CHAPTER - VII
FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCES

Certain basic divergences in the teachings of Devātmā and the Buddha serve to emphasise the unique features of the individual doctrines. Though these thinkers are akin in the fact that they tried to establish the truth of their doctrines by experience and exhibit remarkable similarities between their respective principles yet there are significant differences among various philosophical issues which are delineated clearly as follows.

The notion of 'soul' is strikingly similar, yet differs in certain respects. The parallel in thought here is due to the fact that neither thinker posits an eternal Self but regards the individual as a composite of physical and psychical aggregates. Unlike Buddhism the analysis of the soul or the life force and its powers in Dev Dharma are based on the evolutionary origin of man as depicted by the unravelling of scientific facts. The term 'soul' is but a name for the life force which has much in common with the life forces of the lower forms. Of such a soul he states "It is this organised life force which has under a variety of conditions, produced or built variety of bodily forms in the
vegetable, the animal and human worlds." The birth of every individual being is a new emergent existent of body and soul. The new composite of body and life force does not arise due to the past karmic influences. Buddhism on the other hand refers to the fact of residual karma as being responsible for leading to the birth of a being. The Buddha outlines the fact of misery in relation to the fact of impermanence and the concept of soul is also related to this basic feature, transience. The Buddha states "Material form, feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness, monks, are impermanent (annicca). Whatever causes and conditions there are for the arising of these aggregates, they too are impermanent." In saying thus the Buddha emphasises the dominant fact of misery caused by the fact of impermanence. The Buddha declares that "The five aggregates monks, are anicca, impermanent, whatever is impermanent, that is dukkha, unsatisfactory, whatever is dukkha, that is without atta, Self. What is without self, that is not mine, that am I not, that is not my self. Thus it should be seen by perfect intuitive wisdom, as it really is." Unlike Buddhism, Dev Dharma does not envisage the doctrine of the soul and the individual in relation to suffering. Hence his starting point
is not the fact of suffering and nor does his theory attempt to resolve the problem of misery which he regards as being an aspect of life.

The main principle of Buddhism is the way to come out of the cycle of *karma* and rebirth. Buddhist ethics and its meditative techniques serves to achieve the cessation of life and birth series. Devātmā refutes the doctrine of rebirth and does not accept the doctrine of 'karma' in the traditional sense as given in Buddhism. Buddhist doctrine is set out to gain release from the clutches of *karma* entailing rebirth. Considering 'craving' as one of the main causes leading fresh impetus to karma, the Buddha asserts "For countless births, did I wander in this existence looking for the house builder (i.e. the cause of rebirth) but without success, for unsatisfactory are repeated births. O! Housebuilder! You have now been discovered...., the mind has reached the state of freedom from dispositions and has seen the end of craving". While speaking about the way, to root out birth of the individual the Buddha explicates "Wherefore Ananda, precisely, that is the cause (hetu), that is the 'source' (nidāna), that is the origin (samudaya) that is the 'condition' of old age and death, namely birth". It is maintained that each birth brings along
with it certain conditions causally related to suffering and rebirth and it is only with the cessation of birth, that misery can be ended.

True to his scientific spirit, Devatmā admits the possibility of re-evaluation of his theory if new facts come to light that would warrant any modifications. The Buddha claims infallibility for the truth which he has set out and it follows that whoever discovers them at any time must find them to be the same.

The ultimate destiny of the individual as upheld in Dev Dharma and Buddhism appear to be opposed to one another. While Buddhism posits the goal of Nirvāṇa involving the dissolution of all karmic tendencies; Devatmā seems to be interested in the study of the evolution of the soul and its powers concerning body-building and sustaining activities. Devolution of the soul is also a possibility and evil deeds lead to the degeneration and final dissolution of the life force into inorganic processes. In Buddhism, on the other hand, evil deeds leave behind a potency for future rebirth and therefore when such influences are present there is no utter destruction or annihilation. The Buddha aims at the cessation of the formation of the
personality complex and sets out an ethical path which strikes at the root of craving for existence. The Buddha states "One is the path that leads to worldly gain; and another that leads to Nibbāna. Understanding this, let not the Bhikkus, the disciples of the Awakened One, delight in worldly honour but develop detachment instead". Devātma highlights an ethical path that emphasises active involvement in all spheres of Nature. His ultimate goal is to strengthen the life force and thus induce in it an evolutionary trend which leads to persistence of existence in a subtile body. According to his theory "Value is a necessary condition which furthers existence and disvalue is a necessary condition which reduces further existence".

The Dev Shaktis which the Devātma had developed refers to the complete love of truth and hatred of falsehood. They enabled him to realise the nature of the truths of the 'soul' concerning its evolution or devolution and the way leading to the former. Buddhism posits the six-fold abhiñña consisting of telepathy, clairvoyance, retrocognition, psychokinesis, clairaudience and the knowledge of the destruction of defiling impulses. The higher powers referred to in Dev Dharma are due to the result of biological and cultural evolution. These
powers are considerably different from the higher powers as posited in Buddhism. The doctrine of \textit{karma} was inferred by the Buddha on the basis of the data gained by extrasensory perception and he was thus able to test this truth by retrocognitive knowledge. The Buddha states "Here I observe with my mind, the mind of a certain person as follows: 'This person so conducts himself, behaves in such a way and follows such a path that at death, on the dissolution of the body, he would be born in an unhappy state..., at a later time I observe him by means of my clear paranormal vision, surviving in the unhappy state and experiencing extremely unpleasant sensations. Just as if someone with sight were to observe a pit full of coals, without flames or smoke... and a tired person walking on the road to this pit says "This person surely walks and moves in such a way and follows such a road that he will fall into this pit"; and at a later time he would see him fallen into that pit of coal experiencing extremely painful sensations". Hence the Buddhist claims that the test of doctrine of \textit{karma} is in a way analogous to the method of verification.

Devātma is a twentieth century thinker. So the results established by the Modern sciences of the day
have dominated his thinking. Devatma adheres to the theory of evolution in his explication of the origin of the living organisms and the subsequent evolution of man. He asserts "In the course of evolution man got a speciality over the animal world, of possessing certain progressive faculties in his brain". This view finds expression in modern sciences and the theory of mind wherein it was regarded as immaterial, unchanging and often as supernatural underwent some modifications since Darwin's theory was propounded.

"While the pre-Darwinians saw man as a spiritual being, we see ourselves as animals, albeit exceptional ones. While the pre-Darwinians believed man to have paranormal abilities independent of the brain (such a telepathy and psychokinesis) we believe all our mental functions to be lawful (though not always normal) brain functions". 10

The whole of the Buddhist doctrine leads to the conclusion that detachment to the things of the world and true knowledge of facts 'as they are', leads naturally to the extinction of desire and it is considered to be the path of Nirvana entailing freedom from misery and ultimate peace. Buddhism advocates the principles of non-clinging and non-grasping. Freedom ultimately
means the cessation of rebirth, and the chain of 'becoming'. According to Dev Dharma, the striving of the evolutionary process of the soul or life-force is said to perpetuate life and leads therefore to persistence of being. Hence there is the will to live, the desire for continued existence to present, and this is fostered by wholesome acts which induce an evolutionary trend on the soul.

The ultimate goal in each of these religions is opposed to one another. This forms the important difference between Buddhism and Dev Dharma. Buddhism sets out ethical means and meditative techniques which are conducive to reach the goal of Nirvāṇa and strikes at the cycle of birth and rebirth which is the basic cause of suffering. Dev Dharma on the other hand, posits the horizon of evolutionary perfectibilism as its goal. Another divergence is evident between Buddhism and Dev Dharma. The ethical path in Buddhism forms a way to the goal. It is not part of the goal and can be discarded when it has served its purpose and the objective is attained. In Dev Dharma, the ethical path set out forms not only a way to the goal but is considered to be the definitive part of the goal itself.
References

   Maga, Dev Samaj 1965, Ch.XLVI, pp. 312-3.


