Introduction

The theme of the present thesis is "The Evolution of the Concepts of Ātman and Mokṣa in the Different Systems of Indian Philosophy". An attempt is made in the present work to trace the evolution of the concepts of Ātman (self) and Mokṣa (liberation) in the major and prominent systems of Indian Philosophy, beginning from the Vedas and ending with the religious experiences of Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahāmsa, who lived in the 19th century (A.D.). The range and the breadth of the inquiry into the nature of Ātman and Mokṣa is extremely wide, covering nearly the whole of the history of Indian Philosophy. The extent of this thesis has, therefore, grown too wide. As I have not to concentrate my attention on the nature of Ātman in any one system, it will be undesirable on my part to go into too much details of these concepts, as occurring in the different systems of Indian Philosophy. My concern is more with the 'evolution' of the concepts of Ātman and Mokṣa; therefore, it has become incumbent upon me to take a broad and synthetic survey of these ideas in all the major and prominent systems of Indian Philosophy. As I could not restrict myself to any one definite system, I have proceeded from one system to another and studied the
concepts of Ātman and Mokṣa under certain relevant features of them. I have arranged the discussion in each chapter in accordance with those features and followed the procedure throughout in all the chapters. After fully discussing and presenting these concepts of Ātman and Mokṣa in each system, I have collected together the various views about the common features of Ātman and Mokṣa, as expressed in the different systems, and summarized them to obtain the various views of the different systems on a particular feature in one place, and, to get a broad and synthetic account of them. After that, in the last concluding chapter, I have compared the concepts of Ātman and Mokṣa with those of the Western Philosophers like Anaxagoras, Plato, Aristotle, Stoics, Epicurians, Philo, Plotinus, St. Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Spinoza, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Kant, Fichte, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Royce, Bosanquet, Bradley, Alexander, Bergson, and, those of Islam and Christianity. It is an impossible task to make exact comparisons, however, I have tried to point out the most striking points of similarity. However, I do not dogmatically insist upon any of them. It is my humble effort to understand these ideas in Indian Philosophy and the Western Philosophy by comparison, contrast and similarity just to make them clear. After that I have briefly pointed out my own view about the lines along which
the evolution of the concepts of Atman and Moksa has tended
to take place and, I claim to regard it as the result of my
careful and original thinking on them.)

As a result of the industrial revolution and mechanised
production the present age is growing richer and richer in
the means of material happiness, but inspite of the tremendous
multiplication of the means of happiness man's life in
genral, has not substantially improved; man has not become
morally more sound and spiritually perfect and contented.
The means of material satisfaction and the other cultural
development have not become successful in bringing to man
enduring satisfaction, unending peace, and tranquillity.
There is an acute poverty of satisfaction amidst the plenty
of happiness. Inspite of the many-sided (physical and mental)
wellbeing, man has not become successful to leave peace-
fully with his fellow beings. The present century is fast
approaching a total destruction of the human civilisation
by the use of the demonic weapons like atom bomb and hydrogen
bomb. Human life is becoming more and more insecure inspite
of the tremendous scientific development and the production
of the means of happiness. Similarly, inspite of so much
of the growth of knowledge and scholarly academic develop-
ments, man is found to be groping in darkness. The body
and mind are improving but the promptings of the spirit are not heard. (In spite of so much of material wellbeing, there is no enduring Self-satisfaction. By the means of satisfying the Self by means of the various kinds of desires in numerous ways, efforts are being made to secure enduring satisfaction of the Self. But these methods of securing the permanent Self-satisfaction are proving vain.) Psychologists are trying to remove the mystery of the concept of the Self and are trying to understand the Self by analysing its various functions, and are seeking to secure its permanent satisfaction by trying to satisfy the various appetites it is supposed to possess. William James has tried to understand the Self in its various psychological or empirical aspects like the material Self, the social Self, the spiritual Self and the Pure Ego. But such an analysis ultimately does not reveal the real nature of the Self. The psychologists are averse to admit the Self as an agent and an independent entity having its own nature that it maintains irrespective of the changes in the mental contents. They refuse to admit the existence of any such thing as a Self, apart from the functions which are attributed to it. Their tendency is to understand the Self as the sum total of all the various mental and moral experiences of man and to regard that a fictitious name is
given to all such mental contents as the Self. Behaviourists and physiological psychologists are trying to interpret the Self in terms of the various physiological and cerebral processes, and, thus they seek to deny existence of np it. The various other schools of psychology, like the Psychoanalytic school of Freud, Gestalt Psychology, Hormic psychology, physiological psychology, social and educational psychology are trying to understand and interpret the Self from their own viewpoints. Child psychology and social psychology hold that, the Self is not existing in the human being from the beginning, but it is instilled and formed in him gradually by the various social interactions. It is formed out of the numerous social relationships and it is a thing in time. Thus, the old metaphysical Self is being studied and understood by new objective and scientific methods; but so far there is no final conclusion to which the psychologists have arrived. However, it is a fact that the present age acutely lacks Self-satisfaction and therefore, a new void, a widespread scepticism, disbelief, disappointment, acute frustration, and want of faith in the higher moral and spiritual values of human life are ruling the hearts of men. Human life is thus facing a new spiritual crisis and I think it is due to the confusion caused in the proper understanding of the nature of the
Self for whose satisfaction all the human beings are striving. The present age is the age of science being predominantly ruled by the scientific modes of thought. The scientific method of objective and experimental study is being applied to every thing, every phenomenon, every aspect of human life. The old metaphysical idea of the Self is being subjected to scientific study and rational scrutiny. (It is no use turning desperate about the results by the new method and new approach to it.) However, I think, it is necessary to examine the old metaphysical, psychological, ethical, religious and mythological concepts of the Self, so that they may throw a new flood of light on the problem and may suggest new approaches to solve the problem. Fortunately, most of the systems of Indian Philosophy and the Hindu religion being spiritual in character, possess abundance of material on the Self (Ātman). Similarly, the ancient Indian thinkers, the Ṛṣis, sages, and saints had engaged themselves for centuries together, to properly understand the real nature of the Self, and hence, we can obtain important and significant material on this subject from their inquiries. The ancient Indian thinkers have also very seriously and strenuously thought over the ideals and perfection of human life. In fact, the whole of Indian philosophical thought is inspired, encouraged and guided by
the search after the perfection of human life, and by the desire for attainment of liberation (Mokṣa). Nowhere in the world do we get so much valuable critical thinking on the concept of Mokṣa, which is known also as salvation, emancipation, deliverance, freedom, release, and liberation. The solutions given by the various Indian thinkers in the form of Mokṣa and perfect life, have supreme importance from the point of view of securing the real enduring peace and tranquillity of mind and, everlasting joy of satisfaction and fulfilment. These concepts of Ātman and Mokṣa as expressed in the ancient Indian philosophical systems and, in the writings of the saints may help to a great extent to cure the present sickness of civilisation and, may show the ways of attaining the everlasting satisfaction. They may also release the eternal fountains of divine supersensuous joy and may help to cure the moral and spiritual maladies of the present age. Bearing this thought in mind, I turned my attention to this subject and now propose to put before the reader the various ideas of Ātman and Mokṣa and their possible evolution in the different systems of Indian Philosophy. It is a faithful collection of all these ideas gathered mostly, and as far as possible, from the original sources of each system. I have tried to the best of my ability to collect impartially the data from each system and to
put them together to give a synthetic account of them.

However, I regret, that the lack of sufficient time and lack of the availability of the necessary material and circumstances have handicapped me to a certain extent. Nevertheless, I have overcome all these handicaps and have been able to go to the end of the work with much strain and persistence. I do not propose to undertake too much metaphysical hair-splitting but I wish to present a consistent and concise account of these various concepts objectively and at the end to trace an evolution in these concepts.

The method adopted here is scientific method of research by collecting the various concepts of Ātman and Mokṣa in all the systems of Indian Philosophy, and arranging them in a uniform way. I have discussed the nature of Ātman in certain specific features of it such as, the nature and origin of Ātman, its relation with consciousness, its relation with the universe and God, Ātman as the moral agent of actions (kartā), the experciencer of the fruits of its actions (bhoktā), its nature as the knower (jñātā), its duration of life, and the nature of its worldly life, its relation with ignorance (ajñāna), its relation with body, mind, intellect and adṛṣṭa (the unseen principle). Under the concept of Mokṣa I have discussed the meaning and nature
of Mokṣa (liberation); the nature and cause of bondage (bandha), the nature and cause of ignorance (ajñāna), the nature of the adṛṣṭa (the unseen principle) and its relation with the Self and worldly life, the state of liberation (Mokṣa) itself, the process of rebirth and subtle body and the ways of attaining liberation proposed by the system concerned. Wherever necessary I have also discussed the kinds of liberation including the Jīvanmukti, which is a unique phenomenon in Indian Philosophy.

Thus, I have covered a large portion from the History of Indian Philosophy and dwelt on the major and important systems. I have devoted one chapter to the discussion of the concepts of Atman and Mokṣa to each of these systems. In the former part of the chapter the concept of Atman is described in the latter part the concept of Mokṣa of that system is described. In all there are thirteen chapters excluding the Introduction and, the others chapters are arranged in the following sequence. The concepts of Atman and Mokṣa in the Vedas, Upaniṣads, Čārvākism, Buddhism, Jainism, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, Sāmkhya and Yoga, Pūrva-Mīmāṁsā, Advaita-Vedānta, the later Vedāntic systems including those of Rāmānuja, Nimbārka, Madhva, Vallabha; Śaivism and Śāktism, the Vaiṣṇava Saints of the medieval ages including
(Jñānesvara, Kabīr, Tulasīdāsa, Śūradāsa, Mīrān'bāl, Chaitanya, Narasimha Mehta, Tukārāma and Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahamsa). I have intentionally dropped the idea of devoting a separate chapter to the Bhagavadgītā in its eclectic in nature and various views can and have been attributed to it. It is difficult to dogmatically assert any particular view about its system. Different commentators have differently interpreted it to draw various conclusions in favour of them. In the last concluding chapter a synthetic and comparative account of the concepts of Ātman and Mokṣa in all the previously mentioned systems has been taken under the following heads in the former portion. Soul -- Its nature, Nature of knowledge, The Soul -- Doer of actions, The Soul -- as the enjoyer of Fruits of Actions and as experiencing pleasure and pain, The Permanence of the Soul, Pervasiveness of the Soul, The Soul and the body, The Soul and the Manas and the Buddhi, The Soul and the Adṛṣṭa, The Soul and Nescience (Ajñāna), The Soul -- Its pure and Empirical aspects, Isvāra (God), Mokṣa (Liberation). In the subsequent portion comparisons with the concepts of some notable Western philosophers and that of the religion of Islām and Christianity are made, showing some similarities and contrasts wherever possible and in the same chapter at the last the
possible lines of the Evolution of the concepts of Mokṣa have been briefly stated; this portion is the final conclusion drawn by me from the previous discussions. At the end is given an exhaustive bibliography of the books to which I have referred showing their authority.

This work will be amply justified and paid if any body feels inspired after reading it to undertake further research work of this kind and, to interpret the immense philosophical treasure of the ancient India in the new light to reveal its grandeur and glory.