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JIVANMUKTI

Liberation - Here & Now

Swami Shantananda Puri

JIVANMUKTI
(Liberation — Here and Now)

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to

my Gurudev

Sri Swami Purushottamanandaji Maharaj

and

to all spiritual aspirants

– Swami Shantananda Puri

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CHAPTER I

Introduction – What is Jivanmukti?

We all want unlimited happiness and work for it. The means adopted to attain it are different for different people. Some think that happiness lies in getting rich and earning a lot of money, some in sexual enjoyment, some in acquisition of house-property and possession of things capable of increasing their comfort and enjoyment, some in marriage and having children etc. All people work hard to attain happiness by adopting one or the other of the means described above but happiness eludes them more often than not as all these instruments for happiness result ultimately in causing misery and unhappiness. On the contrary, unforeseen accidents and calamities which we had never dreamt of face us all of a sudden. In despair people cry out “Lord, why all this to me? What have I done to deserve this suffering!”

Sages and Saints like Vasishtha and Adi Sankara have found that because of the wrong identification of the Self with the Body-Mind complex, each person considers himself as the doer of all actions (KARTA) and the experiencer of their fruits (Bhokta). This false identification results in considering oneself as a bound, limited and finite individual, which in its turn leads one to miseries, sorrows and sufferings. A child does not know that a bulb and the electricity in it are not one unit. All differences in age (from date of manufacture), capacity (wattage), form, colour, place of origin (manufacture) and mortality (due to breakage etc.) belong to the bulb and electricity in all the bulbs is only one continuous stream of energy. Similarly the unhappy people are ignorant that even though the bodies (bulbs) are different and subject to birth, old age and death, the consciousness in all the bodies is one and the same. It is the mind which creates the false impression that each one is an individual entity by identifying the Self with the bodies. This is clear from the fact that during sleep when the mind ceases to work, we are not aware of either the body or the individuality. Then we revel in the bliss of the totality

of undifferentiated consciousness. Similarly, pain and pleasure, joy and sorrow, happiness and suffering are all **mere thoughts and fabrications of the mind due to the false identification of the Self with the Body-mind complex**. Anyone who realises the truth through Self-Enquiry (questioning **WHO AM I?**), annihilation of the mind (the **NO-MIND STATE** called **MANO-NASA**) etc. is able to delink his self from the body and identify himself with the Supreme Consciousness (**SAT-CHIT-ANANDA**) and thus gets liberated from this illusion resulting in cessation of sorrows. This state of liberation is called **MUKTI** and many believe that this state of perennial bliss can be attained only after death as a result of a lifetime of spiritual practice (Sadhana).

Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa says “Why speak of God realisation in the future? It is here and now – only the veil that hides it has to be destroyed. When the veil falls to pieces **THAT** which eternally **IS** shines forth – the **ONE**, self-luminous.” The philosophy of Non-dualism (Adwaita Vedanta) preached by the Upanishads as also sages like Dattatreya and Adi Sankara **promises liberation while still alive** and not necessarily only after death. This liberation while living

is called Jivanmukti and those who have attained it are called Jivanmuktas. If liberation or mukti is to result only after death, many would not be inclined to believe in it as nobody will be able to verify whether it really happened or not, while on the other hand **liberation while yet living is capable of direct verification.** The one who is able to perceive the one Eternal Being only in all the individual beings is called a Jivanmukta.¹

While Bhagavad Gita has not used the term “Jivanmukta” as such, some scholars believe that the other terms **STHITA PRAJNA** (steadfast in wisdom) and **GUNĀTITA** (one who has transcended the three modes- Sattwa, Rajas and- Tamas) are identical with **JIVANMUKTA**- the one who is aware of his identity with the Supreme Brahman which is immanent in all beings in an undifferentiated manner.²

-
1. जीवः शिवः सर्व एव भूतेष्वेवं व्यवस्थितः।
एवमेवाभिपश्यन् हि जीवन्मुक्तः स उच्यते ॥
(Jivanmukta Gita by Dattatreya – 3)
 2. सर्वभूते स्थितं ब्रह्म भेदाभेदो न विद्यते।
एकमेवाभिपश्यंश्च जीवन्मुक्तः स उच्यते ॥
(Jivanmukta Gita – 6)

The same idea regarding the essence of Jivanmukti has been forcefully brought out by Adi Sankara in his “SARVA VEDANTA SARA SANGRAHA” thus:-

“I am the Supreme Being (Brahman), I am the Brahman, I am the Brahman, I am the Consciousness, I am the Consciousness. The one who is fully convinced of this and remains as such is a Jivanmukta.”³

In the forthcoming chapters while a brief mention will be made of the methods for becoming a Jivanmukta, which are no different from the entire gamut of sadhanas prescribed in the various religious spiritual texts and scriptures for attaining liberation (Moksha), the various distinguishing characteristics of a Jivanmukta will be discussed in greater detail.

Besides serving other purposes, studying the common characteristics of a Jivanmukta, his inherent qualities, his code of conduct, how he behaves in the normal day-to-day life etc. by itself constitutes one of the easy methods for attaining Jivanmukti here and now.

3. अहं ब्रह्मास्म्यहं ब्रह्मास्म्यहं ब्रह्मेति निश्चयः ।
चिदहं चिदहं चेति स जीवन्मुक्त उच्यते ॥

(Sarva Vedanta Sara Sangraha – 978)

CHAPTER II

Means for attaining Jivanmukti

There are two major methods of Sadhana for attaining Jivanmukti:- One, with effort and the other, without effort. If one can get liberation without any physical or mental effort, who would be foolish enough to adopt sadhanas involving effort viz. rituals, japa (chanting of mantras or sacred syllables), Pooja (formal worship of idols etc.), breath control (Pranayama), observance of various disciplines like celibacy, non-violence, non-stealing, non-accumulation of possessions etc.? The matter is not so simple and the sages who have evolved such elaborate spiritual practices were certainly men of no mean wisdom. The following story will illustrate this point.

A rich man, fully drunk and in a state of thorough intoxication sitting in the drawing room of his own

house in a city (say, Delhi) called his car driver at 3 p.m. one day and ordered him to bring out the car from the garage and to take him to his house as it was quite late. The driver was perplexed and diffidently told his master- “Sir, this is your own house where you are sitting. Where else should I take you”. The master rebuked him saying “I do not want drivers who argue with me. I want unquestioning implicit obedience. Do what I told you”. The driver adopted a ruse. He drove his master through various distant parts of Delhi and brought him back to the same house by 10 p.m. The master felt happy and having come out of his inebriation exclaimed “Ah, now we have arrived!”

So long as we remain entangled in the multi-tentacles of illusions and delusions intoxicated by Maya (the divine will which is responsible for our wrong identification and consequent delusion), we have to start and proceed by the apparently tortuous and strenuous paths involving effort **even though ultimately the seeker is the sought**. When once in a particular birth we start with a mind already purified and spiritually mature, we shall be enabled to go by easier and direct paths where no effort is involved, for

example, **dissolution of all desires** (including for mukti) by adopting a **witness attitude of choiceless perception and an unconditional acceptance of all occurrences and events**, good or bad, favourable or unfavourable.

The two primary means prescribed for Jivanmukti are:- (1) **dissolution of the mind** and (2) **effacement of desires** (Vasanas).⁴

The Upanishads declare that when once all the desires are obliterated thoroughly and nipped at the very source viz. the heart, the individual who is subject to birth and death becomes immortal. He attains Self-realisation here and now.⁵ The dissolution of desires leads one to a still mind, ultimately to the stage of ‘**NO-MIND**’ when all thoughts cease permanently. Cessation of sorrows, freedom from fear, perennial peace and enlightenment – all these rest on the dissolution or

4. “जीवन्मुक्तये मनोनाश वासनाक्षयौ सम्पादनीयौ।

(Chapter I – under Vidwat Sannyasa of Jivanmukti Viveka of Swami Vidyaranya)

5. यदा सर्वे प्रमुच्यन्ते कामा यस्य हृदि श्रिताः।
अथ मर्त्योऽमृतो भवति अत्र ब्रह्म समश्नुते॥

(Brihadaranyaka 4-4-7)

control of mind (Mandukya Karika of GAUDAPADA-3-40). The one way to control the mind is by **gradual study of scriptures** and philosophy giving rise to the **conviction of the unreality of the objects of the world**. This results in **indifference and non-attachment to the worldly objects** (Vairagya). Seeking the company of evolved souls and sannyasins is also an equally effective method to bring about control of mind and effacement of desires.⁶

One of the most direct and instantaneous methods to achieve Jivanmukti, bypassing the aforesaid methods has been propounded by Ashtavakra thus:-

Have first that firm conviction that I am **NOT the Body-mind complex**. Know well that you are separate from the body as electricity is from the bulb. Hence, the limitations of the body (death, old age, disease, sufferings etc.) do not apply to your Self. The electrical energy inside a bulb can never be destroyed.

6. अध्यात्मविद्याधिगमः साधु संगम एव च
..-. एतास्तु युक्तयः पुष्टाः सन्ति चित्तजये किल।

(Laghu Yoga Vasishtha 28-128 & 129)

So, let one practise **sitting for a few hours each day** absolutely relaxed and not necessarily in any particular posture, in the garden or some place of solitude free from all distractions of visitors (including mobile or other telephones etc. used in modern times). Be aware of nothing else except the feeling of bare existence and being alive i.e., “I am”. Be happy in that feeling. Do not think of the body and do not add any qualification to the feeling of ‘amness’, such as, “I am a woman” “I am aged 30 years”, “I am an Indian”, “I am an Engineer”, “I am having headache” etc. Simply **“BE”**. If your eyes are open, do not see things specifically or distinguish the objects. Do not distinguish various noises. Remain in the totality of an uncritical, unjudging, undistinguishing and undifferentiated perception. Do not think “I am”. Just remain in the consciousness i.e., the feeling of your existence, like a new born child which has no vocabulary to think but revels in its **pulsating existence**. If one can permanently remain in this state (which can be attained through practise), here and now one can get Jivanmukti.⁷ There are many more

7. यदि देहं पृथक्कृत्य चित्ति विश्राम्य तिष्ठसि।
अधुनैव सुखी शान्तो बन्धमुक्तो भविष्यसि॥ (Ashtavakra Gita I – 4)

such Instant Moksha capsules in Ashtavakra Gita (Samhita).

Similarly, if one contemplates daily on one or more of the more important common characteristics and inherent qualities of a Jivanmukta delineated in the next chapter, allows it to seep into one's entire being and percolate into and permeate every cell of one's body and heart, one will become a Jivanmukta.

What is most important for attaining Jivanmukti is to engage oneself solely in the pursuit of Self-knowledge.⁸ In this path the main impediment is the mind which will not allow one to concentrate on the only goal. For this purpose aggressive and suppressive methods will be of no avail. The mind is mainly contaminated by attachment and hatred, likes and dislikes, feelings of enmity and love etc. The refractory mind should be fondled⁹ and with gentle persuasions brought to equipoise where it will remain as a **silent witness**.

-
8. नृणां ज्ञानैकनिष्ठानां आत्मज्ञानविचारिणाम्।
सा जीवन्मुक्ततोदेति..... ॥ (Laghu Yoga Vasishtha 5-88)
9. समता सान्त्वनेनाशु न द्रागिति शनैः शनैः।
पौरुषेण प्रयत्नेन लालयेच्चित्त बालकम्॥ (Yoga Vasishtha 2-9-33)

Repeated, persistent and patient efforts for a long time will be necessary till one reaches the conviction of the one Self immanent in all Beings.

Despite all the knowledge of the characteristics and inherent nature of a Jivanmukta at the tip of our fingers it is not at all easy to spot out and recognise a Jivanmukta from the multitude of people without the grace of the Supreme Being and unless the Jivanmukta wills it so.

The Jabala Upanishad speaks¹⁰ of Jivanmuktas as those who wear no distinguishing insignia or marks to denote their caste, tradition, station in life (householder, Sannyasi or other categories) and will have a non-descript and very common-man-like personality. They will not adhere to any specific code of conduct and may behave sometimes like mad men (though not mad in the least), sometimes like those possessed by the devil and more often than not like children. Seshadri Swamigal of Tiruvannamalai used to behave like a mad man. He used to enter into any house and throw

10. “अव्यक्त लिङ्गा अव्यक्ताचारा अनुन्मत्ता उन्मत्तवदाचरन्तः।”

(Jabala Upanishad – 6)

away all the food cooked and kept ready. He used to throw away the goods kept in some of the shops into the mud. All those people with whom he behaved like that got immense material prosperity and spiritual benefits too. Swami Nityananda of Vajreswari (near Bombay) used to threaten, abuse and throw stones at people who dared visit him in his cave, like a man possessed and used to fill the hands of children with sweets and toffees.

Jesus Christ was once feeling hungry and approached a fig tree by the side of the road. He found nothing at all on the tree except leaves. Disappointed, he pronounced “May no fruit ever come from you again”. The fig tree withered at once (St. Mathew 21-18). Is not this act like that of a child which chides the ground where it happens to stumble and fall?

Notwithstanding all the problems of recognition, a Jivanmukta has a distinct and subtle fragrance of his own which refuses to remain hidden, **a divine glow on his face and an undeniable vibration emanating from his body bestowing peace, soothing and calming the agitated minds of those aspirants** who

happen to meet him. These vibrations will reveal themselves more forcefully to those who have developed an intuitive insight on account of the spiritual practices/sadhanas done by them and those who are equipped with the knowledge of the general characteristics of Jivanmuktas.

What do we gain by recognising a Jivanmukta?

1. If once we can recognise a Jivanmukta, we may seek and cultivate his holy company (**Satsanga**). Keeping such company of holy men alone can lead us to the state of Jivanmukti as averred by Srimad Bhagavatam. If one is lucky enough, one may be able to choose such a Jivanmukta as **one's personal Guru** (preceptor). That alone is sufficient to make Mukti (liberation) a *fait accompli*.
2. Many self-styled teachers and aspirants who tread the spiritual path and claim to have had some experiences like seeing a light, hearing the OM sound or supernatural voices, seeing some visions of Gods or divine realms, acquiring some mystic powers like materialisation of objects just by thinking of them or divining the thoughts in

another's mind through telepathy etc. are apt to be sometimes deluded into thinking that they have become enlightened Jivanmuktas. A knowledge of the essential **characteristics of a Jivanmukta will serve as a checklist for self assessment** as to whether or not they have actually reached that state or not. One of the simplest acid tests given in the scriptures is that any saint who is interested in collection and accumulation of money¹¹ and property (for whatever noble reasons it may be) as also anybody who is interested in sexual-sports¹² cannot be a knower of the Self. Incidentally such a knowledge about Jivanmuktas would protect an aspirant from falling into a wrong company under a delusion.

3. Thirdly, even those who seek material prosperity and advancement stand to benefit by going to Jivanmuktas¹³ whose **very presence confers on them the fulfilment of all their desires.**

11. तवात्मज्ञस्य धीरस्य कथमर्थाजिने रतिः। (Ashtavakra Gita III – 1)

12. आश्चर्यं कामवशगो विकलः केलिशिक्षया। (Ashtavakra Gita III – 6)

13. तस्मादात्मज्ञं ह्यर्चयेद्भूतिकामः। (Mundakopanishad III – 1-10)

Many people are fascinated by the various mystic powers demonstrated by some persons who are mistakenly taken to be Jivanmuktas. In Yoga Vasishtha, Sri Rama poses a beautiful question—“Why is it that the Jivanmuktas never demonstrate the mystic powers (Siddhis) like journeying through the sky, levitation etc.?” The reply given by Vasishtha¹⁴ is:- “ordinary persons still in the bondage of the phenomenal world who have not had Self (God) realisation can cultivate such powers through certain occult means. A knower of the Self (a Jivanmukta) will not go after the acquisition of such powers (siddhis) as he is wholly content (LAGHU YOGA VASISHTHA – 28-2&3) in his own Self and these mystic powers are all products of ignorance (Avidya).

What to speak of the glory of a Jivanmukta?
Even long after a Jivanmukta leaves his body,

14. अनात्मविदमुक्तोऽपि नभो विहरणादिकं ।

द्रव्य मन्त्र क्रिया काल शक्त्याप्नोत्येव राघव ॥

(Laghu Yoga Vasishtha 28-2)

आत्मनात्मनि संतुष्टौ नाविद्यामनुधावति ।

(Laghu Yoga Vasishtha 28-3)

the Samadhi where the body lies interred continues to confer fulfilment of the material desires as also immense spiritual benefits to the devotees who circumambulate the Samadhi and/or pray to that saint. Those disembodied saints also become the Gurus of some earnest seekers and continue to guide them. It is presumably because (vide Brihadaranyaka Upanishad),¹⁵ the vital life-force (Prana) and the forces responsible for speech etc. of a Jivanmukta **do not go anywhere else after death but continue to be earthed and absorbed in that very place** (esoterically, in the omnipresent Brahman). Thus the vibrations continue for a very long time.

To cite an instance, one Mr. Dikshit of Bangalore (an ex Air Force Officer) settled in the U.S.A. had come to SRI RAMANASRAMAM at Tiruvannamalai during late 2000 or early 2001. One day he straight barged into my room in the evening and began to rave and rant as to how he

15. याज्ञवल्क्य इति होवाच, यत्रायं पुरुषो म्रियत उदस्मात् प्राणाः
क्रामन्ति अहो३ नेति नेति होवाच याज्ञवल्क्यः, अत्रैव समवनीयन्ते ॥
(Brihadaranyaka III - 2-11)

came to the Ashram with a lot of spiritual expectations and found that the Ashram had deviated from the path of knowledge instructed by Bhagavan Ramana and hence he was going back the next day morning sorely disappointed by not having attained anything in the Ashram. I was gazing at him helplessly. The next day early in the morning, he again came to my room with bag and baggage and with tears in his eyes and told me “Swamiji, I am sorry for my ramblings yesterday. I have since got what I wanted. In fact, Bhagavan Ramana has given me more than what I bargained for.” He went away immediately even before I could ask him as to what he had wanted and what he got.

CHAPTER III

Categories of Jivanmuktas

Despite certain common characteristics, these Jivanmuktas are, in actual life, found to differ widely from one another in their behaviour, their way of dealing with society and the world, their pattern of austerity and imparting of instruction and method of dealing with devotees.

For instance, Bhagavan Ramana lived a life of silence (mostly), never moving out of Tiruvannamalai during the period from 1896 to 1950 i.e., till the end. Nothing could elicit the least reaction in him. His forbearance forbidding his companions / devotees from coming to his help even when thieves broke into his Ashram and beat him was remarkable. He never made a formal disciple by giving traditional initiation. He lived as if

the very Supreme Brahman had descended on the earth as He is and lived amongst us.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa's way of life was far different. He used to weep and pray to His Divine Mother Kali even after he had reached the non-dual (advaitic) stage of Supreme Consciousness. He used to go into Nirvikalpa Samadhi (undifferentiated state of consciousness) even while hearing the names of the Divine Mother or some soul-stirring songs of devotion. He used to talk volubly to the visitors and devotees. He used to dance and sing ecstatically during holy celebrations. He used to weep before the Divine Mother lamenting about the delay in the coming of his disciples to him.

Sadasiva Brahmendra of Nerur used to go about naked not caring for anybody's frown or favour. He used to play with little children in the street and behaved like a mad man. He was an erudite scholar and has written commentaries on the Yogasutras of Patanjali as also on Brahma Sutra. He has composed a number of songs containing both devotion and knowledge (Jnana). Many a miracle has been attributed to him.

Thus each **Jivanmukta** lives in a **distinctly individualistic way** and no two of them have apparently much in common. It is impossible to categorise these Jivanmuktas into recognizable types with common traits. The reason for this difference has been explained in many texts like Jivanmukti Viveka and Advaita Mata Deepika.

Scriptures like Akshyupanishad, Mahopanishad, Annapurnopanishad and Yoga Vasishtha have defined seven stages of Yoga or levels of consciousness (known as Jnana Bhumikas or Yoga Bhumikas). They are:-

First Bhumika:

SUBHECHHĀ (Sprouting of Spiritual longing)

स्थितः किं मूढ एवास्मि प्रेक्षेऽहं शास्त्रसज्जनैः ।

वैराग्यपूर्वमिच्छेति शुभेच्छेत्युच्यते बुधैः ॥ (Mahopanishad V – 21)

With the knowledge that I am ignorant, the desire that arises to know the Reality through scriptures and holy men established in spirituality by resorting to dispassion (i.e. indifference to all other worldly objects) is called **subhechha** (शुभेच्छा).

Gradually his **internal desires** accumulated through past tendencies **get subsided** and he develops **detachment**. He is interested in good and meritorious deeds and desists from worldly interests. He is afraid of sinful thoughts and deeds and does not go after enjoyment. He talks sweetly, appropriate to the time and place and is full of love. He serves all good and holy people by mind, words and deeds. He tries to go through Scriptural texts. This is the first stage.

(Akshyupanishad II – 4 to 9)

Second Bhumika

VICHARANA (Discrimination and Contemplation)

शास्त्र सज्जन संपर्क वैराग्याभ्यास पूर्वकम्।
सदाचार प्रवृत्तिर्या प्रोच्यते सा विचारणा ॥

(Mahopanishad V – 28)

Seeking the **company of good people** and **study of Scriptures** while **practising detachment from all worldly objects** and adopting **the good conduct as followed by Spiritually advanced persons** is the second Bhumika known as **Vicharana** (Discrimination and Contemplation).

As a result of practising the first stage, one reaches the second stage (विचारणा) by following the good code of conduct as prescribed in the Scriptures and by engaging in contemplation and meditation. He hears the discourses by erudite and excellent scholars. As a result of such hearing he is able to know the nature of the various categories of objects and is able to distinguish as to what is to be done and what is not to be done. **He discards pride, ego, jealousy, greed and delusion** just like a snake shakes off its slough. He develops a true understanding of even the secret teachings on account of his devotion to Scriptures and good people.

(Akshyupanishad II – 10 to 14)

Third Bhumika :

ASAMSARGA OR TANUMANASI (Thinning of Desires)

विचारणा शुभेच्छाभ्यामिन्द्रियार्थेषु रक्तता ।

यत्र सा तनुतामेति प्रोच्यते तनुमानसी ॥ (Mahopanishad V – 29)

When due to long practice in the first and second bhumikas, one's attraction to the objects of senses becomes thin, it is known as **Tanumanasi** (Thinning out of mind).

This stage is verily a bed of roses. On account of his mind being firmly engaged in the contemplation of the meaning of scriptural teachings through the spiritual discourses of holy men, his **mind acquires tranquillity** and he **finds pleasure in wandering in solitude** in jungles and other places and spends his life sleeping on stones. By performance of meritorious deeds and by constant practise of Scriptures and company of holy men, he spends **a life of comfortable detachment**. His perception of the world and matter gets more and more clarity.

(Akshyupanishad Part II 15-19)

Fourth Bhumika :

SATTWĀPATTI (Pure mind)

भूमिका त्रितयाभ्यासाच्चित्ते तु विरतेर्वशात् ।

सत्त्वात्मनि स्थिते शुद्धे सत्त्वापत्तिरुदाहता ॥ (Mahopanished V – 30)

By repeated practice of the first three stages when the withdrawal of the mind from all worldly objects gets established, **the mind remains engaged in the Pure Self**. This is the fourth stage known as **sattwāpatti** (Pure mind).

In this stage, ignorance gets mostly effaced and one **begins to look at all things of the world with an equal vision. Dualism disappears and Non-duality takes root. One begins to deem the world as a dream.** This is also called “DREAM” stage.

भूमिकात्रितयाभ्यासादज्ञाने क्षय मागते ।
समं सर्वत्र पश्यन्ति चतुर्थी भूमिकां गताः ॥
अद्वैते स्थैर्यमायाते द्वैतं च प्रशमं गते ।
पश्यन्ति स्वप्नवल्लोकं चतुर्थी भूमिमागताः ॥

(Akshyupanishad Part II 30-31)

Fifth Bhumika :

ASAMSAKTI (Complete lack of attachment)

रूढ सत्त्वचमत्कारा प्रोक्ताऽसंसक्तिनामिका (Mahopanishad V – 31)

According of Akshyupanishad, the third stage itself is known as Asamsarga (lack of attachment) when one dissociates himself from the doership of all actions as everything happens as a result of actions of past birth (PRARABDHA) or as per the Lord’s will. The ultimate achievement of this stage is that one remains **tranquil and silent in his inner form without thinking of any external objects.** According to this version, fifth stage is called “**Sushupta**” (asleep).

As per Mahopanishad, having been completely dissociated with the objects of the world, remaining established in the state of witness-consciousness on account of the firm conviction about the Absolute truth, is the fifth stage.

As per Akshyupanishad (Part II-32 to 36), the mind completely subsides at this stage. Consequently the world does not appear before such a person. **All differences disappear.** This person remains only in his **'am'ness as sheer existence.** He is **inwardly enlightened.** He is established in Non-duality. Even while engaged in actions externally, his **attention is inwards** and so looks as if he is asleep.

“सत्तावशेष एवास्ते पःामीं भूमिकां गतः।

जगद्विकल्पो नोदेति चित्तस्यात्र विलापनात्॥”

(Akshyupanishad II – 33)

Sixth Bhumika:

PADĀRTHABHĀVANĀ (Absorption in the Truth)

भूमिकाप्राप्त्यासात् स्वात्मारामतया दृढम्।

आभ्यन्तराणां बाह्यानां पदार्थानामभावेनात्॥

परप्रयुक्तेन चिरं प्रयत्नेनावबोधनम्।

पदार्थभावना नाम षष्ठी भवति भूमिका॥

(Mahopanishad V – 32 & 33)

In this stage the mind is absorbed in the Witness state which transcends all things internal as well as external. He firmly revels in his own Self. The Akshyupanishad calls this state as Turyā (Transcendental). Mahopanishad terms the Seventh Stage as Turyā (तुर्या) or Turyagā (तुर्यगा) (Transcendental). In this stage, with a lot of effort he recognises that **Brahman** (Supreme being) **is his own Self**.

One is now in a stage which can neither be called as 'Being' or 'Non-being' and is absolutely fearless.

All the knots in his mind have been loosened, all doubts set at rest – a fully blossomed Jivanmukta. He remains unmoved like a burning lamp in a painting.

(Akshyupanishad II – 38 & 39)

Seventh Bhumika:

TURYĀ (Transcendental)

“यत् स्वभावैकनिष्ठत्वं सा ज्ञेया तुर्यगा गतिः ॥

(Mahopanishad V – 34)

Akshyupanishad terms this stage as Videhamuktata (**Thoroughly Oblivious of the existence of a body**). According to some, this stage can be obtained only after death when the body is left. Mahopanishad also, while calling it as Turya, asserts that only when one crosses this stage, Videha Mukti results.

This is the stage where one is **firmly established in his own natural state** (i.e. Brahma). This is a stage beyond words and is the highest state i.e., Pure consciousness. All the superimposition of the world, body etc. is effaced without a trace.

“अगम्या वचसां शान्ता सा सीमा सर्वभूमिषु।”

(Akshyupanishad II – 41)

Even though persons in all the last four of the Jnana Bhumikas are considered to be knowers of Brahman (Brahmavid), the last three belong¹⁶ to Jivanmuktas and they are respectively known as great knowers of Brahman, greater knowers of Brahman and the best

among the knowers of Brahman (Brahmavidvarah, Brahmavidvareeyan and Brahmavidvarishtha) respectively. There again, the seventh (last) Bhumika is deemed by some to belong to Videha Muktas (those who are freed from the body and have no awareness of the body at all). Again, according to some, Videha Mukti is obtained only after one discards the body after death. Ultimately the Videha Mukta is only a refined version of a Jivanmukta.

The difference between the three stages¹⁶ even though all of them are Jivanmuktas is due to the **degree of tranquillity achieved in the practice of undifferentiated (NIRVIKALPA) Samadhi state** by the three categories. But some attribute it also to the result of past actions active in this current birth (viz. Prarabdha) which will be different for different persons.

For a real Sadhaka, these differences in the naming of the stages are of no consequence.

16. पःाम्यादयस्तिस्त्रो भूमयो जीवन्मुक्तेरवान्तर भेदाः।
ते च निर्विकल्प समाध्यभ्यासकृतेन विश्रान्तितारतम्येन संपद्यन्ते।
(Jeevanmukti Viveka – 288 R.K. Mutt Publication)

According to Adhyatmopanishad,¹⁷ the effect of Prarabdha is not destroyed even after attaining Jnana (the highest knowledge) as it is like an arrow already released, which cannot be stopped *en route* without reaching the target. But this is applicable so long as the body sense continues, as ultimately even Prarabdha is an imagination of the mind due to the illusion of the body. For whatever reasons, we have to accept the fact that due to the will of God, substantial differences exist between one Jivanmukta and another in their way of functioning in life etc. In practice, one of the unfailing tests in recognising a Jivanmukta is that when any aspirant or seeker (sometimes even any common man) comes and sits by the side of a Jivanmukta for some time, he will find **all agitations and worries in his mind disappearing automatically and he continues to feel a sort of spiritual exhilaration, inner strength and peace for a long time** (sometimes for days depending on his own stage of development) even after he leaves the presence of the saint. One

17. ज्ञानोदयात् पुरारब्धं कर्म ज्ञानान्न नश्यति ।
अदत्त्वा स्वफलं लक्ष्यमुद्दिश्योत्सृष्ट बाणवत् ।
प्रारब्ध कल्पनाप्यस्य देहस्य भ्रान्तिरेष हि ॥

(Adhyatmopanishad – 53 & 57)

finds his spiritual battery fully charged which endows him with a different outlook enabling him to tackle problems and situations at home, office and in society with ease and a lack of tension or concern about the result.

It is said that in the case of Bhagavan Ramana the doubts of ever so many devotees, like Mr. Paul Brunton, used to get solved while simply sitting in silence before him and there was no need to give vocal expression.

CHAPTER IV

Characteristics of a Jivanmukta

The various Upanishads describe the Jivanmukta as follows:

1. A Jivanmukta is one who never identifies himself with his body or senses (say, I am the body etc.) and never considers the rest of the objects of the world as separate from him.¹⁸ **He, as Brahman (the Supreme Consciousness) is the substratum of the entire world.** This is a highly objective and subtle quality which will be difficult for an observer to recognise.
2. He always **lives in the Supreme Consciousness** of His undifferentiated existence, where he is

18. देहेन्द्रियेष्वहंभाव इदंभावस्तदन्यके।
यस्य नो भवतः क्वापि स जीवन्मुक्त उच्यते ॥ (Adhyatmopanishad-45)

non-different from all the Beings. He has no longer any attachment to anything other than his own Self.¹⁹

3. The Jivanmukta in the fifth state of consciousness (Jnana Bhumika) remains as if he is half asleep and **whenever he goes into Samadhi state he can get up by himself.** The one in the sixth Bhumika remains as if he is asleep, merged in dense bliss and **wakes up from Samadhi state only when aroused by others.**²⁰

The Seventh state is the most wonderful and unique state called also as Turyatita (beyond the transcendental) which is Brahman itself. **He remains without any thought of being or non-being, ego or non-ego,** as pure existence only (LAGHU YOGA VASISTHA 43-77) It is impossible for the mind to conceive of it and for words to

19. सर्वाधिष्ठान सन्मात्रे निर्विकल्पे चिदात्मनि।
यो जीवति गतस्नेहः स जीवन्मुक्त उच्यते ॥ (Annapurnopanishad-28)

20. Annapurnopanishad - 83, 84

describe it ²¹. In my own personal opinion, in recent times (till April 1950) Bhagavan Ramana was an example for that seventh state. The liberated one, when he moves with older and scholarly people talks at their own level profoundly; while talking with children he talks at their level cutting jokes and making them laugh; when people in sorrow come to him he is also full of sorrow in empathy with them (Annapurnopanishad).

4. He is bereft of all desires and attachments,²² though externally he may show some specific preferences. I have seen devotees bringing some special sweets prepared at home for my Gurudev (saying that the latter always liked them) who used to pronounce them as 'excellent' even before he touched or tasted them. It is said that once Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa asked one Mathur

21. तुर्यातीतपदावस्था सप्तमी भूमिकोत्तमा ।
मनोवचोभिरग्राह्या स्वप्रकाश सदात्मिका ॥ (Annapurnopanishad – 89)

22. सर्वेच्छाः सकलाः शङ्काः सर्वेहाः सर्वनिश्चयाः ।
धिया येन परित्यक्ताः स जीवन्मुक्त उच्यते ॥ (Mahopanishad II – 58)

Babu to get him a silk shawl which he wore once and soon enough threw it away in mud and trampled on it saying “what is there in this silk”.

5. He never has a single doubt and never takes any decision like ‘I will do this or that’. **He just floats as if asleep in the ocean of life without choice, without preference**, neither swimming with nor against the current, accepting whatever comes, good or bad, favourable or unfavourable, without judging and without ego or pride like a silent witness ²³. This is the best of the means for attaining Jivanmukti. If we function in this manner in practical life whether in office or house or society, no problem, no crisis nor any unhappiness will crop up.
6. **He takes no interest in any of the objects of enjoyment.** He has no taste for food. He eats bitter, salty, pungent, good and bad things with equal relish. Normally people try to hide and

23. (1) Mahopanishad-II – 46

(2) मौनवान् निरहंकारो निर्मानो मुक्तमत्सरः। (Mahopanishad II – 50)

(3) सर्वत्र विगतस्नेहो यः साक्षिवदवस्थितः। (Mahopanishad II – 51)

fight against old age by dyeing their hair, wearing wigs, applying anti-wrinkle creams etc. A Jivanmukta faces old age, death, calamities, and penury as pleasantly as he would welcome a kingdom offered to him (Mahopanishad II 42, 54 & 55).²⁴

7. The entire eleventh chapter of the Sixth Amsa of SIVARAHASYAM, known more popularly as Ribhu Gita containing the conversation between Ribhu and Nidagha deals with Jivanmuktas. Their characteristics as delineated therein are as follows:
 - (a) A Jivanmukta never identifies himself **with his body, senses, mind etc.** He has the firm conviction that the Supreme Being is verily himself and thus revels in supreme bliss. He is bereft of all ego which is the cause of all misery and lives only as the Pure Consciousness.
 - (b) A Jivanmukta is one who is thoroughly aware that “I have no guru or disciple apart from me. There is no transcendental knowledge apart from me.”²⁵ There is no sacred place of pilgrimage

24. जरा मरणमापच्च राज्यं दारिद्र्यमेव च ।
रम्यमित्येव यो भुङ्क्ते स जीवन्मुक्त उच्यते ॥ (Mahopanishad II – 55)

25. न मे गुरु न मे शिष्यो न मे बोधो न मे परः । (Ribhu Gita II – 28)

apart from me; there is no service to the Lord apart from me; there is no God apart from me.²⁶ There is no Japa (chanting of Mantra) or Mantra (sacred syllable of the Lord) apart from me. There is no fire sacrifice (Homa) apart from me nor is there any night (ignorance). All the world is in me (not apart)²⁷ Thus the Jivanmukta rests in his own Self.

- (c) “I am in no delusion, I have no knowledge apart from me. I have no secrets to hide. I have no lineage (kulam). I have nothing (I possess nothing)”. The one who contemplates thus is a Jivanmukta.²⁸
- (d) “There is no question of any repeated spiritual practice or knowledge to be gained. There is no

26. न मे तीर्थं न मे सेवा न मे देवो न मे स्थलम्।
न क्वचिद्भेदहीनोऽयं स जीवन्मुक्त उच्यते ॥ (Ribhu Gita II – 22)

27. न मे जपो न मे मन्त्रो न मे होमो न मे निशा।
न मे सर्वमिति स्वस्थः स जीवन्मुक्त उच्यते ॥ (Ribhu Gita II – 34)

28. न मे भ्रान्तिर्न मे ज्ञानं न मे गुह्यं न मे कुलम्।
न मे किञ्चिदिति ध्यायन् स जीवन्मुक्त उच्यते ॥ (Ribhu Gita II – 47)

question of attaining any peace of mind nor of controlling the senses.²⁹

- (e) The one who knows that “I have nothing to be spoken to – not even a little; nor have I anything to hear or contemplate in the least³⁰” is a Jivanmukta.
- (f) “I am convinced thoroughly that I am the Supreme Being (Brahman), I am the Brahman and I am the Brahman and also I am the Pure Consciousness, I am the Pure Consciousness.”³¹ This is the state in which a Jivanmukta always lives.

The entire Ribhu Gita including the chapter on Jivanmukta **is meant for constant contemplation on Brahman** (Brahmanusandhanam) and for catapulting the seeker into the contemplation that “I am the Brahman” (‘Aham Brahma’ Bhavana)

29. न मेऽभ्यासो न मे विद्या न मे शान्तिर्न मे दमः । (Ribhu Gita II – 55)

30. न मे वक्तव्यमल्पं वा न मे श्रोतव्यमण्वपि ।
न मे मन्तव्यमीषद्वा स जीवन्मुक्त उच्यते ॥ (Ribhu Gita II – 37)

31. अहं ब्रह्म अहं ब्रह्म अहं ब्रह्मेति निश्चयः ।
चिदहं चिदहं चेति स जीवन्मुक्त उच्यते ॥ (Ribhu Gita II – 59)

Bhagavan Ramana told a least literate lady (Sampurnamma). “Even if you do not understand the meaning, it does not matter. A repeated recitation will bestow untold benefits”. The purpose of the aforesaid description of a Jivanmukta which is neither easy of emulation nor so easily understandable **is to take us to a higher stage of Consciousness only by repeated recitation.**

8. We all believe that everyone of us is a distinctly different individual and the mind is the source of this feeling of individuality which is only a thought. Hence the distinctions of I, mine and you arise. This wrong division of the one Consciousness which is whole, total and undivided is all a thought arising from the mind, which we have been hypnotised into believing. The one who is free from such thoughts of individuality is a Jivanmukta.³²

32. मन एव मनुष्याणां भेदाभेदस्य कारणम्।
विकल्पनैव संकल्पं जीवन्मुक्तः स उच्यते॥

(Jivanmukta Gita of Dattatreya – 22)

9. All our actions in life are normally motivated by our nature made up of three modes (Gunas) — Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas. A Jivanmukta is one whose functioning is spontaneous as he is **bereft of the three modes** natural to every one.³³
10. He revels in his Self alone and remains fully **absorbed in the sweetness of the Supreme Knowledge of the Brahman.**

33. एकाकी रमते नित्यं स्वभाव गुण वर्जितम्।
ब्रह्मज्ञानरसास्वादी जीवन्मुक्तः स उच्यते ॥ (Jeevan Mukta Gita – 17)

CHAPTER V

How does a Jivanmukta carry on with his normal day-to-day life?

Normally, a Jivanmukta in the fifth state of consciousness (JNANA BHUMIKA) remains half awake and half sleepy,³⁴ while the one in the sixth state remains as if asleep. They attend to their worldly duties only when reminded and awakened by other people around them,³⁵ in the same manner as dictated by tradition.

He is **normally engaged in those minimum activities** required for the bare sustenance of his body without being motivated by any desire, delusion or grief, without exercising any choice or preference and without

34. अर्द्धं सुप्तं प्रबुद्धाभो जीवन्मुक्तोऽत्र तिष्ठति। (Annapurnopanishad – 83)

35. पार्श्वस्थबोधिताः सन्तः पूर्वाचारक्रमागतम्।
आचारमाचरन्त्येव सुप्तबुद्धवदक्षताः ॥ (Laghu Yoga Vasishta 13 – 127)

judging or bothering about whether an action is good or bad, favourable or unfavourable.³⁶

As **all actions** (obligatory or otherwise) **have dropped off** by themselves in respect of a person of enlightenment, he never does any activity nor does he ever talk though to the onlookers it appears as if he is performing some act or is talking.³⁷ This is because he has no ego or sense of doership and has no body-sense. Osho, in his books, has narrated that once Gautam Buddha, after having travelled miles from village to village for the propagation of Dhamma (ultimate law of truth) and having delivered sermons for more than about 30 to 40 years, told his favourite disciple Ananda “Ananda, believe me when I say that in all these years I have never walked a single step nor have I talked a single word”. Such Jivanmuktas completely alienate themselves from the body and for them the activity, if any, is done by the body and not by themselves who are of the form of Pure Consciousness. (Ashtavakra Samhita – XIII-25)

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36. शारीरं केवलं कर्म शोक मोहादिवर्जितम्।
शुभाशुभपरित्यागी जीवन्मुक्तः स उच्यते ॥ (Jivanmukta Gita – 9)
37. ज्ञानाद् गलितकर्मा यो लोकदृष्ट्यापि कर्मकृत्।
नाप्नोत्यवसरं कर्तुं वक्तुमेव च किःन ॥ (Ashtavakra Samhita XVIII – 77)

A common man engaged in worldly activities, even while eating is engaged in various thoughts about his office, profession, business or family matters and so he never fully enjoys his eating. The same is the case when he sleeps or travels or talks, as while engaged in these activities he is distracted by other worldly thoughts. In contrast, while a Jivanmukta sleeps, it is with full enjoyment without any other thought. Similarly, he does with full relish any other task like talking, eating etc., as he is bereft of all distracting thoughts of the world.³⁸

Actually, a Jivanmukta is a master idler who feels vexed even with the functioning of opening and closing the eye-lids.³⁹ Self realisation makes even the best speaker seem mute, an intelligent man appear dull and the most active and dynamic person look lethargic.⁴⁰

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38. सुखमास्ते सुखं शेते सुखमायाति याति च ।
सुखं वक्ति सुखं भुङ्क्ते व्यवहारेऽपि शान्तधीः ॥
(Ashtavakra Samhita XVIII – 59)
39. व्यापारे खिद्यते यस्तु निमेषोन्मेषयोरपि ।
तस्यालस्यधुरीणस्य सुखं नान्यस्य कस्यचित् ॥
(Ashtavakra Samhita XVI – 4)
40. वाग्मि प्राज्ञ महोद्योगं जनं मूकजडालसम् ।
करोति तत्त्वबोधोऽयमतस्त्यक्तो बुभुक्षुभिः ॥
(Ashtavakra Samhita XV – 3)

He has no thought of duty so far done or duty yet to be done. The only duty of every person is to know the Self and so no sense of duty done or yet to be done arises for a liberated person.⁴¹ He is not interested either in charitable acts or in meritorious deeds or in earning money or in enjoyment of desired objects or even in liberation (MOKSHA).

Even though a Jivanmukta remains thoroughly inactive like a fallen dried leaf, **he is made to act sometimes by the wind of Totality** which runs the entire world, without any volition of his own⁴². Thus while he performs certain acts, without any desire or attachment, selflessly like a child, he continues to remain pure and is not tainted by the nature of the deed, sinful or meritorious.⁴³

41. इदं कृतमिदं नेति द्वन्द्वैर्मुक्तं यदा मनः ।
धर्मार्थकाममोक्षेषु निरपेक्षं तदा भवेत् ॥ (Ashtavakra Samhita XVI – 6)

42. क्षिप्तः संसारवातेन चेष्टते शुष्कपर्णवत् ॥
(Ashtavakra Samhita XVIII – 21)

43. सर्वारम्भेषु निष्कामो यश्चरेद् बालवन्मुनिः ।
न लेपस्तस्य शुद्धस्य क्रियमाणेऽपि कर्मणि ॥
(Ashtavakra Samhita XVIII – 64)

CHAPTER VI

More Practical Characteristics of a Jivanmukta

1. **MONEY AND SEX** : When we come to the more practical and easily recognisable traits of a Jivanmukta, sexual non-involvement and not earning/accumulation of money play the most predominant role. For any reason whatsoever, whether for building an Ashram or a temple, for running an orphanage or charitable school, earning money by lectures/discourses/Initiations (Mantra Diksha) through donations etc. or so-called voluntary contributions will not be possible⁴⁴ for a liberated saint who cannot indulge in such things. **For a knower of the Self, there**

44. तवात्मज्ञस्य धीरस्य कथमर्थार्जने रतिः। (Ashtavakra Samhita III - 1)

is no world or society apart from himself which needs to be helped through various services.

Even a person who has once heard of the beautiful Self which is pure consciousness will never get attracted to the degrading sexual activities. One who is established in the Non-dual Reality and strives for his liberation can never afford to indulge in amorous and sexual sports having been won over by carnal lust and passion. Sadhana for liberation and sexual indulgence are incompatible and cannot go together. ⁴⁵

2. **POWER OF NOW** : Next in importance is his **attitude towards past, present and future.** A common man's mind gets agitated by thinking of past events. Memories of past sufferings and insults as also of pleasant events both continue to haunt him and disturb his peace of mind.

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45. 1. श्रुत्वापि शुद्ध चैतन्यमात्मानमतिसुन्दरम्।
उपस्थेऽत्यन्त संसक्तो मालिन्यमधिगच्छति॥
2. आस्थितः परमाद्वैतं मोक्षार्थेऽपि व्यवस्थितः।
आश्चर्यं कामवशगो विकलः केलिशिक्षया॥

(Ashtavakra Samhita III – 4 & 6)

Similarly, even though he has no capacity for divining the future in advance, the mind continues to be perturbed by imaging and planning the future by projecting the past and is haunted by fear of insecurity, loss etc. The past is past and there is no use ruminating over it as nothing can be undone now. The future is unknown. The present can never be caught because by the time you become aware of it, it becomes a thing of the past. So, a Jivanmukta never thinks of the past, never bothers about the future and **remains a silent and choiceless witness to the present, accepting things as they come.**⁴⁶ This is the secret of his happiness which is the result of remaining in the 'NOW' at all times.

3. **NO REACTION:** Here lies the ultimate test of a Jivanmukta. He does not react to any events or news, or to any impetus from outside, however intense or immense may be the provocation.

46. अतीताननुसंधानं भविष्यदविचारणम्।
औदासीन्य मपिप्राप्ते जीवन्मुक्तस्य लक्षणम्॥

(Vivekachudamani by Sankara – 433)

- (1) Whether feasted or tormented, he neither rejoices nor is angry as he sees his own Self only in all hosts or tormentors.⁴⁷
- (2) He does not react in the least whether he is adulated or vilified, looks at his own body as if it belongs to someone else and all praise or censure pertains only to the body and not to the Self.⁴⁸
- (3) He is never afraid of the impending and imminent death, as he looks at the world and his own life as but a dream.⁴⁹
- (4) He is neither tempted by worldly objects nor attached to them. If, as a result of past actions, (Prarabdha) some objects of

47. धीरस्तु भोज्यमानोऽपि पीड्यमानोऽपि सर्वदा ।
आत्मानं केवलं पश्यन् न तुष्यति न कुप्यति ॥
(Ashtavakra Samhita III – 9)

48. चेष्टमानं शरीरं स्वं पश्यत्यन्यशरीरवत् ।
संस्तवे चापि निन्दायां कथं क्षुभ्येत् महाशयः ॥
(Ashtavakra Samhita III – 10)

49. अपि सन्निहिते मुत्यौ कथं त्रस्यति धीरधीः ?
(Ashtavakra Samhita III – 11)

enjoyment seek him, he is neither pleased by nor vexed at their presence.⁵⁰

- (5) Rooted in the Non-duality of the Brahman, he performs actions fearlessly. (Ashtavakra Samhita IV-6)
- (6) He is alike in joy and sorrow, hope and disappointment as also in life and death.⁵¹
- (7) He neither desires nor grieves. He neither rejects nor accepts. (Ashtavakra Samhita VIII-2)
- (8) All prosperity and calamities are predestined by the will of the Lord. So a Jivanmukta is happy in both situations.⁵²

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50. 1) निस्पृहं मानसं यस्य नैराश्येऽपि महात्मनः।
(Ashtavakra Samhita III – 12)
 - 2) यदृच्छयागतो भोगो न दुःखाय न तुष्टये ॥
(Ashtavakra Samhita III – 14)
 51. समदुःखसुखः पूर्णः आशा नैराश्ययोः समः।
समजीवितमृत्युः सन्..... ॥
(Ashtavakra Samhita VI – 4)
 52. आपदः संपदः काले दैवादेवेति निश्चयी।
तृप्तः स्वस्थेन्द्रियो नित्यं न वाञ्छति न शोचति ॥
(Ashtavakra Samhita XI – 3)

- (9) When sense objects come before a Jivanmukta he never goes to the extreme of hating them like a yogi or, on the other of hand, hankering after their enjoyment like a worldly Person (Bhogi). He remains a mute choiceless witness neither grasping nor rejecting.⁵³ It is the worldly man, who wants to renounce the home and hearth and be rid of sorrows or sufferings while a Jivanmukta whose desires have been effaced does not experience any sorrow or misery in this world.⁵⁴
- (10) While seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, grasping, talking or walking, a common man chooses only those objects which are to his liking and rejects those which he dislikes.⁵⁵ A Jivanmukta, while doing these very activities,

53. विरक्तो विषयद्वेष्टा रागी विषय लोलुपः ।
ग्रहमोक्षविहीनस्तु न विरक्तो न रागवान् ॥

(Ashtavakra Samhita XVI – 6)

54. हातुमिच्छति संसारं रागी दुःखजिहासया ।
वीतरागो हि निर्दुःखस्तस्मिन्नपि न खिद्यति ॥

(Ashtavakra Samhita XVI – 9)

55. पश्यन् शृण्वन् स्पृशन् जिघ्रन् अश्नन् गृह्णन् वदन् ब्रजन् ।
ईहितानीहितैर्मुक्तो मुक्त एव महाशयः ॥ (Ashtavakra Samhita XVII – 12)

accepts whatever confronts him without exercising any choice based on his likes or dislikes.

- (11) He exercises no compassion nor entertains any wish to harm anybody. He is without pride or humility. Nothing disturbs him; nothing surprises him.⁵⁶
- (12) Alone in the forest or out in the multitude of the world, an emperor in his own kingdom or a beggar begging for alms, winning or losing makes no difference to him.⁵⁷
- (13) Even when his servants, wives, sons, grandsons and close relatives make fun of him and despise him, he remains undismayed and unmoved.⁵⁸
- (14) Even though a Jivanmukta may appear to the on – looker as happy or unhappy with certain things

56. न हिंसा नैव कारुण्यं नौद्धत्यं न च दीनता ।
नाश्चर्यं नैव च क्षोभः क्षीणसंसरणे नरे ॥ (Ashtavakra Samhita XVII-16)

57. स्वराज्ये भैक्ष्यवृत्तौ च लाभालाभे जने वने ।
निर्विकल्पस्वभावस्य न विशेषोऽस्ति योगिनः ॥
(Ashtavakra Samhita XVIII – 11)

58. भृत्यैः पुत्रैः कलत्रैश्च दौहित्रैश्चापि गोत्रजैः ।
विहस्य धिक्कृतो योगी न याति विकृतिं मनाक् ॥
(Ashtavakra Samhita XVIII – 55)

and pleased or displeased by certain events, in reality he is neither pleased nor unhappy at any time. Such marvellous traits of a Jivanmukta can be understood only by other Jivanmuktas in similar state of consciousness.⁵⁹

- (15) He does not bother whether the body falls down in death or it continues to live. He is so firmly set in his own being that he goes beyond the cycle of births and deaths.⁶⁰ Whether a pot continues to stay for years or immediately falls down and is destroyed, **it matters not either way to the space inside the pot.**⁶¹

In conclusion, a Jivanmukta is internally one with the entire world and undifferentiated. He is not bothered about conformity to any standard or

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59. सन्तुष्टोऽपि न संतुष्टः खिन्नोऽपि न च खिद्यते ।
तस्याश्चर्यदशां तां तां तादृशा एव जानते ॥
(Ashtavakra Samhita XVIII-56)
60. पततूदेतु वा देहो नास्य चिन्ता महात्मनः ।
स्वभावभूमि विश्रान्ति विस्मृताशेष संसृतेः ॥
(Ashtavakra Samhita XVIII-86)
61. कुम्भो विनश्यतु, चिरं समवस्थितो वा ।
कुम्भाम्बरस्य न च कोऽपि विशेषलेशः ॥
(Sukashtakam)

world's opinion or acceptance. He can behave as he wants (even though he has no cause to perform any act against universally accepted moral and ethical principles [Dharma]) and there are no dos and don'ts for him (no commands or prohibitions).⁶² Who can understand those people who act like lunatics except perhaps those who are in an exactly similar state?⁶³

He is empty both within and without like an empty pitcher kept in the open. He is at the same time full (plenary) both inside and outside like a jar kept submerged in the ocean and full of water.⁶⁴

62. “निस्त्रैगुण्ये पथि विचरतां को विधिः को निषेधः।” (Sukashtakam)

63. अन्तर्विकल्पशून्यस्य बहिः स्वच्छन्दचारिणः।
भ्रान्तस्यैव दशास्तास्ताःतादृशा एव जानते॥ (Ashtavakra Samhita XIV-4)

64. अन्तः शून्यो बहिः शून्यः शून्यः कुम्भ इवाम्बरे।
अन्तः पूर्णो बहिः पूर्णः पूर्णः कुम्भ इवार्णवे॥

(Laghu Yoga Vasishtha – 43-79)

There is no coming or going for him (to the other worlds) i.e. there is no rebirth.⁶⁵

Immanent in the universe behind all the variegated and manifold forms is the Brahman, the Supreme Existence and it is He that illumines the entire world like the Sun. A knower of this Reality becomes a Jivanmukta.⁶⁶

65. गतागतं द्वयः नास्ति जीवन्मुक्तः स उच्यते। (Jivanmukta Gita – 13)

66. एवं ब्रह्म जगत्सर्वं अखिलं भासते रविः।
संस्थितं सर्वभूतानां जीवन्मुक्तः स उच्यते। (Jivanmukta Gita – 4)

CHAPTER VII

Summing Up

Who can talk of a Jivanmukta or describe him? Seen from the point of view of ultimate reality, there can never be a single individual who can claim himself to be a Jivanmukta. Only when the individuality which identifies itself with the Body-mind mechanism is dissolved, liberation results. **Jivanmukti is a state appearing in the Totality.**

The Ashtavakra Samhita says “So long as there is ‘I’ there is only bondage. When the ‘I’ has dissolved, there is “Liberation”.*

As long as we feel hungry in a dream, a dream food has to be procured in order to appease that hunger in the

* यदा नाहं तदा मोक्षो यदाहं बन्धनं तदा ।
मत्वेति हेलया किःित् मा गृहाण विमुःा मा ॥

(Ashtavakra Samhita VIII – 4)

dream. Till such time as the delusion of the world and bondage exists, there has to be liberation and the state of a Jivanmukta is also relatively true.

To summarise the main steps leading to the state of a Jivanmukta:-

1. Leave off your identification with the body (**Dehatmabhava**) and be convinced that you are not the body-mind mechanism but Pure Consciousness.
2. Live always in the 'Now'. Neither think of the past which has already happened nor worry or have day dreams of the future. As the future is unknown, all thoughts of future are baseless imaginations of the mind. **At this moment you are happy. Extend this from moment to moment.** Even when you have no cause for unhappiness, you become unhappy by either thinking of some unpleasant past events or imagining some fear of insecurity or calamity.
3. Accept the present and float with it. Do not swim either with or against the current. Just float and allow life to take you wherever it wants.

Accept all happenings and just look at them as an uninvolved choiceless uncritical pure witness.

Do not exercise any judgement as to whether an event is good or bad, favourable or unfavourable or whether to your liking or not.

4. **Leave off doership :**

To have a state of unconditional acceptance, it is essential that we **surrender all the doership** to the Supreme Being i.e. the Self. Neither birth nor death (the two ends of life) is in our hands. **Nobody has consulted our desires before we were born nor does anyone give us any notice or choice before our death.** Even breathing takes place on its own and we have no power to stop it on the day it bids final good-bye to the body. How many people strive hard to achieve their ambitions in life with all qualifications and dexterity at their command sparing no efforts but ultimately they fail. Sudden calamities, never even dreamt of, overtake us. All this proves that all actions are taking place in the Totality according to a Divine scheme but we believe that we are the doers and thus attract the results of such actions (good or bad) to us. If only we surrender all the actions to

that Supreme Divine Will and rest content with the actual role of being a passive choiceless and silent instrument in the hands of the Divine, the very Divine Grace will lead us to our Goal.

5. **Do not react**

Even if the entire Universe were to collapse or get inundated with floods, do not react. **Let no external impetus, however favourable or unfavourable, have any effect or elicit any response from you.** This state can result only when the idea that “I am the Body-mind complex” ceases to have a hold on you. In quantum physics, Super conductors (i.e. conductors whose heat energy is reduced to 0° Absolute or – 273.16° C) are considered as perfect as all the electrons are posited in such a perfect condition that no external force (say of a magnet) can penetrate into it. The stage when you become impervious to or invulnerable to any external forces like sufferings, sorrows, censure or praise etc. (the polaric opposites) leads you to perfection.



His Holiness Sri Swami Shantananda Puri of Vasistha Guha (Himalayas) belongs to that illustrious heritage of Spiritual Masters, about which our Motherland is proud of. He is a scholar, par excellence, in Vedic Scriptures as well as in Puranic texts such as Bhagavatam. His deep knowledge and lucid exposition of Bhagavad Gita, Yoga Vasishtha, Ashtavakra Gita, have made

him a popular and lovable guide and Guru for those thirsty for spiritual guidance and knowledge. His simplicity, transparent heart, deep faith in the Divine Force and absolute surrender to THAT, have made him an ideal combination of Jnana, Bhakti, and Vairagya. His mastery in Sanskrit, English, Tamil and Hindi and his vast experience and deep insight have drawn innumerable followers from India and abroad.

Some of the books authored by His Holiness that have been popular among the spiritual seekers are : "Srimad Bhagavatam: Its Message for the Modern Man", "Sadhanas in Bhagavad Gita", "Fragrant Flowers", "The Quantum Leap into Absolute". Some of these books have already appeared in translation also in Kannada, Hindi and Telugu. He has written a commendable commentary in Hindi and Tamil on Shivasahasranamam. He has composed in Sanskrit Sri Ramana Maharshi Suprabhatam which has been brought out by Sri Ramanasramam by way of a cassette which has been very popular.

The present title, **Jivanmukti (Liberation — Here and Now)** is an interesting exposition of the sacred knowledge of liberation as is contained in the Upanishads, Yogavashistha, Jeevanmukti Viveka, Ashtavakra Samhita and other ancient texts. This monograph is a beautiful mirror of Swami's deep knowledge and experience as well as intuition.