The Bhagavad Gītā is one of the component parts of the great epic Mahābhārata. The Mahābhārata containing as many as 100,000 couplets is the longest epic in the world literature. The Bhagavad gītā is a didactic poem included in the Mahābhārata which narrates the battle of Kurukshetra— a battle that took place between the two powerful clans the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas. Here the author imparts instruction to the people in general through Arjuna, the representative of the mankind. Lord Krishṇa himself being the teacher most vividly points out the course of actions to be pursued by a man at different situations in which he is placed for the time being. From this point of view the Gītā may rightly be called a casuistry too.

Many things have been said in praise of the Gītā not only by the Indian scholars but also by the Western scholars. S. Radhakrishnan says, "The Bhagavad gītā which forms part of the Bhīṣma parva of the Mahābhārata is the most popular religious poem of Sanskrit literature."¹ S.C. Roy has described it as at once the root and the flower and the fruit of

¹ S. Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, vol. I, p. 519
the ancient Vedic and Upanisadic culture. For Harendra Nath Dutta it is the "Bible of the mankind." Commenting on the Bhagavad gītā a great western thinker William Von Humboldt in a letter written to Fr. Von Gentz (1827) says, "It is probably the most profound and most sublime work the world can show." In another context he described the Bhagavād-gītā as "The most beautiful, perhaps the only true philosophical song existing in any known tongue." Richard Garbe says that the Bhagavād-gītā is "admired equally in India and in the Occident for its loftiness of thought and expression - an episode of the Mahābhārata." Albert Schweitzer, in describing the course of development from polytheism to ethical monotheism in Indian thought says, "About the year 1000 B.C., Polytheism, as we can see in the later Vedic hymns, was already in movement towards ethical monotheism." In his opinion, the Brāhmīns did not take much interest in the improvement of this popular religion. Speaking about the non-availability of the exact records of

3. H.N. Dutta, Gītā Tattvāṅka, p. 124
4. Quoted in Albert Schweitzer, Indian Thought and its Development, p. 190
5. Quoted in S. Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, vol. I, p. 519
7. Albert Schweitzer, op.cit., p. 174
this development in popular religion which may be called ethico-monotheistic in nature Albert Schweitzer says, "We only know this much - that monotheism probably appears for the first time among the worshippers of the god Krishṇa. The rise of Krishṇa worship again is wrapped in obscurity. Krishṇa (that is to say, the Black one), the son of Vasudeva and Devakī, is probably a deified tribal hero, later held to be an avatar of the god Vishṇu."

The movement from polytheism to monotheism is first noticed in the Bhagavadgītā. The Bhakti cult in Hinduism, according to Schweitzer, comes actually from the aboriginal. In this context Schweitzer says, "The conception of humble self-surrender to God is alien to the Āryans of India." But Radhakrishnan holds a different view. He says, "Bhakti is a direct development of the upāsana of the Upanisads. The love for the supreme involves the giving up of all else." Referring to its source Radhakrishnan quotes from the Brīhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad (IV.4.22), "What shall we do with progeny, when we have got this being, this world to live in?"

8. Ibid., pp. 174-175
9. Ibid., p. 177
11. Ibid., p. 525
It will not be out of place to mention the comment made by Albert Schweitzer in praise of the Bhagavadgīṭā. He says, "It is not merely the most read but also the most idealised book in world literature."\(^{12}\)

The Bhagavadgīṭā was not only a popular book for the Indians, but it also became popular among the Europeans. As soon as the Bhagavadgīṭā became known to the Europeans, it was highly welcomed by them. The Bhagavadgīṭā could easily attract a large number of readers because it taught them a mysticism which proclaims loving devotion to God in activity.

The Bhagavad gīṭā is a poem which consists of 700 verses. But some scholars are of opinion that the original Gīṭā had not had seven hundred couplets as is found in its present form. Some scholars hold the view that many verses have been composed after the Mahābhārata and these have been added to it then. In this context Richard Garbe says, "The theistic part is the original Gīṭā, and the pantheistic part is the later addition. The theistic and bhakti part along with Sāṃkhya-yoga is the original; the Mīmāṁsā and Vedānta portions are of later date."\(^{13}\) What he opines in this context

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12. Albert Schweitzer, op.cit., p. 195

13. Quoted in The Role of Bhagavad-gīṭā in Indian History by Prem Nath Bazaz, p. 166
is that Krishṇaism philosophically based on Sāmkhya-yoga was proclaimed in the original poem. The Vedānta portion, in his opinion, was added later on.

Hill's comments in this context may also be cited here. He writes 'For the most part, the theory of a recast document is founded on the fact that the poem attempts to reconcile so many differing points of view, and appears in many passages to be inconsistent with itself.'

The Gītā is a book conveying lessons of philosophy, religion and ethics. "The full name of the Gītā, as it is evident from the colophon at the end of each chapter, is the Upaniṣad of the name of the Bhagavadgītā." The Upaniṣads may be said to be the philosophic basis of the Gītā. The relation between the Gītā and the Upaniṣads is understood from the Indian point of view thus: "the Upaniṣads are the cows, Krishṇa is the milker, Arjuna the calf, and the nectar-like Gītā is the excellent Milk."

15. S. Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, vol. I, p. 526
16. Svāmi Jagadīśwarānanda, Srimad Bhagavad-gītā, p. 6

sarvopaniṣad gavo
dogdhā gopālanandanaḥ
partho vatsāḥ sudhir bhoktā
dugdham gītāmṛtaṁ mahat.
As regards the ultimate Reality the Gītā holds a view which is similar to that of the Upaniṣads. The Gītā also recognises Brahman as the ultimate Reality. But the Gītā will differ from the Upaniṣads in this that it makes room for persons of different temperaments. Temperamentally men are classified into three classes. There is one class of man in whom willing predominates, then there is another class in whom feeling predominates and there is still another class in whom thinking predominates. So the rigour of metaphysical idealism is not found here. It is made softer with a theistic religion so that all classes of people can realize the supreme.

Like the Upaniṣads, the Gītā also describes the Brahman as the abode of all the auspicious qualities and as beyond these qualities. Kṛishṇa says to Arjuna that at the end of every Kalpa, all beings enter into His being and at the beginning of every Kalpa, He brings them forth again. 17

It is said that the Lord himself creates the entire mass of beings by means of the power of Nature over which He has his full control. All the glories of the world are

17. B.G. IX.7

sarvabhūtāni kaunteya
prakṛtim yānti māmikām
kalpakṣaye punastāni
kalpādau visṛjāmyaham.
created by Him from within Himself. But from such descriptions, we must not understand that the Gītā advocates the idea of Saguna Brahman. Lord Kṛishṇa says that the manifest form which he has is formed by the Lord Himself by His Māyā. He says that His real nature is unmanifested and unconditioned. It is not comprehensible by the senses. It is clear from the above account that the manifest form of the Lord is praised only for the devotees. "The real nature of the Lord is unmanifested, avyakta, beyond the senses. To get manifest from the unmanifest is His Māyā."18 In the opinion of some scholars, there is a difference between the Upaniṣads and the Gītā as regards the conception of Reality. "In the Upaniṣads, we find the Reality is an unconditioned Principle, the Absolute. In the Gītā, the Reality is a self-conscious personality whose 'will' ultimately prevails."19

The Gītā teaches us that we cannot remain without work even for a moment.20 We are so constituted that we cannot but perform duties. "We are helplessly driven to actions by our nature-born qualities."21 Even breathing which is so

18. Dr. A.K. Lad, A Comparative Study of the Concept of Liberation in Indian Philosophy, p. 22
19. Ibid.
20. B.G. III.5
21. B.G. III.5
essential for maintaining our life is a kind of action and hence we are to perform our duties. It is further said that the actions are the causes of bondage. Actions do bind us. Then the question that naturally arises here is: Should we ever remain in bondage as we are bound by Karmas which are inevitable on our part? The answer should be in the negative. The Gītā gives us the way by following which we can get rid of the bondage even though we perform our allotted duties. Duties performed without any hope of reward or fruits cannot bind us. So the Gītā teaches us to perform duties without caring for the results it may yield. In other words, the Gītā teaches us to perform our duties with a total disregard to their consequences. This kind of activity is known as disinterested duties (Nīskāma-dharma). The Gītā thus teaches us of the ideal of disinterested duties and it is because of this fact that Albert Schweitzer says that Kant is not the first to teach the lesson of 'categorical imperative'. It is clear from the above account that the disinterested duties instead of being a hindrance paves the way to salvation.

But it is hardly possible on the part of an average man to perform duties without caring for its consequences. It is only a man of high moral perfection who can do so. So the Gītā teaches the same ideal from different angles. The Gītā teaches that a man who is temperamentally active and in
whom willing predominates should perform actions merely for the sake of sacrifice.

It is taught that if an action be not performed with this end in view, then the world will be chained by the bonds of work. But here the word sacrifice is not used to mean only rituals. A.K. Lad rightly says, "It means in the Gitā all those actions in which the guiding principle of the agent is not the exclusive benefit of his own. In short, all those actions which are done for the universal welfare (loka samgraha) can be said to have been done for the sacrifice." 

People who are devotional in temperament and in whom feeling predominates are instructed by the Gitā to offer their actions to God so that they are not to bear the brunt of their sinful actions. Here one must consider oneself to be only the God's instrument. He is not to think that he is the man performing the work. He is to think that he is performing the work only for the Lord's sake or he is to think that it is the Lord who is acting in and through him. The Gitā also teaches us to surrender all the fruits of our actions to the Lord. It advises us to take refuse only in God by abandoning all our actions. The Lord promises to save us from all sorts of sins.

22. B.G. III.9
23. A.K. Lad, op.cit., p. 23
And hence, we should not lament for it.\textsuperscript{24}

A man who is predominantly thoughtful should free himself from the notion of agency. He must not consider himself to be the agent performing any action. A man whose heart has been polluted with pride alone considers himself to be the agent of the work.\textsuperscript{25} So he should constantly think that the gunas are only acting upon the gunas.\textsuperscript{26} Actions can no longer bind us when we have such a notion towards actions. We should see inaction of the soul in the actions of the Prakṛti. In other words, we should think that Prakṛti alone is active while the soul always remains a passive observer.

When we can develop such an attitude in our minds towards actions, actions can no longer bind us. In this context Lokamanya Tilak says, "... gross or lifeless Karma by itself does not either bind or release anybody; that, man is bound by Karma as a result of His hope for fruit, or his own Attachment; and that, when this Attachment has been got rid of a man stands Released, notwithstanding that he may be

\begin{center}
\begin{verbatim}
24. B.G. XVIII.66
sarvadharmān parītyajya
mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja
ahaṁ tvāṁ sarvapape bhyo
mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ.
25. B.G. III.27
26. B.G. III.28
\end{verbatim}
\end{center}
Then what we learn from the Gita is that we should perform duties simply for the sake of duty. Duty for the sake of duty is the golden rule of life. Thus it teaches the ideal of Niṣkama-karma or disinterested duties. And such actions do not certainly bind us.

Then why do we remain in bondage? What is it that binds us? The simple answer to this question is that the actions performed with the expectation of reaping their fruits or actions performed with a view to fulfilling some of our desires are the causes of our bondage. And these actions are termed Sakāma-karma, i.e., works performed with certain interest. And this kind of action has its origin in ignorance. Hence ignorance is the root cause of bondage.

Now the question is - How do we get rid of such a state of bondage? Can disinterested duties alone lead us to salvation? The paths prescribed for the attainment of liberation in the Gita are manifold which we have discussed in detail in another chapter of this thesis.

27. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Śri Bhagavad-gītā Rahasya, p. 438. Translated into English by Bhal Chandra Sitaram Sukthankar.
According to the Gītā salvation means union of the soul with the Supreme. It is becoming one with Brahman. Mokṣa in the Gītā means seeing, experiencing and living the divine life. Radhakrishnan says, "This is the highest form of religion or life of spirit, called jñāna in the wider sense of the term." But a man in order to become one with the Brahman is in need of acquiring certain qualifications. The individual can become one with the Supreme only when his mind is purified and he can destroy egoism. He must have a pure intellect. He should control himself, turn away his mind from sound and other objects of sense, should give up anger and malice. He should prefer to dwell in seclusion, should eat a very meagre quantity of food. He should control speech, body and mind and he should ever engage himself in meditation and concentration and should take refuge in non-attachment. He is also to abandon self-sense, force, arrogance, desire, anger and possession and thus by becoming egoless and tranquil in mind, he becomes worthy of becoming one with Brahman.

29. B.G. XVIII.51
30. B.G. XVIII.52
31. B.G. XVIII.53
becoming one with Brahman is not all. He should also attain supreme devotion to the supreme Lord. The verse runs thus -

\[
\text{brahmabhūtaḥ prasannatmā}
\]
\[
\text{na śocati na kānkṣati}
\]
\[
\text{samaḥ sarvesu bhūteśu}
\]
\[
\text{mad bhaktim labhate parām.}
\]

"Having become one with Brahman and being tranquil in spirit, he neither grieves nor desires. Regarding all beings as alike he attains supreme devotion to Me."\textsuperscript{32}

It is said in the Gītā that it is through devotion that one comes to know Him, what His measure is and who He is in truth, and after knowing Him fully well (i.e., in truth), one immediately enters into His being.\textsuperscript{33} The word jñāna is used in two senses. Sometimes it is used to mean a method of attaining liberation and it is also sometimes used to mean the final state of release itself. The fact that the word 'jñāna' is used to mean the final state of release has led some thinkers to consider the path of jñāna superior to the other paths and according to them "cognition alone persists, while the other elements of emotion and will fall out in the

\textsuperscript{32} B.G. XVIII. 54

\textsuperscript{33} B.G. XVIII. 55
supreme state of freedom." But this does not appear to be the correct view. In this context Radhakrishnan says, "There does not seem to be any justification for such an opinion."35

Liberation or freedom means in the Gītā unity with the supreme self. The final state in the Gītā is called by different names. It is called Siddhi, or perfection; parāsiddhi, or supreme perfection; parāmgatim, or the supreme goal; "padam anāmayam" or the blissful seat. This state is also called parām śāntim, or supreme peace and eternal abode (śāśvataṁ sthānam).39

We find in the Gītā different interpretations regarding the place of Karma in the final state of liberation. Some passages of the Gītā seem to suggest that the final state is not a state of activity. A man when liberated is completely indifferent to worldly affairs. He is not troubled about the concerns of the world. He loses his individuality and hence the question of his performing actions does not arise.

34. S. Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, vol. I, p. 575
35. Ibid., p. 575
36. B.G. XII.10
37. B.G. VI.45; XIV.1; XVI.22, 23
38. B.G. IV.39, V.12
39. B.G. XVIII.62
verse of the Gîtâ runs thus -

yas tvātmaratir eva syād
ātmatriptās ca mānavaḥ
ātmanyeva ca samtuṣṭas
tasya kāryaṁ na vidyate.

"But the man whose delight is in the self alone, who is content with the self, who is satisfied with the self, for him there exists no work that needs to be done." In another verse the Lord asks Arjuna not to care for acquisition and preservation. He is further asked to be free from the three-fold nature. He should also be free from the dualities of pleasure and pain. In other words, he should be care-free. He must be disinterested in all the affairs of the world. The freed man is now devoid of qualities. He becomes actionless. He becomes one with the Supreme Lord. He takes recourse to God alone as the highest goal.

The eternal self is independent of the modes of prakṛti's workings; and even if prakṛti continues to act it -

40. B.G. III.17
Radhakrishnan's translation has been quoted.
41. B.G. II.45
42. B.G. II.45
43. B.G. VII.18
cannot affect the self in any way. Hence in the state of liberation, there is no ego, no will, no desire. It is a state devoid of modes and qualities. It is a state of peace. It is not merely the state of surpassing death; but it is also a state of attaining the supreme state of being. Here the spirit becomes aware that it is superior to birth and death, that it is infinite and eternal and it is subject to no manifestation. Relying on such passages Śāṅkara interprets the Gītā view of liberation in the way the Sāṁkhya has explained it. According to Śāṅkara then freedom should mean aloofness of the soul from prakṛti. So long as the body clings to us, we cannot but be influenced by prakṛti. Prakṛti will not stop its activities on us till the body is shaken off.

We find other passages in the Gītā which suggest that the state of liberation is one of activity. It means that the freed soul also can act. In the highest state, individuality is not lost. It is not a question of the merger of the individual soul into the Supreme, nor does it mean its disappearance in the highest. The freed soul exists as a part of the divine soul. In the Gītā it is shown that even the Lord keeps Himself engaged in work, and accordingly the man of insight and wisdom also follows the path shown by the Supreme Lord. Hence, they too act. That the Lord is active is known from such verses of the Gītā.
na me pārtha'asti kartavyaṁ
triṣu lokeṣu kiṃcana
nā 'navāptam avāptavyaṁ
 varta eva ca karmani. 44

For the Lord, there is nothing in the three worlds to be done, nor has he anything to be obtained which he has not obtained, even then. He remains engaged in work. In another verse, the Gītā says that God's inactivity will bring ruin to the three worlds, and that He should also be the creator of disordered life. It is also said that He would be the cause of destruction of these people. 45 Thus it is seen that God is always active and the wiseman imitates Him.

People of ancient time, seeking liberation, did perform works without any attachment whatsoever as the Lord Himself performs acts without regard to their consequences. 46 Even the Lord as puruṣottama who pervades the whole universe engages Himself in work. Hence the liberated individuals should also act. In the highest state Puruṣottama becomes the abode for the liberated soul. He attains to the status of God. 47 He becomes free from rebirth. It is a state of

44. B.G. III.22
45. B.G. III.24
46. B.G. IV.14
47. B.G. IV.10
blissful freedom for the soul having existence in the presence of God. In a verse the Gītā says that whatever gain the men of small minds have is temporary. Similarly those who worship gods go to gods. But the devotees of the Supreme Lord go to Him. Thus we notice two conflicting views in the Gītā regarding the ultimate state. According to one the freed soul loses itself in the impersonality of Brahman and attains such peace as is not concerned with the worldly strife. Again according to the other, the liberated attains to the status of God. "The highest state is one of dwelling in the Divine." The freed soul does not lose its individuality, rather his individuality now becomes a part of the Divine.

In this state the freed soul rises above all petty desires and becomes free from all suffering and pain. The Gītā is a religious work and hence it lays emphasis on the ultimateness of a personal God. And it wants to see "the full flowering of the divine in man to its utmost capacity and power, love and universality." It does not follow from this that the Gītā view is opposed to that of the Upaniṣads.

48. B.G. VII.23; IX.25; IV.9
49. Nivasīṣyaṁ mayyeva.
50. S. Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, vol. I, p. 578
51. Ibid.
The controversy chiefly lies with a general problem relating to the ultimate reality. Whether the impersonal Brahman or the personal puruṣottama should be considered the ultimate reality is the main question here. The Gītā while admitting the ultimate reality of the Absolute Brahman suggests that from our point of view this absolute manifests itself as the personal God. As a human and limited being, we cannot but think and envisage the highest reality only in the manner described above. From the same standpoint it can be stated that the "two views of the ultimate state of freedom are the intuitional and the intellectual ways of representing the one condition."52 The Absolute and the personal God are thought of as one and the Gītā in this regard says that it cannot be understood precisely how the combination between impersonality and personality takes place. Similar is the case with the freed spirits. These might not have individuality and yet they have it by their self-limitation.53 The Gītā in this manner tries to make a reconciliation between the inner immobile quietism of the timeless self and the eternal play of the energy of nature.

52. Ibid.
53. Ibid., p. 579
Commentators are at variance in determining the place of work in the final state of liberation. Śaṅkara for instance says that actions can have no meaning in the final stage. For Śaṅkara actions are the causes of bondage because they depend upon the false sense of duality. True wisdom abolishes our idea of duality and then the soul becomes one with the Supreme Brahman. In other words the soul becomes free and no action has any meaning thereafter. S.N. Dasgupta explaining Śaṅkara's position says, "The main thesis of the Gītā, according to Śaṅkara, is that liberation can come only through right knowledge and not through knowledge combined with the performance of duties." On the other hand, Vṛttikāra Bodāyana, another commentator on the Gītā says that it is through combined pursuit of jñāna and Karma, liberation can be attained. Neither of them by itself can help in attaining freedom. S.N. Dasgupta is of the view that works cannot be given up even in the final stage of liberation as the Lord Himself is ever engaged in work. His case being the case of ideal to be pursued by the wise.

Yamunāchārjya, the great teacher of Rāmānuja also gave a brief account of the subject matter of the Gītā in a few verses called Gītārtha-śāṅkara, wherein he wants to show

54. S.N. Dasgupta, A History of Indian Philosophy, vol. II, p. 437
that "the object of the Gītā is to establish the fact that Nārāyaṇa is the highest Brahman attained only by devotion (bhakti), which is achieved through caste-duties, right knowledge and disinclination to worldly pleasures (vairāgya)." Then according to Yamunā caste-duties, right knowledge and disinclination to worldly pleasures lead to devotion and devotion in its turn helps in realizing Brahman. Hence caste-duties according to Yamunā, cannot be abandoned. Nigamānta Mahādeśika, who wrote a commentary on the Gītārtha-samgraha of Yamunā says that "Karma may lead to self-realization either indirectly, through the production of knowledge, or directly by itself." Freedom or mokṣa in the Gītā means union of the soul with the supreme self. It has various names carrying different significance. It is called mukti or release. It is called Brāhma sthiti in the sense of being in Brahman. It is also called naिसkarmya signifying a state of non-action, niṣṭraiguṇya to mean the absence of the three qualities; kaivalya to mean aloofness from prakṛti or solitary salvation; brahma bhāva to mean the being of Brahman.

55. S.N. Dasgupta, Ibid., p. 439
56. Ibid.
Liberation in the Gītā is also explained as either 'coming to Brahmā'\(^{57}\) or 'coming to Kṛiṣṇa'.\(^{58}\) Sometimes it is also described as 'being fit for Brahmā's being' or 'being fit for Kṛiṣṇa's being'.\(^{59}\) The liberated feels oneness with all things. The pervasive nature of the Ātman becomes conspicuous in the state of release. "The Ātman is in all beings and all beings are in the Ātman."\(^{60}\)

The state of release may be called a state of perfection which is far better than the state realised by observing Vedic rites, sacrifices etc. This state also exceeds the state that results from righteousness.

We find many passages in the Gītā which beautifully narrate the life, the activities, the way of thinking etc. of the liberated. In the Gītā, the liberated is called by different names, each of which points out different angles from which the liberated is seen. The liberated is called jīvan-mukta because he acquires the state of emancipation even when he is alive. He is called guṇātīta because he is above the guṇas. He now realises that he being puruṣa is

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57. B.G. IV.31; V.24; XIII.30; XVIII.50
58. B.G. IV.9; VII.23; VIII.7,15,16; IX.25;28,34; X.10; XI.55
59. B.G. XIV.26
60. B.G. VI.29
distinct from prakṛti and no activity belongs to him. He realises that all activities belong to prakṛti. The liberated is also called sthitaprajña because he is not going to be affected in any way by worldly pleasures and pains. Neither joy nor sorrow can move him. He now remains in a balanced mood because he realizes that in all his actions it is only the guṇas in the form of sense organs that act upon the guṇas in the form of worldly objects. He is also aware of the fact that the Ātman remains unaffected. He is called a bhakta because he has before him a supreme being whom he cannot but show respect and reverence and to whom he is very much loyal and faithful doing everything at his command. He considers himself to be an instrument of the Lord and so he thinks that he is not performing any duties. It is only the Lord who acts in and through him.

The liberated is also called jñānī because he reaches the Brāhmi-sthiti and thereby he acquires the knowledge of Brahman. Thus a person who has reached Brāhmi-sthiti or has purified his heart by the worship of the Lord is never again deluded. He becomes entitled to attain to salvation which is equivalent to reaching or becoming one with the Supreme.

61. B.G. II.72
62. B.G. II.72
The liberated is called a Karma-yogi too. Those persons who after doing away with all sorts of desires remain unattached and unconceited attain to peace. 63

So long as the liberated man lives, he is committed to some action or other. According to Śāṅkara it is the modes of nature’s working for which he is to perform action and for Rāmānuja it is the activity of the Supreme for which the freed spirit is to work. Thus the impersonality of the action is shown by them though in two different ways.

Whatever the freed soul does, he does with full freedom and with inner joy and peace which are not dependent on any externals. The carelessness of scepticism can no more be found in him. He dispels all darkness from his countenances.

He is no longer under the sway of flesh, nor he is attracted by any sort of desire. He shows no feeling of despair even in his adversity nor he is elated at his prosperity. He is now free from anxiety, fear and anger. He wears a sinless countenance of a child.

The liberated is not troubled by any thought of good and evil. He is not to pursue the ethical rules as he rises

63. 63. B.G. II.71
above it and he comes to the sphere of spiritual life which is one of light, largeness and power. He here is not to undergo another birth on earth, even if he performs an evil act which in usual course would have forced a rebirth. He is not to follow the ordinary rules and regulations of life. In this context Radhakrishnan observes, "Absolute individualism is the view of the Gītā in so far as the end is concerned." He further says, "It would be a dangerous doctrine if these freed men should imitate Nietzsche's superman, who has no patience with the weak and the unfit, the defective and the delinquent." But the truth is that the freed spirits of the Gītā are not indifferent to the sufferings of the other beings though they are free from social obligations. Rather they are habitually to work for the welfare of the world. Moreover, the liberated cannot cause vexation to others being himself above any vexation. "These noble souls regard with equal mind all things of the earth. They stand for a dynamic creative spiritual life, and see to it that the social regulations tend to the fuller spiritual unfolding or expression of human life."

64. S. Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, vol. I, p. 579
65. Ibid.
66. Ibid.
The liberated ones do their appointed works, because these works are ordained by the Divine will though the Gītā emphasises much on social duties. It also recognises a supra social state. "It believes in the infinite destiny of the individual apart from human society. The Sannyāsin is above all rules, caste and society."67 This symbolises the infinite dignity of man, who can strip himself of all externals, ever wife and children, and be self-sufficient in the solitude of the desert if he has his God with him.

The ideal adopted by the Sannyāsin is not an ascetic ideal. The Sannyāsin even though he keeps himself aloof from the society, is sympathetic and compassionate for all.

Even Mahādeva who is known to be an ascetic readily drank poison for the saving of the humanity.68 The Gītā also speaks of gradual release. One who knows Brahman is successfully led by God till he reaches Brahman, the ultimate reality.

According to the Gītā, then, the finite selves are eternal sparks of God Who consciously dissociate themselves from their psycho-physical vestments when they seek liberation.

67. Ibid., p. 580
68. Ibid.
All actions are actuated by Sattva, rajas and tamas, which are psychical impulses and basic springs of action. The Ātman, the transcendental self transcends the guṇas and is eternally pure and autonomous. "The association of the pure spirit with the unconscious mind-body complex is the cause of its embodied life and transmigration. Its complete detachment and isolation from the guṇas and their modes brings about its release." 69

At the state of release there is ingress of the finite spirit into the infinite spirit, and of the infinite spirit into the finite spirit. As the Gītā says, "Deluded by the three-fold disposition of Nature this world does not know me who am above them and eternal ... But those who take refuge in me shall overcome the spell." 70

70. B.G. VII.13-14.