

Competitive Exams: Hinduism

Moksha is seen as a final release from one's worldly conception of self, the loosening of the shackle of experiential duality and a realization of one's own fundamental nature which is true being, pure consciousness and bliss (satcitananda) an experience which is ineffable and beyond sensation. According to the branch of Hinduism known as advaita vedanta, at liberation the individual soul or atman is realised to be one with the Ground of all being-the Source of all phenomenal existence known as Brahman. The self-as-individual is realised to have never existed. In other (dvaita) traditions it is held that the identification between the liberated human being and God is not total but there is always some distinction between the two. In Vaishnavism, one of the largest branch of Hinduism, Moksha involves forsaking everything material and establishing one's existence as a purely devoted servant of Vishnu (Bhagavan or God; also known by many other names such as Krishna, Rama, Narayana, etc.). Hindu scripture like the Bhagavad Gita, Mahabharata, Ramayana and so on especially emphasize this personal, devotional conception of Moksha, which is achieved through the practice of Bhakti Yoga. On the other hand, works of the non-dualistic Hindu school, Advaita Vedanta or Brahmvada whose doctrinal position is derived from the Upanishads, say that the Self or Super-Soul is formless, beyond being and non-being, beyond any sense of tangibility and comprehension. These two Hindu concepts of Moksha-personal and impersonal-are seen differently depending on one's beliefs.

In Dvaita (dualist) and qualified advaitic schools of the personal Vaishnava traditions, Moksha is defined as the loving, eternal union with God (Ishvara) and considered the highest perfection of existence. The bhakta (devotee) attains the abode of his supreme Lord in a perfected state but maintains his or her individual identity, with a spiritual form, personality, tastes, pastimes, and so on:

In Advaita philosophy, the ultimate truth is not a singular Godhead, per se, but rather is oneness without form or being, something that essentially is without manifestation, personality, or activity. Moksha is union with this oneness. The concepts of impersonal Moksha and Buddhist Nirvana are comparable. Indeed, there is much overlap in their views of higher consciousness and attainment of enlightenment.

In Nastik religions such as Jainism and Buddhism, Moksha is a union with all that is, regardless of whether there is a God or not. After Nirvana, one obtains Moksha. The Nirvana of Hinduism is Brahma-Nirvana meaning that it will lead to God.