CHAPTER - IV

DOCTRINES OF LIBERATION
As we have noted in the ‘Introduction’ awareness of perennial misery is the basis for philosophisation in India. The kind of philosophical questions, which the Indian Philosophers have asked, hover round this central problem – the problem of human existence constitutionally related to misery. Philosophical enquiry of this kind has always forced people to discover a permanent solution to this problem. The solution they discovered was Yoga, a serious, long and diligent moral-and-spiritual way leading to liberation; and since all schools of Indian Philosophy (with the sole exception of Čārvāka) recommend one kind of Yoga or the other, Indian Philosophy in general was called mokṣa-śāstra (science of liberation). In fact, for the ancient Indian philosophers nothing was dearer than the topic of mokṣa. They might not have accepted the existence of God or might have rejected the theory of spiritual substantial soul, but they have never given up the pursuit of the philosophy of mokṣa.

Various solutions have been offered by the Indian philosophers to mitigate and finally eradicate misery. It is not only the orthodox philosophers, like Sāṅkhya, Dvaitins, etc. but also the heterodox ones, such as the Buddhists and the Jainas, not only the spiritual monists like Advaitins but also the material monists like Čārvākas have come up with their answers. So there is no Indian philosopher who is unaware of the problem of human existence or is reluctant to solve it. Indian philosophers in general,
it can be safely concluded, strive to discover peace - ever lasting or otherwise.

The Cārvākas who firmly believe that nothing exists apart from matter clearly reject the existence of a spiritual substance, ātman. They do not deny the concept of consciousness (vijñāna), but only the substantial concept of consciousness. They say that all things including our body arise out of combination and separation of the same four kinds of material atoms, namely, earth, water, fire and air. Out of this combination, called body, consciousness arises just as the red colour, which was not in areca nut, lime or betel leaf would arise when these three are combined in a particular proportion. Once this arrangement of the elements is destroyed, as in death, consciousness also ceases to exist.

The Cārvākas insist that the concept of a transient life, instead of making us passive pessimists, should make us active hedonists. They argue that since there is no rebirth, (since this is the only life we ever have), we should be as much happy as possible before we die. As there is no heaven, we cannot hope to be happy there. There is no God and there is no hell, therefore, there is no fear of being punished for our immoral acts. So the only conclusion is that in order to escape misery we should not look above the world, but into the world, for happy places, and happy occasions. Better borrow ghee and drink it – never mind repaying it.

Since in the olden days, Yoga – whatever be the school – was pursued in order to escape from the perennial miseries and to attain bliss, the concept
of liberation is inextricably related to it. It is precisely for this reason that Indian liberation stands for the highest puruṣārtha (value), the other, lesser ones being artha (wealth), kāma (lust) and dharma (performance of duty in accordance with one's religion). In fact, these three values are sometimes judged as lower only in relation to liberation (mokṣa). Sometimes these three lower values are perceived as something, which should be turned towards the highest value.

The second solution of the Cārvāka is based on the idea that we have no rebirth. His argument is that since death means the end of life, end of life should mean end of misery. He perceives death as a boon, as the final solution to misery. If we had rebirth, we would be forced to experience misery, which is bound up with our new existence also. If existence is misery non-existence must be freedom from misery. It may be noted that final non-existence as a solution to existential misery is not peculiar to the Cārvākas, it was accepted by the ancient Greek philosophers, Epicurus, Leucippus and Democritus.

Both the Cārvāka metaphysics and axiology were unsatisfactory to the other Indian philosophers. Their dissatisfaction was based on the foundational presupposition of Indian Philosophy – nothing that is will cease to exist and nothing that is not will ever come into existence. This is true of living beings as of material objects. Things may change their forms at different stages of their existence, but they never become nothing. A man may die today, but he will be reborn in some other form – man, animal or
plant. Therefore, the Carvāka idea of death as the final solution is not coherent with this basic presupposition of Indian Philosophy.

The early Vedic people thought life must be enjoyed as long as it lasts and therefore, a hundred year's life span on earth was the most desirable goal.

Some of the Upaniṣads speak of two worlds apart from the mortal world we live in now, namely, devaloka and pitṛloka. Accordingly there are two ways, respectively, devayāna or the arcīrmārga (the path of light) and pitṛyāna or dhūma-marga (the path of darkness).

Thus it is said that those who performed charitable deeds or such public works as the digging of wells, etc., follow after death the way of the fathers (pitṛyāna), in which the soul after death enters first into smoke, then into night, the dark half of the month, etc., and at last reaches the moon; after a residence there as long as the remnant of his good deeds remains he descends again through ether, wind, smoke, mist, cloud, rain, herbage, food and seed, and through the assimilation of food by man he enters the womb of the mother and is born again. Here we see that the soul had not only a recompense in the world of the moon, but was re-born again in this world. The other way is the way of gods (devayana), meant for those who cultivate faith and asceticism (tapas). These souls at death enter successively
into flame, day, bright half the month, bright half of the year, sun, moon, lightning, and then finally into Brahman never to return.¹

Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad² speaks of another region, in addition to those three, namely, naraka (hell). In support of this, the Kaṭha Upaniṣad says: “Those who make a gift of barren cows, which have drunk water and eaten hay and given their milk themselves go to the joyless regions”.³ Accordingly to it, such a region is full of creatures such as worms and insects, which live and die and do not come across happiness.

But some Upanisads are very clear that there are only three words, namely, mortal (martya), heaven (svarga) and hell (naraka). These who regarded the life in mortal world as full of limitations and as not a true life wished to go to heaven. Heaven was the ideal of human life. Here also, as in the case of devaloka or pīṭhāloka, righteous life was the means. But the duration of one’s life in heaven was determined by the quantum of puṇya (merit) he had obtained in his earthly life. Once the stock of puṇya is exhausted owing to the enjoyment rewarded, the individual will be sent back to the mortal world where he can again accumulate merit (puṇya), which makes him deserve life in heaven for another duration, or he may accumulate demerit (pāpa) on account of which he is sent to hell.

However, those who realized the temporariness of heavenly happiness and the necessity of striving again for it began to pray for immortality – freedom from rebirths and re-deaths. They wanted to attain a position from
which there is no return and which is attainable here in this life. In short, they regarded mokṣa as superior to heavenly life.

1. UPANIŚADIC CONCEPT OF MOKṢA:

   However, when we come to the Upaniṣadic period, the conception of ideal goal becomes very clear and the Indian Philosophers since then have not thought of modifying it, let alone rejecting it. The goal of the Upaniṣadic thinkers discovered was mokṣa or liberation. Though concept of mokṣa differs from schools to school, its central theme remains unchanged. The differences are only peripheral.

   The Indian belief in mokṣa presupposes four doctrines. (1) There is a soul, which is eternal spiritual substance. While the body in which it resides is subject to changes like birth, growth, old age, disease and death, the soul, which is not material, suffers none of these changes. It is unconditionally immortal and therefore, whether one likes or not, one’s soul gets a new body after the death of the old one. So the soul in its beginningless journey has entered and later discarded innumerable types of bodies and will continue to do so many more, if it does not get liberation. In its original nature it is pure and bliss and in its worldly existence its purity and blissfulness are not destroyed, but only obscured temporarily. Jñāna (knowledge) is its essence, just as the capacity of burning and radiating light is constitutional to fire. To destroy its essence, knowledge, we must destroy the soul itself - which is not possible.(2) Because of avidyā (metaphysical ignorance), the soul’s original purity and blissful nature remains obscured, if not destroyed.
Because of its association with the body, senses, etc. it may suffer many limitations. For example, because of selfish desire, it may induce the senses to do various kinds of actions, as a result of which we are bound to saṁsāra, where we have to reap the consequences of what we did. (3) The metaphysical ignorance, and other limitations which the soul suffers in its series of births and deaths, are not permanent taints. The taints are temporary. Therefore liberation is for the soul, from the temporary taints such as ignorance, karma, rebirth, misery, love and hate, fear, etc. and realization of its original nature of knowledge and bliss. If these taints were constitutional to the soul, no amount of self-effort would have released it from bondage. (4) Mokṣa is final liberation from all ignorance, selfishness, karma and rebirth - in fact, all limitations that have caused the soul to experience misery. It is final in the sense, that while earthly remedies like medicine do not ensure the non-recurrence of the miseries, mokṣa does. One who reaches mokṣa, not only does not long for anything else, because it is the highest value, but also is free from the fear of rebirth. He is said to have burnt all previous karmas and, being selfless, he does not acquire new karmas which fructify in future. Therefore, he is liberated from karma and rebirth also. In short he has no fear of being bound or experiencing misery again.

The reason why mokṣa was preferred to life in heaven may be shown as follows:

1. Life in svarga is temporary. Only those who do virtuous and religious acts in their earthly life acquire merit (punya) and only those who
acquire merit (punya) are eligible to life in svarga, and the duration of one’s
life in svarga is determined by the quantity of merit that one has acquired.
Every man does both good and bad acts and therefore every man goes to
svarga and thereafter to naraka (hell). The duration of one’s punishment in
hell is also determined by the quantity of demerit (pāpa) that one has
acquired in his earthly life. Once the quantity of merit or demerit is
exhausted, i.e., once the enjoyment or punishment in accordance with merit
or demerit comes to an end, the individual is sent back to the mortal world
(martya-loka). Therefore, there is no such thing as eternal life in heaven.

Compared to this, mokṣa is believed to be eternal. Once a man attains
mokṣa he is eternally liberated from all shackles and there is no fear of
returning to earthly bondage.

2. The reason why people aim at svarga is also different from the
reason why people aim at liberation. People believed that once a man enters
svarga, all kinds of material pleasures are thrown open to him. He can,
without any effort or hindrance, fulfill material pleasures, which he
passionately loved but could not fulfill in his earthly life. There are neither
physiological limitations nor quantitative deficiency. In other words, the
svarga enjoyment is just an unhindered extension of earthly enjoyment.

Material pleasure presupposes the sense-object contact. In contrast,
the bliss enjoyed by the liberated person is both qualitatively and
quantitatively different. For the liberated person to enjoy bliss (ānanda)
neither an object nor a sense such as eye or skin is required. The soul in the
liberated state is freed from the limitations of the body, sense, intellect, etc. and expresses itself fully. Bliss is its natural character and it was obscured, if not destroyed, in its worldly existence. Thus to attain liberation is to regain its original bliss. Therefore it can be said that bliss is qualitatively different from the heavenly enjoyment, not only because it does not require sense-objects, but also because it is spiritual. It is not at all like any pleasure we are acquainted with. It is quantitatively also superior to svarga-pleasure because while the latter lasts only as long as the contact of the sense with the object lasts, bliss is said to be eternal. The liberated person often describes it as cira-śānti (eternal peace).

3. To say that a person is liberated is to say that he is free from many limitations that bind him to saṃsāra. These limitations are ignorance, selfish desires, karma leading to rebirth, etc. A person who has acquired heavenly life may not be free from these defects. For example, he has desires to enjoy sensual happiness; he is jealous of others who come to stay in svarga; he is afflicted with sorrow when he comes to know of his imminent departure from svarga. Whenever, for example, Indra came to know a mortal like Viśvāmitra is performing penance with the intention of entering svarga, he became jealous and hatched a plan to thwart it. The liberated person, on the contrary, is free from all selfish desires; in fact, it is in order to become free from selfish desires, fear, jealousy, etc., that he embarks on a spiritual programme, the end of which is mokṣa. He has acquired equanimity of mind, such that he is not worried by others’ progress. Many a time it is said that liberated persons strive for others’
spiritual progress, because their aim is to provide them eternal happiness. While the denizen who returns to the mortal world is not pure, the liberated person is perfectly pure; and there is no fear that he becomes impure again.

4. Life in svarga is an after-death acquisition and this should mean that those who live in svarga have no gross body, but only subtle body. Embodied life in svarga is logically impossible. In contrast, a embodied liberation, according to some Indian philosophical schools, at least, is possible. Thus it is possible to doubt the possibility of svarga-life, because nobody has experienced it while alive and nobody has returned from svarga to narrate their experiences. It is nothing more than mere belief. But embodied liberation cannot be doubted, as one can experience it in one's life time itself. If we know the characteristics of a mukta (liberated person), it is theoretically possible to verify the claim that he is or he is not a mukta.

5. The most important character of a person liberated while alive is his clear knowledge of himself and of the world. Thus he relates his experiences in some form or the other to his disciples, which become the starting point for philosophical discussion. The person who lives in svarga does not make any claim about knowing the truth either of himself or of svarga or of any other thing. He is interested in enjoying things of heaven rather than knowing reality. More often than not, the liberated person claims that reality is one and he is one with it.

Viewing from this angle the ideal of liberation was obviously regarded by the Upaniṣadic thinkers as superior to life in svarga.
Three important developments in the Upaniṣadic concept of mokṣa which draw our attention are as follows:-

1. One World theory: - Some of the Upaniṣads which speak of the law of karma and re-birth in clear terms insist that it works in this world only and that there are no other worlds. A man because of his meritorious or wicked deeds is reborn in this world only. The world in which he is reborn again and again in order to suffer the consequences of his previous deeds is called saṃsāra. The idea of saṃsāra both as a place of experiencing pain and pleasure and as an arena where one carries out one’s spiritual programmer is acceptable to all schools of Indian philosophy (including the heterodox Jaina and Baudhā) except Cārvāka.

2. Becoming Brahman: - “Emancipation or mukti means in the Upaniṣads the state of infiniteness that a man attains when he knows his own self and thus becomes Brahman. The ceaseless course of transmigration is only for those who are ignorant. The wise man however who has divested himself of all passions and knows he to be Brahman, at once becomes Brahman and no bondage of any kind can affect him.”

The idea of mokṣa as becoming Brahman presupposes a definite development in the Upaniṣadic thought. As a result of mystic intuition the seers could witness consciousness present in everything – living and non-living. This they called Brahman. They regarded the Brahman as the essence of the world. Just as clay is the substances out of which different forms like pots, plates, jars are produced, so the different things of the world
are the different forms of one Brahman. They noticed that soul, which also is consciousness, is the essence of man. "Men are reborn in many sizes and shapes - as animals, cows, horses, insects, etc. - but their essence, the soul, remains unchanged. However, again those who had mystic intuition (samādhi) identified the two. One who realizes that he is Brahman is liberated. "He who is this Brahman in man and who is that in the sun, those are one"5 On this subject, S.RadhaKrishnan says

From the beginning of reflection this oneness of subject and object, the existence of one central reality, pervading and embracing all, has been the doctrine of the devout. Religious mysticism and deep piety witness to the truth of the great saying, "That art thou," "Tat-tvam-asi." We may not understand it, but that does not give us a sufficient right to deny it. 6

The concept of becoming Brahman has been interpreted mainly in three ways by Vedāntins - in the Advaita way by Śaṅkara and in the Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita way by Rāmānuja and Madhva.

(3) Mokṣa in this world: While one desirous of heaven left this world after his death and lived in another world, one who is liberated is in this world only. Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad says: "His (the liberated man's) prāṇas do not go anywhere. Being Brahman he is merged in Brahman".7 Similarly Kaṭha Upaniṣad Says that the liberated man who realizes his identity with Brahman need not go anywhere for salvation.8 Moreover, for him body-
mind complex is no more a prison of the soul, nor is it a source of hindrance to the soul; for him the universe is no more a samsāra, for it does not bind him any more. He is absolutely free from all causes of limitation such as ignorance, results of karma, selfish desires which are the causes of future karma, and rebirth. He is said to enjoy eternal bliss (ānanda).

2. CONCEPT OF LIBERATION IN BUDDHISM:

A. Concept of Liberation in Early Buddhism and Hinayāna:

We have seen already that the early Buddhists (Hinayāna, Sarvāstivādins and Sthaviravādins) uphold Nairatmyavāda or Saṅghatavāda, the theory that there is nothing substantial either in the spirits or material things. "The term nairatmya, being negative, tells us what objects are not, while saṅghatva, being positive, states what they are." With reference to human personality this means that it is not a permanent substance, unchanging and everlasting, but an aggregate of five aggregates each continuously changing.

The Buddhists do not say, it must be noted, that there is no self, only that there is no permanent, unchanging and self-existing self. Even the so-called self for them is a combination of Samskāras, sanjñās, vedanās and consciousness (vijñāna). Even if we take vijñāna, as the self, they say that it is also a combination of many awarenesses, each continuously changing.

This philosophy of the self is related to a Buddhist Sanskrit saying that "belief in the being of oneself simultaneously posits belief in that of others and thereby gives rise to the whole range of narrow love and hatred
with the negation of self, all selfish impulses necessarily disappear. The belief in permanent self is due, according to the Buddhist, to avidyā, which is beginningless. This belief, gives rise to selfish desires, which give to selfish action, which in turn result in rebirths in which also one suffers due to avidyā. So to escape from suffering, we encounter in all our births, i.e., to attain liberation we have to first eradicate avidyā (see Bauddha-yoga).

The Buddhists use the word “nirvāṇa” for liberation. The word “nirvāṇa” means ‘extinction’ or ‘becoming cool’. If we interpret the word ‘nirvāṇa’ as ‘permanent decomposition of the five aggregates’ then, we have to admit by implication that the Buddhist’s conception of the highest goal is ‘becoming nothing’ or ‘heaven of nothing’. Or, as S.Radhakrishnan says, ‘salvation consists in the unmaking of ourselves’. Objecting to this interpretation, M.Hiriyanna, says “But the extremely negative character of such an ideal unfits it to serve as an incentive to man for pursuing the course of discipline recommended for its attainment, and thus appears to defeat the very purpose of Buddha’s teaching.” Just because Buddha opposed the Upaniṣadic concept of a eternal substantial soul, it should not follow that the highest goal for him is disintegration of personality. If voluntary disintegration were ‘nirvāṇa’, then there is no guarantee that one is not reborn. Rebirth indicates retrospectively that voluntary disintegration or becoming nothing is not nirvāṇa, the highest goal.

If the Ārya Aṣṭāṅgika-mārga is followed rigourously, it is for becoming perfect. So nirvāṇa ought to be condition of perfection which the Buddhist experience while alive, and obviously corresponds to the
jīvanmukti of the Advaita Vedānta. Sometimes an explicit distinction is made between Upādhiśeṣa and Anupādhiśeṣa nirvāṇa. Childern basing his distinction Milinda Pannhā (ii. 2.4) says that the former corresponds to jīvanmukti of the Hindus and the latter is the consequence of the death of the arhat. It is a state when the passions and the limited interests of common life have been extinguished and the person leads a life of perfect peace and equanimity. It connotes a certain habit of mind, and he that has succeeded in cultivating it is known as an ‘arhat’ or ‘holy’. He is not perturbed by the evils of the world. After the death of the arhat (liberated person), the five aggregates, which composed his personality, disintegrate and he is neither found anywhere on earth or heaven (in which the Buddhists have no faith) nor is he reborn. The after-death nirvāṇa is called pari-nirvāṇa. So after death, he becomes nothing, but he enjoys his nirvāṇa while in the embodied state. If escaping rebirth is annihilation, then Upaniṣadic thinkers also advocate ‘annihilation’.

Buddha is said to have always avoided metaphysical discussion, for they led nowhere. For him the application of remedy is more important than the discussion of the disease and its implication. Yet we can see metaphysical views in his ‘remedies’. The word ‘nirvāṇa’ has two connotations, negative and positive; negatively it means extinction of hot passions and positively it means “cooling”, suggesting the equanimity of cool mind. It is the result of perfection, where “perfection is the sense of oneness with all that is, has ever been and can ever be”. Specially it is a kind of existence full of “confidence, peace, calm, bliss, happiness, delicacy,
purity and freshness” (Milinda Pannha ii, 2.9; iii, 4.6. etc.).\textsuperscript{16} It is perfection inconceivable and our attempt at conceptualization only produces partial views. Perhaps it is for this reason that Buddha avoided metaphysical discussion. Since early Buddhism makes no reference to God, one can say that nirvāṇa is not eternal companionship or an eternal union with God.

\textbf{Nirvāṇa in Mahāyāna:}

Both the Mahāyāna schools, viz, Yogācāra (or Vījñānavāda) and Madhyamika (or Śūnyavāda) believe that the world we experience is only phenomenal (saṃvṛti), the real or noumenal (saṃvṛta) being hidden from sense experience. Nāgārjuna, the greatest exponent of Mahāyāna philosophy, uses the technical language, which became later the technical language of both Gauḍapāda and Śankarācārya, the greatest exponent of Advaita philosophy. He says that we have two forms of reality – the reality that is accessible to sense perception and inference, that is, empirical reality or vyāvahārika sattā; and the reality that is the content of mystic intuition, the transcendental reality or pāramārthika sattā. The Vījñānavādins call the transcendental reality Ālayavijñāna and sometimes Nāgārjuna calls it Śunya or Śūnyāta or Tathatā. In fact, these are not two realities, but only two views of the same reality. Thus what is pāramārthika sattā is simply the reality perceived by the mystic and the same reality when perceived from the empirical standpoint, is what we call the world. According to the Śūnyavādins if the transcendental reality appears as the world it is only because of our avidyā. From this it follows that what is perceived by the avidyā-infected mind is unreal, pāramārthika sattā alone being real. Nāgārjuna does not distinguish between the pāramārthika sat, the mystic
perception of pāramārthika sat and nirvāṇa. So the description of reality is the description of nirvāṇa. But he also warns us against describing nirvāṇa, because describing the indescribable in positive terms results in misrepresenting it. So he resorts to its description in negative terms. He says, nirvāṇa is

anirōdhaṃ, anutpādanaṃ, anucchedaṃ, aśāśvataṃ,
anekārthaṃ, anānārtham, anāgamaṃ, anirgamaṃ

(nirvāṇa cannot be stopped or produced, cannot be annihilated or make it eternal, it is neither one nor many; it neither comes from somewhere nor goes somewhere). Nagarjuna even refuses to say it exists. In fact, according to him, nirvāṇa (śūnya) is devoid of all the four possible predicates (catuṣkoṭivinirmukta), namely, existence, non-existence, combined existence and non-existence and disjoined neither existence nor non-existence.

It cannot be said to exist, because to say something exists is to localize it in a particular part of space. But Śūnya is not part of reality, but reality itself. It cannot be said to non-exist, because to say that something does not exist is to say again that it does not exist here or there or somewhere. Nor can we say it never exists, e.g. son of a barren woman. But Śūnya is not like son of a barren woman. A combination of sat and asat (existence and non-existence) is impossible. Because if it were both, nirvāṇā would be both real and unreal. This is logically impossible. If nirvāṇa is neither sat nor asat nobody would understand what it is.\(^{17}\)

From the negative epithets it is easy to jump to the conclusion that nirvāṇa (or pāramārtha) is nothing. But it is not nihilism. The theory only
says that nirvāṇa is strictly speaking, neither sat nor asat. Therefore the very idea of distinguishing paramārtha sat from vyavahāra sat is misleading. Nāgārjuna describes śūnya (or nirvāṇa) in these words:

Aparaprayāyaṁ, sāntaṁ, prapañcail aprapañcitam
Nirvikalpaṁ, anānārtham, etattattvasya takṣaṇam

(Śūnya is incommunicable, quiescent, not expressible and indeterminable in terms of worldly objects, i.e., it is not like any worldly object, transcendent to discursive thought, non-dual).

That nirvāṇa is not annihilation can be supported by Candrakīrti (the commentator on Madhyamaka-kārikā of Nagarjuna) who quotes from Aryaratnāvali: “Nor is nirvāṇa abhāva (non-existence). How do you entertain such an idea? Nirvāṇa is really complete cessation of such consideration as bhāva (existence) or abhāva (non-existence) of the real”

Śūnyavāda says that śūnya (or nirvāṇa) is neither sat, nor asat. While it asserts that nothing can be asserted about it, it does not assert that it is non-entity. It is truth-paramārtha sat, (transcendental truth). Paramārtham anāgamya nirvāṇam nādhigamyate” (“Nirvāṇa cannot be attained unless the transcendental truth is realized”)

According to Mahāyāna, the conquest of nirvāṇa by the early Buddhists was personal. It means both (1) that the early Buddhists held that each aspirant must be guide or lamp unto himself (ātma-dīpobhava) and should not depend on others such as guru, and (2) that it was selfish, because the liberated one need not help others to achieve it. He becomes, a
pratyekabuddha, a liberated person who does not share with others his “hard-won knowledge of the means for the attainment of nirvāṇa”\textsuperscript{20} He is indifferent to others’ misery and the help they need. “The Hīnayāna ideal of complete absorption, or arhattva, the lonely journey on the trackless path of eternity, this isolated bliss is, according to Mahāyāna, The temptation of the Māra.” (Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā, xi.) \textsuperscript{21} As against this, the Mahāyānists proposed the Bodhisattva theory. The word “bodhisattva” literally means ‘one whose essence is jñāna or ‘bodhi’. But it really applies to one who is on his way to Buddhatva (or bodhi). He is “a future Buddha” or “Buddha designate”\textsuperscript{22} But a bodhisattva, out of love and compassion for others postpones his attainment of nirvāṇa, because he wants to lead the suffering lot to the true knowledge. In short, “the ideal of Hīnayāna is individual enlightenment, the ideal of Mahāyāna is universal enlightenment”\textsuperscript{23}

Sometimes the Mahāyānists indulge in description of various celestial world on Bodhisattva’s way to Buddhatva. “The idea of nirvāṇa is displaced by a paradise with hell opposed to it. On the road to sanctity or bodhisattvahood, the individual enjoys numerous existences on celestial planes”\textsuperscript{24}

3. CONCEPT OF MOKṢA IN JAINISM

Our voluntary actions produce what the Jainas calls karma - pudgala, which flow into the soul. This flow of karma-pudgala is called āsrava (influx). The influx is of two types puṇya (merit) and pāpa (demerit).
Karma-pudgala produced on account of virtuous deeds is called puṇya and that produced on account of wicked deeds is called pāpa and both stick to the soul which is otherwise pure. Actions themselves are neither virtuous nor wicked, but are determined so in accordance with the intentions behind them. Thus our evil intentions impel us to tell lies, steal, be violent, etc. and therefore, such actions are wicked. Similarly our actions like telling truth, helping others, are virtuous because our intention is to help others. Unlike in the Hindu systems like Advaita, Śaṅkhyā, etc. voluntary actions with a view to attaining liberation play an important role in the Jaina-yoga. While bad actions, by producing bad karma-pudgala, defile the soul and harden its relationship with transmigration, virtuous deeds, producing puṇya, free the soul from the karma pudgala and make it light and eligible to liberation. In this sense controlling our passions, lust, infatuation, etc. which lead us to do evil actions is very important part of Jaina spiritual discipline.

If āsrava of karma-pudgala is the cause of bondage, saṃvara (stopping) and nirjara (expelling) are the causes of liberation. In other words, for the attainment of liberation (called nirvāṇa in this system), we must stop the influx of new karma-matter and remove the already exciting karma-matter.

Karma-matter is removed in two ways – naturally and voluntarily. Our karma-matter having produced its results (happiness or unhappiness) at the proper time, naturally leaves the soul. But we can also free the soul from karmic matter by means penance, even before it produces its results in course of time.
Liberation or nirvāṇa is a state of soul in which it is completely free from both the new karma-matter and evil effects of the old karma-matter. In that state it becomes infinitely perfect, i.e., it regains its four infinite qualities (ananta-catuṣṭaya), namely, ananta jñāna (infinite knowledge), ananta darśana (infinite perception), ananta vīrya (infinite power) and ananta sukha (infinite happiness).

After losing the weight of karma-matter the liberated soul becomes light, as it were, and moves upwards till it reaches the top of the universe. In fact, it is believed to move upwards eternally (nityordhavagamanam mukti), because (1) its natural tendency is to move upwards, (2) there is no karma-matter associated with it, which kept it down to saṃsāra (asaṅgatratā) and (3) the momentum due to previous activity in the embodied state (pūrvaprayogat).

The Jainas think that possession of body, sense, etc. is a mark of bondage, and therefore nirvāṇa must be marked by soul's freedom from body, sense, etc. In other words, Jainas propose that embodied liberation is self-contradiction.

The Jainas do not believe in any God that creates, etc. So the liberated soul does not unite, or have eternal companionship with God. Nor is the liberated soul believed to disintegrate and become nothing, as the Buddhists believe. It continues to exist in alokākāsa (space in which there is no world) in perfect blessedness and has no fear of either returning to bondage or being afflicted with misery.
The liberated soul's which co-exist in alokākāśa are called siddhas or thīrthaṅkaras. Their nirvāṇa is, strictly speaking, not caused or produced by external causes. “Know that from the ordinary point of view, perfect faith, knowledge and conduct are the causes of liberation, while in reality one's own soul consisting of these three (is the cause of liberation)” (Nomikendra's Dravyaśaṅgraha, 39, 40)²⁵

4. CONCEPT OF MOKṢA IN SĀṆKHYA-YOGA:

Since the Yoga system being purely practical, depends for its metaphysics on the Sāṅkhya system, its concept of mokṣa will have to be regarded as the same as that in Sāṅkhya, except with minor differences. Because of the similarity in metaphysics between these two systems, they are called syncretistic school and they are represented by a hyphenated name, “Sāṅkhya - Yoga”.

The Sāṅkhya-Yoga believes that there are two realities, which are irreducibly different from and independent of each other, namely, prakṛti and puruṣa. The puruṣa (soul) which is conscious and inactive, is pure in its original nature. “It is above time and space, merit and demerit, bondage and liberation”,²⁶ but because of its beginningless association with prakṛti, it is afflicted with three kinds of misery (tāpatraya), namely;

(1) Ādhidaivika tāpa or misery caused by supernatural beings like gods, demons, planets etc.

(2) Ādhibhautika tāpa or misery caused by natural beings, like men, animals, birds, storms, pests, floods, etc.; and
(3) Ādhyātmika tāpa or misery caused by physical, psychical and moral dispositions of oneself. By congenital defect (e.g. polio) one has to suffer physical misery; by loss of property, etc. one suffers psychically, and by karmas done in the past one may reap both physical and psychical misery. In short, as long as there is a body-mind complex made of the guṇas the suffering continues.

Actually, it is not the association of soul with the guṇas, but the beginningless avidyā, that is the root cause of all misery. Because of its association with the body-mind complex, it becomes subjected to ignorance, because of which it identifies itself with the products of prakṛti such as ego, buddhi, etc. From this ignorance

Proceed the actions vicious, which in their turn again produce as a result of their fruition, birth, life and experiences of pleasure and pain and the vāsanās or residues of the memory of these experiences. Again every new life or birth is produced from the fructification of actions of a previous life; a man is made to perform actions good or bad by the kleśas which are rooted in him, and these actions, as a result of their fructification, produce another life and its experiences, in which life again new actions are earned by virtue of the kleśas, and thus the cycle is continued.  

Therefore, it is the ego that is really bound and not puruṣa.
The Sāṅkhya argument in this case is this: if bondage is due to ignorance, liberation must be due to knowledge - viveka or discriminating knowledge. That is, in order to be liberated one must have knowledge that discriminates between prakṛti, products (vikṛti) of pralāti and puruṣa, the knower (jñā). Right knowledge alone - not karma - can liberate man from the threefold misery. Man must realize at some point of time or the other that he (his soul) is not non-self (i.e. buddhi, aham, etc.), nothing belongs to the soul and the real self has no limbs etc. However, this "knowledge should be more than a mere belief that nature (prakṛti) is different from spirit. It should be an immediate experience and the truth should become known by the practical, we might say, as distinct from the theoretical reason". Thus it becomes evident that the cause of misery is not wrong knowledge, but avidyā (incomplete knowledge).

While the Sāṅkhya says that by constant meditation (tattva-abhyāsa) one can get rid of the influence of prakṛti over puruṣa. Sāṅkhya-kārikā and its commentators are silent about how this direct experience can be gained. But Yoga which is mostly practical oriented lays out an elaborate plan of how to achieve this. Called Aṣṭāṅga-yoga (eight-limbed-yoga), this plan includes ethical (yama and niyama), physical (āsana and prāṇāyāma) and psychological discipline (pratyāhāra, dhāraṇa, dhyāna and samādhi) leading to the direct experience, which is said to be cause of liberation. The Yogic discipline consists in purging the buddhi (intellect) of its rājasika element which represents passion, overpowering infatuation, and the tāmasika element which represents inertia, beastliness and dullness, and, as a result the buddhi becomes transparent and is able to reflect puruṣa in its true form.
In any case, the mukta (liberated person) realizes that his self is only a sākṣi (witness) and not a doer (karta) or experient (bhokta). He looks at his own body, senses, etc. as an object, without being involved. He is comparable to the sthita-prajñā of the Bhagavadgītā. He is liberated while alive (jīvanmukta). Though he is still associated with body, senses, etc. he is least perturbed or influenced by them. This, is in the words of S.N. Dasgupta, “is the kevala (oneness) state of existence after which (all saṃskāras, all avidyā being all together uprooted) the citta is impotent any longer to hold on to the puruṣa, and like a stone hurled from a mountain top, gravitates back into the prakṛti.” In other words, he is free from ideas like ‘I exist’, ‘I act’, ‘I enjoy’ which are completely purged of his citta (aṅtaḥkaraṇa). As a result of absence of such selfishness, he has no future karmas and therefore he has no fear of rebirth. After death there is a complete separation (kaivalya) of the puruṣa (soul) from prakṛti.

According to Sāṅkhya mokṣa is a state in which the puruṣa, is free from suffering, but it is not a state of happiness. Since in that state sattva-guṇa also fails to influence puruṣa, there is no happiness, which is the quality of sattva-guṇa. Therefore, it is also called apavarga - escape (from pain).

Retrospectively speaking, bondage and liberation are both unreal, real only from the practical point of view. They are both unreal because strictly speaking, it is only ego (ahām) that is bound or liberated. The puruṣa in reality is neither bound nor liberated, because in the true sense puruṣa is neither doer nor experient.
While Sāńkhya describes moksa as an experience devoid of both pain and pleasure, Yoga speaks of sānanda samādhi and sāsmita samādhi – lower degree and higher degree of bliss (ānanda). It is a state in which the soul, retaining its individuality experiences ecstasy.

One who experiences this has removed avidyā, the root cause of suffering and in its place has dawned prajñā (true knowledge of oneself and of the phenomenal world)

This final uprooting of the avidyā with its vāsanās directly follows the attainment of true knowledge called prajñā, in which state the seed of false knowledge is altogether burnt and cannot be revived again. Before this state, the discriminative knowledge which arises as the recognition of the distinct natures of puruṣa and buddhi remains shaky; but when by continual practice this discriminative knowledge becomes strengthened in the mind, its potency gradually grows stronger and stronger, and roots out the potency of the ordinary states of mental activity, and thus the seed of false knowledge becomes burnt up and incapable of fruition, and the impurity of the energy of rajas being removed, the sattva as the manifesting entity becomes of the highest purity, and in that state flows on the stream of the notion of discrimination – the recognition of the distinct nature of puruṣa and buddhi- free from impurity.
What happens to the body, senses, etc. of the liberated person after his death? The three sets of guṇas which composed his body, senses, etc. were earlier succeeding each other constantly. But with the kaivalya achieved the succession of the changes of the qualities is over, inasmuch as they have fulfilled their object by having achieved experience and emancipation, and their succession having ended, they cannot stay even for a moment. And now comes absolute freedom, when the guṇas return back to the pradhāna their primal cause, after performing their service for the purusha by providing his experience and his salvation, so that they lose all their hold on puruṣa and puruṣa remains as he is in himself, and never again has any connection with the buddhi. The puruṣa remains always in himself in absolute freedom.37

This is compared by Īsvarakṛṣṇa to cessation of dancing and retiring by the dancer and disappearing from the view of puruṣa for whose pleasure she was dancing earlier.

5. CONCEPT OF MOKṢA IN ADVAITA

Like in other systems of Indian Philosophy in Advaita avidyā (metaphysical ignorance) is held responsible for all our suffering. Avidyā gives rise to four false beliefs – (1) that the world is real, (2) that there are really innumerable individual selves, and (3) that each soul is different not only from the other selves from Brahman. (4) Because of avidyā we also confuse between ātman and body.
Śaṅkara, the first and the chief exponent of Advaita philosophy, holds that the surest way of proving the existence of Brahman, the ultimate reality is to prove the existence of one’s own self. I can deny everything, including my own body, but I cannot deny my own existence. Like Descartes he argues that I think, therefore my spiritual self (ātman) exists. If I were simply body or senses, which are insentient by nature, I would not have concluded that ‘therefore, my self exists.’ If, on the contrary, ‘I’ means the jīvātman, the individual self, whose presence is the cause of mind’s thinking, etc., then the inference to a thinking substance is justified. Therefore, by ‘I am fat’ I should not mean ‘the soul is fat’. But the soul is not a bhoktā (experient) of pain and pleasure. Therefore, by ‘I am happy’ I should mean neither ‘my body is happy’, nor ‘my soul is happy’. But unlike Descartes he says further that the individual is potential Brahman.

Śaṅkara, however, rejects the idea that there are innumerable souls, because if he accepted, he would have to accept that there are innumerable Brahmans. In fact, for him the latter conclusion is the basis for the rejection of the premises. Since the idea of innumerable Brahman is ridiculous, the idea of each individual soul becoming a separate Brahman is also ridiculous. However, he suggests that the different individual souls can become the same Brahman. Just as the different parts of space contained in pots, houses, etc., become one when their limiting adjuncts are removed, so also the different individual souls become one Brahman when their limiting adjuncts like body, sense, etc., are destroyed.
This only means that every individual soul is essentially Brahman. To substantiate his position Śaṅkara quotes Upaniṣadic texts like ‘Tat tvam asi’ (That you are), ‘Aham Brahāmsmi’ (‘I am Brahman’), etc.

Brahman of Advaita is infinite consciousness devoid of any quality. He is Sat (reality), Cit (consciousness) and ānanda (bliss). Our consciousness can be witnessed in various states, such as waking, dreaming, deep sleep and mystic intuition. But the underlying consciousness is the same. Since the bodily or mental states do not change the original quality of consciousness, it is called sat. The sat-cit in its original state is pure bliss (ānanda) and that aspect is temporarily obscured in its earthly existence.

Liberation, according to Śaṅkara, is the realization of self’s identity with Brahman, the infinite consciousness. Since it is not a state to be newly attained, but is the very nature of the self, we can hardly speak of means in its ordinary sense for achieving it. It is realizing what has always been one’s own innate character but happens for the time being to be forgotten”.

In the other words of S. Radhakrishnan

Mokṣa is a matter of direct realization of some thing which is existent from eternity, though it is hidden from our view. When the limitations are removed, the soul is liberated. It remains where it is, what it is and eternally was, the first principle of all things. It is the peace that the world can never give, nor take away, the supreme and only blessedness.
Śaṅkara himself says:

That which is real in the absolute sense, immutable, eternal, all-penetrating like ākāśa, exempt from all change, all-satisfying, undivided, whose nature is to be its own light, in which neither good nor evil, nor effect, nor past nor present nor future has any place, this incorporeal is called liberation.\(^{40}\)

Śaṅkara in his commentary on the Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad\(^{41}\) gives the analogy of a prince who is unaware that he is a prince, since he is brought from his infancy by a hunter family. Once he comes to know of his royal origin he begins to behave in a royal fashion. Similarly, the individual soul has forgotten its essential nature as Brahma. Just as the hunter does not ‘become’ a prince, but only becomes aware that he is a prince, so also the individual soul does not become Brahma, but only realizes that it is in essence Brahma. There is no process of something becoming some other thing. Or, as Śaṅkara says, it is “not like annihilating the hardness of butter by putting it on the fire”.\(^{42}\) Therefore what is required is just the removal of ignorance that prevents us from being aware that we are really Brahma.

The removal of avidyā is explained in Advaita in two forms, negative and positive. The negative form is that avidyā cannot be removed by bhakti or karma, nor by a combination of the two. The positive form is that we try to possess knowledge. Moral perfection by means of Karma-yoga and purification of the citta by surrender to God are necessary, but not sufficient. Because they are not jñāna.\(^{43}\) Or, “they are only aids to jñāna, not to
Once the removal of avidyā is effected, jñāna immediately follows. The two are simultaneous, not successive, just like the appearance of light and disappearance of darkness.

Mokṣa pratibandha nivṛttimātrai eva ātmajñānasya phalam

Though Śaṅkara often regards jñāna as the only means to Brahman-realization, he ultimately holds that mokṣa is not the result of jñāna, but jñāna itself. To understand the meaning of this we have to make a distinction between the two meanings of ‘jñāna’. S.N. Dasgupta has this to say on this:

In the acquirement of ordinary knowledge the ajñānas removed are only smaller states of ajñāna, whereas when the Brahma-knowledge dawns the ajñāna as a whole is removed. Brahma-knowledge at the stage of its first rise is itself also a state of knowledge, but such is its special strength that when this knowledge once dawns, even the state of knowledge which at first reflects it (and which being a state is itself ajñāna modification) is destroyed by it. The state itself being destroyed, only the pure infinite and unlimited Brahman shines forth in its own true light. Thus it is said that just as fire riding on a piece of wood would burn the whole city and after that would burn the very same wood, so in the last state of mind the Brahma-knowledge would destroy all the illusory world-appearance and at last destroy even that final state.
This mystic intuition or jñāna, therefore is both the removal of ajñāna and the attainment of Brahma-jñāna or Brahma-sākṣātkāra. In this state the sadhaka realizes his oneness with Brahman. Thus, according to Śaṅkara, the Upaniṣadic statement “one who knows Brahman himself becomes Brahman” (“Brahmavid Brahmaiva bhavati”) is validated.

The effect of jñāna or mokṣa on the sadhaka is immeasurably great. Karel Werner, says:

However preferable, during a man’s life, existence appears to be death, it is a miserable and shadowy existence compared with the pure and full existence of a liberated one, an existence which is beyond the limitations of space and time. However clear man’s consciousness may be at times, it appears very faint and limited in the light of pure and free consciousness after liberation. And whatever pleasurable experiences man may have in the phenomenal world, they are always mixed with sorrow of some kind and are too brief; but the pure bliss experienced by a liberated one has no limitations whatsoever.47

Śaṅkara is of the clear opinion that jñāna must be had (or Brahman must be experienced) when one is alive. Avidyā-force cannot be removed after death, but only when one is alive. Therefore he calls this state ‘jīvanmukti’ (embodied liberation).48 But he also says that if the obstructions to Brahma-sākṣātkāra are too strong to be removed in this life
in spite of all possible efforts, then the sadhaka may attain mokṣa after his death, which he calls videha-mukti.

The essential characteristic of mokṣa (or mukti) is freedom, on the one hand, from avidyā (ignorance) and on the other, from rebirth. According to Śaṅkara, as also to the other Indian Philosophers, removal of avidyā leading to mokṣa is also the removal of causes leading to rebirth. The causes of rebirth are the karma results. The acquisition of jñāna (i.e., removal of ajñāna) is possible only if all his past karmas are annihilated. Since he has realized that he is Brahman, he has no selfish desires, which impel him to do selfish acts which produce āgāmi (future) karma-results. He has only prarabdha-karmas, but he is not affected by them. Though his body is not subjected to any karma-result it may continue to do its normal function, just as a potter’s wheel goes on revolving for sometime even after the pushing stick is withdrawn. His body may last till the prārabdha karmas demand it.

Thus the emancipated person may walk about and behave like an ordinary sage, but yet he is emancipated and can no longer acquire any new karma. As soon as the fruits due to his ripe karmas are enjoyed and exhausted, the sage loses his body and there will never be any other birth for him.

The world continues to be, but the liberated person’s perception of it has undergone a tremendous transformation. He clearly experiences Brahman in what others call the world. Just as the perception of rope
removes the illusion of snake, so also knowledge of Brahman removes the illusion of the saṃsāra. He knows Brahman alone is real and that both the world and plurality of selves are appearances. Nor is he perturbed by the distractions of the world.

6. CONCEPT OF MOKṢA IN VIŚIṢṬĀDVAITA:

Rāmānuja, the first well-known exponent of the devotion-movement (bhakti-pantha) saw little in Śaṅkara’s nirguṇa Brahman that appealed to religious heart. He thought that nirguṇa Brahman was more a philosopher’s heartless God than a God of religious man’s. Perhaps it is this, which gave him the impetus to interpret the scriptures in terms of devotional theism against Śaṅkara’s interpretation which was purely in terms of spiritual monism (Cid-advaita).

In Ramanuja’s philosophy saguṇa Brahman, God who has innumerable auspicious attributes (anantakalyāṇaguṇa) plays a dominant role and in his religion for realization of the personal God devotion occupies the central position. Scholars are of the opinion that his devotion cult was more influenced by the devotion cult of the Āḻvārs of Tamil Nādu than either by the Upaniṣads, or by the Brahma-sūtras. The concept of devotion is certainly there in the Bhagavadgītā, but it is not as much developed as in the devotional literature of the Āḻvārs.

According to Rāmānuja, Brahman, the highest reality, is not nirguṇa (featureless) Brahman of Śaṅkara. He has not only innumerable auspicious attributes, but also each one them is perfect (Paripūrna). He interprets the
concept of nirguna Brahman not as featureless Brahman, but as God who is not disturbed by the changes in guṇas of prakṛti, such as creation, dissolution, etc.

Like Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja is also a monist. Though he believes that there are innumerable individual souls (cid-vastus) and innumerable material objects, which are the evolutes of prakṛti, he thinks that there is only one reality, namely, Brahman. But instead of calling the individual soul and physical objects illusory, as does Śaṅkara, he makes them attributes (viśeṣaṇas) of Brahman. Thus Brahman is called cit-acid-viśiṣṭa. In any case, ultimately there is one reality with innumerable attributes. In spite of this stand, he says that God is ‘one without a second’ (ekamevādvitiyaṃ). This may mean either that there is only one God and other things are not God, or may mean that so far as perfection is considered nothing equals God.

Sometimes the relation between Brahman and the other two categories (cit and acit) is spoken of in terms of the relation between substance and attributes, between soul and body, between the whole and its parts. He wants us to believe that the relationship between him and the rest is in separable — aprthak-siddhi. Just as a part (aṃśa) cannot be separated from its substance, just as a living body cannot exist apart from the soul, so also the individual souls (and the world) cannot exist apart from Brahman.

But such a relationship between the jīvas (individual souls) and Brahman is not external, but organic or internal. That is just as all souls depend on Brahman, Brahman has entered into all things including the jīvas.
The soul, according to Rāmānuja, is pure in its original nature. But because of its association with avidyā, karma, body, senses, etc., during its sāṃsāric journey, it is impure. However changes in the physical body and mental states do not affect the purity of the soul (svaśarīragatabālatavyuv-tvasthaviratvādayo dharamāḥ jīvaṁ na sprśanti)\textsuperscript{51} The original purity is not destroyed, but only obscured during its bound state. The question of how the pure soul becomes bound up with karma and suffering is answered by Rāmānuja, in the manner in which other Indian philosophers have answered. His answer is that avidyā, karma or the relation of the soul to body, etc. is beginningless. Because of avidyā the soul thinks that it is independent of or separate from Brahman, and wrongly identifies itself with body, sense, ego, etc., and this wrong identification creates in it selfish desire which impel to do all kinds of action which lead to rebirth. In the next birth also it does similar acts and so on. Therefore mokṣa means release from avidyā, karma, rebirth and suffering.

During the state of mokṣa the soul neither becomes Brahman nor is it separated from him. It cannot become Brahman, because in order to become Brahman it must develop the divine qualities, like creatorship, omnipresence, and other perfect auspicious qualities. It cannot develop these qualities, because if every soul develops these qualities, every soul becomes creator, etc., it cannot be all-pervasive (Sarvāntaryāmin) or creator, because all pervasiveness and creative ability are the special qualities of God, and not any ātman.\textsuperscript{52} Moreover, the idea of every soul becoming Brahman i.e., the idea of plurality of Brahmans, is not only contradictory to the spiritual texts
which declare that Brahman is one without a second (ekamevādvitīyaṁ), but also offends reason.

This logically implies that the soul does not lose its individuality in spite of its highest achievement, mokṣa. Because disappearance of the self in Brahman is destruction of the real self (satyātmanāśa). In that state it does not merge in Brahman, it only realizes the mystical intuitive state that its essence is an attribute (viśeṣaṇa), aṃśa (part) or body (śarīra) of Brahman. This realization is the result of highest bhakti, which is not emotional love (devotion) of God, but direct knowledge of God.

The liberated soul becomes pure like Brahman. This is called parama-sāmya (equality with Brahman). That is, the liberated becomes as pure as God. However, there is no tādātmya (sameness) but only sādharmyā (similarity). The many souls, which exist in the liberated state, are all alike. That is, there is no qualitative difference amongst them. All of them are pure like gods and in this respect, they do not different from them. The quantity of ānanda the different liberated souls enjoy is also the same. The bliss they enjoy is described by Vedānta Deśika as "full and perfect enjoyment of bliss of Brahman (paripūrṇa-brahmānubhava). This idea is not acceptable to the Mādhvas who propose the theory of ānanda-tāratamya, the theory that the liberated souls are rewarded with different degrees of happiness corresponding to the degree of hardship they have faced during their spiritual discipline in the earthly life.
Just because the liberated souls are all alike it does not follow that they lose their individuality, what is lost in the mokṣa is not individuality, but only ego. The question often raised is, “If the soul loses its individuality how can it enjoy the bliss?”

The special feature of the Viśiṣṭādvaīta conception of liberation is that the liberated soul becomes omniscient. The concept of omniscience in this context means the ability of the liberated soul to perceive directly Brahman in all its glory (vibhūti). In a broader sense it means continuous unbroken intuition of Brahman. One who has such knowledge does not return to bondage (na ca punarāvartate) The omniscience is not something which the liberated soul newly acquires. The jīva, according to the Viśiṣṭādvaitins, is constitutionally omniscient. But because of avidyā and karma its omniscience is only obscured, though not destroyed, when the obstacles like karma and avidyā are overcome, as in the mokṣa state, omniscience shines forth immediately.

According to Vedānta Deśika, mokṣa consists in the realization by the jīva of its dependence (dāsatva) on God.

Dāsatva or dependence is the very svarūpa or nature of jīva. What constitutes an essential characteristic of jīva will not cause any suffering to jīva. The real cause of suffering to jīva will not cause any suffering to jīva. The real cause of suffering to jīva is karma, and since that is totally rooted out in the state of mokṣa there is no scope for any suffering. (Tattva-muktā-kalāpa, II-64).
The Viśiṣṭādvaiteins vehemently oppose the theory of jīvanmukti proposed by the Advaitins. The argument of the Advaitins for this theory is that since removal of avidyā is itself mokṣa, avidyā must be removed in the embodied state only. According to Vedānta Deśika, the concept of jīvanmukti is not only false, but a self-contradiction.

Mukti, in the correct sense of the term, is that state of the individual self in which it is totally dissociated from the vital breath, sense organs and physical body (muktiḥ prāṇākṣa deḥādibhir upādhibhir atyanda–visleṣha–rūpa). An individual soul connected with prāna, indriyas and physical body is its embodied state (jīvana). The two states disembodied and embodied are mutually opposed to each other. One who a embodied can not therefore be mukta or disembodied.

Once mukti is defined in a particular way, it is easy to condemn the Advaita theory. But the question, “How does one know that he gets liberation after death?” remains unanswerable unless you blindly believe it or blind accept the scriptures, which speak of videhamukti.

Rāmānuja, like other Viśiṣṭādvaitins, believes that a soul eligible to liberation must pass through four stages, namely,

*Sālōkya* or identity of abode, *sāmīpya* or proximity, *sārūpya* or similarity of form and *sāyuja* or intimate union: and is ever immersed in the eternal bliss of Brahman. *Sālōkya* or
co-existence leads to fellowship (sāmīpya) and transformation and deification (sārūpya), and is consummated in the bliss of communion sāyūjya. 60

Rāmānuja thus thinks that the liberated soul live in vaikunṭha, the abode of Viṣṇu (another name of Brahman). The picture he gives of the divine abode is very attractive:

There are streams of living waters, trees laden with delicious fruits, gentle breezes and golden sunshine to cheer them. Amid these delights they sing and feast, listen to the music of the heavenly choirs, and enjoy at times philosophic converse with one another. 61

Prof. M. Hiriyanna adds: The vaikunṭha is

constituted out of Šuddha-sattva. Picturesque descriptions are given of the place. There God is seated on his white throne and is served by his consort Lakṣmī - interceding on behalf of man - by all the souls of the nitya and mukta variety. It is a place of absolute peace and perfection, and the joy of all their lies in following the will of the Supreme. 62
REFERENCES:


2. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* IV:2.2.

3. *Katha Upaniṣad* 1.3.


5. Taitteriya Upaniṣad. II, 8.


10. Ibid., P.147.


19. Ibid., p. 42.


25. Ibid., p. 332.


29. Ibid., SK 44.


32. Dasgupta, S.N., op. cit., p. 266.n.


34. Ibid., S.K 68.

35. Ibid., S.K 62.


37. Ibid., p. 118.


41. Bhāradvāryaka Upaniṣad II, i. 20.


43. Thibaut, George, (Tr.): op.cit., III, iv, 26.

44. Hiriyanna, M. op.cit., p.379.

45. Thibaut, George, (Tr.): op.cit., I. i.4.


49. Ibid., IV, i. 15.


51. Thibaut, George, (tr.): *Vedānta-Sūtras with the Commentary of Rāmānuja* (Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1904), I i, 13.

52. Ibid., 4.4.17.

53. Ibid., I. i.1.


55. Ibid., IV. 4. 16.

56. Ibid., IV, 4.22.


