CHAPTER V

THE CONCEPT OF MAN IN THE BG

Usually the pivotal triadic concepts of Indian philosophy are expressed as Brahman, Jīva and Jagata. After dealing with Brahman and Jagata, we should have, normally speaking, started with a chapter on Jīva, but the title of the present chapter is 'man'. Why?

As has been pointed out earlier the BG contains much of the Upanisadic thought. But the Upanisadic thought is abstract to a great extent, unconditioned by space and time while that of the BG is very much the incarnation, enfleshment or embodiment of the Upanisadic thinking in the concrete human situation. As the UR in the Upanisads is very much transcendent, aloof and abstract whereas that in the BG is very much concrete, humanized and immediate, so too the Upanisads are busy with the self in man detached from his bodily abode while the BG is primarily concerned with man in the concrete, man with flesh and blood. The BG dialogue is between God in the human form, the Theanthropos, Lord Krṣṇa and man with flesh and blood, the man Arjuna, confronted with a puzzling human situation. Here the dialogue is not so much on truth in general as on truthfulness in a concrete human predicament. Of course, these statements are not meant to be taken in a rigidly exclusivistic sense but in terms of the overall atmosphere and general themes. But the revelation by the Avatarik, the Theanthropos Krṣṇa, to man Arjuna is most fitting. Hence our preference to treat man as a whole rather than as jīva.
Our treatment of the present topic is by no means exhaustive but it done in so far as it is relevant and needed for the general theme of our thesis. First we shall consider the two basic constituents of man viz. the Ātman and ānātman, and then the relation between Ātman and paramātman. In the third section some remarks will be made on the bondage of man, then a few points will be made on the question of man's ability for self-determination.

A: THE BASIC CONSTITUENTS OF MAN IN THE BG

In the Indian tradition usually the constitution of man is understood in terms of the two fundamental categories of Sānkhya philosophy, viz. prakṛti and puruṣa. Another pattern of looking at the structure of man is with reference to the five kosās and the reality beyond the kosās as given in the Tait. Up. (2:1-6). Kṣetra-kṣetrajña combination is yet another traditional metaphor through which the reality what man is, is explained. Another well-known metaphor to describe the inner structure of man is that of the charioteer and the chariot found in the Kātha Up. (1:3:3-9). Obviously the most ordinary categories through which the conscious and the unconscious aspects of the human constitution distinguished are Ātman and ānātman. The last categorization being the most common and very similar to the western categorization of man's structure into body and soul. We shall follow this one.

What would be striking for a western philosopher in these categorizations of man is that except perhaps the one of chariot and the charioteer, all the rest are applied both for the microcosm that man is and for the macrocosm. This parallel between the microcosm and macrocosm can be seen even in such an ancient hymn as the Puruṣa Sūkta of the Rgveda.
1. The Anātman (Body?)

The BG accepts the Sāṇkhya categories in themselves (3:40-42; 7:4; 13:5-6) though it achieves a synthesis of the dual principles in Purtisottama. This is especially so with regard to the constituents of the anātman. It is the three guṇas of prakṛti that bind the ātman to the anātman (14:5).

The principle of action resides in the anātman. It is the three guṇas of prakṛti which act (3:27) and the one who knows this truth remains unfettered (3:28). There are a number of ślokas which directly or indirectly bring forth the idea that action belongs to the anātman, (2:19, 21; 3:29, 5:0, 9, 13-15; 7:4; 13:29; 18:13-17 and 41-44). The 'I' which claims for itself the agency is ahma kar which belongs to prakṛti. Indeed, kārya, kārana and kārtya belong to prakṛti (13:20).

Of course the abhamakāra, (the phenomenal self), attributes falsely the action to the real ātman (3:27). Hence the insistence in the BG of suppressing this ego-sense (18:17, 24, 26, 54, 58, 59 etc.).

In verses 7 and 8 of chapter 15 another element is added to the reality of anātman. In verse 7 the Lord says how an 'ādīta' of his becomes the jīva in man and then draws to itself the five sense and the mind. And then in the following verse it is stated that when the soul leaves the body he takes these sense and mind as the wind carries perfumes. Authors like Tilak and Radhakrishnan interpret this verse in terms of the traditional concept of lingasarīra, something quite foreign to the western concept of body. Tilak writes:

According to the Sāṇkhya philosophy, this subtle body is made up
of the 10 elements starting from Mahat up to the five subtle tanmātrās; and it is stated in the Vedānt-Sūtras (3:1:1) that the five subtle elements and ākāśa (ether) are also included in it. Similarly, it is stated in the Maitreyapada (9:10), that the Subtle Body is made up of 18 elements. Therefore, one has to conclude that the words 'Mind and five organs' point to the collection of the other elements, which are in the Subtle Body.4

Thus the anatman of the Bhū implies the 24 of the 25 Sāṅkhya categories, excluding only the purusa. These evolutes of the prakṛti are both as sarīra and as linga-sarīra, i.e. gross and subtle bodies.

The Western Concept of Body and Soul

It is of some use to compare the western concept of body and soul, and to be aware of the great difference that exists between the Western and the Bhū. It seems to be Plato who first treated the question of the body and soul combination of man with systematizing skill and with logical rigour in Western Philosophy. For him what willed in man is the soul which consists of three aspects namely the spiritual, the courageous and the passionate reminding us of the three gunās of the Sāṅkhya prakṛti.5 Plato's sharply dualistic concept of body and soul is partly overcome by Aristotle for whom the soul is the determining principle (entelechy) of an organism. After explaining this entelechy in the plants and animals he comes to the question of the human soul and understands it as quite different from other souls due to mind (nous). He says:

We have no evidence as yet about mind or the power to think; it seems to be a widely different kind of soul, differing as what is eternal from what is perishable; it alone is capable of existence
in isolation from all other psychic powers. All the other parts of the soul, it is evident from what we have said, are, in spite of certain statements to the contrary, incapable of separate existence though, of course, distinguishable by definition.

Aquinas accepts the Aristotelian view that the soul is the entelechy of 'act' of the body which is potency to it, that there are various grades of souls, and that it is the mind or intellect that gives clues to the human soul. He says:

We should assert that the mind, the principle of intellectual activity is the form of the human body. The body's first animating principle is the soul. And since life is manifest by various activities in the various grades of living things, that which the first principle of these vital activities is the soul...Call it mind or intellective soul, this principle is the form of the body.

Aquinas in his efforts to find fundamental unity between body and soul on the one hand, and to assert the possibility of the human soul to exist independently of the body, on the other hand, proposed the theory of matter, and form (hylomorphic) thereby affirming that the soul is the form of the body.

Descartes the father of modern philosophy, distinguishes in man, on the basis of his "Cogito, ergo sum" the thinking aspect and the aspect that is extended, and thus accepts a Platonic sort of dualism. The modern philosophers, by and large, except of course most of the idealists, were not much interested in the question of the human soul, especially as a spiritual reality capable of existing independent of the body. In fact, under the Empiricistic influence, even the very "science of the
From this brief survey what is to be noted is that most of the classical authors of Western philosophy try to understand the human soul in terms of the mind or the intellect. And many of them consider the soul as the principle of activity as opposed to matter which is the principle of passivity. This consideration must lead us to a very important point with far reaching consequences in comparing the Indian psychology with the Western in general, and the BG psychology in particular. As we have seen, it is the anātman that is the principle of activity. Besides, whereas for the BG psychology the buddhi (intellect-sill) and the mind (manas) belong to the anātman, the Western philosophers consider them as the most specific and basic expressions of the human soul. Hence it is obvious that the anātman of the BG cannot be translated into English as body. In point of fact, the "soul" of many of the Western philosophers belong to the anātman of the BG philosophy. Or in terms of Upānishadic terminology, even the mind-sheath (manomaya kośa) knowledge-sheath (vijñānānāmaya kośa) and the bliss-sheath (anandamaya kośa) are sheaths of the ātman, and so the ātman has to be sought beyond them, though there is some confusion in this matter even in Śāṅkaravādāta.

(a)X. The Ātman

In the Indian philosophy it is the ātman that is the centre of philosophical inquiry rather than man as a whole. One might say that Yājñavālka's well-known eulogy of the ātman before Maitreyi, his wife (Br.Up. 2:4:5) could be considered the extreme form of ātman-centred philosophizing in India. Since ātman is considered to stand for the central,
permanent and eternal aspect of man it is but natural to emphasize this aspect to the neglect of the impermanent and transitory anatman aspect of man. In fact in Western Philosophy too the soul was given either too much of importance to the detriment of the bodily aspect by philosophers like Plato, Plotinus and Descartes though the bodily aspect was given its due by philosophers like Aristotle, Aquinas and Bonaventure. Until quite recently, in the West too, to be good, to be religious and to be spiritual were understood more or less synonymously.

According to Monier Williams, etymologically ātman is a combination of at (to move) + an (to breathe) or tman (the vital breath). Already in the Rigveda this word meant vital principle in man. The Greek term atmos has a similar meaning. In Hebrew ruān is used for the soul though it originally means breath. There is nothing surprising at the identification of breath with the vital principle which began to be understood as the soul. For, even the primitive man could notice that when a man dies he stops breathing. Ātman also means the Supreme Self, the essence of things as in karmātman or saññayātama. Ātman may refer to understanding or intellect as in mañḍātman (of slow intellect) or to character. In short, ātman primarily stands for the central or vital core of any reality, and when it is referred to living beings it means the vital principle as associated with breath and when referred to man to the soul which is spiritual and can exist independently of the body.

What does ātman mean in the BG? There is no easy answer. Let us take verse 5:7. "He who is trained in yoga, and is purified in soul (visuddhātma), who is master of his self (vijit'ātma) and who has con-
quered his sense, whose soul becomes the soul of all beings (sarvabhu-
tatmabhutatma), he is not tainted by works though he works." Here,
the pure self seems to be the individual self since it was in need
of purification. Then what is the self which is conquered? For Sa-
karaçarya it is the body. For Ramanuja it is the manas. If so for both
it is an atman which belongs to the prakrti and so to anatman.

Let us take verse 6:5 which can shed some further light on the
above one. "Let a man raise his self (atmanam) by the self (atman); let
him not degrade his self; the self is the friend of the self, so too
the self is the enemy of the self". Arjuna is told to raise the atman
by the atman because the atman can be the enemy of the atman as well as
its friend. In the following verse it is shown how the atman becomes
the bandhu of atman as well as the satru of atman accordingly as the
atman subdues the atman or does not. Now who is the atman who is
friendly and who is hostile? Are they identical or different?

What is the atman to be raised and the atman by which to be raised
as asked by the Lord in 6:5? Obviously there are two atmans. Radha-
krishnan explains in terms of lower and higher self while Zachner in
terms of carnal and spiritual selves. For Tilak the lower self is manas
as for Ramanuja. The lower self which is to be conquered and which can
be enemy or friend belongs to prakrti, and so to anatman, and hence
rightly Sankaracarya explains it in terms of body.

In 13:24 atman is spoken of as the place in which in the locative
case, as the instrument by which in the instrumental case and the object
which in the accusative case. According to Sankaracarya the atman in
which is budhi, the ātman by which is antakaran (inner conscience?) and the ātman which is individual soul (pratyek cetanam). Rāmānuja considers the ātman in which as body (śarīroma) and the ātman by which as mind (manas) and the ātman which as the individual self. The two selves in 3:43 too can be explained in terms of higher and lower selves. Commenting on 6:6 Tilak brings out the three following meanings of ātman: "(1) the āntarātman, (2) one's self, and (3) the Internal Sense or the Mind." By these explanations we do not claim to have solved the problem of the various ātmanas spoken of in the BG, and so we agree with Hill that "this riddle of ātman leaves room for a variety of interpretations" and the confusion will become greater when we consider the question of Paramātman.

b) Some Peculiar Qualities and Characteristics of the Ātman

Like the purusa in Sāṅkhya ātman in the BG is inactive (2:19; 5:28, 29; 5:13, 14; 13:29; 16:16). It is given as the characteristic of a true seer to realize that the ātman is totally inactive and the prakṛti alone is active. However, there are some texts which seem to indicate some sort of agency in the ātman as in 15:7-9). In 15:7 it is said that the ātman draws to itself the senses etc. as it embodies a body and to carry with it (the lingasārira?) as the wind carries the perfumes with it (13:3). We have pointed out just above how the higher ātman conquers the lower one. The ātman of the RG transmigrates (2:13, 22; 6:41-45; 8:18; 9:3,21) and this transmigration consists of casting off old clothes and putting on new ones. And this activity belongs to some
In 2:23-25 a number of characteristics of the atman are stressed showing its spirituality or non-extensiveness so that it cannot be cut, or burnt, dried up etc. It is also said to be unchanging and unmanifest and eternal. The atman is never born nor will it die, since it is eternal, and it can never be killed or destroyed (2:19-21). Budhi seems to be nearest to the atman, next in order comes the manas and then the senses (3:12).

3. The Atman-Anatman Constitution of Man

In our above study it has become clear that the term atman is used for realities belonging to anatman, and this atman belonging to the anatman was called by us lower self. We could not achieve any precise description of the atman. In our consideration of the atman-paramatman relationship, we shall try to achieve a less confusing picture of the atman.

In the section describing the nature of atman in chapter two (11-25) there most of the texts give a sharp distinction between atman and anatman. But the real unity between the two is achieved in the 'urusottama.'

By now it has become clear that any translation of atman of the BG by the word soul of Western philosophy is misleading. From the evidence so far which we have, we found within the complex realities of budhi, manas, ahankar and atman to be conquered. Even the pre-existing and transmigrating and eternal 'soul' of 'kato is somewhat trigunatmika from what we could make out from his description of the threefold characteristics.
The mystery that surrounds Jivatman-Paramatman relationship is even more profound than that surrounds Anatman-Atman relationship. Not that these concepts are meaningless or false as the 'Grammatical Philosophers' would tend to affirm but that they are too deep for the limited human mind to grasp fully or express clearly, in spite of their vital relevance for meaningful human existence. Just as a clearly defined god is no true god, so too a religion with all its basic concepts clearly defined leaving no place for mystery is no true religion.

Jiva brahmaiva na parah is an assertion as fundamental to Sankaravedanta as the assertion that Brahman satyam jagat mithya. Does the BG endorse this view? Since the very concept of Atman itself is liable to various conflicting interpretations, as we have briefly seen, it is not easy to say yes or not to the above question. After placing the problem in perspective we shall bring out some of the conflicting aspects of this problem in so far as they are relevant to our overall problematic.

1. The Atman-Brahman Equation

The Atman-Brahman equation seems to be quite strange to most of the Western schools of philosophy. This has to be interpreted in the context of the microcosm-macrocosm parallelism in the śruti literature which has influenced deeply the various philosophical schools. In the Indian philosophy it is the microcosm, that is, the individual, that is the starting point and the main focus of attention, and quite easily the constituents of the microcosm is transposed to the macrocosm in a
parallel way. The most obvious example is the purusa-prakrti combination of Sāṅkhya transposed from the microcosm to the macrocosm. The kṣetra-kṣetrajña pair also is a similar example. P. Deussen makes an interesting observation, before dealing with the question of Brahman-ātman equation, showing why philosophical speculation starts with the microcosm. He says:

No man, whatever he may do, can get out of his own Self; everything in the world can only arouse our interest, nay, only exists for us, in so far as, affecting us, it enters the sphere of our "I", and, as it were becomes a part of us. Therefore, our own Self with its content is the first, and in a certain sense, the only object of philosophical investigation.

F. Edgerton too observes this parallelism though he does not say which is the starting point. He says:

...the Upanisads center their attention on search for the central, fundamental, and animating principle of the universe, and of man; that these two objects of speculation are regarded in them as parallel, the universal macrocosm being compared to the human microcosm; and that this parallelism indeed turns into an identity, which results in an equation between the 'soul' or real self of man and that of the universe.

In the West, Descartes' starting point from the microcosm was a great revolution in philosophical thinking, while in India it has been the usual procedure even from the Vedic times as the Āryaṇa Sūkta bears it out.

In the extrovert West, the knotty philosophical problem of One and
Many arose in the context of the experience of the changing and permanent, or relative and absolute 'aspects' of reality in the macrocosm. In India, this problem has arisen both in the context of the micro and the macro universes. The relationship between the world and Brahman is parallel to the problem of that between the ātman and the anātman and between ātman and paramātman.

2. Texts Suggestive of Jīvātman-Paramātman Identity

In 5:14 the designation by the term 'prabhu' is of the jīvātman by most of the commentators including Śaṅkara and Rāmachandra. Radhakrishnan considers it as referring to the "Sovereign Self" as it is quite unusual to use this name for jīvātman. But this verse follows immediately after designating the jīvātman as staying in the city of nine gates (navavārāna puruṣottama) as the Lord of this city, and so such an appellation is quite fitting. In 13:8 the name 'Īśvara' is used in connection with the process of transmigration, and so it has to be the jīvātman though this name too is usually used with regard to the Paramātman. The statements that the jīvātman is beginningless and endless in number of verses in 2:12-20, and these attributes are used ordinarily for the Paramātman. The various qualifications given to the jīvātman besides these two in the second chapter (especially from 17-25) like avināśī, nitya, aja etc. could very well be used for the Supreme Self. Thus there are various texts where the designations and qualifications given to the jīvātman are used right through the MG to describe the reality of the Supreme Self.

Apart from these identical names and qualifications for both the jīvātman and the Paramātman there are texts which seem to indicate the
identity between the two. In 5:17 there is a reference to taking the Brahman (Tad) as one's atman (tadatmanah) though it occurs in the context of a dynamic movement of the atman towards the goal. In 5:17 it is stated that one's own soul becomes the soul of all. In 13:22 the Supreme Person (puruṣah paraḥ) is said to be in the body as witness, supporter etc. One might however interpret as Zaehner does, as the Supreme self over and above the jīvātman as soon in verse 24 the question of the plurality of atmans occurs. In 13:31-33, on the one hand it is referred as Paramātman and on the other hand it is stated that it dwells in the body without getting contaminated. Where we have three texts which explicitly speak of the supreme self as abiding in the body without contrasting with atman.

3. Texts that Speak of Difference

a) Explicitly

One of the texts where the Supreme Self, who is Lord Kṛṣṇa himself, is contrasted with the jīvātman is 4:33. Zaehner commenting on this verse writes: "This is a crucial verse in the development of the Gītā's theology; since for the first time it brings God and the self-in-itself into juxtaposition." As can be expected Śaṅkaraśārya explains the atman contrasted with the Lord in terms of his Advaita while Rāmānuja in terms of his Visiśṭadvaita taking the atman as the jīvātman. The text of the Bhagavad-Gītā in itself does not yield the interpretation given by Śaṅkara.

In 15:7 the Lord says that a fragment (aṁśa) of his own being have become a living soul (jīvabhūtaḥ) identifying the jīvātman with his aṁśa. Śaṅkaraśārya commenting on this text says that the aṁśa of the
Lord should be considered in analogy with the reflections of the sun in the water or of the ether in the jar on the basic principle that Brahman is partless. Criticizing Śaṅkara Mānikeśvari says that these analogies "Strictly speaking are not relevant, as the reflection is not 'a part' of the original, but the original, itself on some other surface". He categorically affirms that the relation of the āmsa of the Lord with the Lord cannot be explained in terms of tadvinaya. For Rāmānuja and Vaiśekha this text does not create any difficulty in explaining in a straightforward way, without however, solving the basic question whether the Absolute could have parts or not. We find satisfying the following interpretation of this verse by Radhakrishnan as it tries to bridge the gap between dualism and monism:

The actual manifestations may be partial but the reality of the individual soul is the Divine which the human manifestation does not fully bring out. God's image in man is the bridge between heaven and earth. Each individual has eternal significance in the cosmos. When he rises above his limitations, he is not dissolved in the Superpersonal Absolute but lives in the Supreme (nivaśayasi mayyeva (12:8), and enters into a co-partnership with God in the cosmic activity.

We have already referred to 10:41-42 where the question of āmsa arises in the context of the presence of the Lord in his vibhūtis. Again the Lord's declaration that He is the seed (bij) of all contingent beings (10:41-42) have indirect if not direct bearing on the question of the identity and difference of the contingent beings in general and of the jīvātmā in particular with regard to the Supreme Being. If the contingent beings in the BG are real as we have seen, and if these are stated
to be ṛṣā there is no sufficient reason for calling the ṛṣā of the Lord as the jīvātmān unreal.

b) Implicitly

However there arises the question of the plurality of selves. If there are plurality of jīvātmāns, and if these are constituted of the 'ṛṣā' of the Lord, how can we say that jīvātmān is identical with the Paramātmān? The following is an unambiguous text in the BG of the plurality of ātmāns: "Never was there a time when I was not, nor thou, nor those lords of men, nor will there ever be a time hereafter when we shall cease to be." (2:12). Here the Lord says that as souls, He Himself, Arjuna and the others existed from all eternity, and will exist for all eternity as 'I', 'thou' and 'they'. On the strength of this text Ramanuja derives the following three conclusions: "(1) That there is difference between God and the individual ātmāns (2) that there is difference between individual ātmāns themselves; (3) that this difference is absolutely real." According to Śaṅkaracārya this distinction of souls given here is due to the distinction of bodies. After comparing the various commentaries of the Ācāryas Mainkar says:

It is very difficult to give a decision here; but considering the general trend of the BG of teaching difference as well as non-difference, as well the fact that it is in a sense a Visnavite text, one is tempted to suggest that this is a verse which unequivocally teaches the doctrine common to Rāmānuja, Vallabha, Śāṁbāraka and Nādīva that the individual souls are real, eternal and never lose completely their individual distinction.
Mainkar gets support for his argument in verse 14:25 where the Lord says that the liberated souls would attain to his sadharsaya which means not absolute identity but similarity which implies identity in distinction.

3. Conclusion:

According to the BG ontology reality is ultimately and radically one, and all the contingent beings are seminally Brahman. Yet this "monism" is such that it accepts the reality of the many, of all contingent beings as symbolically represented in the cosmic form of the Lord. Hence there is no point in denying the fundamental unity between the Brahman and the Jīvātmā.

True, all the contingent realities spring up from the seed of the Supreme Reality. And all his vibhūtis are his own tejojāsa. But the jīvātmā of the BG is not absolutely identical with the jagata nor with Brahman.

The jīvātmā is the amsa of the Lord in a special way. Obviously the Supreme Reality cannot multiply itself by dividing itself. The amsa is a metaphoric expression. But it is quite different from saying that this very amsa is the total reality what the Paramātmā is. There are enough evidences to affirm a real distinction between the jīvātmā and Paramātmā in the BG, a distinction that would persist even in the state of liberation.

The BG indeed accepts the Sāṅkhya ontology short of its dualism. When the Purusottama unifies the dual principles naturally the Sāṅkhya concepts have to be reinterpreted in terms of this underlying Gītā-
monism'. The Gita-monism does not demand an illusory concept of the world. Indeed, in the question of plurality of souls, it seems to be accepting the plurality of the purusas by accepting the plurality of ātmans though men, unlike other finite beings, thanks to the special affinity of the jīvatman with the Paramātman, experiences this fundamental unity through the Ātman. Rightly therefore Radhakrishnan says that "God's image in man is the bridge between heaven and earth."

C: NARAYANA'S CONSTITUTIONAL BONDAGE AND FREEDOM

This question will be dealt with partially when the questions of liberation and of niskāmakarma will be studied. Our study here will be confined to certain general aspects of the question which will not be treated later on. We shall concentrate chiefly on the point how man is constitutionally in bondage, born in bondage according to the BG.

The second is a moral question concerning the degree of freedom he enjoys in making decisions and in acting accordingly. Here we are not concerned with the final freedom or muktij but with what is generally known as freedom of will in English though a category equivalent to the "will" of Western philosophy is not found in the BG.

1. Man is constitutionally in Bondage

a) In General

A general understanding of this question is relatively easy. As we have seen, the Ātman in the BG is eternal (nitya) and is a 'para' (param) of the Lord, this implies that by its true nature it 'shares' the knowledge, bliss, freedom etc. of the Paramātman. When the jīvatman takes up a new body it falls into the clutches of the gunās which make
it feel that it acts while the prakrti de facto is the agent and make it blind to see its true nature. To be born in the BG is to be born bound, unless it is an avatāra as we shall see later on.

In chapter 14, verses 5 to 20 give a somewhat elaborate description as to how the gunas bind. We shall cite verse 6 where the bondage is described in general terms and 6, 7 and 8 where a description is given of the binding functions of each of the gunas.

The three gunas, sattva, rajas and tamas, born of nature, bind down in the body, the jīvātmā (dehi), O Mighty-armed. Of these sattva being pure, causes illumination and health. It binds, ob blinmelas one, by attachment to sukhā (happiness, pleasure) and to knowledge (jñāna). Rajas, know thou, is of the nature of rāga (attraction, desire), springing from trṣṇa (craving) and asanga (attachment). It binds, O son of Rūmī, the dehi (jīvātmā) by attachment to action. But tamas, know thou, is born of ajñāna (ignorance). It binds, O Bharata, by pramāda (negligence) and by nidra (sleepiness).

Thus here we have a description of the threefold bondage caused by the three gunas causing attachment to sukhā, karmāni and to pramāda by sattva, rajas and tamas respectively. In 7:13 the Lord says that deluded by these three gunas people fail to recognize Him who is eternal and beyond the gunas. But, unlike in the Saṅkhyā, this prakṛti is not somebody or something, totally uncontrolled and left to its own whims and tyranny. This triganātmaka prakṛti is the mâyā of the Lord (7:14). Nature is the female principle into which the Lord plants his seed for the origination of the contingent beings (14:3–4). Or as we have seen, it is the lower nature of the Lord (7:5–6). This idea of the dependence of the man's struggle for liberation on the Lord is very much in the
spirit of the following passage from the Svet.Up:

He is the maker of all, the knower of all, the self-caused, the knower, the author of time, the possessor of qualities, the knower of everything, the ruler of nature and of the spirit, the lord of qualities, the cause of worldly existence, and of liberation, of continuance and of bondage. 27

Indeed, the Samsarvrsaa has its roots in the UR.

b) More Specific Manifestations of this Bondage

The whole complex process of bondage is explained in 2:62-63. Then a man concentrates his attention to the sense-objects, attachment to them is born, from attachment desire (kama) from desire anger (krodha), from anger bewilderment (moha), from bewilderment loss of memory, from this loss the loss of intelligence (buddhi) and from this loss follows the total loss of the individual. 28 These various links of the chain that bind the jiva-man are too obvious for further elaboration. Raga (attachment) and dveva (aversion) are said to be the two enemies of our liberation (3:34), both of which could be considered as the positive and negative aspects of Buddhistic trsna. Two other enemies that bind man are kama (sensual desire) and krodha (anger), both of which are the products of rajogun (3:36), and these bind man in such a way that he falls into sin in spite of himself (3:37). In 16:21, lobha (greed) is added to kama and krodha, and these three are declared as the three gates of hell.

This is, in general lines, the Gita-concept of bondage. Man, by the mere fact of his atman-annatman constitution is a being in bondage. This statement, however, has to be qualified when we speak of jivan-mukti and of nishka-makarmayoga. Radhakrishnan succinctly puts the Gita
idea of bondage and liberation in the following way:

When the soul identifies itself with the modes of nature, it forgets its own eternity and uses mind, life and body for egoistic satisfaction. To rise above bondage, we must rise above the modes of nature, become *trigunaśāla*, then we put on the free and incorruptible nature of spirit. 28

2. Man and Freedom of Choice

If man is constitutionally in bondage how can we speak of freedom of choice? Besides, if the question of choice arises in connection with action, and if action belongs to *prakṛti* which is material, mechanical and determined, can we say that there exists freedom of choice in the man of the *BG*? Yet, Radhakrishnan says that "The whole teaching of Gītā requires man to choose the good and realize it by conscious effort." 30 Indeed, if the *BG* followed a deterministic concept of man and human actions, the whole of the Gītā-context viz. Arjuna's dilemma or *dharmaśākata* would remain inexplicable. For he finds that he can choose more than one line of action though he is not sure which line is the most appropriate. Nor would there be much meaning in the Lord's advice as to which path has to be followed. After his long discourse on various topics, almost at the end of the last chapter (18:63) the Lord says: "Reflect on it fully and do as thou choosest." 31 If the Gītā-man is a mechanically determined man, this statement would remain totally unintelligible. By pointing out the two sides of the question what we want to say is that this problem cannot yield to any one-sided, simplistic solutions.

Had this question been treated in the Western philosophical context,
Free will has been one of the most disputed questions among the Christian philosophers of the West especially during the mediaeval times. The Western mediaeval philosophers distinguished three faculties in the human soul, viz. the memory, intellect and will. In the light of modern psychology one might say that this categorization is not a very happy one. But when we try to translate the term will into the Sānkhyā-Gītā categories we run into difficulties. It is not only because of the differences in the meaning of the concept of will for philosophers like Augustine, Aquinas, Kant or Schopenhauer but also because of the very different concepts of the human constituents in the BG philosophy.

In the Sānkhyā-Gītā terminology budhi seems to come near to the concept of 'will'. In the Sānkhyakārika (no. 25) the special characteristic of budhi is given as decision making (adhyavāsāyo budhir dharma). The BG's description of budhi as vyavāsāyaṃka also gives more or less the Sānkhyā meaning (2:41). Commenting on this verse Śaṅkarācārya says that the nature of budhi is of decision-making (Mascaya svabhāvaṅka eva budhiḥ). Budhi is not identical with decision-making but this power is embedded in the budhi as the sprout is present in the seed, to use an illustration given by Gaud, to explain the relation between budhi and decision-making.\textsuperscript{32} Zachner translates budhi as 'soul' with some justification.\textsuperscript{33} Ghurye considers Śaṅkara as volitional on the ground that personal appropriation belongs to this 'faculty'.\textsuperscript{34} Budhi is certainly more than will because of its obvious part in causing intellectual cognition. In another sense, it is less than the will of Western philosophy since budhi belongs to the anātman in man while will belongs to the soul.
From what has been said above, it is clear that the question of the freedom of will as proposed in the Western philosophy cannot be transposed in toto to the Gita-philosophy. However, Kåra's help and guidance in choosing the most worthy line of action is Arjuna's primary concern (2:2). In other words, Arjuna's query is with regard to the choice of action. Here we proposed the question in terms of the freedom of choice.

a) Man with Self-determination or Freedom of Decision

From an overall view of the BG, the question whether man in the BG is mechanically determined or with the ability of self-determination looks pedantic. For, as we have hinted at earlier, the very visāda or dharmasankata of Arjuna implies that though he feels that he can choose more than one line of action he does not know which line he ought to choose. Arjuna's question is about the ought. It is because of his awareness that ought implies can, that Kant postulated the freedom of will for the practical reason. If the freedom of decision is not presupposed in the man of the BG, the Lord's teaching would be worse than as the proverb goes, the reading of the Bhagavada before a buffalo. The Lord heals Arjuna of his bewilderment by showing a definite path. After describing this path through a lengthy discourse, the Lord, does not force Arjuna to follow this path, but rather respecting his freedom tells him to do as he likes or rather as he wills (10:63).

The problem of freedom arises when we come more into the detail of human action. The Lord enumerates the five factors of action as taught by Sāṅkhya: "The seat of action and likewise the agent, the
instruments of various sorts, the many kinds of efforts and providence being the fifth." 35 (18:14). Both Tilak and Radhakrishnan interpret this passage pointing out how in an action certain factors are within our own control and certain others beyond our control. Tilak makes the point by giving the example of agriculture. He says: "For instance, agriculture does not depend merely on the efforts of a man, but the natural qualities or the activities of other things like land, seed, rain, manure, oxen etc. are necessary in order that agriculture should be successful." 36 Radhakrishnan illustrates the point by the example of a game of cards. He says: "We did not invent the game or design the cards. We did not frame the rules and we cannot control the dealing. The cards are dealt out to us, whether they be good or bad. To that extent determinism rules. But we can play the game well or play it badly. Our life is a mixture of necessity and freedom, chance and choice." 37

According to this text, there is something in human action which depends on him and something else which does not depend on him. And man is free to the extent of those factors which depend on him. For Tilak the verses 6:5-6 where it is stated how the lower self can become one's enemy or friend accordingly as it is controlled by the higher self, are clear expressions of human freedom. He says:

These two stanzas contain a description of the doctrine of Free Will (ātma-svātāntrya), and propound the principle that every one must bring about his own emancipation; and that however powerful Prakṛti (nature) may be, it is within one's own hands to conquer it and to bring about one's own betterment. 38

Thus, apart from the overall view, even by analysing the particular texts
independent of the general context, we can say that the BG admits an element of freedom in human actions.

b) Man without Self-determination of Freedom of Decision

If the prakṛti alone acts (3:27 etc) and the puruṣa is just a witness how could freedom in action be defended in the BG? After all, prakṛti is mechanical and material. This question has to be tackled by pointing out that the BG prakṛti and puruṣa are not identical to the puruṣa and prakṛti in the context of Śaṅkhyā dualism. In the BG context both prakṛti and puruṣa (jīvātmā) are directly under the control and guidance of the Puruṣottama. But there are texts which seem to deny the freedom of action. What about them?

In 3:5 it is said that everybody is forced to action helplessly (avaśāḥ). Here the helplessness is shown not with regard to this or that particular line of action, that is to say, not with regard to the choice of action but with regard to action itself. In other words, man is by nature determined to act, so much so that even the decision not to act itself is an action; but man has certain freedom with regard to the specification of the action, i.e. with regard to the choice of the type of action.

In 3:33 it is stated that all, including the jñāni, act according to their natural tendencies, and so repression (nigrahaḥ) is of no use. Again this is not a denial of freedom nor denial of the need of controlling the senses. Here the word used is nigrahaḥ which means violent repression as used by the extreme karmakandis. Every contingent being has its own determined nature, forming so to say, its own definability. Air, food, water etc. are vitally needed for animal existence, and among the animals these
necessities are meted out for fish in a way very different from that of man by their own respective natures. Tilak comments on this verse:

What is meant here is that it is not possible to totally destroy the natural tendencies of the senses by self-coercion or persistence. For instance, so long as the body exists, a man leaves his home to go and beg when he is hungry, however much he may be a jñānī or wise, because hunger, thirst etc. are natural tendencies.

We may dismiss the above verse as referring to the more general or more fundamental nature of the contingent beings. Man acts in the human way as fish acts in the fish-like way and they cannot free themselves from their specific natures. But verses 18:59 and 60 seem to refer neither to the necessity of action itself, nor to the necessity of action according to a particular nature but according to a very particular kind of action in a given situation, like fighting or non-fighting. Let us quote the whole passage:

If indulging in self-conceit, thou thinkest 'I will not fight', vain is this, they resolve. Nature will compel these. (39). That which, through delusion, thou wishest not to do, 0 son of Kunti, that thou shalt do, even against thy will, fettered by thy own acts born of thy nature. (30) (39)

These two verses seem to be the ones which go very much against self-determination in man. One might say that even for such "casual action" as going for a war or refusing to go, one is not free. Indeed, one will be forced to act.

This is, however, a very superficial view of the text. First of all, in the Dharma's world-view, to go for a dutybound war or refuse to go
for the sake by a ksatriya prince is not such a casual matter. True, today a brahmin or a vaisya or a sudra can join the army. But according to the UG world-view the fourfold caste order was created by the Lord according to the divisions of quality and work (guna and karma). What is important is that according to this statement this fourfold order belongs to the structure of human society as envisaged by the Gitakīrāṇa keeping in with the attitude of his time, in so far as they have been established by the Lord himself.

Another thing to be noted here is that this statement about the necessity or determination by nature of fighting is spoken of to a concrete person in a concrete situation. The Lord knows that Arjuna is a noble soul and is loyal enough to perform his duty once he overcomes his bewilderment. Such a noble soul will come back and fight when he sees that due to his neglect of duty great disaster is taking place. Hence Śāṅkara-commenting on this verse (18:59) says that Arjuna's ksatriyadharma (his ksatriya-consciousness) will lead him to fight. Rāmānuja and Radhakrishnan too give similar interpretations. What we can say is that these two verses do not go against the partial self-determining ability in man.

3. Conclusion:

Though we discussed the question of self-determination in man, this is not a very important concern of our sacred book. There is no ex officio treatment of this topic as a Western philosopher would have wished. Gītā's primary interest is to make man got all the faculties of his being including the intellectual, conative and affective faculties
attuned to the divine plan, the divine design, the sanntana dharma;
for the establishment of which the Lord took the human form. For this,
man must forget his 'ego' and surrender himself totally to the Lord
performing his duties as a sacrifice in terms of niskänakarma, as we
shall see later on.

To some extent, the question of freedom of decision is a superim­
posed problematic. The BG's primary interest is self-realisation
through the three margas of karma, jñäna and bhakti. Rightly therefore
Belvalkar remarks:

This means in other words, that true freedom consists not so
much in self-determination, as in self-realisation; and the
true mark of this realization is the perfection of the 'Vyä­
vasayatma' to such a pitch that moral conduct becomes
thereafter not so much a matter of weighing motives and
'freely' choosing the right, as of an effortless and intuitive
action very much like the "Vyuththa" action of the Jivan­
mukta.\(^{40}\)

**D: GENERAL CONCLUSION:**

The BG is essentially a God-man dialogue in terms of man's salva­
tion through his own efforts with God's grace. After the consideration
of the natures of God and world according to the BG we have tried to
have a close view of the concept of man according to our sacred book.
Our study is concentrated on three main points, viz. the inner consti­
tuents of man, the jivätm-Paramätm relationship and finally the
question of man's bondage and his freedom of decision.

Discussing the question of the inner constituents of man we have
pointed out the inadequacy of the concepts body and soul as understood in Western philosophy to express the ātman-ānātman constitution of man. For, the soul belongs more to the anātman than to the ātman according to the Śāṅkhyā-Gītā view of man. It has also become clear to us that the ātman-ānātman constitution cannot be adequately explained in terms of the puruṣa-prakṛti pair of Śāṅkhyā either. For, we saw that the ātman to be conquered belongs to the realm of prakṛti, and we called this ātman the lower self. The question of different ātmans in the BG is not very clear. However, from the overall standpoint of our sacred text, defining in precise terms the ātman-ānātman constitution of man is not very important, much as we would have liked it, because of the all-embracing central figure of Puruṣottama who overcomes the Śāṅkhyā dualism and establishes a bridge between the ātman and anātman by his all-pervading presence and guidance.

Solely on the authority of the text of the BG we cannot subscribe to the view that jīvātman is absolutely identical with Paramātman. There are a number of texts which are against such a view, and there are texts which advocate the plurality of jīvātmans as a sign of Gītā's indebtedness to Śāṅkhyā ontology. But the BG assertion that the Paramātman is the total cause of everything and also that the ātman is an amea of Him with sadhārṇaya does not create more conflicting problems than the acceptance of the theory that the jīvātman is absolutely identical with the Paramātman.

The Gītā-man is in constitutional bondage since it is the eternal ātman, sharing the bliss of the Paramātman with sadhārṇaya to Him, is born again and again due to karma, and get shackled by the gunas. This
fundamental bondage expresses itself through its ignorance of its true nature and through various attractions and repulsions which make it incapable of choosing what it thinks to be best for self-realization. However, man is to some extent free to determine his destiny. But this freedom is so limited that it is the experience of all and sundry as voiced by Arjuna (3:36), that we are constrained to do things which we know to be wrong as though by force.

To what extent man is free to that extent his salvation is a task, something to be achieved by his own efforts, something for which he is responsible. And this has to be done by doing one's svadharma, duty. But action instead of liberating, binds. But action performed with janna and bhakti, and so as a sacrificial act, will not bind, as we shall see in the next chapter on the BG where we shall treat the question of the three margas.