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The Concept of Liberation (Moksa) in Spanda System

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Abstract

Spanda system is claimed to be the direct successor of the Agamic tradition and Advaita Vedanta of the 'Vedic' tradition. Both have the same points of agreement and disagreement between them as those which can be found between the two cultural traditions. For examples the 'Purnatva' approach is developed in Spanda System and 'kaivalya' approach in the Advaita Vedanta. The two approaches might be described as the two paths, the path of happiness (ananda) and the path of knowledge (jnana). The path of ananda is the path to utilize all the human potencies, faculties etc. and maintain the state of bliss and thus to release oneself. The path of kaivalya on the other hand, is to use these potencies and live with discriminatory knowledge in order to attain release. The vedanta approach regards knowledge as more fundamental, knowledge *suigeneris* for it. Will and feeling presuppose knowledge. These elements depend upon knowledge for their very existence. But knowledge need not depend upon them. Against this, will is accepted as more fundamental than knowledge in the Agamic tradition. Knowledge is generated by will, as is observed in our daily life.

Keywords: Liberation, Spanda System, Advaita Vedanta

Introduction

The concept of freedom (Svatantrya) or perfection (purnatva) is fundamental to the Agamic approach. Although freedom and perfection have been attributed to Brahman in the Vedanta tradition also, yet the vedantic approach is more or less negative. Perfection or 'Purnatva' essentially means the purity of Being in the vedanta. Perfection of Brahman denotes its freedom from all becoming. To the followers of the Agamas the exclusive separation between Spirit and World by the Vedantin does not appear to be consistent with the notion of Perfection, which consists essentially in omniscience omnipotence, omnipresence, etc. That is why the vedantic absolutism could not become all inclusive. As there is hesitation in regarding maya as real, the vedanta advaitism is exclusive and is based upon renunciation or elimination it could not be all embracing.

Generally speaking there are two ways in which the term 'freedom' might be used, it might be referred to as 'freedom / from', if used in a negative sense, and as 'freedom to', when used in a positive sense. "Freedom to" is a positive description of the capacity of something to bring about the occurrence or non-occurrence of certain events. On the other hand, freedom from' denotes the purity or transcendence of a thing from the others. Absolute freedom can be explained as the stage where one is 'free to' and 'free from' with respect to every occurrence or non-occurrence.

The only way to escape from the endless transmigration which is due to Katmamala, lies in the awakening of viveka jnana in the same. With the awakening of viveka jnana in the aspirant, the aspect of ajfiana that veils him in the form of Krmamala is destroyed and consequently, he is liberated from the bonds of Karma and sathsara. The spiritual knowledge (Paurusa jnana) is that perfect knowledge which awakens in a person, who has reached to > highest stage in the spiritual development through the total annihilation of the innate ignorance (**anavamala**).^[1] It transcends the limit of language and is, therefore, to be known only through experience. Similarly, intellectual knowledge (Baudha jnana) is that perfect knowledge by virtue of which a person transcends the difference between this and that, and sees only one integral whole and that too, as a manifestation of himself. The former comes from the **Diksa**^[2] and the latter from the study of the monistic **philosophy**.^[3] The latter is more important than the former not so much because it can liberate a person right in his life time, but the **Diksa**^[4] is

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inefficacious in bringing about salvation by itself without the assistance of the **Bauddhajñana**.^[5]

Almost all Brahmanical systems of Indian philosophy consider the achievement of freedom (Mukti) from repeated transmigrations and the attendant misery only to be the aim of man's life. The Naiayikas and the vaisesikas have as their Goal the absolute abolition of pain which is consequent on birth caused by the desires, produced through self-ignorance. Hence, their aims is achieved through the realisation of Aatman in its essence as free from the influence of ignorance (ajñana) and its attendant forces and beyond the possibility of contact with the mental organ (manas). The samkhya and the yoga systems, are content with the achievement of liberation of Purusa (the pure self) from the clutches of Prakriti through viveka jñana. In short the liberation of the human being from the ill-effects of his association with physical body is the purpose of his life. The growth of burning desire for self **realisation**^[5] is extremely important for the aspirant in the beginning and its value cannot be over emphasised.

When the separation of self from notself is fully accomplished, the aspirant does no longer exist as a sakala; he dissociates himself from his body apparatus, and later with the destruction of physical body in course of time, he becomes disembodied (akala). But by achieving merely the state of disembodied existence, he cannot be said to be nearer his ultimate Goal, because he is still not absolutely free from limitation. For, when he is a *pralayakevalin* lying nascent in the Maya, he is associated with the Anava and Mayly mala and when he is a *vijnana kevalin*, he has the Anavamala still veiling him. In any case, the Apavaraala, being the fundamental mala, continues to effect him and unless this is removed or destroyed he cannot hope to realise his real Essence. The destruction of anava mala's possible only when the Diviae Anugraha in the form of **Saktipata**^[6] descends on him, and his latent Divinity awakens which in the technical language of the Spanda system is called 'Suddhavidyodaya' or 'Sahajvidyodaya'. This paves the way to his realisation of his ultimate Goal, the Sivata.

There are two possible ways in which Divine Grace can descend on the individual beings from the Highest source—either it may come directly to the individual aspirants without the intervention of any mediating factor as in the case of unembodied and some disembodied beings, or it might be made available through some pure bodies acting as medium for its transmission. Both these ways meet and really appear to be the two aspects of one and the same way. Because in both these ways, all the steps beginning from the descent-of Divine Grace leading to the integral self-realisation by the aspirant are one and the same in principle. Besides this, both ways admit the principle of guru as being the only source of Divine Grace to **aspirants**^[7] and assign an important place to him accordingly. In the former way, the abstract principle of Divine Grace itself is regarded as the guru while in the latter the principle of Divine Grace, acting through a concrete medium in one of the forms is said to function as the guru.

The guru in his embodied form may both be human and divine-human in view of the transitional character of the medium adopted by supreme Lord for its own purpose; and divine in consideration of the Principle of Divine Compassion(anugraha) which functions in and through the medium concerned. There are also two distinct types of sadhakas even among the embodied beings. First are those Sadhakas to whom the infusion of Divine Grace not only awakens instantaneously the latent knowledge of Divinity but also spontaneously transforms their person-ality fully from

human to divine that they have full and integral self-realisation in a **moment**.^[8] The other type of aspirants are with lesser degree of perfection, and hence, they have to depend on external guru for awakening the latent knowledge of Divinity in **themselves**.^[9]

When the Divine Grace is transmitted to the receptive vehicle of an aspirant by the guru, the veil of impurities covering his real svarupa is lifted up in him and the latent knowledge of his Divinity is automatically aroused from within: The operation by which the guru actually accomplishes the two fold task is technically designated as the **diksa**^[10]

The Diksa, is an essential step in way of integral self **realization**^[11]. It is essential and inevitable in all cases of infusion of Divine Grace even in those cases where the infusion has been direct from the Divine source. As such it does not merely signify external ceremonials which might be consciously experienced by the recipient souls or witnessed by all others. It is, in fact a subtle and inner process, by which the guru seeks to remove the mula ajñana from the adhara of the aspirant and awaken the latent knowledge of Divinity in **him**^[12] and thus open **the** way to his integral self-realisation.

From the very view point of External ceremonial, Diksha, according to Agama, is of two kinds, viz samayi Diksha and putraka **Diksha**.^[13] Diksha has another aspect also. It is not merely an external ceremonial, it is an inner process in which the guru transmits the Divine Grace to the disciple in intense form, commensurate with his capacity to receive it. Accordingly, four distinct forms of Diksha, are recognised by the Trika system viz. The anupaya Diksha, the sambhavl Diksha, the Eakti Diksha and the Anavi Diksha. Though Abhinavagupta -does not clearly refer to these four types of Diksha his description of four distinct forms of samavesa in the four upayas is clearly indicative of the facts that there exist four corresponding forms of Diksha **also**.^[14]

The early exponents of this system speak of three upayas only, the sambhava, sakta and the Anava **upayas**^[15] Anupaya is not an upaya in the conventional sense of the term. It is in fact an extra-ordinary upaya meant for extra-ordinary class of -sadhakas, who have been recipients of extremely intense form of Divine **Grace**.^[16] The remaining three upayas the &ambhava, the sakta and the Anava are for the ordinary sadhakas. Anupaya is called Anupaya, not because there is no use of any means whatsoever, but because the elaborate means are but of little **importance**.^[17] The stage attained by this way may be compared to deep sleep, in which consciousness is free from, all **affections**^[18] Anand sakti is predominating in this upaya.

The Sambhava upaya may be considered to be the chief and best of all ordinary upayas for the realisation of the ultimate destiny, the Sivata. The various upayas are meant for sadhakas with varying capacities and therefore, belonging to different levels of spiritual evolution Sambhava upaya is a path in which the perfect knowledge. The knowledge of the ultimate **reality**^[19] comes through mere exercise of the will power. By this way the sadhaka divinises every phase of his **existence**^[19] and begins to feel that the entire creation is his Divine Glory. This existence leads him to the Supreme Realisation (**Purna Ahanta**),^[21] the Sivata, the Supreme end of his journey.

Saktopaya is the one way of the four ways, in which attempts have to be made to rise from the stage of the knowledge of duality to that of unity. It is called jñanopaya because the mental activities of meditation are the most important factors in it.

Apavopaya is that path in which the external ceremonies, such as repetition of certain religious formulas (Mantra), are used as means to self-realisation. In Saiva system described the process in detail, in which the external ceremonies should be performed under the direct supervision of the guru. It is called 'kriyopaya, firstly because to the follower of this- path, both the consciousness of self and that of the objective: universe are equally prominent as in the characteristic experi-ence^[22] and secondly, the physical activities such as repetition of mantra, play an important part in it^[23]

Thus, Moksa (liberation) is nothing, but the state of perfect purity of consciousness.^[24] It is the realisation of the self, the para samvit or the Supreme consciousness,^[25] which is beyond the reach of both thought and language and is the ultimate source not only of both of them, but also of all that they imply or involve.

Recognition (Pratyabhijfia) of this reality is essential for obtaining liberation. A love-sick woman cannot get any consolation and joy, even though her lover may be present near her unless she recognises him. The moment recognition dawns she becomes all joyful. This is also the meaning of the famous formula 'tattvamas'. Recognition at once overcomes bondage. The liberated soul becomes one with Siva and over enjoys the mystic bliss of oneness with the Lord. The sadhakas, when they achieve complete liberation in their embodied state, are technically called the **jivanmukta**.^[26] When the **Jivanrauktas** are dissociated from their physical body apparatus, they establish themselves firmly and perfectly in their Integral Divine Svarupa, and become the supereme Lord Himself. This is the culminating stage of their **exist- once**.^[27]

1. क्षीणं तु पशुसंस्कारं पुंसः प्राप्तप्रस्थितैः
विकस्वरं तद्विज्ञानं पौरुषं निर्विकल्पकम् ।
विकस्वराविकल्पात्मविज्ञानोचित्येन यासवा तद्बौद्धं.....
..... औचित्येन इति तद्वत् पूर्णनात्मना इत्यर्थः अतश्च
सर्वो ममायं इत्येव रूपत्वमस्याः
2. तत्र दीनिना पौरुष ज्ञानं ध्वंसि यद्यपि ।
3. बौद्धज्ञानेन तु यदा बौद्धमज्ञानजृम्भितम् ।
ध्वलीयते तदा जीवन्मुक्तिः करतलं स्थिता ।
बौद्ध ज्ञानेन इति, परमेश्वरद्वयशास्त्रश्रवणाद्युद्भूतेन ॥
4. दीक्षापि बौद्धविज्ञानपूर्वा सत्यं विमोचिका ।
तेन तत्रापि बौद्धस्याज्ञानस्यास्ति प्रधानता ॥
5. अयमधिकारि जन्ममरणादि संसारानलसन्तप्तो
6. Saktipata consists of three distinct phases or stages of divinisation—(I) Pasaksaya, (2) sivatva-yojana or Pratibha Jfianodaya (3) Sivatva-Prapti Illumination and the Divine Union generally spoken of by the christian mystics of the mediieval age. Sen Sharma, D.B, The Philosophy of Sadhang, 86 ; as an act of Divine Freedom, is essentially, a unitive act* it has been classified in the Trika system, under three- principal heads-Tivara Saktipata, the Madhya Saktipata and the Manda Saktipata.
7. *Ibid*, p. 93.7. T.A- ; Ah., XIII, Verse 168-69, p. 107.
8. *Ibid*., Ah IV, Ka, 72-73, p.79
9. *Ibid*., Ah XIII, Verse 142-43, p.93
10. दीयते ज्ञानसद्भावः क्षीयते पशुवासना ।
11. इयं निर्वाण दीक्षा च शिवसद्भावदायिनी ।
....पारमार्थिकस्वरूपस्य दायिनी निर्वाणदीक्षा.....
एवं यो वेद तत्त्वेदन तस्य निर्वाणदायिनी दीक्षा भवत्यसन्दिग्धा
तिला—ज्याहुतिवर्जिता ।
12. T.A. XIII, ka, 174-175.

13. समयी संस्कृतोप्येवं वचनस्यार्हता भवेत्
श्रवणेध्ययने होमेपूजनादौ तर्था च —Sv. Tan., 78.
चर्याध्यानविशुद्धात्मा लभते पदमैश्वरम्
अथ दीक्षाध्वशुद्धचर्था भुक्तिमुक्तिफलार्थिनाम् —*Ibid*., 79.
14. सोपायत्वेसपि इच्छा वा ज्ञानं वा क्रिया वा अभ्युपाच इति त्रैविध्यं
शाम्भवशाक्तावभेदेन समावेशस्य T.S-, I,p. 7 शश्वदेव पारमेश्वरः
समावेशो निरुपायक इवः i *Ibid*, II, P. 9
15. Vasugupta has divided the Siva-Sutras into three sections- Sen, Sharma, D.B., The Philosophy of Sadhana, p., 114.
16. उपायजालं न शिवं प्रकाशयेद्
..... स्वयंप्रकाशं शिवमविसत्क्षणात् T.S., p. 9.
17. अनुपायमिदं रूपं कोपर्थो देशान्यत्र वै
सकृतस्याददेशन पश्चातनुपायत्वमुच्यते —T.A. II, 3.
18. एवं परेच्छाशक्ति शक्तयंशसदुपायमिमं विदुः
शाम्भवाख्यं समावेशं समुत्पन्तेनिवासिनः T.A. I, 235.
19. न्यग्भूतेरिव तदुक्तं, वस्तु तत्प्रतिबिम्बितम् : T.A. III, Ka 19.
20. Sen Sharma, D.B. Concept of Purnahmta, A Study in the Corpus of India Studies, Calcutta, 1980
21. बहिर्भूतोस्वच्छिन्नो योसौ उच्चरादिरर्थः तत्साधनम् । T.A. I, Comm. I, p.188
22. यथा विस्फुरितादृशमनुसन्धि विनाप्यलयम्
भाति भावः स्फुटस्तद्वत् केषामपि शिवात्मता । T.A. I, 186
23. The repetition of a religious formula plays the same part in bringing about the liberation as does a lullaby in putting a child to sleep., Pandey, K.C.: Abhinavagupta— An Historical and Philosophical Study, p. 314.24
स्वतन्त्रात्मारिक्तस्तु तुच्छोतुच्छोपि कश्चन
24. न मोक्षो नाम तन्नास्य प्रथन् नामापि गृह्यते —T.A. i, p. 62.
25. मोक्षो हि नाम नैवान्यः स्वरूपप्रथनं हि तत् ।
स्वरूपं चात्मनः संवित् नान्यत *Ibid*-, 1.192.
26. इति वा यस्य संवितिः कीडात्वेनाखिलं जगत्
स पश्यन् सततं युक्तो, जीव—मुक्तो न संशयः —Sp. Kaj n. 5-
27. यदा त्वेकत्र संरुद्धस्तदा तस्य लयोदयो,
नियच्छन् भोक्तृतामेति तत्त्वकेश्वरेभवेत् —*Ibid*.III, 19