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## Salvation: A Journey From Philosophical Thought To Economical One

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### Abstract:

'Mokṣa' is a very small word but has so many importance, significance and power in Indian literature and culture. This word derives from the Sanskrit dhātupāṭh; the dhātu named 'muc' which means 'Mukti' or freedom. What is 'Mokṣa'? it is a big question among us. The Indians use this word very frequently. But a very small part of people knows the actual meaning of Mokṣa. In Vedic Literature ṛṣi's uttered mantras regarding mokṣa. They kept tough spiritual practices for so long years to achieve this salvation. Mokṣa is also called as Nirvāṇa, Mukti, Vimukti, Vimokṣa etc. Not only in Hinduism but it also has different emancipations in Buddhism, Jainism etc. In a word Nirvāṇa or Mokṣa means 'Freedom.' Freedom from the Saṃsāra, in a broad sense the ultimate freedom from death and rebirth. Upaniṣads, Gītā they show the path of salvation. But apart from these; different literatures have different paths to give the explanation or analysis of salvation. Kauṭilya has shown another type of path or way of life of freedom or mokṣa. In this paper I have tried to compare or analyze the concept of mokṣa in the light of Vedānta philosophy with the Kauṭilya's 'Arthaśāstra. Arthaśāstra has completely the different perspective of freedom which we can relate in modern day's perspective also. So, it can be said that this paper is a comparative study between Vedānta and Arthaśāstra.

**Keywords:** Mokṣa, freedom, salvation, liberation, Vedānta philosophy, Arthaśāstra, Kauṭilya

### Introduction:

Salvation, Liberation, Mokṣa, Mukti, Nirvāṇa lots of names, but the main aim or the vision is the same; Freedom from the death and rebirth which is called in Vedānta philosophy as "Ātyantika Mukti." Life is a place of sufferance and full of sadness. According to Buddhist Philosophy "Sarvaṃ duḥkhaṃ- duḥkhaṃ, sarvaṃ kṣaṇikaṃ kṣaṇikaṃ," means Life is equal to sadness, and it exists for a certain period. Most of the Āstika philosophy thinkers depict 'life' as a darkness. There is no reason to be happy in this life because everything is uncertain in life. It does not validate for so long. So, in the result only sadness is the truth.

So, every āstika philosophers have tried to search the ultimate freedom or salvation from the cycle of birth and death. And for that they have talked about the 'Brahmajyān,' means the knowledge of Brahma. The one who will achieve the knowledge of Brahma will get the ultimate salvation from life. And to achieve that knowledge what is the path? they are all told in the upaniṣads. So, in short mokṣa means the ultimate nirvāṇa (freedom) from life.

But on the other hand, we get the Kauṭilya's 'Arthaśāstra.' This book has been written in later period. It was composed approximately in 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE to 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. It was a very influential book at that time. It has its great impact over the centuries. In Arthaśāstra mokṣa has been derived in a completely different way, and in totally a different perspective. So, in this paper I have tried to discover and compare the two

perspectives of mokṣa. Mokṣa is a common word in Vedānta philosophy. But mokṣa through Kauṭilya's eye is a rare one. So, I have chosen this topic for this paper and will try my level best to depicts the different thoughts clearly.

### Literature review:

For this article I have selected some primary and some secondary sources. As a primary source I have chosen 'Īśāvāsyopaniṣad,' edited by Swami Sharvananda, published by Sri Ramkrishna Math, 1943 (5<sup>th</sup> Ed.), Mylapore, Madras, 'The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad with the commentary of Śankarācārya', Translated by Swāmi Mādhavānanda, edited by Prof. S Kuppaswāmi Śāstri, published by Advaita Ashrama, 1950 (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.), Mayavati, Almora, Himalayas and the book named; 'Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya and Cāṇakya Sūtra', Edited by Vachaspati Gairola, published by Chowkhamba Vidyabhawan, 1984 (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.), Varanasi.

There are some reference books which I was going through as a secondary resource for my article which were 'Kauṭilyam Arthaśāstram (vol.1)', Edited by Manabendu Bandyopadhyay, published by Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, 2010 (4<sup>th</sup> Ed.), Kolkata. 'Sāṅkhyakārikā,' Edited by Asutosh Bhattacharya, published by Vācaspatyantra, 1929 (4<sup>th</sup> Ed.), Kolkata, 'Śrīmadbhagadgītā', Edited by Swami Jagadananda, published by Udvodhan Kāryālaya, 1961 (8<sup>th</sup> Ed.), Kolkata.

Primary resources help me for going through the authentic texts of Upaniṣads and Arthaśāstra. There are so many translations or conceptual editions are available on this subject. But without the help of the authentic texts, it is impossible to reach to the actual knowledge or analysis. And other secondary sources help me a lot to conceptualize and concretized the topic. I have gone through the all texts and then I have got too able to discover this critical subject to a stage.

### Methodology:

I have already said in my literature review portion that I have chosen some primary and some secondary sources to prepare my article. I have some special observations and some perspectives regarding this subject. I have collected many data from different sources, then acculturate them. Then I have compared them all and gone through every possible study. After that I have analyzed them and have tried my level best to give it to all. For this I have followed mixed methodology. Data collections, gone through all texts and contexts then reached to a certain stage to discover a totally a new direction of a traditional word called Mokṣa.

### Discussion:

In Indian Philosophy there are two main branches; one is Āstika (believer in the existence of Veda) and the other one is Nāstika (non-believer in the existence of Veda). In Āstika School there are also six branches of schools. They are Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Mīmāṃsā, Vedānta. This Vedānta or Upaniṣad is called as 'Mokṣa-śāstra. We all know that there are four Vedas; Ṛgveda, Sāmaveda, Yajurveda and Atharvaveda. In this Vedas, there are also four different divisions which is named as Mantra, Brāhmaṇa, Āraṇyaka and Upaniṣad. Upaniṣad is the last part of every Veda. Upaniṣad's another name is Vedānta. Because Upnaṣad as I have already said that it is the last part or division of the Veda and the word 'Anta' is also means as summary. As Upaniṣads hold the whole summary of the Veda, so it called as Vedānta.

It is already said that Upaniṣads or Vedānta śāstra whichever is named is called as 'Mokṣa-śāstra. But it is also important that although Upaniṣad is named as Mokṣa-śāstra but every śāstras are related to mokṣa. Because every Āstika school philosophy is related to mokṣa. Every Āstika philosophers have searched the path of salvation or liberation from the sadness or darkness of the life. In Sāṅkhya philosophy it is told about sadness that "Duḥkhatrayābhīghātājijñāsā"<sup>1</sup>. Now the main aim of the curiosity is freedom or mukti. Now the question is freedom from what? Then it is called freedom from sadness of life. There three types of sadness according to Sāṅkhya philosophy, they are Ādhyātmika, Ādhidaivika and Ādhibhautika. This freedom from sadness is called mokṣa.

Now what is mokṣa or nirvāṇa according to upaniṣads? Freedom or liberation from the cycle of death and rebirth. Upaniṣads believe that if one person is died, his or her body will be destroyed not the soul. Soul is energy, it cannot be destroyed, it only can change the body. Soul will birth in some another body. In this context we all know Gītā's famous ślok-

“vāsāṁsi jirṇāni yathā vihāya  
Navāni gṛhṇāti naroaparāṇi/  
Tathā śarīrāṇi vihāya jirṇā-  
Nyanyāni saṁyāti navāni dehī//2

This śloka means that when our clothes become old and worn, we give up that cloth, just like that, when our body reaches to its final stage, then soul departs our body and merges with another body. Now one another question has come that how soul searches or fixes the next body after death. According to upaniṣad the ultimate result of our whole life's work, whether it is good or bad that determine the next birth and the next life. In a nutshell it is called the 'janmāntaravāda' or the theory of rebirth. But for the ultimate freedom from this cycle of death and birth there are two paths. One is 'karmamārga' which means the path of good works, and the second path is 'jñānmārga,' means the path of knowledge. Now those who only works for their whole life they can not reach the salvation, on the other hand if one person only chooses the path of knowledge, they also cannot reach to the ultimate mukti. In fact, those who only try to get knowledge are the biggest sinner. In this context there is a famous mantra:

“andhaṁ tamaḥ praviśanti yeavidyāmupasate/  
Tato bhūya iva te tamo ya u vidyāyaṁ ratāḥ//3

This mantra means that one who only works in his or her whole life but not encourage the knowledge, must go in the darkness. But the other one who only try to gather knowledge but do not do anything in their whole life he or she will go to in the darker life in the next birth. Here darkness means the world of 'Ajñān;' or the lack of knowledge. So, they must not have the nirvāṇa. So, who will get that? The answer is only who balance the work and knowledge together only he or she can get this freedom. But it is not possible in one life. After so many lives, getting so many virtues one can get this. According to Vedānta philosophy Knowledge means 'Brahmajñān.' Brahma is the supreme power who has created the whole world, every life, every creature etc. in a word he is the creator of everything and he is the ultimate. After balancing the paths of karma (work) and jñān (the knowledge Brahma) for so many lives one can get the brahmajñān and after getting know the Brahma or we can say after reaching the ultimate stage where one is merges with the Brahma, then one can get the ultimate salvation or liberation or freedom whatever can be said from the life. Then that birth will be the last birth of that person. After that the soul will merge with the eternal power, with the Brahma. The person will feel that "Ahaṁ Brahmāsmi"<sup>4</sup>

Now let us take a view of Kauṭilya on mokṣa. He uses this word as a freedom from marriage which we know as 'Divorce' in present scenario. In marital relations separation or divorce is now very common in our society. Statistics of the divorce shows the bitter truth. Although separation from the loved ones is very pathetic and a cause of sadness. But sometimes separation can be the cause of happiness and ultimate relaxation. Person to person it varies. But that is not the point. The main point is that divorce is not at all a new concept. It has its seed so long period ago. Kauṭilya have discussed elaborately on divorce or separation in Arthaśāstra's 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter, named 'Dharmasthīyaprakaraṇa.' In this chapter he has said that, "amokṣā bharturakāmasya dviṣatī bhāryā, bhāryāśca bhartā. parasparaṁ dveṣānmokṣa"<sup>5</sup> It is a kind of a rule of mutual divorce. In modern day also we can see this concept, even there is a law in our constitution regarding mutual divorce. Mutual divorce means when husband and wife both are admitted to fall apart from their marriage and made the same decision about to separate from each other, then the couples can go for mutual divorce. The same concept Kauṭilya has talked about in his book. If only husband has some problem with his wife, divorce will not be granted; likewise, if wife has some problem with her husband, then also mutual divorce will not be considered. Only if both wants to separate from each other then only it can happen. It is also said by him that- "strīviprakārādvā puruṣāscenmokṣamicchet, yathāgṛhītamasyai dadyāt. puruṣaviprakārādvā strī cenmokṣamicchet, nāsyai yathāgṛhītaṁ dadyāt. amokṣo dharmavivāhanāmiti."<sup>6</sup> Kauṭilya also aware and has written about the other rules and laws regarding this type of divorce. He has said that if wife is guilty for some reason, then husband can be freed after giving her all the materials which he got from wife at the time of marriage. But in the opposite side if husband is guilty wife can make the decision about divorce, but in that case, husband cannot be forced to give back the materials to his wife. This may seem quite awkward that if husband is guilty and wife wants divorce, husband is not bound to give the materials which he has got from wife at the time of marriage. But this rule is under debate among the researchers that what will be the exact meaning about this part of the text. Is really Kauṭilya has written this type of rule? It is a debatable topic.

Apart from mutual divorce Kauṭilya also sets some rules and regulations regarding divorce. In what circumstances one can give up on other; these rules were set by him. At first when a man can make the decision of separation, in this regards Kauṭilya has talked. But it can be said that according to Arthaśāstra the main reason of separation from the husband's side is a sterilized wife. At that time, wife is for only to give birth of child. So, for the purpose of child one man marries a woman- "putrārthā hi striyaḥ"<sup>7</sup>. It means that for the child a woman is needed, nothing more than that. In this context also Kauṭilya has set different rules- "barṣānyaṣṭau aprajāyamānānāmputrām bandhyām cakaṅkṣet, daśa nindum, dvādaśa kanyāprasavinīm. tataḥ putrārthī dvtiyām vindet. Tasyātikrame śulkaṁ strīdhanamarghaṁ cādhivedanikaṁ dadyāt. caturbimśatipaṇaparaṁ ca daṇḍam."<sup>8</sup> Here four types of women are depicted. For the four different type of women, four different types of rules have been settled. The first one is- 'aprajāyamānā' which means the woman who is not give birth of a child; the second one is- 'bandhyā,' means a woman who is sterilized by nature, in these cases husband should wait for eight years, after that he has a right to marry another woman. The third one is- 'nindu' which means if a woman continuously gives birth of only dead child, in that case husband has a right to give up on her and remarry after the waiting period of ten years. The fourth one is- 'kanyāprasavinīm' which means if a woman only give birth of female child, not boy; then husband should wait for twelve years, during this period if a woman can not give birth of a boy child, husband can give up on her and remarry. So, we can see that based on giving birth of a child or specifically giving birth of a boy child (because if a man an only wants to have a boy child, in that case also a husband can remarry) husband can make the decision of separation.

Even at that period the concept of alimony was there. Kauṭilya has said that- "śulkaṁ strīdhanāśulkastrīdhanāyāstatpramāṇamādhivedanikamanurūpaṁ ca vṛttim dattvā vahvīrapi vindet."<sup>9</sup> that means if a man wants to separate before the fixed time limit, must pay some money as a fine, must pay back the 'strīdhana' (wife's property) and an amount of alimony to his wife. This kind of rule of paying alimony has prevailed in modern day constitution also. Which means society tries to give some protection to women in every era.

Now some rules were made by Kauṭilya on behalf of the women of the society. In this context it was said that- "nīcatvaṁ paradeśaṁ vā prasthito rājakilviṣī/ Prāṇābhiantā patitastyājyaḥ klīvoapi vā patiḥ//<sup>10</sup> which means if a husband is below charactered or if a husband lives in foreign country being separated from his wife for a long period, if a man is a rebel to the state or if a man is imponent: in these cases, wife can make the decision of being separated or divorced from her husband permanently. So, this is the circumstances. In the Arthaśāstra's third chapter Kauṭilya has depicted all the rules of being divorced to each other. In his eyes freedom from a rotten relationship is mokṣa or mukti.

In the modern-day constitution also, there are provisions of getting mutual divorce under the section 13B according to Indian Constitution. In that case both the husband and wife must have to file petition in the court. And according to Hindu marriage Act Adultery, Cruelty, Desertion are the major reasons of getting divorce.

## Conclusion:

So, we can see the difference between the rules of man and woman. Husbands can get easily separated from his wife only based on an issue of a child. But on the opposite hand, the reasons were very big in the comparison of a child issue. It is very difficult for us to acknowledge this kind of rules in these present day's situation. This is true. But we must consider that Kauṭilya has written these kinds of rules in that century. In those eras society was different, society was much more orthodox. Women were not able to avail that much rights like present days. But the Centuries have passed. Mentalities have changed. Society has changed. So, we must think in that way. Rather we must think in a positive way that Kauṭilya has considered divorce or separation in so much modern way, he considered divorce as mokṣa.

So, that was a long journey. Time passes, conceptions have been modernized. So that, this change has come. From the freedom of death and rebirth; it became the freedom from problematic or bad relationship. In the both cases ultimately 'Freedom' matters. We do not know soul's rebirth is possible or not, this is a debatable question but divorce can happen. Either divorce is good or bad I do not want to enter in that matter. But being suffered in a toxic relationship is not at all healthier one. So, freedom or liberation from toxicities is one kind of 'Salvation' of course. In this way I investigate this and with my small portion of knowledge I have tried in my paper to discover the two different types of perspectives of ultimate 'Salvation.'



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