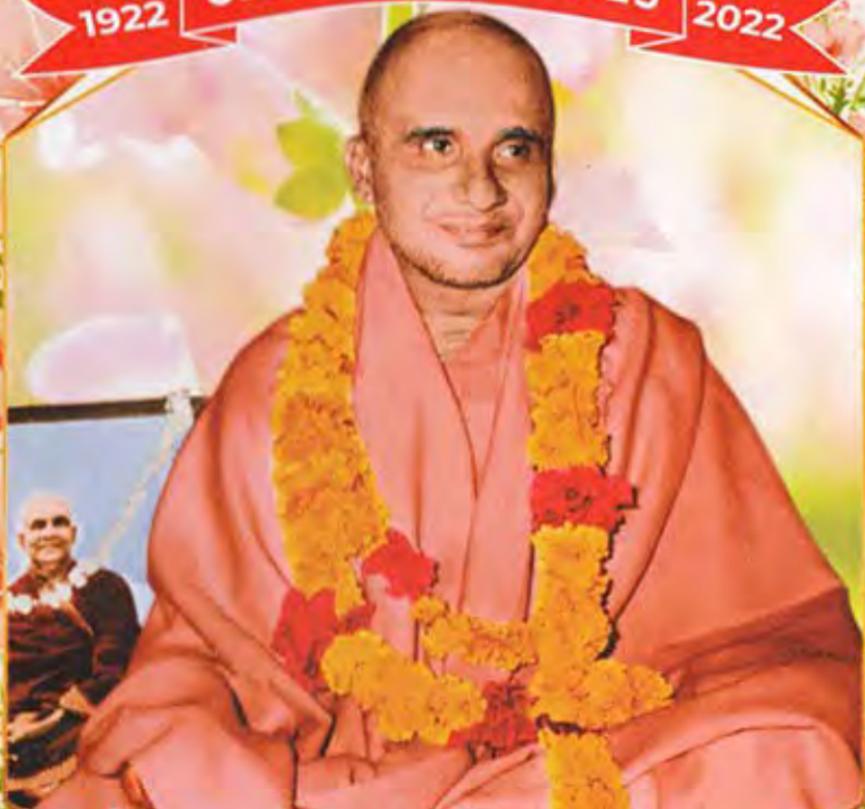




1922

CENTENARY SERIES

2022



The Attainment of Liberation

SWAMI KRISHNANANDA

THE ATTAINMENT OF LIBERATION

SWAMI KRISHNANANDA



Published by

THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

P.O. SHIVANANDANAGAR—249 192

Distt. Tehri-Garhwal, Uttarakhand, Himalayas, India

www.sivanandaonline.org, www.dlshq.org

First Edition: 2022
[2,000 copies]

©The Divine Life Trust Society

Swami Krishnananda Birth Centenary Series

FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION

Published by Swami Padmanabhananda for
The Divine Life Society, Shivanandanagar, and printed by
him at the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy Press,
P.O. Shivanandanagar, Distt. Tehri-Garhwal,
Uttarakhand, Himalayas, India
For online orders and catalogue visit: www.dlsbooks.org

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

The 25th of April 2022 marks the auspicious occasion of the Birth Centenary of Worshipful Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj. To commemorate this sacred occasion, the Headquarters Ashram has decided to bring out booklets comprising the illuminating discourses of Worshipful Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj for free distribution.

Worshipful Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj arrived at the holy abode of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj in 1944, and remained here until his Mahasamadhi in November 2001. Swamiji Maharaj was a master of practically every system of Indian thought and Western philosophy. "Many Sankaras are rolled into one Krishnananda," said Sri Gurudev.

Over the years, Swami Maharaj gave many profound and insightful discourses during Sunday night Satsanga, and on holy occasions such as Sri Gurudev's birthday, Sri Krishna Janmasthanami, Mahasivaratri, etc., and also during Sadhana Week and Yoga Vedanta Courses conducted by the Yoga

Vedanta Forest Academy of the Ashram. Sri Swami Maharaj always spoke extempore, spontaneously, without any preparation, and every discourse was fresh, unique, and divinely inspired. The audience was bathed in that stupendous unfathomable energy that radiated from Swamiji Maharaj during these discourses.

We are immensely happy to bring out some of Sri Swamiji Maharaj's discourses in booklet form as our worshipful offering at his holy feet on the blessed occasion of his Birth Centenary.

The present booklet, '**The Attainment of Liberation**', consists of an illuminating discourse of Sri Swamiji Krishnanandaji Maharaj on the nature of Sadyo-Mukti (immediate liberation) and Krama-Mukti (progressive liberation).

May the abundant blessings of the Almighty Lord, Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj be upon all.

—The Divine Life Society

THE ATTAINMENT OF LIBERATION

The Nature of Sadyo-Moksha

All endeavours aim at the common ideal of the perpetual abolition of sorrow and the experience of unending bliss. Bliss is only in the Infinite and sorrow is only in the finite. There is no bliss in the finite, and no sorrow in the Infinite. Therefore, the attainment of the Infinite Life is the supreme purpose of finite life. Knowledge and meditation have both their dear aim in the realisation of the Absolute. *Moksha* is the highest exaltation of the self in its pristine nature of supreme perfection. Emancipation is the Consciousness of the Reality; not becoming something which previously did not exist, not travelling to another world of greater joy. It is the knowledge of eternal existence, the awareness of the essential nature of Pure Being. It is the Freedom attained by knowing that we are always free. Knowledge is not merely the cause for freedom; it is itself freedom. *Moksha* consists in *jnana* (Knowledge) and is not the effect or product of *jnana*. *Jnana* is Existence itself, and hence it

cannot be a means to attain *jnana* of Existence, which is *moksha*, as a thing does not attain itself. *Chit* is the same as *sat*. To *be* what *is*, is *moksha*. It is to realise one's Self, to be *Oneself*, and to be Oneself is to be the All.

“There is no consciousness after death (of individuality),” says Yajnavalkya. Since Consciousness alone is the entirety of being, there is no consciousness of anything objective in the highest state. It is the Fullness of Perfect Existence. It is, but is not anything; it sees, but sees not anything; it hears, but hears not anything; it knows, but knows not anything. It does not go to where it was not, it does not get what it did not have. Even the expression “It knew only itself” (Brih. Up., I. 4. 10) is an understatement of Truth, for it implies self-consciousness which is the characteristic of Ishvara and not Brahman. Brahman does not know, for it is knowledge; It does not enjoy, for it is enjoyment; It is not “existent” but “existence”. It is non-material, has no contact with any objective being. “It eats nothing; no one eats it.” It is the supreme “incorporeal which pain and pleasure do not touch.” The realisation of the Self is in a way like the shining of the sun when the clouds no more cover him. It is the regaining of originality in the

absolute sense. It is “quenching the fire of death with the water of knowledge” (Brih. Up., III. 2. 10). It is deathless impersonality of conscious nature, not merely living as an eternal person. A person, even the absolute person (Ishvara), is non-eternal. No real change takes place in the realisation of Truth, but it appears to be all change! “Though the Full may be taken out from the Full, the Full alone remains without change.” Even the utter extinction of personality does not involve the least transformation in true existence. It is the simple knowing, the great knowing, so mysterious and complicated, the ever unsolved problem, the only problem of the whole universe. And yet, it is the only Truth to the Knower. The curious riddle, somehow, makes one feel that, truly, nothing *happens* in Infinity, though worlds may seem to roll in it. That which is so simply said as “Existence-Consciousness” and which is so easy to understand, is, after all, a hard nut to crack—never understood, never known, never realised by any individual, the supreme identity of the greatest positivity and the greatest negation in one. The Absolute is really supra-relative, supra-mental, supra-rational. Whatever is spoken or thought is not Truth as it is. Truth is the union of the cosmic thinker and the cosmic thinking. There is no separate

object of this thinking, nothing that is thought of here, for thinking itself is the object of thinking, thought thinks itself, all objects are mere processes of cosmic thinking, nothing real in themselves. Thought and its object, knowledge and the known, seeing and the seen, relation and the object related to, mind and the universe, are identical with the Universal Essence. The conscious transcending of the successive double relation in the cosmos, of the thinker who is identical with the thinking, and of the thinking which is identical with that which is thought of, is Liberation. The universe has no reality independent of its Universal Knower. The original delusion of the difference between the thinker and the thinking is greater than and is the cause of the secondary delusion of the difference between the thinking and the thought-of. There is the thinking because there is the thinker; there is the thought-of because there is the thinking. The thinking is the object of the thinker; the thought-of is the object of the thinking. Egoism or duality-consciousness and the world or multiplicity-consciousness are the respective effects of the mistake that the object is independent of and different from the subject in both these cases. *Samsara* is the knower-knowledge-known-relationship. But it must however be

remembered here that the distinction between the thinker and the thinking and that between the thinking and the thought-of is not valid to the Cosmic Consciousness of Ishvara. This distinction is superimposed by the individual on Ishvara when it perceives, as an individual knower, its own distinctness and the variety of world-manifestation. Relations are meaningful to the individual alone and not to the Universal Being. These distinctions are present even in the superhuman individuals, even in those who have reached Brahmaloaka or the subtlest possible state which is within the jurisdiction of individualistic consciousness. That which is above all distinctions and relations is Brahman, the knowledge of which is neither thinking nor sleeping. This is that which is asserted through endless denials, impossible to describe, impossible to imagine, nothing, everything! The only definition of the nature of Reality is perhaps "That which is not anything, but not nothing, that which is everything, and knows nothing but itself". That is Brahman! Therefore, bondage and liberation are only a matter of forgetfulness and awareness of fact, respectively, and not a change in being. The complete transcendence of one's individuality is at once the realisation of the Absolute. The moment

the *jiva* is negated, the cosmic play is explained, and the cosmos and Ishvara sink into Brahman.

Moksha is neither a mass of consciousness nor self-consciousness. It is the very life and order of the universe, ever present, unchanging. It transcends even the sense of immortality which, also, is conceptual. The Light of the Absolute puts an end to all relative existence, and the world does not exist even as a remembrance. There is no such thing as inert, inanimate, dead matter or blind force. It is all Supreme Force, Knowledge and Bliss without motion of mind. There are no planes of existence, no states of consciousness, no degrees of reality. This is the most blessed and supreme state of absolute freedom and conscious eternal life, not merely a conviction but actual being. It is the awful grandeur of the utter negation of limitation and experience of Infinitude, not mere continued personal life. It is the complete dissolution of thought in simple existence, which is the mightiest nothing! It is an immediate *here* and *now* of spacelessness and timelessness, the inexpressible, beyond joy and sorrow, beyond knowledge and ignorance, beyond life and death, beyond all that is beyond! It is the fullest Reality, the completest Consciousness, the immensest Power, the intensest Bliss. Truth, knowledge,

power, happiness and immortality are its shadows. Unseen, transcendent, uninferable, unthinkable, ununderstandable, indescribable, imperishable, the loftiest, the deepest, the Truth, the Great—That is the Absolute. The light of limitless number of suns is darkness in its presence. It oversteps the boundaries of being, and nullifies all ideas of existence. It is the Giant-Spirit which swallows up the mind and the ego and wipes out the individual consciousness to the very extreme. It is the Thunder that breaks the heart of the universe, the Lightning that fuses all senses of empirical reality. The bubble bursts into the ocean and the river enters the sea! The soul merges into the extremely Real.

The Grandeur of the Absolute is grander than all other grandeur. It is the crowning edifice of truth and glory. Nothing is beyond That. It is neither form, nor content, nor existent. The soul sinks into It by an experience of all-fullness—neither essence, nor kingdom, nor wisdom, neither equal nor unequal, neither static nor moving, neither sitting nor resting, neither one nor two, neither true nor false, neither this-ness nor that-ness, nothing known to us, nothing known to any existent being. It has no name, there is no definition of It! It is *That which is*. It is not love, not grace, not world, not soul,

not god, not freedom, not light, for all these are relative conceptions. It is not *satchitananda*, which is only an ideal 'other' of what we here experience. *Satchitananda* is only the logical highest, a mere intellectual prop. Reality is beyond *satchitananda*, also. It is Itself, the eternal sun that shines in the infinite sky of the absolute world! It transcends cosmic consciousness. It is the supra-essential essence. Eternity and Infinity embrace one another to form Its Centre of Experience. It is an Ocean that sweeps away the earth and the heaven and the netherland. Sun, moon and stars are dissolved in It. Brahma, Vishnu and Siva vanish into It. It is the Life of life, Wisdom of wisdom, Joy of joy, Power of power, Real of real, Essence of essence. Birthlessness and deathlessness float in It like ripples. It is the supreme Death of all, and yet the highest peak of real Life. The totality of all the joys of the universe is merely a distorted fragment of That Supreme. It puts an end to the vicious circle of transmigratory life.

The Upanishads have left no stone unturned in attempting to give the best expression to the majestic Absolute-Experience:

“The knower of the Self crosses beyond sorrow.”
 “He who knows that Supreme Brahman becomes

Brahman Itself.” “The knower of Brahman attains the Highest.” “One who is established in Brahman reaches Immortality.” “He returns not again, he returns not again.”

“By knowing Him alone one goes to That which is beyond death. By knowing the Supreme Being, the wise one casts off both joy and sorrow. They who see Him, the Self-Existent— they, and no others, have eternal peace. Of him, whose desires are completely satisfied, who is totally perfected, all desires dissolve themselves here itself. The liberated one becomes onefold, threefold, fivefold, sevenfold, ninefold, elevenfold, hundred-and-elevenfold, twenty-thousandfold! He goes to the other shore of darkness. That state is ever illumined, it is always day there. Time, age and death, sorrow, merit and demerit do not go there. Fearless is the state of the Bliss of Brahman. Even the gods fear him, even Indra and Prajapati cannot obstruct him— he becomes the Self-Emperor. The knot of the heart is broken, all doubts are rent asunder, and all actions perish, when That is seen, which is the Highest and the Deepest. His vital-spirits do not depart, they are gathered up, here itself. Being Brahman already, he becomes Brahman Itself. He is the maker of everything, he is the creator of all, the universe is his, he himself is

the universe. This is the supreme treasure. The freed souls enter into the All, they enter into Brahman, they are liberated beyond mortal nature. The whole constitution of individuality becomes unified in the Supreme Imperishable. As rivers enter the ocean, leaving name and form, so the wise one, liberated from name and form, reaches the Transcendental Divine Being. Thus is Immortality.”

This is Immediate Liberation (*sadyomukti*), the instantaneous experience of the Absolute through the sudden destruction of the fabric of personality built by *avidya*, *kama* and *karma*. *Karma* is the child of *kama* which is never fulfilled until its source, *avidya*, is destroyed through the realisation of Brahman, which is unsurpassed Perfection. How can, by knowing one thing, another thing be attained? The attainment and the knowledge here are the same, self-identical. The Supreme Brahman is the All.

Sadyomukti is the processless immediate experience of Brahman, spaceless and timeless, on account of one's habituation to the non-dual knowledge of the Self. It is given to a very few to realise Brahman in this way, for most of the aspirants cannot proceed with their meditations without some kind of objective content in their

consciousness. The quick and sudden illumination, which *sadyomukti* is, is a very unique experience, and it puts an end to the relative notions of Ishvara, *jiva* and *jagat*. In this, there is neither the experience of the degrees of phenomena nor resting in the region of Ishvara or Brahmaloaka after being freed. It is at once being Brahman.

Progressive Salvation

There are in the Upanishads intimations of *krama-mukti* or the progressive process of the liberation of the soul. The soul reaches the Karya-Brahman or Parameshwara who transcends even the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. This Great Lord of the universe is also called Parama-Purusha, Uttama-Purusha or Purushottama. He is the Absolute Individual, the Supreme Brahman manifested as the Cause of the origin, the sustenance and the dissolution of the universe. The Upanishads are emphatic in their statements that one who reaches through unselfish meditation and knowledge this Supreme Cause does not return to the mortal coil, but proceeds further to the Absolute Reality. The Mundaka Upanishad says that the sages in the world of Brahma are liberated beyond death in the end of time. Those who attain the world of

the Karya-Brahman remain there until the end of the universe, enjoying the effects of their *satyakamas* and *satyasankalpas*, the fruits of their desires and willings based on Truth. Whatever they wish arises then and there instantaneously, for they are in harmony with the Universal Being. They enjoy the highest approximation to the bliss of the Lord of the universe. Their desires are not like those of the mortals of the *samsara*, for, the latter's desires are flames of morbid passions based on untruth and arising out of intense selfishness and egoism mostly set in opposition to the other individuals of the universe, whereas the former's desires are absolute truth-willings which are attuned to the law of the God of the universe, in spite of the individualities maintained by them there. Practically the desire of the liberated soul is no desire at all in the general sense, for it is not the effect of *avidya* (mixture of deluded passion and darkness) but of *maya* (light of truth and knowledge). The desire of one liberated soul cannot be against that of another, for they all are co-existent with the one God; but the desires of one man are mostly against those of others, for they all are dissipated and cut off one from another by the separative egos rooted in the darkness of *avidya*. The liberated souls think and work through the

higher thought of the spiritual nature, not through the mind and sense-organs of the lower nature. They breathe the universal life and exist as partakers of the joy of the Master of the universe. They have the unceasing immediacy of the consciousness of everything, an awareness of the inmost objective essences of the complete universe. Their experiences are, no doubt, objective, they being not identical with the Absolute, but they can have an entire knowledge of the universe through self-identification with anything, at any time, though this is different from the simultaneous Cosmic Consciousness of God or Ishvara. But they are not opposed to the being of God, they work as God works, live as God lives, will as God wills, though all this happens spontaneously there. They are the sportive forms of the Absolute in itself. They want nothing; they are satisfied with themselves. They do not crave for an entity second to themselves, they desire only themselves, and even when they enjoy the objects of the universe, they do so with an all-engulfing unity-consciousness. They are like several circles with a common centre and radii of the same length, but comprehended within the Great Circle of the Infinite. The differences among these souls are not detrimental to the Infinite, since they are attuned to it. However, even

truth-willings and enjoyments with consciousness of identity of things cannot be taken as the highest Liberation, which is *brahmanubhava*.

It is said that these souls enjoy all powers except those of universal creation, preservation and destruction, which belong to God alone, and that conflict of actions may arise if all are endowed with the same power. This statement can be intelligible only when the relation between God and the liberated souls is not one of identity but of difference. If Liberation means the highest Knowledge of God, then, to live in the same world as God's, to live near to God, and to have a form similar to God's, and yet to be different from God, can only be lesser than Liberation, because God is not one of many individuals, not a *samsari*, but the only existing Absolute Individual, and to have any relation with Him is to know Him, and to know Him is to be one with Him, and to be one with Him is not to perceive duality. The knowledge of God or Ishvara, which these souls in Brahmaloaka on the path of *krama-mukti* have, is only an approximation to Ishvara-Consciousness, but is not the same as that. Hence these souls are neither omnipotent nor omniscient, though they have full freedom as far as their enjoyments within their circles are concerned.

There does not arise the question of the conflict that may crop up among the liberated souls endowed with the power of creation, preservation and destruction, if all souls are one with Ishvara. To be endowed with the same power and knowledge as God is to be non-different beings forming a One-Whole which is God. And, since no two individuals can have identical knowledge without themselves destroying their different forms and becoming one being, we are led to suppose a difference in experience among these souls. Further, when it is said that the liberated souls attain Absolute-Experience only at the end of the universe, it is implied that they cannot experience Absoluteness as long as Ishvara exists as a Self-conscious being, which means that they have still an objective experience and are not identical with Ishvara. Otherwise, there is no reason why they should retain their individualities until the end of the universe. The correct view, however, seems to be that all those who meditate on the Absolute Individual (God) through positive qualitative conceptions, rest in Him, who, in the end of time, winding up the space-time-universe which is His own body, dissolves Himself in the Conscious Power of the Absolute, which is itself non-different from the Absolute. These relatively

liberated ones have their individualities not destroyed here but exist in the world of Ishvara, i.e., Ishvara is experienced by them not directly but as an *objective conscious* universe, of which they are integral aspects. This Self-Dissolution of God is, in some respects, similar to the deep sleep of the worldly individual, who also, at the end of the day, ending his body-consciousness, dissolves himself in the unconscious power based on the Atman, which is superimposed on the Atman. But the difference between the two dissolutions is that in the case of God, there is no further forced coming back to universe-consciousness, no subsequent dreaming and waking state, and there is Absolute-Experience; whereas, in the case of the worldly individual, there is forced coming back to body-consciousness, there is subsequent dreaming and waking state, and there is no Self-Experience. There are *kama* and *karma* in the individual because of *avidya* in him, but in God there is *vidya*, Universal Consciousness or Absolute Self-Consciousness alone, and hence, there are no concomitant *kama* and *karma* which are the causes of objective multiplicity-consciousness and the activity therefor. Desire and action in the individual are the outcome of the darkness of ignorance, but they do not exist in *vidya* which is the light of knowledge.

The souls who are in the World of Ishvara, or the Absolute-Individual, experience it as an Intelligence-World of *shuddha-sattva* corresponding to their own personalities made of the same substance. The soul is said to reach God through the passage of the sun (Mund. Up., I. 2. 11), and, thus, pass on to the Absolute. Anyways, the imaginary problem of the possibility of the multiple lordship of the liberated souls does not arise, any more than the possibility of the existence of many Absolutes and Eternities. When there is individuality there is no omniscience or omnipotence, and when there are these there is no individuality. If we are to be alive to the sentences which declare that the liberated soul “goes around laughing, sporting, enjoying with women and chariots and friends, not remembering the appendage of the body” (Chh. Up., VIII. 12. 3), we can be so only by convincing ourselves that this state cannot be that of the Consciousness of the Absolute, or that this may be the condition of the *jivanmukta* who does mysterious and ununderstandable actions, and who, though he has no consciousness of his body, is yet made to animate his body through a slight trace of the existent pure egoism unconnected with spiritual consciousness. This is the remainder of that part of his *prarabdha-karma* which is

unobstructive to Knowledge. The state of *jivanmukti* has no connection with the physical body; it is a state of consciousness; so it can be experienced even when the physical body is dropped, i.e., even in Brahmaloaka. The *jivanmukta* of this physical world, with his physical body, too, is really in Brahmaloaka in his consciousness, though the body is in this world. Those who have not attained *jivanmukti* here and are not ready for *sadyo-mukti* immediately after the *prana* stops functioning in the present physical body, attain this through *kramamukti* after the death of the physical body. This shows that a *videhamukta* is not one who exists in Brahmaloaka but who has merged in the Absolute. Or, we have to make a theoretical distinction between two definitions of a *videhamukta*—he who has an individuality either in a lower superhuman experience, or in Brahmaloaka, and is on the verge of Absolute-Experience on the exhaustion of his *prarabdha* which is the cause of his superhuman experience and his experience in Brahmaloaka (the arising from which is called the waking up of Brahma or Hiranyagarbha), and he who has actually merged in Brahman. In Brahmaloaka the soul is like a perfect *jivanmukta* of this world, and all its actions are spontaneous promptings of the pure *satsankalpas*,

and not conscious willings born of a deliberately egoistic personality. If we are to be consistent with the demands of *jivanmukti*, we have to hold that even the *satyakamas* and *satyasankalpas* or desires and willings based on Truth in the liberated soul of the Brahmaloaka are really not conscious actions but spontaneous outpourings of the remaining momentum of actions done prior to the rise of Self-Knowledge, which were non-obstructive to the rise of Knowledge. If we are to think that the acts of the soul in Brahmaloaka are deliberately directed conscious ones, it would follow that they are not as evolved as *jivanmuktas* who have no consciousness of individuality. The *prarabdha* in the *jivanmukta* is not experienced by his consciousness; it is not a content of the Absolute-Consciousness; it is existent only to the other ignorant *jivas* who perceive the existence or the movements of his body.

There is also a passage (Chh. Up., VIII. 14) which speaks about the soul's entering into Prajapati's abode and assembly hall. The joy which the soul experiences in the consciousness of God is expressed in glowing terms. The Taittiriya Upanishad (II. 1) says that the knower of Brahman simultaneously enjoys with Brahman-Consciousness all that he desires for. The difficulty that often hampers our understanding of

the exact nature of the different stages in the process of progressive salvation is increased by the fact that the Upanishads are rarely explicit about them, and find joy in giving intimations of immortality even in regard to a state which we must very much hesitate to take as the highest, if we are to use any reason in our understandings and judgments. Many a time, one is at a loss to know whether the Upanishads are giving a metaphorical exclamation of the Experience of the Absolute, or a real description of the state of one in Brahmaloaka on the way to *krama-mukti*. The instantaneous enjoyment of everything with the Absolute-Consciousness has to be construed as an intimation of Ishvara Himself, for the one in Brahmaloaka cannot have a simultaneous experience of the entire existence; or it has to be taken to indicate a joyous outburst of *brahmanubhava*.

However, one thing is certain, that the criterion of salvation lies in that

“By knowing God, there is a falling off of all fetters, distresses are destroyed, there is cessation of birth and death, there is breaking up of individuality (or bodily nature), there accrues universal lordship, one becomes absolute, and all desires are satisfied.”
—Svet. Up., I. 11.

We cannot, with our intellects, understand how there can be wish and enjoyment when all desires are satisfied. It is said that “it is simple Lila” or sport of the Divine, which is not an explanation of the mystery, but an admission that man cannot know God’s ways. For us, even the least wish or action, however much universal it may be, means a state below the Supreme Being. It is clear that all the various statements regarding the different experiences which the liberated soul is said to have must refer to an objective experience introduced in one or the other of the three stages of Virat, Hiranyagarbha and Ishvara, or to the realisation of Brahman itself. The Upanishads, however, use the word “Brahman” to mean any of the four, and it is this that does not allow us to have an adequate knowledge of what they actually hold to be the definite stages of Truth-realisation. To us it somehow appears that the main stages must be only four: Attainment of (1) universal objective multiplicity-consciousness, (2) universal subjective multiplicity-consciousness, (3) universal Self-consciousness, (4) Transcendental Experience. The Mandukya Upanishad testifies to the existence of these four states. But the first three experiences are relative and seem to be existent only so long as one remains an experiencer with a touch

of the spatial concept in the Universal. There cannot be any logical proof for the existence of these three objective states beyond an individualistic demand. As a later Vedantin has said, "Those dull-witted persons who are unable to realise the unconditioned Supreme Brahman are shown compassion by a description of the Qualified Brahman. When their mind is controlled through meditation on the Qualified Brahman, the One Being, free from all limitations reveals itself."

Jivanmukti

It is very difficult, from the statements of the Upanishads, to distinguish between which actually is the state of liberation while living in body and which is that of Absoluteness attained after the transcendence of the body. Often, they give the same description with reference to both. This only shows that the distinction between *jivanmukti* and *videhamukti* is relative and does not have much meaning in itself. The *mukta* has no difference of any kind in himself. *Jivanmukti* is the highest spiritual experience by the individual when the mortal body is still hanging on due to the remainder of a little of *sattvika-ahamkara* or *prarabdha*. In this condition the usual empirical functions of the mind

cease, even this remainder of *prarabdha* is not felt, and the mind takes the form of *shuddha-sattva*, the original nature of universal knowledge freed from the relations of space, time and cause. The *jivanmukta* experiences his being the lord of all, the knower of all, the enjoyer of everything. The whole existence belongs to him; the entire universe is his body. He neither commands anybody, nor is he commanded by anybody. He is the absolute witness of his own glory, without terms to express it. He seems to simultaneously sink deep into and float on the ocean of the essence of being, with the feeling “I alone am”, or “I am all”. He breaks the boundaries of consciousness and steps into the bosom of Infinity. At times he seems to have a consciousness of relativity as a faint remembrance brought about by unfinished individualistic experience. He exclaims in joyous words:

“O, wonderful! O, wonderful! O, wonderful! I am food! I am food! I am food! I am a food-eater! I am a food-eater! I am a food-eater!... I am the first-born!... Earlier than gods, I am the root of immortality!... I, who am food, eat the eater of food! I have overcome the whole universe!” —Taitt. Up., III. 10. 6.

“He is the (real) Brahmana, who, having known this Imperishable, leaves this world” (Brih. Up., III. 8. 10). “He enjoys as the Lord of the universe.” He is the “Seer who sees no death, nor sickness, nor any distress, the Seer who sees only the All, and obtains the All entirely” (Chh. Up., VII. 26. 2). His enjoyment is in the Self, he sports with the Self, he has company of the Self, he has bliss in the Self, he is autonomous, he has limitless freedom in all the worlds. Everything proceeds for him from the Self. He has crossed the ocean of darkness.

“As the slough of a snake lies dead and cast off on an ant-hill, even so lies this body (of a *jivanmukta*). But this incorporeal, immortal Life-Principle is Brahman alone, the Light alone.” —Brih. Up., IV.4.7.

“He does not desire, he has no desire, he is freed from desire, his desire is satisfied, his desire is the Self” (Brih. Up., IV.4.6). “He is the greatest among the knowers of Brahman” (Mund. Up., II.1.4). “Him these two do not overpower—neither the thought ‘therefore I did wrong’, nor the thought ‘therefore I did right’. He overcomes them both. Neither what he has done, nor what he has not done does affect him.” “This eternal greatness of the Brahmana is not increased or decreased by actions.” “He sees the Self

in the Self and sees everything as the Self. Evil does not overcome him; on the other hand he overcomes all evil. Evil does not burn him; on the other hand he burns all evil” (Brih. Up., IV. 4. 22, 23).

The wise sage is silent and indifferent towards the play of life. No force on earth or in heaven can touch him. Even the gods can do nothing to him, for he is the Self of even the gods. He is the supreme master, the overlord of all. If he breathes, others shall breathe; if he stops breathing, others shall die. By his mere wish, mountains shall be shattered and oceans dry up. He is the God; none is superior to him. His wish is God’s wish and his being is God’s being.

“He who sees all beings in his very Self, and the Self in all beings—he is not averse to any thing. In whom, the wise one, all beings are just the Self, then what delusion, what sorrow is there for him, who sees Oneness (everywhere)?” —Isha Up., 6, 7.

The *jivanmukta* is in the extreme condition of *jnana*, the state of Self-absorption, non-related and Self-Identical. There is practically no difference between the highest *jivanmukti* and *videhamukti*, though in the former state the body is unconsciously made to linger on for a short time on account of the last failing momentum of the desires arisen in him

before the time of Self-Experience. For all matters concerning life, we need not make any distinction between the two conditions. The highest *jivanmukta* does not feel that he has any body. Hence, he is not in any way inferior to, or lower than, the *videhamukta*. The distinction is made, not by the *mukta*, but by the other ignorant people, who perceive the appearance or the disappearance of his body.

The Universe and the Liberated Self

Much has been said and written by speculative geniuses on the relation between the perfectly liberated soul and the universe. If liberation means the experience of the Infinite, the question of the liberated soul's relation to the universe is a puerile one. It is like speculating over the relation of the sky to the sky. It is stated by some that the liberated condition need not annihilate the perception of plurality. If we say that the Absolute can perceive plurality, we go against all sense and reason. Or, can we hold that the liberated soul retains individuality? In that case, the liberated soul would become non-eternal, for all that is individual is a part of the process of the universe. Further, what do we mean by plurality? Plurality is the intervention of non-being or space between things. Then we have to say that the

Absolute has internal differentiations and external relations, which would mar the indivisibleness and the secondlessness of the Absolute. No perception is possible without the intervention of non-being in undifferentiatedness. If the Self is the All, there cannot be non-Self in Self, and as long as there is perception of the non-Self, it cannot be the liberated state. Nor can we understand the argument that there can be any duty for the liberated soul. It is erroneous to believe that as long as all individuals are not liberated, no individual can have liberation. There is no intrinsic relation between the *karma* of one individual and of another, except in the sense that there is a mutually determining cosmic relationship of all individuals so long as they live in particularised states of consciousness. When there is destruction of thought, there is annihilation of all forms. Forms cannot exist when there is no differentiation among them, and the differentiation of forms is the work of the cognising consciousness. There cannot be objective cognition in the Absolute. It cannot be said that, because forms exist for others even though one individual may attain freedom, the freed soul can have objective dealings. There is no cogency in the statement that the liberated being can have any relation with any thing, for it transcends

the cosmic relationship of created entities which flow into one another as reciprocally determining forces. As long as there is relation, there is something external to the Self, and as long as there is experience of something other than the Self, there is no Absolute-Experience. The Absolute is not bound by the rules and regulations of the worlds and the thoughts of other individuals in any way. The fact that many others remain unliberated even when one soul is freed, does not compel the liberated one to have relations with others, for the simple reason that the liberated one is no other than the trans-cosmic Absolute. And, moreover, when the thinking process expires in the Absolute, there cannot be perception of other unredeemed individuals. We have no grounds to say that the form of the world exists after Self-realisation, for forms can exist only when existence is divided within itself. But this has no validity for the Absolute, which is *Existence* itself. Division creates individuality which is phenomenal.

So long as there is consciousness of the reality of an objective universe and the individuals, one cannot be said to be a liberated one, for he is, then, only another individual, however much superior he may be to others in the state of his consciousness. Liberation is experience of the highest Reality. He

who perceives that there are others and they are unliberated, cannot be a liberated soul himself, for the liberated is one with the Absolute which is extra-relational. A liberated one does not *think*. He merely *is*. There can be no compromise with self-limitation in liberation, however slight it may be.

The liberated soul becomes the All. Experience of Pure Being is the criterion of liberation. The liberated soul itself becomes the One Self of all; how, then, can it have the consciousness of limitation or of the act of redeeming the unliberated? And, how, again, can an unredeemed soul redeem another unredeemed soul? The human mind is always obsessed by the delusion of the social bond that connects different individuals. It cannot think except in terms of society, family, relations, etc., connected with the separatist ego. He who is concerned with the world is only a magnified family man and is not free from the sense of separateness characterising mortal nature. Even several cultured thinkers have been limited by a humanitarian view of life. Their philosophies are consequently tainted by humanistic and social considerations. They are not dispassionate in their trying to understand the deeper truths, and are deceived by an inordinate love for the human being. The infection has led them even up to the dangerous

point of attempting to argue that none can be liberated until social salvation is effected! This view is the outcome of the interference of materialism with spiritual absolutism. Man's vision is so narrow that he is concerned merely with things that he sees. He fails to take an integral view of the essence of existence as a whole, because of his experience and reason being limited to empirical reality. To the Absolute, the world is not a historical process, but *being*. To the ignorant individual *samsara* appears to be from eternity to eternity, an undivided super-rational appearance, though in the Absolute there is cessation of *samsara*. Since different individuals are in different stages of evolution, and as also there can be nothing to prevent the entering of the soul into the Absolute on the rise of Knowledge, there cannot be any such thing as social salvation or ending of the historical process of the universe.

If the Absolute does not have any external or internal relation to itself, the liberated one cannot have any such relation to the universe, because the distinction of the individual and the universe is negated in the Absolute. It is illogical to say, at the same time, that "Liberation means Absolute-Experience" and that "the liberated soul is concerned with the work of redeeming

others, and even on getting liberated, retains its individuality.” Relative activity and Absolute Being are not consistent with each other. If it is argued that both these are compatible, it is done at the expense of consistency. The Absolute has nothing second to it, and hence no desire and no action. Anything that falls short of the Absolute cannot be regarded as the state of Liberation. The *jiva* remains a centre of universal activity in the states of Virat, Hiranyagarbha and Ishvara, but not in Brahman. If what the Sruti says—“He does not return”—is true, there can be no reverting to individuality after Absolute-Experience. There cannot be action without consciousness of plurality, and plurality-consciousness is not the nature of the Absolute. All attempts to reconcile Reality with appearance, taking them as two realities, are based on a faith in the ultimate validity of empirical experience. We want to know the beyond without stepping over to the beyond from binding phenomena. We wish to plant our two legs in two ships moving in opposite directions, and then cross the ocean. We desire to know something absolutely without ourselves being that thing, an impossibility! The tendency of some of the modern thinkers to struggle to give a reality to objective experience and multiplicity-consciousness

even in the highest Reality is the effect of a failure to discriminate between the Real and the apparent and is due to an unwise attachment to phenomenal diversity. As long as philosophers are content to be mere dogmatic theorists, they can never succeed in determining the nature of Reality, or of bondage and liberation. It is but intellectual perversion that causes some to twist even the metaphysical truths to answer to the empirical demands of man. The fact that we see things is not the proof for their existence.

It is said that, because the individual is inseparable from its environment, the liberated soul has to work for the redemption of the other unliberated souls, if its own salvation is to be complete. This argument is, again, limited to the souls that are still in the cosmos, that move in the realms of Virat, Hiranyagarbha and Ishvara, but is irrelevant to *brahmanubhava*. It is wrong to think that the liberated soul has any external environment with which it may have relations. It is Infinitude itself. Further, each individual is restricted by its own *antahkarana*, the mode of objectified thinking, and hence, its world of experience cannot be identical with the worlds of others. Man is cheated by the notion that each individual has the same psychological background and constitution as the other, and that

the environment of one individual includes those of all other individuals, also. The environment of one is different from that of the other, and, therefore, the liberation of one individual does not have any relation to the states of other individuals. If everyone is to think alike, there would be no diversity of living beings and there would be a wholesale salvation of the universe. If individuals think differently, one cannot have an intrinsic relation to the other. No doubt, everything is comprehended in the Absolute, and so each individual, as long as it exists as such, influences the universe by its existence and active individualistic consciousness, and vice versa, since there is a real Unity behind all individuals. But this mutual interaction is secondary, and does not affect the primary factor of liberation. Moreover, we have no right to give independent realities to the subject and the object, for all plurality is like a dream in the Universal Consciousness, and to it there can be no question of the existence of unredeemed souls or an objective reality. Bondage is in each individual separately and not in the universal unity. In any case, the problem of the redemption of the unredeemed souls by the liberated one does not arise. There is no wrong to be set aright, no error to be converted, no ugliness to be banished from

life, except with reference to one's own self. When the self is purified, the Absolute Truth is revealed in it, and in its infinite knowledge it can set right the universe by its very existence, or consciousness of perfection. There is no ultimate relation amongst the imaginary environments of different individuals, even if they interpenetrate one another. They have a transcendental oneness, and an empirical phenomenality.

There is also an attempt made by some to argue that unworldliness is not the essence of any true philosophy, and that the Upanishads do not teach unworldliness. This view is the outcome of the failure of the arbitrary reason unaided by experience to determine the nature of Reality. There is a desire in the human being to maintain the same worldly relationship even in the state of final Liberation. Whatever we experience empirically seems to be a hard fact, the reality of which we do not want to deny. The individual's attachment to the body and society is so intense that to break away from it does not seem to be desirable. If unworldliness means repudiation of the separative forms of experience and individual relationship, liberation is really unworldly. The Absolute is unworldly in the sense that it has not, as the world has, distinctions of space,

time and individuality, or name, form and action. Liberation is the possession and experience of unlimited, undivided consciousness of the Bhuma, or the plenitude of existence.

There cannot also be any question in regard to the position of power, rulership, and the like, in the state of the highest liberation. These are all relative notions of individuals. The Ultimate Reality is the Absolute, which is non-dual and, therefore, there is no scope for the operation of an objective power in it. The Absolute itself is Power, not merely an exerciser of power. Power is a separative factor, a means to create duality, which is nullified in the Absolute. The truly liberated one does not feel that he is the lord of anyone else, which notion involves distinction in existence, but he has the Eternal Experience of the Essence of Infinity.

Absolute Liberation is Transcendent Experience, beyond conception and expression, free from the differentiations of knower, knowledge and known. It is the Conscious Experience of absolute "Be"-ness, which is the Great Reality.

“By knowing Him alone one goes to That which is beyond death. By knowing the Supreme Being, the wise one casts off both joy and sorrow. They who see Him, the Self-Existent— they, and no others, have eternal peace. Of him, whose desires are completely satisfied, who is totally perfected, all desires dissolve themselves here itself. The liberated one becomes onefold, threefold, fivefold, sevenfold, ninefold, elevenfold, hundred-and-elevenfold, twenty-thousandfold! He goes to the other shore of darkness. That state is ever illumined, it is always day there. Time, age and death, sorrow, merit and demerit do not go there. Fearless is the state of the Bliss of Brahman. Even the gods fear him, even Indra and Prajapati cannot obstruct him— he becomes the Self-Emperor. The knot of the heart is broken, all doubts are rent asunder, and all actions perish, when That is seen, which is the Highest and the Deepest. His vital-spirits do not depart, they are gathered up, here itself. Being Brahman already, he becomes Brahman Itself.

—SWAMI KRISHNANANDA



A DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY PUBLICATION