

PRZEMYSŁAW SZCZUREK
(University of Wrocław)

Juggling with *Ātman*. Remarks on the *Bhagavad-gītā* 6.5-6*

Abstract

The *Bhagavad-gītā* passage 6.5-6 is regarded as one of the most difficult points in the poem. The difficulty is caused by the fact that in these two stanzas the term *ātman* appears as many as 13 times. There is no agreement as to the proper meaning of *ātman* and whether the term should be understood in the same way every particular time in both stanzas. In this paper, the interpretations which have been suggested so far have been traced, and also one more attempt at an interpretation of this text is proposed. Attention is drawn to the compositional technique of these ślokas (for example the re-use of some established verse formulas in the new context). The role played by these ślokas within the context of *Gītā* chapter 6 is considered. Finally, the confrontation of BhG. 6.5-6 (and also a few other ślokas of the poem) with some passages of both the early Jaina texts and the Pāli canon is proposed. This confrontation points to the *Gītā* as being a poem of the (broadly understood) orthodox current which also contains some polemical elements.

1.

Among the ślokas of the *Bhagavad-gītā* which cause difficulties to interpreters and because of that are subject to various translations and interpretations, ślokas 6.5-6 seem to be in the top position.

BhG. 6.5-7ab:

*uddhared ātmanātmānaṁ nātmānam avasādayet/
ātmaiva hy ātmano bandhur ātmaiva ripur ātmanaḥ//
bandhur ātmātmanas tasya yenātmavātmānā jitaḥ/*

* It was Professor M.K. Byrski who, a few years ago, inspired me to look on the *Bhagavad-gītā* as a polemical composition. Especially the second part of this paper owes much to Professor Byrski's suggestions.

anātmānaś tu śātrutve vartetātmaiva śātru-vat/
jītātmanah praśāntasya param ātmā samāhitah¹

The main difficulty emerges from the fact that in these two stanzas the term *ātman* appears as many as 13 times (and including the very next hemistich, 6.7ab, 15 times). It is commonly known that the term *ātman* is one of the key words of the Brahminic philosophy, its metaphysics, standing – from the time of the earliest *Upaniṣads* – for the only true, immortal, individual Self, also ultimate reality identified with *brahman*, the self-existent universal Self, the Absolute. It is also well known that in Sanskrit *ātman* is used as a reflexive pronoun. And this terminological ambiguity lies most of all at the basis of the difficulty with the interpretation. There is no agreement as to what the proper meaning of *ātman* was intended to be in 6.5-6, be it ‘the (immortal, supreme) Self’, ‘the self’ as the internal organ (*antaḥ-karaṇa*), mind, or bodily-mental complex of man, i.e. the phenomenal self, or just reflexively ‘oneself’.² While comparing translations and commentaries, it is also not clear whether the term should be understood and translated with the same sense every time in both stanzas or if it represents different meanings in different places in these ślokaś, and therefore its meaning should be split. Both ślokaś are translated, interpreted, commented upon in a few different ways.

Interpretations occur which treat the term *ātman* in BhG. 6.5-6 merely as a reflexive pronoun.³ There is no stress in them on the word in its metaphysical (ontological), so to say Upaniṣadic sense. Instead, the reflexive meaning is stressed, the main sense being that everyone is encouraged to be responsible for himself (his discipline/his proper way of life or fate), with the help of himself (his own mind or efforts). That is why everyone as an independent being can be his own friend or enemy. This rendering seems to follow Śaṅkara’s understanding of the text (*ātman* as a phenomenal self). Some other interpretations can be encountered in which *ātman* is understood with a dual meaning, sometimes as a reflexive pronoun, ‘oneself’, ‘himself’, sometimes as ‘the self/Self’, ‘the soul’.⁴ A group of interpreters follow Rāmānuja and – leaving aside the reflexive meaning – they perceive two different selves in the repeated *ātman*, the lower self and the higher

¹ “One should lift up *ātman* by *ātman*, he should not let *ātman* down; for only *ātman* is the friend of *ātman*, only *ātman* is the foe of *ātman* (5). *Ātman* is the friend of that *ātman* by which *ātman* the very *ātman* is conquered; but the very *ātman* of the one who does not possess (or: control) *ātman* would abide in enmity like an enemy (6). Of the one whose *ātman* is conquered, who has come to peace, *ātman* is most highly concentrated (7ab).” As for separation of *param* and *ātmā* (7b), I follow Belvalkar’s edition of the *Mahā-bhārata*’s *Bhīṣma-parvan* (Belvalkar 1947: LXXX-LXXXI) as very attractive. He follows Rāmānuja’s suggestion (cf. also Hill 1973: 118; Emeneau 1968: 272).

² Cf. also Jurewicz 1993: 53.

³ E.g. Tilak 1936: 988; Bolle 1979: 71; van Buitenen 1981: 93. Cf. also Malinar 1996: 215.

⁴ Hartmann 1907: 50; Deussen 1911: 43-44; Goyandka 1969: 279-282; Minor 1982: 209-210; Schreiner 1991: 80; Gotshalk 1993: 24. Also van Buitenen (1981: 93, 165), though in his translation he emphasises the reflexive meaning of *ātman*, adds in his commentary to 6.6: “The text works here with two meanings of the word *ātman*: the reflexive ‘oneself’, i.e. the phenomenal self that needs to be conquered; and the transcendent self.”

Self.⁵ In this understanding of the text, the higher Self (i.e. the very true Self) should be affected (raised up, not let down) by the lower self (the one consisting of body, senses, mind). The lower self can be a friend or an enemy of the higher Self.⁶ There are, finally, some who consistently translate the term *ātman* as “the Self” (sometimes using the small letter, “the self”, but understanding the term as the supreme Self), neither referring to the reflexive meaning nor differentiating between the two selves.⁷

Some interpreters, no matter how they translate (sometimes paraphrase) these stanzas, notice that it was the intention of the author to make use of the ambiguity of the term *ātman* in order to introduce a sort of word-play or figure of speech.⁸ One has to admit that it is difficult to contradict this viewpoint. But there still remains the unanswered question of what meaning of *ātman* can be discerned here or at least what meaning seems to dominate in this word-play. Moreover, whether these ślokaś should be put into the broader context of the utterance or should be understood as a separate composition. And finally, what might have been the author’s intention in using the figure of speech while placing the ślokaś in between the other stanzas of the 6th chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

In his interpretation, M.B. Emeneau (1968: 272-276) drew attention first of all to the formulaic character as the main motive of the composition of BhG. 6.5-6. Based on some parallel places from the *Mahā-bhārata* he demonstrated that some two-thirds of the two stanzas is the formulaic material adapted to a new context. Emeneau recognised the repetition of *ātman* as a figure of the sound of the repetition (*laṭānuprāsa*). In his opinion these stanzas hardly fit in the broader context of the passage, and he argued that it was not the meaning that was the author’s main concern but simply a figure of speech.

A few years earlier, D.H.H. Ingalls (1959) carried out his analysis of the places in the *Gītā* with the collocation of *ātman* quite differently.⁹ Firstly, he referred to Śaṅkara’s commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā* according to which the term *ātman*, occurring so often in the poem, either singly or in compounds (Ingalls counts 133 times), has different meanings in different places and contexts. Secondly, he examined Śaṅkara’s as well as other Sanskrit commentators’ glosses on those ślokaś where the collocation of *ātman* appears (BhG. 2.55, 3.43, 6.5-6, 6.20, 10.15, 13.24, 28). He demonstrated that among the commentators only Śaṅkara in most places (six out of eight) does not split the sense of

⁵ E.g. Hill 1973: 117-118; Radhakrishnan 1956: 189-190. See also the translations of Deutsch, Barnett, Sri Aurobindo, Besant-Das, Gandhi-Desai cited by Gotshalk (1993: 189). In most of these translations the difference between the two selves is marked by using the small and the capital letter. One may suppose that the reading *parama-ātmā* from 7b (and not: *param ātmā*, accepted in this paper, see above) might have left its impress here.

⁶ Another, quite odd splitting of the meaning of the two selves is done by Zaehner (1969: 220-221) who interprets them as “carnal” and “spiritual” self. Here the “spiritual self” (= “own efforts” or “[spiritual] self [-in-itself]”), “conjoined with soul” */buddhi/*) should affect the “carnal self” (= “the combination of soul */buddhi/*, mind, ego, and the senses”). Malinar (1996: 214, n. 5) notices that Zaehner in both his translation and commentary uses actually four meanings of *ātman* (‘carnal self’, ‘own efforts’, ‘spiritual self conjoined with *buddhi*’ and ‘spiritual self-in-itself’).

⁷ E.g. Schroeder 1922: 31; Edgerton 1994.

⁸ Hill 1973: 118, fn. 1; Rao 1978: 173-174; see below (Ingalls 1959 and Emeneau 1968).

⁹ Emeneau does not seem to know this interpretation; he does not refer neither to Ingalls personally nor to his (or similar) analysis.

the term *ātman* where it occurs twice in succession in one verse. Then Ingalls proposed his own interpretation of those ślokaś. Like Emeneau a little later, he recognises the figure of speech (*laṭānuprāśa*) in the eight stanzas of the *Gītā*, but, unlike Emeneau, he lays much greater stress on the context and meaning of the repeated words. Based on analogy to other epic places where *laṭānuprāśa* occurs (he chose the stanzas from the *Rāmāyaṇa*), Ingalls states that in every *Gītā* śloka with *ātmanātmānam* or *ātmānam ātmanā* the sense of both the first and the repeated term (as was suggested by Śaṅkara for most of those ślokaś) should be recognised as the same. Finally, he argues that the only proper meaning of *ātman* in these places is ‘the self’, i.e. the very Self or the supreme Self. His main arguments are based on his interpretation of the way in which *yoga* or the discipline is taught in the *Gītā*. According to Ingalls, *yoga* is presented as being subject to some hierarchy (the hierarchy being: *indriyāṇi* – *manas* – *buddhi* – *ātman*). The Self¹⁰ is the ultimate instrument of ultimate control, the Self-control. There is no higher way to control the Self than by the Self alone and this is the highest goal of the *Bhagavad-gītā* (a goal which can be achieved by different means, “by concentration, by stoicism, by love of God, by knowledge, by various other ways”). And the self-contradictory expressions used in the poem, i.e. the figure of speech, are to serve the purpose of expressing this highest form of *yoga*.

2.

Regarding the two different analyses of the great scholars presented above (Emeneau, Ingalls) which led them to two quite different (if not opposed) conclusions, the author of this paper is inclined more to follow Ingalls’ argument, at least in a few points. Ingalls seems to present reasonable arguments leading to the conclusion that one should not split the sense of *ātman* where it occurs in collocation. I am also of the opinion that the fixed epic formulas were used in the poem with the intention of connecting them with the broader context of the utterance. Although one may be sceptical as to the generalisation in Ingalls’ conclusions,¹¹ as far as the 6th chapter of the *Gītā* is concerned, the text itself seems to corroborate most of his suggestions.

Of course, one should agree with Emeneau that the composer of these stanzas was working within a poetical technique of re-using older formulaic material in a new context. The phrase *ātmanātmānam* or *ātmānam ātmanā*, used so many times in the *Mahā-bhārata*, appears in the epic in quite different contexts.¹² As far as the hemistich 6.5cd is

¹⁰ Ingalls writes the term with a small ‘s’, though he means the immortal self; I suggest usage of the capital letter.

¹¹ Such scepticism about Ingalls’ attitude has been expressed e.g. by Malinar (1996: 214-215).

¹² With the electronic version of the *Mahā-bhārata* it is easy to support Emeneau’s collection of the similar or identical expressions with additional references:

– BhG. 6.5a (= MBh. 6, 28.5a): (*uddhared*) *ātmanātmānam* – cf. MBh. 1, 58.29c, 68.32a; 2, 39.4a; 5, 9.12a, 34.62a, 103.20c; 10, 70.50c; 11, 40.10c; 12, 47.11c, 162.46a, 242.6c, 242.10c, 308.126a, c, 314.1cd; 13, 16.40c, 130.50a, 150.5c; 14, 19.19c, 80.14c;

concerned, its identical form is found in two other *Mahā-bhārata* stanzas, i.e. 5, 34.62cd; 13, 6.27ab, and a very similar one in another stanza, 1, 67.7ab.¹³

Stanza 5, 34.62 appears in a didactic passage in which Vidura, in front of the king Dhṛtarāṣṭra (and asked by him), pronounces his instructions as to the right actions of the king. It appears, namely, in the part where the necessity of one's sense-restraint is emphasised.¹⁴ Adhyāya 6 of the 13th book (being a part of the royal education of the king Yudhiṣṭhira) is dedicated to a discourse about the power of destiny (*daiva*) and human exertion (*puruṣa-kāra*). In the confrontation of the two powers, stanza 27 is put among others which stress the great value of man's personal exertion and state that one's destiny is due to one's own deeds.¹⁵ In the Śakuntalā story of the *Ādi-parvan* (MBh. 1, 62-69), the king Duṣṣanta enchanted by the beauty of Śakuntalā, trying to seduce her, declares his desire to marry her according to the rite of the Gandharvas. He persuades her not to wait for her guardian (the hermit Kaṇva) to give her in matrimony, by saying, among other things, (MBh. 1, 67.7): "Oneself is one's own best friend, oneself is one's only resource. You yourself can lawfully make the gift of yourself."¹⁶ (Transl. van Buitenen 1973: 163-164)

The collocation of *ātman*, i.e. the phrase *ātmanātmānam* or *ātmānam ātmanā*, apart from the 6th chapter occurs five more times in the *Gītā* and has been adapted to a few different contexts. Stanza 2.55 occurs in the context of disciplining oneself. The one who abandons desires coming from the mind and is contented in *ātman* by *ātman* is called one whose wisdom (*prajñā*) is steady.¹⁷ Stanzas 3.42-43, again, conclude a passage on the self-discipline of the person active in this world. The discipline is to result in freeing

– the phrase *ātmānam ātmanā* – cf. MBh. 1, 94.38d, 146.28b, 166.19b, 167.10b; 3, 8.15b, 42.4b, 55.10b, 61.53d, 68.8c, 72.25c, 106.5e, 126.8b, 149.1d, 12d, 168.22b, 258.13d, 262.27b; 4, 2.8a, 2.25d; 5, 131.32b, 180.36b; 6, 61.65b; 7, 53.55b, 163.39b; 8, 6.28d, 43.49b; 10, 5.8b; 11, 1.36d, 2.2b; 12, 7.4c, 8.36d, 10.21b, 11.9d, 54.30b, 69.14b, 96.15c, 120.13f, 122.24c, 136.171d, 151.10d, 196.5b, 197.9d, 221.16d, 232.18d, 238.12b, 242.10b, 289.49b, 290.74d, 291.20b, 302.2d, 313.28d, 314.1d, 315.29b, 335.73d;

– BhG. 6.5cd = MBh. 5, 34.62cd; 13, 6.27ab; cf. 1, 67.7 (BhG. 6.5c – cf. MBh. 12, 30.6a);

– *ātmā hy evātmano* – MBh. 12, 306.100.

¹³ Emeneau (1968: 272-276) refers to MBh. 5, 34.62 and 1, 67.7. Similarly Malinar (1996: 215).

¹⁴ MBh. 5, 34.61-62:

*arthānām tīvaro yaḥ syād indriyāṇām antīśvaraḥ/
indriyāṇām anaiśvaryaḥ aiśvaryaḥ bhraśyate hi saḥ//
ātmanātmānam anvicchen mano-buddhīndriyair yataiḥ/
ātmaiva hy ātmano bandhur ātmaiva ripur ātmanaḥ//*

("He who owns riches but is owned by his senses is toppled from his estate by his triumphant senses. One oneself should search for the self, with mind, spirit, and senses subdued, for the self is one's friend and the self is one's foe." Transl. van Buitenen 1978: 264.)

Emeneau (1968: 275) notices that this stanza – in comparison to our *Gītā* passage – is not so tightly composed either in itself or within its context, and "in consequence may be considered to be in some sense secondary to the *Gītā* passage".

¹⁵ Mbh. 13, 6.27:

*ātmaiva hy ātmano bandhur ātmaiva ripur ātmanaḥ/
ātmaiva cātmanaḥ śakṣī kṛtasyāpy akṛtasya ca//*

("The self is one's friend and the self is one's foe, as also the self is witness of one's good and evil deeds.")

¹⁶ *ātmano bandhur ātmaiva gatir ātmaiva cātmanaḥ/
ātmanaivātmano dānaiḥ kartum arhasi dharmataḥ//*

¹⁷ *prajāhāti yadā kāmān sarvān pārtha mano-gatān/
ātmany evātmanā tuṣṭaḥ sthita-prajñas tadocyate//*

oneself from desire (*kāma*).¹⁸ The hierarchy presented here: *indriyāṇi*, *manas*, *buddhi*, *saḥ* [= *ātman*] (similarly to 6.24-25, where *ātman* is on the top of the hierarchy, cf. below) seems to suggest that in the phrase *ātmānam ātmanā* one may be justified in discerning the Self. The collocation of *ātman* in 10.15 refers to Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme God who – as Arjuna reports – knows Himself through Himself alone.¹⁹ 13.24ab seems to be a summary of the *dhyāna-yoga* path presented in the 6th chapter (*dhyānenātmani paśyanti kecid ātmānam ātmanā*), while *pādas* cd (*anye sām̐khyena yogena karma-yogena cāpare*) can be referred to the speculations on the *sām̐khyā-yoga* and *karma-yoga* concepts in the poem, presented especially throughout chapters 2-6. Stanza 13.28, in turn, returns to the concept of *śamatvā* (cf. esp. 6.29, 32) and uses the phrase *ātmanātmānam* in the context of presenting the God, *īśvara*, as the same everywhere.²⁰

What seems to result from the above cited places is that using the formulaic material does not have to determine the meaning, but it gives some possibilities of adaptation of an ambiguous phrase to the required context. Moreover, the problem of the relative chronology of the cited places cannot be a matter of foregone conclusion. Two stanzas of the *Mahā-bhārata* outside the *Bhagavad-gītā* with a composition similar or the same as BhG. 6.5cd (= MBh. 6, 28.5cd) come from books of the epic of a late origin (1 – *Ādi-parvan*, 13 – *Anuśāsana-parvan*), one stanza (MBh. 5, 34.62) is so loosely connected with the context of the utterance that one can assume its secondary character to the neighbouring stanzas. *Bhagavad-gītā* itself as a whole poem shows complexity in its structure, one may recognise here earlier and later parts or textual layers, and according to this point of view stanzas with the repeated term *ātman* belong to different textual layers.²¹ What seems to be most reasonable is that we should most of all analyse the meaning of stanzas 6.5-6 within the context of the 6th chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā*.²²

An interesting analysis of the term *ātman* in chapter 6 proposed by Joanna Jurewicz (1993: 59), presented in Polish, must be mentioned here. Jurewicz refers the *Gītā*'s concept of *ātman* to the monistic concept coming from the early Upaniṣads according to which the possible ambiguity of the term *ātman* is in fact apparent. She also stresses the reflexive character of yoga in which *ātman* appears to be the real Subject who acts on Himself (i.e. on *ātman* – the Object) and, as a result, manifests Himself as a *yogin*. In

¹⁸ *indriyāṇi parāṇy āhur indriyebhyaḥ paraṁ manaḥ/
manasas tu parā buddhir yo buddheḥ paratas tu saḥ/
evam buddheḥ paraṁ buddhvā saṁstabhyātmānam ātmanā/
jahi śatruṁ mahā-bāho kāma-rūpaṁ dur-āsadam//*

¹⁹ *svayam evātmanātmānam vettha tvam puruṣottama/
bhūta-bhāvana bhūteśa deva-deva jagat-pate//*

²⁰ *samaṁ paśyan hi sarvatra samavasthitaṁ īśvaram/
na hinasty ātmanātmānam tato yāti parāṁ gatim//*

²¹ Such is the viewpoint of the author of this paper on the origin and the composition of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, based in a great part on the methodology and philological analyses proposed by M. Ježić (cf. Ježić 1979; 1986).

²² Prof. G. Bailey (in a verbal communication) drew my attention to the military vocabulary of BhG. 6.5-6. Depending on one's attitude, *ātman* may appear as his friend (*bandhu*) or enemy (*ripu*, *śatru*). These expressions probably refer to the epic context of the poem. They are put in the mouth of Kṛṣṇa who, in the epic dimension, is trying to convince Arjuna to come to fight, teaching him why and how he should do it.

this concept the disciplined or conquered *ātman* reflects the character of the description of a liberated one in a most complete way. As there is only one Self (*ātman* identified with *brahman*) his activity must be directed towards himself.²³ The author of this paper agrees with Jurewicz's observations as far as this aspect of his analysis of BhG. 6.5-6 is concerned.

It seems useful for the purpose of the following remarks to make a few suggestions concerning the composition of chapter 6. First of all, based on some previous research into the relative history of the *Gītā*'s text, it seems very reasonable to presuppose that stanzas 6.10-15, 30-31 and 47 may be identified as being of later origin than the rest of this chapter.²⁴ Such textual differentiation follows, most of all, a noticeable difference in depicting the Supreme, *summum bonum*. On the one hand, it is the concept of *ātman-brahman* to which Kṛṣṇa refers in the 3rd person (in the central part, 18-29, 32); on the other hand, it is the personal God addressed by Kṛṣṇa in the 1st person (14-15, 30-31, 47).²⁵ There is textual evidence enabling one to show that passages 6.10-15, 30-31, 47 have been inserted into the earlier text of the 6th chapter, though they have been adapted in a skilful way to the neighbouring passages by means of the so-called duplicating repetitions with the intention of reinterpreting the original content of the 6th chapter.²⁶ They subordinate the concept of *yoga* with its ultimate achievement (supreme bliss as a result of unifying the mind with *ātman*, the Self, and thus of contact with *brahman*, the Absolute) to the concept of *bhakti* with Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme God.²⁷

What is then comprised in chapter 6 without the *bhakti* segment can be provisionally divided into three parts. Stanzas 1-9 and 16-17 create a sort of introduction into the central part, a presentation of the proper attitude of the *yogin* who is to follow the path of meditation. In the central part (18-28, 29, 32, 33-36) the concept of *yoga*, or the discipline in its meditative aspect is presented as mental unification with the supreme Self, as well as the results of achieving perfection in *yoga*. The final part of the chapter (37-46) presents an alternative way for honest and faithful people who are, however, unable to achieve perfection in *yoga* within the space of this lifetime.

The beginning śloka (1-4) link the 6th chapter with the previous parts of the *Gītā* and Kṛṣṇa's earlier teaching devoted to *karma-yoga*, the discipline of action. The ambiguous

²³ Consequently, Jurewicz emphasises the possibility of rendering the word *ātman* in Polish, in each case, as a reflexive pronoun, though marked with a capital letter (Polish: "Sie", "Oneself", declined according to the grammatical case).

²⁴ Cf. Ježić 1986; Malinar 1996: 222-226; Szczurek 2005: 191-192, 207, 213-216.

²⁵ Different attitudes towards *yoga* in passages 1-9 and 16-28, on the one hand, and, on the other, in 10-15; cf. below, are also apparent.

²⁶ I have dealt with this issue in a separate publication (Szczurek 2005), referring mainly to Ježić's (1979; 1986) philological methodology.

²⁷ The same aim accompanies the other *bhakti* interpolations and additions within chapters 1-6 and 13-18. Together with most of the central part of the poem, i.e. chapters 7-12, the interpolations create the so-called *bhakti* layer, most probably the youngest textual layer of the poem, though the most important from the point of view of the whole composition (cf. Ježić 1986; Szczurek 2005).

stanzas 5-6 emphasise the discipline of *ātman* (whatever the term may mean). And in 7-9 the sameness of outlook upon the world and indifference to the outer world, towards all conditions of human life and interpersonal relations are stressed. In 16-17 Kṛṣṇa, in agreement with his words on *śamatvā*, emphasises moderation, avoidance of extremes (indulgence, on the one hand, and ascetism on the other), as constituting the basis for *yoga* practice. Then, in the central part (18-28), a further description of *yoga*, the discipline, is presented. I must now refer to Ingalls' analysis (1959: 109) and admit that, according to his suggestions, in the central part of the 6th chapter *yoga* is depicted as subject to some hierarchy. This hierarchy is presented *expressis verbis* in 24-25, both ślokaś creating something like a summary of the speculations on the *dhyāna-yoga* "technique" in this chapter:

*saṁkalpa-prabhavān kāmāṁś tyaktvā sarvān aśeṣataḥ/
manasaivendriya-grāmaṁ viniyamya samantataḥ//
śanaiḥ śanair uparamed buddhyā dhṛti-grhītayā/
ātma-saṁsthāṁ manasḥ kṛtvā na kiṁcid api cintayet//*

One should abandon all the desires (*kāma*) originating in intentional activity (*saṁkalpa*)²⁸ as well as restrain one's senses (*indriya-grāma*; cf. 6.4, 8) with the mind (*manas*) as an instrument.²⁹ The mind should then be fixed on the Self (*ātman*) with the help of *buddhi* (intellect, intuitive insight; cf. 21). Thus we have here a ladder construction: (*saṁkalpa-kāma*-) *indriyāṇi*, *manas*, *buddhi*, *ātman*.³⁰ *Ātman* is on the top of this construction. The idea of fixing one's mind on the true, immortal, transcendent Self, expressed here a few times (18-20, 24-26, 35-36), must be acknowledged as the essence of meditation or of all *yoga* practices. A *yogin* (or *yukta*), absorbing his mind with the Self, gradually silencing in himself all aspects of life activity and rational thinking (25), achieves the supreme endless bliss of contact with *brahman*, the Absolute (27: *sukham uttamam*, *brahma-bhūta*; 28: *brahma-saṁsparśa*, *atyantam sukham*). As a result, he is able to perceive the individual Self as the same in all beings and all circumstances (29, 32). This makes him the perfect *yogin* (32d: *sa yogī paramo mataḥ*).

²⁸ Cf. 6.18c (*niḥsṛghaḥ sarva-kāmebhyo*). In the earlier parts of the poem this idea is expressed by means of different terminology; while following the path of *karma-yoga* one is instructed to abandon the fruits of action, *karma-phala* (2.47-48; 4.20; 5.12, 14; cf. also 3.7, 19, 25: *asaktaḥ*; 4.12: *nirāśis*; 5.10: *saṅgam tyaktvā*). In stanzas 6.1-4 referring to the earlier presented concept of *karma-yoga* and "uniting" it with the idea of meditation both terms, *karma-phala* and *saṁkalpa* occur.

²⁹ About restraining the senses with the mind, see earlier, 3.6-7.

³⁰ Cf. the very similar hierarchy in 3.42-43.

On both sides of the central part creating the concept of *yoga* in the 6th chapter one encounters something like frames of this composition:

19cd: [<i>sopamā smṛta</i>]	28ab:
yogino <i>yata-cittasya</i>	yuñjann <i>evam sadātmānaṁ</i>
yuñjato yogam ātmanah//	yogī (...)/ ³¹

In these and other stanzas (7, 20, 36) the idea of conquered/controlled/disciplined *ātman* has been expressed, in the central part becoming the ultimate condition on the path towards perfection in meditation. And the only instrument for affecting the Self – superior to *manas* and *buddhi* – is the Self alone which stanza 6.20 speaks about:

6.20-21:
*yatroparamate cittam niruddham yoga-sevayā/
 yatra caivātmanātmānaṁ paśyann ātmani tuṣyatil/
 sukham ātyantikam yat tad buddhi-grāhyam atīndriyam/
 veti yatra na caivāyam sthitaś calati tattvatah//*³²

“The ultimate discipline, the ultimate control is Self-control” – as Ingalls suggests (1959: 109). In 6.20 the Self itself appears to be the subject, object and aim of *yoga*.³³

When we then put stanzas 6.5-6 into the context of the whole chapter, it becomes even more evident that it is not impossible to connect the figure of speech, based on the repetition of *ātman*, with the concept of *yoga* based on absorption of mind in the Self and the ultimate discipline of the Self, which is presented a little later. Stanzas 5-6 appear as intentionally anticipating what a bit later is praised as the highest point of all the *yoga* efforts. They anticipate the idea of the ontological unity of the Self-Subject with the Self-Object, fully expressed in the central part of the text.³⁴

It seems that this supposition of quite a close relation between 6.5-6 and the central stanzas on meditation may be supported by drawing attention to the fact that, generally speaking, several cross-references are apparent between the beginning part (esp. 1-9) and the central part of the 6th *adhyāya*. The concept of renunciation of *saṁkalpa* (‘purpose, intention [in activity], volition, desires’) presented in the context of the selfless activity or *karma-yoga* (2, 4), reappears in the *dhyāna-yoga* context (24). The idea of the *yogin*’s

³¹ The bhakti interpolation 6.10-15 duplicates these frames:

10ab:	15ab:
yogī yuñjīta <i>satatam</i>	yuñjann <i>evam sadātmānaṁ</i>
ātmānaṁ (...)	yogī (...)

³² “When thought comes to rest restrained by *yoga* practice, and when one beholding the Self by the Self is content in the Self (20), one knows that endless bliss which is to be grasped by the intellect and transcends the senses, and, when established there, one does not move away from the truth (21).”

³³ Cf. also Jurewicz 1993: 58.

³⁴ Cf. Jurewicz’s remarks on the reflexive character of *yoga* (in chapter 6) in which *ātman* is both the Subject and the Object, the Subduing and the Subdued One (1993: 56).

inner calmness is expressed both in 3 and then in 27. The idea of *samatvā* or sameness in the *yogin*'s outlook upon the world in opposite living circumstances and different human relationships (7-9) is continued and evolves as the perfection of *yoga*, i.e. perceiving *ātman* as the same (*sama*) in every living being and in opposite conditions (29, 32). The epithet *yukta* from 8 characterising a *yogin* with the same outlook upon the world, reappears in 17 and 18 (in the context of the *yogin*'s moderate attitude) and in 29 as *yoga-yuktātmā*, in the metaphysical context, as an epithet of the perfect *yogin*. Similarly, the concept of the conquered or disciplined *ātman* is first expressed in 6ab and 7ab among the ślokas emphasising the proper attitude of the *yogin* necessary to practice meditation, and then, in the strict meditative context, in 19 (comparison of the *yogin* concentrated in the discipline of *ātman* to a lamp not flickering in a windless place) and in 28.³⁵ Finally, the same figure of speech, *ātmanātmānaṁ*, appears both in 5 and 20.³⁶

The ambiguity of the repeated term *ātman* in 6.5-6 seems to be intentional and implied in the broader context of the whole consideration on meditation in the 6th chapter (or its original form). Looking at these ślokas from the viewpoint of the central part where the ultimate discipline is presented as Self-discipline, one is able to justify the meaning that it is the very Self that should be raised up by the Self, and according to whether one is successful or not in this ultimate form of discipline, the very Self becomes a friend or an enemy to Himself. And even if one postulates referring *ātman* to one's own bodily-mental complexity and perceives subordination of this complexity (or just himself) to be a basic step on the *yoga* path, one should be conscious of the fact that this path is crowned at the end by the realisation of the metaphysical Self (and this means contact with *brahman* and the supreme bliss).³⁷ Regardless of the ambiguity of formulas, *yoga*

³⁵ 6.28:

*yuñjann evaṁ sadātmānaṁ yogī vigata-kalmaṣaḥ/
sukhena brahma-saṁsparśam atyantam sukham aśnute//*

Cf. above, p. 222. And moreover 6.36:

*asaṁyātātmanā yogo duṣprāpa iti me matiḥ/
vaśyātmanā tu yatata śakyo'vāptum upāyataḥ//*

³⁶ One cannot exclude the possibility that 6.5-6 are an interpolation inserted in the text later, composed on the basis of the formulaic material and placed among the original stanzas in order to emphasise the meaning of the Self-discipline (according to the interpretation proposed in this paper, see above).

BhG. 6.4cd:

sarva-saṁkalpa-saṁnyāsī yogārūḍhas tadocyate//

5ab: *uddhared ātmanātmānaṁ nātmanam avasādayet/*

6ab: *bandhur ātmātmanas tasya yenaṁmaivātmanā jitaḥ/*

7ab: *jitātmanah praśāntasya param ātmā samāhitaḥ/*

20cd: *yatra caivātmanātmānaṁ paśyann ātmani tuṣyati//*

If stanzas 5-6 were inserted later, one can hypothetically discern some formal adaptation of them to the genuine stanzas by means of duplicating references or duplication repetitions (cf. Ježić 1979; 1986 for the methodology based on repetitions). The verbal form *uddhared* ('one should lift up') may refer back to the forms derived from the verb *ruh-* ('to climb') from 3-4, esp. to *yogārūḍha* ('one who has climbed up to discipline'; cf. Emeneau 1968: 273-274). The phrase *ātmā (...)* *ātmanā jitaḥ* from 6b might be a duplication repetition of *jitātmanah* from 7a, and the figure of speech in 5-6 might be inspired by the similar figure in 20.

³⁷ Cf. also Jurewicz 1993: 58.

or the discipline is presented in the 6th chapter as leading from *ātman* through *ātman* to *ātman*, and thus to *brahman*.

3.

The form of *dhyāna-yoga* outlined in the *Gītā*'s 6th chapter may be generally characterised, using J. Bronkhorst's terminology, as belonging to the "main stream meditation".³⁸ This term, however, comprises at least a few different currents and is so general and broad that one must draw attention to the fact that, firstly, the *Gītā* represents only one current of this main tradition of meditation and, secondly, that the form of the discipline and meditation proposed in the poem has some individual features.

Referring to a few places from the early *Upaniṣads*, one finds elements similar to those from our *Gītā* passage.³⁹ Thus, for example, *Chāndogya-upaniṣad* 8.15 mentions concentration of the senses upon the Self among the conditions leading to attainment of the world of brahman (*ātmani sarvendriyāṇi sampratiṣṭhāpya (...) brahma-lokam abhisampadyate* – "he who concentrates all his senses in the self (...) reaches the Brahma-world"; transl. Radhakrishnan 1953: 511-512). *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka-upaniṣad* 4.4.23 presents the result of concentration as discernment of *ātman* in *ātman* as well as everywhere (*tasmād evaṁvic chānto dānta uparatas titikṣuḥ samāhito bhūtvātmāny evātmānam paśyati sarvam ātmānam paśyati* – "Therefore he who knows it as such, having become calm, self controlled, withdrawn, patient and collected, sees the Self in his own self, sees all in the Self." Transl. Radhakrishnan 1953: 280). In the *Kaṭha-upaniṣad* (3.6 [I 3.6], 6.10-11 [II 3.10-11]; probably for the first time among the *Upaniṣads*) some details about meditation, such as subduing the senses, restraining the mind and the intellect are presented.⁴⁰

Among descriptions of *yoga* and meditation appearing in the didactic parts of the *Mahā-bhārata* one may find passages resembling the presentation of the discipline from the *Gītā*'s chapter 6. In order to demonstrate this resemblance I refer here to two passages on *yoga*-activity (*yoga-kṛtya*) from the *Śānti-parvan*.⁴¹

MBh. 12, 232. 2, 12-18:

*yoga-kṛtyam tu te kṛtsnam vartayiṣyāmi tac chṛṇu
ekatvaṁ buddhi-manasor indriyāṇām ca sarvaśaḥ
ātmano dhyāyinas tāta jñānam etad anuttamam*||2||
(...)

³⁸ Cf. Bronkhorst 2000: esp. 53, 67, 112. Bronkhorst defines under the common name of "main stream meditation" different currents coming mainly from Jaina and Hindu (or Brahminic) traditions of meditation, as opposed to what he identifies as the original Buddhist form of meditation.

³⁹ Bronkhorst (2000: 46-47, 112) refers to these *Upaniṣadic* places in different contexts.

⁴⁰ Moreover, the same *Upaniṣad* (Kath. 3.10 [I 3.10]) presents a very similar hierarchy of the discipline to that presented in BhG. 6.24-25 (cf. BhG. 3.42).

⁴¹ Both passages are referred to by Bronkhorst (2000: 46, 60-61).

*samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu labdhālabdhena vartayan/
dhuta-pāpmā tu tejasvī laghv-āhāro jītenḍriyaḥ/
kāma-krodhau vaśe kṛtvā ninīṣed brahmaṇaḥ padam//12//
manasaś cendriyāṇām ca kṛtvaikāgryam samāhitah/
prāḡ rātrāpara-rātreṣu dhārayen mana ātmanā//13//
jantoḥ pañcendriasyāśya yad ekaṁ chidram indriyam/
tato 'sya sravati prajñā dṛteḥ pādād ivodakam//14//
manas tu pūrvam ādadyāt kumīnān iva matsyahā/
tataḥ śrotram tataś cakṣur jihvām ghrāṇam ca yogavit//15//
tata etāni saṁyamya manasi sthāpayed yatīḥ/
tathaivāpohya saṁkalpān mano hy ātmani dhārayet//16//
pañca jñānena saṁdhāya manasi sthāpayed yatīḥ/
yadaitāny avatiṣṭhante manaḥ-śaṣṭhāni cātmani/
prasīdanti ca saṁsthāya tadā brahma prakāśate//17//
vidhūma iva dīptārcir āditya iva dīptimān/
vaidyuto 'gnir ivākāśe paśyaty ātmānam ātmanā/
sarvaṁ ca tatra sarvatra vyāpakatvāc ca dṛśyate//18//⁴²*

MBh. 12, 294. 6cd, 13-20:

*yoga-kṛtyam mahā-rāja prthag eva śṛṇuṣva me//6cd//
(...)
vimuktaḥ sarva-saṅgebhyo laghv-āhāro jītenḍriyaḥ
pūrva-rātre pare caiva dhārayeta mano 'tmani//13//
sthīr-kṛtyendriya-grāmaṁ manasa mithileśvara
mano buddhyā sthīram kṛtvā pāśāṇa iva nīścalaḥ//14//
sthāṇuvac cāpy akampaḥ syād girivac cāpi nīścalaḥ/
budhā vidhi-vidhānājñās tadā yuktaṁ pracakṣate//15//
na śṛṇoti na cāghrāti na rasyati na paśyati/*

⁴² "I will explain to you the whole activity of *Yoga*, listen to it. The unity of intellect (*buddhi*) and mind (*manas*), of all the senses (*indriyāṇi*), and of the self (*ātman*) absorbed in meditation, this is, my dear, the highest knowledge (2). Acting the same (*sama*) way toward all beings, with [things] obtained or not obtained, having shaken off sin, full of fire, taking little food (*laghv-āhāra*), having conquered the senses (*jītenḍriya*), having brought desire and anger under control, he should wish to bring [himself] to the place of Brahman (12). Having brought about one-pointedness of his mind (*manas*) and senses (*indriyāṇi*), concentrated, he should fix his mind (*manas*) with his self (*ātman*) in the first and last parts of the night (13). If one sense leaks of this man possessed of the five senses, then his insight flows away, like water from the bottom of a bag (14). But he should first take hold of his mind, just as a killer of fish [first takes hold of] small fish; then the knower of *Yoga* [should take hold of] his ear, then his eye, tongue and nose (15). Then, holding these together, the ascetic should place them in his mind; removing in the same way his volitions (*saṁkalpa*), he should fix his mind (*manas*) in his self (*ātman*) (16). Bringing the five [senses] together with his knowledge, the ascetic should place them in his mind; and when these [five senses] with the mind as sixth stay in the self, and come to rest staying together, then Brahman shines forth (17). Like a shining flame without smoke, like the bright sun, like the fire of lightning in the sky, he sees the self (*ātmānam*) with the self (*ātmanā*); and everything is seen there and everywhere on account of pervasion [of the self] (18)." (Stanzas 12-18d transl. by Bronkhorst 2000: 60-61)

sparśaṁ vijānāti na saṅkalpayate manaḥ//16//
na cābhimanyate kiṁ cin na ca budhyati kāṣṭhavat/
tadā prakṛtim āpannam yuktam āhur manīṣiṇaḥ//17//
nivāte ca yathā dīpyan dīpas tadvat sa dṛśyate/
nirīṅgaś cācalaś cordhvaṁ na tiryag-gatim āpnuyāt//18//
tadā tam anupaśyeta yasmīn dṛṣṭe tu kathyate/
hṛdayastho 'ntarātmēti jñeyo jñas tāta mad-vidhaiḥ//19
vidhūma iva saptārcir āditya iva raśmīmān/
vaidyuto 'gnir ivākāśe dṛśyate 'tmā tathātmani//20//⁴³

Yoga is presented in the cited passages of the *Mahā-bhārata* as principally based on the same elements as in our *Gītā* passage (6.18-28, 29, 32, 33-36), retaining the same hierarchy (*indriyāṇi*, *manas*, *buddhi*, *ātman*; BhG. 6.24-25 [= MBh. 6, 28.24-25] – MBh. 12, 232.2, 13, 15-17; 12, 294.13-14). The results of the ultimate discipline or perfection in meditation are presented as both contact with *brahman*, the Absolute (BhG. 6.27-28 – MBh. 12, 232.12, 17), and perceiving *ātman* by or in *ātman*, which is expressed by the figure of speech (BhG. 6.20 – MBh. 12, 232.18c; 12, 294.20d).⁴⁴ In the first *Mahā-bhārata* passage we find the characterisation of *yogin* as the same (*sama*) towards all being, which results in perfection of the discipline, as perceiving *ātman* (as the same) everywhere (BhG. 6.7-9 : 29, 32 – MBh. 12, 232.12ab : 18; cf. also MBh. 12, 232.27cd-31). In the second passage a similar simile of the motionless *yogin* to a lamp not flickering in a windless place appears (BhG. 6.19 – MBh. 12, 294.18).⁴⁵ The most important feature of the common tradition the cited places refer to is the conviction that reaching perfection

⁴³ "Listen to me, great king, [as I explain to you] the *Yoga*-activity separately (6cd). Freed from all attachments, taking little food (*laghv-āhāra*), having conquered the senses (*jīteṇdriya*), he should fix his mind (*manas*) on his self (*ātman*) in the first and last part of the night (13). Having made his senses (*indriya-grāma*) firm with his mind (*manas*), oh lord of Mithilā, and having made his mind (*manas*) firm with his intellect (*buddhi*), he is motionless like a stone (14). He should be without trembling like a pillar, and motionless like a mountain; the wise who know to follow the precepts then call him 'one engaged in *Yoga*' (*yukta*) (15). He neither hears nor smells nor tastes nor sees; he notices no touch, nor does [his] mind form conceptions (16). Like a piece of wood, he does not desire anything, nor does he notice [anything]. When he has reached the Original Nature (*prakṛti*), then sages call him 'engaged in *Yoga*' (*yukta*) (17). And he looks like a lamp shining in a place without wind; not flickering and motionless it will not move upward or sideward (18). Then he should perceive Him, Who – when perceived – is told by people like me, my dear, to be the knower who is to be known as being in the heart, the inner self (*antarātmā*) (19). Like the seven-flamed fire without smoke, like the radiant sun, like the fire of lightning in the sky, the self (*ātmā*) is seen in the self (*ātmani*) (20)." (Stanzas 13-18 transl. by Bronkhorst 2000: 46)

⁴⁴ Cf. also MBh. 12, 232.33:

ajam purānam ajaram sanātanam yad indriyair upalabhate naro 'calaḥ/
aṇor aṇīyo mahato mahattaram tadātmanā paśyati yukta ātmavān//

12, 294. 25cd: *evam paśyaṁ prapaśyanti ātmānaṁ ajaram param//*

⁴⁵ Cf. also the same epithets of *yogin*, *yukta* (BhG. 6.8c, 18d – MBh. 12, 294.15d, 17d) and [*vi-*] *jīteṇdriya* (BhG. 6.8b – MBh. 12, 232.12d; 294.13b), and BhG. 6.16ab, 17a (*yuktāhāra-*) – MBh. 12, 232.12d; 294.13b (*laghv-āhāra*).

in meditation and thus liberation, consists in absorption of bodily, but most of all mental activities in the Supreme Self, *ātman*, as well as insight into the nature of the Self.⁴⁶

One has to emphasise the individual character of the *Bhagavad-gītā* in the presentation of the concept of *yoga*. The stress here is laid on the mental aspect of the discipline, the physical aspect is mostly omitted, though so broadly presented in other sources representing other currents of the so-called main stream meditation.⁴⁷ There is no trace of the breath control description,⁴⁸ and apart from the bhakti interpolation 6.10-15 there is no mention of the body posture of the disciplined one.⁴⁹ Moreover, stanzas 1-9 and 16-17 enable us to perceive this part of the *Gītā* as a composition additionally conveying some polemical elements.

4.

It seems that the *Bhagavad-gītā*, commonly perceived as an eclectic composition, may also be analysed as a polemical one. If this hypothesis is followed, the confrontation of some ideas and thoughts presented by the *Gītā* with those of heterodox currents, like Jainism and early Buddhism, appears particularly rewarding. In the following part of the paper I would like to look at chapter 6 of the poem, trying to make a few remarks on its polemical meaning. This may also throw some light on the question of stanzas 6.5-6 and their role in the possible polemical dispute.

The beginning stanzas of the 6th chapter (1-4) refer to one of the most important concepts of the *Gītā*, i.e. to *karma-yoga*, which was presented in detail in the earlier parts of the poem.⁵⁰ The stanzas of chapter 6 do not develop the earlier displayed teaching, but simply repeat or duplicate it, taking for granted what was the effect of speculations in the

⁴⁶ As already suggested, I assume that in the interpolated stanzas, BhG. 6.10-15, 30-31, 47, creating the bhakti segment in this chapter, the concept of liberation (or the supreme bliss) – originally based on reaching *ātman-brahman* – is reinterpreted and subordinated to the concept of Kṛṣṇa's divinity.

⁴⁷ See Bronkhorst 2000: 1-22, 26-38, 45-53, 56-58.

⁴⁸ Cf. BhG. 4.27, 29-30.

⁴⁹ Stanzas 6.10-15 (a bhakti interpolation, cf. above, p. 220) mention some ascetic practices of *yoga*. A *yogin* is supposed to stay in seclusion, get rid of all desires and possessions (10). He should sit in a place suitable for meditation after he has prepared a proper seat (11). His mind is to be focused on a single object (*ekāgra*), controlling his senses and thoughts he is to practice *yoga* to purify himself (12). His body, head and neck should be straightened in one line and his gaze should be placed on the tip of his nose (13). He should practice *yoga* with a quitted self, free of fear, faithful to vows of *brahma-cārin*, subduing his mind (14). Then, in stanzas 16-17 Kṛṣṇa returns to his teaching given before stanza 10, referring to the concept of *sāmya* (7-9).

⁵⁰ See esp. BhG. 2.47-48; 3.7-8, 19, 25, 28; 4.20, 21, 41; 5. 7-10, 12. The concept of *karma-yoga* is connected in the poem with *jñāna-yoga*, the discipline of knowledge (cf. BhG. 2.39; 3.3; 4.41; 5.4-5). The true liberating knowledge consists most of all in the assumption that it is not the Self that is engaged in action, but the *guṇas* of the Original Nature (*prakṛti*; cf. BhG. 3.4-6, 27-29). The transcendental Self is above and independent of Nature (BhG. 2.11-30; 3.42-43; 5.13-15). Knowing this there is no necessity to abandon activity.

stanzas from the previous chapters. In ślokaś 6.1-2⁵¹, both thematic and verbal reference particularly to speculations from the 5th chapter on *yoga* and *sāṃkhyā/saṃnyāsa* (5.1-6, 10ab, 12ab) are apparent. In Kṛṣṇa's teachings directed to Arjuna, prince and kṣatriya, before the great battle, speculations are brought out that aim at redefinition of the term and concept of *saṃnyāsa*, 'renunciation'. According to the poem, true renunciation is not to be based on giving up action, abandoning activity in this world, but on giving up the fruits of deeds or the effects (*karma-phala*, *saṃkalpa*) of deeds undertaken and accomplished, especially those connected with one's own duty. As a consequence of the paradoxical seeming speculation one comes to the conclusion that renunciation (*saṃnyāsa*) and activity (*yoga*, *karma-yoga*) are not two different paths, but only two aspects of one and the same liberating path. The concept of renunciation as presented here has a clearly polemical character towards the forms of renunciation which the author (or authors) of the poem had to witness. Characterising *saṃnyāsin* as one who is not *niragni* ('without fire', i.e. one not keeping a consecrated/sacrificial fire) nor *akriya* ('without ritual action', i.e. one who does not perform sacred rites) in 6.1, points to the acceptance of the Brahminic ritual observances. The polemics might have been directed towards the inner contest represented by some extremists, the ones idealising the theology of renunciation, but first of all heterodox religious currents have to be taken into consideration here, the ones that regarded renunciation of the Brahminic world as a basic necessary step on the path towards inner perfection and liberation. *Bhagavad-gītā* presents an alternative proposition towards early Buddhism and Jainism.⁵² The *karma-yoga* concept with the *Gītā*'s way of renunciation creates a starting point from which the path of the discipline or meditation evolves, which is the main subject of the 6th chapter.

In stanzas 6.7-9 and 16-17 some other features the *yogin*'s activity in meditation should be based on are presented. These are, firstly, the same attitude (*sama*) towards all conditions of human life (such as cold and heat, pleasure and pain, honour and dishonour, 7), towards all material things (no matter whether it is clod, stone or gold, 8) and interpersonal relations (*yogin* should apply equal judgment to friends, companions, enemies, the indifferent, the neutral, the hateful and the related, saints and sinners, 9).⁵³ Secondly, moderation, avoidance of extremes (indulgence, on the one hand, and ascetism

⁵¹ 6.1-2:

*anāśritaḥ karma-phalaṃ kāryaṃ karma karoti yaḥ/
sa saṃnyāstī ca yogī ca na niragnir na cākriyaḥ//
yaṃ saṃnyāsaṃ iti prāhur yogaṃ taṃ viddhi pāṇḍava/
na hy asaṃnyasta-saṃkalpo yogī bhavati kaścana//*

The term *karma-phala* ('fruit of action') repeated in 6.1 has been replaced by the introduced term *saṃkalpa*. Then in 6.3-4 the term *yogārūḍha* is introduced.

⁵² Van Buitenen (1981: 165) commenting upon the terms *niragni* and *akriya* also sees in 6.1 allusion to "e.g., the Buddhist and other unorthodox who rejected the Vedic ritual".

⁵³ See earlier in the *Gītā*, 2.14-15, 38, 2.48, 4.22, 5.18.

on the other) is emphasised in such aspects as taking food, sleeping and keeping awake, recreation, movement and activity (16-17).⁵⁴

Comparing the attitude of *yogin* or *yukta* from this first part of chapter 6 with the monk's attitude recommended in the Jaina accounts, which Bronkhorst presents in his book on *The Two Traditions of Meditation in Ancient India* (2000: 31-44), one may come to the conclusion that, in this part of the text, the *Gītā*'s way of discipline can be regarded as an alternative particularly to the Jaina way.

The *Āyāraṃga-sutta* (1.8(7).7.2-8/228-53) is supposed to give the earliest Jaina description of the path leading to liberation.⁵⁵ The text presents the most important steps on this path which are: gradual reduction of food until its final complete reduction, rejection of all bodily activity and movement, total *ahimsā*, bearing any physical pain and discomfort.⁵⁶ The passage, as Bronkhorst (2000: 35) points out, is actually "a description of a voluntary starvation to death, accompanied by an as complete as possible restraint with regard to all activity and movement," and this is the climax of all the Jaina monk's endeavours. In other passages of the *Āyāraṃga* there is an emphasis on abandonment of activity (Pkt. *āraṃbha*, *kamma*) being acknowledged as a source of suffering (Pkt. *dukkha*).⁵⁷ Complete abstention from activity is then the recommended way.⁵⁸ The

⁵⁴ BhG. 6.16-17:

*nātyaśnatas tu yogo 'sti na caikāntam anaśnataḥ/
na cātisvapna-śīlasya jāgrato naiva cārjuna/
yuktāhāra-vihārasya yukta-ceṣṭasya karmasu/
yukta-svapnāvabodhasya yogo bhavati duḥkha-hāḥ*

⁵⁵ Bronkhorst 2000: 31.

⁵⁶ The passage (Āyār. 1.8(7).7.2-8/228-53) is cited and translated by Bronkhorst (2000: 31-35). I refer here to only two stanzas, 233 and 241:

majjhatho nījarāpeḥi samāhim anupālae/ aṃto bahim viyosajja ajiḥhattham suddham esaḥ/233//

("Impartial, intent on the destruction of activity he should preserve his concentration. Renouncing internally as well as externally he strives after a pure heart.")

hariesu ṇa nīvajjejja thamḍaṃ muṇiā sae/ viyosajja aṇāhāro puṭṭho tattha'dhiyāse/241//

("He should not sit down on green plants, but lie on the bare ground after inspecting it; renouncing, taking no food, he should bear [discomfort] when affected [by it] in that [position].")

⁵⁷ Following Bronkhorst (2000: 35), I refer to three passages. Āyār. 1.3.1.3/108 and 1.4.3.1/140: "knowing that all this suffering is born from activity" (*āraṃbhajam dukkham iṇaṃ ti ṇaccā*); 1.3.1.4/110: "no action is found in him who has abandoned activity, the condition [for rebirth] originates on account of activity" (*akamassa vavahāro ṇa vijjati, kammaṇā uvādi jāyati*).

⁵⁸ Bronkhorst 2000: 36. Āyār. 1.1.5.1/40: "therefore he who does not act has ceased [from activity]; he who has ceased from that is called 'homeless'" (*taṃ je ṇo karae esovarate, ethhovarāe esa aṇagāre tti pavuccati*); 1.2.2.1/71: "free from activity he knows and sees, he does not long for [anything] because of his insight; he is called 'homeless'" (*esa akamme jāṇati pāsati, paḍilehāe ṇavakamkhati, esa aṇagāre tti pavuccati*); 1.4.4.3/145: "But he is wise and awakened [who] has ceased from activity. (...) Looking at those among the mortals in this world who are free from activity, having seen the result connected with activity, he who really knows turns away from that [activity]" (*se hu pannānamāṇe buddhe āraṃbhovarāe (...) nīkammadaṃsi iha macciehiṃ kammaṇā saphalaṃ daṭṭhā tato nījati vedavī*).

Bhagavadgītā 18.3ab expresses this Jaina path to liberation (Bronkhorst 2000: 45):

tyājyam doṣa-vad ity eke karma prāhur manīṣiṇaḥ/

("Some wise men say that [all] activity is to be abandoned as evil.")

same text (Āyār. 1.3.1.1/106; cf. also *Sūyagaḍaṃga-sutta* 1.14.6/585) gives another rule for the *muni*: “the unwise sleep, the sages always wake” (*suttā amuṇī muṇiṇo sayā jāgaranti*).⁵⁹ In a little later Jaina text, the *Uttara-jjhayaṇa*, chapter 29, we find the ideas of renouncing activity and food even more connected with the idea of meditation and final liberation.⁶⁰ If one discerns the elements of polemics in the *Gītā*’s presentation of the attitude of *yogin* (for whom the discipline of action instead of total renunciation of activity, indifference, moderation – avoiding of extremes are at the basis), then Jainism appears as one of the most noticeable disputants. While the Jaina texts recognise activity to be the source of suffering (*dukkha*) and complete inactivity combined with severe ascetic practices to lead to stopping all that suffering (Uttar. 29.41/1127; 29.56-58/1158-60; 29.61/1163), the *Gītā* 6.18 identifies the end of suffering (*duḥkha*) with the idea of *yoga* based on disciplined activity and moderation of *yogin*.

5.

It is interesting to notice that as far as the *Gītā*’s critical remarks towards ascetic practices are concerned, early Buddhist thought, as expressed in some parts of the Pāli canon, can be considered as supporting these remarks. In several passages the Buddha criticises severe and painful ascetic practices during meditation, connected with restraint of breathing and reduced intake of food (M. I 92-95, 242-246, II 218-219), he also argues against complete inactivity as an element of meditation (M. I 92-95, II 214; A. I 220-221), sometimes referring the criticised practices directly to the Jainas.⁶¹ In the *Gītā*’s stanzas 6.7-9 (the same outlook upon the world, all conditions of human life and interpersonal relations) and, even more, in 16 and 17 (*yoga* as the way of avoiding extremes) an association with Buddhism is noticeable. The moderate way of *yoga* can

One should notice that the *Gītā* also in 3.4ff polemises with this concept, and 3.4 may be placed in direct opposition especially to the last cited Jaina passage (Āyār. 1.4.4.3/145). BhG. 3.4:

*na karmaṇām anārambhān naiṣkarmyaṃ puruṣo 'śnute/
na ca saṃnyasanād eva siddhiṃ samadhiḥ gacchati*||

(“Not by abstention from works does a man reach a state free from activity; not by mere renunciation does he attain perfection.”)

⁵⁹ Bronkhorst 2000: 17.

⁶⁰ Bronkhorst (2000: 36-38) cites Uttar. 29.37/1139; 29.40/1142; 29.61/1163. The culmination of this liberating way is expressed in Uttar. 29.72/1174, where the idea of “pure meditation” (Pkt. *sukkha-jjhayaṇa*/Skt. *śukla-dhyāna*) is presented, consisting in stopping all activity of mind, speech and body, and putting a stop to breathing. Bronkhorst (2000: 38-44) refers also to other passages describing the idea of “pure meditation”.

⁶¹ See Bronkhorst 2000: 1-17, 26-30. Bronkhorst (2000: 15, 29, n. 8, 79-80, 127) notices, however, that in some portions of the Pāli canon the same ascetic practices that were criticised and refuted by the Buddha are recommended to Buddhist monks (M. I 120-121; A. I 221, II 197-198, V 292, 294, 297, 298; Ud. 21; Sn. 744-751). This is to be regarded as due to an outside, esp. Jaina, influence on the Pāli canon. Thus, for instance, in the *Dvayatānupassanā-sutta* of the *Sutta-nipāta*, in stanzas 744-751, it is said that effort (*ārambha* = *karman*/Pāl. *kamma*, activity), food (*āhāra*) and movement (*iñjita*) are among the sources of suffering (*dukkha*) and by their destruction the origin of suffering is destroyed. In Sn. 926 sleep is disapproved of. Moreover, approving references to ascetism (*tapas*) in the *Sutta-nipāta* often appears (Sn. 71, 267, 284, 292, 655).

be considered as not dissimilar to the Buddha's "middle way".⁶² A reference to Buddhist thought can also be discerned in presenting *yoga* as leading to liberation from *duḥkha*. In three ślokas, 6.17, 22, 23, the same aim of *yogin*'s or *yukta*'s efforts as is promised to the followers of Buddhism is mentioned.⁶³ Liberation from *duḥkha* leads to the highest bliss (BhG. 6.21: *sukham ātyantikam*; 27: *sukham uttamam*; 28: *atyantaṁ sukham*). Bronkhorst (2000: 22-25) recognises the original form of Buddhist meditation to be the so-called Four *Dhyānas* (pāl. *jhāna*) meditation (M. I 246-247), which is "a pleasant experience, accompanied with joy (*pīti*) and bliss (*sukha*), or bliss alone, in all but its highest stages," in opposition to what is presented in non-Buddhist, especially Jaina, meditation.⁶⁴ In the Pāli canon we also find plenty of places where *nibbāna*, the Buddhist highest goal, is characterised as *sukha* or *para-/parama-sukha*.⁶⁵

Thus the question arises how can one define the *Gītā*'s attitude towards the early Buddhism in the 6th chapter.

What seems to be worthy of particular emphasis is that apart from those similarities with Buddhism or even a sort of inspiration by Buddhism, apart from places of a noticeable idea of compromise between the *Gītā* and the great heterodox movement, the poem looks much more like a confrontation of orthodox Brahminic thought with Buddhism, resulting in an alternative proposition. The discipline which in the *Bhagavad-gītā* leads to a Buddhist-like liberation from *duḥkha* is based on the absorption of one's mind in the Self, *ātman*.⁶⁶ The highest bliss is a result of perfection in the discipline of the Self (20-21) and appears as a contact with *brahman* (*brahma-saṁsparśa*) (28). The perfect *yogin* realises the Self in every being and every being in the Self, in every circumstance (29, 32). This vision of *yoga* may be interpreted in its final meaning as opposed to Buddhism, and the polemics refers most of all to the early Buddhist concept of *anattā* – selflessness. And when one is looking at the problem from this point of view, one may discern that stanzas BhG. 6.5-6 even emphasise this polemical dispute.

In my understanding of the problem of the Self or soul in Buddhism I follow the Buddhologists' widespread opinion that in the Buddha's teaching transmitted in the Pāli

⁶² See Minor 1982: 216; Malinar 1996: 221. In the *Indriya-bhāvanā-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya* (M. III 298-299) the Buddha criticises such a cultivation of the senses that leads to their non-functioning. Instead, he explains that the best cultivation of the senses (*anuttarā indriya-bhāvanā*) consists in equanimity (*upekkhā*) towards what is experienced through the senses.

⁶³ In a skilfully presented definition from 23, based on a word-play, it is said that *yoga* ('discipline/union/linking') should be known as 'dissolution/disunion/unlinking' (*viyoga*) of the 'union/linking' (*saṁyoga*) with suffering, *duḥkha* (which is to be practiced/united/linked, *yuktavya*, with undismayed mind). Zaehner (1969: 229) in his commentary to the *Gītā*'s 6.23 emphasises that "this new definition of *yoga* is purely Buddhist". He treats *duḥkha* as used in this passage in the technical Buddhist sense. I would like to disagree, however, with his equalizing of the *Gītā*'s discipline of the Self with the Buddhist understanding of "self" (*attā*) in the Pāli canon.

⁶⁴ Bronkhorst also draws attention (2000: 48-49, 68-71) to the fact that in such non-Buddhist descriptions of meditation as *Maitrāyaṇīya-upaṇiṣad* 6.34.7-9 or MBh. 12, 188, the Buddhist influence can be noticed when *sukha* appears as the result of meditation.

⁶⁵ See e.g. M. I 508, A. IV 414, DhP. 202-204, 381.

⁶⁶ 6.18: *yadā viniyataṁ cittam ātmany evāvaśiṣṭhate* (...) *yukta ity ucyate tadā*; 25c: *ātma-saṁsthaṁ manaḥ kṛtvā*; 26: *manaś* (...) *ātmany eva vaśaṁ nayet*.

canon one cannot find any trace of acceptance for any view about the existence of the Self, soul, permanent and thus blissful “I”, immortal and transcendent principle in man in either an individual or a universal dimension. Quite the contrary, in many places of the Pāli canon, in different ways, by means of different parables and by recurring phrases one is taught and encouraged to abandon both views about an immortal Self and any metaphysical speculations on it.⁶⁷ The metaphysical disputes are considered there to be caused by attachment to an erroneous belief in eternity and permanence, and, in turn, in happiness established in an immortal principle, which is considered in the Buddha’s teaching as the most subtle form of clinging, the most subtle indication of egotism. These disputes are thus from the Buddha’s viewpoint senseless, developing only the conceit of intellect, leading to confusion and suffering, and disturbing the achievement of the state of enlightenment.

As some Buddhologists emphasise, in many places in the Pāli canon, when the Buddha’s teaching of his *dhamma* is presented, one can find traces of ancient debates or polemics. The Pāli canon is full of references, allusions, echoes, sometimes even quotations from other, mainly Brahminic religious and philosophical traditions.⁶⁸ As R. Gombrich (1996: 13) puts it:

“[...] the Buddha, like anyone else, was communicating in a social context, reacting to his social environment and hoping in turn to influence those around him. [...] The *dharma* is the product of argument and debate, the debate going on in the oral culture of renouncers and brahmins (*samaṇa-brāhmaṇa*), [...] in the upper Ganges plain in the fifth century B.C.”

In fact, it is nowhere expressed openly in the Pāli canon that the Self in man does not exist. Instead, what we often find in the Pāli texts are subtle polemical discussions with references or allusions here and there to the Brahminical speculations, especially those preserved in the early *Upaniṣads*.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ On the concept of *anattā* in early Buddhism, see e.g. Rahula 1959: 51-66; Collins 1982; Upadhyaya 1983: 301-335; Wijesekera 1994: 3-12, 43-52, 71-83, 257-265; Norman 1991; Harvey 1995; Gethin 1998: 133-162.

⁶⁸ Such a point of view is particularly highlighted by Gombrich in his works on early Buddhism and the Pāli canon. Cf. e.g. Gombrich 1990; 1992; 1996.

⁶⁹ One of the most important texts illustrating the Buddha’s teaching of *anattā* is an extensive passage from the *Alagaddūpama-sutta* (22) of the *Majjhima-nikāya*, M. I 135-139. The meaning and significance of this passage were probably best shown by Norman (1991; originally 1981) and, a little later, by Gombrich (1990: 14-16; 1996: 38-39). In short, the Buddha here undertakes a discussion with the central teaching of the oldest *Upaniṣads*, *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka* and *Chāndogya*, and he rejects the Upaniṣadic view of the nature of reality (the immortal essence of man, *ātman*, as being identified with the immortal essence of the world). He does so by referring to expressions very similar to those appearing in the *Upaniṣads*. The most spectacular remark seems to be the one that when the Buddha considers the following conviction wrong: *eso ’ham asmi*, “I am this”, he clearly alludes to the crucial statement from the *Chāndogya-upaniṣad* (VI 8,7 – 16,3): *tat tvam asi* (“Thou are that”). This Buddhist statement, repeatedly referred to in the suttas (esp. in the negative form: *n’etaṃ mama*, *n’eso ’ham asmi*, *na meso attā*), appears as a response to the statement identifying the individual Self with the Self of the universe, referred to time and again in the *Chāndogya*. But the net result of Buddhist verbal allusions in the *Alagaddūpama* is more dense. Referring above all to Norman’s and Gombrich’s findings (cf. also Jayatilke 1963: 60-61; Upadhyaya 1983: 101), I presented some appropriate fragments in a separate paper (Szczurek 2007 forthcoming).

One means of dealing with the term *attā* (and, as it seems, with the concept of *attā* in the background) is by referring to the same ambiguity of the Pāli *attā* as in the Sanskrit *ātman*, but highlighting a conventional use of it, i.e. using it as a reflexive pronoun, a term useful in everyday life. Such is the case, for instance, in the *Avyākata-vagga* of the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*, A. IV 94-98. This passage deals with man's anger (*krodha*; Pāl. *kodha*) and presents, among other things, the destructive consequences of it. It is said that angry people are able to commit the most cruel deeds:

A. IV 96-98:

*kodhano dubbaṇṇo hoti atho dukkhaṃ pi seti so/
 atho atthaṃ gahetvāna anattaṃ adhipajjati/
 tato kāyena vācāya vadhaṃ katvāna kodhano/
 (...)
 kuddho hi pitaraṃ hanti kuddho hanti samātaram/
 kuddho hi brāhmaṇaṃ hanti hanti kuddho puthujjanam/
 (...)
 attupamā hi te sattā attā hi paramaṃ piyo/
 hanti kuddho puthuttānaṃ nānārūpesu mucchito/
 asinā hanti attānaṃ (...)
 bhūnahaccāni kammaṇi attamaṇiyanī ca/
 karontā nāvabujjhanti kodhajāto parābhavo⁷⁰*

That is certainly not to say that a man seized with anger would be able to kill the Self. If this concept was accepted the Self as an immortal element could not be subject to any form of destruction.⁷¹ The meaning of this passage is that in wrath people committing the most cruel deeds do not perceive that what they do results in their own destruction – people in wrath kill themselves.

Attā is used as a reflexive pronoun in one of the better known parts of the Pāli canon, in the *Mahā-parinibbāna-sutta* of the *Dīgha-nikāya*, D. II 100-101. The Buddha, shortly before his death and attainment of *parinibbāna*, while staying in a village Beluva, was asked by the depressed Ānanda for instructions concerning the Order of the Saṅgha. The

⁷⁰ Translation [Pāli Text Society], A. IV 96-98:

“How ugly is an angry man! His sleep / Is comfortless; with fortune in his hands
 He suffers loss; and being full of wrath / He wounds by act and (bitter) word. (...)
 A man in anger will his father kill, / In wrath, his very mother will he slay,
 Brāhman and common folk alike he'll kill. (...)
 Self-mirrored all these beings are; each one / Loves most the self. In wrath the common folk
 Kill self, by divers forms distraught: by sword / Men kill the self; (...)
 Thus ruin runs in wake of wrath, and they, / Who act in wrath, perceive not that their deeds,
 Destroying life, bring death unto the self.”

⁷¹ This is what the *Bhagavad-gītā* says, see e.g. 2.20cd (= Kath.Up. 2.18cd):

ajo nityaś śāśvato 'yam purāṇo na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre//

(Cf. also 2.23-24).

Buddha, consoling his devoted attendant, addressed his short instructions to him with the conclusion that the Tathāgata on his way (to *nibbāna*) should depend on himself as well as on the Dhamma taught by the Buddha, and not on anyone or anything else.

D. II 100:

*tasmāt ih'Ānanda atta-dīpā viharatha atta-saraṇā anañña-saraṇā,
dhamma-dīpā dhamma-saraṇā anañña-saraṇā.*⁷²

The ambiguity of meaning of the term *attā* was also used by the Buddha as an instrument in his dispute with the doctrine(s) of the Self. One of the clearly evident examples of this (as shown probably most clearly by R. Gombrich 1996: 62-64) can be found in the *Mallikā-sutta* of the *Saṃyutta-nikāya*, S. I 75. The sutta, concerned about the conversation between king Pasenadi and queen Mallikā, has been recognised as a reminiscence of the famous conversation from the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka-upaniṣad* (II 4 and IV 5) between the sage Yājñavalkya and his favourite wife Maitreyī. The Buddhist discourse appears as a subtle polemic with the Upaniṣadic one.

In the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka* Maitreyī asks Yājñavalkya to present the teaching about immortality. The sage begins by saying that it is not through the love towards a husband that the husband is dear, but it is through love (*kāma*) to *ātman* that a husband is dear (*priya*). Similarly, it is not through love to wife, children, wealth etc. that a wife, children, wealth etc. are dear, but it is through love to *ātman* that they are dear. A series of parallel statements is then used leading to the conclusion that to know *ātman* means to know everything. In this passage *ātman* is apparently the essence of the individual and the universe, the Self.

In the passage of the *Saṃyutta-nikāya*, king Pasenadi asks his wife, Mallikā, if there is anyone dearer (*piyatara*) to her than *attā*. The queen replies that there is no one dearer to her than *attā*. The king replies the same when asked, in turn, by Mallikā if there is anyone dearer to him than *attā*. Having met the Buddha, king Pasenadi reports this conversation to him. The Buddha, understanding the matter, responds in verse: "Having traversed all directions in thought, he nowhere found one dearer than *attā* (*piyataram attanā*). In this way, for others too the separate *attā* is dear (*piya*). Therefore one who loves *attā* (*attakāma*) should not harm others."⁷³

According to Gombrich, the Buddha refers here to Yājñavalkya's teaching "half playful and half serious" and yet draws quite contrary conclusions. Making use of a word-play based on the ambiguity of the word *ātman/attā*, he supplies the echoed Upaniṣadic term of the Self with quite a humdrum meaning; *attā* in the Pāli text is the reflexive pronoun (hence, in this fragment of the *Saṃyutta*, *attā* should be understood as 'herself' or 'himself' respectively). Recognition of this allusion enables us to reveal one more way of showing the problem of the Self as illusory in the Buddha's teaching: "bypassing it" as Gombrich said. What is the true essence in both the individual and universal dimensions in the

⁷² "Therefore, Ānanda, dwell making yourselves your island (support), making yourselves, not anyone else, your refuge; making the Dhamma your island (support), the Dhamma your refuge, nothing else your refuge." (Transl. by Rahula 1959: 61) Cf. D. III 58, 77; also S. III 42-43, V 163; Dh. 236, 238; Sn. 501, 514.

⁷³ Transl. by Gombrich (1996: 62-63). I left the term *attā* untranslated.

Upaniṣad, is reduced by the Buddha to mere egoism in human terms (everyone loves first of all himself). But the Buddha makes an ethical use of it: “who loves himself should not harm others”. “Ethics in place of metaphysics” as Gombrich concluded.⁷⁴

Stanzas 6.5-6 of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, to return to the main point of the paper, with their contextual meaning as accepted here and presented above, may be put in a more direct confrontation especially with two stanzas of the *Dhamma-pada*, 379-380.⁷⁵ The formal similarity between the two passages encourages such a confrontation. The structure of the Pāli stanzas is also based on the repetition of the term *attā*.

Dhp. 379-380:

attanā coday’attānaṃ paṭimāse attam attanā/
so attagutto satimā sukhaṃ bhikkhu viḥhisi//
attā hi attano nātho attā hi attano gati/
tasmā saññamay’attānaṃ assaṃ bhadraṃ’va vāṇijo//⁷⁶

As in many other places of both the *Dhamma-pada*⁷⁷ and the other passages from the Pāli canon, *attā* is used here in its reflexive sense. As in the Buddha’s last instruction to Ānanda, we have here expressions indicating self-reliance as a means to live a happy life. It is to be done by restraining oneself, by referring to oneself as a protector or refuge.

It is, moreover, important to mention that earlier in the *Dhamma-pada* one finds the well known *ti-lakkhaṇa* formula, Dhp. 277-279:⁷⁸

277: *sabbe saṃkhārā aniccā (...)*
278: *sabbe saṃkhārā dukkhā (...)*
279: *sabbe dhammā anattā’ti yadā paññāya passati/
atha nibbindati dukkhe esa maggo visuddhiyā*//⁷⁹

⁷⁴ Gombrich 1996: 63. (Cf. p. 64: “So here too we see the Buddha reacting to Upanishadic teachings by shifting attention away from what the world is, ontology, to how we should behave: morally, and in particular kindly.”) The whole *Mallikā-sutta* is repeated in the *Udāna* V 1 (Ud. 47). Reflection on this teaching with its “*atta*-argument” transformed into an ethical aspect is also conveyed by some other fragments, for example two stanzas from the *Dhamma-pada*, 129-130.

⁷⁵ Malinar (1996: 215-216), while analysing BhG. 6.5-6, pointed to these two stanzas of the *Dhamma-pada* (also to Dhp. 165) where a similar figure of speech occurs. Earlier also Radhakrishnan (1956: 180) pointed to similarities with the *Gītā* śloka in Dhp. 160 and 380. Malinar supposes that the sense of the *Dhamma-pada* stanzas may also be referred to by the stanzas of the *Gītā*, which is quite a different, if not opposite, view than the one presented below.

⁷⁶ 379: “By self do you censure yourself. By self do you examine yourself. Self-guarded and mindful, O bhikkhu, you will live happily.”

380: “Self, indeed, is the protector of self. Self, indeed, is one’s refuge. Control, therefore, your own self as a merchant controls a noble steed.” (Transl. by Narada Thera 1993: 285)

⁷⁷ See Dhp. 157-166, 236, 238.

⁷⁸ Wijesekera (1994: 82) characterised this formula as “the three corner-stones of the whole edifice of the Buddha Dhamma”.

⁷⁹ 277: “‘Transient are all conditioned things’ (...)

278: ‘Sorrowful are all conditioned things’ (...)

The differentiation between *saṃkhārā* and *dhammā* seems to play a crucial role in the proper understanding of this formula.⁸⁰ When impermanence and painfulness (or unsatisfactoriness) are in question, the word *saṃkhārā* is used. It is replaced by *dhammā*, though, in the case of selflessness. *Samkhārā* in this context refers to all conditioned, compounded, originated things both physical and mental, i.e. to the so-called five aggregates (*pañca-kkhandhā*). *Dhammā*, however, in the third verse embraces both conditioned and unconditioned things, and thus includes also *nibbāna*. By this differentiation it is shown that even *nibbāna*, summum bonum, being not *anicca* nor *dukkha*, is *anattā*, free from the permanent Self.

Thus, stanzas 379-380 of the *Dhamma-pada* were composed against the background of the Buddha's teaching in which the doctrine of *anattā* plays an extremely important role. On the other hand, the *Bhagavad-gītā*'s stanzas 6.5-6 were composed against the background of the Upaniṣadic and later Brahminic doctrine in which the concept of the permanent Self plays the foremost role in achieving the ultimate goal. The discipline of oneself in Buddhism implies abandonment of any metaphysical speculations about the Self. The discipline of oneself in the *Bhagavad-gītā* becomes the discipline of the Self as the ultimate form of the discipline. What is abandoned in one tradition is highlighted in the other. It should be emphasized once more that when one reads stanzas BhG. 6.5-6 with their ambiguous meaning, one should have in mind the further passages of this chapter in which unambiguously stress is laid on the discipline of the Self as the only way to achieve the world of *brahman*. That is why we venture to suggest that the introduction of these stanzas into the 6th chapter might have equally been done with the intention of using them as supportive in the confrontation with the Buddhist doctrine proposed in this chapter. Using a similar structure, referring in BhG. 6.5-6 to the similar figure of speech as in the *Dhamma-pada* stanzas, moreover, creating verbal allusions in these and other stanzas of the poem might point to the alternative way presented by the *Gītā* as a result of this confrontation. In this context the statement from 6cd that *ātman* may appear as an enemy for one who is *anātman* seems to be far more meaningful; the Self itself cannot be perceived as a friend for the one who follows the concept of Selflessness.

6.

The philological evidence found in the text by Ježić enabled him to put forward an interesting hypothesis about an earlier, much shorter version of the poem (in fact of the epic episode) which might have ended with chapter 4 (minus some interpolations in

279: 'All Dhammas are without a soul': when this, with wisdom, one discerns, then is one disgusted with ill; this is the path to purity.'" (Transl. by Narada Thera 1993: 222-224.)

⁸⁰ See e.g. Rahula 1959: 57-58; Norman 1991: 207; Narada Thera 1993: 224-25.

chapters 2-4).⁸¹ If one follows this idea one cannot exclude another hypothesis. Namely, that at one of the early stages of the *Bhagavad-gītā*'s version the epic episode could have consisted of the first six chapters (without later interpolations, especially the bhakti ones).⁸² Throughout the next six chapters (7-12) the character of the poem changes. What is emphasised there is Kṛṣṇa's divinity, manifold aspects of his divine power and the presentation of a different liberating way, the one of *bhakti* (*bhakti-yoga*), devotional love directed to the supreme God Kṛṣṇa.⁸³ But earlier, together with chapter 6, the poem presents itself mainly as a *yoga-śāstra*.⁸⁴

A question therefore arises as to whether the contents can account for the hypothesis claiming the existence of the earlier version, what value the first 6 chapters might have had (especially without the bhakti segment in them). Kṛṣṇa, perceived as Arjuna's teacher and *guru* (and not yet the supreme God), appears to be here a protagonist of a new form of Brahminism, and presents, generally speaking, some basic elements of Brahminic ethics and ontology. And the epic context of the episode points, in particular, to the ethics of kṣatriya based on the concepts of *karma-yoga* combined with *jñāna-yoga*, and, finally, elements of *dhyāna-yoga* crowning them. The concepts presented in the first six chapters and the terminology used there, enable us to suppose that it would be promising to perceive those passages as a Brahminic confrontation with some heterodox traditions, especially the early Buddhist thought which seemed to obtain high position in Indian societies in the time of poem's creation (i.e. in the first centuries B.C.). The confrontation concerns ethical and ontological aspects. The ethics of the warrior from the poem refers to the *pravṛtti* approach ("engagement with the social world"), propagated also in other didactic parts of the *Mahā-bhārata*, versus *nivṛtti* ("disengagement with the social world", "the way of renunciation of the world") being also well represented in Buddhist ethics. Arjuna's dilemmas, his reluctance to undertake fighting and killing, and finally the rejection of weapons (chapter 1) make his attitude resemble that of Buddhism, the Buddhist ideal of *ahiṃsā* (Jayatilleke 1955; Upadhyaya 1983: 132-133; Szczurek 2007 [forthcoming]). Trying to make Arjuna abandon his dilemmas, Kṛṣṇa refers firstly to the traditionally established social system and focuses on Kṣatriya's duties towards society (2.1-3, 31-37). The ethics of the warrior has also at its basis the Upaniṣadic-like speculations about immortality (2.11-30; and then chapters 5; 6), which creates the concept of the liberating knowledge (*jñāna-yoga*). This concept should be put in opposition to epistemological ideas of early Buddhism in

⁸¹ Ježić 1979; 1986: 632-634. Based on his own philological methodology Ježić proposed the reconstruction of textual layers of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, and his hypothesis about the earlier version of the poem concerned the three earliest textual layers.

⁸² This means – referring to Ježić's hypothesis and terminology – that the episode was extended by two more textual layers (the ones creating chapters 5 and 6).

⁸³ See Ježić 1986; Szczurek 2005.

⁸⁴ Taking into consideration the hypothesis about the possible earlier version of the *Gītā*, one should mention that it seems probable that some stanzas of chapter 18 might have been added to this version (first 6 chapters without interpolations) constituting its ending (see also Malinar 1996: 382, 409-411). Stanzas 18.50-53 and 59-63, in particular, seem to refer directly to the speculations contained in the first six chapters. These stanzas, however, omit at the same time the issues considered between chapters 7 and 18.

which any speculation on the immortal Self were rejected (see above). One should treat the concept of *brahma-nirvāṇa* in 5.24-26 as the *Gītā*'s answer to the Buddhist concept of summum bonum, *nirvāṇa* (Pāl. *nibbāna*).⁸⁵ The essence of meditation in chapter 6 is the realisation of *ātman*, as stated above.⁸⁶ The brand new concept of *karma-yoga*, the discipline of action, conveys the redefinition of the term and the concept of freedom from activity and renunciation (*saṃnyāsa*). And this can also be acknowledged as a dispute with the Buddhist (as well as Jainist) ideal of renunciation of the Brahminical world recommended to monks on their way towards liberation from *dukkha*. In this context, Kṛṣṇa's words in 2.49: *buddhau śaraṇam anviccha* may be understood as an ironical allusion (based on a word-play) to the formula constituting the Buddhist expression of faith, viz. to the first of the Three Refuges (*ti-saraṇa*): *Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi* (followed by: *dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi, saṃghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi*).⁸⁷ Kṛṣṇa appeals to Arjuna: "seek refuge in [your] intellect, *buddhi*" (which will allow you to walk the true way of life, the way of action with non-attachment to the fruits of action). This seems also to suggest: "By seeking refuge in your *buddhi* you do not need to seek refuge in the Buddha."

Thus, especially in the first six chapters of the poem Kṛṣṇa seems to return to the debate which had been undertaken a little earlier by the Buddha himself. He returns to the ideas repudiated by the Buddha, presenting them in new, revalidated form. And despite the epic context, his alternative propositions try to solve the dilemmas of human life and show the way leading to liberation, in a way allowing not only Arjuna, a Kṣatriya, but any man active in social life to identify with them.

Abbreviations

- A. – *Aṅguttara-nikāya*
 Āyār. – *Āyāraṅga-sutta*
 BhG. – *Bhagavad-gītā*
 D. – *Dīgha-nikāya*
 DhP. – *Dhamma-pada*
 Kath.Up. – *Kaṭha-upaniṣad*
 M. – *Majjhima-nikāya*
 MBh. – *Maha-bhārata*
 S. – *Saṃyutta-nikāya*
 Sn. – *Sutta-nipāta*
 Ud. – *Udāna*
 Uttar. – *Uttara-jjhayaṇa*

⁸⁵ See Szczurek 2003.

⁸⁶ As the teaching is presented directly to a member of the *kṣatriya-varṇa* and just before the great battle, the terminology used in stanzas 6.5-6 (i.e. *ātman* as friend, *bandhu*, or enemy, *ripu*, *śatru*) may additionally stress the epic context of the utterance. Cf. above, fn. 22.

⁸⁷ I am grateful to Prof. M.K. Byrski for drawing my attention to this association. (Cf. also Malinar 1996: 147-148, fn. 55.) In the Pāli canon the formula often appears as: *Bhagavantam/Gotamaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi dhammaṃ ca bhikkhu-saṃghaṃ ca* (e.g. D. I 85; M. I 24, 489, 512; S. II 21, A. IV 179), but the commonly known and the one quoted by the followers of Buddhism has been the one containing the name of the Buddha (cf. DhP. 190-192).

Bibliography

- Belvalkar S.K. (ed.), 1947. *The Mahābhārata. For the First Time Critically Edited*, vol. 7 (*Bhīṣmaparvan*). Poona, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute.
- Bolle K.W., 1979. *The Bhagavadgītā* (A New Translation). Berkeley-Los Angeles-London, University of California Press.
- Bronkhorst J., 2000. *The Two Traditions of Meditation in Ancient India*. Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass.
- Collins S., 1982. *Selfless Persons: Imagery and Thought in Theravada Buddhism*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Deussen P., 1911. *Der Gesang des Heiligen. Eine philosophische Episode des Mahābhāratam* (Aus dem Sanskrit übersetzt). Leipzig, F.A. Brockhaus.
- Edgerton F., 1994. *The Bhagavad Gītā* (transl. and interpreted), vol. 1-2. Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass.
- Emeneau M.B., 1968. "Bhagavadgītā Notes", in: *Mélanges d'Indianisme à la mémoire de Louis Renou*: 269-278. Paris, Éditions E. De Boccard.
- Gethin R., 1998. *The Foundations of Buddhism*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Gombrich R., 1990. "Recovering the Buddha's Message", in: D.S. Ruegg, L. Schmithausen *Earliest Buddhism and Madhyamaka* (Panels of the VIIth World Sanskrit Conference, Leiden: August 23-29, 1987): 5-23. Leiden.
- Gombrich R., 1992. "The Buddha's Book of Genesis?", *Indo-Iranian Journal* 35: 159-178.
- Gombrich R., 1996. *How Buddhism Began. The Conditioned Genesis of the Early Teachings*. London, The Athlone Press.
- Gotshalk R., 1993. *Bhagavad Gītā* (Translation and Commentary). Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass.
- Goyandka J., 1969. *Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā* (With Sanskrit text and English translation). Gorakhpur, Gita Press.
- Hartmann F., 1907. *Die Bhagavad Gita. Das Lied von der Gottheit*. Leipzig, Verlag von Max Altman.
- Harvey P., 1995. *The Selfless Mind. Personality, Consciousness and Nirvana in Early Buddhism*. Richmond, Curzon Press.
- Hill W.D., 1928. *The Bhagavadgītā* (transl. with introd., argument and comm.). London, Oxford University Press.
- Ingalls D.H.H., 1959. "Ātmanātmānam", in: C. Vogel, *Jñānamuktāvalī. Commemoration Volume in Honour of Johannes Nobel*: 101-110. New Delhi, International Academy of Indian Culture.
- Jayatilke K.N., 1955. "Some Aspects of Gītā and Buddhist Ethics", *University of Ceylon Review* 13 (2-3): 135-151.
- Jayatilke K.N., 1963. *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*. London, Georg Allen & Unwin Ltd.
- Ježić M., 1979. "The First Yoga Layer in the *Bhagavadgītā*", in: J.P. Sinha, *Ludwik Sternbach Felicitation Volume* (Part One): 545-557. Lucknow, Akhila Bharatiya Sanskrit Parishad.
- Ježić M., 1986. "Textual Layers of the *Bhagavadgītā* as Traces of Indian Cultural History", in: W. Morgenroth (ed.), *Sanskrit and World Culture: Proceedings of the Fourth World Sanskrit Conference* (Schriften zur Geschichte und Kultur des Alten Orients 18): 628-638. Berlin, Akademie-Verlag.
- Jurewicz J., 1993. "Ātman jako 'Się' brahmana. Próba interpretacji", *Classica Wratislaviensia* 17: 53-59.
- Malinar A., 1996. *Rājavidyā: Das königliche Wissen um Herrschaft und Verzicht. Studien zur Bhagavadgītā*. Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz Verlag.
- Minor R.N., 1982. *Bhagavad-Gītā: an Exegetical Commentary*. New Delhi/Columbia, Missouri, Heritage Publishers.
- Narada Thera, 1993. *The Dhammapada* (Pāli text and translation with stories in brief and notes). Taipei, The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation.
- Norman K.R., 1991. "A note on attā in the Alagaddūpamasutta", in: *Collected Papers*, vol. II: 200-209. Oxford, The Pali Text Society.

- Radhakrishnan S., 1953. *The Principal Upaniṣads* (Edited with introduction, text, translation and notes). London George Allen & Unwin Ltd.
- Radhakrishnan S., 1956. *The Bhagavadgītā* (With an Introductory Essay, Sanskrit Text, English Translation and Notes). London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd.
- Rahula W., 1959. *What the Buddha Taught*, Oxford, Oneworld Publications.
- Rao M.C.R., 1978. *Sreemad Bhagavadgeeta. The Way of Happiness and Success* (With a Critical and Comparative Commentary). New Delhi, C/o L. Cdr. M. Gopad Rao.
- Schreiner P., 1991. *Bhagavad-Gita. Wege und Weisungen* (übersetzt und eingeleitet). Zürich, Benziger.
- Schroeder L. von, 1922. *Bhagavadgītā. Des Erhabenen Sang* (übertragen und eingeleitet). Jena, Eugen Diederichs Verlag.
- Szczurek P., 2002. "Some remarks on the so-called Epic Layer of the Bhagavadgītā", in: M. Brockington, *Stages and Transitions: Temporal and Historical Frameworks in Epic and Purāṇic Literature* (Proceedings of the Second Dubrovnik International Conference on the Sanskrit Epics and Purāṇas, August 1999): 55-72. Zagreb, Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts.
- Szczurek P., 2003. "Brahmanirvāṇa versus nirvāṇa (nibbāna). Some remarks on the polemics with Buddhism in the Bhagavadgītā", *Cracow Indological Studies IV-V* (2nd International Conference on Indian Studies, Proceedings): 547-275.
- Szczurek P., 2005. "Bhakti Interpolations and Additions in the Bhagavadgītā", in: P. Koskikallio (ed.), *Epics, Khilas, and Puranas: Continuities and Ruptures* (Proceedings of the Third Dubrovnik International Conference on the Sanskrit Epics and Purāṇas, September 2002): 183-220. Zagreb, Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts.
- Szczurek P., 2007 [forthcoming]. "Prajñāvādānś ca bhāṣase: Polemics with Buddhism in the Early Parts of the Bhagavadgītā", in: P. Koskikallio, *Proceedings of the 12th World Sanskrit Conference*, Helsinki.
- Tilak B.G., 1936. *Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā Rahasya or Karma-yoga-śāstra* (transl. B.S. Sukthankar), vol. 2. Poona, Tilak Bros.
- Upadhyaya K.N., 1983. *Early Buddhism and the Bhagavadgītā*. Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass.
- Van Buitenen J.A.B., 1973-1978. *The Mahābhārata* [Books 1-5] (Translated and Edited), vol. 1-3. Chicago, Chicago University Press.
- Van Buitenen J.A.B., 1981. *The Bhagavadgītā in the Mahābhārata* (Text and Translation). Chicago-London, The University of Chicago Press.
- Wijesekera O.H. de A., 1994. *Buddhist and Vedic Studies. A Miscellany*. Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass.
- Zaehner R.C., 1969. *The Bhagavad-Gītā* (transl., introd., with a commentary based on the original sources). Oxford, Oxford University Press.