

**A Comparative Study of Aesthetic Experience and Mokṣa: With
reference to Hiriyanna**



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by

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CERTIFICATE

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Chapter 1- An Exposition of Indian Aesthetics

Introduction

The attempt to give a definition of aesthetics has been upon each and every scholars and thinkers who may have shown interests in aesthetics. Although when speaking about aesthetics our thoughts connect aesthetics with various things the specific concern here is aesthetics in connection with art. The concept of aesthetics is believed to have originated in Germany during the eighteenth century and was introduced by a German philosopher named Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten. We find the backbone of Indian aesthetics traced back to *Nāṭyaśāstra* of Bharata Muni, a sage and a priest who lived during 3rd century BCE and the 1st-century CE. Bharata was known to advocate the theory of *rasa* and also the concept of *bhāva*. He had originally discussed the *rasa* theory in relation to drama and it was only later by other aestheticians that the *rasa* theory was discussed in relation to other forms of art. One among the scholars on aesthetics who had discussed aesthetics mainly in relation to poetry is Hiriyanna. Hiriyanna is a contemporary thinker on aesthetics whose views have formed a significant part of Indian aesthetics. Although *rasa* is not the subject concern of this paper, we cannot do without it for it is the core of aesthetic experience in Indian aesthetics. Another reason for bringing out the theory of *rasa* is because Hiriyanna has also recognized the theory of *rasa* as the basis for the Indian aesthetic culture.

Indian aesthetics

We find trails of aesthetic related discussions in the *Vedas* and *Upaniṣads*. The history of Indian aesthetics can be traced on the discussions of poetry, poem and the poet. We find in the *Vedas* that the poets were treated with high regard as they were seen as gods or *kavi*. The poet was seen as a creator and a maker; one with profound consciousness. He makes the world a

better place through his poem, his words (*vak*) and imagination. The Indian art tradition is rested on one main concept- the concept of “*rasa*” which means taste, savor or juice. The *rasa* theory has been discussed mainly in relation to dramas among other creative works of art and occupies a central place in the Indian aesthetics as all creative works of art revolves around it. And in connection with the theory of *rasa* we certainly cannot omit the concept of ‘emotion’ in the Indian schools of thought, emotion has been discussed mainly in connection with the theory of *rasa*, which is known as “juice, sap, essence, condiment or even flavor and refers to the different sentiments invoked by a work of art, for example a piece of music”¹. The concept of ‘emotion’ has always played a vital role in the Indian aesthetics as seen in connection with the theory of *rasa* which is “aesthetic emotion”². The theory of *rasa* rested on the concept of *bhāva* which is used to refer to an experience. When *bhāvas* are enacted in a drama, that becomes *rasa*. The common translation of *bhāva* has been emotion although the concept is a reference to our experience and it deals with the existence of man. It refers more to the establishment of our existence through the experience of certain emotions. The word ‘*bhāva*’ literally means ‘to exist’.

Hiriyanna has discussed the beauty we see in art and the beauty we see in nature. In “*Art Experience*”, as he discussed the distinction between the two, he has also exposed that the Indian philosophical culture has been misunderstood for not dealing in their philosophy with the domain of aesthetics or to be precise, with the subject of beauty in art and for being exclusive only to a discussion of beauty in nature. It is indeed true, but the reason behind this is because they do not find any direct connection between art and the pursuit of the ultimate end of life. They did not consider any discussion of art to administer a way to their journey

¹ Tuske, Joerg. "The Concept of Emotion in Classical Indian Philosophy (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)." Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Last modified July 26, 2016. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/concept-emotion-india/>.

² "The Theory of *Rasa*." In *Indian Aesthetics: An Introduction*, edited by V. S. Seturaman. Madras: Macmillan India Limited, 1992, p.191.

towards the end goal of their life pursuit. Some even believed that art distracts man from the ultimate goal. However, according to Hiriyanna, he stated “Art is a short cut to the ultimate value of life”.³ The intention of art is to give us an experience that is higher than our mundane experience. Art aims to secure a unique experience in life. The beauty in nature was considered as inferior to that of the beauty given in art. Nature is indeed beautiful and can satisfy man in his quest for beauty. Nevertheless, he presented the idealistic view of nature. The idealists view of nature contended that the beauty contained in art is much more whole than beauty in nature. The beauty of nature is subjected to time and decay. With time there will be a change in the appearances of nature. There can also be a change in our attitude for nature. All of these does not happen with art. The idealists also contended that beauty may not be part of nature viewed in parts. It is until the self has overcome selfish desires and attained a realization of the truth that nature lacks complete beauty. It is only in art that we have such complete kind of beauty. There are another group of aestheticians who took a pessimistic view of nature. They have considered ‘ugliness’ alongside beauty. The need for art is, according to them is because of the presence of ugliness. Art experience is an experience that gives rise to unselfishness. The kind of unselfishness we get from the experience of art is ‘spontaneous’, ‘complete’ and yields for man a state of oblivion towards his desirous self. This unselfishness leads to joy that elevates man to a higher state of experience. The experience that art gives has been analyzed and gives rise to two different viewpoints. There are those who believe this ‘unique experience’ can be attained only by surpassing the worldly desires and affections. It is an experience that is attained after the perfection of the self. Another group believes that upon a contemplation of art, we have an experience which is attained but not in this life.

³ "The Main Aspects of Indian Aesthetics." In *Indian Aesthetics: An Introduction*, edited by V. S. Seturaman. Madras: Macmillan India Limited, 1992, p.162.

Hiriyanna has given art a high regard as he states, “Art is a device for the provisional attainment of the final ideal of life, whether or not we look forward to a state which eventually renders it superfluous.”⁴ Hiriyanna has put the experience of art and that of the spiritual experience (*mokṣa*) at the same plane. He has called the two experiences of art and the ultimate ideal ‘identifiable’. It is the purpose of art to give us an experience that is unique to our ordinary experience. Hiriyanna makes his comparison based on the idealistic view of the ultimate ideal.

A group of thinkers known as the formalists argued that we direct our attention towards the qualities of the object that are prominently visible and obvious upon view. For example, we notice the size, the shape and color of the object, or certain figure, order and sound of the event. So basically, it is ‘form’ we are dealing with when we engage in art experience. Hiriyanna has also argued that the artist attempt to bring out the artistic attitude of viewers either through the ‘form’ or the ‘content’ the form as already explained consisted of the physical appearance or outer appearance. In the Indian tradition the form of an art object matters less as compared to the meaning expressed. There have been different views that persist between theorists and critics regarding the criteria for judgement for a good poetry, whether it is to be judged with the form or the content. Some have argued, for example, in the case of the statue of Buddha, the outer linings may be perfectly executed and even appreciated for this, but one must instead be looking at the inner buildings of the statue such as the calmness and the serenity portrayed by the statue. Such is the case with the idols of the Hindu Gods that are various and physically depicts a God that have arms extremely exceeding the normal number of arms we may have seen or known any being to have, or a God that may look almost abnormal to the normal human eye. It is the contention of the followers of the Hindu religion that these Gods should be seen as depicting some deep concepts and powers.

⁴ Ibid, p.163.

What is the aim of poetry?

The *Upaniṣads* had presented the self as consisting of the lower and the higher self. In align with this the nature of man is such that he has a higher and a lower motive. It is the strife for higher pursuits like the ideal that makes man a spiritual being, and while he is spiritual in nature, he is also a natural being bounded by the pursuits of lower ends. Hiriyanna has also stated of the persistence of ‘internal conflict’ between the lower self and the higher self or the flesh and the spirit. All this however changes with the context of art. It is when we contemplate on art objects that objects have been idealized. In this idealization, the self is no longer bound with its worldly desires and attachments. It is in this idealization of art objects that the empirical self has been transcended because the ‘self’ rises above the limitations of the empirical world. The nature of pleasure achieved will be pure, and gives rise to an experience of pure joy. However, one may often move too quickly into thinking that pleasure has already been eradicated in the transcended state of the self. It is important to note that rather than being eradicated they have been manifested into a different kind of pleasure, a pleasure that is transcended and pure (known as *para-nirvṛti* or higher pleasure). Such kind of pleasure is emitted when contemplating a work of art.

It is a common belief when we look into the purpose of poetry that the aesthetic end that one hopes to achieve from poetry or art works as a whole is pleasure. A way we can identify what poetry aims for is either from the perspective of the poet or the readers. In the theory of *rasa*, it is the perspective of the readers that plays a huge role in determining the aim of poetry. Considering the kind of results poetry may give to its readers, one immediately believes as many writers of Indian thoughts believe, that pleasure is gained from poetry. Hiriyanna also believed, like many other Indian writers believe that pleasure is gained from poetry, although Hiriyanna slightly differed as he contended pleasure was only another

aspect of one of the many uses of poetry to the readers. The reason for this is that pleasure can be derived from various other sources of everyday activities as well. For instance, we get pleasure from a simple act of eating an ice cream, taking a nap, having a conversation, playing, using our electronic devices or sending an electronic mail.

The concept of pleasure⁵ or *ānanda* is a concept that has been given great significance in the Indian schools of thought. It is a concept that refers to a state of mind whose nature is bliss. It is attained in aesthetic experience. The kind of pleasure which is not *ānanda* is in relation to object, whereas *ānanda* is a state of complete bliss. Hiriyanna explains what pleasure is as – “a state of the self or a mode of experience of which it is a constant and a conspicuous feature”⁶. For Hiriyanna, pleasure may be gained from the reading of poetry but ultimately it is the experience of *rasa* that he contended to be the ultimate use of poetry. The experience of art involves an ‘idealization’ of the art object by the viewers and readers. As such, the main theme of poetry according to the *rasa* theory is not what the poet feels, as explained in *Ramayana*- “On a certain day, in a beautiful forest bordering on his hermitage, Valmiki, the future author of the epic, it is said, chanced to witness a fowler killing one of a pair of lovely birds that were disporting themselves on the branch of a tree. The evil-minded fowler had singled out the male bird and had brought it down in one stroke. Seeing it lie dead on the ground, all bathed in blood, its companion began to wail in plaintive tones. The soft-hearted sage was moved intensely by the sight; and he burst into song which was full of pathos and which, according to tradition, became the prelude to the composition of the first great epic in Sanskrit”⁷. The *rasa* theory has interpreted this scene as an idealization. There are two things to be considered here, firstly the instant feeling that has been aroused from the poet and secondly, the scene that has aroused this feeling. It is in such cases when a poet describes the

⁵ ‘Pleasure’ will henceforth be used to refer to ‘*ānanda*’.

⁶ Hiriyanna, Mysore. *Indian Conception of Values*. Mysore: Kavyalaya Publishers, 1975, p.330.

⁷ Hiriyanna, Mysore. *Art Experience*. Mysore: Kavyalaya Publishers, 1954, p.34.

earth as “carved out of ivory”⁸ on nights when the moon shines bright. They called this *pratibhāna* or “creative fancy”⁹ and this is an essential feature of poetry according to the poetics. It is in this idealization that art objects no longer appeal to the ignorant and the egotistical self, thereby being raised to be impersonal in character, as well as disinterested.

The concept of ‘disinterestedness’¹⁰ has also been extensively discussed and given high importance by Hiriyanna as part of the essential characteristic of art experience. It is very often that disinterestedness is misunderstood to be a kind of uninterested attitude toward art objects, whereby it can contradict the interests that one shows in art contemplation. However, showing disinterested attitude in the contemplation of art does not mean absence of activity. It simply means indifference. When contemplating on a work of art, the egoistic self is set aside for that moment of contemplation. This is what Hiriyanna calls ‘disinterested contemplation’. This indifference is towards what is real and what is unreal, towards desire and aversion. The kind of pleasure we get upon contemplating a work of art is a ‘higher pleasure’ that may arise both in cases of pleasant and tragic scenarios.

In the Indian aesthetics culture, the 9th century AD saw a change regarding the content of art, which up till this time consisted of the expressed meaning. Emotion started to replace as the content of art. The expressed meaning was to be considered as only the outer portion of art works. “It is the emotional character of the situation depicted by the artist that constitutes the true content of art, and the type of experience to which it gives rise in the spectator is called *rasa*.”¹¹ Other aspect of aesthetic experience is that it is suggestive in nature and he has taken this from *dhvani* theory. *Dhvani* is in relation to poetry. Emotions are communicated only indirectly with the method known as *dhvani*. *Dhvani* is a term which refers to the indirect

⁸ Ibid, p.31.

⁹ Ibid, p.31.

¹⁰ The concept of ‘disinterestedness’ is borrowed from the Western aesthetics but the concept is also found in *rasa* theory.

¹¹ Hiriyanna, Mysore. *Art Experience*. Mysore: Kavyalaya Publishers, 1954, p.48.

method employed by the artist to communicate the emotions that embodies his art works. In Indian aesthetics, when the resulting experience is one of emotion it is called *rasa-dhvani*. And when the resulting experience is of an imaginative situation it is called *alamkara-dhvani*. The resulting experience may be about a matter of fact which is called *vastu-dhvani*. The systematic way of conveying the aimed experience or ‘method of art’ as Hiriyanna calls it is as crucial as the aim of art, where the aim of art is *rasa*. The *rasa* is primarily established in our emotion, while the *alamkara* is primarily established in our imagination.

Therefore, emotion came to be accepted as the purpose behind any poetry. In order to give a detailed explanation for this Hiriyanna looked into the nature of poetry as constructed with words and these words are put to use, they constitute meaning when they make up a sentence. Firstly, every word has a meaning that is most basic. This meaning is the primary meaning of a word which is also called the dictionary meaning. Secondly, words have meaning which is derivative of the primary meaning. This is the secondary meaning and they are derived when words are used in a context. Words are universally supposed as having these two meanings. The *rasa* theory added another meaning of words which is known as the tertiary meaning. The tertiary meaning is the meaning which arises both from the primary and secondary meanings. It is the suggested meaning of a word and through which according to the *rasa* theory emotions are conveyed by the poet to the readers of poetry. In poetry, emotions are expressed by the suggested meaning the poet may or may not have given. Poets may create the poems but the readers of poetry have been given a crucial position. Upon reading a poem the reader has the important role of creatively reproducing what has been produced by the poet. For this reason, *rasa* experience has been called a reconstruction. Art is a projection of nature. However, we are not concerned whether the art object matches reality. The semblance is valued before the reality. The poet has the freedom to construct new ideas and aspects of the object projected. This is called the ‘creative fancy’. It is because of this that the art object has

much more than the actual. It therefore presents something idealized. The poet idealizes the objects. And the experience of reading poetry leads to a complete detachment and gives pleasure. This pleasure is a state of the self and gives rise to a transcendence of the egoistic self. This experience is considered as an escape from the mundane experience. This escape however is only temporary.

Hiriyanna has covered many aspects in his writings on aesthetics as he explored the nature of aesthetic experience. The discussion of art in the Indian tradition is done mostly by taking poetry into the equation, which Hiriyanna had also done. In the Indian aesthetics, the content of poetry has been given more importance over the form. By content it refers to the meaning expressed by the poem. The content of poetry is neither to be seen as real nor unreal. The content of poetry does not owe it to us to make the contents conform to reality, at the same time they should not be discarded to be unreal either. The nature of aesthetics as discussed in Indian aesthetics has a close connection with *mokṣa* as Hiriyanna has also deemed them 'identifiable' and made a comparative study of the two experiences. The ultimate ideal is an ultimate value in Indian philosophical thought. Among many values that may be considered as ultimate, the ultimate ideal of freeing one's self of its attachments from its worldly desires and longings has been established as the highest value. The highest value is *mokṣa*. Hiriyanna has also considered art as an ultimate value because it is sought for its own sake and not for the sake of anything else. Likewise, *mokṣa* is also a value that is sought for its own sake. A detailed discussion of the comparative study of aesthetic experience and *mokṣa* will be given later, however one thing that can be established now is that Hiriyanna has given the nature of aesthetics to be spiritual in nature. The *rasa* theory which is the core of Indian aesthetics has

also been given as referring “to the experience of the Supreme Reality which is one of self-existent delight”¹².

Before Hiriyantha, there are thinkers that have mentioned aesthetic experience in relation to spiritual values such as Sri Aurobindo, Ananda Coomaraswamy and Rabindranath Tagore among many other prominent thinkers. These scholars are particularly mentioned as their view on aesthetics will be discussed here. We shall now explore the various conceptions of art and aesthetic according to three prominent scholars.

Sri Aurobindo

Sri Aurobindo was a prominent Indian figure of the Indian Renaissance. He was a philosophically, religiously and politically outstanding scholar. We have mentioned how Indian aesthetics rested highly upon works on poetry and how poetry sets the foundational basis for a discussion of Indian aesthetics. A discussion of Aurobindo’s aesthetics also moves along poetry as he discusses about the central concept of his aesthetic which is *mantra*. *Mantra* is the “poetic expression of the deepest spiritual reality”¹³. The *mantra* is possible with three factors that comes into play in an intense degree, these are ‘rhythmic’, ‘style’ and the ‘soul’s vision of truth’. Aurobindo’s view of aesthetics had also incorporated his general philosophy of evolution. Hence his theory may be known as the evolutionary theory of art. He established that art has a significant role in the evolution of man to become the ‘Superman’. It is art that helps man in his journey of ‘ascending’. He also brings in the well-known knowledge about the essential nature of Indian art i.e. Indian art does not concern merely in imitation. He was influenced by the *Upaniṣads* and the philosophy of *Vedānta* and he has also established Bliss, Existence and Consciousness (*Sat Cit Ānanda*) as the Truth. *Sat Cit Ānanda*

¹² "Introduction." In *Indian Aesthetics: An Introduction*, edited by V. S. Seturaman. Madras: Macmillan India Limited, 1992, p. 2.

¹³ "The Future Poetry." In *Indian Philosophy in English: From Renaissance to Independence*, edited by Nalini Bhushan and Jay L. Garfield. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011, p.134.

is the Ultimate Reality. The world and all objects in it are manifestations of *Brahman*. Therefore, all that have come to existence are as real as *Brahman*.

We can see that the aesthetic conception of Aurobindo is inclined towards the spiritual influenced by his philosophy. He believed aesthetics is mainly concerned with Beauty and *rasa*. The beauty we see in art do not fall under the domain of reason nor does it fall under the domain of the ordinary. The beauty in art is 'supranatural'. Art works have an inspiration from divinity and the creation of art is done by man in his creative mind. This means that any art work involves the divine and the effort of man working together. Beauty also goes together with Truth, for he says Truth is not merely about asserting facts but also something beautiful which is discovered and revealed.

To understand Aurobindo, we must acquire a fine understanding of his evolution theory as given in "The Life Divine". The famous book, "The Life Divine" written by Aurobindo deals with evolution of man and his consciousness and how man should journey towards his spiritual end. He had argued for a spiritual evolution. It is an amalgamation of his original creative ideas with the Western and the Indian art. In his famous poem *Savitri*, Aurobindo discussed self which is the subject of transformation in the evolution of man to the spiritual. This transformation involves the self and consciousness ascending to a higher level (supramental). The great scientific theory of evolution 'natural selection' as propounded by Charles Darwin states that all form of life has one common ancestry. Aurobindo extended Darwin's theory of evolution to another level that requires man to rise or 'ascend' to a level where he becomes a 'Superman' and a 'Gnostic Being'. It is a process of becoming and transforming taking place over a period of a long time. On the lower sphere there are matter, life force, psyche and mind. On the higher sphere are Pure Consciousness, Consciousness force, Bliss and Supermind. The process of the circle presented by Aurobindo goes like this – Consciousness force, Pure Consciousness, Matter, Life force, Psyche, Mind, Supermind,

Bliss, Pure Consciousness, Consciousness force and so on. He states that Mind is the same with Supermind, the difference we make is due to the mind not having realized itself or identifying with the Supermind.

The key concept in Aurobindo's evolution theory is 'integration' and integration consisted both the process of dissent and assent. Evolution is assent and involution is dissent. Consciousness is a fond concept in Indian philosophy and in this context also by *Vedānta* and Aurobindo. These are the stages of consciousness, namely awakening, sleeping, dreaming and supreme. The evolution to a gnostic being is an evolution of a divine consciousness in man. The journey of the self to become a Gnostic Being is a process involving changes that are internally taking place over a long period of time. It is for this reason that we seem to be unaware of the evolutionary process going on and while the transformation occurs nobody is aware of it.

The process of becoming a Gnostic Being is not without a negation, he added two kinds of negation, namely material negation and ascetic negation. The ascend to have a Divine life involves a shift from worldly and material attachments to realizing the spiritual nature of man. There are seven types of ignorance according to Aurobindo- original, cosmic, egoistic, temporal, psychological, constitutional and practical. He stated the Gnostic Being is free from all seven ignorance. The ignorance in man is because of a lack of harmony. The ignorance of man comes when the fundamental truth of his existence that man and all creations are in their true nature divine is not discovered.

Aurobindo believes there is in every experience an inherent 'delight' and 'beauty'. The Absolute and eternal spirit is *Ananda* which is the cascade of delight and beauty. It is from *Ananda* that all existence derives and sustains, and characterized as an impersonal and spiritual, free from all passions and selfish activities of the mind. The world is a manifestation

of the eternal spirit *Ananda*. The evolution of man requires a spiritual awakening in man. This awakening brings man out of ignorance to see the truth which is the 'divine unity' in all.

Aurobindo regards the mind and the imagination, the senses as only instrumental to poetry.

"The true creator, the true hearer is the soul"¹⁴, states Aurobindo. Pleasure gained from poetry has to be raised to a 'delight' of the soul which is a "formative and illuminative power"¹⁵.

Aurobindo states, "Delight is the soul of existence, beauty the intense impression, the concentrated form of delight, and these two fundamental things tend to be one for the mind of the artist and the poet, though they are often enough separated in our vital and mental experience."¹⁶ It is through beauty that the soul reaches the Absolute. Aurobindo sees art as "a link between the visible and the invisible, between the real and the apparent."¹⁷ It is the function of art to create something new that is beyond our perception. The greatness of poetry is defined by the depth of its effect on the soul. Poetry gives a revelation of the soul and its ideas, its vision and experiences.

Rabindranath Tagore

Rabindranath Tagore is one of the greatest figures of the Indian culture of art and literature. He was a man of great mind and talent as he was a poet, a musician and a painter. Tagore was largely in touch with the world and humanity which make him believe in the likely existence of love and harmony in the world. He had also placed a spiritual value on art. His take on art is that art is a medium through which man expresses the infinite. Art was also to serve man with freedom in his creative imagination and creation of art. In this creative act of creating art works comes joy and freedom for man. The significant concepts in his aesthetic philosophy includes 'intuition', 'expression', 'joy', 'surplus' and 'spirit', etc.

¹⁴ Ibid, p.129.

¹⁵ Ibid, p.130.

¹⁶ "The Soul of Poetic Delight and Beauty." In *Indian Aesthetics: An Introduction*, edited by V. S. Seturaman. Madras: Macmillan India Limited, 1992, p.405.

¹⁷ Nandi, S. K. *Studies in Modern Indian Aesthetics*. Simla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1975, p.156.

The aesthetic conception of Rabindranath Tagore is simple, and to explain his aesthetics he categorizes man into two- the physical and the personal. The physical man is one who is in touch with his thirst and hunger, whereas the personal man is one who is free from the control of his thirst and hunger. The personal man is the highest in man. There is another world that Tagore talks about which is seen and felt and accessed with the help of our emotions. This world is neither analyzable nor measurable, and this is what he called art. Tagore believed that man has a large number of surpluses of energy and emotion and is in need of an outlet for this surplus. It is art that provides him an outlet. In the essay "*What is Art?*" Tagore distinguishes between two worlds: the world which has become only the partial part of his senses and mind. It changes as we change and with our perception it grows. Our emotions transform the world of appearance. It transforms it into the more intimate world of sentiments. The other world is that which awakens our emotional moods. This is *rasa*, which we have already discussed. He believed poetries will awaken our emotions. According to Tagore, the Real is calling and art is the response of the creative soul of man to this calling.

For Tagore, art cannot be defined. He has characterized art as an activity, that of a spiritual one. There is in every man a spirit that which relates and reacts to the eternal and infinite Spirit. This response is what constitutes art according to Tagore. The influence of ancient Indian philosophical texts like the *Upaniṣads* on Tagore's works is evident as the principle of the unity of the universe forms a prominent idea in his philosophy. He believes that among the many desires of man, the desire to be in unity with the universe is a strong force in man. When this unity is felt, man expressed this unity and this is what constitutes art. Tagore believes, that this unity with the universe is expressed by man in the form of art, to specify, literature. This unity is felt when man is free from his selfish and finite desires.

Expression forms an important part of the truth of art although it may not form the whole truth. The content and form of art both equally occupies an important part. He did away with

the duality of man and nature. It is in unity that freedom is achieved. As the poet expresses his self through his work, his self is reflected in his work, and this Tagore calls 'self-expression'. Self-expression is the Spirit expressing itself. The true self is essentially spiritual in nature and also of pure joy (*ānanda*). Tagore also argues that the self of man is nothing different from the universal self. Therefore, it is the universal self that is expressed in art. The creation of art object is also one of self-realization for the readers or viewers (*sahridaya*) of the art object with an experience of *rasa*. According to Tagore, in this expression, man finds his true self. He states, "If art give pleasure, it is the pleasure of one's being conscious of oneself".¹⁸

The place of the self, the soul, or man occupies an important place in Tagore's aesthetics as even aesthetic values like Truth and Beauty are dependent on the subject. The creation of art objects may require an aspiration from the external world, but without the subject there cannot be the creation of art works. Whatever is to be expressed forms the content of art. He believes that in this expression lie the truth of art and beauty is found in unity with the universe. The significance of art may differ for different individuals as he believes that what the poet conveys and the message taken from art works differ, this is why Tagore characterizes art as relative and differing in appearance and not in essence. Like Hiriyanna, Tagore also believes that the concern of art is not to be factual in nature.

Ananda Coomaraswamy

Ananda Coomaraswamy had been known for exposing Indian art to the western world. He saw that Indian art is spiritual in nature. He clearly represents the nature of Indian art which is to reach beyond the limited and finite appearances of the world. Ananda Coomaraswamy in his conceptions of aesthetics analyses the word and meaning of 'aesthetics'. According to him, the word 'aesthetic' is a misnomer. On the subject of beauty, Coomaraswamy had

¹⁸ Ibid, p.28.

distinguished those beauties that are observed and empirical with ideal beauty. Unlike Aurobindo, Coomaraswamy did not equate Truth and Beauty, or conform to the common saying that Truth is Beauty and Beauty is Truth. For him, Beauty is a quality of Truth that makes Truth appealing. The role of Beauty is therefore to attract us not to itself but the Truth. With regard to Goodness, Goodness is that which brings forth the question of the relation of art and morality. He had also established that God is the source of Beauty, hence all things created by God are also beautiful.

Coomaraswamy believed that concepts like ‘beauty’ and ‘beautiful’ is strictly confined to aesthetics. It is a concept that is employed only in relation to those judgements that are aesthetically made. He had made a clear distinction between ‘work of art’ and those which are judged only from its practical aspect and ethical aspect which he calls ‘mere illustration’. The mere appreciation of the constituents, the parts and materials of an object does not represent an aesthetic appreciation according to Coomaraswamy. A work of art according to Coomaraswamy consists of an intuitive vision of the artist, an expression of the intuitive vision, the technical signs of this expression and the role of the critic (*rasika*) to recreate the work of the artist. “Every artist discovers beauty, and every critic finds it again when he tastes of the same experience through the medium of the external signs”.¹⁹ Beauty is created by the artist and the critic (*rasika*). He had given significant importance to the artist and the critic as he went to the extent of claiming there is no beauty independent of the artist who is the creator and the critic who has shared the experience expressed by the artist. The part of the critic is given significant importance as the beauty of a work of art consists not in the object itself but in the reactive or responsive actions of the critic on the art object. At one time, he had also claimed beauty can be found anywhere which evidently shows that the source of the artist comes from anything. He believes that Beauty was also more of a discovery than a creation.

¹⁹ Ibid, p.41.

This merely intensifies the role of the artist and the critic as the connecting factor between the beauty that can be discovered and the beauty there is in objects. Coomaraswamy believes in a form of beauty, a ‘significant form’, the kind of form which reminds us of beauty. This form evokes in the critic an aesthetic awakening of emotion.

In “The Dance of Śiva”, Coomaraswamy interpreted the dance of Lord Śiva. Śiva is known, through his dance, both as the artist and the critic, as an actor and an audience with the whole universe as his platform. The five activities (*pañcakṛitya*) are creation (*Śṛishti*), preservation (*sthiti*), destruction (*samhāra*), embodiment (*tirobhava*) and release (*anugraha*). Śiva is also known as a destroyer who destroys illusions of the ego. In another interpretation of the dance, the dance is seen as a God securing for souls a reward in his world (*iham*) and a bliss in release (*param*). It is through this dance that he “plunges the soul in the ocean of bliss (*ānanda*)”.²⁰ His dance is representative of freedom in its many interpretations. It springs from a pure and spontaneous nature of the dancer Śiva.

Art within morality according to Hiriyanna

If there is a talk about art there is a talk about morality. We cannot have a discussion about the concept of art without an attempt to find the place of art within the realms of the moral spectrum. The relationship between art and morality has always been a common topic of discussion among the aestheticians. It is of their interest to find the connection between art and morality or the place of art in the world driven by moral laws and obligations. Art is a medium that offers a platform for the expression of the mind, our thoughts and imaginations. The expression in the name of art also entails the privilege of freedom vested in the artists. The artists may be allowed to freely express his ideas and imaginations in whatever way he may prefer. Vested with such artistic freedom the artists may at times go beyond the lines that

²⁰ Coomaraswamy, Ananda K. *The Dance of Śiva: Fourteen Indian Essays*. New York: The Sunwise Turn, 1918, p.62.

have been drawn by morality. This is where morality comes in. Morality comes with a certain set of rules or a standard that determines certain practices as either good or bad. We must have all come across a piece of art work that may not conform to the norms of our daily experiences, that which is unpleasant for viewing. They may stir in us a feeling of uneasiness and inappropriateness thereby challenging our moral standpoints. We are led into thinking about the moral issues of such art works.

Hiriyanna stated that the necessity of art lies in the fact that evil persists in the world. Art gives us an ideal experience that is unique and rises above the ordinary mundane experiences of our life often accompanied by misery and pain. Art gives us an escape from the mundane routine of life. Owing to this, Hiriyanna has been led to compare the ethical and the aesthetic values. As stated before, the experience of art leads to an attitude of the self that is disinterested. Likewise, the ethical attitude is also a disinterested attitude. The main goal of art experience is to reach a state where attitude becomes impersonal. The aim of art is also to give an experience that is impersonal and joyful. This certainly is the common ground between the experience of art and morality. However, they often come to a conflict and here are the few points of difference between art experience and moral experience. Firstly, the ethical attitude is basically active while art experience is by its nature not active. Secondly, the ethical attitude has a purpose while artistic attitude aims to go beyond all purpose. Thirdly, the ethical attitude is an attitude of achievement while the artistic attitude is the attitude of contemplation. Fourthly, the ethical attitude comes from an internal influence while the artistic attitude comes from an external attitude. Hiriyanna believes that “art should not have a moral aim, but must necessarily have a moral view, if it should fulfil its true purpose”.²¹ The final contention of Hiriyanna is that while art and morality may be associated together, there exist no direct connection between the two values.

²¹ "The Main Aspects of Indian Philosophy." In *Indian Aesthetics: An Introduction*, edited by V. S. Seturaman. Madras: Macmillan India Limited, 1992, p.171

Conclusion

A similar ground that becomes clear from the conceptions of art and aesthetics as discussed by the great Indian philosophers is that aesthetics bend closely to the spiritual values of man. The final aim of the Indian philosophical quest always being *mokṣa* or freedom from the chains of suffering, the contemplation of art gives rise to an experience that provides man a brief moment of freedom from his suffering. Art was seen as an aesthetic expression of the spiritual. Hiriyanna has established a clear distinction between beauty in nature and beauty in art. Bharata was also discussing beauty only in relation to art. Hiriyanna had also conceived that in the contemplation of art, art experience is a transient experience. Hiriyanna established the relation between art and morality is only an indirect connection and not necessarily linked. He also believed that the content of art is constituted by emotion and that the true method of art is the method of suggestion or *dhvani*.

Chapter 2- The Conception of *Mokṣa* in Indian Philosophy

Introduction

The concept of '*mokṣa*' is a common conception in Indian philosophical systems accepted by both the orthodox called *āstika* subscribing to the authority of the *Vedas* and the heterodox or *nāstika* who do not subscribe to the authority of the *Vedas*. The *āstika* are also those accepting, apart from the *Vedic* authority, the existence of the self (*ātman*). We shall discuss here the conceptions of the 'self' according to *āstika* systems like *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika*, *Sāṅkhya* and *Śaṅkara Vedānta*, and the conception of '*mokṣa*' according to *Sāṅkhya*, *Vedānta* and the views of *nāstika* systems like *Buddhism* and *Cārvāka* on their idea of liberation. We will see in this chapter discussions about the basic foundation of ideas like the concept of *ātman* and *mokṣa* which has their roots in the *Vedas* and the *Upaniṣads*. The *Upaniṣads* are revealed texts (*śruti*). The subject of discussion in the *Upaniṣads* are "the ideal of man's beatitude", "perfection of knowledge", "vision of the real" and "quest for truth"²² which has been reformulated later by different philosophical systems in their own perspectives.

***Mokṣa* as the ultimate value**

The traditional Hindu social organization divides individuals into four class called *varṇas* and an individual's life into four stages called *āśramas*. Each individual is believed to live a life of limitations here on this world, which the individual is supposed to overcome by working towards a certain set of aims that has been laid down. These are the *Puruṣārthas* consisting of *artha*, *kāma*, *dharma* and *mokṣa*. Every religious belief system lay down its own ethical system and *Puruṣārtha* is the core of Indian philosophy of morals. *Puruṣārtha* etymologically comes from the Sanskrit word '*puruṣa*' meaning 'being human' and '*artha*' means 'meaning', 'purpose', 'object of desire'. Literally, *Puruṣārtha* means the meaning and purpose

²² Radhakrishnan, Sarvepalli, and Charles A. Moore. *A Source Book in Indian Philosophy*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1957, p.37.

of being human. It deals with the meaning of being a person, the aims or goals of human life. It is a two-tier value system- *abhyudaya* or achievement in life or material progress, and *nihsreyas* or fulfilment, spirituality or spiritual liberation. *Abhyudaya* comes with the achievement of *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma*. *Nihsreyas* is also called fulfilment or *mokṣa* or spiritual perfection.

Ārtha means prosperity, economic values, wealth, material possessions, and meaningful. It includes all that a person can possess or lose, whether right or wrong. *Kāma* means desire, pleasure, love and psychological values. It includes desire, the satisfaction of that desire, the pleasure and enjoyment resulting out of this. *Dharma* means righteousness and moral values. *Dharma* comes from ‘*rta*’. It is the principle of natural order which regulates and coordinates the operation of the universe and everything within it. It also refers to the duties and vocation of an individual in the society. *Dharma*, considered as the supreme value may have contesting considerations as it has been reduced to an activity that aims at achieving an end. *Dharma* is also essential for the achievement of *abhyudaya* and *nihsreyas*.

For anything of value to qualify as the ultimate requires certain characters to distinguish it from other contesting values. In the traditional philosophical tradition, we have Goodness, Beauty and Truth ever contesting alongside *mokṣa* although they may never come to be accepted as such. *Dharma* may be considered either as an instrument for either *mokṣa* or *abhyudaya* (prosperity). The case is different for the *Prabhākara* school of the *Mīmāṃsakas* who considers Goodness or *dharma* as the ultimate value. “*Prabhākara* believes in ‘duty for duty’s sake’. Obedience to the Veda is an end in itself and is of ultimate value (*puruṣārtha*)”.²³ Hiriyanna in “The Quest after Perfection” accounted for this as for him Beauty, Goodness and Truth appeals to him merely as the ‘regulative ideal’ that leads to the ultimate value *mokṣa*. The distinguishing feature that marks *mokṣa* from the other three values

²³ Sharma, Chandradhar. *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1976, p.237.

is the age-old philosophical term ‘means to an end’ and ‘ends in themselves’. Goodness, Beauty and Truth are merely the means to an end i.e. *mokṣa*. It is a necessary characteristic of anything of supreme value that firstly, it is pursued for the sake of itself and secondly, that it is comprehensive and satisfying. In other words, it is one, eternal, enduring and final. Hiriyanna remarks, “It is a higher good than what man commonly seeks as a social and intellectual being; it is what he seeks as an individual with a spiritual destiny.”²⁴ Although much controversial to his contention Hiriyanna has termed *mokṣa* as ‘self-perfection’.

Values like Goodness and Truth may often contest to be the ultimate end but we have seen how Hiriyanna has disproved them to be so. We find that they are only pursued for the further pursuit of *mokṣa*. Goodness or *dharma* is not an end in itself but a means to an end. Truth also is only instrumental to another end. Both Goodness and Truth are the contributing factor to *mokṣa* as Hiriyanna stated, “For all knowledge leads to activity, aiming at the achievement of some end”.²⁵ They are interdependent values that lead to the ultimate value.

The different conceptions of *mokṣa* in the Indian philosophical schools of thought owe its difference to the differing conception of the self. The other reason for the difference is with regard to when the ideal can be attained, for example some are of the opinion that a release is possible only after death while some believe in the release of the self from all attachments here in life itself. The connection of the infinite and liberated self with the world are not conflicting or as Hiriyanna puts it; the liberated self is “empirically in it but transcendently out of it”²⁶ This is known as *jīvanmukti*. The nature of *mokṣa* is conceived as either the absence of ‘pain and suffering’ or ‘the presence of bliss’. With this we have a positive or a negative *mokṣa*²⁷. *Jīvanmukti* is a case of positive *mokṣa*, and a negative *mokṣa* is where there

²⁴ Hiriyanna, Mysore. *Indian Conception of Values*. Mysore: Kavyalaya Publishers, 1975, p.243.

²⁵ Ibid, p.241

²⁶ Ibid, p.251

²⁷ Ibid, p.251

are only absence of pain and sufferings but no bliss. We can conclude from the conception of *jīvanmukti* that the self which has attained such bliss and the freedom from pain and sufferings are now equipped with the right knowledge and attitude that aids in overcoming worldly attachments.

The concept of 'self'

The *Vedas* are Indian philosophical texts that contain knowledge, and were considered to be given by some supernatural being like *apauruṣeya*. The authorities of the *Vedas* are hence usually not questioned and accepted as it is since they are believed to be divinely given. There are four *Vedas* – *Ṛg Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, *Sāma Veda* and *Atharva Veda*. These four are each subdivided into four texts- the first are the *Samhitās* which consisted of the mantras and the benedictions, second is the *Brāhmaṇas* which is the commentaries on the rituals and the ceremonies, third is the *Āraṇyakas* which consisted of rituals and ceremonies, and also deals with the realisation of the self. The last text is the *Upaniṣads* which consisted of knowledge that are spiritual and philosophical. *Upaniṣads* comes from 'sad' with prefix 'ni' (to sit), which means an act of sitting down near a teacher and of submissively listening to him. The *Upaniṣads* were the first recorded attempts of the Indian thoughts at systematic philosophizing. They formed the concluding portion of the revealed *Vedic* literature and were also called *Vedānta*. There are a number of *Upaniṣads*, out of which thirteen of them have been considered to be most important. The knowledge given in the *Upaniṣads* deals with knowledge about the self and its transcendental states and were considered to be higher knowledge, whereas the knowledge given by the *Samhitās* and *Brāhmaṇas* are considered as lower knowledge because they deal with the ritualistic performance that are used to gain material things from divinities. The *Upaniṣads* deal with the question of Reality. Reality is that from which everything that has come into existence originates, sustains and dissolves after their destruction. It is also that which by knowing it you know everything else, and know

what is not known as well. Reality is that with the knowledge of which a person gains immortality. The *Upaniṣads* contain questions of the *Brahman* and the *ātman* and it put forward questions about the self and the world.

What is the ‘self’? The *Upaniṣads* spoke of the self as having two layers, the lower and the higher self. The higher self is considered to be the real self in its true nature. The lower self is consisted of the mind, intellect or the ego, the body and sense organs that are responsible for our desires and longings for worldly pleasures. These desires and longings for objects of the world or the world is just a passing, temporary attribute of the self. The true self is free from all these affections towards the world. It is a concern of Indian philosophy the transcending of the lower self to the higher self. Exactly how this is to be done is where many schools of thought are differentiated. The issue of interest here, to put it simply, is the causative factor that will lead the lower self to transcend the higher self. In other words, we are concerned with the means to the ultimate goal of life i.e. *mokṣa*

The *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* explains four states of the self, viz. (1) the waking state (*vishva*), (2) the dream state (*taijasa*), (3) dreamless sleep (*prājñā*) and (4) state of spiritual consciousness. It is held by the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* that each state represents different states where the ‘self’ acquaint itself with different objects. The waking state is where the self directs its consciousness towards the gross objects of the world. In the dream state the self makes and imagines objects. In the state of deep sleep, the subject ‘self’ is absent for a while and for this reason there is also an absence of object for a while. In such state of deep sleep, there are no pain or pleasure and no desires. There is bliss in this state, but this bliss is said to be a negative bliss because this bliss only lasts for as long as the self is in the state of deep sleep. The presence of positive bliss is found in the state of pure consciousness where there is no presence of ignorance and no duality of the subject and the object. The last state is known as the state of the true self. It is characterized by a consciousness which is pure in nature. Pure

consciousness is the essence of the ultimate reality *Brahman* in the *Vedānta* philosophy and the essence of *Puruṣa* as given by the *Sāṅkhya* philosophy. The self is characterised as- “It is calm, non-dual, blissful and all-consciousness where all plurality is merged.”

The need to get liberated comes from the belief that we are in bondage with the worldly desires of the ego. This is the general view that all schools of Indian philosophical system hold. According to the *Upaniṣads*, ignorance is the cause of bondage and liberation is the result of knowledge. This bondage is because of ignorance, which is the ignorance to know the true nature of the self (*jīva/ ātman*). The understanding of the Indian philosophical system about the conception of the highest ideal entails the concept of ‘self’ for it is this self that is to be liberated. It is therefore necessary to understand the concept of the ‘self’ in order to fully grasp the concept of liberation in the Indian tradition.

The terms like *jīva*, *ātman*, *puruṣa* and *jīvātmā* are used to refer to the ‘self’. If we look into the nature of the self as discussed by the different philosophical systems, we may have a better understanding of their conceptions on *mokṣa*. The traditional Indian philosophical system recognises as pluralistic those doctrines that consider the plurality of the self. The adherents of such doctrines are the *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* who has talked about ‘selves’ characterised with the nature such as desire, knowledge, pain and pleasure, etc. These characters are not the fundamental qualities of the selves but form only the accidental qualities.

The *Sāṅkhya* system has recognised the self as one of the ultimate realities. It is a reality the existence of which can never be denied for this only result in showing the existence of the self. For the self that denies the existence of the self only proves of its existence. The self is identified neither with the body, the mind, the senses and the intellect. Rather it is pure consciousness and the substratum of all knowledge. If the self is identified with external objects, the mind, the body or the senses, it is out of ignorance and not because the self is such

things. Like the *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika*, the *Sāṅkhya* system also holds the pluralistic view of the self. Therefore, the self is many and eternal, it is an immaterial entity that is all-pervading, and which is beyond all changes and activities.

The self is pure consciousness and it does not have activity and quality. It is not limited by space and time or by the laws of causation. It is beyond all bodily and mental changes and affections. The self is the subject that transcends all things physical and mental, the senses, ego and intellect. This means that the pain and sufferings that affects the body and mind does not affect the self²⁸, because the self is beyond them. It is the mind that wants pleasure and experiences pain as well. The self is free from the limitations of space and time, and the causal order in the world. It is pure consciousness because it is beyond all mental and physical complexities, and it is also eternal and immortal, because it is neither produced nor destroyed. In the philosophy of *Śāṅkara Vedānta*, the body with which the self has wrongly been identified with under the influence of ignorance is merely an appearance and an illusion. He has come to the conclusion that the self and *Brahman* are one and the same reality.

It is due to the different conceptions of the self that there are various meanings of *mokṣa* among the different schools. In common understanding, we understand *mokṣa* as liberation or freedom. *Mokṣa* can mean the freedom from pain and suffering, or the cycle of birth and rebirth, from *karma*, and so on. It is considered to be the ultimate aim of an individual's life. The cultivation of each value is leading towards the end goal that is *mokṣa*. *Mokṣa* is the only *Puruṣārtha*²⁹ that is pursued for its own sake and not for a means to something else, whereas *artha*, *kāma* and *dharma* are for their own sake or for the sake of attaining *mokṣa*. The ultimate ideal represents a case of the lower self that has transcend to the position of the

²⁸ However, in the case of bondage, the self is affected with ignorance of its own true self and identifying itself with the desires and cravings of the mind, the intellect and the ego.

²⁹ It is the Indian system of value consisting three values according to the *Trivarga* scheme and four values according to the *Chaturvarga* scheme pursued by each individual in his life. Each value may be valued for various purposes.

higher self. As stated by *Śāṅkara*, it merely is the means that has come to be realised as the end. The ultimate ideal is inwardly grasped and experienced personally by individuals. The self is realised. The self is “the foundation of all existence” and “the presupposition of all knowledge”³⁰

Knowledge as a means to *mokṣa*

It is a universally accepted view in the Indian tradition that ‘knowledge’ leads to liberation. The state of liberation is closely related to knowledge, having the right knowledge about the nature of this world. What *Buddhists* call as a ‘potential Buddha’ is the *Bodhisattva*, one who is on the way to a perfect wisdom. For the *Buddhists*, liberation or *nirvāṇa* marks the end of the momentary existence of the self as a series of similar entities. Nāgārjuna, one of the commentators of the *Buddhist* philosophy believed we attain *nirvāṇa* with the knowledge of the non-difference between the world (*śamsāra*) and *nirvāṇa*. He had said that when we look for *nirvāṇa* we lose it, because there is nothing to look for, or to attain, it merely is a matter of having proper understanding of the world. We can see in all systems- the *Sāṅkhya*, *Buddhist* and *Vedānta* that liberation³¹ is about having the right knowledge about reality. In the view of the *Vedānta* school, *mokṣa* is when the self completely becomes one with *Brahman*. The *Advaita Vedānta* system believes that we attain liberation with the knowledge of the duality of the *ātman* (the self) and *Brahman*. In the view of *Sāṅkhya Yoga*, the term they use is *kaivalya* which is when the self gets detached from all other things. They believe that we attain liberation with the right knowledge of reality- the plurality of the self and things in the world. In Buddhism, nirvana is a state of knowing the non-difference between *śamsāra* and *nirvāṇa*.

The *Sāṅkhya* conception of *mokṣa*

³⁰ Sharma, Chandradhar. *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1976, p.23.

³¹ *Kaivalya* in *Sāṅkhya*, *mokṣa* in *Vedānta* and *nirvāṇa* in *Buddhism*.

We have already stated how the various conceptions of the self gives rise to the various conceptions of *mokṣa*. The *Sāṃkhyakārikā* opened with the statement that it is a basic need for all human beings to pursue happiness. However human life does not only have good times in terms of happiness, but also a negative side to it that brings sorrow, pain and suffering. This suffering is of the body and the mind and there are three causes of this suffering- *ādhyātmika* (self), *ādhibhautika* (external factors, outside influence) and *ādhidaivika* (supernatural factors). *Ādhyātmika* is something that comes from within the body and the mind, the bodily disorders and mental affections like headache, fever, fear, etc. *Ādhibhautika* is that which comes from the external influences and external factors, like other men, thorns, attack from animals etc. *Ādhidaivika* is caused by the supernatural things like demons and ghosts.

It is the desire of all being to be free from the cold hands of pain. We want to do away with the sufferings that are inflicting ourselves and the rest of mankind. We desire happiness and pleasure, but not pain and suffering, however we cannot have one without the other. The ceasing of life, i.e. death, seems to be the only way to be free of pain. This is how it has always been perceived in our mundane thought. However, in the Indian school of thought, liberation is also known as *jīvanmukti* which stands for liberation in this life itself. The *Sāṅkhya* system believed in the complete cessation of pain in this life with no chance of turning back. The common belief is that we suffer because of our ignorance, and with this most Indian schools of thought believed we can have freedom from pain with the right knowledge of reality (*tattvajñāna*). Human beings have an imperfect knowledge of reality. The *Sāṅkhya* system believes that with the right knowledge of reality comes the freedom from the pain we all are subjected to. To have a knowledge of reality is to know the nature of the selves as pluralistic. It is a right knowledge, a discriminatory knowledge known as *Viveka*

kyati. *Viveka khyati* is a concept in *Yoga* philosophy.³² It is the knowledge to differentiate the self from matter, and reality from unreality.

To give a further elaboration of this system, the *Sāṅkhya* philosophical system admits two ultimate realities— *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti*. *Puruṣa* is the self, the soul or the spirit. *Prakṛti* is the primal matter. These are the two principles operating in the world. *Puruṣa*(self) is free from all affections of the physical and mental pain. However, not knowing its true nature the self tends to identify itself with the mind, the ego or the intellect. The self therefore becomes affected by their pleasures and suffering that leads to its sufferings. Whatever affections the mind has the self has taken it to be its own, the self is happy when the mind is happy and unhappy when the mind is unhappy. This is why we are in pain and the reason we suffer. The living being, the self or the experiencing subject often identifies itself with the experienced objects. A case where the self can distinguish between the real self (which is it) and the not-self (the mind, intellect or ego) is a case of freedom from pain and suffering. This liberated state is called *mokṣa*. This state can come only when the self has a direct knowledge of the difference between the self and the not-self.

Sāṅkhya talks of three qualities or *guṇas*, namely *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. *Sattva* is light and produces goodness. *Rajas* is the principle of motion, activity and produces pain. *Tamas* is inactive, at rest and indifferent. These three qualities exist in all things- living or non-living with different combinations. They are constitutive of *Prakṛti* which is the material cause of the world. They were in a perfect state of balance before creation. Creation starts when this balance is disturbed, and objects are divided according to the combinations and concentration of the three *guṇas* in them. Beings of higher status are said to be constituted predominantly by the *sattva*, beings in the middle are predominated by *rajas* and the ones in the lower rank are

³² The *Sāṅkhya* and *Yoga* philosophical systems are considered as one, with *Yoga* forming the practical side to the attainment of *kaivalya*.

predominated by *tamas*. Human beings possess all three, and the predominance is arbitrary. This predominance depends on the spiritual status of the person. An ordinary human driven by the desires for worldly things is predominated by *rajas*, and when a person observes *dharma*, *sattva* is said to predominate. A person with no spiritual drive is driven by *tamas*. The three are always in a constant war to predominate by suppressing one another. It is when the *sattva* predominates that humans illuminate knowledge. A predominance of *rajas* creates desires, passions for worldly things making us selfish and greedy. *Tamas* creates in us dullness, delusion and inactivity. The three *guṇas* are responsible for our bondage, ignorance and sufferings. So long as they remain active, we cannot be free from our bondage. The *Bhagavadgītā* believed that we should learn to move beyond them, by learning more about their nature. The *Bhagavadgītā* said that even for those who are striving for liberation, they should not be under the impression that *sattva* is the ultimate end because it leads us to both pleasure and pain. Gaining pleasure and avoiding pain is what we want to do. After all *sattva* is still under the sovereignty of *Prakṛti*. *Sattva* is constantly trying to predominate by suppressing the other two. We are to transcend the three *guṇas* and become one and the same with the self. It is only by transcending the three that a person attains liberation, i.e. freedom from the cycles of birth, old age and death.

Now question arises, what happens to a person who transcended the *guṇas*? He has attained a state of control over his mind. The witness has gained control over his mind and its modifications and stays in his true form (*tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpe'vasthānam*). According to the *Bhagavadgītā*, a person who has risen above the three *guṇas* becomes indifferent and is no longer disturbed by the workings of the three *guṇas*. There comes a realization that the three *guṇas* only belong to the material things and not the self. With this realization, he becomes indifferent in his response to pain or pleasure. The eight-fold path of liberation given by the

Buddhist which will be mentioned later, the practices of yoga given by the *Sāṅkhya*, these are all meant to be followed to cultivate purity (*sattvic*).

The Buddhist conception of liberation

Siddhārtha, also known as Gautama Buddha is the founder of *Buddhism*. The term '*Nirvāna*' which literally means "blowing out"³³ has been famously associated with *Buddhism*. *Buddhism* was founded by Buddha who himself was known to have been liberated and enlightened. The name 'Buddha' literally means 'awakened' and is conferred on an individual who discovers the path to *nirvāna*, the cessation of suffering, and propagates that discovery so that others may also achieve *nirvāna*. Buddha's philosophy started with '*dukkha*' which is usually translated as suffering, stress, anxiety. He dealt with existential suffering, the cessation and even the path to the cessation of suffering to ultimately come to liberation from suffering. This existential suffering is the sort of frustration, alienation and despair that arise out of our experience of the transitory nature of the world. In *Buddhism*, detachment from worldly things is necessary for *nirvāna* or enlightenment. It is a state of perfect quietude and freedom from *śamsāra*. It marks the realisation of the true self and emptiness. In Buddhist philosophy, *nirvāna* is synonymous with *mokṣa*. Getting out of this existential suffering comes with the realisation of the truth which is that the world is filled with suffering, and is impermanent.

As a young prince he saw the sufferings that inflicted on people, the pain, death and diseases that torment human lives. He gave up his worldly life and became the Buddha or the enlightened. Our existence comes with pain and misery. It is therefore our duty to get rid of this, instead of bothering ourselves with speculations of the metaphysical things. This only makes us like the fool whose heart had been pierced by an arrow and wonders details (origin, size, maker, etc.) about the arrow rather than pulling it out of his heart.

He found answers to the questions like why do we suffer misery and pain? Why do we suffer old age and death (*jarā-maraṇa*)? The answer to this is because we are born (*jāti*). Why are we born? This is because there is a will to be born (*bhava*). Why should there be a will to

³³ Sharma, Chandradhar. *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1976, p.81.

become? We cling to objects in the world (*upādāna*). Why do we have this clinging? This crave is to enjoy the objects of this world (*tṛṣṇā*). Why do we thirst for this enjoyment? This is because we have sense experience (*vedanā*), and this sense experience is because of the contact between sense and object (*sparsā*). This sense-object contact happens because of the sense organs (*ṣaḍāyatana*). Why do we have our sense organs? We have them because of psycho-physical organism (*nāma-rūpa*). This organism is because of the initial consciousness of the embryo (*viññāna*), and this consciousness is because of the predispositions or impressions (*saṃskāra*). Why do we have these impressions? This is because of our ignorance (*avidyā*). Hence our ignorance or *avidyā* is the root cause of all sufferings.

If we get rid of all the conditions that cause our suffering, then we can put an end to suffering. It is important to look into this state of the end of our suffering and know more about it. This liberation is a state that can be attained in this very life itself, and does not necessarily refer to liberation after death. Keeping passions under control and contemplation of the truth are considered as important step to be taken for the cessation of suffering. One who has done this will be called free and liberated. This is called *nirvāna* or liberation, where all passions and desires of the world have been eliminated.

Nirvāna is not to be misunderstood as cessation of all life's activities, or an activity-free state, since it implies getting rid of all worldly desires, passions and clinging. It simply implies that the liberated self is no longer attached or disturbed by the worldly pleasures and desires. To bring more light to this, there are two types of action- firstly, actions that are influenced by our attachments and secondly, actions that are done without the influence of this. The first kind of actions Buddha had always wanted his followers to exempt from. It is our attachment with the material things, or our relationship with others that binds us, gives us the desire to be a part of the world, and this strengthens our desires and passions creating rebirth through karma. The second kind of action does not produce any. When a person gets liberated, the liberated does

not want to keep it all to himself what he has achieved through hard toils, instead wants to share the wisdom and knowledge he has gained from the journey. He instead shows love and sympathy towards the people who still remains under the desires and passions for worldly things. Here it would be good to look into what the Buddha had meant by liberation. For certainly he did not talk of the liberated person gaining enlightenment after death, because we have seen that he avoided all questions of metaphysics. The answer to this is firstly *nirvāna* ensures us that rebirth is destroyed and will not happen again. The liberated person is now free from the pain and sufferings that comes from our desire and passions. He is in a serene, passionless peace of mind. The *Hīnayānist* school of *Buddhism* believes those who have “lived a pure life and have knowledge of the elements of existence as taught by the Buddha can attain *Nirvāna*”³⁴. According to *Mādhyamika*, “*Nirvāna* really means the Quiescence of things”³⁵. It is indefinable and cannot be extinguished, attained, annihilated, eternal, or produced.

Mūlamadhyamakakārikā of Nāgārjuna started with *pratityapratika* which is an enquiry into the cause. Causation was important for *Buddha*, because there must be a certain reason why we hold on to things. Natural causation or *pratītyasamutpāda* is the un-conditionality and the dependence of all existence of things in the world. *Nirvāna* is a state that can be attained in this world here in this life, and not necessarily that which is attained after life ends. It is the extinction of passions, desire and misery. A liberated person is free and becomes an *arhat* or a venerable person. Nāgārjuna explicitly talks about *nirvāna*. His philosophy boils down to one thing, an emptiness or *śūnyatā*. This emptiness is an emptiness of inherent existence of things, and not emptiness of reality in the world as is usually preconceived. A realisation of this emptiness leads to a break from our bondage with the worldly things, from *dukkha*. The

³⁴ Stcherbatsky, Theodore. *The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa with Sanskrit Text of Madhyamaka-Kārikā*, Theodore Stcherbatsky. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1975, p.96.

³⁵ Ibid, p.97.

realisation of *śūnyatā* however does not come easy because it is beyond the worldly understanding. All existences are empty or *śūnya* or devoid of inherent existence. This is the reality of all existences. *Śūnyatā* has a soteriological significance in his philosophy which is that its realisation is a means to liberation. “When rightly grasped, it leads to the negation of the multiplicity of the *dharma*s and to detachment from the ‘passing show’ of the tempting things of life.”³⁶

The *Madhyamaka* school looks at things with their two truths, namely the conventional truth and the ultimate truth. We see all existence in the world as the ultimate truth; we misunderstood them and cling to them like they are permanent and real. However, they are of the world and whatever is of the empirical world are conventional truths, and exists relatively. They are also subjected to causation, of cause and effect, and are not independent but dependent. What is true from the conventional side of view is necessarily not true from the ultimate view. However, at the ultimate level, the two are neither identical nor different from each other. This is also the case with *nirvāṇa* and *śamsāra*. *Nirvāṇa*, looked at from one side is *śamsāra* and *śamsāra* is *nirvāṇa*. *Śamsāra* is the repeating cycle of birth, life and death. *Śamsāra* is representative of the world, the world birth, of suffering and pain, and death. *Nirvāṇa* represents the freedom from all the worldly things that bind us. This *nirvāṇa* comes with a realisation of this bondage we are in.

Nāgārjuna gave four conditions regarding *nirvāṇa*. The first condition is that *nirvāṇa* is existent (*bhāva*): *Nirvāṇa* is of the nature of existence, it is of the ordinary existence. This however would mean it is of the realm of the created, because there is nothing of the nature of existence that is of the uncreated realm. This would also mean *Nirvāṇa* is appropriating, but it is not, it is non-appropriating. Secondly, *nirvāṇa* is non-existent. Since *Nirvāṇa* is not of the nature of existence, it must be non-existent. But the question here is how could what is in the

³⁶Ibid, p.40.

nature of non-existence be *Nirvāna*? “Where there is no existence, equally so, there can be no non-existence.”³⁷ Moreover, we cannot have non-existence without existence. They have to co-exist. *Nirvāna* is also non-appropriating. Just as there cannot be a non-appropriating existent thing, there cannot be a non-appropriating non-existent thing either. Thirdly, *nirvāna* is both existent and non-existent. This cannot be, because it is uncreated, and both existence and non-existence are created. Existence and non-existence are incompatible like that of light and darkness. And fourthly, *nirvāna* is neither existent nor non-existent. Now to understand this, we first need to understand and establish existence and non-existence. So “their negation is absurd”³⁸ We also have bases on which this claim is made. The question here is regarding the source or the means of this claim. Nobody can really know whether the Buddha was enlightened or not.

Nirvāna and *śamsāra* are not two separate things. They are one and the same. When you look for one of them, you find the other as well. Nāgārjuna raised doubts regarding this. If *nirvāna* exists at all, then it is of this world, subjected to the same situation like objects of the world are, and therefore loses its ultimate nature. This is a challenge for Nāgārjuna, that if it is real it has to be something subjected to *Pratītyasamutpāda* or dependent origination. If it is dependently originated, which comes to being must end. There is no empirical existence that is not subjected to the laws of the world and does not come to an end. *Nirvāna* cannot be subjected to the same laws that give us pain. It has to be something outside. Things that are not should not be discussed as it is futile to discuss them. He concluded it is difficult to define *nirvāna*.

³⁷ Inada, Kenneth K. *Nāgārjuna: A Translation of his Mūlamadhyamakakārikā with an Introductory Essay*. Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1993, p.155.

³⁸ Stcherbatsky, Theodore. *The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa with Sanskrit Text of Madhyamaka-Kārikā*, Theodore Stcherbatsky. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1975, p. 99.

Nāgārjuna describes *nirvāna* as “that which is neither abandoned nor acquired, it is neither a thing annihilated, nor a thing eternal; it is neither destroyed nor produced.”³⁹ Nāgārjuna wanted to show that the absolute *nirvāna* is transcendental to thought and speech. Neither the concept of existence nor non-existence can be applied to it. His philosophy is hence called *Madhyamaka*, that which is ‘pertaining to the transcendent’. Realities cannot be confined into either ‘is’ or ‘is not’. Buddha himself “taught the abandonment of the concepts of being and non-being.”⁴⁰ To look for *nirvāna* is to lose it, there is no *nirvāna* over and above the phenomenal reality *śamsāra*- “The universe viewed as a whole is the Absolute, viewed as a process, it is the phenomenal”⁴¹.

The materialistic approach

The *Cārvāka* is the school of Indian philosophy that stands for ‘materialism’. The epistemological standpoint of the *Cārvākas* determines their metaphysical view. They believe that perception (*pratyaksha*) is the only valid source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*). They have rejected inference as a *pramāṇa* because they argue that there are no grounds to believe in the invariable association (*vyāpti*) of inference. Even if one instance of inference has proved to be true, it does not follow that such similar instances will be true. They have argued that all cases of inference are not known since it is not possible to prove all cases in the past, present or future. The believe in perception alone as a valid source of knowledge has led to the believe that matter is the only reality, since matter can be perceived. They believe in only four elements (*bhūtas*) such as earth, water, fire and air. A fifth element in Indian philosophy *ākāśa* has been rejected on grounds that *ākāśa* is inferred and cannot be perceived. According to the *Cārvākas*, consciousness is also a product of the four elements. They have also identified

³⁹Ibid, p.28

⁴⁰ Inada, Kenneth K. *Nāgārjuna: A Translation of his Mūlamadhyamakakārikā with an Introductory Essay*. Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1993, p.156.

⁴¹ Stcherbatsky, Theodore. *The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa with Sanskrit Text of Madhyamaka-Kārikā*, Theodore Stcherbatsky. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1975, p.71.

consciousness with the physical body. The self is nothing but the physical body which and they regard the self as only a property of the body.

The *Cārvākas* are known for their materialistic outlook towards life and their views on God, the afterlife and the soul. Thus, their approach on liberation differs drastically from other Indian schools of philosophy. The *Cārvākas* do not talk of liberation as such but they have an idea of good living. However, this does not mean they don't have an idea of liberation. They accept the reality of the physical, materiality of the world and emphasizes on it. We can see here the twist in the understanding of the concept of liberation. The *Cārvākas* only believe in the maximization of pleasure and living every day working towards the maximization of pleasure. Hiriyanna remarks, "The *Cārvāka* is so impatient of obtaining pleasure that he does not even try to secure freedom from pain."⁴² If any ideal aim can be associated with the *Cārvākas*, they are known to have propagated hedonism. They have accepted only two of the *Puruṣārthas*- *artha* and *kāma*, and rejected *dharma* and *mokṣa*.

Vedānta on mokṣa

There are many interpretations of the *Upaniṣads*. *Vedānta* philosophy claims to be the exposition of the philosophy taught in the *Upaniṣads*. *Vedānta* forms the ending portion of the *Vedas*. Śaṅkarāchārya wrote a commentary on one of the *Upaniṣads* but his approach with *Brahman* is very different from the earlier approaches given by the *Bhagvadgītā* and the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* which gave a sectarian view on *Brahman*. *Brahman* is widely discussed in the early *Upaniṣads*. It is the highest principle, the ultimate reality. In the *Upaniṣads*, *Brahman* is *Sat-cit-ānanda* (truth-consciousness-bliss), the permanent, unchanging, and highest reality.

⁴² Hiriyanna, Mysore. *Reviews*. Mysore: Kavyalaya Publishers, 1970, p. 194.

Ātman is often discussed alongside *Brahman*. Taken from a Sanskrit word which means the soul or the self *ātman* is one of the most basic concepts in Indian philosophy. It became a philosophical topic in the later *Upaniṣads*. It is that which either transmigrates to new life or attains release (*mokṣa*) from the bonds of existential limitations. For *Vedānta*, knowledge of *Brahman* leads to *mokṣa*.

The *Vedānta* school is divided into many and this division is usually based on the question regarding the nature of the relationship between the self (*jīva*) and *Brahman*. *Madhva* believes that the self and the *Brahman* are two different entities. Their position is known as *Dvaita* or dualism. *Shaṅkarāchārya* holds a monistic position and believes that the two are one and the same entities. This position is called monism (*Advaita*) and in the monistic view of the self, they have argued for the supremacy of the cosmic self over the individual self. “It rather signifies a widening of the conception of the self to the utmost and realising its fundamental unity with the rest”⁴³ The *Upaniṣads* had also emphasised on the importance of the dominance of the higher self over the lower self. In the *Advaita Vedānta* of *Shaṅkarāchārya*, *ātman* is identical with *Brahman*. The two are distinct in the *Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta* of *Rāmānuja* where it is believed that *ātman* and *Brahman* are in a part-whole relation. This position is known as qualified monism. The self or *ātman* is the same with the ultimate reality God or *Brahman*. The *Advaitins* have the concept of ‘*jīvanmukti*’ which is liberation attained during this lifetime, that is achieved with the realisation that *ātman* and *Brahman* are identical. *Advaita* is one of the schools of *Vedānta*. The *Advaita Vedānta* focuses on the correct understanding of the texts *Śrutis*, because understanding of these texts is needed to acquire knowledge about the self and the highest reality that will lead us to liberation. Having the right knowledge will get rid of ignorance (*avidyā*). Liberation for them is when you realize your own real nature as

⁴³ Hiriyananna, Mysore. *Indian Conception of Values*. Mysore: Kavyalaya Publishers, 1975, p. 258.

Brahman. Śaṅkara is one of the most prominent scholars of this school. The *Upaniṣads* have given that the knower of *Brahman* becomes *Brahman* himself. *Mokṣa* is not attained with self-purification which is an activity, but with knowledge which is itself an existence.

This world is just an appearance, an illusion caused by *Brahman* by his power *māyā*. Those who are of the worldly and ignorant are fooled by this appearance. The wise are however not fooled by this illusory show. When the rope is mistaken as the snake, it is our ignorance that makes us see the rope as a snake. *Māyā* conceals reality of things from us and distorts the object to our mind into something else it is not. This illusion caused by *māyā* is often compared to a magician. When a magician uses his magic skills to make a coin disappear and appear, the ones who are aware of the magical tricks involved will not be fooled by the disappearance and appearance of the coin. However, those who are unaware of the tricks will be deceived. Therefore, *māyā* is the power by which *Brahman* creates an illusion that makes it appear as the world. *Brahman* therefore is not deceived by *māyā*, like the magician will not be deceived by his own magical tricks. It is his will to create illusion. However, those who are ignorant are deceived by this world appearance which really is *Brahman*. For the ignorant, *māyā* is that which produces illusion by ignorance. So *māyā* is also known as *avidyā* or ignorance. *Māyā* conceals the true nature of *Brahman*, and makes *Brahman* appear as something it is not.

The highest knowledge of all is the knowledge that comes with the realization of the self. This realization comes through meditations, focusing on spiritual goals, suppressing of the desires and longings of the empirical self. The highest knowledge is to realize that in reality, the empirical self and the transcendental self, the *jīva* and *ātman* respectively are one and the same. We experience plurality because of error in judgements (*mithya*) and ignorance (*avidyā*). Knowledge of *Brahman* removes these errors and causes liberation from the cycle of transmigration and worldly bondage.

The views on the relation between the self and *Brahman* differs for Rāmānuja, one of the commentators of the *Vedānta* philosophy. Unlike the beliefs of the *Advaitins* of Shāṅkarāchārya philosophy known as monism, the philosophy of Rāmānuja is known as *Viśiṣṭādvaita* or qualified monism. The assertion “That thou art” of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* he explained it as ‘that’ referring to the ultimate *Brahman* with qualifications like all-knowing and all-powerful reality, and ‘thou’ refers to *Brahman* qualified as the self that is embodied. Although it is hard to discern the exact standpoint of Rāmānuja, he has come to propagate the presence of both identity and difference. This he explained in terms of the relation that exists between part and a whole. A part belongs to a whole where the part and whole maintains both identity and difference. This argument he established to be the relation between the self and God or *Brahman*. This has led many to believe that he is a *bhedābheda-vadin* also known as identity-in-difference.

While Indian philosophers like Rāmānuja believe in liberation only after death there are others like Shāṅkarāchārya who believed in liberation of the self in this life and not necessarily after the death of the physical body. Hiriyanna may have taken this line of supposition in his philosophy to compare the experience of *mokṣa* with the experience of aesthetics. Although there are other reasons for his comparison between the two experiences, this may have constituted one among them.

Conclusion

Mokṣa is a value and a state that has to be realised by selves which are in bondage. It is to be emphasised that the Indian conception of *mokṣa* is a realisation of the true nature of the self. It is wrong to assume this state is newly attained as such for this state is already in the self but hidden by the complications of this world. The change that *mokṣa* brings about is a difference in our mental states and not on the physical states. The thought process of the liberated self has been altered with the awakening to its true nature. Firstly, *mokṣa* has been conceived as

the self that is restored to its original state implying that *mokṣa* is a state of the self. Secondly, *mokṣa* is the absolute and ultimate value where all other values like Goodness, Truth and Beauty are only a part of it.

Chapter 3- A Comparative Study of Aesthetic Experience and Mokṣa

Introduction

The concept of *mokṣa* in Indian philosophical schools like *Sāṅkhya* and *Vedānta* are based on the *Vedic* presentation of the nature of reality, the *Vedic* concept of the self or *atman* and the supreme reality which is *Brahman*. *Buddhism* laid down the need for liberating one's self from the misery and suffering the world entails. *Cārvāka* also presented the idea of freedom or liberation as the maximization of pleasure. From the different conceptions of *mokṣa* as discussed in previous chapters, we can see that the concept of *mokṣa* in Indian philosophy concerns man, his existence and his spirituality. This spirituality also forms an important aspect of art and aesthetic experience. Hiriyanna has done works on this close connection between aesthetic experience and the experience of *mokṣa*. We shall now look into how aesthetic experience has been brought in comparison to *mokṣa* from the perspective of Hiriyanna as laid down in his work *Art Experience*.

The presentation of the 'ideal state' as 'perfection'

One line of question to be highlighted is whether aesthetic experience is only a possible domain of the humans, whether animals also contemplate on the aesthetic beauty of the surroundings they indulge with on a daily basis. With regard to this Hiriyanna in Lecture I of "*The Quest after Perfection*" stated what makes human beings different from animals is the pursuit of something called the 'ideal'. It is the awareness of events in his life, not just the present but also his past and future events that differentiates man from other beings. He reflects on his feelings, emotions, thoughts and actions in these events and passes judgements on these actions. This made Hiriyanna believe there is a standard by which humans make these judgements. He referred to this standard as the 'ideal state'. It is a state of 'absolute perfection' as it is free from all imperfections and gives complete satisfaction. According to

Hiriyanna, the very concept of 'imperfect' even existed solely because man is aware of the 'perfect'. Man is aware of the ideal state and reaches for it. This grasping for the ideal is what makes man a spiritual being. His spirituality consists in this. All actions and activities of man is meaningless if there is no strife for the spiritual end of his life. The ideal is something which Hiriyanna has also grappled with in his works, which is evident in his work "*The Quest after Perfection*" as he questions whether humans can ever reach the ideal or to put it differently, if man can ever reach to perfection.

Perfection is an ideal state for Hiriyanna. The ideal is what man 'ought to be'. He has aimed to give a better definition of the ideal state. He has attempted this in his lecture "*The Quest after Perfection*" as he deals with issues of perfection. To do this, he had taken three eternal values like Goodness, Beauty and Truth. These values have always been considered to be the ultimate ends. Hiriyanna would rather call these values 'tentative ends.' The reason why he did not consider them as ultimate ends are of various reasons:

Firstly, Hiriyanna looked into Beauty in relation to art. The contemplation of art as explained before is an activity that leads to an impersonal and unselfish attitude, the forgetting of oneself, and a directing of complete attention to the art object. The source of art experience however comes from an external source whereby the art object presently contemplated upon if taken away will bring an end to the experience. It is for this reason that art experience is said to be transient. Certainly, something of the standard by which we make a judgement cannot be merely temporary thereby it cannot be considered ultimate. If we now look into Beauty in nature, Beauty in nature is not the same with Beauty in art. Beauty is not in the object, but what we make of it. Beauty in nature is seen as only fragmentary and for this reason we cannot have the whole experience of beauty from nature by only observing a beautiful landscape. And thus, in order for nature to be considered the ultimate ideal, it has to be experienced in its whole, not in parts or fragments.

Secondly, Hiriyanna examines Goodness. Goodness mostly has an inclining association with the moral spectrum, i.e. moral goodness, badness, right or wrong etc. The golden rule of goodness states that one should do to others as he would like them to do to him. Man, by nature is good to his fellow men; he has by nature a tendency to treat others right as it comes to him in the form of a duty to be performed towards him as well as to people living amidst him. The higher and the lower motive of man drive him to the pursuit of either of lower or higher pursuits. As man can be swayed by either his lower or higher motives, in performing certain duties he might even be motivated by selfish interests. He remarks, “The moral good cannot therefore represent the final goal of life, until self-love is wholly overcome and altruistic service becomes the effortless expression of a permanent attitude of mind”⁴⁴. Hiriyanna considered that Goodness can also be acquired by learning. In such cases, one may have learned to be a morally good person. The downside of this is although man may behave morally in most situations, there will be situations where there are conflicts of duties; and one may not be able to know what the situation demands. Moral goodness in its true sense requires an intuitive understanding of the ultimate level of reality. So, Goodness depends on knowledge of the truth and therefore it is dependent. Hence Goodness cannot be the ultimate ideal.

Thirdly, Truth has to be immediate and not mediate, like philosophic truths that talk directly about reality. Philosophic truths involve not merely a speculative activity but also a practical activity.

Therefore, these values are only ‘subsidiary’ to one ultimate value *mokṣa*. Each value when pursued alone cannot lead us to a higher aim. Although these values are not ultimate ends, Hiriyanna has not completely discarded these values. He has stated that these values when

⁴⁴ Hiriyanna, Mysore. *The Quest After Perfection*. Mysore: Kavyalaya Publishers, 1952, p.52.

combined together can lead to an end of a greater value. He believes that the three pursued together can lead to the ultimate ideal, the 'perfection' that every man ought to seek after.

Art and *mokṣa* as an ultimate value

There are values that are of utmost importance to us. Among the important values considered by Hiriyanna are Goodness, Truth and Beauty. We have seen how Hiriyanna has asserted the pursuit of the three values together can lead to the achievement of the ultimate ideal, and the ideal as given by Indian philosophical belief is *mokṣa*. Values like Goodness, Beauty and Truth according to Hiriyanna represent only a 'regulative ideal' for *mokṣa*. With the cultivation of each values of Beauty, Goodness and Truth, man is driven towards the pursuit for the ultimate end.

Hiriyanna has termed art and the experience of art as an ultimate value because art is for its own sake and not for the achievement of any other value. Although we may be led to think otherwise as we understand Beauty as just a regulative means to an ultimate value, he has presented art as an ultimate value. This may immediately lead one to point out an inconsistency in his aesthetic theory. However, it is the distinction made between Beauty with reference to nature and to art that makes prominent the importance of art and its place as an ultimate value. Hiriyanna has highlighted the idealistic view of nature and it is in the perspective of the idealist argument that Hiriyanna has established to put aesthetic experience and the ideal experience on the same plane.

The Beauty that is considered as the ultimate value is found in art. Art as depicted by Hiriyanna yields an experience of spontaneous joy. It is an experience that elevates man to a state of pure joy and worldly detachment. As mentioned before this state may only last for a short while, however it has certain characteristics that has qualified it to be compared with the highest value of man. The purpose of art is to serve man the highest experience there is to

offer in life. In this way, the end purpose of man as set down by the *Puruṣārthas* in the Indian philosophical system is also similar to it as man grasp for an experience of a higher kind in his life.

The central area of focus in a discussion of any experience, both in the experience of art and the experience of *mokṣa* involves the subject of experience which is the self. There are two sets of views that discusses the possibility of the attainment of art experience. It is set forth that we can have an experience of art either in the present life or only when the self has attained 'self-perfection'. Self-perfection is a state where the self discovers its true nature. It is a 'self-realization' and therefore it is an implication to the realization of the ultimate value. This further indicates the self as the ultimate value. What is highly held in importance by the *Advaitins* is the self and the self is the highest value that man can achieve. The important step towards the achievement of the ultimate value is realization. It is a realization of the self and its true nature. This self-realization is of the highest value for the *Advaitins*, and to realize the self is to realize the highest value. If we see to art experience as given by Hiriyanna, we can see the act of art contemplation leading to a state of 'self-forget'. What this state seems to suggest is the absence of a self in such case, but really it points to the forgetting of the empirical self. The empirical self is set aside and we have a purely joyful experience of art. In this state, the self will be known as the transcendental self as given by the *Advaitins*. Art experience leads to a state of a temporary overcoming of the lower self and provides a glimpse of the higher transcendental self.

The concept of *mokṣa* found its first mention in the *Upaniṣads*. Before *mokṣa*, truth and goodness were pursued separately. Now regarding truth, there can be a theoretical knowledge of truth as well as the practical aspect of truth. In the Indian tradition, it is common belief that a theory not backed by practice is rather useless. Therefore, a theoretical knowledge should be sought for a practical end. The concept of *mokṣa* has been placed at a higher plane than

dharma or *jñāna*. *Dharma* can have different meanings. The context in which *dharma* is used here is -*dharma* can mean goodness for personal advantage or goodness which serves the purpose of others and not one's own. The nature of the ideal is such that it leaves the former sense and signifies the latter. The *Upaniṣads* has also emphasized the need for *dharma* and *jñāna* for the attainment of *mokṣa*. *Dharma* was considered as the ultimate ideal for a long period of time. This is evident in the *Trivarga* scheme of *Puruṣārthas* which consisted of only *artha*, *kāma*, and *dharma* and excluded *mokṣa*. With the exclusion of *mokṣa*, *jñāna* and *dharma* should not be considered to be insignificant as it has also been declared by the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* that the practice of *dharma* gives inspiration and knowledge or *jñāna* cannot be excluded because there is no *mokṣa* without knowledge. We have seen that the Indian ethical system has ultimately given *mokṣa* as the ultimate value of all ends of life.

Art and *mokṣa* as a spiritual value

What Coomaraswamy, Tagore and Aurobindo contended on was the spiritual nature of Indian art. Coomaraswamy recognizes the spirituality of Indian art as he offers an attempt to escape from what is given to us to what is to be sought after. Beauty is a quality of Truth that makes Truth appealing. Coomaraswamy would also agree with Hiriyanna in stating aesthetic experience to be free of a necessary relation with morality. Coomaraswamy considers those which will bring in the ethical or the moral spectrum as only 'mere illustration'. He believes that concepts like 'beauty' and 'beautiful' belong only to that which are aesthetic. Also, what constitutes aesthetic appreciation according to Coomaraswamy does not include the judgement of the physical or the outer traits as a part of an aesthetic appreciation. Thus, aesthetic experience is found in the experience of *rasa* which the artist has expressed in his works. The experience of the spiritual occurs in the experience of *rasa* in the artists creative art

work. It is interesting to see that in his representation of the dance of Śiva, Coomaraswamy has projected this activity of Śiva as an aesthetic representation of the divine activities.

Aurobindo's theory of aesthetics which is known as the evolutionary theory of art describes the spiritual journey, the transition of the consciousness self to the discovery of its true self. It describes man as he becomes the superman, the gnostic being as it enters the life divine. Aurobindo believes that with the aid of art, man discovers his true state of being. As we look into his explanation of mind and Supermind he has incorporated a similar line of argument which follows the monistic explanation given for the self. He believes the mind is nothing else other than the Supermind. The mind has only identified with something other than the Supermind, when in actuality the mind should identify with the Supermind.

Tagore also saw aesthetics to have a spiritual underlying. Art was a medium man used to let out his inner insights of the ultimate 'infinite'. Tagore's 'freedom' was to imply the impact of art and imagination to whoever utilizes this medium. According to Tagore, art is a spiritual activity. The response to the calling of the infinite is where Tagore locates art. The calling of the infinite is the unity of all things existing in the world. This is known and expressed by man and in this expression, we find art. The knowing of this unity requires man to be detached from all worldly attachments in the form of desires and wants. It requires man to be selfless. In his expression, we find his 'higher' self being expressed, as Tagore also believes in the ultimate oneness of the 'lower' and the 'higher' self- the 'physical' and the 'personal' man. Therefore, in art we find the higher self. The pleasure that one may find in art is that of one being finally aware of his true self. Tagore gives a significant importance to the self because everything depends on the self. Aesthetic values are dependent on the self. The self is the central source of all creative expressions of art works.

What is the nature of the 'ideal state'?

The nature of the 'ideal' is that it is a state of tranquility, peace and satisfaction. It is also a state of disinterestedness which is also a constant feature of aesthetic experience. There is also no conscious effort, only spontaneous and joyful moral attitude. Any effort which is consciously done drags man away from the progress towards the knowledge of the attainment of the ideal. The journey to the achievement of the ideal is a slow process that makes Hiriyanna believe perfection cannot be reached. This invites the question as to whether the ideal state is actual and true, or a false and a futile pursuit. He said, "Even if we grant that perfection can never be finally attained, that man's reach will always exceed his grasp, it would be necessary to recognize it as a regulative ideal"⁴⁵. What is meant by this is that the ultimate ideal cannot be actualized. However, if man sets a goal on perfection this will lead man towards the ultimate ideal. The experience of the ideal produces joy and detachment. It has been described as a state of bliss or *ānanda*.

Art is seen by Hiriyanna as providing a taste of the experience man seeks to attain. It gives man a short-lived taste of the state of freedom from all his worldly attachments. Art liberates man in his act of contemplation. It is of great importance in Indian philosophical studies by the different systems that one is equipped and conscious of the nature and essence of reality. This is because the experience of *mokṣa* is an experience of bliss or *ānanda*. The freeing of one's self from the bounds of the world very much requires the knowledge for the true aspects of the world and of reality. A similar but diverse line of argument has been presented by Aurobindo. The concept of 'mantra' in the aesthetic view of Aurobindo is representative of the 'expression' that has also been discussed by Tagore and Coomaraswamy. It is an expression of the infinite, the supreme reality. Aurobindo seems to give a theistic explanation of beauty, as he explicated *ānanda* as the source of beauty and delight. As he believes the world and all existence in it to have been manifested by *ānanda*, he directed us towards the

⁴⁵ Ibid, p.58

existence or the presence of beauty in all experience. There is both beauty and delight. He has also given the Truth as a unity of all existence. The Truth is a unity of a divine nature. He talked of a raising of pleasure to delight. Beauty is the medium through which Aurobindo believes the self finds *ānanda*, the absolute spirit. It is art which connects two worlds- what we can perceive and what is beyond our ordinary perception. Art helps man to identify real from those that will only temporarily exist. In other words, we can say that art according to Aurobindo is a realization or an expression of the self.

A possible line of questioning is whether the ideal is to be attained by one and all or by some? If it is the former, is it by an individual in isolation or an individual together with others? It is commonly believed that the ideal cannot be attained by an individual self alone, but by realizing the underlying unity of all selves. Man can never reach his goal by separating himself from others. The pursuit of the ideal can never be individualistic. Even persons who attain *jīvanmukti* or liberation in this life do not abandon their life activities, but their activities have rather become an impersonal one because the liberated self has now directed his focus towards helping other selves attain liberation. We can see that the idea of *mokṣa* or liberation in Indian system of thought is closely related to knowledge. It has also been said that knowledge is that which liberates. Hiriyanna in this lecture have brought to light the need for the practicality of the theory of *mokṣa*. The three eternal Values-Beauty, Goodness and Truth are therefore not the ultimate ideal as has historically been regarded, but are the practical means to the attainment of the ideal. With these values man can have a ‘glimpse’ of the ideal, and make him aware of the existence of such ideal end, and gives prove of the practical value of the ideal.

Tagore has also argued that it is through art that man channels the infinite, it gives him his freedom as he expresses his creative imagination in the form of art. Art was a form of liberation and blissful existence. It paves the way for the physical man to become the personal

man. Man finds his awakening in art as poetries stirs his emotions. For Tagore, art was a fulfillment to establish a unified relation with reality. This established unity is a state of separation from desires and selfishness. Man finds his true self as he expresses the truth. The categorization of man into the 'physical' and the 'personal' man is how Tagore categorizes the Upanishadic self that is divided into the 'lower' and the 'higher' self. He has given 'emotion' as that instrument that connects man with art. It is in the employment of emotions that Tagore believes we accessed art. Emotions helps us transform the world we see into a world of what we would term as the 'ideal'.

The 'ideal' and art experience

Let us look into the two kinds of experience- the experience of art and the experience of *mokṣa* and see the relation that has been laid down by Hiriyanna between art experience and the ultimate ideal. We have seen that according to Hiriyanna, the ideal is nothing but a 'synthesis' of the three values. The ideal is attained with a combined pursuit of all the three values- Beauty, Goodness and Truth. Beauty, Goodness and Truth are therefore the three means to reach the ideal. Hiriyanna stated that the three are a 'foretaste' of the ultimate ideal. These are the differences between *mokṣa* and aesthetic experience as given by Hiriyanna. In order to make a comparative study of art experience and the experience of *mokṣa*, Hiriyanna analyses the basic nature of the experience of art and the experience of the 'ideal'. Aesthetic experiences or art experiences is an experience involving an object that is experienced and the subject that is experiencing the object. While the subject of experience may indicate a nature of permanence following the nature of 'self' as laid down in the Indian philosophical texts, objects are external entities that may not always be within the reach of the subject at hand. The experiences derived from art objects depend solely on the presence of the art object. When the object no longer is in view, the aesthetic experience we have is gone. Aesthetic

experience is therefore dependent on an external source which may not always be present whereby we can conclude to their being inconsistent, impermanent or temporal. This temporal or transient nature only marks one among other differences between aesthetic experience and *mokṣa*. The experience of *mokṣa*, on the contrary have sprung from within the subject indicating a permanent presence of the source of experience. It is a realization that comes from within the self. Since the self is eternal, therefore its nature is of permanence.

Art experience with its transient nature gives a provisional satisfaction to man and this prompts man to the pursuit of the ideal and finally catch hold of it forever. Hiriyanṇa also believe that value like Truth and Goodness together yield a better result. The synthesis of the two results in an ideal that is higher than the two taken separately. If man lingers on truth everyday while at the same time observing moral goodness, the ‘impulses’ of man that are not disciplined will be kept under control. The knowledge of the ultimate reality is therefore to be realized by an individual from within himself. It is therefore a matter of intuition. Hiriyanṇa here uses ‘intuition’ not in the sense of awareness of new facts or an instinctive knowing, but a different way of viewing what is already known. Dwelling on the truth therefore will make man view things differently. Coomaraswamy also believed art is a product of the intuitive insights of an artist.

Hiriyanṇa also examines the moral connections of both the experience of art and the experience of the ‘ideal’. It is important that we look into the question of whether art follow certain moral lines, likewise the connection between *mokṣa* and morality. As already discussed, aesthetic experience gives rise to an impersonal attitude and a ‘spontaneous joy’, which may lead to an overly indulgence into the experience that it results in the viewers becoming completely negligent of their surroundings. On the other hand, the experience of *mokṣa* entails love and service for all living kind. It shows no sign of detachment from the environment whatsoever. There is a pessimistic representation of nature and art. The

pessimists have presented the existence of evil to necessitate the need for art in life. It is in the necessitated presence of art that we are led on to look into the relation between art and morality. We often encounter artistic works of paintings and dramas being subjected to the judgements of morality. Morality on certain occasions may or may not have a role to play behind it. If morality is driven by the fear of some retribution of the evils done that act is everything short of morality. There has often been a comparison between these two experiences and the ideal state, although we find they may differ in many ways. Thus, Hiriyantha concludes that “the best interpretation of it seems to be to take it as commending both as alternating phases of the same ideal”.⁴⁶ Both offer a change that is beneficial to the suffering the humans are facing in life. The moral attitude brings about a change in the shortcomings of the life while the experience of art will bring about this change but only temporarily by offering an escape. Art gives us the ideal world. “If man were a perfect being placed in the midst of a perfect environment- social as well as natural-there would be little need for either art or morality.”⁴⁷ Art and morality both aim to get rid of the selfish attitude that is in man. They aim to attain a state free of all selfishness. What is moral or immoral is judged by whether the goal is pursued with either selfish intentions or unselfish intentions. There may come a time when even the unselfish act becomes a selfish act when such acts are done consciously. Such desired result of unselfishness may only be possible with the experience of art which as mentioned yields an impersonal attitude. “Just as by becoming purely ascetic morality contradicts itself, art also by becoming self-centered contradicts itself, since the artistic attitude, like the moral, should be absolutely unselfish.”⁴⁸ Hiriyantha has defined this unselfishness as ‘conquest of the lower self by the higher self’.

⁴⁶ Ibid, p.61.

⁴⁷ Ibid, p.55.

⁴⁸ Hiriyantha, Mysore. *Art Experience*. Mysore: Kavyalaya Publishers, 1954, p.58.

One can see the ‘impersonal’ attitude of the subject in art experiences where one does not personally respond to the situation displayed. This response is only emotional. Say we go out to see a movie, where the actors of the movie are caught in an unpleasant situation of violence, betrayal, and brutality. In such cases one does not get off their seats and rush off to help the actors on screen. The ideal state on the other hand demands, among other things, certain practical and personal implications. There is a need for the self to acquire knowledge, where this knowledge is for the realization of the ultimate Truth. There is a permanent and direct change or transformation of character to be seen in the experience of the ideal state, whereas we only get a temporary change of attitude in our experience of art.

Conclusion

We have seen that in Indian aesthetics art is a value that brings man to a closer spiritual nature of his existence. We can say that Hiriyanna has given a high view of our experience in art as we have seen that he has termed them ‘identifiable’. Although such is the case that art experience may present itself to be identifiable with the experience of the highest spiritual experience of *mokṣa*, Hiriyanna did not equate the two experiences or claim that they are one and the same.

In align with the above points that has been discussed, aesthetic experience depends on something that has been created by the artists and therefore this source may not be real but constructed. Being constructed here does not imply unreality or incompleteness, rather they are a whole. Reality may not always be replicated in exact. This implies the less concern for the existence of art objects in reality and a serious concern for appearances. The concern of an artist is in giving us an idea of the object as some art work may have no spatial and temporal existence. “The poet idealizes the objects in depicting them; and it is in this process that they are raised to the level of art and acquire aesthetic significance and, though not real, come to be

of interest to the reader.”⁴⁹ The basic reason for the rejection of beauty in nature was the change in the presentations of nature or in our attitude towards them. From the idealist perspective, art has to be independent of all shortcomings of the beauty given in nature. It is in art that man can truly find beauty, unchanging and eternal. It is because art is never subject to change, art being the outcome of the idealistic presentation of beauty given in nature. It is as laid down in *Vedantic* thoughts, it is when the self finds joy as he realized the ultimate truth of reality that he can see the beauty in all things. This realization emphasized in the attainment for the freedom of the self is also what constituted the ascend of man to see the truth of divine unity in all things in the philosophy of Aurobindo. The ultimate reality is said to be realized. Aurobindo further stated, that it is not enough that the ultimate Truth be realized. The Truth must be lived. The Truth must be made the motivating force of all life.

Also, it is not in the concern of art to copy or duplicate reality as it is, as it is less weighted with its concern for facts. Hirianna himself has also addressed this issue as he introduces the existing exclusion of aesthetics from the domain of philosophy during his time. It was to avoid all necessities to form the theories of reality in alignment with the theories of art. He states, “The aim of art is not to discover the nature of reality but to secure for us the highest experience of life”.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Ibid, p.31.

⁵⁰ "The Main Aspects of Indian Philosophy." In *Indian Aesthetics: An Introduction*, edited by V. S. Seturaman. Madras: Macmillan India Limited, 1992, p.162

Conclusion

The main characteristic and common nature of Indian philosophy is that it is a philosophical query that is spiritual in nature. It enquires into the deep questions of reality and the means of acquiring the knowledge of reality. It is a significant feature of Indian philosophy that knowledge should influence the practical life of every living being. This is where its eschatological aspect comes in as the purpose of all knowledge is to guide the *self* to freedom and liberation. With regard to this we have discussed the different conception of the *self* as given by *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* and *Sāṅkhya* who held a pluralistic view regarding the self as they present the self to be many. The view of *Śaṅkara Vedānta* is a monistic view as it upholds the presence of only one ultimate self. It was in relation to the difference in the conception of the *self* that we have different conceptions of *mokṣa*. We have also discussed the different conceptions of *mokṣa* by Indian schools like *Sāṅkhya*, *Vedānta*, *Buddhism* and *Cārvāka*. The *Advaita Vedānta* believes that when the self realizes its true nature as a transcendent self, it identifies with *Brahman* which is its true identity. This knowledge of the oneness and the sameness of *ātman* and *Brahman* is *mokṣa*. The *Sāṅkhya* employed a different term *kaivalya* which represents a state of detachment from the world. The Buddhist term for liberation is *nirvāṇa* which is enlightenment. It also comes with the knowledge in realizing the relation between the *śamsāra* and *nirvāṇa*. The materialistic school of *Cārvāka* do not adhere to the presence of anything beyond what can be perceived. The *Cārvāka* has given its idea of liberation as enjoyment of life and living a pleasurable life. Therefore, *mokṣa* in Indian philosophy is a state of discovering the nature of the self that has been hidden and ignored by the desires and attachments with the world.

The *Puruṣārtha*, which is the Indian ethical system lays down four values that are set for man. Among the four which consisted of *artha*, *kāma*, *dharma* and *mokṣa*, *mokṣa* was considered to be the ultimate value. *Puruṣārtha* is concerned with the meaning behind the existence of

man and the purpose of his existence it deals with both two things, the achievement of man in life known as *abhyudaya* or the attainment of man's spiritual liberation. *Dharma* is also a value that has been examined by Hiriyanna. It is a value that may be considered as an ultimate value like the *Prabhākara* of the *Mīmāṃsakas*. For the *Prabhākaras*, the observance of *dharma* signifies obedience to the supreme authority of the *Vedas*. Hiriyanna has given that values like Goodness, Beauty and Truth are only instrumental to the pursuit of one ultimate value which is *mokṣa*. He had used the term 'regulative ideals' to define them. The essential nature of anything of ultimate value is that it is dependent, one and eternal. It is also sought as an ultimate end in itself and not for the further attainment of other values. The ultimate end can never be a means for another end. These qualities are only satisfied by *mokṣa*. Therefore, *mokṣa* is the ultimate value and the ultimate end.

The value of art and *mokṣa* have also been established. The importance or significance of art in Indian aesthetics is based on seeing the spirituality in Indian art. It has also been stated as "The value of art consists in large part in its ability to induce this taste of liberation and the impersonal joy that it involves."⁵¹ It is this induced experience of the transcendental state that Hiriyanna has termed as a 'foretaste' of the experience of *mokṣa*. The amount of value given to aesthetic experience by Hiriyanna is because of its relation of similarity with the experience of the spiritual end which is *mokṣa*. The basis of inspiration for taking the experience of *mokṣa* in close connection with the aesthetic experience is taken from the *Vedantic* philosophers by whose philosophy Hiriyanna was highly influenced.

Besides the conception of aesthetic experience from the perspective of Hiriyanna, we have explored other conceptions of art and aesthetic experience according to three prominent scholars like Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo (Aurobindo Ghosh) and Ananda

⁵¹ Bhushan, Nalini, and Jay L. Garfield. "Indian Ways of Seeing: The Centrality of Aesthetics." In *Minds Without Fear: Philosophy in the Indian Renaissance*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017, p.286

Coomaraswamy among many others. The common feature of each conceptions of art by these three thinkers concludes that to have the experience of art is also to have a spiritual experience. Hiriyanna has also brought the experience of *mokṣa* and aesthetic experience to a similar ground. The reason for comparing aesthetic experience to the experience of *mokṣa* is because aesthetic experience is spiritual in nature. Hiriyanna however did not go as far as to say that the two experiences are one and the same. He denies that they are identical as he terms them to be only 'identifiable'. The lack of the permanence of the source of experience in art experience forms the focal point of comparison. Since the experience of *mokṣa* is the self, the self is an eternal entity, therefore the source of the experience of *mokṣa* is permanent. The resulting joy and satisfaction from aesthetic experience is also only a temporary joy and satisfaction. While this is the case for aesthetic experience, the satisfaction from experiencing *mokṣa* is a permanent state of bliss. The attainment of *mokṣa* no longer keeps man in touch with the mundane desires and pleasures. The pleasure he gets is of a transcendent kind, which is free from all impurities and trivial worldly desires. This kind of experience can also be temporarily achieved from the experience of art. Due to this possibility of a temporary attainment of a transcendent pleasure, aesthetic experience is said to give a glimpse of *mokṣa* experience. This brief experience of *mokṣa* introduces man to his spiritual nature thereby he wants to attain this experience forever.

Mokṣa is an ideal which Hiriyanna has presented as a state of *perfection*. It is the awareness of the state of perfection that also distinguishes man from other beings. In in in this that we can find man has distinguish himself by philosophising and indulging in philosophical enquiries and speculations. Although the self loses its true identity under the influence of ignorance, the self is at its core spiritual in nature. His search for perfection is an activity that is reflective of his spirituality. Man ought to search for this perfection and there are different ends that may present themselves to be of the ultimate end or the ultimate perfection. The three ends that

Hiriyanna has examined are Goodness, Beauty and Truth. These three ends have always been valued by man as an ultimate end. However, Hiriyanna has examined these ends and presented how they have fallen short to be considered as the ultimate end. Hiriyanna analyses Beauty into two- Beauty in nature and Beauty in art. The beauty in art is experienced from the contemplation of an object that is not present always. Therefore, in the absence of an art object, aesthetic experience cannot occur. So, the beauty found in art depends on the presence of an art object. Since the experience of art is dependent on the presence of art objects, it cannot be an ultimate end. Also, beauty in nature is subjected to change because nature dies and alters its appearance within a short period of time. The beauty in nature is also experienced only by seeing a fragmentary presentation of nature. Beauty has to be experienced in whole, therefore Hiriyanna believes that beauty in nature cannot be considered as the ultimate end. Goodness as examined by Hiriyanna is a tendency to do good to others. Since man is presented by the Upanishads as consisting a higher and a lower self, man is also driven by the pursuits of either lower motives or higher motives. If man is good only because of a selfish pursuit of his goals, such case represents goodness to be short of an ultimate end. Hiriyanna has also presented a case of learning to be a man with good morals. In such case, an act of kindness or moral acts is not a genuine case of goodness. Truth also requires that it is immediate to be considered as an ultimate end. All these are only regulating man to the pursuit of *mokṣa* which is the ultimate end because it is neither dependent nor temporary. It is a value that is independent, comprehensive, eternal and an end in itself.

Aesthetic experience is also a state of ‘disinterestedness’. It represents a state of detachment from the worldly attachments. It is a state of indifference towards all distractions, either in the form of desires or in the form of concern for the realness of the art object. In the contemplation of art, all these are temporarily set aside and the self enjoys pure joy and blissful experience. It should be noted that aesthetic experience is not an outcome only of a

pleasant scenario. Even a tragic scenario can induce aesthetic experience in the viewers and observers. A work of art is a representation of nature that creatively reproduces nature in an idealized form. It is due to this idealization that the experience of art takes man beyond the experience of the mundane experience.

The purpose of art as given in Indian aesthetics is to evoke an experience of *rasa*. The *rasa* theory that Hiriyanna believed as the basis of Indian aesthetics is the *rasa* theory of Bharata. Bharata placed the experience of *rasa* in the subject of experience in contrast to an alternative that locates *rasa* in the object. Hiriyanna's position would disagree with Bharata's location of *rasa*. Aesthetic experience according to Hiriyanna is a case of becoming one with the artist. It is an experience that requires having a heart like the artist which is known as *sa-hṛdaya*. It concerns the self which is the subject of experience and where the experience of *rasa* occurs. The distinguishing feature of aesthetic experience from ordinary experience is the impersonal attitude and the resulting detachment from the experience. The experience of *mokṣa* also leads to detachment from all worldly attachments and desires. Hiriyanna believed that "artistic experience can improve us, heightening both religious and moral sensibility".⁵² The poet during the Vedic periods were highly respected as they were seen as the creator. The poets were considered as gods or *kavi* since the poet has the power to create and the imaginative power. The poet gives the creative expression of what he has been given to him in intuitive insights.

The question of reality in art according to Hiriyanna does not need to meet requirements matching reality. While life is driven by many laws, and particularly in the Indian ethical value system of *Puruṣārtha* which lay down that the pursuit of *mokṣa* requires that a man should follow *dharma*, there is no necessary need for morality in order to acquire the

⁵² Ibid, p. 288.

experience of art. In other words, there is no necessary relation between aesthetic experience and morality. Aesthetic experience has no direct connection with morality. The connection between morality and aesthetic experience is best explained by Hiriyanna as he categorized what aesthetics is. He believed that aesthetics is neither to be categorized as logical nor ethical. Aesthetics, according to Hiriyanna is '*alogical*'. Whereas, in the experience of *mokṣa*, adherence to *dharma* is a prerequisite for the attainment of *mokṣa*. Therefore, there is a direct relation between *mokṣa* and morality, while the relation between aesthetic experience and morality is such that morality should not be the ultimate aim of aesthetic experience although it can definitely form a moral view.

Mysore Hiriyanna was a great philosopher of the Indian Renaissance. His works will continue to shape studies in aesthetics and philosophy. The comparative study of aesthetic experience and the experience of *mokṣa*, as well as his identification of the spiritual values in art, is an insight that will continue to serve as a great contribution to the deep philosophical thought of the Indian aesthetic tradition.

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