CHAPTER - V

ONTOGOGY

The ontological structures evinced in the philosophical doctrines of the Buddha and Devātmā exhibit all the characteristics of process philosophy, wherein everything in the universe appears to be an interacting set of events or processes. The characteristics of Nature, the individual, causation and the epistemology contained in each of the religions reveal this basic principle i.e. of ceaseless becoming. Both thinkers were impressed by the constant change that seems to pervade everything.

*TranSciency of all Natural Existences:*

Devatma claims Nature to be the sole reality. By emphasising impermanence, he asserts that "Nature is ever changing in all its various component parts; in other words, it never remains in the same condition but is constantly undergoing change". Nature is ever changing due to the action of its own forces. Nature is held to be composed of the constituents of force and matter. The Universe consists of embodied existences which are regarded not as permanent entities but are subject to constant change and different kinds of
newer elements are formed by the action of Nature's promordial force on its primordial matter. Devatma points out the fact that individuals, matter and events are absorbed in the process of dynamic change.

The Early Buddhists seem to have upheld a type of process ontology strikingly similar to the doctrine of Dev Dharma. The principle of Anicca asserts "Transcienet are all conditioned things". This fact of transicncy applies to inanimate objects and to animate lire of all species. The Buddhist doctrine speaks of the existence of mind or consciousness and of the reality of matter without suggesting the existence of any permanent under-lying entity. It is stated in one of the Nikāyas as follows: "Feelings, perceptions, volition, sensory impingement, reflectiveness, this, your reverences, is called mind. The four great elements (extension, cohesion, heat and mobility) and the material shape derived from the four great elements, this your reverences, is called matter". Both thinkers declare that the world consists of ever changing elements which are in constant flux and none of them are static but dynamic in nature.

Both thinkers establish the fact of flux and change by means of their perceptual experience. An objection that could apply to such a form of verification is that
"A reference to sense - perception as such - that is to say - a pure receptivity of mind - verifies nothing. It only seems to do so on the assumption that what is given in sense perception exists independently in its own right". Yet it could be conceded that "While no evidence can be conclusive, we seem to be inclined to accept something (whose existence has been conjectured) as actually existing if its existence is corroborated; for example by the discovery of effects that we would expect to find if it did exist. However, we may say that this corroboration indicates, first that something is there, at least the fact of this corroboration will have to be explained by any future theory. Secondly, the corroboration indicates that the theory that involves the conjectured real entities may be true, or that it may be nearer to the truth (that it has a good degree of verisimilitude)". This view appears to be in conformity with the principles of Devātma and the Buddha who recognize the reality of material objects without ever implying that material things are in any sense ultimate and substantial. Popper can be said to sum up an important aspect - a view which becomes common to both religions, when he states "Having learned about physical forces, events and processes, we may discover that material things, especially solids, are to be
interpreted as very special physical processes, in which molecular forces play a dominant role. Hence the existence of forces which are essentially of a dispositional character (i.e. their dispositions to interact) is interwoven in their doctrine of change.

Ontology of 'Soul':

Devātmā's naturalistic doctrine is directed towards the soul's ultimate destiny. Devātmā asserts that the 'Soul' is not an unchanging substance and he states that "Under the operation of the universal laws of change, the inner organism of the life power or soul of man changes, much in the same way as his outer body changes under its operation." The soul has its origin, growth, evolution or devolution in accordance with the immutable laws of Nature. All embodied existences are under the law of change. The human soul is construed as a life force among other life forces in the world of living organisms but not a subsisting entity. Man is said to be a product and agent of evolution and human nature is held to be "an evolute from biological life." The human individual has no enduring entity that remains the same despite various changes, but is itself composed and conditioned by various processes.
Buddhist Analysis of Being:

Buddhism considered man as a psycho-physical being made up of matter, feeling, perception, disposition and consciousness and does not posit an ultimate Being or immutable self behind these aggregates. The characteristics of suffering, impermanence and non-self are the description of the existential nature of things. A human being born in the world is bound up in the process of sustaining itself and this expresses itself in the basic desire for life or 'Upādhi' which is the root cause of attachment. It is clinging to repetitive existence that causes a bond in existence itself. In Buddhism, it is effects of deeds that accumulate and live on causing further existence and not any life-force. Suffering is basically due to the facts of transience and the positing of any static reality or an identifying element in the moment to moment process of existence is a mistaken assumption and anādīman therefore forms the basic fundamental truth in Buddhism. The ontological structure evinced by the trilakṣaṇa is characterised by momentariness and one cannot staticise the momentary existence but should realise them as a continuous process. Thus it is stated that "The 'great chain of being' is not merely a static linking/phenomenon where the nature of being persists in a linear fashion; rather it is a novel
creative process based on the ever fresh dynamic nature of the links where nothing persists or endures. Since the goal to be attained is the object of the entire Buddhist doctrine, it is stated that one should be constantly aware that there is no enduring substratum behind phenomena or eternal being in the individual persons. The Buddha asserts "Wherefore monks, whatever is material shape, past, future or present, subjective or objective, gross, subtle, mean or excellent, whether it be far or near all material shape should be seen thus by perfect intuitive wisdom, as it is: This is not mine, this am I not, this is not my self. Whatever is feeling......, whatever is perception......, whatever the habitual tendencies......, whatever is consciousness, past, future, present, subjective or objective, gross or subtle, mean or excellent, whether it be far or near - all consciousness should be seen thus by perfect intuitive wisdom as it really is - this is not mine, this am I not, this is not my self. Once this is realized one is capable of disregarding feeling, perception, material shape, dispositions and consciousness and by thus disregarding becomes dispassionate and by this means is freed from sorrow.

Prolongation of Being in Dev Dharma:

DevDharma unlike Buddhism upholds the ontological
character of persistence of being by means of evolution in a subtle body. The basic aim of this religion is to gain knowledge of the soul's growth and consequently its constructive power by the evolutionary progress. When such a process of evolution is lacking the constructive power is lost and the life force gets disorganised into inorganic forces. There is no tenet of rebirth in his philosophy as each life force is an entirely new existence that is brought into being with the birth of the individual.

**Conclusion:**

So far as the ontological status of mind and matter are concerned, both the Buddha and Devātmā are opposed to Materialism which upholds the theory that matter is the ultimate reality and reduced everything into such terms. According to such a view, matter is considered to be the eternal substance and all changes are produced by the motion of the bits of matter. These thinkers alike are against the Substantialist theory according to which the soul is the unchanging factor amidst the various changes of the personality. Thus they are in accord in affirming that there is no ground for belief in the existence of an immortal soul or eternal Being.

Although the Buddha and Devātmā are in agreement in setting out theories of process expressed in naturali-
-stic terms, yet they differ in their goals. According to Devātmā, human soul either evolves or regresses into inorganic matter and his goal is to aid the process of evolution according to the immutable laws of Nature and he states, "The true knowledge of religion consists only in the knowledge of the constitution of the human soul and of the various truths about its life which is based on the laws and facts of Nature". The ultimate reality in Buddhism unlike in Dev Dharma, is the realization of Nirvāṇa. The Buddha declares that 'This is the real, this the excellent, namely the calm of all the impulses, the casting out of all the basis', the extinction of craving, dispassion, stopping, Nirvāṇa.

In Buddhism and Dev Dharma alike, there is no reference to eternal or immutable entities. They assert that while one may name things, 'things' are not the final realities in the sense of having a substantival principal in them. They do not attempt elaborate linguistic analysis of concepts. In the manner of the phenomenologist, they point to 'the things themselves' as they are revealed to us in a phenomenological manner without getting themselves involved in 'standardised abstractions' of a metaphysical kind or being hampered by 'conceptual precommitments'. The 'facts' achieved however are not just merely
accepted as a phenomenologist might accept them, but are found to entail a deeper significance as they transform one's perspective and is to be adopted fruitfully to achieve the goal.
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