

LHARMATMA SRI V

LECTURES

JIVANMUKTI IN ADVAITA

Vidyalankara

Prof. S. K. RAMACHANDRA RAO

JIVANMUKTI
IN
ADVAITA

DHARMATMA SRI V. VAIDYASUBRAMANYA IYER
ENDOWMENT LECTURES
FOR 1978

JIVANMUKTI IN ADVAITA

Vidyalankara
Prof. S. K. RAMACHANDRA RAO



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INTRODUCTION

Dharmatma Sri V. Vaidyasubrahmanya Iyer of Madras has instituted this Endowment Annual Lecture on the occasion of his 61st birthday, contributed by his friends and admirers. It is to be delivered each year either to coincide with Sri Sankara-jayanti or with the vardhanti of the present Jagadguru of Sringeri, Sri Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha Mahasannidhanam. I was called upon to deliver the lecture for 1978 at Madras on the occasion of the Vardhanti of the Jagadguru, which fell on 30th of October.

The subject I chose to deal with was in memory of the late Jagadguru Sri Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati Mahasvami, who was himself a *jivan-mukta*. He has left a deep impress on my life, and has always inspired in me sentiments of deepest adoration and gratitude. I have, therefore, sought humbly to dedicate this talk to his sacred memory.

I have an additional source of satisfaction. Sri Vaidyasubrahmanya Iyer, in whose name this Lecture has been instituted, is indeed a *Dharmatma*. His simplicity, piety, nobility and generosity have been well-known. I have been

fortunate in having merited his affection and regard. I consider it a privilege to have been asked to deliver this Lecture, especially in the very Pravachana-mandira that he has gifted to Sri Sringeri Matha in Madras. I respectfully offer him my most sincere feelings of gratitude.

Gurubhaktamani Sri K. R. Sundaram Iyer, the Chairman of the Endowment Committee, and *Gurusevanirata* Sri S. Y. Krishnaswamy, ICS (Rtd.), member of the Committee, have done me the honour of inviting me to deliver this Lecture. I have been touched by their kindness and consideration for me, and I take this opportunity to express my heart-felt gratitude to them.

S. K Ramachandra Rao

समर्पणम्

तपस्विने नमस्तस्मै सन्ततानन्दसिन्धवे ।
जीवन्मुक्ताय गुरवे चन्द्रशेखरयोगिने ॥

अर्पिता च पदद्वन्द्वे माला चिन्तनरूपिणी ।
अङ्गीकरोतु कृपया चन्द्रशेखरभारती ॥

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Jivanmukti in Advaita

“Jivanmukti, if we rightly understand the spirit of Indian Philosophy, is indeed the highest and most truly philosophical of all conceptions of deliverance, and may be said to represent a landmark in the history of philosophic thought in India.”

— PROF. M. HIRIYANNA¹

1. Liberation in the Present Life as a Value

Traditional Indian thought, whether orthodox or otherwise, centers round the idea of liberation. Liberation from what? The Indian answer is : from *Samsāra*. It is a peculiarly Indian word, which is hard to translate into any other language. However, it can roughly be rendered as ‘trans-migration’. The idea is that we wander about aimlessly in the world, obtaining innumerable births, and suffering untold miseries in the bargain. The idea refers to our phenomenal existence and involvement. There is, however, no suggestion that the world

is wicked or that life is evil. In fact, human life is regarded as a welcome opportunity for working out ones destiny, for correcting ones errors, and for helping others. The idea of *samsāra* is by no means a crutch of the misanthrope ; it is a charter for adventure.

Why then must one get liberated from it ? Is *samsāra* in the nature of a bondage ? Phenomenal existence means having a specific body-mind complex, and being involved in a particular material and social context ; it means subjection to action and reaction. The need to work, the constraints that operate from within, the necessity of being subject to the feedback of what one does, and the unavoidable continuance of involvement in a round of births and deaths—these factors induce stress and strife in life. A sense of being a helpless victim caught in the blind vortex of powerful currents of karma looms large in human existence. This dread and anxiety are inevitable aspects of *samsāra*. A deliverance from them is what is sought. In other words, the idea of liberation emphasizes the bondage character of phenomenal involvement or ‘being-in-the-world’ (Dasein) to use a modern expression, made popular by the Existentialists. ‘Being’ is freedom, but, ‘being-in-the world’ is bondage, for

'being' is then constrained, confined and conditioned.

Closely associated with the idea of phenomenal involvement (*samsāra*) are two other ideas: the law of action and its feedback (*karma*) and the notion of fundamental ignorance or nescience (*avidyā* or *ajñāna*). Ignorance of reality in the ultimate analysis is the cause of phenomenal involvement; it is what necessitates action of all kinds so that the individual may survive as a specific 'being-in-the-world' (*jīva*). The law of action implies that whatever one does will necessarily bind him to a series of reactions and keep him busy with the world. The 'being' thus becomes both by conviction and aspiration the 'being-in-the-world'.

And, being-in-the-world does not get exhausted in one life-time; it is actualized in a series of births. Death does not by itself put an end to phenomenal existence. It is only a link in the chain; it is a door through which the individual will pass into another unit of existence. Phenomenal existence and involvement never get wound up in the natural course. Liberation is an attempt to snap the chain, by undoing the karma-potentiality and by obviating its source, *viz.* the basic ignorance. Liberation thus relieves the individual from the

necessity of phenomenal involvement. The being-in-the-world recovers its Being from the world. To be liberated is to *be*, to be no longer *in-the-world*.

The Indian word for liberation is 'mukti' (or *moksha*) from the Sanskrit root which means "to leave, to abandon, to give up"². What is given up here is the phenomenal involvement. But there is an argument in this context. Most thinkers insist that phenomenal involvement can be given up only when phenomenal existence is undone. As long as the individual continues to be, it is impossible for him not to be in the world. Liberation truly means only the elimination of phenomenal existence with an automatic removal of involvement. Therefore, the physical death, which marks the cessation of phenomenal existence, is an inevitable precondition for liberation, provided the individual has also in the meantime relieved himself of the karma-necessity and has removed the basic ignorance. This is technically known as 'liberation after death' (*videha-mukti*, liberation after the body has gone). The significance is that there is no more involvement in the world for the individual who has been liberated. That is to say, he will not be obliged to be born again. He is freed from phenomenal existence first,

and the phenomenal involvement is thereby precluded.

This means that during one's life one can only make preparations for liberation, but liberation occurs only at death, and not earlier. Those who hold this view also introduce other details. One of them is that upon death, the individual who has made adequate preparations for liberation, will be transported to a supra-mundane plane of existence. Instead of returning to the phenomenal world, he will abide in that trans-phenomenal world until the end of the time-segment known as *kalpa*, and then gets liberated. This view of liberation can be described as the theory of deferred liberation.

There is the other view, which insists that liberation has meaning only when it is experienced during one's own life. Liberation after death can only be hypothetical and conjectural; it lacks experiential certainty. Phenomenal involvement and liberation are of course antithetical, but phenomenal existence and liberation are not. That it is possible for one to be liberated even while he is phenomenally existing is the main argument of this view, which is technically known as 'liberation while one is still alive' (*jīvan-mukti*). The import here is that there can be phenomenal existence without involvement. This is liberation here and now;

it does not wait for death. And after death, of course, there is no more becoming for him, no further phenomenal existence.

Liberation, according to this view, does not interfere with the phenomenal existence of the individual; it only eliminates his involvement in the world. This elimination will itself preclude further units of existence after the present unit has drawn to its close. From the moment of liberation till his death, he can consciously experience the state of liberation. He can be in the world, but not bound by it.

That it is possible for one to be freed from the fears and fetters of phenomenal involvement here and now, while one is still alive, is a grand idea that Indian culture evolved. In fact, it is one of the grandest ideas that human mind has been able to conjure up. It not only sets high store on human potentiality, but holds out a reasonable hope for every earnest seeker. It projects an integrated and meaningful image of man's destiny, and provides the aspirant with sufficient motivation.

It is true that the more popular view is that liberation and physical life cannot co-exist, that phenomenal existence necessarily presupposes involvement, and that true liberation can only be after the individual's death. But there is ample evidence to show that the other view,

vz, the *jīvan-mukti* view, was not only older but traditionally more valid. We find the idea unmistakably expressed in the early *Upanishads* as well as in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. The *Vedānta-sūtras* of Bādarāyaṇa discusses this view, and approves it. It was accepted by the older school of Buddhism, by the defenders of the Sāṃkhya doctrine, and by the votaries of Yoga.

A systematic formulation of the theory of *jīvan-mukti* as well as the essential details of the practice involved in it was the work of the great Śaṃkara (655-687 A.D.). Advaita Vedānta developed this theory into a doctrine, which is undoubtedly the most significant of its contributions to world thought. History records that numerous individuals who subscribed to Advaita Vedānta, have in their lives achieved this state of liberation, thus demonstrating the practical value of this doctrine. It is well-known that the previous pontiff of Śringeri, Śrī Śrī Chandraśekhara Bhāratī Mahāswāmigal, (1892 -1954), whose blessings I was fortunate enough to obtain, was an eloquent illustration of the idea of *jīvan-mukti* in our own times.

2. Work and Wisdom

I have briefly referred to the role of karma in phenomenal existence and involvement. The

Indian word implies not only whatever is done by way of physical acts, mental processes and vocal expressions, but also whatever impact, latent or manifest, such performance has on the individual. Action generates an impression ; and every impression has a tendency as well as some energy, so that it works itself out inevitably. The present life of each one of us is determined precisely by the actions and impressions pertaining to our prior lives. Our body-mind complex, our domestic situation, our immediate social surrounding, the material culture that is available to us, the opportunities for growth, the external environment, and the values that govern our individual and collective existence are aspects of the structure that karma determines for each one of us. Our phenomenal existence is the result of karma, and the co-ordinates of our involvement are also determined by karma. But the actions that we bring to bear on our involvement will determine our subsequent existence. Thus, existence-action-involvement-action-existence is the shape the chain of karma assumes.

It is usual to classify karma into three types. There is one type of karma which is in the nature of cumulative deposits (*sañcita*). The karma dispositions, introduced into our present lives as a sort of 'carry-over' from previous

lives, narrow down our energies, attentions and opportunities; they determine our action tendencies and reaction patterns. The second kind refers to the present potentiatives for future actions (*āgāmi*). The karma in this case consists of latent tendencies that are likely to become manifest, provided conditions are favourable. Sometimes it is clubbed with the current action-tendencies (*kriyamāṇa*). The third kind is the group of action-impressions that have been directly responsible for the structure and function of our present body-mind complex, and also for the developmental processes that may be occasioned in this complex. This variety is distinguished from others in as much as the karma here has already begun to work itself out (*prārabdha*), like “an arrow that has been sped from the bow”.

As regards the undoing of the effect of karma which is necessary for liberation to occur, the first variety, viz., the accumulated variety, is easily handled. The karma of this kind gets erased or weakened by taking recourse to expiations and penances prescribed in the ritual-oriented scriptural texts, and by obtaining the wisdom that the knowledge-oriented scriptural texts provide. The second kind does not come into the picture, because its role is only relevant in the future. When the other

two varieties of karma are weakened or undone, this one is automatically rendered ineffective. But the third variety, viz., the already begun-to-act variety, is beyond all methods of elimination. It must necessarily work itself out and it can in no way be interfered with. The course that it has taken can neither be altered nor revised.

When we talk of liberation and imply that the hold of karma has thereby been loosened, we mean that it is the 'accumulated' variety that has been made inactive. The power of the 'yet-to-be' karma dispositions will, by this very act, countered. There is an argument about what happens to the 'already-begun' variety. Those who insist that true liberation can only be an after-death affair argue that even this 'already-begun' karma (one of whose expressions is the present life) must be undone before liberation can occur. But those who are in favour of *jīvan-mukti* hold that liberation will leave this karma untouched, and that liberation can still occur even while this karma is on.

All schools of Vedāntic thought in India agree that the chief factor in undoing the hold of karma and in bringing about liberation is the obtainment of intuitive wisdom concerning reality (*jñāna*). Even those Vedāntins (like Rāmānuja and Madhva) who advocate devo-

tion as a valuable approach to liberation nevertheless emphasize the primacy of wisdom. Advaita, in particular, is uncompromising in its insistence upon wisdom as solely responsible for liberation. The light of wisdom annuls the darkness of ignorance, thus obviating the tantalizing hold of karma. Therefore, the discussion about liberation in Advaita Vedānta centers round whether liberation is immediate and instantaneous with the dawn of wisdom or liberation is deferred till the last vestige of karma is destroyed.

Śaṅkara contributes significantly towards the crystallization of the jīvan-mukti argument in Indian thought. It was he who recovered this ancient ideology from the Upanishadic texts and reconstructed the viewpoint on the basis of scriptural authority, reasoning, and his own personal experience.

3. Absence of Pain, or Bliss?

Let me indicate briefly the background of this new line of thinking that Śaṅkara developed. Indian thought crystallized a comprehensive scheme of values quite early in its history. It classified the objectives of human existence in terms of personal and social values (*dharma*), economic and productive values

(*artha*), hedonistic and reproductive values (*kāma*), and spiritual values leading to liberation (*mokṣa*). Normal religious urges such as piety, moral earnestness and aspiration for heavenly rewards were included in the first group. Efforts to make and save money, as well as the urge to secure the material well-being of the individual distinguished the second group. Pleasures and pastimes, sex and survival, were the main elements in the third group.

The three together (known as *tri-varga*) adequately summed up the normal aspirations of a human being involved in society. The fourth category, viz., *mokṣa*, was not only an after-thought, but in a sense it negated the other three. It is reasonable to assume that at no time did it inspire the life and conduct of the majority of us, for it is undoubtedly abstract, almost impractical, and apparently hypothetical. But it is remarkable that its ideology has survived with an aura of glory, and has been accepted as a sort of utopian panacea for thousands of years, all through the vicissitudes of our intellectual and religious history. And, it must be recognized that a small section of our population has committed itself to this ideal in every generation. Even those of us who are inclined to resist a serious commitment to it, nevertheless insist on hold-

ing it in high esteem. It is an archetype that has struck the deep chords of our collective existence.

From heavenly reward as a value (*dharma*) to liberation (*mokṣa*) was a leap that took several centuries, and involved a major change in our outlook. The early man could only think of an indefinite continuance of life here, or in some other region very similar to this one, with of course a greater share of pleasure and profit. The goal that was regarded as worthy of pursuit involved the idea of an actual physical transportation to an indisputably pleasant realm called heaven, where happiness was unadulterated with any touch of sorrow, and where there was no ailment, aging, or death.³ But the experience or enjoyment of this condition was considered as contingent upon the continuance of merit derived from the 'good' or socially elevating actions done here on earth. When the merit got exhausted by such enjoyment (as it is the case with any material wealth), there was an inevitable although undesirable relapse into this world of stress and distress.⁴ The rituals and sacrifices, worship and gifts that were calculated to secure such rewards came in course of time to be under-valued, for it is not in the power of these rewards to finally or fully eliminate the

inherent ills of worldly existence, or to prevent a return to this dismal world here below.

This realization disabused the Indian mind of the longing for lasting comfort in an imaginary heaven, and replaced it with an urge to be genuinely and finally released from the baneful involvements of worldly existence. This was the genesis of the liberation or *mukti* idea. It was doubtless in the nature of a negative ideal. The early synonyms of *mukti* retained this negative flavour: *apavarga* (abandonment, shaking off), *nirvāṇa* (blowing out, passing away) and *kaivalya* (cutting loose, becoming isolated). The idea signified the ultimate and absolute cessation of all ills and ailments, incidental to, and inherent in, our life in the world. That it meant nothing more than this was clearly the Nyāya view.⁵ But the view also included the associated notion that thereby further involvement in the phenomenal world was precluded. It was not only the condition of getting loose from the phenomenal moorings, but also a 'non-return' (*apunarāvṛtti*). Praśastapāda, the eminent Nyāya writer, likens this event to the burning fire being completely extinguished on the entire consumption of fuel.⁶ Not only does the fire then cease to burn, but there is no possibility of its being kindled again, for the fuel is gone.

Among the orthodox systems of thought, early Mīmāṃsā was still so preoccupied with *dharma* as the final value and with the visions of delightful heavenly rewards that neither Jaimini nor Śabara-svāmin ever gave a serious thought to the idea of *mukti*. When, later, Kumārila-bhaṭṭa incorporated the idea into the Mīmāṃsā system, it was in the sense of preventing the assumption of another body, by entirely exhausting all actions together with their consequences, during this very life.⁷ He insisted that *mukti* was essentially negative in its conception, for it was a matter of undoing the present conditions of distress and preventing the return to this world. He precluded from the concept any notion of happiness: for him, it was nothing more than the absence of pain. Following him, Pārthasārathi-miśra defined liberation as “dissolution of the self’s painful entanglements with the phenomenal world.”⁸ Likewise, Śālikanātha speaks of liberation as irrevokable dissolution of the body,⁹ and the consequent total elimination of pain. Having a body-mind complex was the real source of misery, according to this school of thought; and when that was gone the goal was reached.

The inquiry, which was more or less academic, whether happiness could be anything more than the mere absence of misery

had its impact on the practical issue whether or not man can profitably pursue happiness as the positive goal, independent of the implied avoidance of pain. Whatever the views held by Nyāya and Mīmāṃsā, Vedānta affirmed that happiness was a positive value, and that spiritual life would be meaningless were it not so. The working postulate of Vedānta is that there is in man a fundamental urge to 'attain a thing of positive value.'¹⁰ It is not the desire to eliminate pain that sets him to work out his destiny, but the desire to obtain happiness, not the material or sensory happiness that is transient but the happiness that is constant and unsullied. Working out one's destiny is a constructive enterprise.

There is an Advaitic work of the thirteenth century which has not achieved the celebrity it merits. It is Rāmādvaya's *Vedānta-kaumudī*. We find in this work an interesting discussion of this problem.¹¹ The author rejects the Nyāya argument that avoidance of pain can be a self-sufficient human objective, and that the aspiration for liberation does not involve any inducement of happiness. He points out that even in daily life we have a distinct appreciation of happiness as something other than, and more than, mere absence of unhappiness. When, for instance, we are told : "If you take this road,

you will come to grief! But the other road is a happy one," the unhappiness on the first road may be due to difficulties like exposure to wild animals and robbers. The promised happiness on the other road will no doubt involve the absence of these difficulties, but it may also have positive attractions such as the availability of conveniences like food and shelter. In the state of liberation, there would, of course, be the absence of misery that is incidental to phenomenal existence and involvement, but there is also the additional factor of happiness.

The stand taken by Vedānta emphasizes that the pursuit of liberation is a worthy endeavour in view of the positive value that it entails, namely happiness. Citsukha, in fact, defines bondage (from which *mukti* is sought) as that which clouds the great bliss that is inherent in every one of us; his commentator adds that wisdom is what dissolves this cloud. It is noteworthy that Citsukha does not make much of misery (*duhkha*) or its elimination in his discussion on *mukti*¹². He emphasizes the positive aspect thereof, which illustrates the characteristic position of Vedānta.

Now, happiness is a matter of degrees. Dharmarājādhvari the author of *Vedānta-paribhāṣā*, distinguishes two kinds or degrees of happiness¹³: the happiness that is occasioned

by bodily and sensory satisfactions (viz. the happiness that we are acquainted with in our daily life), and the happiness that is derived from liberation (when the Absolute is experienced). The former is 'surpassable' (*sātīśaya*), in the sense that it can be eliminated by a change in the conditions, and also in the sense that one could always conjure up the vision of a higher degree of happiness. The latter, on the contrary, is 'unsurpassable' (*nirātīśaya*). Once it occurs, neither can it be eliminated, nor can it be excelled. There is no lapse of that happiness at any time or on any account. It can hardly be gainsaid that the pursuit of this happiness which is absolute, ultimate and immutable is what is especially or exclusively worthwhile for the serious seeker. Vedānta not only projects it as an ideal, but affirms that it is an attainable objective.

The author of the *Vedānta-sūtras* refers to the view of Jaimini that the liberated individual will enjoy bliss by becoming one with God-head¹⁴. He also points out, in the same context, that Auḍulomi held that the destiny of the liberated soul was to become pure thought, to become identified with basic consciousness. But Bādarāyaṇa's own view in the matter is that the two views are not conflicting: bliss and

pure consciousness are not in fact mutually exclusive.

4. Sources of the Idea

Is such an absolute happiness possible at all in this life, while the body-mind complex survives as it does, and is involved as it is in the phenomenal world? Advaita Vedānta affirms that it is possible. And this is the central point in the conception of *jivan-mukti*. But most of the schools of Indian thought reject this possibility. We have seen that the Nyāya and Mimāṃsā view of liberation was in terms of elimination of phenomenal existence. They argued that as long as the physical structure continues, bondage can never be said to be finally undone. It is impossible for the condition of liberation to co-exist with the continuance of the body-mind complex. But there were two schools of thought that held that the possibility of liberation while one is still phenomenally intact need not be ruled out : the Sāṃkhya and the Yoga.

The Sāṃkhya thinkers were impressed by the analogy of the potter's wheel which continues to revolve for a while even after the finished pot has been taken out of it¹⁵. When the discriminating insight dawns, the seeds of

karma become dry and barren, having got rid of the moisture of ignorance. Nevertheless the body-mind complex which is itself the effect of *karma* continues for some time, propelled by the momentum of past impressions (which, however, are beyond the reach of insight's influence). But the early *sāṃkhya* books neither mention *jīvan-mukti*, nor do they consistently develop the doctrine. We find an explicit reference to *jīvan-mukti* only in the *Pravacana-bhāṣya*¹⁶ of Vijñāna-bhikṣu, a sixteenth century writer whose obvious interest was to reconcile Sāṃkhya with Vedānta.

In the Yoga system, the *dharmamegha-samādhi* which is the condition immediately preceding the final isolation (*kaivalya*) is described as the *jīvan-mukti* stage. The commentator Vyāsa in fact uses the expression : "the wise man becomes liberated even while he is alive."¹⁷ Actually, however, this is a condition prior to final release, which occurs only when the body falls. Therefore, the liberation spoken of here can properly be described as figurative (*gauṇa-mukti*) or as imminent (*āsanna-mukti*).

There appears to have been an old view that the moment of the dawn of liberating wisdom would coincide with physical death. Among the Theravāda Buddhists in Ceylon there is a belief that if a layman who becomes

enlightened is not immediately ordained, he will die before the day is out. It must be remembered that ordination is tantamount to domestic and social death. The attempt to synchronize enlightenment with death may be seen also in the practice that was current in South India of taking 'sannyāsa' just before one's death. Known as 'ātura-sannyāsa' it was resorted to by pious laymen in extreme old age or in dire sickness. By a curious transposition, which was also convenient, the assumption of 'sannyāsa' was symbolically the obtainment of the liberating wisdom. And rebirth would thereby be precluded !

Buddhism and Advaita are distinguished by their unequivocal espousal of the *jivanmukti* argument. They denied that enlightenment was strictly an after-death affair, or that it was synchronous with death. Liberation need not necessarily be after death or at death. Continuance of life after enlightenment was not only a possibility ; it was indeed the ideal that one must work for. The Buddhists call it 'nirvāna with the remnants of the structural base' (*sa-upādi-sesanibbāna*) as distinguished from its entire disappearance in *pari-nibbāna*. But they did not evolve a definite doctrine out of this concept, as Advaita did, although the

'arahat' ideal does approach the 'jīvanmukta' ideal in essential details.

Advaita based its thinking entirely on the Upanishads. There are numerous references in the early Upanishads confirming and describing the *jīvan-mukti* condition, although the word is not found anywhere among them. We must remember that the scriptural import is stronger than the scriptural texts, तत्पर्यवती हि श्रुतिः प्रत्यक्षाद्भलेवती as the author of *Bhāmatī* says. The Upanishads speak of the wise man who is released while still alive as 'dhīra', 'muni', 'brahmavit', 'yuktātman', 'ātma-saṁstha', and 'mahātman'. The *Bhagavad-gītā* as the canonical successor to the Upanishads describes him as a 'sthita-prajña', 'brahma-bhūta', 'muni', and 'yoga-yuktātmā'. The *Vedānta-sūtras* of Bādarāyaṇa which set out to define the synthetic viewpoint of the Upanishads presuppose an acquaintance with this ideal, though it goes unnamed. Bādarāyaṇa refers to two views regarding liberation, and seeks to reconcile them.¹⁸ The view ascribed to Bādari is that the condition of liberation entails the dissolution of the body-mind complex. Liberation, according to him, is impersonal and beyond individual awareness. Jaimini, on the other hand, held that the state of liberation can co-exist with the present body-mind complex. In other words, liberation can

be personal and within ones experience. Bādarāyaṇa himself appears to have held that liberation could either be personal or impersonal, could be along with the body-mind complex or without it. One of these views answers to the description of *jīvanmukti*, although the expression appears unfamiliar to Bādarāyaṇa. Indeed, it may appear remarkable that Śaṅkara himself does not use the word *jīvan-mukti* anywhere in his commentaries on the *Vedānta-sūtras* or on the ten Upanishads. And, to my knowledge, he uses the word but once in his commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā*.¹⁹

The word as well as a description of that condition occurs in a late Upanishad, *Muktikopaniṣad*,²⁰ which, however, seems to be heavily indebted to the celebrated Advaita classic, *Yoga-vāśiṣṭha*. *Yoga-vāśiṣṭha* is an enigmatic and mystical work which was probably composed contemporaneously with Śaṅkara's days, or more probably at a later date.²¹ It represents a queer fusion between classical Advaita and Vijñāna-vāda Buddhism. But the Advaita preached here is different in many details from the one taught by Śaṅkara. However, attempts were made in later times to reconcile the two points of view. An important attempt in this direction was *Jīvan-mukti-viveka*, a thirteenth century manual ascribed popularly to Vidyā-

raṇya.²² This work is obviously inspired by *Yoga-vāsiṣṭha* and lays great emphasis on yogic practices. It is possible that the expression *jīvan-mukti* came into great vogue in the field of academic Advaita, as a result of the impact made by this book.

5. Realization and Non-Return

To get an idea of the views earlier to Śaṅkara's days regarding liberation and salvation we have to turn to the discussion found in the fourth chapter of *Vedānta-sūtras*.²³ It deals with the relative merits and divergent fruits of worship (*upāsana*) and wisdom (*jñāna*). As interpreted by Śaṅkara, two views of salvation for the worshippers are mentioned in the context. The first is Bādari's, which Śaṅkara appears inclined to accept as valid. It holds that one, who has been a pious worshipper, will, on death, pass on, through the way of gods, to the plane of Godhead (*Hiraṇya garbha*, or lower *brahman*, viz., the 'brahman' as effect), and there acquiring the liberating wisdom during the great dissolution at the end of the aeon, reaches the 'great and pure realm of Viṣṇu' (viz., final liberation). He will thus achieve the status of a non-returner to the

phenomenal world. Śaṅkara describes this position as “gradual liberation” (*krama-mukti*).²

The second view is that of Jaimini, which insists that the worshipper is directly and finally liberated upon death. This may be described as the conventional ‘*videha-mukti*.’ Śaṅkara, however, does not in the context employ this expression. Nor does he accept this position as meaningful. Worshipping a deity is a ‘lower’ *vidyā*, and it entails the worshipper to reach only the ‘lower’ *brahman* (or Godhead). Reaching this position is not the same as realizing the Absolute, which indeed is the true import of liberation.

These conflicting views notwithstanding, the *Vedānta-sūtras* believe that liberation is essentially realization (*sākṣātkāra*) of one's own true nature,²⁵ and that when this realization is had, there is no more return to the phenomenal world (*anāvṛtti*).²⁶ This is the most important consideration in any view regarding liberation. There is an unequivocal emphasis on wisdom, for realization is secured exclusively by wisdom (*jñāna*). All schools of Vedānta are unanimous in affirming that wisdom alone is the means of attaining liberation. Bondage is due to basic and phenomenal ignorance (*avidyā*), and the involvement in the phenomenal world is derived entirely from this source. Ignorance can be

removed only by wisdom; and, therefore, liberation is the direct result of wisdom. Śaṅkara speaks of "immediate or instantaneous release" (*sadyo-mukti*) as the fruit of 'knowledge concerning the self (*ātma-jñāna*)'"²⁷. This kind of liberation, according to him, is what is attained by those who are devoted to perfect wisdom.²⁸ Ānandagiri explains that release in this case is simultaneous with the arousal of wisdom (*jñāna-samā-kāla-mukti*); no time interval intervenes between becoming wise and getting released.

Ānandagiri poses a problem : "If such wisdom can indeed undo the basic and phenomenal ignorance and thereby eliminate all pressures exerted by *karma*, does not the body (which is one of the results of such pressure) fall automatically and instantaneously, when the liberating wisdom is occasioned ?"²⁹. In other words, will not enlightenment also necessitate immediate physical death ? Will *sadyo-mukti* not also entail *sadyo-maraṇa* ? Does not liberation necessarily mean the absence of the body-mind complex ? Śaṅkara concedes that liberation strictly means 'being without this complex'³⁰, but denies that liberation is only for the dead and not for the living³¹. 'Being without a body' in the classical description of liberation is to be taken in the sense of elimina-

tion of bodily bondage, which in fact is what is eliminated in liberation. The bondage is owing to karma, which in turn is due to ignorance. When ignorance is removed by wisdom, the bondage due to karma is also removed. The well-known and oft-quoted hymn in *Muṇḍaka-upaniṣad* (2, 2, 8) emphasizes that liberation is freedom from the fetters of the heart, mind and karma :

भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थिश्छिद्यन्ते सर्वसंशयाः ।

क्षीयन्ते चास्य कर्माणि तस्मिन् दृष्टे परावर ॥

“The knots of the heart snap ; all doubts are cut asunder ; and his karmas die out—when the Highest is beheld.”

The description would be meaningless if we interpret that the undoing of karmas here involves the destruction of the physical body. Karmas in the context can only mean the ‘*sañcita*’ and the ‘*āgāmi*’ varieties, those that have not yet commenced to bear fruit. The ‘*prārabdha*’ which is responsible for the body-mind complex is left untouched by the liberating insight.³² Since the actions responsible for bringing about the complex have already set out to fructify, they must necessarily work themselves out. Śaṅkara compares this with the arrow which has been shot ; it can come to rest only when its force has been spent.³³

He discusses this problem at some length in his commentary on *Chāndogya-upaniṣhad* (6,14,2). The Upanishadic text which has evoked this discussion is

तस्य तावदेव चिरं यावन्न विमोक्ष्येऽथ संपत्स्य इति ।

“There is only this much of delay-as long as he is not released (from the bonds of *avidyā*) ; and then he gets home !” *Śaṅkara* explains the condition :” Until the body falls as a result of the exhaustion of the karma which has been responsible for bringing about the body”. He then gives the illustration of an arrow that has been shot at a target. It comes to rest only when the speed has run out, although it might have hit the mark in the meantime. It has no function after the target has been hit, but its momentum carries it on. Elsewhere,³⁴ he gives the example (given in the old *Sāṃkhya* text) of the potter’s wheel continuing to revolve for some time after the pot has been finished. Even so, when the liberating wisdom has arisen, there is no more work for the saint to do, nor any other purpose for him to achieve. But the body will continue until the *prārabdha* is exhausted. When, however, the body falls, there is no more returning to this phenomenal world. When an ordinary man dies, he returns. But when the enlightened saint dies, he does not. *Śaṅkara* takes the word

'*atha*' (then) which occurs in the Chāndogya text above cited in the sense of "immediately"; there is no time lag between 'bodily release' and 'getting home' (or obtainment of *mukti*). This is, in a sense *sadyo-mukti*; but it is also tantamount to *jivan-mukti*.

6. The value of continuance of body-mind complex.

It is argued that the purpose of the liberating wisdom is only to eliminate ignorance, and not to interfere with, or destroy, the body.³⁵ And the wisdom liberates at once, without waiting for any changes to occur in the body or in the world at large. The presence or absence of the body-mind complex is, therefore, irrelevant to the condition of liberation. There is no logical or psychological necessity that the moment of enlightenment and physical death should coincide. It may be noted that the *prārabdha* which has brought into being the present physical existence is also responsible for the enlightenment that has dawned within the context of this particular phenomenal existence. There need not be an inherent conflict between the realization of Brahman and the operation of the *prārabdha*. There is, therefore, nothing unusual or impossible about the continuance

of the body or the involvement of the saint in the phenomenal world, after enlightenment has been obtained.

There is a more important consideration. Should it happen that the moment of enlightenment coincides with the physical death of the saint, or if it is held that liberation is only an after-death affair, there would then be no authentic teacher of Advaita to tell us about the possibility and benefits of liberation. The tradition of the enlightened teacher communicating this wisdom to his discerning student would not be current at all. Vimuktātman in his *Iṣṭa-siddhi* holds that the very processes that bring about the enlightenment would also preserve the body for some time, so that the wisdom could be transmitted to others³⁶. No one can possibly doubt that Śaṅkara himself was a *Jivan-mukta* before he began teaching the Advaita doctrine. Prof. M. Hiriyanna has drawn our attention³⁷ to a passage in Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Sūtras* of Bādarāyaṇa, which suggests that *jīvan-mukti* was a matter of his own personal knowledge. Śaṅkara's words are: "There need not be a dispute about whether the enlightened saint will preserve his body for sometime or not. How can one possibly deny another's personal experience of realization or (his reason for) preserving his body? This is

precisely what is implied when the scriptural passages set out to describe the characteristics of the liberated saint.”³⁸ It is by no means fantastic to assume that Śaṅkara’s immediate disciples benefitted by the master’s golden touch. Intimate contact with a totally transformed person can readily prompt transformations in others. The disciples like Sureśvara and Padmapāda, who contributed much to stabilize the structure of Advaita teaching that Śaṅkara constructed were most likely *jīvan-muktas* themselves. This tradition of conjoining personal experience with philosophical teaching must have continued for a length of time, although it is reasonable to guess that dilution of fervour was incidental to the passage of time. But now and then, there did come on the scene a *jīvan-mukta* who made a tremendous impact on the people around him. In recent memory, Sadāśiva-brahmendra and the late pontiff of Śrīṅgerī Śrī Śrī Chandraśekhara-bhārati-svāmi were outstanding instances.

These instances clearly demonstrate that although enlightenment is possible in this very life, the condition of liberation and the ordinary condition of phenomenal involvement cannot co-exist.³⁹ Enlightenment will bring about a total transformation in the perspective of the individual. He may, for all practical intents, behave

like an ordinary mortal; and he cannot help it because the *prārabdha* drags on. But his sense of the Real will not desert him at any time. Śaṅkara gives an illustration; a person who suffers from an optical aberration and sees two moons will continue to do so, even though he knows for certain that there is in actuality but one moon.⁴⁰ The enlightened saint knows that the real is a unity, but he involves himself albeit minimally in the world of multiplicity until the *prārabdha* ceases and the body falls dead. But this cautious involvement will not alter or diminish his enlightenment. Having been liberated (*mukta*), he can never become 'bound' (*baddha*) again. An individual, whether liberated or bound, cannot avoid involving himself in activities that are essential for survival. But a saint having freed himself from the fetters of phenomenal existence knows how to live in this world and yet not be of this world. His sole mission would be to lead other aspirants to the same state that he is in.

7. Jivan-Mukti alone valid

From a discussion of concepts like *krama-mukti*, *sadyo-mukti*, *videha-mukti*, and *jivan-mukti*, it should not be imagined that there are different kinds of liberation. Śaṅkara ash

unequivocally affirmed : “The fruit of liberation is of one shape only”⁴¹, unlike the results of *karma* which are various, relative to time, place and conditions of occurrence. Liberation is actually becoming one with the Absolute, and there is not a duality or multiplicity in the Absolute.⁴² The wisdom which alone is the necessary and sufficient means of liberation is one ; and the fundamental and phenomenal ignorance which it eliminates is also one. It is meaningless, therefore, to think of varieties of or degrees in *mukti*.

It is true that Śaṅkara speaks of *krama-mukti*, *sadyo-mukti*, and, at least in one context, *jīvan-mukti*. But *krama-mukti*, which is the fruit of worship (or *upāsana*) can not really be regarded as *mukti* ; it is only a ‘theological make-shift’, as R. D. Ranade describes it.⁴³

Śaṅkara does not use the expression ‘videha-mukti’ in his Commentaries, but he appears to have been familiar with the idea, which perhaps was current during his days. He dismisses the idea as irrelevant and hypothetical. *Videha-mukti* is an inadequate idea ; for unless liberation has a relevance to our life here and now it ceases to be a value. Śaṅkara stresses this point at several places. While summing up the famous *Muṇḍaka* passage describing the state of liberation, Śaṅkara says

“they become brahman even while they are alive.⁴⁴ When he discusses the import of the passage “That thou art” (*tat tvam asi*),⁴⁵ he tells us that it cannot be taken to mean “You will become That when you die.” Elsewhere,⁴⁶ he is clearer in his affirmation : “Here and now, he becomes the brahman, not at some time after his death.”

Sadyo-mukti is what, according to him, is the real import of liberation. It is liberation instantaneously achieved with the dawn of wisdom (*jñāna-sama-kāla-mukti*). And such liberation is meaningful only when it is achieved while the individual is still alive. *Sadyo-mukti* is often employed synonymously with *jivan-mukti*. The significance of *Videha-mukti* is that it means that the saint will not be reborn, and that he will pass out of phenomenal existence. It is of course the ultimate fruit. But can it be a goal of human endeavour? The so-called ‘body-lessness’ in liberation is but figurative. ‘Having a body’ is ascribed to ignorance, and mistaking the body for one’s own self is an aspect thereof. Thus, Śaṅkara argues, even while the saint is alive he cannot be said to have a body in the sense that the ordinary man has a body.⁴⁷ There is, then, no question of *mukti* being specially *videha* : it is *videha* in any case.

The conclusion from the foregoing discussion is that Śaṅkara regards *jīvan-mukti* as the only valid concept of *mukti*. It is probable that the apparent vehemence with which he argues in favour of this position was due to a mistaken interpretation that was being given during his days to *sadyo-mukti*. For instance, his elder contemporary, Maṇḍana, had propounded in his *Brahma-siddhi* the view that enlightenment will undo all *karma*, including the *prārabdha*.⁴⁸ Although he accepted *sadyo-mukti*, he actually meant by it liberation only *at death*. He made a distinction between *sthitaprajña* who is still an aspirant (*sādhaka*) and a perfectly liberated one (*siddha*), whose *prārabdha* has vanished. He conceded that the experience of saints cannot be dismissed as invalid, but he also pointed out that the 'latent impressions of nescience' continue till the event of physical death. However, the world appears to one whose latent impressions remain (although in an attenuated form), as a mere shadow, as things in a painting, or as objects made of clay or wood; there is no possibility of his getting involved in it. And, these latent impressions are too weak to occasion the renewal of physical existence for him. They disappear completely at death. Although Maṇḍana called this the state of *jīvan-mukti*, it goes against the very substance

of Śaṅkara's argument.⁴⁹ Bhāskara, who wrote his commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra* a century or so after Śaṅkara, nevertheless represents a view of *jīvan-mukti* that may have been current during Śaṅkara's days. He accepts two kinds or degrees of liberation: *sadyo-mukti* and *krama-mukti*, both as after-death occurrences. He rejects *jīvan-mukti* as impossible, but concedes that the saint who is free from impurities and from impediments such as attachment, aversion and arrogance could be regarded 'as if liberated' even before death has overtaken him.

There are thinkers even within the fold of Śaṅkara's Advaita, who do not seem entirely reconciled to the idea of *jīvan-mukti*. Notable among them is Sarvajñātman, who held that *sadyo-mukti* in the sense of undoing all karma including *prārabdha*, was the only valid view of liberation.⁵⁰ According to him, *sadyo-mukti* can only be *videha-mukti*. He explains away the reference to *jīvan-mukti* in scriptures as merely an eulogy of *brahmavidyā*,⁵¹ a mere expedient to encourage the aspirant.⁵² The author of *Pañca-daśī* also seems to take the same view.⁵³

Partyag-rūpa, the commentator of Citsukha, quotes a passage; "If there is mukti at all, there is only the *jīvan-mukti*."⁵⁴ But when he undertakes to elaborate the discussion found

in Citsukha concerning the 'little nescience' (*avidyā-leśa*) he points out that it continues during the *jīvan-mukti* state.⁵⁵ This 'little nescience', in the context of this passage, is not a left-over or a hang-over; it is a distinct form of nescience. Nescience has three forms : the first makes for the belief that the world is real, the second conjures up conditions that encourage involvement in such a world, and the third (the 'little nescience') determines the objective forms that are presented to the knowing mind. The first two are removed by the liberating wisdom, whereas the third survives this wisdom. It determines the kind of body that he will have and the character of the world that he has to deal with. It is suspended and rendered in-operative only during the state of absorption that the *jīvan-mukta* may engage himself in. But it is completely eradicated only when he dies, and this is referred to as 'utter isolation' (*kaivalya*).

Appaya-dīkṣita raises the discussion of this 'little nescience' (*avidyā-leśa*), due to the continuance of which the liberation must be regarded as *jīvan-mukti*.⁵⁶ He refers to several views, including that of Sarvajñātman mentioned above. All the views suggest that *jīvan-mukti* is but partial or incomplete liberation; that the gain here is penultimate. Of the two

powers of nescience, veiling the reality (*āvaraṇa*) and projecting the phenomenal world (*vikṣepa*), the saint who is said to be liberated while still alive would have eliminated the former but not the latter, for the latter is inherently involved in the body-mind complex and cannot disappear until death. Or one may think of this condition as a pot in which garlic has been cooked. However well the pot is cleaned, the smell of garlic would persist for a while. The 'little nescience' may be regarded as similar to this peculiar 'hang-over' or as a continuing sub-liminal impression (*vāsanā-viśeṣa*) which is responsible for the survival of the body-mind complex. The third view cited here which perhaps is in greater accord with the classical position gives the analogy of a burnt cloth : the shape of the cloth is retained until breeze scatters it, but the substance is already gone. The troublesome nescience has been dispelled by wisdom, and it is rendered altogether inactive; but its dead form lingers for a while in the shape of the saint's body-mind complex.

Madhusūdana, who is impressed by the burnt cloth analogy, interprets 'little' (*leśa*) as the mere 'form' (*ākāra*)⁵⁷, as a subtle state of nescience which facilitates the appropriation of the body. He compares it with the 'apūrva' of the Mīmāṃsakas, which is the subtle remnant

which contains the fruits of the sacrifice after the sacrifice is over; with the shiver that persists even after one knows that a rope has been mistaken for the snake; with the potter's wheel continuing to revolve even after the central shaft has been removed. He argues that it is possible for the effect to persist even after the cause has been eliminated.

8. Individual differences among the liberated.

Bearing on the character and extent of the nescience that persists even after enlightenment, there is a discussion in the later Advaita texts, especially in the minor manuals such as the *Tr̥pti-dīpikā*, ascribed to Vidyāranya (in *Pañcadaśī*). They highlight the individual differences in the lives of the *jīvanmuktas* and their modes of conduct. Janaka, the king of Mithilā, as is well-known, was an enlightened person; but he lived amidst plenty and comfort. Yājñavalkya, the poor householder with two wives, was also enlightened. Śuka and Sanaka were ascetics who were enlightened; they led simple and austere lives. Vāmadeva was enlightened even when he was born, unlike others who achieved this state by effort and application. Rahū-gaṇa, Sīkara-dhvaja and

Priya-vrata were known to be bad characters, although they were enlightened.

There is a popular verse—

“Krishna was a *yogi*, Śuka was an ascetic, Janaka was a king, Vasiṣṭha was an active hermit and Karkaṭi an eater of carcasses. The wisdom of all these was of one kind ; but their involvements were diverse.”

To explain this difference, the texts mentioned above classify *prārabdha* into five types : (1) ‘superior’, which will predispose the individual to withdraw from worldly involvement from the very moment of his birth, as it happened in the case of Vāmadeva ; (2) ‘midding’ which will initially prompt involvement in the world but will in due course encourage withdrawal, as in the cases of Śuka and Sanaka ; (3) ‘inferior’ which will make only for withdrawal, as in the case of Yājñavalkya ; (4) ‘very inferior’ which will initially prompt withdrawal but encourage in due course involvement, as in the case of Janaka ; and (5) ‘exceedingly inferior’, which will predispose the individual to folly, license and vice, as it happened in the cases of Alarka and others. The difference in the *prārabdha*, however, does not mean that there is a difference in the quality of *jīvan-mukti*. Involvement in the world and participation in its pleasures cannot happen without

desires on the part of the individual as well as favourable conditions, which are directly the results of *prārabdha*. A little of the desire may be deliberate (*icchā*), but much of it is conditioned by the peculiar physical constitution of the individual (*anicchā*); or it may be the result of pressures from others (*parecchā*). However, the whole discussion is of recent origin and in the nature of a minor problem.

As long as the individual is free from the delusion of bondage, no worldly involvement is likely to affect him. And his transactions in the world are not motivated by love and hate, and so will not bear fruit. He does not cling to the world or to life, and does not strive. He allows things to take their natural course, and he looks forward to nothing. There is a natural tendency for him to withdraw from the world as much as he can. For, although the phenomenal involvement now does not alter the quality of his liberation, it will reduce the happiness that forms the core of that experience. Yājñavalkya's decision to renounce the world is given as an illustration. Yājñavalkya was wise and liberated even when he lived as a house-holder. After he won laurels in the philosophical disputes in the court of Janaka, he decided to become a mendicant (*saṁnyāsin*) and withdraw from normal life. The reason for

this decision was that although he was liberated in lay life, he could not experience the happiness of that liberation, because of his involvements. True happiness can be enjoyed only by renouncing. Greater the involvement in the transactional world, lesser is the possibility of the enjoyment of bliss of liberation. *Prārabdha* in any case will work itself out and get exhausted; but when it favours withdrawal, it will allow a greater measure of the experience of liberation.

Involvement in worldly affairs will not negate the state of liberation when once it has been attained, but will diminish the peculiar happiness that the state of liberation can provide. Even the liberated person has to utilise his psychophysical energy in his transactional behaviour. This energy gets fragmented and scattered when the person's involvement is excessive and diverse. The enjoyment of bliss requires that energy which should be concentrated and total, and this presupposes withdrawal and detachment. It is, therefore, more usual for a *jivan-mukta* to lead a life of isolation, austerity, and absorption. It is natural to expect the *prārabdha* which occasions the liberating wisdom also to create conditions that favour its experience as a state of supreme happiness.

9. Liberation not an achievement but a discovery.

We may now go a little deeper into the implications of the concept of *jīvan-mukti* as crystallized by Śaṅkara. We shall see how the concept can make both life and the study of Vedānta meaningful. It is almost an axiomatic assumption that every man aspires to obtain freedom and happiness. Bondage and misery of any kind are undesirable, and all of man's effort in the ultimate analysis is directed towards eliminating them. Vedānta recognizes this normal human urge towards freedom and happiness, and describes the obtainment of absolute freedom and highest happiness as *mukti*. Advaita goes a step further, and claims that this condition of absolute freedom and highest happiness is not something that must be obtained or achieved (*sādhya*), but a condition that is natural and is already present (*siddha*). Bondage and misery are merely co-efficients of our ignorance of this true state of affairs, and this is due to our phenomenal involvement.

Śaṅkara draws our attention to an old story.⁵⁸ A prince, abandoned in a jungle as a babe, is picked up by a hunter. He grows into manhood, convinced that he is the hunter's son. Then some one reveals to him that he is in

actuality a prince. When the boy discovers his true identity, he cannot be said to have then become the prince, for he never had ceased to be a prince ; he was always one. Realization is really shaking off ones mistaken notions. Śaṁkara calls this the 'perfect insight' (*samyagdarśana*),⁵⁹ a matter of highest knowledge (*jñāna*). Vedānta, especially Advaita, insists that knowledge is the sole means of realization. And, knowledge is the removal of ignorance, and nothing more. Liberation is therefore described as 'the undoing of nescience' (*avidyāstamayo mokṣah*). It is not the obtainment of a new state of being, a transformation, a modification, or an effect.⁶⁰ It is merely the discovery of a condition that was always there, inalienably.

When, however, we speak of the 'occurrence' or obtainment of enlightenment, as if liberation was generated at a particular time, it is so only with reference to an earlier condition, and in the sense of removing the felt bondage. Śaṁkara gives the example of our speaking about the health of a person when his disease is cured.⁶¹ Health is not a new condition that has been achieved ; it is only the restitution of the natural or normal condition. It is the disease that is in the nature of a deviation or disturbance of this natural condition. There is, however, a difference with regard to libera-

tion inasmuch as the ignorance will in no way actually disturb or distort the original condition of freedom and happiness. It only seems to do so. Whatever disturbance is felt, it is only apparent, and essentially unreal. In a real sense, there is no difference in the self in the two states of bondage and liberation.

If, in that case, there is no extraordinary condition that is achieved in liberation, why should the scriptures ask us to put forth all this effort in the direction of liberation? And what would, in that case, be the utility of scriptures at all? Śamkara poses this question, and answers: ⁶² It is true that there is no extraordinary and novel condition that can be achieved by liberation; and as a matter of fact, there is no real difference between the 'bound' condition and the 'liberated' condition, for the self does not undergo any change whatsoever at any time. But liberation does achieve a positive purpose, and that is the removal of ignorance which projects falsely the 'bound' condition upon the 'ever liberated' condition. And such removal is accomplished by the wisdom occasioned by the scripture. Indeed, scriptures have their value only in this context; they have a purpose to fulfil only in the case of a 'bound' individual. When once he is liberated, scriptures lose their relevance and utility.⁶³

Accordingly, the talk of enlightenment and the effort towards enlightenment have relevance only at the phenomenal level. And that is the level at which we all operate. Although Gauḍapāda, at the transcendental level, says that there is neither bondage nor liberation, neither the seeker after liberation nor the liberated,⁶⁴ we cannot forget the phenomenal fact that we are bound, and we aspire to be liberated here and now. In this context, *jīvan-mukti* is meant to transform our entire orientation to life, our attitudes and our involvement in the world; and to enable us experience the joy of liberation and the joy of 'being' during our very lives. Liberation does not alter facts; it does not bring about a change in the world; nor does it even free us of our commitment to others around us. But our approach to ourselves and to the world undergoes a total change.

10. An Inner Revolution

There is a classical definition of *jīvan-mukti* given in *Jīvanmukti-viveka*, a work ascribed to Vidyāraṇya,⁶⁵ which perhaps is the only work that is entirely and exclusively devoted to this subject :

जीवतः पुरुषस्य कर्तृत्वभोक्तृत्व सुखदुःखादिलक्षणाश्चित्तधर्मैः ।

क्लोशरूपत्वाद्बन्धो भवति । तस्य निवारणं मुक्तिः ॥

“A person that is alive has his consciousness characterized by such details as occasioning action, experiencing its results, feeling happy, and feeling unhappy. These details are sources of stress, and therefore they become fetters. The removal of these fetters is liberation while one is still alive.” In the fourth chapter of this work, among the concrete benefits of *jīvan-mukti* are listed : ‘protection of the acquired wisdom’ (*jñāna-rakṣā*), ‘absence of all discord’ (*viśaṁ-vādābhāva*), ‘removal of stress’ (*duḥkhanāśa*), and ‘joy in life’ (*sukhāvirbhāva*). In other words, the liberated saint is wise, integrated, relaxed, and happy. His consciousness is unfettered and devoid of the sources of stress.

Technically, the liberated saint’s habitual mode of consciousness is called in later Advaita literature *brahmākāra-vṛtti*. This expression has become so important that it merits some elaborate consideration. A *vṛtti* is a mode of consciousness, a modality that has been occasioned by an objective stimulation or by a dispositional prompting. It signifies the act of consciousness that ‘flows out’ as it were and assumes the form of the presented object. It is likened to a canal that draws water out in a line from the reservoir. Usually the modes are phenomenal ;

they assume forms of material objects and mental images. The purpose is to cope with the world as successfully as one can, by interpreting the objects for us.

There is a distinction made in the later history of Advaita between the object-conditioned consciousness of this sort (*phala-vyāpya*) and the process-oriented consciousness (*vṛtti-vyāpya*). The former *reveals* a concrete object by removing our specific ignorance with regard to that particular object; and it *relates* us with the outside world. In effect, it results in practical experience, and helps us achieve a particular purpose. The latter, on the other hand, is consciousness turned on itself, dissociated from the objective context. It is meant to reveal the undifferentiated and indeterminate Absolute (*brahman*) by removing our fundamental ignorance with regard to this reality. This will ultimately result in the consciousness whose form is that of the Absolute (*brahmākāra-vṛtti*) breaking all barriers and limiting conditions. This is said to result from the intuitive and total understanding of scriptural passages like 'That thou art' (*tat tvam asi*). The important element here is that the 'witness consciousness' (*sākṣī-caitanya*), a sort of non-participant observer beyond the subject-object duality, will illumine both the modal consciousness and

the mind which is the physical basis for it. This illumination will immediately be followed by the elimination of nescience, which in its turn will remove the superimposition of the phenomenal presentation upon the pure consciousness. And as this happens, the process-oriented consciousness (which has now completed its purpose) itself ceases. It is in this sense that it has been called the 'final mode of consciousness' (*carama-vṛtti*) before liberation.

A discussion has ensued in several texts⁶⁶ concerning the description of this final mode. The prevailing view is that the Absolute towards which the modal consciousness is directed is naturally conditioned by that process, which is as yet a phenomenal event. But the enlightenment that this process occasions not only provides the individual with an intuitive realization of the Absolute (unconditioned by the process), but spontaneously dissolves that very process. Thus by the wise utilization of a phenomenal (and, therefore, unreal) process, the transcendental reality is realized. An error has been made to yield a valid result (*saṃvādi-bhrama*). It is like an individual who, mistaking the light emanating from a precious gem for the gem itself, reaches for it, and gets the gem. The light (which is in fact not the gem) helps him to procure the gem. Likewise, the

final mode of consciousness, although phenomenal, leads to reality.

11. Expansion of Consciousness

The import of this achievement is that liberation is to be viewed in terms of freeing the body-bound and individualized consciousness into the boundless expanse of self-vision. For one whose physical existence continues despite his liberation, this vision concerns the 'cosmic consciousness' (*īśvara*). In fact, the expression 'that' (*tat*) in the celebrated scriptural passage means, according to some, only this aspect of consciousness, even as 'thou' (*tvam*) refers to the individualized consciousness. The realization of the essential identity of the individual consciousness with the cosmic consciousness in their essential and fundamental aspect is the direct benefit of liberation. Śaṅkara says : "Not to know the nature of *īśvara* is bondage; to know his nature is liberation".⁶⁷

This is not the occasion to enter into a discussion concerning the place of *īśvara* (or *saguna-brahman*) in Advaita metaphysics. It would suffice our purpose here to note that *īśvara* (or Godhead) is responsible for the phenomenal framework within which the *jīva*

(or the individual personality) functions. It is the cause as well as the content of the world. The two are only different aspects of the same reality, the former unclouded by ignorance but the latter distinguished by it (thus subjecting it to phenomenal fetters). Īśvara is the Absolute's image in the phenomenal firmament, while the *jīva* is the reflection of the same reality in the waters of our individual psychological outfit.⁶⁸ Godhead abides in the individual as witness and 'inner controller' (*antaryāmi*); he is the bridge between *being* (or the Absolute beyond time, space and causality) and *becoming* (or the phenomenal world). As cosmic consciousness he is the substratum, background, and core of the individualized consciousness. When the spiritual career of the individual reaches its fulfilment, the individualized consciousness will break through all the conditioning and limiting factors, and expand into cosmic consciousness. This is the significance of the expression *brahmākāra-vṛtti*.

Although the normal physical co-ordinates of individual existence continue for the individual that has achieved this liberation, there is a total transformation in his psychological moorings and relationships. The reason for this persistence at the existential level and transformation at the functional level is that

the condition of *jīvan-mukti* is essentially an altered state of consciousness.

The change that occurs in a *jīvan-mukta* has been graphically described in several texts, especially in some Upanishadic passages, in *Bhagavadgītā*, and in *Yogavāsiṣṭha*. The descriptions are replete with suggestions regarding the transforming power of liberation. The individual's personal consciousness gets suddenly freed from the psychological barriers of customary cognitions as well as from the organismic need to survive as an individual in the world of distinctions and differentiations. He feels no longer bound to his ego or to the objects outside. His consciousness, though most of the time individualised by his body and mind is nevertheless illumined by the direct experience of the essential unity of all experience at the level of cosmic consciousness (*brahmākāra-vṛtti*). The bubble of his ego is punctured, and it can no longer break down and build up the presented world in accordance with fancy, desire, or fear, as it would do in an ordinary individual. He will no longer be deluded, annoyed, lured or caught unawares by the world. The world for him would be like a serpent whose fangs have been taken out: it may bite, but cannot injure.

However, he would still have to live and move in the world, much as he did before enlightenment. The vital functions have to be carried out, and social relations have to continue. Although the appearance of everything has altered, he would still have to react to the appearances. He knows that this whole world is a mere phantasmagoria, but he has to live in it like any other person. Technically this necessity is known as "following that which has been sublated" (*badhitānuvṛtti*). The example that Śaṅkara has given of a person with an optical aberration has already been cited. The person knows that there is only one moon, but he cannot help seeing two of it, because his optical malady continues. Sureśvara gives another example: The man who is frightened by mistaking a rope for the snake, will continue to tremble for a while even after he is told that it is merely a rope.⁶⁹ The obvious explanation is that his liberation does not dissolve the reality of the world or his relatedness to it. His existential structure continues although the function has been transformed.

The liberating wisdom will eliminate the delusion that is responsible for phenomenal existence and involvement. The wisdom, free from doubt and error, occurs once, and neuroscience is instantaneously undone. There is no

more delusion taunting the individual. But this liberating wisdom is only a mental process, as we have seen; it is a psychological modality. The happiness that results from it would disappear when other mental processes (with phenomenal involvement) intervene and suspend this modality. For the liberated individual has still to work out the remnants of his *prārabdha*, and therefore he transacts with the world. Although there is no danger of his losing his wisdom or being deluded again, he would miss the joy of liberation unless he repeats the initial mental modality that liberated him. In order to experience the bliss of liberation, he is advised repeatedly to cogitate on the identity of the individual consciousness with the cosmic one. The normal inclination of the *jīvan-mukta* would be to preserve and pursue the *brahmākāra-vṛtti*; for which, the stability and purity of mind are essential requisites. But it may so happen that the *prārabdha* may present him with diverse distractions, for it is impossible even for a liberated one to be unceasingly in a state of absorption. He is subject to the necessity of 'emerging out' (*vyutthāna*) to participate in the phenomenal world, so long as his embodied condition lingers on. Thus, he moves between the reality that he has realized

and the unreality that he has sublated but has to concede.

12. The Ethical Issue

The problem that would arise in this contingency is whether such an individual would still feel the normal moral responsibilities and discharge the usual social obligations, or whether he would withdraw completely from the norms and conventions of morality and social life. In the latter event, a further question would be whether his conduct would not be outlandish and erratic. The answer that Advaita gives is that the individual who is liberated while living would, of course, not do anything that may be regarded as wicked or immoral. For, wicked or immoral conduct stems from phenomenal involvement in the shape of selfishness, and excessive attachment to physical existence and psychological satisfactions. A liberated one is evidently freed from such involvement. His personal self tends to disappear, and he no longer clings to life or to the world. He would give up even normal pleasures as unbecoming; how could he, like a dog, go to them again?⁷⁰ Samkara points out that when a spiritual seeker gives up as burdensome even those rituals, which are prescribed in the scrip-

tures, how could he indulge in actions which are obviously foolish and selfish?⁷¹ And, as an aspirant who is preparing himself for perfection, he would have rejected what social norms regard as wicked and immoral actions as detrimental to his own spiritual career; how could he regard them as worthy or permissible when he has now achieved his goal. One who would not think of eating poison even when he is hungry would of course not eat it when his belly is full after a festive lunch.⁷² Enlightenment and moral depravity can never go together.

The instances of *jivan-muktas* (like Alarka and others) whose *prārabdhas* were 'exceedingly inferior' and who were given to licentious living have been given in some later manuals. This is only to illustrate the point that a liberated individual would go beyond 'good' and 'bad'; the import is that whatever his actions, they would in no way cloud his wisdom or prejudice his liberation. The liberated individual would of course rise above the restrictive values of common morality, and reject the imperative character of social obligations. But to imagine that he would sink himself in vice, or become a menace to society, would be foolish. At the worst, we might characterize him as amoral and a social, like a child. More fre-

quently, the *jivan-muktas* have been thoroughly austere and compassionate, and their conduct has been known to conform perfectly to social norms, because they are aware that they should set healthy standards for common men to follow. Sadānanda points out⁷³ that the virtues he reveals in his conduct are in the nature of 'ornaments' for him, and they become second nature to him. He has no use for them, but they gain in value because of him.

The liberated individual would have this additional sense of moral responsibility. Not being any longer involved in the phenomenal world and selfish, having turned his back on self-indulgence, he spends the rest of his life working for the welfare of mankind (*loka-saṁgraha*); he usually assumes the role of a teacher and guide. This mission is regarded as so worthwhile indeed that a liberated individual may willingly get reborn to continue his mission, although his enlightenment would have freed him from this necessity.⁷⁴ The transformation that occurs in the liberated one's personality would involve the replacement of self-centeredness by generosity, altruism and compassion. He has a positive function to fulfil within the social context, and more often than otherwise, he would willingly discharge this responsibility.

He would then consent to get involved in the phenomenal world, although he feels no compulsion to do so. And such involvement would not defile him or distort his vision of reality. But the value of altruism may not always be felt. When the situation present before him is incompatible with his own make-up, the liberated individual may spend the rest of his life in quiet contemplation and with a restricted involvement in his immediate surrounding.

Śaṅkara, in his prologue to the commentary on *Bhagavad-Gita* refers to the 'approach' (*pravṛtti*) and 'withdrawal' (*nivṛtti*) tendencies. The saint would prefer the latter to the former. In the language of Arthur Deikman, he would prefer the 'receptive' mode to the 'action' mode. He accepts whatever comes along his way. He does not aspire or plan, design or programme. He does not seek to alter the world or strive to safeguard his own interests. He is not even scared of death, the most potent and persistent of threats to man's composure. Action mode is emphasized in the phenomenal world in order to cling to life and fight against death in all possible ways. Death is regarded as something that is extremely annoying, disturbing and destructive. It comes to man in a variety of shapes, and man is continually busy

combating it. The dread it occasions and the anxiety that it spreads are the prime motivations for man's phenomenal involvement. The thought of death keeps him tense and troubled. But the liberated one will look upon death as a perfectly natural event, and rests relaxed. The *Upaniṣhads* frequently refer to the dread of death and describe the great goal of liberation as 'deathless' (*amṛta*). It is not liberation from physical death that is intended, but freedom from its dread. It is this dread that is the source of all evil. Our selfishness and wickedness are born out of our petty ego-sense, which is a counter-construct to battle with the dread of death. Immorality is basically a reaction to the deep fear that wells up from within. The saint who is liberated is also free from fear (*abhaya*), and is therefore devoid of the chief motivation for immoral conduct.

13. The Strategy of Renunciation :

It is not so much the social norms of morality that bother the ordinary man; it is his own sense of what is right being stifled by what he is under a compulsion to repudiate. The normal man is divided against himself, and consequently sees the world as split and haphazard. But the saint who has achieved integrity in

himself sees the world as unified and orderly. And he is not anxious about the future; he is in fact not concerned with it. He lives in the present and is quite satisfied with it.

It is a difficult exercise to cultivate an effective indifference to the past and the future. For most of us, the present is merely a meeting point of the past and the future. The present eludes us because the normal mind is busy calling up images from the past and conjuring up visions of the future. To encounter the present, a mood of relaxation is essential, and an attitude devoid of ego-involvement is a help. The total and exclusive orientation to the present would necessarily involve the attitude of 'a non-participant observer', or in the language of Vedānta, of a 'mere witness' (*sākṣī*). Indian tradition advocates the development of this attitude as an indispensable aid in the spiritual career.

Śaṅkara's insistence on renunciation (*saṁnyāsa*) has often been misunderstood. It is frequently mistaken for the monastic style of living. Nothing was farther from Śaṅkara's intention. He nowhere justifies the abandonment of normal life, nor does he advocate a formal entry into, or confinement in, a monastic institution. Renunciation is an attitude, a dominant mode of approach to the phenome-

nal world. He means by it a willingness to give up everything in the world and also himself. It is, for him, what we would now call a strategy. He follows the Upaniṣhadic ideology that a normal man busily engaged with the external environment would have little time, energy or facility to explore his own interior; and that he would not even be aware of the reality within himself. To become sensitive to the non-ordinary reality, one must give up the preoccupation with the ordinary world. He should no longer be 'active' in the world; he should establish within himself the 'receptive' mode of transaction.

This aspect of the problem is well brought out in the distinction that is made in later Advaita thought between two kinds or degrees of renunciation: *vividiṣāsaṁnyāsa* and *vidvat-saṁnyāsa*⁷⁵. The former is renouncing in order to *know*, in order to obtain the wisdom concerning reality (*tattva-jñāna*). It is an encounter with one's own interior. The latter is the renunciation of one who is already a *knower*, one who has already obtained the wisdom. Yājñavalkya's resolve to renounce is cited as the example of the latter. Renouncing of the worldly goals and pleasures is a necessary step to obtain wisdom. Renunciation means a positive effort towards minimising the external and

internal distractions, so that one is free to marshall and focus his energy and attention on higher values. Turning ones back on the ephemeral is a preparation for directly apprehending the essential. Unless one gives up the clinging to the outside, he cannot enter into himself. However, for the sense of renuciation to take root, one must engage himself in what is known as *karma-yoga* or doing ones duties without a selfish interest and in the spirit of dedication to Godhead. This would necessarily involve the eschewing of such unhelpful dispositions as lust, anger, and regret. In other words, the ascetic would have to free himself from phenomenal involvement and live in isolation before he can aspire to acquire the liberating wisdom.

When the renunciation in the first degree has served its purpose, viz., the obtainment of 'knowledge', the renunciant then becomes eligible to work for the ideal of liberation in this very life. Śaṅkara would describe this stage of the 'renunciation of the knower' as 'abandonment of all possible action' (*sarva-karma saṁnyāsa*). In contradistinction, the earlier renunciation may be described as 'abandonment of actions that are egoistic' (*kaṭṭṛtva-pūrvaka-karma-saṁnyāsa*), and the preparatory state of

moral perfection as 'abandonment of the fruits of actions' (*karma-phala-samnyāsa*).

14. Authentic living.

The concept of *jīvan-mukti* is thus an adequate formulation of what in modern research on consciousness is called 'authentic living'. It points out that the true goal of man must be to live in perfect accord with himself, true to himself, without getting mixed up in a motley host of conflicting values and norms that crowd the world. Indian tradition always emphasizes the individual: it recognizes that each individual is unique, and that each individual must work out his destiny by himself. The value it attaches to societal living or to social conformity is minimal. Phenomenal involvement can destroy not only the uniqueness of the individual but his initiative for encounter with himself. There is in it a very real danger inasmuch as the reality within is transferred to the arbitrary constructs that are in their nature unreal.

The phenomenal world is an elaborate apparatus for ordering our involvement, for confining our individual streams of consciousness in norms, goals and values that are socially approved and materially beneficial. The consciousness that is phenomenally involved is a

matter of relations. Śaṅkara speaks of the 'I' and 'Thou' split (*yuṣmad-asmāt-pratyaya*) in our consciousness as responsible for phenomenal existence and involvement. The split symbolizes the fact that intentions are foisted upon relations. Intentions further engender the fragmentation of the individual: duality (*dvaita*) results inevitably in multiplicity (*nānātva*). Our life is thus lived amidst unreal irritations and enjoyments.

The scriptures warn us that reality is one and undivided; and that whoever sees it as dual or as multiple is not only deluded but gets bound to the phenomenal wheel of anxiety and involvement. To know reality, to experience its unity, to be liberated from the compulsive need to be involved, to be oneself truly and purely - this is authentic living. And it is exactly this that is held out in Vedānta as the proper goal of human life.

Jivan-mukti is a flash of transforming insight into the totality of individual existence in the phenomenal context. It is an intense awareness of a new dimension of being. When it is described as the suspension of the individual's gross physical existence (*sthūla*) as well as the psychological structure corresponding to it (*sūkṣma*), the suspension emphasizes that the 'active' aspect of transactions based on motiva-

tions has yielded to the 'receptive'. The 'differential' outlook makes way for the 'existential' outlook. Modern research on the human brain has shown that its structure as well as function is dual, that what we have is a split brain. The 'anguish' of life is derived from this persistent dichotomy. The unity that we seek to achieve in life is based on illusions and strivings (what Śaṅkara would call *prātibhāsika* and *vyāvahārika*), and hence does not touch the root problem of duality. Doubt and error are incidental to such a pursuit of unity. The unity that the *jivan-mukta* achieves is a fundamental one; it negates all possibility of dichotomy and differentiation. This is what the Vedāntic texts describe as '*akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti*'. The definition of the *jīvan-mukta* given by Sadānanda⁷⁶ is not only comprehensive but suggestive :

"The *jīvanmukta* is one who, by the wisdom obtained from the unitary apprehension of his own essential nature and by means of negating the ignorance that clouds the Real, has realized the undifferentiated Absolute, viz., his own nature; by also negating ignorance, its effects, accumulated *karma*, doubt and error he has freed himself from all fetters (that bind him to the phenomenal world); he rests in the Absolute."

The definition emphasizes that liberation is to be viewed in terms of eliminating all barriers that separate the individual personality from the Absolute undercurrent that is unitary. When the barriers are intuitively perceived as unreal, their hold on the mind is weakened; their bondage character vanishes. But they continue to appear, as long as the *prārabdha* dispositions endure. But their mere appearance cannot be said to hold the individual captive. Nor is it true that the individual can altogether dispense with them. That is why Sadānanda draws a distinction between the *jīvan-mukta* who rests in the Absolute and the *Videha-mukta* who is the very Absolute, and whose only character is bliss. The *jīvan-mukta* has isolated himself at the essential level but voluntarily and temporarily suspends his isolation at the transactional level. But the *videha-mukta* has isolated himself entirely and truly; there is no emerging out of it at any time or in any condition. Sadānanda describes this latter state, which is also the ultimate, as 'absolute isolation' (*parama-kaivalya*)⁷⁷.

It has been my endeavour to present before you some details concerning this great ideal in Indian thought. In conclusion, permit me to remind you that we should be grateful to Āchārya Śaṅkara for having recovered this

ideal when it was all but lost sight of. It was his genius that crystallized this idea as the core-concept of Advaita. Indeed, if we ignore the importance of this ideal and forget the message of the great Āchārya concerning its value and urgency, we would lose the opportunity that Advaita provides for us to fulfil here and now our destiny. *Jivan-mukti* is an effective and sufficient answer to the complaint that Advaita is only a metaphysical system without a practical counter-part.

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1. Prof. M. Hiriyanna : *Reviews* (Kavya-laya, Mysore, 1970) p. 7
2. derived from the root 'muc' with 'bhāve kting.'
3. Cf. *Kaṭha-Upaniṣad*, 1, 1, 12.
4. क्षीणे पुण्ये मर्त्यलोकं च्यवन्ति
5. Cf. *Nyāya-bhāṣya* (1, 1, 22) refers to 21 kinds of pain and adds- तदत्यन्तविमोक्षोऽपवर्गः । Cp. Śaṅkara's remark - नवानामात्मगुणानामत्यन्तानुत्पादो मोक्ष इति क्वाणदाः । (VSB, 2, 3, 50)
6. निर्बीजस्यात्मनः शरीरादिनिवृत्तिः पुनः शरीराद्यनुत्पत्तौ दग्धेन्धननालवत् उपशमो मोक्ष इति ।
7. *Śloka-vārttika*, 108-110. Prabhākara held the same view. Cf. Śālikanātha: निःशेषधर्मा-धर्मपरिक्षयनिबन्धनो मोक्षः (Prakaraṇa-pañcikā).
8. प्रपञ्चसबन्धविलयो मोक्षः ।
9. आत्यन्तिकस्तु देहोच्छेदः । (Prakaraṇa-pañcikā)
10. इष्टाधिगमार्था प्रवृत्तिः ।
11. *Vedānta-kaumudī* (Ed. by Siddheswara Bhattacharya, Banaras Hindu University, 1873), p. 118-196.
12. *Tattva-pradīpikā*, p. 570.
13. *Vedānta-paribhāṣā*, (Ed. By S. S. Suryanarayana Sastrin, The Adyar Library, 1942), sections 3, 4, 5 & 6.

14. *Vedānta-sūtra*, 4,4,5 to 7.
15. *Sāṃkhya-kārikā*, 67
16. on *Sāṃkhya-sūtra*, 3, 77-83
17. *Yoga-sūtra-bhāṣya*, 4, 30
18. *Vedānta-sūtra*, 4, 4, 10 to 12
19. *Bhagavad-gītā-bhāṣya*, 6, 27

जीवन्मुक्तं ब्रह्मैव सर्वं इत्थेवं निश्चयवन्तं...

20. *Muktikopanishad*, 2, 1

पुरुषस्य कर्तृत्वभोक्तृत्वसुखदुःखादिलक्षणश्चित्तधर्मः ।

क्लेशरूपत्वाद्बन्धो भवति । तन्निरोधेनं जीवन्मुक्तिः ॥

21. S. N. Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II (Cambridge, 1952), p. 231.

22. *Jivan-mukti-viveka* of Śrī Vidyaranya (Ed. by S. Subramanya Sastri and T. R. Srinivas Ayyangar. The Theosophical Publ. House, 1935).

23. *Vedānta-sūtra* 4, 3, 7 to 16. This comprises of two adhikaraṇas, according to Śaṅkara : Kāryādhikaraṇa (4, 3, 7 to 14) and Apratikālabhānādhikaraṇa (4, 3, 15 and 16). The former contains the views of Bādari and Jaimini.

24. Śaṅkara's views on Krama-mukti can also be found in his comm. on *Vedānta-sūtra* 3, 2, 21; 3, 3, 1; 1,313 and 1,1,12. Cf. also his comm. on *Bhagavadgītā*, 8, 24.

25. *Vedānta-sūtra*, 4,4,2.

26. Ibid, 4,4,22.

27. *Vedānta-sūtra-bhāṣya*, 1, 1, 12 सद्योमुक्ति-
कारणमात्मज्ञानम् ।

28. *Bhagavadgītā-bhāṣya*, 5, 27. Intro. Cf.
also 8, 24.

(सद्योमुक्ति is explained as सद्य एव विमुच्यते)

29. Ibid, 4, 37 Introduction. Also see
Śaṅkara's *Chāndogya-bhāṣya*, 6, 14, 2.

30. *Vedānta-sūtra-bhāṣya*, 1, 1, 4. Cf. Ibid
4, 4, 10.

31. Ānandagiri on *Bhagavadgītā-bhāṣya*,
5, 26.

32. *Jīvan-mukti-viveka*, 1st ch. Cf. Bhārati-
tirtha's *Vivaraṇa-prameya-saṁgraha* (Andhra
Univ. Series 1941) 9, 32 (a), p. 337.

33. *Vedānta-sūtra-bhāṣya*, 3, 3, 32. Cf.
Chāndogya bhāṣya, 6, 14, 2.

34. *Vedānta-sūtra-bhāṣya*, 4, 1, 15.

35. *Jīvan-mukti-viveka*, p. 228.

36. विद्वच्छरीरं परिपालयन्त्वेव विद्यार्थान्यपि कर्माणि किञ्चित्कालं
यावता विद्यासन्तत्युच्छेदो न भवेत् ।

37. *The Quest after Perfection*, Mysore :
Kavyalaya, 1952, p. 72.

38. *Vedānta-sūtra-bhāṣya*, 4, 1, 15,

39. *Vivaraṇa-prameya-saṁgraha* (Bhārati
tirtha), 9, 32.

40. *Vedānta-sūtra-bhāṣya*, 4, 1, 15.

41. Ibid 1, 1, 24. एकरूपमेव फलं मोक्षम् । Also Cf.
Vedānta-sūtra-bhāṣya, 1, 4, 13

42. Ibid. 3, 4, 52.

43. R. D. Ranade: *Vedānta, the Culmination of Indian Thought*, Bombay: The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1970, p. 167.

44. *Vedānta-sūtra-bhāṣya*, 3, 3, 22.

45. *Brhadāranyaka-upaniṣad-bhāṣya*, 4, 4, 6.
Cf. also *Kaṭha-upaniṣad-bhāṣya*, 2, 2, 1 and 2, 1, 14.

46. *Muṇḍaka-upaniṣad*, 3, 2, 6

47. *Vedānta-sūtra-bhāṣya*, 1, 1, 4.

48. *Brahma-siddhi*, p. 130 (Ed. by S. Kuppuswami Sastri)

49. This is the traditional view (e.g., Amalananda's *Kalpataru*, 4,1,15). But a careful examination of views in *Brahma-siddhi* considered along with the commentaries, Ānanda-pūrṇa's *Bhāva-suddhi* and Citsukha's *Abhiprāya-prakāśikā*, shows that there is a large agreement between his views and Samkara's own views, as suggested by the Editor of these commentaries, Anantakrishna Sastri (Sanskrit Introduction, Govt. Oriental Series CLXI, Madras 1963). There is a discussion about this matter in my forthcoming publication: *Mandana, a Study in Advaita*.

50. *Samkṣepa-śārīraka*, 4, 38. Madhusūdana's commentary (*Sāra-samgraha*) summarizes the argument (Intro. to 4, 38)

51. *Ibid*, 4, 39

52. But verses 40-45 in the same section appear to support the *Jīvan-mukti* argument.

53. *Pañcha-daśī*, 4, 51 and 52.

56. *Śāstra - Siddhānta - leśa-Saṁgraha* (ed. by S. R. Krishnamurti Sastri and N. Veezhinathan, Secunderabad, 1973.) 4th Chapter. (Pp. 365 f.)

57. *Advaita-siddhi* (Madusūdana-sarasvatī), with the comm. of Gauḍa-Brahmānanda and Viṭṭaleśa, Nirṇaya Sagar Press, Bombay, 1937, Pp. 890.

58. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-bhāṣya*, 2, 1, 19. According to Ānandagiri the story is from Draviḍā-cārya. Cf. Suresvara's *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-vārtika*, 2, 970-972.

59. e.g. in *Bhagavad-gītā-bhāṣya*, 4, 37 and 39. *Samyag-darśana* is explained in *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-bhāṣya*, 2, 4, 5.

60. Not a भावान्तरापत्ति, उसाद्य, संस्कार्य, आप्य or विकार्य। Cf. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-bhāṣya*, 4, 4, 6 and *Vedānta-sūtra-bhāṣya*, 1, 1, 4.

61. *Vedānta-sūtra-bhāṣya*, 4, 4, 2.

62. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-bhāṣya*, 4, 4, 6.

63. *Bhagavad-gītā-bhāṣya*, 13, 2.

64. *Māṇḍukya-kārikā*, 2, 32.

65. *Jīvan-mukti-viveka*, p. 9 (Sanskrit section), The same definition also occurs in the *Muktikopaniṣad*.

66. Cf. Madhusūdana's *Advaita - siddhi*, Nrsimhāśrama's *Vedānta-tattva-viveka*, Brahmānanda's *Laghu-candrikā*, *Vedānta-kalpa-latā* etc.

67. *Vedānta-sūtra-bhāṣya*, 3, 2, 5.

68. *Vedānta-paribhāṣā*, Section 8, Pp. 135.

69. *Naiṣkarmya-siddhi*, 4, 60.

70. *Ibid*, 4, 62.

71. Intro. to *Aitareya - bhāṣya*. Cf. also *Chāndogya-bhāṣya* 2, 23, 1.

72. Sureśvara's *Naiṣkarmya-siddhi*, 4, 66.

This is the verse from *Upadeśa-sāhasrī*, 18, 220.

73. *Vedānta-sāra*.

74. *Vedānta-sūtra-bhāṣya*, 3, 3, 3, 32.

75. *Jīvan-mukti-viveka*, Cf. i, Pp. 4-8. (Sanskrit Section).

76. जीवन्मुक्तो नाम स्वस्वरूपाखण्डज्ञानेन तदज्ञानबाधनाद्वारा स्वस्वरूपाखण्डब्रह्मणि साक्षात्कृते अज्ञानतत्कार्यसञ्चितकर्मसंशयादीनामपि बाधितत्वात् अखिलबन्धरहितो ब्रह्मनिष्ठः ।

77. Cf. *Vākya-vṛtti*, 52 and 53

Jivanmukti In Advaita

Indian philosophical thought and religious practices are primarily concerned with liberation, the ultimate freedom from all worldly ills as well as the state of absolute bliss. While all schools of Vedanta hold out this liberation or **Mukti** as the great ideal, Advaita holds that this goal is attainable in this very life, provided the right wisdom is obtained. This condition of liberation while one is still alive is called **Jivanmukti**.

The present book, which was delivered as two lectures at Madras under the Dharmatma V. Vaidya-subrahmanya Iyer 61st birthday Endowment Lecture scheme, deals with the idea of **Jivanmukti** as crystallized by Samkara and later thinkers in the field of Advaita. It focusses attention on the relevance of the idea in the context of Indian thought in general.

The author, Prof. S. K. Ramachandra Rao is currently directing the Study of Consciousness in Advaita sponsored by Sri Abhinava Vidyateertha Swamigal Scientific Research Academy at Bangalore. He has had the benefit of traditional learning as well as modern training in psychological research. He has held many important academic positions and has written extensively on psychological and philosophical subjects.



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