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## **BHAGAVADGĪTĀ, ROMAN INGARDEN AND THE CONCEPT OF RESPONSIBILITY<sup>1</sup>**

This article provides an analysis of the Hindu concept of action (*karman*) in relation to the concept of responsibility proposed by Roman Ingarden in his paper “On Responsibility. Its Ontic Foundations” (Ingarden 1983). Hindu moral theory is discussed using selected chapters of the *Bhagavadgītā*. It will be shown that the concept of responsibility, as understood by Ingarden, is a good tool for the analysis of Hindu moral theory. Through the analysis it will also allow me to specify some similarities and differences between Hindu ethics on one hand and that proposed by Ingarden on the other.

*Keywords:* Action in Hinduism, *karman*, *Bhagavadgītā*

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## 1. Introductory remarks

In the paper, an analysis of the Hindu concept of action (*karman*) is offered using the concept of responsibility as proposed by Roman Ingarden in his paper “On Responsibility. Its Ontic Foundations”.<sup>2</sup> Hindu moral theory will be discussed on the basis of selected chapters of the *Bhagavadgītā* (hence BhG). It will be shown that the concept of responsibility, as understood by Ingarden, is a useful tool for the analysis of Hindu moral theory as it clarifies aspects of that moral theory which is usually expressed in metaphors or even only implied, but is fundamental for understanding Hindu philosophy and ethic. The analysis also allows for the specification of some similarities and differences between Hindu ethics and that proposed by Ingarden.

It is well known to every Indologist that the semantic range of the word *karman* encompasses the whole scenario of action, i.e. action as completed, its value deriving from the intention of the agent and its link with the agent the potential outcome of which will be the form of the future rebirth.<sup>3</sup> The relationship between the agent and his action is often conceived in terms of the various phases of the occupation of farming. As during ploughing, man necessarily becomes dirty, in the same way, man as an agent is influenced by his actions. The influence of action on the agent is conceived in terms of soil. It is also conceived in terms of eating the fruit of what has been sown earlier which implies that past actions are present in the agent in their latent form and will manifest themselves at the right time. And, as the form of the eater depends on what he eats, the agent assumes the form appropriate to his past deeds, either in the same life, or in the next one.

## 2. The concept of *karman* in the BhG

In Hindu philosophy, cosmos, society and man are conceived as temporal and spatial manifestations of the absolute reality which, as the Whole, is unmanifest (Jurewicz 2016). In other words, cosmos, society and man are manifest aspects of this absolute Whole.

<sup>2</sup> Ingarden (1983: 53-119)

<sup>3</sup> In some later schools of classical Hindu philosophy, the link between the agent and his action is named by separate words (*apūrva*, *adr̥ṣṭa* (Halbfass 1991: 291-345). There is also a chapter in the *Mokṣadharmaparvan* (12.174) where we find a separate term for the link between the agent and his action (*vidhāna*), see Jurewicz (2006). For the concept of *karman* in classical Indian traditions, see Doniger (1980). For the early Hindu-Buddhist debate on *karman* see Gombrich (1996, 2009).

The word *karman*, in its general meaning, denotes specific activity of each part of the cosmos and of each member of the social estate. The distinctive nature of their activity is regulated by law (*dharma*). Hence, in respect of men, the meaning of the word *karman* is enlarged to include the meaning of duty.<sup>4</sup>

The BhG is a dialogue between Kṛṣṇa, the incarnation of the god Viṣṇu, and Arjuna, the warrior. The dialogue takes place on the battle field, just before the great war begins between two families and their allies. Arjuna decides not to fight and the aim of Kṛṣṇa's argument is to persuade Arjuna that he should. Kṛṣṇa argues as follows. The existence of the cosmos, society and man is guaranteed by the constant action of the absolute reality. Since it is one, it is everything, so it has neither external reason to act, nor does it take any advantage from its action. But still, it acts, because were it to stop its movement, the world would disappear. The movement of reality is called *karman*:

*na me pārthāsti kartavyaṃ triṣu lokeṣu kiñcana |*  
*nānavāptam avāptavyaṃ varta eva ca karmaṇi || 3.22.*

Arjuna, there is nothing whatsoever that I need to do in any of the three worlds, heaven, air, and the earth. There is nothing to gain that I have not already gained, and yet I am still engaged in action.

*utsīdeyur ime lokā na kuryāṃ karma ced aham |*  
*saṃkarasya ca kartā syāṃ upahanyāṃ imāḥ prajāḥ || 3.24*

All worlds would collapse if I myself did not perform any work. I would thus become an agent of the caste confusion, and I would wind up destroying all of these creatures.<sup>5</sup>

Man is identical with the absolute reality and should behave like it behaves. In order to do that, he has to awake his absolute essence or self (*ātman*) and allow it to act through him. Such a man is called liberated (*mukta*). And because the absolute reality manifests itself in action, man should be active too and undertake action (*karman*) which corresponds to his social estate.

Arjuna is a warrior. Within the frames of body metaphor used to conceive society, this social state is conceived as the manifestation of

<sup>4</sup> The holistic meaning of *karman* also includes "ritual", but for the present discussion this meaning can be seen as synonymous with "duty".

<sup>5</sup> All the translations of the BhG are by Thompson (2008).

arms. The specific action (*karman*) of arms is fight in order to protect oneself. Hence Arjuna, in order to realize the identity of himself with the absolute reality, should recognize this fact and behave accordingly to it.

Before I go on, let me emphasize one more thing. Although on the concrete level, the topic of the BhG is the problem which could be summarized, at least at its beginning, as “to fight or not to fight?”, on the more general level, the BhG is a general ethical discourse on action conceived in terms of war. War is a very expressive model of action because man in war faces ultimate situations, in the psychological and moral sense, and his actions are irreversible.<sup>6</sup>

### 3. The features of the responsible agent

Ingarden begins his discussion on responsibility with the analysis of features which should characterize an agent able to bear responsibility. The most important feature of such an agent is that he should be aware of what he does and what the consequences of his actions will be (pp. 55-56). According to the BhG too, awareness should characterize the agent and its range is even wider than that proposed by Ingarden. Man should be fully aware of the entire context of his action, social, cosmic and, finally, the absolute one. The aim of Kṛṣṇa's teaching is to make Arjuna aware of this context. To return to Ingarden — he states that the agent who is able to be responsible for his action should actively perform it. Its action cannot be “a purely passive tolerating of something which happens to the agent, or some involuntary, automatically induced reaction” (p. 56). In the same way, Kṛṣṇa urges Arjuna to fight actively and with full involvement (BhG 3.25-26, see below, section 5).

### 4. The features of an action for which one can be responsible. Action and its value

Having discussed the features of the responsible agent, Ingarden analyses features of the action for which one can be responsible. He says that these are the actions which “are carriers of some positive or negative value” or “they at least indirectly lead to the emergence of

<sup>6</sup> It is worth noting that in the same way war was understood by existentialists (e.g. Sartre 1965). I would like to thank Agnieszka Drotkiewicz for directing my attention to this.

a factual state bearing a value character” (p. 58). Playing solitaire in free time is not the activity the agent of which can be judged as responsible or not. However, if this activity made someone neglect his duty, then responsibility emerges, but then “the responsibility weighs on him not for the harmless playing of solitaire, but for the neglect of his duties” (p. 58). As already said, the concept of *karman* also encompasses the meaning of the activity of parts of the cosmos and of action which should be performed by men. They are regulated by the law (*dharma*). Both, cosmos and man are manifestations of the absolute reality. Manifested in the cosmos, reality submits to the law always and unconditionally. However, man may submit to the law, or may not. And this is the case of Arjuna: he does not want to perform the action prescribed by his *dharma* of the warrior. We can see then that within the semantic range of *karman*, the meaning of the action which carries a moral value is also present. If a man performs the duty ascribed to him by *dharma*, he will realise the positive value of his *karman*. If he evades it, he will actualize the negative value.

According to Ingarden, the fact that there are positive and negative values which can be realized in action, is the first ontic foundation of responsibility (p. 69). Values should not be considered as historically conditioned and the fact that they are not always and everywhere recognized is not an argument for them not to exist. Their negation leads to the negation of the possibility of any responsibility (p. 76). In Hindu moral philosophy, the ontic dimension of values can also be seen in the real influence of values of the action upon the agent which determines his future incarnation. Man is embodied in the form commensurate with the values of his deeds, we could say, he is the visible form of those values.

## 5. The features of an action for which one can be responsible.

### “Own” Action

According to Ingarden, “the agent is responsible for the deed performed by him and for its result if and only if it is his own deed” (p. 59). It should “spring forth from the I-centre” of the agent (p. 60). The *I-centre* should constantly command and direct “the execution of action which emanates from it” (p. 60). Ingarden discerns two kinds of one’s *own action*. In the first case, the *I-centre* undertakes an action only out of necessity, because it cannot do otherwise (p. 61). Here, “the approval is granted to some mode of behaviour, without the

I actually assimilating it or making it its own” (p. 61). This kind of action is not the real *own action*.

According to the BhG, there are people who undertake actions in accordance with their *dharma* and thus fulfil their duty just because they think that they should be done and fulfilled. Kṛṣṇa describes them as follows:

*saktāḥ karmany avidvāṃso yathā kurvanti bhārata |  
kuryād vidvāṃs tathāsaktaś cikīrṣur lokasaṃgraham* ||3.25

Just as the ignorant who are attached to their actions continue to act, so the man of knowledge also acts, though without attachment, since he pursues the protection of the world.

*na buddhibhedam janayed ajñānām karmasaṅginām |  
joṣayet sarvakarmāṇi vidvān yuktaḥ samācaran* || 3.26

The man of knowledge, disciplined and active, should not confuse the understanding of the ignorant who are attached to action. He should let them take pleasure in their actions.<sup>7</sup>

Here the agents are described as attached to their actions. Attachment (*sakti*, *saṅga*) is the state of mind when it is obsessively focused on the aim of one’s action. This mental attitude is based on the conviction that the agent does not possess something, but he can possess it thanks to his action. Such agents are called “ignorants” because they do not understand the truth about the unity of reality.<sup>8</sup> However, Kṛṣṇa postulates that such agents should be an example for the man of knowledge, i. e. for an aware agent who knows the truth. He should be involved in his action in the same way as they, with a similar effort and involvement, because only then can he be the responsible agent (see above, section 3). Moreover, he should not muddle them in their everyday practice. This is because their actions carry some positive values for themselves and for the world (see below, section 6). Their actions, however, do not emerge from their deepest *I-centre*, but from an external necessity (like expectations of their

<sup>7</sup> Thompson translates the stanza in a slightly different way: “The man of knowledge should not confuse the understanding of the ignorants who are attached to action. Like one disciplined in yoga, he should let them take pleasure in their actions.”

<sup>8</sup> The reverse situation is when the agent, through his action, wants to avoid something of which he is afraid.

families, general sense of duty etc.). In Ingarden terms, their actions are not fully their own actions.

The second kind of action which, according to Ingarden, can be called one's own is performed only when "I" is not conditioned by any external motivations and causes. It "proceeds to engage in the endeavor of acting" (p. 61). According to the BhG, such a state of complete unconditionality from external motives and reasons can be realized by the liberated man. Such a man has awakened his absolute self and has experienced his ontic unity with everything that exists. For such a man there is no external motive or reason for his action. Kṛṣṇa describes such a man as follows:

*yas tv ātmaratir eva syād ātmatṛptaś ca mānavah |  
ātmany eva ca saṃtuṣṭas tasya kāryam na vidyate || 3.17*

But the man who takes pleasure only in the self, and is satisfied only with the self, and finds his contentment in the self alone — for him there is nothing to do at all!

*naiva tasya kṛtenārtho nākṛteneha kaś cana |  
na cāsya sarvabhūteṣu kaś cid arthavyapāśrayaḥ || 3.18*

For him there is no purpose whatsoever in what he has done or in what he hasn't done. Nor does he depend on other creatures at all to give the purpose to his life.

The liberated man acts in the same way as Kṛṣṇa at BhG 3.22 quoted above (section 2): because he wants to act and not because he has to. In Ingarden's terms, such a person performs his own action.

## **6. Paradoxical nature of the highest state of responsibility**

Summing up his analysis of the relationship between one's own action and responsibility, Ingarden states that the highest degree of responsibility is realized when "the deed is undertaken and accomplished in full awareness with intent and with premeditation by the personal I" (p. 65). And, as he points out, here we come across the paradoxical nature of responsibility. If an agent agrees to assume responsibility for his action, this finally leads to its annihilation in reference to this concrete action. As he puts it:

"But the assuming of responsibility and compliance with the requirements directed at the agent which follow therefrom, as well as the

fulfillment of what is demanded from him, relieve him of his blame and his responsibility becomes thereby debilitated or annulled.” (p. 67)

In the BhG, the relationship between the liberated agent and responsibility is understood in a similarly paradoxical way. We have just seen that there are people who perform actions according to their *dharma* with their absolute self not awakened (see above, BhG 3.25-26, section 3). They realize positive value for the world and for themselves. The world preserves its consistence and harmony (*lokasaṃgraha*) thanks to their actions. Moreover, thanks to the performance of actions which carry positive value, those agents influence their future incarnations. Their present ontic situation is shaped by their past actions. In the same way, their actions, which carry positive value will shape their future, better incarnation. And it may happen that those people will develop so valuable a psycho-mental organism that they will be able to wake up their absolute self. It may happen after many incarnations but will happen for sure. When Arjuna asks Kṛṣṇa about the future of people who have not managed to finally liberate themselves in this life, Kṛṣṇa answers:

*pārtha naiveha nāmutra vināśas tasya vidyate |  
na hi kalyāṇakṛt kaś cid durgatiṃ tāta gacchati || 6.40*

Arjuna, my friend, neither in this world nor in the next does that one perish, for anyone who has done some measure of good cannot possibly take the wrong path.

*prāpya puṇyakṛtāṃ lokān uṣitvā śāśvatīḥ samāḥ |  
śucīnām śrīmatām gehe yogabhraṣṭo bhijāyate || 6.41*

He goes to the worlds that he has made with his good actions, and he dwells in them for endless years. Then the man who has stayed away from yoga is reborn into a house of the pure and the blessed.

*tatra taṃ buddhisam yogaṃ labhate paurvadehikam |  
yatate ca tato bhūyaḥ saṃsiddhau kurunandana || 6.43*

There he obtains the kind of understanding that he had gained from his previous body. And then, Arjuna, the joy of the Kurus, he strives further toward perfection.

When the absolute self of the agent is awakened, the agent begins to act under its guidance and will never be reborn. This is because

<sup>9</sup> Here the responsibility is identified with blame which makes Ingarden's exposition less clear (see also below, Conclusion).



action manifests in the agent in the very moment of its performance and only then. Using the frame of the farming metaphor, we could say that the actions do not leave any dirt and they do not ripen in order to give fruits later. This is the state in which action, its value, its aim and its result are realized all at once. In this state, there is only an acting agent. This situation goes beyond everyday understanding of action, because it is the absolute in the most literal meaning: it is the Absolute which acts through the human agent.

Ingarden's concept of responsibility allows us to see this situation very precisely. When a liberated man, consciously and of his own volition, directed by his deepest absolute self, undertakes the action prescribed to him by *dharma*, he assumes responsibility which is abolished in the very moment of its assumption. The composer of the BhG is aware that such an action cannot be called "action" in the everyday sense and he calls such action a "non-action" (BhG 4.18).

### 7. The opposite state of the highest responsibility

Ingarden also describes the state which is opposed to the state of highest responsibility. It takes place when the agent is forced to act either because the external conditions exert the most pressing influence on the agent or because he is not aware of what is going on. In this state, there is no responsibility at all. Ingarden uses the example of the situation of a woman who is raped (p. 65). The BhG does not use this example, but also discusses a situation when a deed is forced by an external influence. Kṛṣṇa says:

*yad ahaṃkāraṃ āśritya na yotsya iti manyase |  
mithyaiṣa vyavasāyas te prakṛtis tvāṃ niyokṣyati || (18.59)<sup>10</sup>*

If your frame of I<sup>11</sup> leads you to think "I will not fight," your resolve will be useless. Nature itself will compel you in any case.

*svabhāvajena kaunteya nibaddhaḥ svena karmaṇā |  
kartuṃ necchasi yan mohāt kariṣyasi avaśo 'pi tat ||(18.6)*

Arjuna, you are bound by your own action, which arises from your very nature. You will do unwillingly the very thing that you wish not to do because of your delusion.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> For the meaning of this stanza see also below, section 8.

<sup>11</sup> Thompson translates *ahaṃkāra* as "egotism".

<sup>12</sup> Thompson translates the second half of this stanza slightly differently: «You will do unwillingly the very thing that you wish not to do. This is delusion.»

At this moment of discussion, Arjuna's dilemma is not "to fight or not to fight?". Now, his dilemma can be formulated as "to fight voluntarily or coercively?". Arjuna is a very well-trained warrior, taught how to react instinctively. Together with<sup>13</sup> Kṛṣṇa, he stands between two armies eager to fight. The war will take place notwithstanding the decision Arjuna will take. And when anyone attacks him, he will respond automatically. Most probably, Arjuna is also somehow forced by social expectations of which he may be aware. Finally, the word *prakṛti* not only refers to the nature of the agent, but also to the nature of the world. And since the world is the manifestation of the acting Absolute, its nature forces everyone to act. The concept of man in terms of which society is conceived can help here: Arjuna is part of the Absolute's arms which will fight notwithstanding whether Arjuna takes part in this action or not. Arjuna can activate his absolute self and voluntarily make a decision to be a visible sign of the activity of arms (BhG 11.33). If he does not make this decision, he will anyway perform this action he does not want to perform — as if "raped" by the very nature of the world. This specific nature of the world is expressed using three attributes (*guṇa*). They are: *sattva* (being), *rajas* (passion) and *tamas* (darkness). The structure [of these three categories] reflects the elements of the scenario of any action: *sattva* describes aspects of the world connected with its subject, *tamas* describes aspects of the world connected with its objects and *rajas* describes aspects of the world connected with activity itself. The three attributes are not only descriptive, but also evaluative: the phenomenon qualified as *sattvic* is evaluated positively, the phenomenon which is qualified as *tamasic* is evaluated negatively. In the two last chapters of the BhG (17-18), various elements of the world and man are evaluated according to those three attributes. Among others, three types of agent are analyzed. The features of the *sattvic* agent are very similar to the features of the agent able to assume responsibility as enumerated by Ingarden. These are: moral courage, bravery, internal strength, "perseverance in bearing responsibility, skill to grasp positive and negative values", "sensitive conscience", "strength to overcome his own inclinations or desires" (p. 84). In the BhG the agent is free of the

<sup>13</sup> Ingarden also gives the situation of a fight as the example of an automatic reaction: «when a blow instantly elicits a counterblow, a counterblow from which the given person cannot refrain and whose particular nature he cannot apprehend" (p. 56)

frame of <sup>14</sup> I, his awareness should not be clouded by attachment (18.17)<sup>15</sup>, he is determined and vigorous, unchanged by success or failure (18.26)<sup>16</sup>15, his reason discerns between activity and its cessation, between what is obligatory and what is not, between fear and fearlessness (18.30)<sup>17</sup> and his resolve allows him to control his organism (18.33)<sup>18</sup>.

On the other hand, the *tamasic* agent is the agent who does not understand the world and himself, is even not able to understand it and he is forced to act by external factors and not his own free will.<sup>19</sup> BhG 18.60 quoted above, presents delusion (*moha*) as the reason that Arjuna could refrain from his duty. We can presume that if he makes this decision, he will be the *tamasic* agent evaluated very negatively. Probably, Ingarden would interpret the situation as Arjuna being forced by the social and cosmic influence, so he cannot be responsible for his actions. According to Kṛṣṇa, however, Arjuna will bear the responsibility which will shape the afterlife form of tamasic agents in hells and on earth, horrible and full of suffering (see BhG 16). We can see then that according to the composers of the BhG, the state which is opposite to the state of highest responsibility realized by the liberated man, can also be seen as the state of the highest responsibility, but realized in a contrary way. The more unaware the agent is, the higher is his responsibility and the more difficult it is to get rid of it. When he becomes an aware agent, he is able to assume the highest responsibility and to immediately get rid of it. If Arjuna kills his enemies, forced by external circumstances, he will be reborn in hells and then, in a miserable form on earth. If he kills out of his free will, motivated by his absolute self,

<sup>14</sup> On the concept of the frame of I (*ahamkāra*), see also below, section 8.

<sup>15</sup> *yasya nāhaṃkṛto bhāvo buddhir yasya na līpyate | hatvāpi sa imāṃl lokān na hanti na nibadhyate* (18.017).

<sup>16</sup> *muktasaṅgo 'nahaṃvādī dhṛtyutsāhasamanvitaḥ | siddhyasiddhyor nirvikāraḥ kartā sāttvika ucyate ||* (18.26).

<sup>17</sup> *pravṛttiṃ ca nivṛttiṃ ca kāryākārye bhayābhaye | bandhaṃ mokṣaṃ ca yā vetti buddhiḥ sā pārtha sāttvikī ||* 18.30.

<sup>18</sup> *dhṛtyā yayā dhārayate manaḥ prāṇendriyakriyāḥ | yogenāvyabhicāriṇyā dhṛtiḥ sā pārtha sāttvikī ||* (18.33)

<sup>19</sup> *anubandhaṃ kṣayaṃ hiṃsām anapeksya ca pauraṣam | mohād ārabhyate karma yat tat tāmasam ucyate ||* (18.25)

*adharmam dharmam iti yā manyate tamasāvṛtā | sarvārthān viparītāṃś ca buddhiḥ sā pārtha tāmasī ||* (18.32)

*yayā svapnaṃ bhayaṃ śokaṃ viśādaṃ madam eva ca | na vimuñcati durmedhā dhṛtiḥ sā pārtha tāmasī ||* (18.35)

he will not bear any responsibility for his action and will never be reborn.

### 8. Ontic fundaments of responsibility.

As already mentioned, Ingarden sees value as the first ontic fundament of responsibility. The second fundament is the personal identity of the agent. It is the necessary condition of the possibility to assume responsibility and to get rid of it (p. 78). In Hindu thought, the personal identity of the agent is guaranteed by the faculty called *ahaṃkāra* (the I-maker). It is a mental faculty which allows the cognizing subject to discern itself from the cognized object. As long as this frame is treated ontologically, the absolute self present in the human agent cannot be awakened. In the BhG 18.59 quoted above (section 7), Kṛṣṇa sees the frame of *I* as the reason for the wrong decision about resignation from action. When man realizes that the division into subject and object is only epistemic and not real, he will understand the unity of reality. Such a man, devoid of the frame of *I* (BhG 18.26, see section 7 and note 16), is liberated.

Ingarden's concept of responsibility is again useful in the description of this situation: when the personal identity disappears in the moment of liberation, the responsibility for the past actions disappears too. The frame of *I* is a faculty of the agent who is endowed with reason (*buddhi*), mind (*manas*) and sensual cognitive powers. This cluster of cognitive abilities is called the *subtle body* (*sukṣmaśarīra*). It envelops the absolute self and transmigrates from one physical body to another (BhG 15.7-10, 13.5). All human beings have the same absolute self, but their subtle and physical bodies differ, because they are shaped by their past actions. In Ingarden's words, it is the subtle and physical body of the agent which bears the responsibility for the past actions and is shaped by it. In his discussion of the personal identity of the agent, Ingarden emphasizes that responsibility can be assumed only by personal *I* and not the pure ego of the original transcendental consciousness (p. 81). Although "both, the pure ego and the personal I can be equally correctly considered as the axis of every action and responsibility" (p. 82), the pure ego is an abstraction realized during the process of phenomenological reduction.

According to Husserl, in this process, the transcendental consciousness is recognized as the metaphysical residuum which is opposite to the real man, and, especially his soul or person (p. 83). And, as

Ingarden claims, we can talk about responsibility only in case of a real agent characterized by specific features, psychic and physical, who performs a real action conditioned by real circumstances (p. 84). In the philosophy of the BhG, the pure transcendental consciousness corresponds to the absolute self of the agent and the personal *I* corresponds to the human organism composed of subtle and physical bodies which envelop the self. In the moment of liberation, the absolute self becomes active and annihilates responsibility for all the actions performed by the human organism.

The analysis of the Hindu moral philosophy with the use of Ingarden's concept of responsibility has allowed me to argue that the body of the liberated man is constantly created as long as he acts. If he stopped, the body would disappear because there is no personal agent and no responsibility which could weld the agent and his actions. Moreover, it is responsibility which can be seen as the main motive of creation of the world. In the pre-creative state, the absolute reality is not active. The beginning of creation is the beginning of action. The absolute action is free of responsibility. The responsibility appears when the absolute reality creates its cosmic, social and human organisms and manifests as various agents whose actions (*karman*) and responsibility (*karman*) are various too.

The next ontic fundament of responsibility mentioned by Ingarden is temporality of the world (p. 105.). Discussion of the relationship between time and *karman* in the BhG and other texts of this period would go beyond the present paper.<sup>20</sup> Action is possible only in the world ruled by the spatio-temporal divisions which cause past actions not to manifest simultaneously and in all agents at once. When time is abolished (as in the situation of the liberated man), responsibility is abolished too.

According to Ingarden, freedom is the next ontic fundament of responsibility. He says that it is possible thanks to the structure of the person and of the world in which a person acts which ensure freedom of decision and action (p. 84). As I have shown elsewhere, freedom is the only attribute of the absolute reality in its unmanifest state (Jurewicz

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<sup>20</sup> The composer of MBh 12.174 mentioned in the beginning of the paper who introduces a separate term to name the link between the agent and his actions (*vidhāna*) postulates time as the necessary condition of this link, see Jurewicz (2003). See also Vassilkov (1999).

2016: 314-318) and is reflected in the structure of cosmos and man. At the end of his teaching, Kṛṣṇa says:

*iti te jñānam ākhyātaṃ guhyād guhyataraṃ mayā |  
vimṛśyāitad aśeṣeṇa yathecchasi tathā kuru || (18.63)*

Such is the wisdom I have taught you, the most secret of secrets! Consider it fully. And then do what you wish.

Arjuna is completely free in his decisions about his actions. Although he has cognized and experienced his absolute self thanks to Kṛṣṇa's teaching and manifestation (chapter 11), he himself will decide about his participation in the battle and the way he will fight.

### 9. Conclusion

This analysis of the concept of responsibility proposed by Ingarden is a very good tool to understand the Hindu concept of *karman*. The fact that one word *karman* encompasses action and responsibility betrays conviction of the Hindu philosophers that they are inseparable in everyday life. They can be separated only in liberation, a state which breaks all the everyday rules and is the absolute state. In conclusion it is evident that it is responsibility which is the fundamental concept of Hindu moral philosophy. It is responsibility which shapes the form of man, in his mental, psychic and physical dimensions. It is possible only in the temporal world where the man can act as personal agent, aware and free. In this respect, the moral philosophy of Ingarden and of the BhG postulate the same thing.

There are other important similarities between the moral thought of Ingarden and the composers of the BhG. Both postulate that responsibility is a necessary aspect of action. Both assume that responsibility influences the personal agent, and that the highest state of responsibility causes its annihilation. However, this state is conceived differently. In the BhG, it takes place when the agent becomes acting Absolute. Then he is free of responsibility forever. According Ingarden, the agent can get rid of responsibility only with regard to one deed. His ontic situation does not change: he is still a mortal being facing new challenges. The difference can also be seen in the way the state opposite to the highest state of responsibility is seen. It happens when the agent is not aware of what is going on and he is forced to perform an action. According to Ingarden, in this state, the agent is not responsible for his action at all. In the BhG, this is also the state

of highest responsibility which finally manifests itself in the most horrible forms of the agent.

The Hindu understanding of responsibility can also be useful in the analysis of Ingarden's philosophy. Ingarden usually refers to the responsibility when the negative value is realized and sometimes he almost identifies responsibility with guilt. This model has the result that it is not very clear how Ingarden understood the responsibility for the right action. In the Hindu concept of *karman*, both kinds of responsibility are balanced. The responsibility is symmetrical and the nature of how it is assumed differs only in signs: each action, good or bad, is linked with the agent in the same way and one can get rid of it in the same way too. If Ingarden knew about Hindu moral concepts, he could use them in his own theory with good results.

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