CHAPTER 4
CHAPTER-4

VIVEKANANDA'S
CONCEPT OF LIBERATION

4.1: Introduction:

Swami Vivekananda, whose pre-monastic name was Narendranath Dutta was one of the critical figures in the history of Hinduism. Swami Tapasyananda says “Swami Vivekananda was a manifold personality- a spiritual giant, who, not satisfied with his own unfoldment, intensely strove for the good of all. Whatever he did or spoke, it was for the salvation of India, for the removal of the misery of the world, and above all, how every human being could get the knowledge of his divinity” He was the most famous and influential spiritual leaders of philosophies of Vedānta and Yoga. Vivekananda was the first Hindu Swami to come to the west, where he introduced Hinduism, Yoga and Vedānta at the world’s parliament of religions, in connection with the World’s Fair in Chicago, in 1893. “Swami Vivekananda was at many times, a man of inconceivable attitude of thought, and often to all appearances a living paradox; but beneath the surface of appearance he was clearly the living explanations of the spiritual life” Vivekananda’s basic philosophical position guided by the desire to reoriented the Vedānta philosophy to make it the theoretical foundation
of the struggle for building a new India. Vivekananda paid considerable attention to the question of philosophical heritage as a whole.

Vivekananda’s mission was both national and international. A lover of mankind, be strove to promote peace and human brotherhood on the spiritual foundation of the Vedantic Oneness of existence. A mystic of the highest order, Vivekananda had a direct and intuitive experience of Reality. He derived his ideas from that unfailing source of wisdom and often presented them in the soul stirring language of poetry. The natural tendency of Vivekananda’s mind, like that of his Master, Ramakrishna, was to soar above the world and forget itself in contemplation of the Absolute. But another part of his personality bled at the sight of human suffering in East and West alike. It might appear that his mind seldom found a point of rest in its oscillation between contemplation of God and service to man. Be that as it may, he chose, in obedience to a higher call, service to man as his mission on earth. This choice has endeared him to people in the West, Americans in particular.

Vivekananda is not merely a theoretician, but a man of practical wisdom. He has insight and far-sight. He is the beacon light of the world, lost in the midst of encircling gloom. Vivekananda, the eternal spirit of mankind left nothing out of ken of his observation. He rejected nothing, accepted everything, embracing even the lowly and the base, which stood for expansion, growth, progress and all round perfection- physical, mental and above all spiritual. Vivekananda is the symbol of revolt against all injustice and oppression...
and privilege, which is the emblem of light like the Sun-God Apollo illuminating the entire world with the light of Advaita Vedānta. Vivekananda is a man who is not of the age but of all ages.

The message of Swami Vivekananda was the message of Vedānta — a spiritual teaching that again and again saved India during periods of decline and crisis. The keynote of this message is: "Truth is one: Sages call it by various names."\(^3\) Its four cardinal points are non-duality of the Godhead, divinity of the soul, oneness of existence, and harmony of religions. Religion, in the light of Vedānta, is the manifestation of the divinity already in man. The central theme of Vedānta is harmony of religions. This spiritual harmony is to be realized by deepening our spiritual consciousness. According to Swami Vivekananda, "The spirit is reflected from the mind. It is the light of the spirit that makes the mind sentient. The minds are like so many mirrors, and love, fear, hatred, virtue etc. are all the reflections of the Spirit in it. When the reflector is bad, the reflection is bad"\(^4\) Vivekanda advised his followers to be holy, unselfish and have shraddha (faith). He encouraged the practice of Brahmacharya.

Vivekananda holds that all that we see in the universe has for its basis this one struggle towards freedom. It is under the impulse of this tendency that the saint prays and the robber robs. When the line of action taken is not a proper one, we call it evil. Again, when the manifestation of it is proper and high, we call it good. But the impulse is the same, the struggle towards freedom. The saint is oppressed with the knowledge of his condition of bondage.
and he wants to get rid of it; so he worships god. The thief is oppressed with the idea that he does not possess certain things and tries to get rid of that want, to obtain freedom from it; so he steals. Freedom is the one goal of all nature, sentient or insentient; and consciously or unconsciously, everything is struggling towards that goal. Vivekananda pointed out that the freedom which the saint seeks is very different from that which the robber seeks; the freedom loved by the saint leads him to the enjoyment of infinite, unspeakable bliss, while that on which the robber has set heart only forgoes other bonds for his soul. For Vivekananda, so long as this world lasts, there will and must be and the millennium of perfect equality will come only when a cycle of creation comes to its end. Before that equality cannot be realized. Yet this idea of realizing the millennium is a great motive power. Just as inequality is necessary for creation itself, so the struggle to limit it is also necessary. If there were no struggle to become free and get back to god, there would be no creation either. It is the difference between these two forces that determines the nature of the motives of men. There will always be these motives to work, some tending towards bondage and others towards freedom.

4.2: Analysis:

In his concept of liberation Swami Vivekananda make a powerful expression of the total self-negation required in the path of Advaita for the one who seeks to realize the true self. By following traditional ancient Hindu philosophy Vivekananda says that it is only when man is able to pass beyond the
cycle of births and rebirths that he is able to attain immortality. Swami Vivekananda belonged to that branch of Vedanta that held that no one can be truly free until all of us are. Even the desire for personal salvation has to be given up, and only tireless work for the salvation of others is the true mark of the enlightened person. The Upanishadic sages refuse to be satisfied with anything other than Mokṣa. Mokṣa is the cessation of the circuit of birth and death and all kinds of pain. It is the realization of oneness with Brahma. Of all the traditional systems of Indian philosophy Advaita view of Mokṣa appears to be the best. As per this view on the attainment of freedom nothing happens to the world, only our view of it changes. The soul only assumes the form of its true nature. Mokṣa is not the abolition of the self, but realization of its true nature—realization of self of what it is fundamentally. It is like the finding of the golden ring which is all the time in our possession. It is an inward realization, not a gift from the above. By following Vedantin tradition Vivekananda holds that liberation in life is that state of life where in the last trance of egoism and selfishness is gone.

The Advaitins holds that personalized self is the cause of misery. This individualized self makes us different from all other beings, brings hatred and jealousy and misery, struggles and all other evils. When this idea has been got rid of, all struggle will cease, all misery vanish. So this is to be given up. We must always hold ourselves ready; even to give up our lives for the lowest beings. When a man has become ready even to give up his life for a little insect, he has reached the perfection which the advaitist wants to attain. At that
moment when he has become thus ready, the veil of ignorance falls away from him and he will feel his own nature. Even in this life, he will feel that he is one with the universe. For a time, as it were, the whole of this phenomenal world will disappear for him and he will realize what he is. But so long as the karma of this body remains, he will have to live. This state when the veil has vanished and yet the body remains for some time is what the Vedantins call the Jivanmukti, the living freedom.

*Mokṣa* or release from all bondage for Vivekananda is something wonderful and stands at the pinnacle of the science of values. *Dharma*, *artha* and *kāma* can give us a happy and pleasant life. It is the fullness of a modern welfare state. Vivekananda holds that there will be a feeling in the human heart of something missing in human life—knowledge of the unknown, knowledge of the imperishable, knowledge of the Infinite reality of the Atman, of God, hidden within the heart of every human being, which, as will be shown later, is the very source of all values, the very value of all values. We do not know anything about it, even when we are under its influence when we practice *dharma*. Vivekananda invites the attention to remember the situation: The truth of all truths, the value of all values, the very source of the universe, *satyasya satyam* ‘the truth of all truths’. When this question arises in the human heart, the human being enters into the field of *Mokṣa* and a direct search for God, the infinite and immortal, who is the Self of all human beings and of the universe.

Vivekananda believes in the law of *karma*. “The purpose
of duty is only to control the brute nature and lead one to ethics and religion. The aspirant is advised to renounce even good in order to transcendent evil and good and attain liberation."5 In his Philosophy Swami Vivekananda combines Jñāna, Karma, Bhakti and Yoga. According to Swamiji "A religion that will be equally acceptable to all minds; it must be equally philosophic, equally emotional, equally mystic and equally conducive to action".6 Again Swamiji said "All men were so constituted that in their minds all these elements of philosophy, mysticism, emotion and of work, were equally present in full."7 Vivekananda carried out his concept of liberation through his concept of religion. In his concept of religion Swamiji make a harmonious balance of Jñāna, Karma, Bhakti and Yoga. But here the point should be noted that although Swami Vivekananda give stress on integrated cultivation of Jñāna, Karma, Bhakti and Yoga in his religion, yet he is ready to admit that pursuit of any one of the paths sincerely and entirely will lead to the ultimate goal of human life namely liberation. Swami Vivekananda says, "Love is always the highest ideal. When one has passed through the first two stages when one has thrown off all shop-keeping and cast off all fear, one then begins to realize that love is always the highest ideal."8

One important lesson he claimed to receive from Ramakrishna was that "Jīva is Shiva" (each individual is divinity itself). This became his Mantra, and he coined the concept of Daridra Nārāyana Sevā - the service of God in and through (poor) human beings. To quote Swami
Vivekananda, “He who sees Shiva in the poor, in the weak, and in the distressed, really worships Shiva; …… He who has served and helped one poor man seeing Shiva in him, without thinking of his caste, or creed, or race, or anything, with him Shiva is more pleased than with the man who sees him only in temples…..taking about Shiva’s beautiful eyes and nose and other feathers, …….. He who wants to serve Shiva must serve His children-must serve all creatures in this world first”.9 If there truly is the unity of Brahman underlying all phenomena, then on what basis do we regard ourselves as better or worse, or even as better-off or worse-off, than others? - This was the question he posed to himself. Ultimately, he concluded that these distinctions fade into nothingness in the light of the oneness that the devotee experiences in Moksha.

“He who is called the Brahman by the jñāni, is known as the ātman by the Yogins and Bhagavān by the Bhaktas. The same Brahman is called the priest, when worshipping in the temple and cook when preparing meal in the kitchen.”10 Swami Vivekananda belonged to that branch of Vedānta that held that no one can be truly free until all of us are. Even the desire for personal salvation has to be given up, and only tireless work for the salvation of others is the true mark of the enlightened person. He founded his mission on the principle of ātmano Mokṣartham Jagad-hitāya cha (for one’s own salvation and for the welfare of the World). Vivekananda advised his followers to be holy, selfless and have shraddhā (faith). He encouraged the practise of Brahmacārya. Vivekananda says, “The true humility arising out of the feeling that we are quite blind will
open the door of our heart to spiritual truths. Truth will never come to us so long as there remains the faintest shadow of *ahamkār*, arrogant egoism.”

According to Swami Vivekananda realization of immortality is the destiny of the soul. The literal meaning of the word immortality is deathlessness. For Vivekananda, “No search has been dearer to the human heart than that which brings to us light from God. No study has taken so much of human energy, whether in times past or present, as the study of the soul, of God, and of human destiny.” When we call the soul is immortal literally we mean that death is not the end of the soul- that the soul survives death. Freedom represents the essence of the soul, and as such the soul is not really in bondage. “The human soul has sojourned in lower and higher forms, migrating from one to another, according to the *samskāras* or impressions, but it is only in the highest form as man that it attains to freedom. The man form is higher than even the angel form, and of all forms it is the highest; man is the highest being in creation, because he attains to freedom.” The bondage of the soul is only an apparent view of the soul. Immortality has two aspects namely Survival and Immortality as such. Immortality in the sense of survival means that death is not the end of life. In this regard Swami Vivekananda indicates about the doctrine of ignorance and *karma* and incorporates them in his doctrine of the soul. According to Vivekananda, “Always remember that renunciation is the root idea. Unless initiated into this idea, not even Brahma and the World-Gods have the power to attain *Mukti*” Swami Vivekananda says that the soul performs
actions in ignorance, certain tendencies and *samskāras* are created in accordance with which the next birth is determined. But when we are thinking of the ultimate nature of immortality we must not confused it as continuous movement of births and rebirths. In his philosophy Swamiji conceived birth and rebirth as a state of bondage. For Swami Vivekananda the ultimate aim of human life must consist in freedom from this state. True immortality can be attained only when the cycle of births and rebirths is finally stopped.

Concept of liberation or *mukti* or freedom from bondage is the most vital concept of Hinduism. To quote Swami Vivekananda-

"Thus, day by day, till *Karma*’s powers spent
Release the soul for ever. No more is birth,
Nor I, nor thou, nor God, nor man. The “I”
Has All become, the all is “I” and Bliss.
Know thou art That, *Sannyāsin* bold!"\(^\text{15}\)

The journey of samsara seems to be an endless affair which is very painful. Failure and disappointment, loss and separation, disease and death have to be endured by all. All these make our life through repeated births very painful. But we can do away with all miseries by realizing God. For then alone we shall find what we have been seeking all along, namely, eternal bliss and infinite knowledge and we shall have no longer to go through births and death. We shall be freed, once for all from *samsāra*. This state of freedom from *samsāra* is called *mukti*. For Swami Vivekananda “With the axe of
knowledge cut the wheels asunder and the atman stands free, even though the old momentum carries on the wheel of mind and body. If that body does anything bad, know that the man is not jivanamukta; he lies if he makes that claim. But it is only when the wheels have got a good straight motion (from cleansing the mind) that the axe can be applied. All purifying action deals conscious or unconscious blows on delusion. To call another a sinner is the worst thing you can do. Good action done ignorantly produces the same result and helps to break the bondage.”

The liberated man realizes the essence of his being as none other than God, and therefore, becomes divine in all his bearings. Eternal peace reigns in his heart. The liberated persons have no want, no fear; love and compassion for all move him to help them out of samsāra. “The Hindu śāstras hold that liberation (mukti) is the goal to be attained by every individual. In deed, everyone is terribly earnest to reach this goal. Only he may not be aware of this fact”

Concept of liberation has a great bearing in the philosophy of Swami Vivekananda. A man may release him from the state of bondage only through the mercy of god and purity which is the condition of his mercy. The self is our own nature, pure and perfect and nature is like a screen that hides the reality. Swami Vivekananda says, “Men are repeating Mantras and practicing meditation, but no qualitative improvement is found in them. This is because their minds have not yet attained that strength and refinement for the effective practice of these disciplines of Mokṣa.” We are sure to attain liberation if we
get three rare things namely- the first is the human body, since human mind is the nearest reflection of God and since we are God's own image. Secondly, there should be intense desire to be free. The third one is the preceptor who has already crossed the ocean of dualism. According to Swami Vivekananda “You will go to the hell if you seek your own Salvation! Seek the salvation of others if you want to reach the highest. Kill out the desire for personal Mukti. This is the greatest spiritual disciplines.”

Birth is the association of the soul with the body which may is the cause of bondage and suffering. This is again caused by ignorance and this is ignorance being the ignorance of the real nature of man. In the state of immortality all these should be transcended. It would be a final transcendence of the process of birth and hence a freedom from bodily bondage. For Swami Vivekananda “Those that are working for their own salvation will neither have their own nor that of others. Want of sympathy and lack of energy are at the root of all misery, and you must therefore give these two up. Who but the Lord knows what potentialities there are in particular individuals-let all have opportunities, and leave the rest to the Lord. It is indeed very difficult to have an equal love for all, but without it there is no mukti”.

Liberation is the state in which suffering will finally come to an end. It is the state of knowledge and not of ignorance. Freedom from the chain of births, freedom from suffering, knowledge realization of the free character of the soul- all these would be the aspects of the soul in the state of immortality. Swamiji says “Bhakti, love of
Good, helps us to seek and realize God, the source of all values, ever present within all, and to achieve the goal of human evolution, even though higher bhakti is by itself both the means and the end.\textsuperscript{21} Over and above of all these Swami Vivekananda also says that this state would be a state of pure joy and pure bliss. The state of liberation does not merely provide a negative happiness of freedom from miseries; it is a state of positive joy and happiness. Our mind seems to be glued to the world. We have to focus them entirely on God and on nothing else. One’s mind has to be drawn away from some objects and fixed on God. Then alone one is sure to realize God and become free forever. According to Swami Vivekananda “Ours not to reason why, ours but to do and die. Be of good cheer and believe that we are selected by the lord to do great things, and we will do them. Hold yourself in readiness, i.e. be pure and holy, and love’s sake. Love the poor, the miserable, the downtrodden, and the Lord will bless you.”\textsuperscript{22}

4.3: Path of Liberation:

Vivekananda reconciles different paths to liberation in his philosophy. Vivekananda holds that no other attributes to God except—that He is Infinite Existence, Infinite Knowledge and Infinite Bliss. Existence without knowledge and love cannot be; knowledge without love and love without knowledge cannot be. What Vivekananda wants is the harmony of Existence, knowledge and Bliss. That is why instead of mere knowledge, or mere love, or mere work, he accepts all in the ideal life and the ideal spiritual path. What he
wants is harmony, and not one-sided development. Vivekananda pointed out that it is possible to have the intellect of Samkara with the heart of Buddha. Vivekananda maintains that love is a universal principle, the only moving principle in the universe. Vivekananda holds that the motive power of the whole universe, in whatever way it manifests itself, is that one wonderful thing, unselfishness, renunciation, love, the real, the only living force in existence.

The value of the paths towards the goal of liberation must be recognized. For the realization we need knowledge because we have reason and that must be satisfied. Again we have to perform work because we have will and energy and they must have their proper outlet and proper use. By being devoted to the service of others and by getting our heart purified by such work, we will attain the vision of all beings as the self. Love of God and man is equally necessary for the satisfaction of our heart.

Regarding the attainment of liberation or mukti Swami Vivekananda says “Both the goal and the methods employed for reaching it are called Yoga, a word derived from the same Sanskrit root as the English ‘yoke’ meaning ‘to join ‘to join us to our reality, God. There are various such Yogas or methods of union – but the chief ones are- *Karma Yoga, Bhakti-Yoga, Rāja-Yoga and Jñāna -Yoga.*”23 There are various methods of union; among these the chief ones are - *Karma Yoga, Bhakti-Yoga, Rāja-Yoga and Jñāna -Yoga.* As the ultimate goal of all mankind, the aim and end of all religions is but one-reunion with the God, or what amounts to the same with the divinity which is
every man’s true nature. But while the aim is one the method of attaining may vary with the different temperaments of men. Every man must develop according to his own nature. As every science has its methods so has every religion. The methods of attaining the end of religion are called *Yoga*. According to Swami Vivekananda Yoga is the means through which man may attain the state of liberation. Here the point should be noted that different forms of *Yoga* are adapted to different natures and temperaments of man. The different forms of yoga as suggested by Swami Vivekananda for the attainment of freedom or liberation or to realize immortality are as follows:

### 4.4: Karma Yoga:

According to Swami Vivekananda *Karma Yoga* is the manner in which a man realizes his own activity through works and duties. The term karma is a Sanskrit word meaning work or action. In a broader sense this word includes thoughts as well. Thus both thoughts and actions, whether conscious, subconscious, or reflex, can be included in the term *Karma*. In this regard Swami Vivekananda says—“*Karma Yoga* is a system of ethics and religion intended to attain freedom through unselfishness and by works. The *karma-Yogi* need not believe in any doctrine whatsoever. He may not ask what his soul is, nor think of any metaphysical speculation. He has got his own special aim of realizing selflessness, and he has to work it out himself.”

*Karma Yoga* as a means for the attainment of liberation emphasizes on the importance and value
of action along with the sense of unselfishness. Swami Vivekananda is of the view that man has to remain in this world amidst the good and evil, pleasure and pain, happiness and sufferings. Every man should have to work as well as he can do. The *Karma-Yogi* has to work in such a way that he must not permit any work to dominate him or to bind him. Hence the *Karma Yogins* must have to work for unselfishness. Swami Vivekananda says that one must work like a master and like a slave. Allotment of personal or selfish consideration to regulate action makes man a slave of his desire.

A *Karma yoga* may live in the midst of a worldly life, attend to all his prescribed duties and yet proceed straight to the goal of Perfection and Blessedness. No duty, however repugnant, can stand in the path of his spiritual unfoldment. It is the attitude that counts and not the nature of the work one has to do. There is a way of living in the world and doing things that goes to cleanse one’s mind thoroughly and make for the highest spiritual achievement. This is the way what is known as *Karma Yoga*. Swami Vivekananda says “He works best who work without any motive, neither for money, nor for fame, nor for anything else; and when a man can do that, he will be a manner as will transform the world. This man represents the very highest ideal of *Karma-Yoga*.”

In *Karma-Yoga* a *Karma Yogi* should have to gives up his whole body, mind and everything as an eternal sacrifice unto the Lord and attains perfect peace. In *Karma-Yoga* no work is done as duty under compulsion, a *Karma-Yogi* works as a free being unattached and must has to consider his duty as the duty assigned
Karma-Yoga is a contrivance through which even a secular duty may be turned into worship. To quote Swami Vivekananda “Karma-Yoga therefore, is a system of ethics and religion intended to attain freedom through unselfishness, and by good work. The Karma-Yogi need not believe in any doctrine whatever. He may not believe even in good, may not ask what his soul is not think of any metaphysical speculation. He has got his own special aim of realizing selflessness; and he has to work it out himself. Every moment he has to solve by mere work, without the help of doctrine or theory, the very same problem to which the jñāni applies his reason and inspiration and the Bhakta his love.”

Swami Vivekananda holds that although the universe will go on always, our goal is freedom, our goal is unselfishness; and according to Karma-Yoga that goal is to reach through work. All ideas of making the world perfectly happy may be good as motive powers for fanatics. But we must know that fanaticism brings forth as much as evil as good. The Karma-Yogi asks why you require any motive to work other than the inborn love of freedom. Man can train himself to know and to practise that says the Karma-Yogi. When the idea of doing well becomes the part of his being, then he will not seek for any motive outside. Let us do good because it is good to do good. He who does good work even in order to get to heaven binds himself down, says the Karma-Yogi. Any work that is done with any the least selfish motive, instead of making us free, forgoes one more chain for our feet. Swami Vivekananda says “He is the ideal
Karma-Yogi, acting entirely without motive, and the history of humanity shows him to have been the greatest man ever born compare the greatest combination of heart and brain that ever existed, the greatest soul power that has ever been manifested. He is the first great reformer the world has seen.”

Again Swami Vivekananda is of the view that he works best who works without any motive, neither for money, nor for fame, nor for anything else and when a man can do that, he will be a Buddha, and out of him will come the power to work in such a manner as will transform the world. That man represents the very highest ideal of Karma Yoga. If attainment of liberation through work is the end, performance of work without desire is the means. According to Swami Vivekananda “Such work leads to knowledge, which in turn brings emancipation.” Hence, for Swami Vivekananda he is the highest man who rejoice in the self, satisfied with the self, and is content in the self alone can not work because there is no attachment for him.

4.5: Bhakti-Yoga:

The spiritual history of the Hindus is replete with countless instances of blessed seers of truth from among the adherents of every school of Bhakti-Yoga. According to Swami Vivekananda Bhakti-Yoga is the path of the realization of the divinity through devotion to, and love of a personal God. Bhakti-Yoga suggests the best possible use that may be made of emotion. For Swamiji Bhakti-Yoga may utilize to reach the goal of life- liberation. It is
the path of love, appeals to the majority of mankind. *Bhakti-Yoga* is perhaps the easiest approach and suited to the taste and capacity of most of us. *Bhakti-Yoga* helps us out of difficulty. *Bhakti-Yoga* presents a graded course through which a no-vice may gradually develop, intense love for God that leads a man straight to liberation. For Swami Vivekananda "*Bhakti* is a religion. Religion is not for many, that is possible. A sort of knee-drill, standing up and sitting down, may be suited for the many, but religion is for the few. There are in every country only a few hundreds who can be, and will be religious. The others will not be awakened, and they do not want to be. The chief thing is to want god."29

*Bhakti-Yoga* or the path of love is this adoration and worship in continuous worship of the lord who is the inner Being, the Self in man, and embodiment of love and all blessed qualities. According to Swami Vivekananda devotion and love is natural to man. But here the point should be noted that our love is not pure love but attachment. In this regard Swami Vivekananda holds that *Bhakti-Yoga* is the way which may lead us towards pure love, where the objects of love or devotion are not finite but the supreme. Secrete of *Bhakti-Yoga* is to control feelings and emotions and to give the soul higher and higher direction towards god. To quote Swami Vivekananda "Do you think so long as one Jiva (a living being) endures in bondage, you will have any liberation? ..... Every Jiva is a part of yourself.......... As you desire the whole-hearted good of your wife and children, knowing them to be your own, so when a like amount of love and attraction for every Jiva will awaken in
you, then I shall know that Brahma is awakening in you, not a moment before. When this feeling of all rounds good of all without respect for caste or colour will awaken in your heart, then I shall know you are advancing towards the ideal. Just consider the greatness of his heart who thinks that he will take the whole universe with him to liberation."

Swami Vivekananda holds that ordinary emotion can be converted to powerful feelings, ordinary love may be converted to Divine love or Supreme Devotion through the Bhakti-Yoga. Swami Vivekananda truly realizes the steps through which the Bhakti-Yoga progress towards the realization of the Supreme. The first stage of Bhakti-Yoga is the stage of worship. The second stage is the stage of prayer and repetition of Gods name. In the third stage this type of prayer is transcended and a silent meditation starts. In this stage only the God is exists for the devotee and nothing else. Again, in the final even this distinction vanishes and the devotee almost becomes one with the Supreme. The culmination of Bhakti-Yoga is the complete unconditional surrender of the lower self or ego to the God or the Supreme Self. When the barrier of ego is removed, the omnipresent, omniscient, immortal Lord of the universe becomes revealed as the Lord of the heart—the Supreme Self.

Just like the other Yoga Bhakti-Yoga also prescribes a course of moral preparation. In this regard Swami Vivekananda says “One must try to control the passions, practise self restrain and self denial, truth, honesty,
sincerity, non-injury. One must not covet what belongs to others and should do
good to all without a thought of return. One must be strong in body and mind
and give way to excessive mirth.” Swami Vivekananda pointed out that it is
possible to realize God simply by ‘loving’ we may go on extending the scope of
our love, so as to make more comprehensive till it becomes truly universal.

4.6: Rāja-Yoga:

According to Swami Vivekananda Rāja-Yoga is the path
of realization of the divinity through the control of mind. There are some people
who can not take any thing on trust. They want to be convinced of anything only
by tangible results. To such people Rāja-Yoga is admirably suited. It does not
require anybody to swallow any dogma nor to perform any mystifying ritual.
Rāja-Yoga simply prescribes a graded course of mental concentration and the
courses are perfectly rational. The goal of liberation or mukti is reached when
the mind becomes absolutely still. Swami Vivekananda is aware that the method
of Rāja-Yoga is not for the weak, as it requires an immense faith in oneself and
also physical and mental strength. Rāja-Yoga gradually enables the follower to
acquire certain excellences and powers and finally the follower is able to
practise complete concentration leading to the realization of unity with the
Divine. Swami Vivekananda says “Man wants truth, wants to experience the truth
for himself; when he has grasped it, realized it, felt it within his heart of hearts,
then alone, declare the Vedas, would all doubts vanish, all darkness be scattered,
and all crookedness be made straight. Yet the children of immortality, even those who live in the higher spheres, the way is found; there is a way out of all this darkness, and that is by perceiving Him who is beyond all darkness; there is no other way."32 In order to learn union with God through activity, we must also possess tranquility and the peace that comes through meditation. To the un-meditative man no peace will come. That is why according to Swami Vivekananda the Gītā puts emphasis on the practice of meditation, which is technically called Rāja-Yoga. The aim of Rāja-Yoga is the realization of unity with God. Rāja-Yoga is a plan of physical and mental disciplines has to be worked out. Rāja-Yoga requires certain involvement of Yogic exercise of the psychophysical nature. According to Swamiji "The science of Rāja-Yoga proposes to put before humanity a practical and scientifically worked out method of reaching this truth."33 Again Swami Vivekananda says "The science of Rāja-Yoga, in the first place, proposes to give us such a means of observing the internal states. The instrument is the mind itself. The power of attention, when properly guided, and directed towards the internal world, will analyse the mind, and illuminate facts for us. This power of the mind is like rays of light dissipated; when they are concentrated, they illumine. This is our only means of knowledge. Every one is using it, both in the external and internal world; but, for the psychologist, the same minute observation has to be direct to the internal world, which the scientific man directs to the external; and this requires a great deal of practice."34
In this regard Swami Vivekananda holds that to turn the mind, as it were, inside, stop it from going outside and then to concentrate all its power, and throw them upon the mind itself, in order that it may know its own nature, analyse itself, is very hard work. Yet Rāja-Yoga is the only way to any thing, which may be a scientific approach to the subject. We will perceive for ourselves whether we have souls, whether life is of five minutes, or of eternity, whether there is God in the universe or none. It will be revealed to us and this is what Rāja-Yoga proposes to teach.

We the human being have a little command of our mind. In this regard by following Swami Vivekananda it may be stated that to bring the command about to get that control over body and mind, we must take certain physical helps. To quote Swami Vivekananda “The external world is but the gross form of the internal, or subtle. The finer is always the cause, the grosser the effect. So the external world is the effect, the internal the cause. The man who has discovered and learnt how to manipulate the internal forces will get the whole of nature under his control. The Yogi proposes to himself no less task than to master the whole universe, to control the whole nature.” Thus Rāja-Yoga can help us to manifest our divinity. Spirituality has nothing to do with worldly powers. Any desire for these, like all other desire for worldly things is suicidal to spiritual life and is to be shunned like poison. According to Swami Vivekananda “Rāja-Yoga proposes to start from the internal world, to study internal nature, and through that control the whole-both internal and external.”
For the attainment of liberation or mukti one has to propose to attain that state of perception in which he can perceive different mental states. One should have to perceive how the sensation is traveling, how the mind receiving it, how it is going to determinative faculty, and how this gives to purusa. As each science require certain preparations, and has its own method, which must be followed before it could be understood, even so in Rāja-Yoga. Swami Vivekananda states that when a man goes into the final stage of Rāja-Yoga, he comes out as a sage, attains metaphysical and transcendental knowledge.

4.7: Jñāna-Yoga:

Swami Vivekananda says that the realization of a man’s own individuality through knowledge is jñāna-Yoga. jñāna-Yoga literally means the path of union through knowledge. It has come to connote the path of intellectual analysis leading to the immediate perception of God who is both immanent and transcendent. jñāna-Yoga is based on the realization that bondage is due to ignorance. In this regard Swami Vivekananda says that ignorance is of the real nature of things and it is the inability to distinguish between the real and the unreal. According to swami Vivekananda, “The Vedantist gives no other attributes to God except these three— that He is Infinite Existence, Infinite Knowledge, and Infinite Bliss, and he regards these three as one. Existence without knowledge and love can not be; knowledge without love and love without knowledge cannot be. What we want is the harmony of Existence, s Knowledge
and Bliss Infinite. For that is our goal. We want harmony not one sided
development."37

\textit{Jn\={a}na-Yoga} stands on the spiritual truths and throws open
a direct approach to self knowledge and hence to liberation. There are three
different steps in \textit{j\={a}na-Yoga} namely-\textit{Shravana} (hearing), \textit{Manana} (cogitating)
and \textit{Nididhy\={a}sana} (meditating). The first step i.e shravana consists in hearing
about the real Self. One has to do this from illumined guide. The second step is
manana, that is cogitation. Here, one has to reason out what has been heard
from the spiritual guide and the scriptures. Again the third step, \textit{nididhy\={a}sana}
requires the \textit{j\={a}na-Yogi} at this stage to withdraw him entirely from all things
and concentrate on the idea, 'I am the Witness'. In order to attain immediate
realization and understanding of the Self \textit{Jn\={a}na-Yoga} advocates all these steps
after the process of ratiocination. To quote Swami Vivekananda "All beings are
like bits of paper and straw flowing towards the ocean in a tremendous stream.
They may struggle to go back or may float against the current and play all sorts
of pranks, but in the long run must go and join the great ocean of life and bliss."38

Swami Vivekananda says that the Atman never comes nor
goes, it never born nor dies. It is nature of moving before the Atman and the
reflection of this motion is on the \textit{\=Atman}; and the \textit{\=Atman} ignorantly thinks it is
moving and not nature. When the \textit{\=Atman} thinks that, it is in bondage; but when it
comes to find it never moves, that it is omnipresent, then the freedom comes.
To quote Swami Vivekananda "We lastly come to the \textit{Jn\={a}na-Yogi}, the
philosopher, the thinker, he who wants to go beyond the visible. He is the man who is not satisfied with the little things of this world. His idea is to go beyond the daily routine of eating, drinking, and so on; not even the teaching of thousand books will satisfy him. Not even all the sciences will satisfy him; at the best, they only bring this little world before him.”^39 For such a realization one must be able to meditate upon the truths learnt. This requires the practice of concentration on the nature of the truths learnt. Swami Vivekananda holds that it is obvious that all knowledge is stored up in us from the beginning. If we are like little waves in the ocean, that ocean is our background.

According to Swami Vivekananda “Without the knowledge of the spirit all material knowledge is only adding fuel to fire, only giving into the hands of selfish man one more instrument to take what belongs to others, to live upon the life of others, instead of giving up his life for them.”^40 In _Jñāna-Yoga_, there must be in addition a transformation of life and conduct, a conversion of the soul, before the knowledge of God or self can be attained. Again Swami Vivekananda holds that for the practice of _Jñāna-Yoga_ renunciation is a necessary stage. Renunciation is necessary because it may help one to get rid of selfishness and he may also be able to his senses, the body and the mind. According to Swami Vivekananda “When all the desire of the heart will be vanquished, then this very mortal will become immortal-then the very man will become God.”^41 In support of _Jñāna-Yoga_, Swami Prabhavananda maintains that _Jñāna-Yoga_ is the very process of ‘Neti, Neti, ‘not this, not this’, which we
consider in our study of Upanishads. That is, the self must not be identified with impermanent entities like the body, the mind and the senses, or with any object and instrument of experience. When a person has become an adept in detaching his true Self from non self, he becomes blessed with the vision of the Divine, and there draws upon him the knowledge of the Self in all and all in the self.

According to Swami Vivekananda “The perfected soul, if it wishes, can take any form; it is able to take a hundred bodies, if it wishes, or have none at all, if it so desires. It becomes almost almighty, except that it cannot create; that power belongs to God alone. None, however perfect, can manage the affairs of the universe; that function belongs to God. But all souls, when they become perfect, become happy for ever and live eternally with God.”

In Jñāna-Yoga what one is required to do is to conceive the body as the house, in which one abides, and the mind and senses as the instrument of living, to all of which the Lord is the witness. Such a person acts but does not identify himself with his actions. Then he experiences the objective universe but he has learned to detach himself from his experiences. In this regard Swami Vivekananda says “As long as you see the many, you are under delusion. In this world of many he who sees the One, in this ever changing world he who sees Him who never changes, as the Soul of his own soul, as his own Self, he is free, he is blessed, he has reached the goal.”

Swami Vivekananda is of the view that the soul is one with
freedom, and the soul is one with Existence, and the soul is one with Knowledge.
So, Swami Vivekananda opines that birth and death, life and decay, degeneration
and regeneration, are all manifestations of that oneness. Hence, knowledge,
however for Swami Vivekananda manifests it, either as ignorance or as learning,
is but the manifestation of that same Chit, the essence of knowledge; the
difference is only in degree, and not in kind. Swami Vivekananda says “The soul
is a circle whose circumference is nowhere (i.e. limitless) and whose centre is
in some body. Death is but change of centre. God is a circle whose circumstance
is nowhere and whose centre is everywhere. When we get out of the limited
centre of a body, we shall realize God as our true self.”
Thus, with the help of
these three steps, the Jñāna-Yogi peels the universe layer by layer, as it were
and reaches its very core and comes to be blessed with the Supreme
Realization.

4.8: Vivekananda’s Concept of Jivanmukti:
In his concept of liberation Swami Vivekananda speaks of
the possibility of the realization of immortality in the embodied state itself.
He also maintains the distinction of Jivanmukti and Videha Mukti. Vivekananda’s
description of Jivana Mukta is more or less like that of the vedantic description
of it. Vivekananda holds that Jivana Muktas act in a dispassionate manner. He
is no longer be interested in having things for himself. His behaviour must not
be regulated by possession, acquisition etc. The Jivana Muktas are not affected
by his activities. In this way the *Jivana Muktas* continues his embodied life and attain the state of immortality. That perfect man will love his own enemy. Such a man for Vivekananda becomes a world-mover. At this state the man realizes that for him the little self is dead and God stands in its place. Vivekananda asserts that if mankind realizes a bit of this truth peace would replace fighting and quarrelling. Hence, only the remnant of good are left behind in case of the perfect.

4.9: Estimation:

Through his description of the liberated Vivekananda tried to incorporate his account with the different systems of Indian philosophy. But, his description of the liberated is closer to that of Vedanta in so far as he makes joy as essential aspect of immortality. Vivekananda unite the intellect of Samkara with the heart of Buddha. From through observation on his concept of liberation it may be pointed out that Vivekananda tried to profound a philosophy of head and heart.

In explaining his concept of liberation Vivekananda obviously talks of liberation of the individual but he gives much more emphasis on collective liberation. Swami Vivekananda’s greatest contribution lies in his emphasis on collective liberation. Swamiji opines that if we feel oneness with all we cannot go forward without taking all with us. The concept of collective liberation which Swamiji envisages has similarity with the Buddhist ideal of
Bodhisatta. Vivekananda says that Vedanta wants to know ourselves and to have faith in ourselves. But that faith must not confine itself to limited self which stands opposed to other selves. It is faith in the universal self, the self that is in me, in you, in all. It means therefore faith in all, because you are all one. Love for oneself means love for all. For men, animals and everything for you are all one.

Vivekananda’s concept of liberation bears the spirit of altruism. In this regard it should be noteworthy that Vivekananda considers altruistic service as religion. Ceremonial observances in the name of religion are madness, even it is wrong to hanker after one’s own salvation. For Vivekananda “Liberation is only for him who gives up everything for others, whereas others who tax their brains day and night harping on my salvation, my salvation wander about with their true well-being ruined, both present and prospective; and this I have seen many a time with my own eyes.” The spirit of altruism is truly reflected in his concept of liberation.

Swami Vivekananda does not make a clear water-tight distinction between Jñāna, Karma and Bhakti. He is not ready to accept that Karma is a stepping-stone to Bhakti and Bhakti is a means to Jñāna. To him, although an integrated cultivation of all these paths is the ideal of religion, any one of the paths if followed sincerely and entirely will lead to the ultimate goal of human life, namely liberation.

Vivekananda may be compared with Apollo-Eternal Spirit.
of Humanity—full of rebellion, of vigour, full of spirit, full of goodness and magnanimity, full of joy and optimism. In his concept of liberation Vivekananda not only talks of spiritual freedom but also he points to economic freedom. This is the full concept of life—an integrated scheme of life—both spiritual and mundane.

Vivekananda’s view of liberation reflects his pragmatic outlook of philosophy. But Vivekananda’s pragmatic approach issues out of Vedānta—an extension of its basic creed which the Vedāntist would not accept. Here heaven and earth meet and mingle. Vivekananda, a Vedāntist, joins hands with a materialist transforming and elevating the latter to a higher stage. In Vivekananda there is not only the doctrine of service to humanity but exhortation of work—Karma for which there is exhortation in the Gīṭā. In this regard Vivekananda holds that if some one wants to reach the highest he should have to kill out the desire for personal mukti. Seeking salvation of others is considered as the highest spiritual discipline by Vivekananda.

Vivekananda in his philosophy combines the contributions of both Śamkara and Buddha. Vivekananda says, “Feel like Buddha you will be a Buddha. It is feeling that is the life, the strength, the vitality, without which no amount of intellectual activity can reach God. Intellect is like limbs without the power of locomotion. It is only when feeling enters and gives them motion that they move and work on others….It is one of the most practical things in Vedāntic morality, for it is the teaching of the Vedānta that you are all prophets,
and all must be prophets.” So the problem before Vivekananda was to have a philosophy of head and heart. With this end in view, Vivekananda unite the intellect of Samkara with the heart of Buddha. In his concept of liberation Swami Vivekananda extended the boundary of Advaita Vedanta with an admixture and flavour of Buddhistic humanism. Therefore, according to Swamiji the ultimate destiny of an individual is the realization of immortality.

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