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## **Mukti In Advait Vedānt : A View**

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For Achārya Shankar Moksha is the immediate experience of the real nature of the self. Moksha is the freedom from pain without any possibility of returns. Liberation is the eternal happiness. Basically Moksha is not a postmortem state but it can be realised even here while in embodiment. It is known as jīvanmukti. There is no becoming in moksha, the individual self does not really become Brahman for it always is Brahman itself, there is nothing to be left or acquired here (heyopādeyashūnyatvam). 'He who knows brahman becomes brahman' it means that Brahman cannot be known by finite thought as an object as Shankar identifies moksha with Brahman.

Shankar identifies moksha with Brahman. He who knows brahman becomes brahman it also means that it can be expressed directly by realising once unity with it. When one realizes that truth one will live in the world with a sublime unconcerned comparable to the perfect indifferent of inanimate nature.

Brahman knowledge is of the nature of happiness or bliss. It marks the cessation of entire sorrow, it signifies the culmination of all desires, the accomplishment of unaccomplished as it were the attainment of the unattained. He has nothing to accomplish in this world or in the next. Released person revels in the bliss of brahman, and the realisation that he is not different from the absolute gives him felicity and peace.<sup>1</sup>

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The Advait Vedānta has accepted the position that the self is in an ever abiding relationship with the ultimate reality and the non-self is only a mere illusory appearance or has to receive only little consideration. It proclaims that the non self will cease to function at the dawn of right knowledge. Right knowledge is the first hand knowledge of the Identity of the Atman and Brahman.<sup>2</sup>

Knowledge of brahman which leads to the eternal bliss does not depend on performance. Religious texts enjoying injunctions or prohibitions. Knowledge merely instructs.<sup>3</sup>

Knowledge of Brahman culminates in immediate experience and is already an accomplished fact.<sup>4</sup> Action whether secular organic can be done misdone or left undone. Injunction prohibitions options rules and exceptions depend on our thinking. But knowledge leaves no option to ask for its being this or that or for its existence or non existence.<sup>5</sup>

'He who knows brahman becomes brahman.' (Brahma vid brahmaiv bhavati) means that brahman cannot be known by finite thought as an object but is to be experience directly by releasing once unity with it. Shankar gives the following definition for Mukti as Moksh:

Brahmbhavy; Moksh is the realisation of Brahman.

Avidyānivritti; Moksha is the cancellation of avidyā.

Nityam ashariratvam; Moksha is the eternal unembodiedness.

Realisation of Brahman and cancellation of Avidya are the same for both to reveal the absolute as eternal consciousness and bliss. Unembodiedness means the utter unrelatedness of the self with the three types of bodies, gross (sthūl), subtle (sūkshma) and causal (kāran). It is actually absence of the relationship with the body not the absence of the body. Hence jīvanmukti is admitted.

There are two kinds of sorrow or misery which belongs to this world and that which is associated with other world. One who has realise the self there is no misery in this world.

The afflictions of the body are possible for the man who does not see the self and consequently desires things other than it.

Man struggles desiring something for himself, some else for his son, a third thing for his wife and so on, goes the round of births and deaths, and is diseased when his body is diseased. But it never happens for a man who sees everything as a self. The cause of this misery and pain is just because jīva gets itself attached to the psycho-physical organism. When it discriminates its true nature from the illusory name and the metaphysical world, then there is no more misery that is born of the connection of man and woman, or that which was born for himself ie. into which he was born as any thought of the body would only cause pain, and the body abounds in pain.

Ātmā and Brahman are one. The self is really never bound therefore the question of real release actually doesn't arise. Though Avidya the self is imagine to be finite to be an agent and enjoy your to be subject to the cycle of birth and death and this constitutes its bondage. The self is released and infinite ever pure and ever free when this avidya is cancelled by immediate spiritual experience. In fact the self is needed bound nor released. Avidyā is the only thing which appears and avidya which vanishes. The self is always pure eternal and transcendental reality.

In rope snake illusion, the rope does not become a snake even during illusion when it is so mistaken and does not become a snake even during illusion when it when it is so mistaken and does not shed off snakehood and regain its ropehood when the solution is removed by knowledge of the rope. Moksha is the cancellation of transcendental illusion by the immediate experience of real (Avidyānivritti). Though the passage from the state of illusion to the state of knowledge involves temporal sequence, yet time is not a constituent elements or an intervening factor in illusion and its cancellation, because the illusory object is unreal at all time. Ground reality knowledge and cancellation of illusion happen simultaneously. Due to removal of Avidyā there is immediate experience of brahman and then realisation of moksha.

Moksha cannot be accepted as an effect or kārya or produced by anything (utpādyā). It is eternal reality and therefore cannot be produced. It is not the result of phala or Karma (action) or upāsnā (meditation) because if it is something achieved by action or meditation that will be definitely anitya or non-eternal and non eternal moksh is contradictory in terms. No empirical pleasure can be eternal. Also no empirical pleasure can be unmixed as it is always accompanied by pain.

Conviction of the mind that Brahman is real and the universal is unreal, is designated as discrimination between the real and the unreal. Karma requires purity of the mind and without governable mind no spiritual progress is possible. The enquiry into the philosophy of Vedānt should have the capacity to distinguish the discrimination that of Brahman alone is the permanent substance and that all things other than that are transient.

Shankar brings out the nature of moksha in following way, as it is ultimate reality, the absolute pāramārthīc satta which is pure being. It is not eternal in the sense of 'enduring through change' ie. parināmīnitya, for any change in moksh would disturb its purity, it is absolutely eternal that (ie. kūṭasthitya) in the sense of being totally free from change. It is infinite and all pervading like space is beyond space as it is the universal spirit ie. sarvavyāpi. It is beyond causation and causal modifications ie. sarvvikriyārahit. It is ever contended eternal bliss ie. nityatīpt. It is not self conscious and blissful in the sense of consciously enjoying it's own bliss, it is bliss itself, not parted by subject object duality. It is transcendental unity, indivisible and unique ie. niravayava.□...It is abhayapada or fearless goal. It is the highest and in human life known as Param purushartha.

Shankar employs a parable to illustrate the truth about the aquatic doctrine of Mukti.<sup>8</sup>

Mukti, understood as a recognition of the self's identity with Brahman is no bare identity as some have apprehended. In fact, as pointed out before it is identical with brahman and all its fullness,

pūrnatā and richness of contents is there to make it the highest value and goal of life. In discussing Brahman as Satyam, Jñānam and Anantam, both in its Nirgun and Sagun aspects we pointed out at some length that Brahman is not less but immeasurably more than the contents of these expressions. The incapacity of the empirical mind to grasp the contents of the absolute is of course no excuse for it to condemn brahman as bare.<sup>9</sup>

The final knowledge or brahmākārāvṛtti no doubt liberates the body-bound self into a boundless self-vision and consciousness of freedom. But this does not always considered with the disappearance of the body, the erstwhile prison house of the self. From "the supervision of samādhi, wherein one's contact with the infinite is sufficient to make the illusion of all differentiated egos—our own and other men's disappear immediately," some return to the attenuated shell of the differentiated ego to the world of relativity. These are said to enjoy the status of deliverance in life or jīvanmukti, and this concept forms one of the most characteristic features of Advaita philosophy. Besides, jīvanmukti and videhmukti, krama mukti or gradual deliverance and sadyomukti or immediate deliverance are also recognised in Advait.<sup>10</sup>

Sadyomukti or immediate deliverance is brought about by the knowledge of Ātman i.e. the realisation of pure consciousness.<sup>11</sup> Shankar in his commentary on Gīta says that immediate deliverance accrues to those renunciants who have established themselves in samyagadarshan.<sup>12</sup> The reference here is to those whose happiness is within themselves, who delight within themselves, whose light is within those who are yogins and have become one with brahman. Their sins have all dwindled away; their doubts have all been solved; they have perfect sweet over themselves and are intent on promoting the welfare of all living beings. They are free from lust and anger; they have known the self, and are, therefore delivered both in within life and hereafter.<sup>13</sup>

This conception of deliverance hardly differs from that of Jīvanmukti as we shall presently see. Logically, sadyomukti must

be identical with videhmukti or deliverance without embodiment. Both may be alike defined as jñānasamakālamukti - deliverance, simultaneous with the knowledge that saves.<sup>14</sup>

Kramamukti or gradual deliverance refers to the ultimate freedom from nescience which awaits the sādhanika who, due to failure to win the saving knowledge, is obliged to travel to the world of the kārya brahman or hiranyagarbha.<sup>15</sup>

Sādhakās who have ardently worshipped Sagun brahman, i.e., are well-versed in sagunvidyās, move on to higher stations where they progressively gain competence for the saving knowledge. The moment here, of course, relates only to the sūkshmaśarīr of the sādhanika and not to the Ātman which is all pervasive.<sup>16</sup>

For Shankar jīvanmukti is actual liberation. Moksh is not reserved for the dead. Liberation basically means removal of ignorance by knowledge. Once it is dawn, it dawns forever and at once removes all ignorance and consequently all bondage. Therefore, liberation means removal of ignorance by knowledge.<sup>17</sup>

Aśharīram śharīreṣu, the self is actually unembodied even when housed in a body. The jīvanmukt is he who released even while being embodied. There is for him the persistence of the body until the fruition of the residue of prārabdh karm. Though knowledge of truth destroys avidyā that is the material cause of all karm without exception still it does not remove prārabdh karm, since it is itself the fruit of that karma. The continuance of the body even after the destruction of nescience is intelligible on the analogy of the potter's wheel rotating for sometime till the momentum is spent even after the propelling rod is removed. The effect continues to remain for a while after the removal of the cause. In the case of momentary effects it may be admitted that they remain only for one moment after their causes are destroyed. But in respect of the body which is a product of beginningless nescience, says the Advaitin, we must allow considerable lapse of time, before it can be finally resolved.<sup>18</sup>

Prārabdh karm perishes by enjoyment. Both the released and the bound have alike to reap the consequences of their prārabdh. The mukt who has transcended nescience not affected by the ruffle of the empirical life. If he be discomfited at any time it is due to his aversion to the objects of sense.

Knowledge is not the destroyer of prarabdh since it does not bring about the resolution of the world. It reveals only the illusory nature of the universe and by that the later is not resolved. Just as people while not denying the fact of a magical show, know it to be fictitious, the knower of truth, while not discarding the enjoyment generated by prārabdh the cognition of the illusoriness of the world. The obstinacy of prārabdh is in compelling the jīva to enjoy pleasure and suffer pain, and not in postulating the reality of the objects of enjoyment.<sup>19</sup>

The jīvanmukt lives in the world but he is not of it. He awaits only the fruition of the residue of his prārabdh, even in reaping the fruits of his Karma he is unattached and does not lose his balanced deportment. He is compared to a child or lunatic, since he has no conceit in his actions. To his synoptic vision there is neither action nor agent neither enjoyment nor enjoyer. He has transcended the temporal process and temporal categories have no meaning for him. He revels in the bliss of non difference that has not come to be, but which was, is and will ever be.<sup>20</sup>

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