SOME METAPHYSICAL CONCEPTS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

From the foregoing discussion of different systems of Indian Philosophy, we have noted there are some concepts which stand aloft and are of paramount importance. Therefore, it will be very necessary that every study of Indian Philosophical Systems should have clear notion of them at the outset. It will not be out of place if we discuss some of these concepts here in brief. Let us start with Brahma.

1. Brahma: Brahman or Brahma is the pivot of Indian Philosophy. It stands for one absolute being which is pure consciousness and undiluted joy or bliss. It is the basis and the source of all. It is a supreme power and all other powers of the Universe are only subservient to Him. He can neither be made nor created whereas He is the Creator of everything. He is the one self of all. Union with Him, is the ultimate desire of the human-soul, according to Vedânta and Yoga.

In the pure state of Brahman is said to be without any qualities (i.e. nirguna sarûpa). On the other hand, as He is the creator and sustainer of the whole of the Universe with all its varieties, He is seen possessing qualities also (saguna sarûpa). Another term for Saguna Brahman is Shabda Brahman. Shabda means sound or word. It means that the fundamental force in the Universe is sound, issuing as a word or command-logos in Greek.
Brahma, when it comes to the Saguna Sarupa from its Nirguna sarupa, there is the expression of certain powers, known as shaktis. In the schools of Tantric Yoga, and in common belief these powers are represented as goddesses and consorts of three great gods, i.e. Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma.

Thus, in Indian Philosophy, Brahmā is the nerve-centre of all discussions, all aspirations, all yearnings. It is the pen-ultimate aim of every activity of life in any form.

2. Atmā: — Atma or Atman means the true Self, in contrast with the false self of individuality and personality which each man, commonly thinks himself to be. In Vedantic Philosophy, this is the one ever-present universal spirit, free from all conditions or characteristics of subject or object of mind and matter, though it commonly appears to be a separate self, the Jīvātmā.

Sometimes we use the words soul or conscience for Atman, which are considered to be the innermost self of human-beings.

Indian Vedic Tradition is of the belief that Atman is the part of Brahma or it is the Brahma Himself. That is why sometimes word Parmatma is used for Brahma. It is suggested that Atman is separated from its source i.e. Brahman and suffers tormentations. That is why, it longs for re-union. When re-union is achieved, all the torments
are eliminated and it rests in a state of bliss.

Relationship and re-relationship of Brahman and Atman is the basic question of the Indian Philosophical thought.

3. Jīva: — Jiva or Jivatma means a living being. It is a unit of life. This, the core of our being, beyond body and mind, is our very self, our pure consciousness. In popular speech, the term simply stands for a living being of any kind distinguished from non-living, lifeless or dead.

4. Māyā: — Māyā means 'illusion'. The doctrine of Māyā suggest that all we see in the manifested universe is illusion, it is not reality. The reality of the Universe is something else which cannot be perceived by ordinary human eye. The reality is Brahma and Māyā is His creation. Māyā is just like dream which is never a reality. The human soul is tempted by the Māyā and it forgets its real aim. It takes the worldly objects to be real and gets attached to them. That is why it continues to suffer miserably. When, it realizes that this universe is just an illusion, it stops taking interest in it and sets out on a divine journey to achieve what is Reality and Truth. Māyā distracts human soul from its path of Reality but through Gyāna, it marches towards its goal and gets true happiness in the company of Brahma.

5. Moksha: — Moksha means liberation or freedom. Liberation from what? In Indian Philosophy it is emphasized time and again, that the human soul is separated from the
Super-soul or Brahma. Due to this separation the human-soul suffers miserably. It has to bear the pangs of birth and death. This circle of Avagaman is the root cause of all the sufferings of the human soul.

Moksha will be state when human-soul will be liberated from all these ordeals which cause suffering. In that state, there will be no tormentations of any kind.

However, scholars differ on the point that how human-soul feels in the state of Moksha. Some say, it is a state of feelinglessness. When there is no feeling, there is no suffering and at the same time no sense of bliss also. Some say, it is a state of bliss, in which there is no place of any suffering.

Moksha has many substitutes like Muktí, Nirvána or Kaivalya, which different philosophers have used in their discourses. However, the spirit behind all of them is the same.

6. Nirvána: As already pointed out, the word Nirvana means liberation in the manner as the term Moksha means. However this term was used by Buddha. It is said that after his enlightenment, Buddha exclaimed: "I, Buddha, who wept with all my brothers' tears, laugh and am glad, for there is liberty." Of the state of Nirvana, he thought, was not describable. That is why, he asked his followers: "Sink not the string of thought into the fathomless. Who asks doth err; who answers errs; say naught."

Bhagwad Gita also speaks of Nirvana as the State of
ultimate aspiration of human soul. It calls it Brahm-Nirvāṇ, which further signifies the sublimity of the term. As Buddhism holds no belief in God, the Nirvāṇa in Hindu Scriptures stands for the state of Union with Brahma and his sat-chit and ānāḍ. Thus, the Nirvāṇa is the state of bliss itself, though viewed differently in the Buddhist and the Hindu Scriptures. Dorothy Field’s remarks about what Nirvāṇa means are noteworthy:

"Nirvāṇa - The all-desirable condition of Nirvāṇa has always been a subject for controversy among European scholars. The word comes from nir=out, and va to blow, and the meaning has been somewhat differently interpreted even among Indians themselves. Speaking generally, it would be safe to say that it has never meant annihilation, but rather absorption into the Absolute. Where the belief in a personal Deity is strong, Nirvāṇa has stood for unity of the creature with the Creator..... its realization is compared to the blending of two streams." (3A)

7. Paramdhamā: - "Param " means 'The Greatest' and 'dhamā' means the 'abode'. Thus Paramdhama means the greatest, the sublime and the most elevated state of existence in union with Brahma. The Bhagwad Gītā considers this state to be the cherished goad of human-soul. Thus, it is a state where the bliss of the Lord is showered upon the human-soul.
CONCLUSION

From our discussion of the various Indian and non-Indian systems of Philosophy, we come to a clear conclusion that the idea of happiness or bliss finds attention with almost every system. However, its elaborate discussion in the Vedic tradition, develops it into a specified Vedic theory. The Upanishadas have put forth a forceful concept which is well-known as Ānandvād or Ānand Siddhant. Needless to say that the Upanishadic concept of Ānand is the guiding factor in almost every system of Indian Philosophy, directly or indirectly.

In the following pages, we will find how the Adi Granth has also been greatly impressed by this predominantly Upanishadic Thought.
1. "Brahman: - The philosophical system of the Vedanta adopts as its aim the search after Brahman, and makes this the central point of its teachings. The loftiest conception of Brahman speculation is there set forth, and handed down from generation to generation. It is, however, only the climax of a long intellectual development, the beginning of which may be traced in the Rig Veda, the most ancient poetry of early India. . . . Brahman has been exalted to the position of the supreme first principle, which itself without beginning creates the Universe. . . ."


"Brahman: - The Upanisads try to answer in various ways the question "What is Brahman? (the sacred power implicit in ritual performance) Brahman came to be thought of as the power sustaining the whole cosmos, and thus the question prompted an enquiry to find a single principle that underlies the multiplicity of phenomena."

(The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, Vol. 4, PP. 1).

2. "There are two words, Brahman and Atman, which are often used in the Upanisads to signify the inner essence of the individual as well as of the whole world, and which cannot be considered separate from each other."

(Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. 2, PP. 195)
3A. The Religion of the Sikhs, PP. 49.

4. "Nirvana: - In the Oriental philosophical doctrines, the absolute and final extinction of individuality, without loss of consciousness. It is defined as a condition in which all pain, suffering, mental anguish and above all, samsara have ceased." (Dictionary of Mysticism, PP. 124).

5. "Jiva- A life, or living being. The individual soul. It is what makes a man conscious of his own consciousness, or conscious of himself, even without any definition or thought of himself or of others, or indeed of anything else at all. What makes him conscious of the mortal and other selves is his use of the intellect or mind lower or higher, but he knows himself as jiva even without their functioning...." (Vedanta Dictionary, PP. 93).

5. "Maya - A Sanskrit term, approximately meaning illusion. In Hinduism and other occult and esoteric philosophies, the cosmic force which produces the phenomena of material existence and permits them to be perceived. All that is finite and subject to change and decay, all that is not eternal and unchangeable, is considered as maya. There is but one reality, Brahman -
attan, the Universal Spirit.

(Dictionary of Mysticism, p. 99-100).