मोक्ष

Contents

Hindi

Etymology

Borrowed from Sanskrit मोक्ष (mokṣa).

Pronunciation

- IPA^(key): /moːkʃ(ə)/

Noun

मोक्ष • (mokṣ) _m_

1. (*Jainism*, *Hinduism*) moksha (liberation from the cycle of reincarnation)

Sanskrit

Etymology

From the root मोक्ष् (√mokṣ, "to free one's self, loosen, liberate") (verb मोक्षते (mokṣate)).

Noun

मोक्ष • (mokṣa) _m_

1. (*Jainism*, *Hinduism*) emancipation, liberation, release from; moksha
2. release from worldly existence or transmigration, final or eternal emancipation.
3. death.
4. Name of particular sacred hymns conducive to final emancipation.

5. (*astronomy*) the liberation of an eclipsed or occulted planet, the last contact or separation of the eclipsed and eclipsing bodies, end of an eclipse.
6. falling off or down. (compare गर्भ-)
7. effusion.
8. setting free, deliverance (of a prisoner).
9. loosing, untying (hair).
10. settling (a question).
11. acquittance of an obligation, discharge of a debt (compare ऋण-)
12. shedding or causing to flow (tears, blood etc.).
13. casting, shooting, hurling.
14. strewing, scattering.
15. utterance (of a curse).
16. relinquishment, abandonment.
17. Name of the Divine mountain मेरु.
18. *Schrebera swietenioides L.*

Descendants

- Tamil: மோட்சம் (mōṭcam)

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Moksha

Moksha (/ˈmoʊkʃə/; Sanskrit: मोक्ष, *mokṣa*), also called **vimoksha, vimukti** and **mukti**,[1] is a term in Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism which refers to various forms of emancipation, enlightenment, liberation, and release.[2] In its soteriological and eschatological senses, it refers to freedom from *saṃsāra*, the cycle of death and rebirth.[3] In its epistemological and psychological senses, *moksha* refers to freedom from ignorance: self-realization, self-actualization and self-knowledge.[4]

In Hindu traditions, *moksha* is a central concept[5] and the utmost aim to be attained through three paths during human life; these three paths are *dharma* (virtuous, proper, moral life), *artha* (material prosperity, income security, means of life), and *kama* (pleasure, sensuality, emotional fulfillment).[6] Together, these four concepts are called Puruṣārtha in Hinduism.[7]

In some schools of Indian religions, *moksha* is considered equivalent to and used interchangeably with other terms such as *vimoksha, vimukti, kaivalya, apavarga, mukti, nihsreyasa* and *nirvana*.[8] However, terms such as *moksha* and *nirvana* differ and mean different states between various schools of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism.[9] The term nirvana is more common in Buddhism,[10] while *moksha* is more prevalent in Hinduism.[11]

Translations of Moksha	
English	Emancipation, liberation, release.
Sanskrit	मोक्ष (*mokṣa*)
Bengali	মোক্ষ (*mokkho*)
Gujarati	મોક્ષ (*mōkṣa*)
Hindi	मोक्ष (*moksh*)
Javanese	𑑑𑑑𑑑𑑑𑑑 (*moksa*)
Kannada	ಮೋಕ್ಷ (*mōkṣa*)
Malayalam	മോക്ഷം (*mōkṣaṁ*)
Nepali	मोक्ष (*moksh*)
Odia	ମୋକ୍ଷ (*mokhya*)
Punjabi	ਮੋਕਸ਼ (*mōkaśa*)
Tamil	வீடுபேறு (*vīṭupēṟu*)
Malay	*samuksayam*
Glossary of Hinduism	

Contents

Two Hindu sadhus near Pashupatinath Temple in Kathmandu, Nepal. Usually sadhus live by themselves, and spend their days in their pursuit of *moksha*.

Etymology

Moksha is derived from the root Sanskrit: मुच्, *muc*, which means free, let go, release, liberate.[12][13] In Vedas and early Upanishads, the word Sanskrit: मुच्यते, *mucyate*[12] appears, which means to be set free or release, such as of a horse from its harness.

Definition and meanings

The definition and meaning of *moksha* varies between various schools of Indian religions.[14] *Moksha* means freedom, liberation; from what and how is where the schools differ.[15] *Moksha* is also a concept that means liberation from rebirth or *saṃsāra*.[3] This liberation can be attained while one is on earth (*jivanmukti*), or eschatologically (*karmamukti*,[3] *videhamukti*). Some Indian traditions have emphasized liberation on concrete, ethical action within the world. This liberation is an epistemological transformation that permits one to see the truth and reality behind the fog of ignorance.[web 1]

Moksha has been defined not merely as absence of suffering and release from bondage to *saṃsāra*, various schools of Hinduism also explain the concept as presence of the state of *paripurna-brahmanubhava* (the experience of oneness with Brahman, the One Supreme Self), a state of knowledge, peace and bliss.[16] For example, Vivekachudamani - an ancient book on *moksha*, explains one of many meditative steps on the path to *moksha*, as:

> जाति नीति कुल गोत्र दूरगं
> नाम रूप गुण दोष वर्जितम्।
> देश काल विषया तिवर्ति यद्
> ब्रह्म तत्त्वमसि भाव यात्मनि ॥२५४॥
>
> Beyond caste, creed, family or lineage,
> That which is without name and form, beyond merit and demerit,
> That which is beyond space, time and sense-objects,
> You are that, God himself; Meditate this within yourself. ||Verse 254||
>
> — Vivekachudamani, 8th Century AD[17]

Eschatological sense

Moksha is a concept associated with *saṃsāra* (birth-rebirth cycle). *Samsara* originated with religious movements in the first millennium BCE.[web 1] These movements such as Buddhism, Jainism and new schools within Hinduism, saw human life as bondage to a repeated process of rebirth. This bondage to repeated rebirth and life, each life subject to injury, disease and aging, was seen as a cycle of suffering. By release from this cycle, the suffering involved in this cycle also ended. This release was called *moksha*, *nirvana*, *kaivalya*, *mukti* and other terms in various Indian religious traditions.[18]

Eschatological ideas evolved in Hinduism.[19] In earliest Vedic literature, heaven and hell sufficed soteriological curiosities. Over time, the ancient scholars observed that people vary in the quality of virtuous or sinful life they lead, and began questioning how differences in each person's *puṇya* (merit, good deeds) or *pāp* (demerit, sin) as human beings affected their afterlife.[20] This question led to the conception of an afterlife where the person stayed in heaven or hell, in proportion to their merit or demerit, then returned to earth and were reborn, the cycle continuing indefinitely. The rebirth idea ultimately flowered into the ideas of *saṃsāra*, or transmigration - where one's balance sheet of *karma* determined one's rebirth. Along with this idea of *saṃsāra*, the ancient scholars

developed the concept of *moksha*, as a state that released a person from the *saṃsāra* cycle. *Moksha* release in eschatological sense in these ancient literature of Hinduism, suggests van Buitenen,[21] comes from self-knowledge and consciousness of oneness of supreme soul.

Epistemological and psychological senses

Scholars provide various explanations of the meaning of *moksha* in epistemological and psychological senses. For example, Deutsche sees *moksha* as transcendental consciousness, the perfect state of being, of self-realization, of freedom and of "realizing the whole universe as the Self".[22]

Moksha in Hinduism, suggests Klaus Klostermaier,[23] implies a setting-free of hitherto fettered faculties, a removing of obstacles to an unrestricted life, permitting a person to be more truly a person in the full sense; the concept presumes an unused human potential of creativity, compassion and understanding which had been blocked and shut out. *Moksha* is more than liberation from a life-rebirth cycle of suffering (*samsara*); the Vedantic school separates this into two: *jivanmukti* (liberation in this life) and *videhamukti* (liberation after death).[24] *Moksha* in this life includes psychological liberation from *adhyasa* (fears besetting one's life) and *avidya* (ignorance or anything that is not true knowledge).[23]

As a state of perfection

Many schools of Hinduism according to Daniel Ingalls[15] see *moksha* as a state of perfection. The concept was seen as a natural goal beyond *dharma*. *Moksha*, in the epics and ancient literature of Hinduism, is seen as achievable by the same techniques necessary to practice *dharma*. Self-discipline is the path to *dharma*, *moksha* is self-discipline that is so perfect that it becomes unconscious, second nature. *Dharma* is thus a means to *moksha*.[25]

The Samkhya school of Hinduism, for example, suggests that one of the paths to *moksha* is to magnify one's *sattvam*.[26][27] To magnify one's *sattvam*, one must develop oneself where one's *sattvam* becomes one's instinctive nature. Many schools of Hinduism thus understood *dharma* and *moksha* as two points of a single journey of life, a journey for which the *viaticum* was discipline and self-training.[27] Over time, these ideas about *moksha* were challenged.

Gajendra Moksha (pictured) is a symbolic tale in Vaishnavism. The elephant Gajendra enters a lake where a crocodile (Huhu) clutches his leg and becomes his suffering. Despite his pain, Gajendra constantly remembers Vishnu, who then liberates him. Gajendra symbolically represents human beings, Huhu represents sins, and the lake is saṃsāra.

Nagarjuna's challenge

Dharma and *moksha*, suggested Nagarjuna in the 2nd century, cannot be goals on the same journey.[28] He pointed to the differences between the world we live in, and the freedom implied in the concept of *moksha*. They are so different that *dharma* and *moksha* could not be intellectually related. *Dharma* requires worldly thought, *moksha* is unworldly understanding, a state of bliss. How can the worldly thought-process lead to unworldly understanding? asked Nagarjuna.[28] Karl Potter explains the answer to this challenge as one of context and framework, the emergence of broader general principles of understanding from thought processes that are limited in one framework.[29]

Adi Shankara's challenge

Adi Shankara in the 8th century AD, like Nagarjuna earlier, examined the difference between the world one lives in and *moksha*, a state of freedom and release one hopes for.[30] Unlike Nagarjuna, Shankara considers the characteristics between the two. The world one lives in requires action as well as thought; our world, he suggests, is impossible without *vyavahara* (action and plurality). The world is interconnected, one object works on another, input is transformed into output, change is continuous and everywhere.

Moksha, suggests Shankara,[23] is that final perfect, blissful state where there can be no change, where there can be no plurality of states. It has to be a state of thought and consciousness that excludes action.[30] How can action-oriented techniques by which we attain the first three goals of man (*kama*, *artha* and *dharma*) be useful to attain the last goal, namely *moksha*?

Scholars[31] suggest Shankara's challenge to the concept of *moksha* parallels those of Plotinus against the Gnostics, with one important difference:[30] Plotinus accused the Gnostics of exchanging an anthropocentric set of virtues with a theocentric set in pursuit of salvation; Shankara challenged that the concept of *moksha* implied an exchange of anthropocentric set of virtues (*dharma*) with a blissful state that has no need for values. Shankara goes on to suggest that anthropocentric virtues suffice.

The Vaisnavas' challenge

Vaishnavism, one of the *bhakti* schools of Hinduism, is devoted to the worship of God, sings his name, anoints his image or idol, and has many sub-schools. Vaishnavas (followers of Vaishnavism) suggest that *dharma* and *moksha* cannot be two different or sequential goals or states of life.[32] Instead, they suggest God should be kept in mind constantly to simultaneously achieve *dharma* and *moksha*, so constantly that one comes to feel one cannot live without God's loving presence. This school emphasized love and adoration of God as the path to "moksha" (salvation and release), rather than works and knowledge. Their focus became divine virtues, rather than anthropocentric virtues. Daniel Ingalls[32] regards Vaishnavas' position on *moksha* as similar to the Christian position on salvation, and Vaishnavism as the school whose views on *dharma*, *karma* and *moksha* dominated the initial impressions and colonial-era literature on Hinduism, through the works of Thibaut, Max Müller and others.

History

The concept of *moksha* appears much later in ancient Indian literature than the concept of *dharma*. The proto-concept that first appears in the ancient Sanskrit verses and early Upanishads is *mucyate*, which means freed or released. It is the middle and later Upanishads, such as the Svetasvatara and Maitri, where the word *moksha* appears and begins becoming an important concept.[15][33]

Kathaka Upanishad,[34] a middle Upanishadic era script dated to be about 2500 years old, is among the earliest expositions about *saṃsāra* and *moksha*. In Book I, Section III, the legend of boy Naciketa queries Yama, the lord of death to explain what causes *saṃsāra* and what leads to liberation.[35] Naciketa inquires: what causes sorrow? Yama explains that suffering and *saṃsāra* results from a life that is lived absent-mindedly, with impurity, with neither the use of intelligence nor self-examination, where neither mind nor senses are guided by one's *atma* (soul, self).[36][37] Liberation comes from a life lived with inner purity, alert mind, led by *buddhi* (reason, intelligence), realization of the Supreme Self (*purusha*) who dwells in all beings. Kathaka Upanishad asserts knowledge liberates, knowledge is freedom.[38][39] Kathaka Upanishad also explains the role of yoga in personal liberation, *moksha*.

Svetasvatara Upanishad, another middle era Upanishad written after Kathaka Upanishad, begins with questions such as why is man born, what is the primal cause behind the universe, what causes joy and sorrow in life?[40] It then examines the various theories, that were then existing, about *saṃsāra* and release from bondage. Svetasvatara claims[41] bondage results from ignorance, illusion or delusion; deliverance comes from knowledge. The Supreme Being dwells in every being, he is the primal cause, he is the eternal law, he is the essence of everything, he is nature, he is not a separate entity. Liberation comes to those who know Supreme Being is present as the Universal Spirit and Principle, just as they know butter is present in milk. Such realization, claims Svetasvatara, come from self-knowledge and self-discipline; and this knowledge and realization is liberation from transmigration, the final goal of the Upanishad.[42]

Starting with the middle Upanishad era, *moksha* - or equivalent terms such as *mukti* and *kaivalya* - is a major theme in many Upanishads. For example, Sarasvati Rahasya Upanishad, one of several Upanishads of the bhakti school of Hinduism, starts out with prayers to Goddess Sarasvati. She is the Hindu goddess of knowledge, learning and creative arts;[43] her name is a compound word of "sara"[44] and "sva",[45] meaning "essence of self". After the prayer verses, the Upanishad inquires about the secret to freedom and liberation (mukti). Sarasvati's reply in the Upanishad is:

In myths and temples of India and Bali Indonesia, Sarasvati appears with swan. Sarasvati is the Hindu goddess of knowledge, learning and creative arts, while swan is a symbol of spiritual perfection, liberation and moksa.[43] The symbolism of Sarasvati and the swan is that knowledge and moksa go together

> It was through me the Creator himself gained liberating knowledge,
>
> I am being, consciousness, bliss, eternal freedom: unsullied, unlimited, unending.
>
> My perfect consciousness shines your world, like a beautiful face in a soiled mirror,
>
> Seeing that reflection I wish myself you, an individual soul, as if I could be finite!
>
> A finite soul, an infinite Goddess - these are false concepts,
>
> in the minds of those unacquainted with truth,
>
> No space, my loving devotee, exists between your self and my self,
>
> Know this and you are free. This is the secret wisdom.
>
> — Sarasvati Rahasya Upanishad, Translated by Linda Johnsen[46]
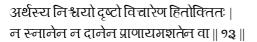
Evolution of the concept

The concept of *moksha*, according to Daniel Ingalls,[15] represented one of many expansions in Hindu Vedic ideas of life and afterlife. In the Vedas, there were three stages of life: studentship, householdship and retirement. During the Upanishadic era, Hinduism expanded this to include a fourth stage of life: complete abandonment. In Vedic literature, there are three modes of experience: waking, dream and deep sleep. The Upanishadic era expanded it to include *turiyam* - the stage beyond deep sleep. The Vedas suggest three goals of man: kama, artha and dharma. To these, the Upanishadic era added *moksha*.[15]

The acceptance of the concept of *moksha* in some schools of Hindu philosophy was slow. These refused to recognize *moksha* for centuries, considering it irrelevant.[15] The Mimamsa school, for example, denied the goal and relevance of *moksha* well into the 8th century AD, until the arrival of a Mimamsa scholar named Kumarila.[47] Instead of *moksha*, Mimamsa school of Hinduism considered the concept of heaven as sufficient to answer the question: what lay beyond this world after death. Other schools of Hinduism, over time, accepted the *moksha* concept and refined it over time.[15]

It is unclear when the core ideas of samsara and *moksha* were developed in ancient India. Patrick Olivelle suggests these ideas likely originated with new religious movements in the first millennium BCE.[web 1] *Mukti* and *moksha* ideas, suggests J. A. B. van Buitenen,[21] seem traceable to yogis in Hinduism, with long hair, who chose to live on the fringes of society, given to self-induced

states of intoxication and ecstasy, possibly accepted as medicine men and "sadhus" by the ancient Indian society.[15] *Moksha* to these early concept developers, was the abandonment of the established order, not in favor of anarchy, but in favor of self-realization, to achieve release from this world.[48]

In its historical development, the concept of *moksha* appears in three forms: Vedic, yogic and bhakti. In the Vedic period, *moksha* was ritualistic.[21] Mokṣa was claimed to result from properly completed rituals such as those before *Agni* - the fire deity. The significance of these rituals was to reproduce and recite the cosmic creation event described in the Vedas; the description of knowledge on different levels - *adhilokam, adhibhutam, adhiyajnam, adhyatmam* - helped the individual transcend to moksa. Knowledge was the means, the ritual its application. By the middle to late Upanishadic period, the emphasis shifted to knowledge, and ritual activities were considered irrelevant to the attainment of *moksha*.[50] Yogic *moksha*[21][51] replaced Vedic rituals with personal development and meditation, with hierarchical creation of the ultimate knowledge in self as the path to *moksha*. Yogic *moksha* principles were accepted in many other schools of Hinduism, albeit with differences. For example, Adi Shankara in his book on *moksha* suggests:

Mokṣa is a key concept in Yoga, where it is a state of "awakening", liberation and freedom in this life.[49]

> अर्थस्य निश्चयो दृष्टो विचारेण हितोक्तितः |
> न स्नानेन न दानेन प्राणायमशतेन वा || १३ ||
>
> By reflection, reasoning and instructions of teachers, the truth is known,
> Not by ablutions, not by making donations, nor by performing hundreds of breath control exercises. || Verse 13 ||
>
> — Vivekachudamani, 8th Century AD[52]

Bhakti *moksha* created the third historical path, where neither rituals nor meditative self-development were the way, rather it was inspired by constant love and contemplation of God, which over time results in a perfect union with God.[21] Some Bhakti schools evolved their ideas where God became the means and the end, transcending *moksha*; the fruit of bhakti is bhakti itself.[53] In the history of Indian religious traditions, additional ideas and paths to *moksha* beyond these three, appeared over time.[54]

Synonyms

The words *moksha*, nirvana (*nibbana*) and kaivalya are sometimes used synonymously,[55] because they all refer to the state that liberates a person from all causes of sorrow and suffering.[56][57] However, in modern era literature, these concepts have different premises in different religions.[9] Nirvana, a concept common in Buddhism, is a state of realization that there is no self (no soul) and Emptiness; while *moksha*, a concept common in many schools of Hinduism, is acceptance of Self (soul), realization of liberating knowledge, the consciousness of Oneness with Brahman, all existence and understanding the whole universe as the Self.[58][59] Nirvana starts with the premise that there is no Self, *moksha* on the other hand, starts with the premise that everything is the Self; there is no consciousness in the state of nirvana, but everything is One unified consciousness in the state of *moksha*.[58]

Kaivalya, a concept akin to *moksha*, rather than nirvana, is found in some schools of Hinduism such as the Yoga school. Kaivalya is the realization of aloofness with liberating knowledge of one's self and union with the spiritual universe. For example, Patanjali's Yoga Sutra suggests:

> तस्य हेतुरविद्या,
> तदभावात्संयोगाभावो हानं तद् दृशेः कैवल्यम्|

> After the dissolution of avidya (ignorance),
> comes removal of communion with material world,
> this is the path to Kaivalyam.
>
> — Yoga Sutra (Sadhana Pada), 2:24-25[60]

Nirvana and *moksha*, in all traditions, represents a state of being in ultimate reality and perfection, but described in a very different way. Some scholars, states Jayatilleke, assert that the Nirvana of Buddhism is same as the Brahman in Hinduism, a view other scholars and he disagree with.[61] Buddhism rejects the idea of Brahman, and the metaphysical ideas about soul (atman) are also rejected by Buddhism, while those ideas are essential to *moksha* in Hinduism.[62] In Buddhism, nirvana is 'blowing out' or 'extinction'.[63] In Hinduism, *moksha* is 'identity or oneness with Brahman'.[59] Realization of *anatta* (anatman) is essential to Buddhist nirvana.[64][65][66] Realization of *atman* (atta) is essential to Hindu *moksha*.[65][67][68]

Hinduism

Ancient literature of different schools of Hinduism sometimes use different phrases for *moksha*. For example, *Keval jnana* or *kaivalya* ("state of Absolute"), *Apavarga*, *Nihsreyasa*, *Paramapada*, *Brahmabhava*, *Brahmajnana* and *Brahmi sthiti*. Modern literature additionally uses the Buddhist term nirvana interchangeably with *moksha* of Hinduism.[57][58] There is difference between these ideas, as explained elsewhere in this article, but they are all soteriological concepts of various Indian religious traditions.

The six major orthodox schools of Hinduism have had a historic debate, and disagree over whether *moksha* can be achieved in this life, or only after this life.[69] Many of the 108 Upanishads discuss amongst other things *moksha*. These discussions show the differences between the schools of Hinduism, a lack of consensus, with a few attempting to conflate the contrasting perspectives between various schools.[70] For example, freedom and deliverance from birth-rebirth, argues Maitrayana Upanishad, comes neither from the Vedanta school's doctrine (the knowledge of one's own Self as the Supreme Soul) nor from the Samkhya school's doctrine (distinction of the Purusha from what one is not), but from Vedic studies, observance of the *Svadharma* (personal duties), sticking to *Asramas* (stages of life).[71]

The six major orthodox schools of Hindu philosophy offer the following views on *moksha*, each for their own reasons: the Nyaya, Vaisesika and Mimamsa schools of Hinduism consider *moksha* as possible only after death.[69][72] Samkhya and Yoga schools consider *moksha* as possible in this life. In Vedanta school, the Advaita sub-school concludes *moksha* is possible in this life,[69] while Dvaita and Visistadvaita sub-schools of Vedanta tradition believes that *moksha* is a continuous event, one assisted by loving devotion to God, that extends from this life to post-mortem. Beyond these six orthodox schools, some heterodox schools of Hindu tradition, such as Carvaka, deny there is a soul or after life *moksha*.[73]

Sāmkhya, Yoga and mokṣa

Both Sāmkhya and Yoga systems of religious thought are *mokshaśāstras*, suggests Knut Jacobsen, they are systems of salvific liberation and release.[74] Sāmkhya is a system of interpretation, primarily a theory about the world. Yoga is both a theory and a practice. Yoga gained wide acceptance in ancient India, its ideas and practices became part of many religious schools in Hinduism, including those that were very different from Sāmkhya. The eight limbs of yoga can be interpreted as a way to liberation (*moksha*).[74][75]

In Sāmkhya literature, liberation is commonly referred to as *kaivalya*. In this school, kaivalya means the realization of *purusa*, the principle of consciousness, as independent from mind and body, as different from *prakrti*. Like many schools of Hinduism, in Sāmkhya and Yoga schools, the emphasis is on the attainment of knowledge, *vidyā* or *jñāna*, as necessary for salvific liberation, *moksha*.[74][76] Yoga's purpose is then seen as a means to remove the *avidyā* - that is, ignorance or misleading/incorrect knowledge about one self and the universe. It seeks to end ordinary reflexive awareness (*cittavrtti nirodhah*) with deeper, purer and holistic awareness (*asamprājñāta samādhi*).[75][77] Yoga, during the pursuit of *moksha*, encourages practice (*abhyāsa*) with detachment

(*vairāgya*), which over time leads to deep concentration (*samādhi*). Detachment means withdrawal from outer world and calming of mind, while practice means the application of effort over time. Such steps are claimed by Yoga school as leading to samādhi, a state of deep awareness, release and bliss called *kaivalya*.[74][76]

Jñāna yoga

Bhakti yoga

Rāja marga

Three of four paths of spirituality in Hinduism. Each path suggests a different way to *moksha*.

Yoga, or *mārga*, in Hinduism is widely classified into four spiritual practices.[78] The first mārga is Jñāna Yoga, the way of knowledge. The second mārga is Bhakti Yoga, the way of loving devotion to God. The third mārga is Karma Yoga, the way of works. The fourth mārga is Rāja Yoga, the way of contemplation and meditation. These mārgas are part of different schools in Hinduism, and their definition and methods to *moksha*.[79] For example, the Advaita Vedanta school relies on Jñāna Yoga in its teachings of *moksha*.[80]

Vedanta and mokṣa

The three main sub-schools in Vedanta school of Hinduism - Advaita Vedanta, Vishistadvaita and Dvaita - each have their own views about *moksha*.

The Vedantic school of Hinduism suggests the first step towards mokṣa begins with *mumuksutva*, that is desire of liberation.[23] This takes the form of questions about self, what is true, why do things or events make us happy or cause suffering, and so on. This longing for liberating knowledge is assisted by, claims Adi Shankara of Advaita Vedanta,[81] guru (teacher), study of historical knowledge and viveka (critical thinking). Shankara cautions that the guru and historic knowledge may be distorted, so traditions and historical assumptions must be questioned by the individual seeking *moksha*. Those who are on their path to *moksha* (samnyasin), suggests Klaus Klostermaier, are quintessentially free individuals, without craving for anything in the worldly life, thus are neither dominated by, nor dominating anyone else.[23]

Vivekachudamani, which literally means "Crown Jewel of Discriminatory Reasoning", is a book devoted to moksa in Vedanta philosophy. It explains what behaviors and pursuits lead to *moksha*, as well what actions and assumptions hinder *moksha*. The four essential conditions, according to Vivekachudamani, before one can commence on the path of *moksha* include (1) *vivekah* (discrimination, critical reasoning) between everlasting principles and fleeting world; (2) *viragah* (indifference, lack of craving) for material rewards; (3) *samah* (calmness of mind), and (4) *damah* (self restraint, temperance).[82] The *Brahmasutrabhasya* adds to the above four requirements, the following: *uparati* (lack of bias, dispassion), *titiksa* (endurance, patience), *sraddha* (faith) and *samadhana* (intentness, commitment).[80]

The Advaita tradition considers *moksha* achievable by removing avidya (ignorance). *Moksha* is seen as a final release from illusion, and through knowledge (*anubhava*) of one's own fundamental nature, which is Satcitananda.[83][note 1] Advaita holds there is no being/non-being distinction between *Atman*, *Brahman*, and *Paramatman*. The knowledge of Brahman leads to *moksha*,[86] where Brahman is described as that which is the origin and end of all things, the universal principle behind and at source of everything that exists, consciousness that pervades everything and everyone.[87] Advaita Vedanta emphasizes Jnana Yoga as the means of achieving *moksha*.[80] Bliss, claims this school, is the fruit of knowledge (vidya) and work (karma).[88]

The Dvaita (dualism) traditions define *moksha* as the loving, eternal union with God (Vishnu) and considered the highest perfection of existence. Dvaita schools suggest every soul encounters liberation differently.[89] Dualist schools (e.g. Vaishnava) see God as the object of love, for example, a personified monotheistic conception of Shiva or Vishnu. By immersing oneself in the love of God, one's karmas slough off, one's illusions decay, and truth is lived. Both the worshiped and worshiper gradually lose their illusory sense of separation and only One beyond all names remains. This is salvation to dualist schools of Hinduism. Dvaita Vedanta emphasizes Bhakti Yoga as the means of achieving *moksha*.[90]

The Vishistadvaita tradition, led by Ramanuja, defines avidya and *moksha* differently from the Advaita tradition. To Ramanuja, avidya is a focus on the self, and vidya is a focus on a loving god. The Vishistadvaita school argues that other schools of Hinduism create a false sense of agency in individuals, which makes the individual think oneself as potential or self-realized god. Such ideas, claims Ramanuja, decay to materialism, hedonism and self worship. Individuals forget *Ishvara* (God). Mukti, to Vishistadvaita school, is release from such avidya, towards the intuition and eternal union with God (Vishnu).[91]

Mokṣa in this life

Among the Samkhya, Yoga and Vedanta schools of Hinduism, liberation and freedom reached within one's life is referred to as *jivanmukti*, and the individual who has experienced this state is called *jivanmukta* (self-realized person).[92] Dozens of Upanishads, including those from middle Upanishadic period, mention or describe the state of liberation, *jivanmukti*.[93][94] Some contrast *jivanmukti* with *videhamukti* (*moksha* from samsara after death).[95] Jivanmukti is a state that transforms the nature, attributes and behaviors of an individual, claim these ancient texts of Hindu philosophy. For example, according to Naradaparivrajaka Upanishad, the liberated individual shows attributes such as:[96]

- he is not bothered by disrespect and endures cruel words, treats others with respect regardless of how others treat him;
- when confronted by an angry person he does not return anger, instead replies with soft and kind words;
- even if tortured, he speaks and trusts the truth;
- he does not crave for blessings or expect praise from others;
- he never injures or harms any life or being (ahimsa), he is intent in the welfare of all beings;[97]
- he is as comfortable being alone as in the presence of others;
- he is as comfortable with a bowl, at the foot of a tree in tattered robe without help, as when he is in a mithuna (union of mendicants), grama (village) and nagara (city);
- he doesn't care about or wear śikha (tuft of hair on the back of head for religious reasons), nor the holy thread across his body. To him, knowledge is sikha, knowledge is the holy thread, knowledge alone is supreme. Outer appearances and rituals do not matter to him, only knowledge matters;
- for him there is no invocation nor dismissal of deities, no mantra nor non-mantra, no prostrations nor worship of gods, goddess or ancestors, nothing other than knowledge of Self;
- he is humble, high-spirited, of clear and steady mind, straightforward, compassionate, patient, indifferent, courageous, speaks firmly and with sweet words.

When a Jivanmukta dies he achieves Paramukti and becomes a Paramukta. Jivanmukta experience enlightenment and liberation while alive and also after death i.e., after becoming paramukta, while Videhmukta experiences enlightenment and liberation only after death.

Mokṣa in Balinese Hinduism

Balinese Hinduism incorporates *moksha* as one of five tattwas. The other four are: *brahman* (the one supreme god head, not to be confused with Brahmin), *atma* (soul or spirit), karma (actions and reciprocity, causality), *samsara* (principle of rebirth, reincarnation). *Moksha*, in Balinese Hindu belief, is the possibility of unity with the divine; it is sometimes referred to as nirwana.[98][99]

Buddhism

In Buddhism the term "moksha" is uncommon, but an equivalent term is *vimutti*, "release". In the suttas two forms of release are mentioned, namely *ceto-vimutti*, "deliverance of mind," and *panna-vimutti*, "deliverance through wisdom" (insight). *Ceto-vimutti* is related to the practice of dhyana, while *panna-vimutti* is related to the development of insight. According to Gombrich, the distinction may be a later development, which resulted in a change of doctrine, regarding the practice of dhyana to be insufficient for final liberation.[100]

With release comes Nirvana (Pali: Nibbana), "blowing out", "quenching", or "becoming extinguished" of the fires of the passions and of self-view.[101][102] It is a "timeless state" in which there is no more becoming.[103]

Nirvana ends the cycle of *Dukkha* and rebirth in the six realms of Saṃsāra (Buddhism).[104][note 2] It is part of the Four Noble Truths doctrine of Buddhism, which plays an essential role in Theravada Buddhism.[109][110] Nirvana has been described in Buddhist texts in a manner similar to other Indian religions, as the state of complete liberation, enlightenment, highest happiness, bliss, fearless, freedom, dukkha-less, permanence, non-dependent origination, unfathomable, indescribable.[111][112] It has also been described as a state of release marked by "emptiness" and realization of *non-Self*.[113][114][115] Such descriptions, states Peter Harvey, are contested by scholars because nirvana in Buddhism is ultimately described as a state of "stopped consciousness (blown out), but one that is not non-existent", and "it seems impossible to imagine what awareness devoid of any object would be like".[116][104]

Jainism

In Jainism, *moksha* and *nirvana* are one and the same.[57][117] Jaina texts sometimes use the term *Kevalya*, and call the liberated soul as *Kevalin*.[118] As with all Indian religions, *moksha* is the ultimate spiritual goal in Jainism. It defines *moksha* as the spiritual release from all karma.[118]

Jainism is a Sramanic non-theistic philosophy, that like Hinduism and unlike Buddhism, believes in a metaphysical permanent self or soul often termed *jiva*. Jaina believe that this soul is what transmigrates from one being to another at the time of death. The *moksa* state is attained when a soul (*atman*) is liberated from the cycles of deaths and rebirths (*saṃsāra*), is at the apex, is omniscient, remains there eternally, and is known as a *siddha*.[119] In Jainism, it is believed to be a stage beyond enlightenment and ethical perfection, states Paul Dundas, because they can perform physical and mental activities such as teach, without accruing karma that leads to rebirth.[118]

Jaina traditions believe that there exist *Abhavya* (incapable), or a class of souls that can never attain *moksha* (liberation).[120][118] The *Abhavya* state of soul is entered after an intentional and shockingly evil act,[121] but Jaina texts also polemically applied *Abhavya* condition to those who belonged to a competing ancient Indian tradition called *Ājīvika*.[118] A male human being is considered closest to the apex of *moksha*, with the potential to achieve liberation, particularly through asceticism. The ability of women to attain *moksha* has been historically debated, and the subtraditions with Jainism have disagreed. In the Digambara tradition of Jainism, women must live an ethical life and gain karmic merit to be reborn as a man, because only males can achieve spiritual liberation.[122][123] In contrast, the Śvētāmbara tradition has believed that women too can attain *moksha* just like men.[123][124][125]

Sikhism

The Sikh concept of mukti (*moksha*) is similar to other Indian religions, and refers to spiritual liberation.[126] It is described in Sikhism as the state that breaks the cycle of rebirths.[126] Mukti is obtained according to Sikhism, states Singha, through "God's grace".[127] According to the Guru Granth Sahib, the devotion to God is viewed as more important than the desire for *Mukti*.[127]

> I desire neither worldly power nor liberation. I desire nothing but seeing the Lord.
>
> Brahma, Shiva, the Siddhas, the silent sages and Indra - I seek only the Blessed Vision of my Lord and Master's Darshan.
>
> I have come, helpless, to Your Door, O Lord Master; I am exhausted - I seek the Sanctuary of the Saints.
>
> Says Nanak, I have met my Enticing Lord God; my mind is cooled and soothed - it blossoms forth in joy
>
> — Guru Granth Sahib, P534[127][128]

Sikhism recommends Naam Simran as the way to mukti, which is meditating and repeating the *Naam* (names of God).[126][127]

See also

- Enlightenment (spiritual)
- Henosis
- Salvation

Notes

1. The description comprises the three Sanskrit words *sat-chit-ananda*:
   - *sat* सत् (present participle); [Sanskrit root *as*, "*to be*"]: "Truth", "Absolute Being",[web 2] "a palpable force of virtue and truth".[84] *Sat* describes an essence that is pure and timeless, that never changes.[web 2]
   - *cit* चित् (noun): "consciousness",[web 2] "true consciousness", "to be consciousness of",[85] "to understand",[85] "to comprehend".[85]
   - *ānanda* आनन्द (noun): "bliss",[web 2] "true bliss", "happiness",[web 3] "joy",[web 3] "delight",[web 3] "pleasure"[web 3]

2. Ending rebirth:
   * Graham Harvey: "The Third Noble Truth is nirvana. The Buddha tells us that an end to suffering is possible, and it is nirvana. Nirvana is a "blowing out," just as a candle flame is wxtinguished in the wind, from our lives in samsara. It connotes an end to rebirth"[105]
   * Spiro: "The Buddhis message then, as I have said, is not simply a psychological message, i.e. that desire is the cause of suffering because unsatisfied desire produces frustration. It does contain such a message to be sure; but more importantly it is an eschatological message. Desire is the cause of suffering because desire is the cause of rebirth; and the extinction of desire leads to deliverance from suffering because it signals release from the Wheel of Rebirth."[106]
   * John J. Makransky: "The third noble truth, cessation (*nirodha*) or nirvana, represented the ultimate aim of Buddhist practice in the Abhidharma traditions: the state free from the conditions that created samsara. Nirvana was the ultimate and final state attained when the supramundane yogic path had been completed. It represented salvation from samsara precisely because it was understood to comprise a state of complete freedom from the chain of samsaric causes and conditions, i.e., precisely because it was unconditioned (*asamskrta*)."[107]
   * Walpola Rahula: "Let us consider a few definitions and descriptions of Nirvana as found in the original Pali texts [...] 'It is the complete cessation of that very thirst (tanha), giving it up, renouncing it, emancipation from it, detachment from it.' [...] 'The abandoning and destruction of craving for these Five Aggregates of Attachment: that is the cessation of *dukkha*. [...] 'The Cessation of Continuity and becoming (*Bhavanirodha*) is Nibbana."[108]

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   - T. Chatterjee (2003), Knowledge and Freedom in Indian Philosophy, ISBN 978-0739106921, pp 89-102; Quote - "Moksa means freedom"; "Moksa is founded on atmajnana, which is the knowledge of the self.";
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moksha

See also: **Moksha**

Contents

English

Etymology

Borrowed from Sanskrit मोक्ष (*mokṣa*, "liberation").

Pronunciation

- (*UK*) IPA^(key): /ˈməʊkʃə/

Noun

moksha (*uncountable*)

1. In Indian philosophy and theology, the final liberation of the soul or consciousness from samsara and the bringing to an end of all the suffering involved in being subject to the cycle of reincarnation.

Italian

Proper noun

moksha *m*

1. Moksha (language)

Portuguese

Noun

moksha _m_ (_uncountable_)

1. Moksha (language)

Spanish

Noun

moksha _m_ (_uncountable_)

1. Moksha language