it is only through the heart that one may be able to make an attempt to approach it. There seems to be a definite process of the evolution of the disciple's mind through I's and Mine's and Me's of the *Gītā*. That could be a very deeply interesting reading of the *Gītā*, but it should be treated in a separate paper.

