Chapter X

CONCLUSION

No human being is satisfied with the circumstances in which he is placed in this world. From the first cry to the last groan he is in some sort of bondage which he wants to transcend. It has been the endeavour of man to find out ways and means by which he could be free from misery and sorrow. This idea gradually develops into the conception of Moksha or Liberation. Liberation is the ultimate end of life, the focal theme of all life and existence. It is the paramount ideal. It is the ultimate goal of philosophy. Various schools of Indian Philosophy agree in holding that liberation is self-realization or restoring the self to its normal condition. And this condition is the condition of perfection. Hence liberation may also be described as self-perfection in which the lower-self completely yields place to the higher. M. Hiriyanna describes the nature of liberation thus - "The nature of this state is restful peace or absolute satisfaction, according to all the doctrines."1

We have maintained that according to some Indian thinkers liberation is attainable here and now - in which case

1. M. Hiriyanna, The Indian Conception of Values, p. 250
it is called jīvan-mukti. But there are thinkers who do not formally accept the doctrine of jīvan-mukti. In their case too it may be asserted that they acknowledge a state which is similar to the state of release. According to them, the knower has done everything necessary for attaining release; he comes nearer to the ideal and he will attain release as soon as he meets with death. In other words, the individual in question for actually attaining it, needs to be free from the physical conditions which limit him. We may in this connection remark that the ideal of jīvan-mukti is implicit, though not explicit, in all the doctrines.² The concepts of jīvan-mukti and videha-mukti differ only in respect of their bearing on the duration of the practical discipline prescribed for reaching the goal. According to one school who admits the ideal of jīvan-mukti connection with a finite body is not a hindrance for attaining liberation. M. Hiriyanna in this context remarks, "The freedom is in and out of Samsāra at the same time - empirically in it but transcendentally out of it."³ Again according to the other school which does not formally accept the same ideal, for actually attaining release, a man should be freed from the physical conditions which limit him.

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. 251
Thus he is to continue the process of preparation till his death. He cannot stop this process at any stage of his life. The Indian philosophers do not very much differ in respect of the nature of this ideal. This ideal is conceived only in two ways. According to some it is a state in which there is complete absence of pain and suffering while according to others it is a state of bliss - the absence of pain and suffering being its necessary condition - for arriving at the bliss. This difference of opinion lies in the fact that the psychologists are not at one in interpreting the relation between pleasure and pain. Some hold the view that pleasure is nothing but absence of pain while some others hold that pain is only the negation of pleasure. It will be wrong on our part to think that a jīvan-mukta will totally be freed from pain and suffering the moment he gains the ideal. Pleasure and pain may be said to be brothers twain. They often go together. One Upaniṣad, viz., Chāndogya Upaniṣad says that a man who is embodied is subject to both pleasure and pain and one cannot escape from pleasure and pain so long as one continues to be embodied. What it really means is that the knower by knowing fully well the true nature of self acquires the habit of tolerating pain and suffering.

4. Chānd. Up. VIII.12.1
without any complaint whatsoever even if it befalls him during his lifetime. Whether we conceive the ideal either as positive or negative the attitude of the knower towards the world is not one of pessimistic fatalism though it is the usual practice prevalent amongst most of the thinkers. That the ideal is not pessimistic can be best understood from the doctrines which represent the state of release as one of supreme bliss.

Moreover, there are some holy men in India who were famous for their loving kindness to all and they were always found joyous with smile beaming on their lips. Even the philosophers who regarded the state of jīvan-muktī not as a state of bliss but as one of total absence of pain, were found very much kind and sympathetic to their fellow beings. Buddha was one such philosopher, who after his enlightenment spent his life for redressal of miseries of all human beings. He was moved even by the sufferings of the meanest of creatures. Buddha is said to have stated that he would willingly bear the burden of everybody's sufferings, if only he could thereby bring relief to the world.

Thus we notice that only some of the doctrines conceive the ideal of liberation negatively, i.e., it is beyond good and evil. But the majority of the doctrines hold
that it is a state of pure bliss and not one of pure blankness. "Weeping may endure for the night, but joy cometh in the morning." The ideal of jīvan-mukti has other important characteristics. A jīvan-mukta by knowing fully well the true nature of the universe and his place in it, performs only disinterested duties, thus rising above selfish interest. He does not lead a passive life. He also engages himself in imparting spiritual knowledge to others. In view of all this, it is said that the ideal of life goes beyond self-perfection. It also includes works for the universal good. The liberated acts directly for the welfare of others and also imparts philosophic knowledge to those whom he considers fit for such knowledge. Above all he stands as an ideal man whom all will follow in their lives.

Sāmkhya-Yoga defines liberation negatively as complete and absolute cessation of all kinds of ills that characterize mundane life. Such life results from the self's attachment to the not-self. Such attachment arises from anādi-aviveka or a beginningless non-discrimination of puruṣa from prakṛti. Liberation can come only through essential detachment of self from object. Attachment arises from non-discrimination; and cognition of discrimination terminates the confusion of self.

5. M. Hiriyanna, op.cit., p. 252
with the not-self that lies at the root of the mundane life. Attachment will cease when ignorance ceases, and ignorance can be removed not by Karma but by knowledge or jñāna. For Sāmkhya-Yoga, liberation is the absolute negation of three-fold suffering or pain. In the state of release there is complete isolation of the self from Prakṛti and its evolutes, the mind-body complex. In this respect Sāmkhya-Yoga stands in opposition to the Gītā and the Upaniṣads. But the Gītā view of liberation has striking similarity with the Upaniṣadic view of it. For both it is a state of peace or bliss. Both the Gītā and the Upaniṣads describe this state as union of soul with Brahma or they describe it as merger of the soul with Brahma. Sometimes both the Gītā and the Upaniṣads describe this state as attaining to the same status with God or Brahma. But we may notice a very slight variation in their descriptions of the ultimate state. The Gītā in addition to describing this state as 'coming to Brahma' or 'being fit for Brahma's being', also describes it as coming to Krishṇa or being fit for Krishṇa's being. Now the question arises - whether its description as 'being fit for Brahma's being' or its description as 'being

6. B.G. IV.31; V.24; XIII.30; XVIII.50
7. B.G. IV.9; VII.23; VIII.7,15,16; IX.25,28,34; X.10; XI.55; XII.4; XVIII.55,65,68.
8. B.G. XIV.26
fit for Krishna's being' means the same thing or not? In the Gita the 'state of Krishna's being' seems to be higher than the 'state of Brahman's being'. It appears to hold that Krishna is something higher than the Brahman. T.G. Mainkar in this context says, "If at all any idea of superiority or inferiority is there, the state of Krishna's being is more honoured, for Krishna is something higher than the Brahman and it is only through devotion to Him, He can be obtained." But the Gita does not appear to make such distinction between these two expressions as it describes the state of liberation indifferently as 'coming to Brahman' or as 'coming to Krishna'.

We like to make one point more clear in respect of the concept of liberation. Liberation in India is conceived as eternal. It is not something to be acquired anew. It is something that exists eternally. The Upanishads, the Gita and also the Samkhya-Yoga hold the same view. The path suggested by almost all the systems of Indian philosophy for attaining liberation is the path of knowledge. As the different systems of Indian philosophy consider ignorance to be the cause of bondage and suffering, hence its removal inevitably leads to salvation. This is the general view of most of the systems of Indian philosophy. But the systems differ in their interpretation of knowledge.

9. T.G. Mainkar, A Comparative Study of the Commentaries on the Gita, p. 2
According to the Upaniṣads knowledge means knowledge of Brahman as non-different from one's Ātman. It is the knowledge of identity between the Ātman and the Brahman. The Upaniṣadic saying "tat tvam asi" (that thou art) means nothing more than this identity between the Ātman and the Brahman. And one who possesses this sort of knowledge attains Brahmanhood or in other words he attains liberation.

The road to salvation according to the Upaniṣads is not a smooth and easier one. It requires arduous striving for its attainment. It is said that the path leading to liberation is like the sharp edge of a razor which is difficult to cross and hard to trample over.10 The progress to perfection is possible only in and through pain and suffering. Ignorance is the cause of bondage. This ignorance is the ignorance of the self about its true nature. The self lacks the knowledge that it is non-different from Brahman. One who sees the difference between the two cannot avoid the cycle of birth and death.11

The Upaniṣads teach us that the knowledge of Brahman alone can remove our ignorance. Knowledge is of two kinds.12 One is called lower knowledge while the other is called higher

10. Kaṭha Up. i.2.7; B.G. ii.29
11. Kaṭha Up. ii.1.10
12. Muṇḍ. Up. i.1.4
knowledge. "The knowledge that liberates is the true knowledge."\(^{13}\) Here higher knowledge itself is the liberation; and it is not the result of higher knowledge. Lower knowledge as well as higher knowledge is necessary for attaining liberation. Lower knowledge leads to higher knowledge; and as such lower knowledge is not useless. According to the Upaniṣads knowledge is the only means of realizing the ultimate goal of life.\(^{14}\)

Knowledge, according to the Śāṅkara School of Vedānta does not differ from that of the Upaniṣadic view. Knowledge here is the knowledge of identity between the Ātman and the Brahman.

But for the Śāmkhya-Yoga School knowledge means knowledge of distinction between puruṣa and prakṛti. The self should know that it is entirely different from prakṛti. According to this school, the knowledge of the Vyakta, the Avyakta and the jña or soul is the means to attaining liberation.\(^{14}\) There are certain other means of removing misery, but Śāmkhya philosophy considers these means as uncertain. It further considers that these means cannot remove misery once for all; hence it suggests a better method and that method is the method of knowledge. The scriptural means are also rejected by the

\(^{13}\) sa vidyā ya vimuktaye.

\(^{14}\) S.K. II
Sāṃkhya-Yoga.

Yoga philosophy almost literally accepting the Sāṃkhya path of liberation lays emphasis on the practice of Yoga. It considers the practice of Yoga essential for gaining the saving knowledge.

The Gītā view of the path of liberation seems to be a bit different. The Gītā also holds that knowledge is the means to attaining liberation, but at the same time, it holds that knowledge is not the only means. For the Gītā Karma, devotion, meditation etc. are other alternative means. These also lead to the same goal. People can follow according to their suitability any of these means for attaining the goal of life. The Gītā especially lays emphasis on the path of knowledge, devotion and action. But these paths should not be considered as mutually exclusive of one another. For the Gītā, selfless action, or nīskāma karma is the fundamental requisite for all the three paths. "It is not only the very basis of Karma-yoga, it is also a governing principle of the other two paths."¹⁵ As the follower of the path of knowledge should be free from desire so also the follower of bhakti mārga should renounce the results of works. Thus the Gītā suggests a harmonious combination of bhakti, karma and jñāna. According to the Gītā, action as such

¹⁵. R.K. Chatterjee, The Gītā and Its Culture
is not the cause of bondage. It is sakāma karma which binds man. Niṣkāma karma is quite compatible with the manifestation of knowledge. The cause of bondage and embodiment is Kāma, not Karma.

Man is a queer animal expressing diverse attitudes and behaviours in life. Yet we are to recognise that man in the world over exhibits certain common characteristics. Explaining this viewpoint, K. Satchidananda Murty says, "Men are just men everywhere in all lands and times, who are moved by the same instincts, desires and aspirations."\(^{16}\) According to Murty "there is no clear-cut fundamental difference between Eastern and Western thinking."\(^{17}\) Speaking about the likeness of man, S. Radhakrishnan observes, "There cannot be complete unlikeness, since man the world over is the same, especially so far as the aspects of spirit are concerned."\(^{18}\) Radhakrishnan traces the variations only to distinctions in age, history and temperament.\(^{19}\)

What these philosophers intend to mean is that though each nation has peculiar bent of mind, yet these nations will

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16. K. Satchidananda Murty, The Realm of Between, p. 45
17. Ibid.
18. S. Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, vol. I, p. 23
19. Ibid.
not very much differ in their thinking and in spiritual nature. But people at different times and in different places have been attempting to study 'man'. Man has been the proper subject of research. If we go through the history of human thought, we shall find that man is ever engaged in studying man. Mark Mitin in this context says, "Man is an old and eternally philosophical problem. From time of old, man, his essence, aims and actions, his past and future have been a subject of philosophical research. In cognizing the world about him, man has meditated upon his place in this world. When changing the surrounding reality, he has pondered his role in the world, his strength and possibilities."  

Indian philosophers likewise attempted to know what a man is, what his essence is, what the aim of his life is etc. They also attempted to answer questions like - what is the destiny of man? What is his relation with the world and God? What is a man in his true nature? etc.

The Gitā by way of explaining the nature of man, first classifies man according to the preponderance of sattva, rajas and tāmas which are said to exist in varying proportions in every man and object. And as these guṇas are characteristically different from one another, a man's nature is determined

by the dominance of one or other of the three qualities. A man with the preponderance of sattva-guna is of divine nature. He is characterized by knowledge. Such a man possesses as many as twenty six good qualities which we have enumerated. Against this class there are two opposing classes whom the Gita term as fiendish and demoniac. A man with the preponderance of rajas becomes active and greedy while a man with the preponderance of tamas becomes dull, inactive, idle, drowsy etc. A man with the preponderance of tamas is of fiendish nature and such a man usually indulges in cruel activities. A man with the dominance of rajas may be called demoniac in nature and such a man has the qualities of ambition, greed, and the like. These two classes of people are incapable of judgment. The Gita subsequently brings these two latter classes of man under one category called demoniac and makes two broad divisions of man as divine and demoniac.

We have already pointed out that the Gita indirectly recognises the existence wicked man, \(21\) deluded evil doers, the worst sinner of all sinners. \(22\) The Gita appears to recognise three kinds of primary vices, viz., desire or lust, wrath, and greed. The Gita makes another division of man into four

\(21\) B.G. IX.30; VII.15
\(22\) B.G. IV.36; III.16
classes, viz., Brāhmin, Kśatriya, Vaiśya and Śudra. This division of man is also based on the preponderance of this or that quality that a man has in his disposition. By way of explaining what an ideal man is the Gīta expresses its aversion to Vedic rituals. It says that the Vedas are concerned with the actions of the three-fold modes. Hence, it advises us to be free from these modes. It further says that we should not care for acquisition and preservation. The Gīta distinctly says that the Vedas have little use for a wise Brāhmin who understands. What right we have is for the action alone and not for its fruits. In our life we should act without any attachment whatsoever to its fruits and should be indifferent to success or failure. The Gīta describes a sthitaprajaḥ thus: "When a man puts away all the desires of his mind, O Pārtha (Arjuna), and when his spirit is content in itself, then is he called stable in intelligence." "Who sobs not in sorrow nor dances in joy - free from passion, free from fear, free from anger - he is said to be the sage with mind equanimous." A sthitaprajaḥ has other good qualities. He

23. B.G. II.45
24. B.G. II.46
25. B.G. II.47
26. B.G. II.55 (Radhakrishnan’s translation)
27. B.G. II.56 (Jayantilal S. Jariwalla’s translation)
has no attachment to other worldly objects. He feels not elated in joy nor he feels worry in sorrow. Many passages of the Gītā appear to suggest that man has no freedom. But on final analysis we notice that the Gītā advocates man's freedom.

The Sāmkhya-yoga philosophy depicts a gloomy picture of life though pessimism is not their final word. Present life according to the Sāmkhya system is not a blessing, rather it is a wearisome burden. But the soul can overthrow this burden by being free from the contact of matter. According to the system the only way of obtaining salvation is the knowledge of philosophy. For Sāmkhya philosophy man lives in a world where he is bound by prakṛti. It recognises Karma also. The Sāmkhya philosophy recognises two realities, viz., Puruṣa and Prakṛti. Each of them is distinct and independent. For this school puruṣas are innumerable while prakṛti is one. It holds that puruṣa is inactive but intelligent. Prakṛti on the other hand is active but non-intelligent. It is through their mutual co-operation that the world of objects comes into existence. Puruṣa requires the help of prakṛti in order that it can discriminate itself from prakṛti and thereby it can attain liberation.

One interesting point in the system is that along with the brightening of a man's sāṃskāra or buddhi, he can improve
the quality of its acts. Moreover he becomes capable of acquiring more and more freedom of movement and his power of performing super-human works also increases. Buddhi, ahamkara and manas constitute antah karaṇa in the system and each of them has its own special function which distinguishes one from the other. Buddhi or intellect has the function of both ascertainment and determination. The function of ahamkara is self-consciousness. The mind has the function of analysing and synthesising the internal and external perceptions.

The soul of man in the system of Kapila is the highest existence and his system recognises only the supremacy of humanity. The Sāmkhya philosophy regards the ētman as sat and cit but not as ānanda.

We may raise one very important question in connection with the concept of liberation. Is liberation possible for some men or is it possible for all? Or we may raise the question in this way also: Is it attainable only by some or by all? The Indian thinkers give the answer in two different ways. Some hold that it is attainable by all while others hold that it is not attainable by all. Especially the Yoga philosophy of Patañjali holds that universal freedom is impossible.²⁸ For it, if sarva-mukti is admitted, then it will go against the

²⁸ M. Hiriyanna, op. cit., p. 292
traditionally accepted belief that saṃsāra is endless. It would also be inconsistent with the view that the number of souls is infinite.

The Mīmāṃsakas agree with the Yoga philosophy in this respect. They also do not recognise sarva-mukti. They also believe in the perpetuity of the saṃsāra, and hence for them also there cannot be universal freedom. They say, "never was the world other than it is now". It points to the fact that the future world will resemble the past world. But such a view of redemption of the world in part can be subjected to criticism. Such a view would certainly mean that the nature of the ultimate values will differ in different cases. In this view further evil will be a permanent feature of the universe and in that case we shall have to characterise the doctrines as pessimistic rather than optimistic.

The dvaita form of Vedānta too holds that all are not fit for attaining liberation. It denies rights to certain types of souls. According to this doctrine those who are not fit for attaining liberation are condemned either to perpetual transmigration or to eternal death. And even among those who are worthy of attaining liberation, it is attained separately. When we say that all are not liberated, then we are also to admit the permanent presence of evils in the world. This
The other doctrines seem to advocate sarva-mukti. The term sarva-mukti should be used to mean the release of all at a time. According to this view none can attain release until all become qualified for attaining it. But only a few of the doctrines advocate release in this sense. Commenting on the concept of mukti M. Hiriyanna says, "there can be no other conception of final freedom which makes a wider appeal to man. It is a completely democratic ideal." 29

The Upaniṣads and the Gītā hold identical views as regards the Ultimate Reality. The indeterminate, indescribable Absolute Brahman is the Ultimate Reality according to the Upaniṣads. It is one without a second, without attributes or determinations. As it is unqualified or without attributes it is called Nirguṇa. It is the transcendent ground of the empirical world. It cannot be comprehended by our intellect. In other words it cannot be brought under any empirical category. Hence It is called indeterminate, incomprehensible,

29. Ibid., p. 293
and indefinable. "The eternal One is so infinitely real that we dare not even to give It the name of One since Oneness is an idea derived from worldly experience." As the Upanisads describe It negatively as 'not this', 'not this', the Gītā also in its many passages support such a view of the Ultimate Reality. For the Gītā also Brahman is the Ultimate Reality. The Supreme is said to be unmanifest, unthinkable and unchanging. The Gītā further says that the Supreme Brahman is beginningless and He is neither existent nor non-existent.

Like the Upanisads, the Gītā also conceives of a personal Lord who is Omnipotent, Omniscient, the Creator, preserver and destroyer of the world. God creates the perceptible world by His nature. He resides in the heart of every being; He is the enjoyer and Lord of all sacrifices.

The Sāmkhya philosophy on the other hand recognises two realities, viz., Puruṣa and Prakṛti both of which are distinct and independent of each other. It also recognises a plurality of selves. The Yoga philosophy in addition to

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30. S. Radhakrishnan, The Bhagavad-gītā, p. 21
31. B.G. II.25
32. B.G. XIII.12; XIII.15-17
33. B.G. IX.17-18
34. B.G. XVIII.61
35. B.G. IX.24
admitting the two abovementioned realities further admits a supreme person who in the system is called God.

Liberation is freedom in its entirety from all kinds of internal and external compulsions. It involves the whole man - his cognition, affection and conation. It involves detachment from nature and discovery of the spirit in man and existence, the self-existent consciousness. For both Sāmkhya-Yoga and the Gītā, liberation is spiritual freedom. Man in his identification with the body-mind complex stands involved in the environment of which it is a part. The spirit is ignored. When the spirit comes to its own and man identifies himself with the spirit, liberation is attained. This is self-realisation.