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## **MOKṢA: A STUDY OF ŚAṆKARĀCĀRYA'S UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION**

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**Abstract:** In this research paper I'll try to elucidate and examine the uniqueness of the philosophical concept of Mokṣa as described by Adi Śaṅkarācārya, according to whom, the knowledge of Brahman (Brahmanjñāna) is the Summum bonum or Parama-puruṣārtha or Mokṣa of human life. Indian thinkers allocated all the desires of human life into four categories, called puruṣārtha that are essential to lead a happy life. Out of four puruṣārthas, Artha, Kāma and Dharma support us to attain the ultimate goal, i.e., Mokṣa. Most of the Indian philosophical systems accept the self or Ātman as part of Brahman is eternal, pure and free, but due to nescience, the self identifies itself with its body and tolerates various sufferings, and Mokṣa is the goal of life, i.e., end of the death and rebirth cycle, and each and every individual can conquer ignorance and reach total freedom. Thus, Mokṣa or emancipation is regarded as the highest value or basic ends of individual life. Like other Indian philosophical schools, Śaṅkarācārya, also states Avidyā, or ignorance as the reason of all griefs and miseries. Śaṅkarācārya claims that Brahman is only one reality and Mokṣa is realization of Brahman, as in realizing Brahman, he says, jīva or human beings can escape the endless cycle of birth and rebirth.

**Key words:** Puruṣārtha, emancipation, Brahman, Jīva, avidyā, jīvan-mukti.

### **Introduction:**

Puruṣārthas posit human's fourfold purposes reflecting the appropriate synthesis of material and spiritual values of Indian ethos and recognizing the practical ultimate truth.<sup>1</sup> These four Puruṣārthas are, viz; Dharma, Artha- Kāma and Mokṣa, out of these Mokṣa is regarded as the final goal of human life. Puruṣārtha is a significant concept of traditional Indian Philosophy. Out of four Puruṣārtha, Mokṣa is regarded as the ultimate aim of life. Etymological meaning of "Puruṣārtha" is the final end of life that signifies the actual being of humans. But all the ways of taking Puruṣārtha in context, do not satisfy what it demands because the concept of Puruṣārtha means the spiritual and religious as well as moral goal of life which is nothing but an assembly of endeavouring, craving, ambition and achievement of the maximum good of human life as a spiritual and material being. But all the possible standpoints of treating Puruṣārtha emanate to the fulfilment of either mental or physical prosperity.<sup>2</sup> If we want to search its origin we will find that

“the Sanskrit composite term ‘Puruṣārtha’ is made up of the words “puruṣa” and “artha,” here “puruṣa” refers to the “human being,” “Soul,” or “spirit” and the word “artha” denotes to both prosperity or value and purpose or aim. Etymologically, the word “Puruṣārtha” means to the aim or purpose in life.<sup>3</sup> In Indian schools of thought, Mokṣa is regarded as the highest value on recognizing which nothing remains to be realized. It is the end of birth and death and there by all kinds of pain and at the same time, it is the realization of one's self.<sup>4</sup> ‘Mokṣa’ is concerned in Indian culture and heritage with the spiritual and the moral life of jīva, where spirituality leads to a way of life concerned with the ultimate purpose of jīva which is the realization of their own true nature or identifies with the Absolute. Indian spirituality is extremely rooted in the ancient philosophical and holy ethnicities of the land.

Indian philosophy originated as a pursuit into the mystery of Jīva or individual life and existence. The Vedas occupy an important place in Indian philosophy. The root of most of the Indian philosophical system can be traced to the Vedas,<sup>5</sup> which teaches divine monism and mysticism, which expresses the spirit of fraternity and friendship in the entire society. Ancient philosophers try to know all those things that thoroughly and remotely concern man. The chief purpose of Indian philosophy is to guide us on how to achieve true knowledge of reality and thereby attain Mokṣa or liberation from misery in this life. It is a real fact that all philosophers of diverse systems of philosophy, Indian as well as Western, both have been challenged with the problems of reality. In the early ages, starting from the period of ancient philosophers from the philosophy of Democritus, Heraclitus, Plato, Aristotle up to the period of contemporary philosophers, the thinking process has been focused in search of reality, the ultimate underlying principle. A little philosophical reflection displays that search for reality is the inner craving of humans.<sup>6</sup> Both traditions, i.e., in the Indian as well as in Western philosophies address queries about the presence of a transcendent or divine reality, the limits of human knowledge, the

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1. Singh, S. (2013). Ancient Indian Ethos and Mindfulness. *Puruṣārtha: A Journal of Spirituality, Ethics, and Management*, 6(2), p. 36-52.
  2. Prasād, R. (2008), A conceptual –analytic study of classical Indian Philosophy of Morals, New Delhi: Jointly published by Centre for Studies in Civilization and Concept Pub. Co. for the Project of History of Indian Science, Philosophy, and Culture. P.125.
  3. M, Hiriyānnā (2000), *Philosophy of Values*, in *Indian Philosophy: Theory of value* (Editor: Roy Perrett), Routledge, ISBN 978- 0-8153-3612-9, pp.1-10.
  4. Karnik, Vaishali Sunil, (2012). *Concept of Mokṣa*. Delhi: Bharatiya Kala Prakashan.
  5. Sharma, Ram Nath. (1972), "Indian Philosophy", New Delhi: Orient Longman LTD, P.3.

Nature of the self, the source of morality, goal of human life, i.e., to attain liberation. Though, these methods each tradition pays to address these issues contrast greatly, but almost all different

philosophies accept that with the help of true knowledge of reality, and insight; jīvas or human beings will be able to reach our ultimate goal.

Indian philosophical thoughts recommend the view that jīva are part of God or identical with Divine and the final goal of every jīva is to realize its divine nature. The early tradition of Veda dictates that the individual life is the chance for divine development endorsed to attain the final Aim of realizing only the central fact about truth of oneself, that is the realization, ‘Aham Brahmāsmi,’<sup>7</sup> i.e., I am the Everlasting One to attain a state of self-realization, here the ‘self’ is indistinctly identical and one with the Brahman, the Divine. This state of realization is the ultimate liberation of the human soul, which is also commonly known as emancipation or Mokṣa. The quest of Mokṣa contains self-realization, self-examination, self-exploration, and to cultivate spirituality. It needs all jīvas to observe beyond the outside world and turn innermost to discover the depths of their self-consciousness. By exploring into the real nature of their self, human beings (jīvas) seek to cognize their indispensable divinity and the fundamental unity of existence. Thus, it comes to know that Indian philosophy is different from Western philosophy in both theoretical and practical aspects, which emerged for the fulfilment of the ultimate purpose of Jīva or human life.

India has successfully upheld its reputation of being a pioneer in spiritual emancipation, but today, due to the contribution of science and applied-technology, Indian society is moving ahead, development which advances materialism a lot. But it is a matter of concern that when humans become irrational, then all the means, systems and ideals are destroyed. The search of Mokṣa is entrenched in the indulgence that man’s meaningful presence is noticeable by sorrow and the transitory nature of the material world. From the Indian sages of ancient times, till contemporary Indian thinkers think that philosophy is a vital and practical element essential to lead an optimized life.

The present situation of India necessitates today is not a theoretical philosophy but a philosophy with a pragmatic approach to life. Though it is true that negativity and sufferings have become a part of human life, they do not create an integral part of our life dominion of truth which is also precise-ness.<sup>8</sup> Indian philosophies are completely constructive about the ultimate goal of human life. Thus, all philosophical systems aim at liberation, which is not an escape from or an end of life. Therefore, philosophy has to be clarified in terms of how it serves the purpose of living for individuals for peaceful social life. So, discussion on Mokṣa or emancipation is very much needed in the present era.

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6. Satapathy, Rasmita, (2020) “Concept of Reality in Advaita Vedanta with special reference to Western Philosophy.” International Journal of Research Culture Society, p. 12 -13.

7. Dalal, N. (2009), *Contemplative Practice and Textual Agency in Advaita Vedānta. Method & Theory in the Study of Religion*, MTSR 21, p.15–27.
8. Radhakrishnan, S. (1923), *Indian Philosophy*, London: George Allen & Unwin LTD, Vol – 1, p.50.

**Material and Methods:**

The research is strongly based on reliable scriptures, the primary writings, such as Śaṅkarācārya's interpretations on the Upaniṣads will serve as the primary sources for comprehending the various philosophers' perspectives on Mokṣa, other realisable books and book-chapters, academic articles, and discussion in magazines, this study provides a conceptual examination of emancipation. It is based on references from innovative literature, academic journals, books and well-known publications on this topic. It has been thoughtfully explored to suggest why is emancipation very much needed in the present era with special reference with Śaṅkarācārya's notion of Mokṣa.

**Mokṣa in Indian Philosophy:**

The term “Mokṣa” in Indian culture, is meant to become free from ego, from the restrictions of “I” from “Mine”, arriving into the lifecycle of soul where all distinctions merge into extensive identity. In different language, e.g., Sanskrit and Hindi language, Pāli, Sri Lankā language, Telugu and Tāmil etc., liberation is known as differently, viz; Moksha, Mokṣa, Mukti Vimukti, Vimochana, Vimokkha or Vimukthi etc., these terms express the same understanding and meaning, which are deliverance, emancipation, freedom, liberty, release.<sup>9</sup> Some other terms are found to indicate emancipation, viz; Apavargaha, Turīya, Kaivalya, Mokṣa, Mukti, Nirvāna and Nihśreyasa. It is believed in the reality of the soul in Indian culture and heritage Mokṣa is concerned with the moral and spiritual life of mankind. The term “Mokṣa” means freedom from the cycle of life and death, and in this stage complete freedom may be achieved. Only Cārvāka rejects the view and announced “liberation in the sense of complete cessation of sufferings can only mean death (Maraṇam eva apavargah – Bṛhaspati Sūtra).”<sup>10</sup> Indian systems of philosophy, except the Cārvaka philosophy, all have recognized Mokṣa as ‘Param-Puruṣārtha,’ for this reason, it is sometimes described as the ‘Mokṣa-scripture.’ The concept of Mokṣa is necessarily connected with some questions such as what does Mokṣa mean? How is Mokṣa to be attained? Philosophers have shared many different opinions and explanations toward solving the above questions in their own ways. If liberation be the Supreme Ideal how is it to be realised and with what means? How is Śaṅkarācārya's Advaita Vedānta different from those of the other philosophical schools? Let us critically discuss on Śaṅkarācārya's notion of Mokṣa. The outcomes of this study will provide a profound understanding of Mokṣa and its worth in Indian spiritual philosophy.

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**Mokṣa in Advaita Vedānta:**

Śaṅkarcārya (788 – 820 A. D.), preceptor and propagator of Non- Dualistic School of Advaita Vedānta, who see that Ultimate Reality as the only reality without a second (ekam evādvītiyam-Chāndogya. Upaniṣad VI-21) and all other things as neither identical with, nor

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9. Chatterjee S., and Dutta D., (1939), An introduction to Indian Philosophy, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt, Delhi. P. 63.

10. James Hastings, (1955) Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics (ed.), Volume VI, Fiction-Hyksos, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, p. 770.

separate from, that one reality. Śaṅkara follows the monism embeds in Prasthānatrayi, viz, the Upaniṣads, the Brahmasūtras and the Bhagavad Gitā. His acclaimed book Śaṅkarabhāṣya is a discourse on some sūktas of Upaniṣads that have philosophical glory. By his light of spiritual thoughts, we can express Śaṅkara's realization of emancipation through his Advaita philosophy, which is considered as a way of spiritual life. Its goal is to assist mankind to resolve the existential complications of worldly-life, transform our limitations by making capability to go beyond misery and thereby achieve ultimate fulfilment and harmony by realizing that Brahman is the only reality and as, we are all Brahman; we are all free. He melts successfully the deterrent thoughts of reality as expressed in all other Indian philosophy by upholding that the world is an appearance of one indistinguishable truth, i.e., Brahman. So, main teachings of Śaṅkara philosophy, that can be summed up as

"Brahma Satyam Jagan Mithyā Jīvo Brahmaiva Nā parah,"<sup>11</sup> i.e., Brahman single reality; the material world is unreal and the jīva is not other than Brahman. Śaṅkara Kevalādvaitavāda highlights the monistic nature of reality and the understanding of individual's identity with Brahman as the pathway to Mokṣa and declares that Brahman is the only reality and everything is just name and form. Śaṅkara states that "Brahman is the only ontological reality (Ekameva hiparamārthasatyaṁ brahma- Śaṅkara-bhāṣya, Taittirīya Upaniṣad, ii.6)."<sup>12</sup> "Brahmabhāvaśca Mokṣah- Śaṅkara Bhāṣya on Brahma Sūtra:, i.1.4). It is not only a state of the cessation of sufferings but also a positive<sup>13</sup> state of the attainment of Brahman in which there is a full realisation of Brahman's Pure Existence, Consciousness and Bliss.<sup>14</sup> Mokṣa is described as an absolute, change-less everlasting, all-pervading like space, devoid of all alterations, ever content, part less, self-luminous by nature, it is a state in which exist neither good or evil, nor their effects, it is neither past, present, nor future. As such, it is not dissimilar from the supreme Reality, i.e., "Brahman. (idam tu pāramārthikam, kūṭastha-nityam, vyomavat sarva-vyāpi sarvavikriyā- rahitam nitya-tṛptaṁ niravayam svayam-jyotiḥ -svabhāvam / yatra dharmādharmau saha kāryeṇa kāla-trayaṁ ca nopāvartate / tad etad aśarīratvaṁ mokṣākyaṁ / ... atas tad brahma yasyeyaṁ jijñāsā prastutā (Brahmasūtra with Śaṅkarabhāṣya 1.1.4, p. 14)." So, it is true fact as Śaṅkara states us that "liberation simply is Brahman (brahma-bhāvaś ca mokṣah- Brahmasūtra with

Śaṅkarabhāṣya, 1.1.4).<sup>15</sup> The Ātman is Brahman (Ātmān ca brahman, SBS, i.1.1.). The real nature of jīva, for Śaṅkara, Brahman, which is self-luminous. (SBS, i.3.22.), indistinguishable from Brahman.

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11. Grimes, John., (2004), “The Vivekacūḍāmaṇi of Śaṅkarācārya Bhagavatpāda: An Introduction and Translation”, Motilal Banarsidass, p. 183- 194.
12. Sinha, Jadunath. (1999) "Indian Philosophy", Deihi, Motilal Banarsidass Private Limited, Vol-II, p. 495 – 496.
13. Swami, Madhavananda. (1983), Vedānta Paribhāṣa (Translation), Advaita Ashram, Calcutta Vedānta Paribhāṣa, p.197.
14. Narain, K. (2003) ” The fundamentals of Advaita Vedanta", Varanasi: Indological Research Centre, p. 261.
15. Brahmasūtra with Śaṅkarabhāṣya (1985), Works of Śaṅkara in Original Sanskrit, vol. 3. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Private Limited, p. 17.

In Buddhism, liberation is called ‘Nirvāṇa’, which is the final end of Buddha’s philosophy. In Buddhism, Nibbāna (Nirvāṇa), a derivative, means ‘to become extinguished, to cease blowing.’ It holds total devastation of life satisfying faculties of mind such as greed, hate misapprehension, cessation of miseries, and clinging to existence. When the Nibbāna is attained one discontinuities the endless birth - death cycle and totally stops future rebirth, old age, sickness and death.<sup>16</sup> Śaṅkara also admits this view of Mokṣa, i.e., Brahmanirvāṇa (Śaṅkarabhāṣya, ii. 72.). But the problem may arise here: If Brahman is all, divinity is the essential nature of Jīva, why then, liberation is needed?

The above objection rests upon a misperception among reality, i.e., eternal and temporal. This difference of Ātman and Brahman is only a misconception as at the highest level of reality both of them are identical. So, Mokṣa is achieved by realizing the identity of Ātman and Brahman, the complete understanding of one's real nature as Brahman in this life. This is often stated by Śaṅkarācārya, as:

“I am other than name, form and action.  
My nature is ever free!  
I am Self, the supreme unconditioned Brahman.  
I am pure Awareness, always non-dual.”  
(— Adi Śaṅkarācārya, Upadeśasāhasrī 11.7.)



Hence, Liberation is self-realization or knowledge of the soul. It is a fundamental tenet of Advaita Vedānta Darśana that essentially the jīva is Brahman and not different from it, so, there is no question of any relation between them. But in real life the relation between jīva and Brahman acquires significance. Śaṅkara discusses the problems and came to the conclusion that the relation of 'whole' and 'part' is found between Brahman and jīva, but this problem only from the practical (vyāvahārika) perspective, as the self identifies itself with the body-mind complex due to Avidyā or nescience which is known as Māyā. This kind of identification is called bondage, and this identification is detached by right knowledge of Brahman (Brahman Jñāna).<sup>17</sup>

### **A comparative study on Mokṣa:**

In Sāṅkhya system, Jīva's bondage is unconsciousness (ajñāna). Puruṣa's essence is consciousness, but it is not blissful consciousness (ānandasvarūpa), as Śaṅkarācārya thinks. Sāṅkhya Puruṣa is the pure subject, uncaused, all-pervading, silent witness, the emancipated, self-luminous and self-proved. Due to ignorance Puruṣa becomes jñātā, kartā and bhoktā, as a consequence, jīvas are plagued by three types of miseries, viz, ādhyātmikaduḥkha, ādhibhautikaduḥkha and ādhidaivikaduḥkha. Through Vivekajñāna, i.e., the differential

16. Nyanatiloka. (1988), *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines*. (Nyanaponika, Trans.) Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, p. 201.

17. Sinha, Jadunath. (1999), "Indian Philosophy", Deihi,: Motilal Banarsidass Private Limited, Vol.II Page- 495-496.

Knowledge between Puruṣa (self) and Prakṛiti (not self), the jīvas get rid of these sorrows or pains. In Sāṅkhya philosophical system liberation is described as the entire end of all sorrows. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas system elucidates the knowledge of realities for the realization of the chief good or the final goal of jīva. The consciousness is a non-eternal and accidental attribute of the self, at the time the self is connected with the mind, mind is connected with the senses which are related with the external objects, then consciousness originates in the self. Due to ignorance (Ajñāna) jīvas feel several types of suffering and when the true knowledge of the sixteen categories (tattvajñāna) is drawn, jīva can reach liberation. The later Naiyāyikas, though, hold that emancipation is the soul's ultimate release from agony and achievement of endless bliss.<sup>18</sup> In Buddhist philosophy, like the view of William James, self-admitted as being the flow of consciousness. Consciousness is an eternal process resulting from the relation of antecedent and subsequent between various movements, so, there is no permanent unchanging, immutable self.<sup>19</sup> Śaṅkarācārya, Like Rāmānuja criticize the Buddhist doctrine of impalement empirical self. The Ātman is of the nature of un-difference consciousness (nirviśeṣacaitanya) that reveals the empirical self or jīva. It is subject-objectless universal consciousness. Like Descartes, Śaṅkarācārya says, I can deny

everything, including my own body, but I cannot deny my own existence. Descartes claims that I think, therefore, my spiritual self (Ātman) exists. If my simple body or senses are insentient by nature, I would not conclude that myself exists.' If, on the contrary, 'I' means the 'jīvātman', the individual self, whose presence is the cause of minds thinking, etc., then the inference of thinking substance is reasonable. Therefore, by 'I am fat' I should not mean 'the soul is fat;' as the soul is not a bhoktā of pain and pleasure. Therefore, by 'I am happy' I should mean neither 'my body is happy,' nor 'my soul is happy'. But unlike Descartes he says further that the individual is a potential Brahman. In Advaita Vedānta, in absolute souls, Śāṅkarācārya, however, rejects the idea that there are innumerable souls, because if he accepts it he would have to accept that there are innumerable Brahman. Since the idea of innumerable Brahman is ridiculous, the idea of each individual soul becoming a separate Brahman is also ridiculous. However, he suggests that the different individual souls can become the same Brahman. Just as the different parts of a space contained in pots, houses, etc., become one when their limiting adjuncts are removed, so also the different individual souls become one Brahman when their limiting adjuncts like body, sense, etc., are destroyed. This only means that every individual soul is essentially Brahman. To substantiate his position Śāṅkarācārya quotes Upaniṣadic texts like 'Tat tvam asi'(Chāndogya Upaniṣad-6.8.7.), (That you are), 'Aham Brahmāsmi' "so aham ātmā" (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad- 1.4.10.) (I am Brahman), etc. Brahman is Sat (reality), Cit (consciousness) and Ānanda (bliss). Our consciousness can be witnessed in various states, such as waking, dreaming, deep sleep and mystic intuition. But the underlying consciousness is the same. Since the bodily or mental states do not change the real quality of consciousness, it is called Sat. The Sat-Cit in its original state is pure bliss (Ānanda) and that aspect is temporarily obscured in its earthly existence. According to Śāṅkarācārya, liberation is the realization of oneness, i.e., self-identity with Brahman, the infinite of consciousness, it is called Sat. The Sat-Cit in its original state is pure bliss (Ānanda) and that aspect is temporarily obscured in its called Sat. The Sat-Cit in its original state is pure bliss (Ānanda) and that aspect is temporarily obscured in its earthly existence. According to Śāṅkarācārya, liberation is the realization of oneness, i.e., self-identity

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18. Hiriyanna. M, (2014) Outlines of Indian Philosophy, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited.

19.Sharma, Ram Nath.( 1972), "Indian Philosophy", New Delhi,: Orient Longman LTD, p. 154-155.

with Brahman, the infinite of consciousness, it is called Sat. The Sat-Cit in its original state is pure bliss (Ānanda) and that aspect is temporarily obscured in its earthly existence. According to Śāṅkarācārya, liberation is the realization of one's own self, one's identity with Brahman, the infinite self, not a state that one can achieve. Understanding what has always been a part of one's character and is currently being forgotten.<sup>20</sup> Empirical studies from the Indian as well as Western



context indicate that self is eternal and free but due to ignorance liberation of soul is needed. In the book *A Comparative Study of the Concept of Liberation in Indian Philosophy*,<sup>21</sup> it is described that Mokṣa is the realization of non-difference from Brahman. The liberation of the Ātman consists in apprehending the fact that it is one and non-different from Brahman, the ultimate reality beyond space, time and causation. Śāṅkar's Mokṣa is a matter of direct realization of something existent from eternity, though it is hidden from our view when the limitations are removed the soul is liberated.

According to Śāṅkara, Karma and Bhakti are means to Jñāna, which leads to Mokṣa. S. Radhakrishnan claims that Mokṣa is the straight realization of something that has existed from the beginning of time but has been hidden from our view. The soul can only be freed by removing all of the restrictions. The first principle of all things remains where it is, what it is, and has always been. It's the only and final blessing that this world can't give or take away peace.<sup>22</sup>

The knower of Brahman, as the Upaniṣad contends, becomes Brahman itself. Śāṅkara taught people that the goal of human existence is self-realization, and the means of reaching this goal. In Advaita Vedānta Avidyā (ignorance) is responsible for all our suffering like other systems of Indian Philosophy, but unlike other systems it affirms that all are Brahman. It means that the ultimate reality is Brahman, on which the world appears through Avidyā till jīva is in bondage. For Śāṅkara, the world appearance is the formation of Īśvara and wrongly the Jīva considered himself as agent as well as enjoyer due to Avidyā. The self-realisation may occur any time in this life, (jīvan-mukti), or after this life, (videha-mukti) of an aspirant. As such an incident the released soul may either shake off his physical body or retain it for achieving an assignment for the spiritual profit of humankind. Such liberated souls may remain to retain their<sup>23</sup> (Brama-sūtra- Śāṅkara – bhāṣya on sūtra, 3,2,21) bodies, or may move on to other bodies like a jātismāra with full freedom. So, we find that liberation is possible in this life as there are two types of mukti, viz; jīvanmukti and videhamukti. The person who has obtained videhamukti will not be born again. Therefore, videhamukti is actual liberation. Some other Indian philosophical systems also believe in jīvanmukti, such as the Jainas, Buddhist and Sāṅkhya philosophers believe in jīvanmukti. According to Jainism, liberation is possible in the life stage, and those who have achieved liberation in their life, are called Tirthankar or

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20. Hiriyanna, M. (2014), *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, p. 378.

21. Lad, Kumar Ashok (1967), *A Comparative Study of the Concept of Liberation in Indian Philosophy*, Burhanpur: Girdhar Keshavdas.

22. Radhakrishnan, Dr. Sarvepalli, (2008), Indian Philosophy, Oxford University Press, Vol. 2, p. 636.
23. Narain. K. (2003), The fundamentals of Advaita Vedanta, Varanasi: Indological Research Centre, p. 262- 274.

Kevaljñāni. According to Buddhism, liberation is possible in this life to obtain liberation. In the third Noble Truth of Buddhism, we find the concept of Nirvāṇa, which can be attained in this life by a human being. If we are able to stop the movement of the bhavacakra, then we can obtain Nirvāṇa. According to Buddhism, no craving remains in the self after liberation and as a result there remains no suffering. This total extinction suffering is called Mokṣa or Nirvāṇa or liberation.<sup>24</sup>

The knowledge of Brahman is the summum bonum or Parama- puruṣārtha or Mokṣa of life, for this reason Śaṅkara recommends sādāna catuṣṭaya to attain Mokṣa, viz; (i) the discrimination (viveka) between the eternal (nitya) and the transient (anitya) items of experience; (ii) unconcern towards the enjoyment of fruits of action here in present world and in heaven after death; (iii) achievement of means of discipline such as calmness, mental control etc.; (iv) a strong craving for liberation. Śaṅkara argues that the liberated person has no more perception of duality. Jīva who is living while liberated in this world is called jīvanmukti. For Śaṅkara, because of Avidyā, we separate us from Brahman. Jīva is apparently composed of the body and the soul, but the body has merely an illusory appearance. Real knowledge, i.e., Brahmajñāna is called Vidyā, leads us to endless happiness that is Mokṣa or liberation.

For Rāmānuja, the disembodied release, i.e., videhamukti is the only kind of liberation. But Śaṅkara declares that Mokṣa is possible here, in this life. A very significant question regarding the nature of Mokṣa often enquired by the challengers of Vedānta: Is the state of Mokṣa a positive or is it purely negative? Śaṅkara believes that emancipation does not mean the nonexistence of pain, it is the state of Brahman, so the state of Mokṣa is a positive, and never negative, it is state of knowledge and bliss. In the time of liberation, the individual self (jiva) is eternally liberated and identical with the absolute Brahman.

### **Results:**

From the study, we get the following the nature of Mokṣa as described by Śaṅkara.

- “(a) Mokṣa is release of Avidyā (Avidyanivṛttirāiv mokṣa.)  
(b) Mokṣa is realization of Brahman (Brahmabhavseha mokṣa), and  
(c) Mokṣa is ever freedom from bodies (Nityaśariratvam mokṣaṇyam).” Avidyā disappears with vidyā or Jñāna, in the stage of mokṣa.

We also find out that ‘Mokṣa’ as described by Śaṅkara, has some speciality that makes this notion different and unique from other philosophical systems, these are as follow:

- (i) **Emancipation is removal of nescience** (avidyā- nivṛtti). The self is associated with the body due to nescience, which is known as bondage. The soul is established in its real nature during liberation it necessarily means that the soul exhibits itself just as it truly without obtaining.

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24. Tigunait, Pandit Rajmani.(1983), Seven systems of Indian Philosophy, Himalayan Institute, P.42.

- (ii) **Liberation is nothing else than becoming one with Brahman.** We observe the definition of emancipation is equal to the definition of Brahman. It means, the liberated soul exists in a state of homogeneous identification with Brahman.

- (iii) **Mokṣa is jñāna.** This content of jñāna is a total understanding of who and what one is, and how the phenomenal world really exists. In this sense Mokṣa is realizing the true nature of the Self (Ātman), which is identical with the ground of the universe (Brahman)<sup>25</sup>

- (iv) **Mokṣa does not deny relativity** (āpekṣika) of the phenomenal world. We also observe that the world has relative (āpekṣika) reality, empirical, or pragmatic reality, and the world must be admitted to be real, and it must be regarded to be an essential medium for the – self-manifestation of Ātman. Jīva’s spatial-temporal life is only a way for the understanding of the higher spiritual life.<sup>26</sup>

- (v) **Liberation is a state of being.** This aspect of Mokṣa recommends that with the knowledge of Mokṣa, how jīvas existence is affected. Śaṅkara claims that the existence of the embodied soul is only apparent and it is the product of nescience, but actually the soul is nothing but Brahman (jīvo brahmaiva nāparah). So, liberation is neither the production of anything new, nor the purification of any old state; it is always there.<sup>27</sup>

- (vi) **Liberation means establishment of a real blissful nature of self**, i.e., transcendental (pāramārthika) nature, which is Pure Existence, Consciousness and Blissful Infinity.

- (vii) **It is observed Śaṅkara notion of jīvanmukta man is a man of universal love.** In him there is no trace of self-centeredness. His love is truly other-centered. The love people have for each other in phenomenal living is often not true love. The Philosophy of Emancipation (Mokṣa) as the

ultimate and supreme ideal of human life has probably found no greater exponent in the whole of Indian Philosophy than Śaṅkarācārya, the founder of Advaita Vedānta.<sup>28</sup>

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25. Loy, D. (1988). *The Path of No-Path: Sankara and Dogen on the Paradox of Practice*, Philosophy East and West, p. 129.

26. Devaraja, N. K. (1972), *An Introduction to Sankara's Theory of Knowledge*, Delhi, India: Motilal Banarsidass, p. 34.

27. Chatterjee, S. and Datta, D. (2016), *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, Delhi, India: Motilal Banarsidass, p.409.

28. Narain. K.( 2003), "The fundamentals of Advaita Vedānta", Varanasi: Indological Research Centre, p.261.

### **Conclusion:**

From the above discussion and observation, we come to the conclusion that Śaṅkara's conception of emancipation is assumed as it is achieved by recognizing our personal self. Thus, when the individual self identifies himself with Brahman and apprehends the intrinsic transcendental nature, attend liberation. So, Mokṣa means nothing other than becoming one with Brahman. Shankara's philosophy emphasizes the non-dual nature of reality and the realization of one's identity with Brahman is not only as the path to attain liberation, but it is the state of liberation. He contributed so immensely by his monistic philosophy, when Vedic wisdom was almost eclipsed by the rise and the glory of such non-vedic systems as Jainism and Buddhism as jīvanmukta man. I think that in his philosophy of Advaita Vedānta; Śaṅkarā highlights Brahman's non-dual nature and realizing oneself as Brahman as Mokṣa. Śaṅkara noted that since the individual is non-dual Brahman in essence, the individual is already what they seek to be—unlimited, whole, and complete. The challenge, though, is that one's felt self of finite identity is at odds with non- duality, and creates a structured sense of distance between the person and Brahman. Mokṣa is recognition of reality as it is. Its deceptive assumption tempts one to seek action with intent to become or attain Brahman, but what is 'already' is 'attained' is continuously disguised by some effort. Śaṅkarācārya declares that self-realisation may occur anytime in the life of an aspirant, even in this very life. As liberation is not a product (utpādyā). The self (Ātman) is all-pervading, therefore; its liberation is forever extant in it. When the Jīva or the empirical self becomes one with Brahman, it gets knowledge of Brahman, it is freed from its individuality and finitude and realizes its essential Satchidānanda nature.