

In the first volume of The Journal of Studies in the Bhagavadgītā both Professors Eric Sharpe¹ and Robert Minor² have separately raised some pertinent points concerning the interest generated by the Bhagavadgītā and the sorts of treatment the text received since it first came into the hands of Western scholars. I wish to follow the lead provided by the two writers by isolating the work on the Gītā of a modern Western scholar, and with a more limited aim concentrate on certain aspects of the Gītā that betray a certain emphasis in the scholar's work, but which is absent in comparable Indian works. The work in question is that of R. C. Zaehner: The Bhagavad-Gītā with a Commentary Based on the Original Sources.³ The translation provided by Zaehner with notes and commentary is fairly reliable and admittedly is a useful teaching aid in Western educational institutions. However, so far as Zaehner's interpretation is concerned there are serious problems, which I attempt to highlight in his paper.

Zaehner may have spared the earlier Western commentators on the Gītā for their inadequate treatment in view of the fact that comparative religion, as a discipline of study, had not reached the sophistication and maturity it did in the days of Zaehner. Indeed, Zaehner does not pay much attention to the translations and interpretations by other Western, or

Indian, scholars, whether from the pre-modern or modern period, save to mention a few of them in passing.⁴ But then the question arises: what approach does Zaehner take himself? Zaehner argues that he is not much interested in what others say the Gītā says but in what the Gītā actually says. And instead of going about the apparently 'fashionable' way of emphasising the various strands that go to make up the Gītā, and thereby its incoherence, Zaehner prefers to tackle the Gītā by "putting as little as possible of oneself into it ... (and) to consider it as a whole that should be explained by itself and by the miliéu out of which it grows."⁵ Zaehner suggests that the Upanisads might also be part of the miliéu. The Mahābhārata too could be usefully deployed for clarification of some points. Zaehner also does not show much concern with the modern scepticism about Gītā's genuine unitariness, and believes that it is possible to extricate the original text intact from the available sources. Yet he criticises Garbe for his attempt to extract the Ur-Gītā from the Mahābhārata and other sources.⁶ And therefore it is no surprise to Zaehner that "others have tried to treat the Gītā as a separate poem that somehow or other got itself inserted into the fabric of the Great Epic from which for some reason it has never been extricated."⁷

In the translation and rendering of certain nuances Zaehner does admit to difficulties, but he is hesitant in resorting to the "ancient commentators" for their opinion, amongst whom he names Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja, because "they

almost invariably read their own philosophical and theological views into the text, however forced and incongruous this may turn out to be." Despite the disclaimer Zaehner does refer at some length to Rāmānuja's commentary where he seeks to refute Śaṅkara's variant reading,⁸ or ridicule the 'neo-Hindu' interpretation, or perhaps support his own understanding of the issue raised in a particular statement.

II. Buddhi-yoga

To illustrate the point being made I now move to a more concrete analysis of the treatment certain issues in the Gītā receive at the hands of Zaehner. On such issue is buddhi-yoga and its relation to other forms of yoga as discussed in the Gītā.⁹

Zaehner emphasises three basic Yogas in the Gītā, viz. karma-, jñāna- and bhakti-yoga, but does not attribute such a prominent place to buddhi-yoga. (He also undermines the importance of dhyāna-yoga, sometimes referred to as rāja-yoga, as another of the basic types of Yoga taught by Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna; but this is another issue which needs to be dealt with separately.) On the topic of buddhi-yoga, some have even argued that it is the central teaching in the Gītā and that, like the hub of the wheel, it integrates the four limbs of karma-, bhakti-, jñāna- and dhyāna-yoga into a unified whole.¹⁰ Others, again, have argued that buddhi-yoga is a part of, and subordinate to, jñāna-yoga, the path of wisdom-knowledge.¹¹ But Zaehner does not even give that

much credit to buddhi-yoga. His view is that buddhi-yoga is a means to enhancing one's moral strength whereby one will be able to cast off passion and hatred as well as good and evil works. He denies that it has anything to do with yoking one's intelligence with the Divine.¹²

It seems to me that Zaehner's failure to give an important, if not central, place to buddhi-yoga in the Gītā stems from his translation or rather misrendering of the term 'buddhi' and the consequent oversight of the implications buddhi has for the form of Yoga named after it. Had Zaehner seen buddhi in a light closer to the spirit of the text, his conclusions about the 'spiritual exercises' taught in the Gītā may have been quite different.

First, let us see what Kṛṣṇa could have meant by buddhi and what Zaehner took it to be. Buddhi is derived from the root budh meaning 'to be awake' in the sense of discriminating, discerning and realising intelligently. As one of the very first mentions of the term 'buddhi' occurs in the line where Kṛṣṇa makes reference to Sāṃkhya as a system of theory (II.39), it would not be too far-fetched to link buddhi with mahat-buddhi--the great principle of lucidity--in Sāṃkhya psycho-cosmology, where it designates the first and highest evolute of Nature (prakṛti). In the hierarchy of emanations from the world-ground in the shadow of puruṣa (Spirit), buddhi marks a level of emanation which is not wholly divorced from the transcendental, higher nature, nor wholly identical with the lower nature (consisting of the

mind or manas, the senses and the sense-objects, etc.). But while buddhi tends towards the higher nature of puruṣa, there is a sharp distinction made between buddhi and manas as the faculties of thinking and memory.

The psychology depicted here finds an echo in the simile of the chariot as found, for instance, in the Katha Upaniṣad (I.2.3-4) where the body is likened to a chariot whose owner is the ātman or transcendental Self, whilst buddhi is the charioteer, manas the reins, and the senses are the steeds.¹³ Since this Upaniṣad is closer to the Gītā in spirit, it would not be unreasonable to assume that buddhi in the Gītā means something similar to the usage of this term in the Katha Upaniṣad. Significantly, the Katha Upaniṣad (III.6.10-11) also speaks of a hierarchy or 'order of progression' of the faculties of man: from the senses to the mind (manas), to buddhi, the 'great entity' (mahān ātmā), the unmanifest (avyakta) the ultimately the Supreme Person (puruṣa). The corresponding stanzas in the Gītā (II.62-63) read thus: "When a man dwells on the sense-objects, attachment to them is born. From attachment springs desire (kāma), from desire anger (krodha) is bred. From anger comes total bewilderment (sammoha), from total-bewilderment disorder of the memory and from disorder of the memory the destruction of buddhi. Upon the destruction of buddhi he is lost."

Thus buddhi, it may be surmised, stands higher and is subtler than manas to which belongs the power of discursive thinking and memory and which is itself subtler than the

senses. To buddhi pertains the power of discernment and intuitive insight which is engendered by its proximity to the transcendental realm of ātman/puruṣa. Whereas manas, being part of the lower nature, has to be subdued and brought under the control of buddhi, buddhi itself stands between the higher and the lower nature and helps to illumine the mind (manas). It is thus the faculty of illumination or 'en-lightenment'. Through a process of self-purification buddhi can transcend itself and integrate itself by itself, without the support from other faculties. "For the uncontrolled there is no buddhi", remarks Kṛṣṇa (II.66). As it is ontogenetically prior to aḥamkāra (the 'I-maker'), buddhi cannot be said to be an individual entity, though it may become individual in association with the lower nature. In principle, buddhi must remain a unified whole (II.41) akin to the kṣetra-jña (or 'field-knower'), of which Kṛṣṇa speaks in chapter XIII.

In a later chapter (XVIII.29-32), Kṛṣṇa identifies three kinds of buddhi, each corresponding to the three modalities of Nature, the so-called guṇas, viz. sattva, rajas and tamas. The buddhi which can discriminate between right and wrong, true and false, action and inaction is sattva-endowed and is freer than the buddhi coloured by the restless rajas-tendency to wander. The absence of sattva and rajas, again, leaves buddhi in an inert and stagnant state of darkness.

However, as buddhi purifies itself and gains in spiritual stature, it increases its 'luminosity content' (sattva

quality) and extricates itself from the process of emanation. A yogin possessed of such a buddhi is integrated and stands steadfast in wisdom, and to such a one the goal of yoga ('yoking with the Supreme') is assured: "Renouncing in thought all actions to Me, intent on Me, resorting to buddhi-yoga, be constantly Me-minded. Me-minded, you will transcend all obstacles by My grace..." (XVIII.57-58).

As pointed out earlier, one of the first occurrences of the term is in the second chapter (vs. 39). What does Zaehner make of this and subsequent stanzas? The verse in question is translated by him as follows: "The wisdom has (now) been revealed to you in theory; listen now to how it should be practised. If you are controlled by the soul, you will put away the bondage that is inherent in (all) works."¹⁴ Zaehner admits that the first occurrence of buddhi means 'wisdom' in preference over 'intellect' (which is its normal meaning), and he adds in his notes: "...as Ś (= Śaṅkara) rightly interprets it (jnāman)."^{14a} Yet in the immediately following hemstitch the term is supposed to denote 'soul'. He refers us to the use of buddhi in II.41 and argues that the Sāṅkhya definition of buddhi as the highest human faculty 'rooted in nature' is not wholly adequate for the purposes of the Gītā.¹⁵ He cautiously remarks that there is something ambivalent about this concept insofar as buddhi "seems to stand on the brink between the world of pure spirit (the self) and man's physical and psychic nature."¹⁶ But he cuts short the analysis and states that according to the Gītā's

own definitions, buddhi corresponds more or less exactly to what we in the West call 'soul'.

But what do we in the West understand by the term? Do we look for its meaning in the ancient Greek philosophies, in the Judaeo-Christian adaptations, in the Neo-Platonic cosmology or in the much later theosophical confusions? Does Zaehner find parallels with Plato's *νοῦς* and Plotinus' *ψυχῆ*? Or is 'soul' to him what it is in Christianity--where the notion is by no means clear or distinct?¹⁷ If Zaehner wants us to understand it in the former sense of *νοῦς* or *ψυχῆ*, then we would expect him to stress the use and importance of the intellect and intuitive insight for attaining the goal of yoga; if the latter, then we could expect little or no emphasis on this 'technique'. From Zaehner's comments it becomes clear that he prefers the latter understanding.

Zaehner seeks to reinforce his adoption of 'soul' for buddhi by referring to II.41, and especially to the line 'vyavasāya-ātmikā buddhir-ekā-eva' which he translates as "the essence of the soul is will." Thus he interprets vyavasāya as 'will', whereas Edgerton understands the term as 'resolution' and Radhakrishnan as 'resolute (decision)'. Moreover, Edgerton and Radhakrishnan do not render buddhi but 'soul', but take it to mean 'mental-attitude' and 'understanding' respectively. The line reads better as "the higher intelligence whose nature is reflection and resolution." However, Zaehner observes that it is on the strength of this particular passage that he has "taken the liberty of trans-

lating buddhi as 'soul', for in the Christian tradition it is the soul that is the responsible element in man; it is the soul that is saved or damned, for in it are both intellect and will."¹⁸ Not that it is both the intellect and the will but that in it are both these properties. In Zaehner's reading therefore 'intelligence' is only a function of buddhi, and buddhi--like the 'soul' in Christianity--is an ontological entity quite distinct from the spirit. One cannot say in accordance with this definition, as I am proposing, that buddhi is a cosmic intelligence that has come to be associated with 'lower nature' in the process of evolution. Taken as 'soul' one can say, as Zaehner does,¹⁹ that buddhi is the agent of integration, but not that the integration of buddhi--and therefore buddhi-yoga--is the goal. For once buddhi is integrated by buddhi one attains to brahman-nirvāna (lit. 'extinction in the world-ground').

The compound buddhi-yukta can thus be safely read as 'integrated with and by buddhi' and not left merely to read 'controlled by the soul'. Furthermore, if Kṛṣṇa declares that buddhi-yoga is superior to karma-yoga, this need not be taken as an incidental comment, for he appears to be quite serious about buddhi-yoga: "Far inferior indeed is mere action to the discipline of buddhi ... Seek refuge in buddhi" (II.49).

If on the other hand Zaehner had sought the Western equivalence of buddhi in the $\psi\chi\gamma'$ of Plotinus or even the $\psi\chi\gamma$ of Plato, the interpretation would have been quite

different. The ψυχῆ of Plotinus, like buddhi, has a cosmic dimension and that "which at its highest reach is an eternal inhabitant of the world of divine intuitive thought, the nôus ... and shares its activity and live, and its power of self-transcendence and return to its source beyond thought ..." ²⁰ All ψυχῆ are in a sense one, though differentiated (to various degrees at different levels) in their unity, and in the eternal intelligible world in which ψυχῆ at its highest is a permanent inhabitant, the unity-in-difference is far more intimate, the interpenetration of parts more complete. "Light is transparent to light ... The sun here is all the stars and each star the sun and all the others." ²¹ At its highest the ψυχῆ corresponds to Plato's in its divine or godlike function which is an eternal intuitive unity in contemplation. Though the intelligent principle may be admitted to be in the ψυχῆ at its highest the cosmic ψυχῆ does not think as the mind does, but grasps noetically and intuitively.

The marked parallel with the function of buddhi here is undeniable. In jñāna-yoga, too, discursive thinking does not occupy a very significant role in the attainment of true knowledge. If intuitive knowledge is what is sought for through jñāna-yoga, then it is obvious that buddhi plays a crucial part in the attainment of the same. It becomes difficult at a point to distinguish buddhi-yoga from jñāna-yoga; indeed they complement each other like the two sides of a coin. Buddhi-yoga also complements bhakti-yoga which also

requires the use of a discerning disposition in choosing which form (or which formless reality) to love and how to love: "To these (who are) ever yoked and worship (Me) with fondness--I give that buddhi-yoga by which they approach Me." (X.10)

Needless to say that buddhi-yoga likewise complements karma-yoga, for one needs a discerning intellect to distinguish between that which is action and that which is inaction, and between action that is impelled by desire and that which is free from desire. The relation of buddhi-yoga, moreover, is made clear in numerous verses, such as the following: "Little by little he will come to rest. Making the mind (manas) subsist in the Self by holding buddhi steadfast, he should think of nothing." (VI.25)

Thus in the above light, buddhi takes on a different meaning from Zaehner's interpretation. Simultaneously we are led to a new understanding of the function and significance of buddhi-yoga. Perhaps one can even say that buddhi-yoga in conjunction with the other forms of Yoga is a necessary--if not a sufficient--condition for the realisation of moksa. "That is the utmost joy which transcends-the-senses (and which can be) grasped by buddhi (alone). And when he knows this, standing (still), he truly does not move from reality." (VI.21)²²

III. Bhakti in Relation to Brahman, and purusottama²³

Another important question concerns bhakti or love

towards Brahman. Brahman is usually taken to be an impersonal absolute that transcends all attributes and characteristics of a personal Godhead. However, if loving devotion is expressed, as it appears to be in the Gītā, towards Brahman, does it therefore mean that Brahman is taken to be a personal form of Godhead, quite distinct from the impersonal formless 'being-nonbeing' of the Upaniṣads? Or could it mean there is possibility of bhakti even for an essentially impersonal reality? Or, may it mean that Brahman in this context acquires a somewhat unique status? Chapter Twelve of the Gītā begins with Arjuna's puzzlement as to which form of devotion is better--that to the Imperishable, the Unmanifest (Aksara) or that to the Personal Manifest Lord, which Arjuna had just witnessed. Though Kṛṣṇa goes on to extol devotion to the Personal form he does not rule out the validity of devotion to the Imperishable (Brahman); he merely says that the goal of the Unmanifest is 'hard for the embodied to reach' (XII.5). But Zaehner wishes to identify the devotion to the highest, to Brahman the Imperishable, as being none other than devotion to the Personal God, which in effect is to say that Brahman spoken of here is none other than Īśvara. For, it seems, at least to Zaehner, that without such an identification the Gītā would be reduced to upholding an impersonal 'monistic' absolute as the highest principle for which, however, there could be no love. Zaehner says in his Gītā and in his earlier work, Mysticism Sacred and Profane,²⁴ that there can be no love for a monistic absolute. Yet it

is clear that there is much talk of love in the Gītā; but this could not have been so were the Gītā to extol above all the impersonal Brahman of the Upaniṣads and of the Buddhists (brahma-bhūta). Thus, it seems that scholars such as Zaehner were hard pressed to find a figure towards whom this love is directed without any compromise. And to this end the personal form of Godhead with whom Kṛṣṇa is identified is isolated as the 'Being' to whom this love is due.

But another slightly variant reading of the Gītā could lead one to the position that there is a 'highest' towards whom love is directed but this highest is not the Personal God Īśvara, or at least not Īśvara alone. To pursue this point further one would need to make reference to puruṣottama (the 'highest Spirit'), a centrally important conception in the Gītā to which Zaehner has not paid adequate attention. Zaehner is right when he argues against the wholesale identification of puruṣottama with the Brahman of monist. However, as Eliot Deutsch²⁵ argues, it would be a mistake to read some kind of ultimate dualism into the Gītā on the basis of puruṣottama as being the highest category. 'It is not so much that Brahman, the undifferentiated, distinctionless One is opposed to the puruṣottama; rather Brahman and Īśvara (the creative, destructive personal god) are each identified with It: each is a primary expression of spiritual being. While puruṣottama cannot be characterized totally as the Imperishable non-personal being, nor can It on the other hand be identified as Īśvara without reference to Brahman as

the 'highest Spirit'. The text itself, it would seem, spells this out fairly clearly. To quote some verses from chapter XV, which contain an exposition of this 'highest Spirit':²⁶

There are two spirits in this world, the perishable and the imperishable. The perishable is all beings and the imperishable is called kutastha (the unchanging).

But there is another, the highest Spirit (purushottama), called the supreme Self, who, as the imperishable Lord, enters into the three worlds and sustains them.

Since I transcend the perishable and am higher even than the imperishable, I am renowned in the world and in the Vedas as the highest Spirit.

(XV.16-18)

Zaehner argues that the identification of purusottama is primarily with Īśvara and only secondarily with Brahman, for Brahman is the secondary aspect of the Personal God. If purusottama were to be completely identified with Īśvara, then the purusottama would also have to be identified with the manifestations proceeding from Īśvara, namely the soul and the changing world. But as we see in the verses quoted above, and in others that follow, the 'highest Spirit' is spoken of as transcending the individual and the changing world which are involved in and have evolved from the perishable.

The 'highest Spirit', which is in a sense beyond even the Imperishable as it is not identifiable completely with Brahman, is without any fixed abode, and is described as that which neither flows nor does not flow: 'flowing It flows not, not flowing It flows', and It enters the entire manifest world and yet remains outside it, ruling the three worlds in their entirety. It can be seen that the conception of purusottama

goes beyond the duality of the form and formless, the higher and lower, the 'perishable' or finite and the imperishable or the infinite, the dynamic and static or the moving and unmoving. It is through the syncretic representation of purusottama that the seemingly opposite polarities of Brahman and Īśvara, the Unmanifest and the Manifest, the Absolute and the Relative, the Impersonal and the Personal, the Monistic and Dualistic Gods are resolved and brought together. To turn now to Arjuna's perplexity, expressed at the beginning of chapter XII: ought one worship the personal, manifest god or better the non-personal, the Imperishable and Unmanifest? one might surmise that while Zaehner perpetuates even further the distinction Arjuna alludes to here, the text itself brings the two views of the highest principle together in the category of purusottama and to his extent represents Brahman as being more 'theistic' and 'personalized' than some of the Upaniṣads do. Still, however, it does not warrant in any way the interpretation that Gītā is a thoroughly theistic text, or that the mysticism of love concerns itself only with a theistic or personal form of Godhead.

IV. The final goal (mokṣa) in the Gītā

In this final section of the paper I wish to discuss Zaehner's interpretation of the final goal as represented in the Gītā. On the basis of the identification that Zaehner makes of purusottama primarily with Īśvara and only secondarily with Brahman, as I have just pointed out, he interprets

the Gītā as teaching, that first one attains to Brahman and then, through loving devotion, union with Īśvara, the personal God. In such a union, the individuality (soul) of the devotee is never totally lost in or identified with God, as God and soul are necessarily distinct and separate beings. What unites them or relates them intimately is the strong bond of love between the two. Thus if Kṛṣṇa has spoken of the man of knowledge "becoming Brahman" (XIV.26) this could not be crucial save only as a stage preceding the final union with Īśvara, according to Zaehner. Śaṅkara is fairer for once at least, as he gives three possible interpretations or senses of the verses wherein this occurs. We need not go into his interpretations here,²⁷ except to note that in one of them he considers the possible identification of Brahman with the "power" (māyā) or manifestation of Brahman as Īśvara. Kṛṣṇa speaks again of the aspirant as having "become Brahman"-- towards the end of the Gītā, in XVIII.54. The verse reads as follows:

Having become Brahman, serene-souled, he neither grieves nor longs: alike to all beings, he attains supreme devotion to Me.

Zaehner takes this as an all important verse wherefrom he establishes that jñāna leads to para-bhakti, but maintains that the respective ends of jñāna and bhakti (even para-bhakti) always remain different. He accordingly subtitles this part of the chapter 'From Brahman to God', implying again, that the devotee first enters Brahman--"that is nirvāna too"--then attains to God. He comments, "this

highest bhakti (to God) is, then, only bestowed after the man has 'become Brahman'." Commenting on the last two verses that follow, Zaehner approvingly refers to Rāmānuja's interpretation that "this 'knowledge' of God is subsequent to the knowledge of self as Brahman." To "enter" God means "to possess Him in his fulness"--and not, presumably, to "become God or disappear totally in God, as salt in water," as the mystic philosophers would interpret the same verse. There is no doubt in my mind that Arjuna is here being enjoined to return to bhakti, or better, para-bhakti, but that this 'higher bhakti' is one fortified by, and derived from, a knowledge of Self.²⁸ Further, the "Me" here is purusottama, 'the highest Spirit', embodied as Kṛṣṇa, a Spirit in whom, as we saw earlier, both the Brahman and Īśvara are present and reconciled.

"By devotion he knows Me, what my measure is and what I am essentially; then having known Me essentially, he enters forthwith into Me." (XVIII.55)

It would appear, therefore, that devotion leads one to the higher knowledge of the divine Being, of purusottama that is, which one enters to become one with It. It must be stressed that this interpretation is not the same as that of the monists (whoever they may be), who supposedly discard love and urge that the merger is with the "Absolute One." Radhakrishnan offers an interpretation of the two verses in question which sums up more faithfully the spirit of the text than does Zaehner's interpretation. Radhakrishnan remarks:

The knower, the devotee, becomes one with the Supreme Lord, the Perfect Person, in self-knowledge and self-expression: Jnana, supreme wisdom and bhakti, supreme devotion have the same goal. To become Brahman is to love God, to know Him fully and to enter into His being.³⁰

V. Conclusion

We observe therefore that Zaehner's treatment of at least certain aspects of the Gītā does betray an approach peculiar to his own interests and concerns, which are related pari passu to his views on mysticism. In his earlier work Mysticism, Sacred and Profane,³¹ Zaehner tried to show that there is a variety of mystical experiences and that there is a great divide between the two basic types of religious mysticism, as he puts it, one which has regard for love, and the other which disregards love altogether, opting for a unity or an escape or 'liberation' from the phenomenal world. But very rarely do these two forms combine into a unitary "oneness" experience. He mentions mystics who apparently had both the experiences--such as Ruysbroeck, the Ṣūfī Al-Junayd of Bhagdad, Ibn Tufayl of Andalusia and Najm al-Dīn Rāzī. And he finds this represented in the Gītā as well. But unlike other interpreters who view one of the strands as a preparatory stage for the other, Zaehner is convinced that the whole purpose of the text is "to demonstrate that love of a personal God, so far from being only a convenient preparation for the grand unitary experience of spiritual 'liberation' (the moksa or mukti of the Upanishads, and vimutti of the

Buddhists), was also the crown of this experience itself which, without it, must remain imperfect."³² What Zaehner is saying in effect is roughly that, a) it is possible to have a simultaneous experience of both unity and love; b) in accordance with the hierarchy as Zaehner established earlier among mystical experiences in which the most perfect form is one that entails love for a personal Godhead, the Gītā elevates this form over all other forms of mysticism, including jñāna and buddhi-yogas; and c) therefore the Gītā does teach about the highest form of mysticism as being one that goes beyond the experience of total oneness or 'liberation'. Zaehner denies that he is reading his own interpretation into the Gītā, or even that of Lamotte on whom he relies heavily and whom he quotes as saying that the final stage of deliverance is "union with Krishna, the Bhagavat", and not with "brahman", for "Krishna who had supplanted the brahman both in theodicy and in cosmology now surpasses it in eschatology too."³³ Perhaps Zaehner wanted to say, with a few other Western scholars, that by the time of the Gītā the Hindus had evolved towards a more enlightened and clear grasp of God and, leaving behind the unfortunate "metaphysical irrelevancies" of the Upaniṣads, had come closer to the awareness that it is through the love of a Personal God only that one attains salvation. And this therefore must be the central theme of the Gītā, as Rāmānuja, according to Zaehner, also confirmed in his commentary. In this regard then, Hinduism through the Bhagavad-gītā, does cross the

"great divide" and joins hands with forms of mysticism peculiar and perhaps unique to Christianity and Islām. However, Zaehner would warn that if one took seriously the interpretation of Śaṅkara or of his followers, or even that of Radhakrishnan, one would continue to believe that the Gītā taught a form of unitary experience as the hallmark of mysticism, but such a one according to Zaehner, remains on the other side of the divide, and is promised at best an imperfect state of 'liberation'. But I have attempted to show the Gītā does not fall easily on either side of the divide; if anything, the Gītā attempts to transcend it and comes to rest on yet another dimension of mystical experience as its finalé.

It might be remarked in conclusion that unless one attempts to view the Gītā from a meta-theological perspective, with hermeneutical openness, and makes clear the assumptions in the translation and interpretation offered and the judgements made about the meaning and nature of the text, the task of interpreting the Gītā will remain fraught with perils and pitfalls. Zaehner does not detach himself, I believe, from the bias stemming from his background, and traditional commitments project themselves in his treatment of the Gītā. But his work has raised many pertinent questions and has contributed to the dialogue across different religious systems. Therein lies its greatest merit.

2NOTES

1. Eric J. Sharpe, "Some Western Interpretations of the Bhagavad Gītā, 1785-1885," The Journal of Studies in the Bhagavadgītā, Vol. I (1981), pp. 1-28.
2. Robert N. Minor, "The Bhagavad-gītā and Modern Scholarship: An Appraisal of Introductory Conclusions," loc. cit., pp. 29-60.
3. Published by the Oxford University Press, 1969 (paperback 1973).
4. Zaehner does rely heavily on the translation and interpretation of Lamotte as becomes clearer in the text. He mentions, though half-approvingly, the translations by Franklin Edgerton (1944), Douglas P. Hill (1953) and the rendering by Sir Edwin Arnold. In footnote he acknowledges S. Radhakrishnan's translation as the best known modern work, and mentions there that the Gītā "has also been commented on by such illustrious figures as Mahatma Gandhi, Aurobindo Ghose, and Vinoba Bhave" (loc. cit., p. 1 footnote 1). On the whole, Zaehner believes that most recent translations are inaccurate and biased.
5. Zaehner is quoting from Lamotte's Notes sur la Gītā (Paris: Geuthner, 1929), p. 127. See R. C. Zaehner, supra pp. 2-3.
6. Ibid., p. 1. Rudolf Otto also attempted this.
7. Ibid., p. 6. Also see Robert P. Minor's lengthy discussion on this very issue.

8. R. C. Zaehner, op. cit., pp. 8, 37, 40; and comments on Gītā XVIII.53.
9. A brief discussion of this appeared as "A Critique of Zaehner's Treatment of Buddhi-yoga," Bulletin of the Yoga Research Centre, No. 3 (1980), pp. 34-41.
10. See A. H. Armstrong and R. Ravindra, "The Dimensions of the Self: Buddhi in the Bhagavad-Gītā and Psyche in Plotinus," Religious Studies, 15 (1979), p. 333. I have argued elsewhere that there are four basic Yogas which are dealt with at length in the Gītā: "The Historical Eight-limbs of Yōga," Religious Experience Reader 2 (Unit B, Weeks 6-10) (Geelong: Deakin University, 1979), pp. 227-230.
11. See e.g., S. Radhakrishnan whom Zaehner dismissed often enough, as he also dismisses P. Deussen (op. cit., p. 147, notes to II.50).
12. Op. cit., p. 147, notes to II.50.
13. For a translation see S. Radhakrishnan, The Ten Principal Upaniṣads (London, 1974), pp. 623-34.
14. Op. cit., p. 139 notes. My italics.
- 14a. II.41.
15. However, in his Mysticism Sacred and Profane (Oxford University Press, 1957), Zaehner offers a better reading of buddhi: "...may be translated as 'mind' though buddhi would also include the will. Its functions are mental effort (adhyavasāya), virtue (dharma), knowledge, absence of passion, and lordship." (p. 108) He acknowl-

edges that this is the Sāṃkhya view of buddhi.

16. Op. cit., p. 22.
17. I owe this remark to Professor Charlesworth.
18. Op. cit., p. 142.
19. Ibid., p. 153.
20. A. H. Armstrong and R. Ravindra, op. cit., p. 335.
21. Ibid., p. 335.
22. Gītā IV.21.
23. This section (III) as also the next (IV) appeared in a somewhat modified form in Hinduism (London) Winter-Autumn issues, 1981, Nos. 93-94.
24. R. C. Zaehner, The Bhagavad-Gītā, passim; and Mysticism Sacred and Profane, p. 172. Zaehner urges "...a sharp distinction must be drawn between those forms of religion in which love or charity plays a predominant part and in which it does not. In Christian mysticism love is all-important, and it must be so, since God Himself is defined as Love. In Islām, too, because Islām inherited more than they knew from the Christians.... In Hinduism, this religion of love breaks through in the Gītā and in the cults of both Viṣṇu and Śiva, and of course, in the worship of Rāma and Krishna as incarnations of Viṣṇu.... And in monism there can be no love--there is ecstasy and trance and deep peace, what Ruysbroeck calls 'rest', but there cannot be th ecstasy of union nor the loss of self in God which is the goal of Christian, Muslim, and of all theistic mysticism." On this basis Zaehner argues

that the Gītā is essentially a scripture of theistic mysticism, which to him is the highest form of mysticism, while the Upaniṣads are basically texts of monistic mysticism which is a lower form of mysticism--because there is no love and no Personal God in most of the Upaniṣads.

25. Eliot Deutsch, The Bhagavad Gītā (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968), Part II, p. 17. Deutsch goes on to remark "The highest Spirit, then, is at once Brahman and Ishvara, the first of the gods. And It is unknowable." For this he finds support also in the following verse from X.15: "Only Thou knowest Thyself by Thyself, O Supreme spirit (purushottama), Source of beings, Lord of creatures, God of gods, Lord of the world!" To stress the uniqueness of purushottama, Deutsch remarks "Purushottama is in a sense identical with these manifestations (as Brahman, Īshvara, purusha and prakṛiti) of Itself, and yet is not identified with them--that is, It is not exhausted by them."
26. Ibid., p. 171.
27. See Śaṅkarācārya's commentary on the Bhagavad-Gītā, in Chapter XIV. (Translated with notes by Alladi Mahadev Sastry, 1897, reprinted by Samata Books, Madras; p. 394 ff.). He says first that it could be the realisation of Brahman as abiding in the Pratyagātman, the true Inner Self; then he says it could be referring to Brahman as Īśvara-Śakti through whose grace and potential energy

the devotee realises the Lord; or could be an assertion on part of the Conditioned Brahman as abiding in the Unconditioned Brahman, the Immortal and Indestructible.

28. E. Deutsch, op. cit., p. 167.
29. S. Radhakrishnan (ed. and trs.) Bhagavadgītā (New Delhi: Blackie & Son [India], 1974).
30. Ibid., p. 372.
31. See note 24 above.
32. R. C. Zaehner, The Bhagavad-Gītā, p. 3.
33. Ibid.