CHAPTER - IV

THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

(a) CONCEPTION OF REALITY

Buddhism and Deva Dharma are unanimous in emphasizing that knowledge of the real is the result of observation, experience and experimental corroboration as opposed to authority, mystical intuition or reasoning by a priori means.

Devātmā conceives Nature as the sole reality. Nature is defined as self-existent, exhibiting a system of inter-related bodies and forces. Matter and force form the building blocks of all existence in the universe. He subscribes to a theory of flux and asserts the matter force constituents to be constantly changing. The inanimate forces explain changes in the material sphere while organic forces account for changes taking place in organisms. Devātmā's theory points out that an explanation of the causal manifestation of Nature according to its immutable laws, is to achieve knowledge of the real. As natural forces adequately explain natural events, the hypothesis of a divine force distinct from natural forces is abandoned. Devātmā clarifies that Nature has undervived
existence as it is an uncreated, self-existent whole. The scientific knowledge of change in natural forces and events depicts Nature as being autonomous in its working. Devātma’s naturalism presents a contrast to the theory of deliberate creation and emphasizes that the world is a natural development of primordial reality.

Buddhism finds ceaseless flux and change everywhere in the universe and the 'identity' which one may ascribe to objects, signifies only the continuity of becoming and no static enduring entity. The Buddha, thus, accounts for the continuity of process without referring to any underlying unity and explicates on the causes and conditions of all things. The aim of the Buddha was to set out the facts of the universe with reference to continuous flux or nisatta, nījīva or soullessness. All that is, is dhāma or grouping of conditions. Regarding the nature of the individual, the knowledge of the truth of suffering, its origin, cessation and way leading to such extinction is to be known by the observation of the 'things' of the world. i.e. an understanding of their nature as being fleeting and transcient. The Buddhist principle is that everything is in the nature of arising and passing away. The closer analysis of
the transiency of events leads to the discernment of
the causal order manifested in them. The order of the
universe is termed niyāma and five orders are distingui-
shed, namely kammaniyāma or order of act and result,
utuniyāma or physical inorganic order, bijaniyāma or
organic order, cittaniyāma or order of conscious life
and dhamaniyāma or order of the norm or effect of Nature.
Everything in the universe whether material or psychical,
the sāṅkhāras are held to be rooted in change.

The four noble truths discovered by the Buddha exhi-
bits the real nature of existence and depicts the factor
of impermanence which as shown in relation to the indi-
vidual is one of the causes of suffering. The Buddha
emphasises the way to the removal of suffering. The
following statement shows the importance that was accorded
to this factor. Using the simili of the 'burning turban'
the Buddha aska- " Bhikkus, when one's turban is ablaze,
what is to be done?
- Why laughter? What pleasure can there be where all
is ever-burning?" ¹

The 'Arya satya' or the four noble truths refers
to the problem of suffering. They can be explicated
as follows:
(1) There is suffering, misery, pain and woe in life: even the so-called pleasures are wrought with pain, since they are all transient in nature. Loss of what one cherishes, desires or craves brings suffering in its wake. This suffering of the world is a fact of common experience.

(2) There is a cause of suffering: The second noble truth states that the existence of suffering has certain causes and conditions due to which suffering manifests itself. All events of existence are conditional, relative, limited. 'This being, that arises' is a basic dictum of Buddhism. The fact of the essential dependence of misery opens up the possibility of its destruction, which would be inconceivable if there were a thing-in-itself.

(3) There is cessation of suffering: Due to the fact that everything arises dependent on some causes and conditions, with the elimination of these causes and conditions, suffering ceases.

(4) There is a way leading to the elimination of suffering: This way is known as the eight-fold-path consisting of moral and ethical, intellectual as well as meditative principles that lead to the elimination of suffering.
It comprises of the virtues of right faith, right resolve, right speech, right action, right effort, right living, right thought and right concentration.

Buddhism and Deva Dharma hold that every component thing is ceaselessly undergoing change by its own forces and even the most rudimentary elements are as evanescent as the things they produce. Every component thing is held to be conditioned by certain factors and there is no reference to disembodied beings. The main concern of Buddhism is to set out the exposition of the four noble truths relating to suffering and its cessation and to explain existence in terms of flux and impermanence. The laws of the universe relating to the individual are set out insofar as they aid one in the dissolution of suffering. Deva Dharma utilizes the basic theories of the sciences which relate to the fundamental laws of Nature and also relates to the fact of change, evolution/devolution of the individual existence. These religions attempt to set out the fact that the laws of Nature are to be taken cognizance of in acquiring knowledge of reality.

The nature of existence according to Buddhism can be summed up in the following statements:
(i) All things (the sánkhāras) exist in a state of relation to one another and not independently.

(ii) All things are dynamic, changing and interact with one another and are in the form of processes.

(iii) The direct source of knowledge is experience. Any form of subjective experience occasioned by a biased attitude with the ego as the centre of observation leads to the false conception of reality.

(iv) Existence has three main characteristics, namely, transience, sorrow and unsubstantiality.

(v) The fact of suffering is set out in relation to the human being and the variation of suffering is governed by the law of cause and effect, and works naturally. The involvement of supernaturalism or anthropomorphism is rejected.

(vi) The way to eliminate karmic influences is by a process of moral training, observation of precepts etc., and mental training by concentration, meditation and contemplation.

(vii) True knowledge and ethical progress lead one to the goal of Nirvāṇa or enlightenment.
Similarly the nature of existence in Deva Dharma can be reduced to the following statements:

(i) The reality of the various kinds of existences in Nature composed of matter and force.

(ii) The physical forms and qualities of various kinds of real existences in Nature.

(iii) The inanimate and animate forces of the various kinds of existence in Nature and their attributes.

(iv) The immutable processes of Nature under the operation of which various kinds of changes take place in different kinds of real existences in Nature and the facts concerning such change.

(v) The ultimate goal to be achieved is one of evolutionary perfectibilism by following an ethical code consisting of altruism and freedom from low loves and low hates so as to attempt to achieve harmony with other orders of Nature.

The account given of reality in Buddhism and Deva Dharma have striking similarities as they alike accept a kind of naive realism. The notion of transcendence is emphasised and the self is not a static or stationary point from which everything is observed but is itself
involved in change. There is no permanent metaphysical self in man and no enduring substance in any object. They alike hold that all events are inter-related and governed by causal laws. The facts of impermanence and unsubstantiality are essential features of reality. The difference between their views is with regard to the Ultimate goal posited. One can achieve peace by acquiring true knowledge of the nature of the universe and its laws which the Buddha claims leads to enlightenment, Nibbāna in this very life. Dev-Dharma posits a goal of evolutionary perfectibilism wherein one needs to be actively involved in all spheres of Nature. In accordance with an empiricist stance adopted by both thinkers, the conception of reality envelope all that can be known by experiential means. They emphasise that one can enlarge one's perceptual powers by means of Moral and mental training.

Repudiation of Omniscience:

Buddhism and Dev Dharma make no reference to Supernatural Reality and do not contain a belief in the existence of a Universal Spirit or Absolute Creator. Neither religion places any belief in Omniscience.
Buddhism does not make the claim of the mystic that knowledge is derived from a supernatural source in an unaccountable manner but maintains that it is a product of natural development of the mind. In Buddhism one finds that extrasensory perception does not refer to such mystical or intuitive knowledge and the Buddha did not claim Omniscience but a threefold knowledge. The Buddha states "Those who say that the Recluse Gotama is Omniscient and all-seeing and professes to have an infinite knowledge and insight which is constantly and at all times present to him,... are not reporting him properly and misrepresent him (as claiming) what is false and untrue." 2 The three-fold knowledge claimed by the Buddha was that of retrocognition, clairvoyance and the knowledge of the destruction of inflowing impulses. While other types of extrasensory knowledge like telepathy and clairaudience also yielded knowledge, these three sources of knowledge were of primary importance. Devātmā, also repudiates Omniscience and claims "Though it is possible for a person who is able to acquire knowledge according to Nature's true method to gradually extend and enlarge his knowledge in any sphere
of Nature's various kingdoms, yet it is never possible to get complete knowledge of Nature and thus become Omniscient.\(^3\)

**Unsubstantiality:**

An analysis of the Buddhist dhamma reveals the fact of transiency of all conditioned things, the nature of suffering as a basic fact of sentient existence and the nature of unsubstantiality of things. These are the three main characteristics of all conditioned things. A statement in the Dhammapada claims "Those who mistake the unreal to be the real and the real to be unreal, dwelling in wrong thoughts, never arrive at the real."\(^4\) All events in Nature are essentially fleeting and contain no abiding principle in them. Hence one should not mistake what is unreal to be real and should recognise the dynamic nature of existence which leads to the insight into truth. The eight-fold path taught by the Buddha consisting of morality, meditative concentration and wisdom is intended to lead one to the knowledge of the deliverance from worldly birth and suffering, to the ultimate goal. Higher powers of perception aid one in gaining the insight of the real nature of events.
In a similar way, Devatma states that it is 'the knowledge - affording forces' inclusive of higher power of perception which reveal the nature of reality. He emphasises on the laws of transcendence and causal inter-relatedness of all things in Nature and asserts "Nature is like a completely organised body and all the existences in it are its parts or organs. Therefore, all these existences are related to each other visibly or invisibly, closely or remotely." 5 What was sought by Dev Dharma, was knowledge of the truths pertaining to the individual and he relies on experiential knowledge. The path advocated by Devatma forms part of the goal as well as forming a means to it. In conformity with his naturalistic philosophy he affirms "Every event in Nature, every occurrence or phenomenon in Nature is real or true." 6 Man's destiny is to be achieved within Nature and his goal is one of evolutionary perfectibilism.

According to Dev Dharma all existence in Nature are composed of the two components, matter and force and in stating this aspect in relation to individuals Dev Dharma appears to be in accord with Buddhism. The Buddha assert that a purely immaterial (arūpa) personality is a mental fabrication (manomaya). He asserts
that individuals are composed of the physical and psychical aggregates - 'nāma' which means 'mind' or force and 'rūpa' which means matter. There is no unitary enduring self and the individual is composed of aggregates such as - feelings, perception, cognition, sensation, dispositions and states of consciousness. Buddhism affirms that the states of consciousness are not the properties of Self and in a similar manner, Devātmā denies permanent soul and the term 'soul' when applied in his philosophy characterises the life principle of the body and has no other cannotation.

**Insight into the Real:**

The Buddha and Devātmā alike, adopt a kind of naive realism in their respective theories and assert that the reality of what is perceived is directly presented to us. The Buddhist doctrine differs from Dev Dharma as it apparently delves deeper into such a realistic trend. The Buddha's doctrine of universal flux points to the reality of momentariness. The Buddha is said to have perceived the flux but rises above it. An observation that is valid in this context
and worth remembering is that of Plato's view. The weakness of any theory that assumes flux and change to be the ultimate reality, Plato remarks, is that, if it were, knowledge would be impossible. This point is raised against the Heraclitan doctrine that "All things whatsoever are in change" and a critical analysis of such a principle in Plato's *Theaetetus* makes it evident that the follower of such a doctrine "cannot even stand still to attend to an argument or question." In the Buddhist approach to reality, to withdraw from the flux is to attain 'Nirvāṇa', or enlightenment. Change and suffering are facts observed of the external world in relation to the human being, and 'dukkha' in Buddhist parlance is not merely pain or misery; even more it is said to imply an imperfect condition which is basically unsatisfactory. And therefore, it is the unconditioned that is perfect in contradistinction to what is conditioned, what is imperfect and undesirable. Thus the statement in the Udāna claims "There is an not-born, not-become, not-made, not-compounded. Were there not, O monks, no escape from the world of the born, become, made and the compounded would be known here." The disciple who has eliminated cravings
remains steadfast. The highlight is on the ability to remain steadfast and unmoved when in contact with the external world or when experiencing happiness or suffering and the quote depicts Nirvāṇa as a state to be contrasted with Samsāra. Unlike Buddhism, Devatma makes no reference to the goal involving dissolution of the aggregates. The doctrine of Dev Dharma incorporates what is revealed by the laws of Nature i.e. the facts of incessant change and evolution/devolution which involves all spheres of Nature and these objects of reality can be summed up as being only such forms and qualities of embodied existence as lay open to human awareness.

Prof. Stcherbatsky remarks, "Negation of objects inaccessible to experience is a source of problematic reasoning, since its essence is exclusive of both direct and indirect knowledge. When there are altogether no means of cognition, the non-existence of an object cannot be established. The existence of right knowledge proves the existence of real objects, but the absence of knowledge cannot prove the non-existence of (the corresponding objects)." The Buddha rejects what may
be beyond the range of experience. He rejects the belief in the ultimate principle of the Self or Brahman (Universal Reality) due to the fact that there is no standard measure to determine whether there is any such reality or not. Though the Buddha did concede the reality of spiritual experience, yet he did not interpret it as a revelation of anything beyond itself. Devatma is also opposed to any kind of speculative philosophy and to any supernatural or mystical reality. Knowledge is to be gained by direct awareness of the reality of the various kinds of existences in Nature, of their qualities and forms, or various natural events, their causes and laws. He thus rejects transcendentalism and supernaturalism and holds that the intellectual powers of man should be confined within the bounds of sense experience, and should be capable of being verified by specific standards. The scientific method of enquiry and inductive justification play a major role in the teachings of Dev Dharma and it is considered essential to attain true knowledge of objects and of the various kinds of forces that permeate through them by the right method of experiment, to test the knowledge derived by the sense organs and intellectual powers. A result of
such considerations is that the limit of the methods of science sets the limits of human knowledge about 'what exists'. The absence of contradiction is enough for any proposition to be meaningful but not true. In Devātmā's doctrine, truth and reality are verified by scientific means and this method of enquiry applies equally well to facts not only of the objects of the physical world but forms the basis of aesthetic and moral judgements that lead ultimately to higher values. His conception of Nature precludes the acceptance of any reality outside it as every true existence is but a part of the sole reality, Nature.

Means to Knowledge in Buddhism:

The fundamental truths and the ultimate value in Buddhism are ascertained by experiential insight. All such knowledge form a path or means to the final goal. One 'comprehends the Noble Truths and sees them' and the Tathāgata is said to be 'a seer of what is seen' and preaches the truth which is known by such means. The highest form of knowledge is gained as a result of constant mindfulness and meditation. The verification of reality in Buddhism is by such
experience which forms a test of truth and yields knowledge. One of the Buddhist text states "The world for the most part, O Kaccana, holds either to a belief in being or a belief in non-being.... That things have being, O Kaccana, constitutes one extreme doctrine; that things have no being is another extreme. These extremes O Kaccana, have been avoided by the Tathagāta and it is a middle doctrine he preaches."10 Buddhism is thus often characterised as a path (—magga), that signifies a mean between extremes. This reality being the fundamental nature of what exists, is true for all time. All things known by experience are conditioned. Neither eternalism nor nihilism is posited. The reality/truth is present all the time and it requires right understanding to know it. The truth in Buddhism is not something to be grasped or clung to for such a tendency takes one away from the knowledge of reality.

The Buddha and Devātmā are found to have avoided all metaphysical speculations. They alike emphasise direct and immediate experience as the source of knowledge. They alike maintain that by
adopting the path of purification by ethical means, one can avail themselves of higher power that aid in the perception of truth and enable one to gain the knowledge and insight of reality. They insist on verification by experiential standards and point out the limited value of reasoning as a source of knowledge.

(b) SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE IN BUDDHISM.

Perception as a Source of Knowledge:

Buddhism upholds the validity of sense perception as the fundamental source of knowledge. The six senses afford one direct knowledge of the corresponding objects and form the basis for cognition. These senses are (1) sense of vision, (2) sense of audition, (3) sense of smell, (4) sense of taste and (5) the faculty of intellect. The Buddhist account gives a strictly causal explanation of sense cognition. Visual cognition for example, results from the presence of three conditions which are the unimpaired internal sense organ of sight, external visible forms entering the field of vision and an appropriate act of attention on the part of the mind. The sense organs give one direct
knowledge in respect of the five sensory fields and the Buddhist Nikāyas include also the knowledge gained by internal perception or introspection. Viññāna is the general term for cognition and pañña the term for 'right understanding' — often restricted to the cognition of spiritual truths. It is stated "It is with Viññāna — that one understands something." Hence, perception yields direct knowledge through the instrumentality of the senses.

**Extrasensory Perception:**

The Buddhist also accepts extrasensory perception as a source of knowledge and it is by means of paranormal powers that insight into fundamental truths is gained. It is stated "When the defilements of the mind are eliminated and the mind is prone to dispassion and is developed by dispassion, it becomes supple as regards the things verifiable by higher knowledge." Extrasensory perceptual powers which form a valuable asset in yielding knowledge are as follows: (i) Psychokinesis (iddhividha) which is not a form of knowledge but a power. It consists in
various manifestations of the power of will, (levitation, etc.), (ii) Clairaudience (dibbasotadhātu), the faculty of perceiving sounds even at a distance, far beyond the range of ordinary auditory faculties. This extension of auditory perception both in extent and in depth enables a person to perceive certain correlated phenomena which are otherwise only inferred, (iii) Telepathy (cetopariyanāna), which enables one to comprehend the general state as well as the functioning of another's mind, (iv) Retrocognition (pubbenivāsanussatināna), the ability to perceive one's own past history. It is dependent on memory (sati), and this memory of past experience is attained through acts of intensive concentration (samādhi), as in the development of other faculties, (v) Clairvoyance (dibbacakkha or cutūpapātanāna); the knowledge of the decease and survival of beings who wander in the cycle of existence in accordance with their behaviour (karma). This together with retrocognition, enables one to verify the phenomenon of rebirth, (vi) Knowledge of the destruction of defiling impulses (āsavakkha-yanāna) which, together with the last four mentioned above, provides an insight the four noble
truths. The Buddha accepts a form of empiricism broad enough to include extrasensory perception. Though paranormal perception was regarded as a valid source of knowledge, whatever knowledge was received by this source was looked upon by the Buddha as a means to an end. Unbiased perception is stressed as one's likes and dislikes lead to all forms of dogmatic beliefs. In Buddhism, the limitations of all other sources of knowledge such as revelation, a priori reasoning and knowledge by comparison are emphasised. As the Buddha's teachings are basically ethical, he did not preach any speculative metaphysics relating to the ultimate origin of world, nature of soul etc., but placed emphasis on the practical way of gaining release from evil and suffering. His doctrine involves phenomenological description of events of the world and no interpretation was placed on data received by experiential means, as attainment of knowledge warranted the need to observe things 'as they are' which becomes distorted if one's habits of mind were to impose implications on them.
Inference as a Source of Knowledge

Inference was also accepted as a valid source of knowledge. While testimony and authority is an initial step towards arriving at knowledge, yet any proposition of this kind had to be verified in the light of one's own experience. The Buddha preaches,

Just as wise men (test claim to be gold) by burning, cutting and rubbing (on a touchstone), my statements, O monks should be accepted after examination and not out of respect for me."  

The Buddhist doctrine, 'the dhamma' is described as 'an invitation to "come and see" leading to the goal and verifiable by the wise.' It is found necessary that the knowledge proper should be based on experience. Inferences based on perception and extrasensory perception form a valuable source of knowledge as the latter provides direct data. Buddhism extends complete certainty for the inductive generalisations based on perception.

Sources of Knowledge in Dev Dharma:

Devatma asserts that man can directly know the qualities of objects in space and time, know of the ego and its psychology as well as values - aesthetic,
moral, logical and spiritual. The means by which such knowledge is obtained is listed in an eight fold classification and for Devatma, the scientific knowledge is the knowledge of reality and not of phenomena in an illusory sense, and it is to be obtained by the joint application of reason and experience. The many sources of knowledge as explicated in his doctrine include the higher powers of perception and inferences based on them. The sources of knowledge indicated by Devatma can be stated as follows.

(i) **Direct Knowledge - giving several elementary consciousness:** The sense organs are said to yield direct knowledge about various existences. They are regarded as the true sources of knowledge and perception apparently yields a direct cognition of the object and its qualities. Devatma subscribes to the physiological conditions under which perception takes place but does not hold that there is anything intermediate, either idea, sense or sense data between percipient and the object. When one encounters a case of illusory perception, a later veridical perception enables one to distinguish illusion from reality. According to Devatma, there is no perception that warrants the denial of
embodied objects in space and time. It is the Nature of what exists that is to count as true knowledge. And under normal conditions, he emphasises that there is no justification for doubting the validity of the source of knowledge received by the senses and he therefore states "It is only through the sense-organs and through no other means that man can and does acquire direct knowledge about various existences." 15

(ii) Direct-knowledge-giving several cognitive powers: Cognition or intellectual powers aid man in the realization of true knowledge and there is held to be an evolution of the powers of cognition in man. Devatma details the mental powers to consist in the power of ideation, memory, imagination, concentration, reasoning and retention. It can thus be affirmed that "It is because of these mental powers that we can rise above the sensuous knowledge of the 'This, here and now, and know the Universal Laws of Nature valid for phenomena existing at different times and places." 16

Regarding this particular classification it could be questioned if this knowledge is entirely 'direct'. Concerning such a source of knowledge S.P. Kanal explicates "the laws of logic are directly apprehended by
reason, say the law of contradiction. Again, we immediately recognise certain objects, so some recallings are direct. However, it is true that previous perceptions are utilized for securing knowledge by inference and it is therefore not direct knowledge."17 While such knowledge is conditioned by the physiological and mental make-up of man, it is still asserted to be the knowledge of reality.

(iii) Direct-knowledge-giving several consciousness connected with the conception of ego: The consciousness of ego is said to develop with time. It is this consciousness of 'I' that enables a person to distinguish himself from other persons, plants, and inanimate objects and enables him to feel responsible for his actions. The third group of cognitive consciousness is found to include introspection as it is through the development of selfconsciousness that mental experience can be introspected.

(iv) Direct-knowledge-giving lower kinds of consciousness or sensuous feelings: The Dev Shastra makes the claim that direct knowledge about the reality of the various aspects of Nature that can be obtained by man
through any particular kind of his real feeling, can only be acquired by him by means of that and that feeling alone and not otherwise. The development of lower kinds of sensual feelings enables one to understand and appreciate hedonistic and utilitarian values. The knowledge and capacity to appreciate various pleasure and pain develops along with the development of mental capacities and these are regarded as being natural and not innate.

(v) Direct-knowledge-giving several aesthetic senses or consciousness: Devatma affirms that one can perceive as many values as the number of senses of values one has developed. These aesthetic values include the sense of beauty, linguistic sense, sense of music and so on. The aesthetic senses needs to be developed by education and training, yet it is necessary to possess the rudimentary feeling in order to acquire that knowledge. Devatma clarifies that there is no such thing as one universal aesthetic sense which can appreciate all kinds of beauty but there are innumerable aesthetic senses. Devatma holds that only human beings are capable of aesthetic sensibility and this can be developed. Hence taking the appreciation of beautiful
things as an example, Devatma says "Even among human beings, only those can get such true knowledge in whom the sense of beauty has developed to a sufficient extent!" 18

vi) **Direct-Knowledge giving higher feelings of Justice**: It is maintained that acts of injustice and atrocity are motivated largely by the pleasure principle. Devatma's contention is that a person can understand the rightness or wrongness of an action provided and to the extent a sense of justice has developed in him. The feeling of justice he observes consists in having hatred for any action, transgressing upon the individuality or proper rights and privileges of other men and animals for the satisfaction of any one's low feelings and needs. Devatma speaks of 'the sense of duty' and 'the sense of discipline' as senses based on the feeling of justice. A person who lacks repulsion for any unjust act can have no realization of the thoughts which are present in one in whom higher hatred is felt for injustice. It is emphasised that in the course of evolution in Nature, persons are born in whom "The sense of justice is developed to a higher degree than the ordinary people of those times and in
the light of this higher sense they felt that any prevalent convention or custom of society, or its certain rite, or belief, or opinion or a certain law of its government was opposed to justice..., and adopted several right means and made various struggles and endeavours to propogate their justice-based ideas in that respect." 19

(vii) Direct-knowledge-giving feelings of reverence and service of others: According to Devatma, one has direct consciousness of perception of values. This is apparently true of altruistic feelings too. Therefore, "When any person awakens in his soul some such feeling which moves him spontaneously and without any persuasion from others to render service or help of any kind for the good of any person, animal, plant or tree etc., with whom he is not bound by any ties of low loves or undue attachment and in doing so, he does not in return seek to satisfy any of his selfish ends, he is said to possess the higher feelings of altruism." 20 The higher altruistic feelings that a person can develop naturally are those of altruistic reverence, altruistic feelings of responsiveness to the needs of others and each of these feelings form
the source from which we acquire direct knowledge of some facts of value.

(viii) **Direct-knowledge-giving several kinds of Dev Shaktis or Highest Psychic powers:** The various Dev Shaktis evolved in Devatma are all sided highest loves of all kinds of truth and goodness; and all sided hatred for all kinds of falsehoods, unrighteousness, evils, injustices, sins and crimes. Devatma also claims to have acquired through this source the knowledge relating to the organism of human soul, its degeneration, freedom from such degeneration and evolution of such a life force. It is to be noted that in Devatma’s doctrine that as the nutritive, motor, sensory and rational functions of the soul are not exclusive in their working, so also the perceptual, mental, aesthetic and spiritual power are inclusive in character. In the systems of Buddhism and Dev Dharma, experience is found to be the exclusive witness and the source of knowledge.

(c) **DIRECT KNOWL**

Devatma and the Buddha alike, in their respective doctrines, lay emphasis on experience, both sensory and
extrasensory as the means to reveal knowledge of the truth. The doctrine of truth projected by each individual thinker is based on empirical ground and even the development of higher powers of perception is said to be a natural occurrence, though the nature of the latter goal varies in its description. The similarities and differences are clearly discernable in their approach to the development of psychic powers in the foregoing analysis of 'direct experience' as a means to truth.

**Basic truths:**

Buddhism aims at the extinction of misery. The last principle of the four-noble-truths points out the way to achieve this goal. The goal not only entails the cessation of misery but also concerns the achievement of absolute peace. This ultimate aim of Buddhism whose attainment would put an end to the process of rebirth is also held to be the matter of ultimate experience. With reference to the fullest possible this-life experiences of nibbāna, attained in nirodha-sampatti (cessation of all perception and feeling) Buddhaghosha is supposed to have questioned (in 'The
Path of Purification') as to why individuals attain it answers it by stating "Being wearied by the occurrence and dissolution of formations (i.e. experiencing ordinary consciousness of fluxing data by a fluxing consciousness) they attain it thinking 'Let us dwell in bliss here and now reaching the cessation that is Nirvāṇa.' Of the different aggregates of which the personality is composed namely body, feeling, perception, dispositions and consciousness, it is the factor of dispositions that influences human life and plays an active role in the determination of birth and rebirth. In Buddhism, the world of the happy man is one in which he has achieved pacification of all dispositions, which is the same as Nirvāṇa. Pacification of dispositions enables one to live a peaceful life, which though dominated by causal dependence is unconditioned by dispositions (asaṅkhāta). It is therefore, a life that conforms to Nature (dhamma) but involves the complete renunciation (virāga) of attachment caused by dispositions. Hence it seems that 'for the Buddha, the world of the happy man is not transcendental in the sense that 'nothing can be said'
about it. For him it is transcendental (lokuttara) only in a moral sense." 22 The distinction the Buddha made between dispositions on the one hand, and the human will or action on the other makes it clear that a person is capable of willing or acting without following any dispositional tendencies. At the outset, the Buddha makes it evident that it is the fact of attachment or 'clinging' that causes unhappiness. Further it is said that "For mankind, intent on its attachments, it is hard to see this principle, namely conditionedness, origination by way of cause (paticcasamupāda). This principle too, is hard to see, namely the cessation of all compounded things, the renunciation of all clinging to rebirth, the extinction of craving, absence of passion, cessation, Nirvāṇa." 23

Similarly Devātmā emphasises the development of psychic powers as a necessary means to know truth. It is by these means that he could derive the knowledge pertaining to the truth of his religion, a religion which he emphasises is 'nature-bound' and 'science-grounded'. By the manifestation and evolution of the
Dev Shaktis, Devatma has developed in himself the higher psychic-light or Dev-Jyotí which is said to dispel ignorance as to the true nature of the soul. Devatma clarifies that it is by the evolution of powers by natural means that one is able to attain direct knowledge. By the emergence of higher powers of perception, he is said to have attained the "Unique ideal life" (Advátiya Dev Jiwan) by evolving these forces (of love of truth and goodness) helped by the hidden evolutionary process of Nature. And along with the development of Dev Shaktis he also evolved in his soul the psychic energy (Advátiya Dev Tej) in accordance with the natural laws of the spiritual realm. He was also rendered capable of being able to destroy falsehood and evil and create higher feelings by Dev Prabhavas (psychic influence) in fit soul according to their individual capacities. Devatma is not divine in the sense of a supernatural being, he is ideal in terms of his unique psychical equipment and the idea of the ideal being therefore is not above, the perspectives of natural laws.
In Buddhism, the mind or consciousness is held to be luminous (Pabhassara) in its essential nature and it is said "This consciousness is luminous but it is defiled by adventitious defilements. The un instructed average person does not understand this as it really is. I say that for him there is no mental development. This consciousness is luminous and is freed from adventitious defilements. The instructed Ariyan disciple understands this as it really is. I say that for him there is mental development." 24

The Digha Nikāya distinguishes three kinds of knowledge or wisdom based on thinking, on learning and on mental development (equivalent to meditation). They are thus explicated by Buddhaghosa: "Based on thinking" is that knowledge (or wisdom) which one has acquired by one's own cogitation without having learned it from others. 'Based on learning' (literally hearing) is that knowledge which one has learned (heard) from others 'Based on meditation' is that knowledge which one has acquired through 'mental development' in this or that way, and which has reached the stage of attainment - concentration (appana-samādhi)." 25

Hence, by means of
concentration the disciple is able to discern the true nature of the dhamma, realizing it for himself apart from a mere 'intellectual' understanding of the teaching. The eightfold ethical path consists of three aspects - Wisdom (right understanding and thought), Morality (right speech, action and livelihood) and Concentration (right effort, mindfulness and concentration). According to the Abhidhamma, "the path (magga) is a designation of the moment of entering into one of the four stages of holiness, Nirvana being the object produced by intuitional insight (vipassana) into the impermanency, misery, and impersonality of existence, flashing forth and forever transforming one's life and nature. By 'fruition' (phala) are meant those moments of consciousness, which follow immediately thereafter as a result of the path and under which circumstances, may repeat for innumerable times during a life time".26 The insight into reality therefore points to the doctrine of dhammas or impersonal forces as playing a central role in Buddhism.

In the philosophy of Devatma, it is made clear that the higher truth cannot be obtained by means of one's own learning, intellectual wisdom etc. In
addition it requires **vikas**. "Vikas" is taken to mean the evolution of the human soul which consists in the cultivation of higher loves and higher hates, a dedication to truth and goodness. The principles of morality and values are said to be both universal and objective. Devātma claims the truth he has realized to be unique and says "These are prime truths which none else in the world have ever seen, known, proclaimed or taught except the Devātma."  

**Empirical Basis:**

In their respective doctrines, the Buddha and Devatma emphasise the attainment of powers and the experience of higher truth is to be achieved by maintaining spiritual discipline. Enlightenment is the ultimate achievement in the teaching of Buddhism. There is no such goal as Nirvāṇa posited in Dev Dharma. Buddhism adheres to the principle of birth and rebirth which is noticeably absent in Dev Dharma. Yet both thinkers share a similarity in affirming that when the mind is purified, it is possible to realize the truth and that the truth is not supernatural and mystical in nature. Since both teachings place emphasis
on 'direct experience' an empirical trend is visible in both doctrines. Devatma states "The principle of experimental interrogation together with laws of logic had so completely possessed me and had become such an integral part of my mind, that it became impossible for me to accept any belief merely on the basis of speculation or tradition." 28 And the Buddha in one of his discourses states; "Eye and material form, ear and sound, nose and odour, tongue and taste, body and tangibles, mind and concepts - These are called everything. Monks, he who would say", 'I will reject this everything and proclaim another' everything", he may certainly have a theory of his own. But when questioned he would not be able to answer and would moreover be subject to vexation. Why? Because it would not be within the range of experience." 29 There is a similarity in method evinced by both thinkers in that both uphold 'experience' to authenticate the knowledge of reality.

(d) Devatma's Theory (Direct Knowledge Giving Consciousness) Compared with the Early Buddhist Theory:

Perceptual Activities:

The Buddha and Devatma in their respective doctrines speak of the reality of the external world of physical
objects and the inner world of feeling and values. The Buddhist position is that truth does not depend on matters which are subjective as truth is objective in nature. As the Buddha says "An uninstructed ordinary person does not comprehend as it really is, that material shape, feeling, perception, the impulses, consciousness are of the nature to originate, to decay, and both to originate and decay; nor does he comprehend as it really is the satisfaction and the peril in them or the escape from them." 30 The Buddha emphasises perception as being a genuine source of knowledge. In the teachings of Devatma perception is given equal importance for direct knowledge is to be obtained by the senses and also by the development of higher psychic powers. Hence it is claimed that knowledge is only possible for a person to the extent he possesses adequate or corresponding sense or psychic powers for receiving it. Buddhism rejects reasoning in terms of takka (indirect or a priori proof) as being an unsatisfactory source of knowledge. Devatma similarly rejects pure reasoning and any reasoning has necessarily to be joined with experience and says that any belief which cannot be verified to be true by proper methods
of verification is not worthy to be accepted as true by any seeker of truth. Likewise, Buddhism claims that one may provisionally accept (accept a proposition for the purpose of verifying its truth and one should not commit oneself to the claim that it is true prior to verification by experiential standards.

**Ego Consciousness:**

In Buddhism and Dev Dharma alike there is no conception of self as an immutable entity. Devātmā speaks of the 'consciousness of I' that develops in individuals and appears to be in agreement with the Buddha in assessing that there is no ontological subject in the sense of an enduring entity, corresponding to the grammatical subject 'I'. The Buddhist texts state that "terms like 'Individual', 'person', and 'I' or 'soul' are designations in common use in the world which the Tathāgata makes use of without being led astray by them." 31.

**Effects of Feelings:**

Buddhism and Dev Dharma recognise sensuous feelings and passions as psychological faculties which can develop
into low loves and low hates. Devātma holds that man's motives can be governed by the pleasure principle and the dominance of this cuts one off from 'truth and goodness'. As regards motivations and cravings the Buddha says that there are different kinds of attachments namely there is 'sensual craving', 'craving for eternal existence', the 'craving for self-annihilation', Whatever kind of feeling one experiences - pleasant, unpleasant or indifferent one approves of and cherishes that feeling and clings to it, on clinging depends the 'process of becoming' and on the process of becoming depends (future) birth and dependent on birth are decay, death, sorrow, despair." 32 Hence the only release is to make such craving vanish.

Consciousness of Values:

Devātma affirms that one can have direct consciousness of values and can perceive as many values as the number of senses one has developed. He says that "Senses based upon justice are varied and many. Now the person who has awakened any of these various senses or feelings gets on account of that awakening, various kinds of urges in his heart, and cherishes various
thoughts and deliberations in his mind, the direct knowledge of which is not possible to millions of people who are devoid of them."

Devatmā believes that true liberation can be achieved when one rids oneself from low loves and loves hates. The well-known eight-fold ethical path of the Buddha likewise aims at the elimination of addiction to pleasures and aims at the realisation of the higher values. The Buddha advocates the middle path for avoiding the extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification. For the purification of the mind and in order to know the futility of undue attachments, the Buddha points out "Herein monks, a monk lives contemplating body in the body, ardent, clearly comprehending it and mindful of it; likewise mind in the mind, likewise mental states in mental states so as to control the coveting and dejection in the world." He emphasises the need for right understanding so as to know the nature of true values.

**Intellectual Powers:**

Devatmā details the mental powers of man in terms of the faculties of ideation, memory, imagination and reasoning which give new destiny to man's perceptual
knowledge. Along with perception such knowledge enables one to make causal inferences on what is logically constructed out of sense data. Yet both thinkers stress the need to guard oneself from falling into traps of one's own making, because of the tendency to form stimulus-response bonds, for this tendency to habit gets ratified and fixed by the response of the intellect. One can often mistake the unreal to be real by positing an eternal substance behind phenomena and it may be because of this reason that non-substantiality becomes difficult to comprehend. Hence both thinkers realise the fact that often sense perception is bolstered with mistaken metaphysical notions due to the manner in which man has been conditioned to interpret what he sees, hears and so forth. In other respects, without such preconceptions, these mental powers aid man in the acquisition of knowledge.

**Psychic Powers:**

The highest knowledge, Devatma asserts is yielded by the Dev-Shaktis. These powers were evolved in Devatma and enabled him to gain love for true knowledge and hatred for false beliefs, love for what is good and
beneficial in all departments of Nature and consequent hatred for all kinds of evils. The Buddha is said to have developed various paranormal powers of psychokinesis, clairaudience, clairvoyance, telepathy and retrocognition. He speaks of the knowledge of the destruction of defiling impulses as the outcome of meditation and mindfulness. Mental concentration is always causally conditioned and it is this that serves as a cause for the development of extrasensory powers.

In Buddhism and Dev Dharma alike, higher psychic powers serve as sources of knowledge but supernatural forces are decried for there is no place for such beliefs in their doctrines and they do not posit any transcendental metaphysical entities. Both the Buddha and Devatma emphasise the role of moral and intellectual progress as being necessary conditions for the development of higher psychic abilities. The emergence of psychic powers is said to have a scientific basis in Dev Dharma. In Buddhism, though the process of development of psychic powers is explained on the basis of causation, yet the psychic and parapsychic analysis in Buddhism could lend itself to scientific study and depicts an empirical system that can be tested by personal experience.
Additional Criteria for Truth Discovery

Devātma's contention is that besides the kinds of true knowledge–giving consciousness that man possesses, there are four kinds of emotional equipment which are required for the acquisition of true knowledge. The first of these is the necessity for sufficient love for the truth relating to the subject about which knowledge is sought. And this forms such a fundamental criterion that in speaking of the Buddha, Devātma states "The net result of all his enlightenment or Buddhahood was that he made it a supreme goal of his life to seek out all the methods to get free from the worldly miseries and to attain complete freedom from the cycle of births and deaths. It was not at all the goal of his life to evolve in his soul all the various constituents of the love of truth, to generate unique love in his soul and to get knowledge of the universal process of evolution and devolution." 36

In the Buddhist Nikāyas, one finds no direct enquiry into the nature of truth in a strictly epistemological sense, yet the value placed on truth (in the wider sense) was so great that some observation on the nature
of truth in the former sense becomes evident. Buddhism had not evinced interest in knowledge that did not pertain to the goal i.e. the removal of misery, and the truth set out by the Buddha was considered to be useful until one attains salvation. The possibility was granted that there could be statements what true but lacking this utility. The Buddha preached the dhamma which led ultimately to enlightenment and it is therefore said "In regard to things that are past, future and present, the Tathāgata is a speaker at a suitable time, a speaker of fact, on what has bearing, of dhamma, of discipline, therefore, he is called Tathāgata." 36 Certain queries were set aside as being unthinkable which is pointed out by the Buddha as follows "Of Buddhas monks, the range is unthinkable, not to be thought of. The fruit of action, monks, is unthinkable, not to be thought of... World speculation monks, is unthinkable not to be thought of, thinking of which one would be distraught and would come to grief." 37

The second criterion necessary for gaining true knowledge is according to Devatmā, sufficient attraction for the scientific method of investigation for
acquisition of knowledge in all aspects of Nature. Progressive knowledge was to be achieved by such a method of experimentation and what is true for the study of facts is held to be true of values also. In comparing this aspect of Devatma's with that of Buddhism, it can be observed that the truth discovered by the Buddha are considered to be final and absolute, whereas Devatma's scientific knowledge can be noted to be reliable but may be subject to change with respect to accumulation of data. In contrast to the selective theorising of science, the Buddha had a more practical intention; how to live a righteous life in order to discover the Final Truth. Dev Dharma adopted the scientific procedure as it formed an effective check against all forms of dogmatic beliefs and hence such verification becomes the keyword of his doctrine.

The next criterion for acquiring the knowledge of truth is to place reliance on the method of logical reasoning in order to clarify any subject. In the Buddhist Nikāyas as well, logical consistency is regarded as a criterion of truth and its application is essential to differentiate a valid from an in-valid
argument. When two statements contradict each other about matters of fact, it cannot be the case that both statements are true.

The fourth criterion for illuminating truth, which the Devatma puts forward is the necessity of various kinds of lights for the perception of different kinds of truths of Nature. These are of four kinds, physical light, mental light, altruistic light and highest psychic light. The first refers to the psychical conditions necessary for observing facts, the second to the intellectual powers of man, the third the evolution of higher feelings, of altruism, said to be conducive to soul welfare and the last refers to the evolution of psychic forces. The last has no transcendental overtones but refers to the development of psychological powers. Both the Buddha and Devatma insist that the development of intellectual and moral powers and their progress enable one to realize the nature of the facts, of the real, changeful character of all objects of the universe. Such a method also leads to knowledge of man and his destiny. Buddhism, in order for man to live creatively
in the world of transcence and destruction speaks of a path that leads to progressive compassion (feeling element), progressive awakening (intellectual element) and progressive goodness (ethical element). The evolution of these virtues is what is required to set man free from the vicious cycle of birth and its entailing miseries. Devātmā's doctrine differs in this respect from Buddhism, as it does not uphold the principle of rebirth. According to Dev Dharma, the actions of the forces of Nature are said to entail evolutionary or devolutionary changes and if the latter change were to continue, the beings one day or the other, regress into inorganic forces.

Both thinkers appear to place emphasis on verification by experience, and claim that the truth set out have to be verified and are verifiable. While rejecting authority and pure reasoning as unsatisfactory as sources of knowledge, they rely on experiential means and reason in a qualified sense, to yield knowledge. They accept perception and inference as sources of knowledge.

(e) **TRUTH AND FALSEHOOD:**

The Buddha and Devātmā set up certain criteria in their respective doctrines to distinguish true
from false beliefs. Devātma's principle is that "When Nature alone is real and every kind of animate and inanimate existences composed of matter and force exist in Nature and form its part and are subject to its immutable laws, there can exist no animate and inanimate being which may be beyond or outside it. Hence, it is nothing but a falsehood to believe that any inanimate or animate being exists outside Nature". Devātma outlines certain knowledge-imparting consciousnesses which include elementary consciousness of the senses, cognitive powers, consciousness of ego, sensual feelings, aesthetic consciousness and higher consciousness of justice and altruism and the Dev Shaktis or higher psychic powers. Any proposition opposed to these direct-knowledge giving consciousness was not believed to be true. Hence the qualification is that anything inconsistent with the laws of Nature and not proved to be true by experimental means, is not truth.

Buddhism advocates that one can know something to be true when one has direct personal knowledge of it. Knowledge requires both reflection and experience and the Buddha also advocates the
exercise of mindfulness in the pursuit of truth. In the Apannaka Sutta, it is asserted that falsity is the denial of fact or what does not accord with fact. A false belief, a false conception and false statement is defined as follows: "When in fact there is a next world, the belief occurs to me that there is no next world, that would be a false belief. When in fact there is a next world if one thinks that there is no next world, that would be a false conception. When in fact there is a next world, one asserts that there is no next world, that would be a false statement." Truth is the object of knowledge as one knows what is in accordance with facts. The real nature of things as they are, is known by experiential means. The Buddha made assertions which are true, useful and either pleasant or unpleasant. As objective facts, the Buddha put forward the four noble truths pertaining to the individual's life on the cosmos, characterised by impermanence and suffering. This unhappiness is caused by the operation of unsatisfied desires. The next truth asserts the fact that there is cessation of unhappiness and the way to such cessation is by
the development of moral and spiritual aspects of one's personality unhampered by desires, which finally culminates in salvation.

**Correspondence Theory of Truth:**

The Buddha and Devatma while upholding experience as the arbiter of truth, claim that what is held to be true is only so because of its correspondence with fact. The religio-philosophies of both thinkers synthesise a quest for truth based on experiment and personal experience and are not systems of speculative metaphysics but constitute verifiable hypothesis. They alike expound a correspondence theory of truth and an objective attitude as evinced in their systems demands that statements to be true must reveal evidence that warrants their assertion. Whatever be the source of beliefs, its verification by experience makes it a warrantable assertion and is also a means to discern its truth or falsity.

**Conformity to Logical Standards:**

Logical consistency is regarded by both thinkers to be another essential criterion of truth. Devatma
states: "Anything which is inconsistent with the principles of validity in logic cannot be true and it is therefore incumbent upon every seeker of truth not to be believe it to be true." 40 Devātmā shows the paramount importance of taking cognizance of logical fallacies and points them out in setting out such arguments with a paralogist. Propositions are held to be verified as being true or false according to the evidence of facts, as well as conformity to logical standards.

Buddhism considers coherence and consistency according to logical standards as criteria of truth. The canonical texts prove to be aware of the principle of contradiction. It is asserted that "If p (a certain statement) is true, not p is false and if not p is true, p is false." 41 But the canons also contain statements which make possible two other alternatives. Hence there are statements of the following type:

(i) S is both p and not p e.g. the universe is both finite and infinite.

(ii) S is neither p nor not p e.g. the universe is neither finite nor infinite.
Buddhist logic takes account of situations which gives rise to statements of the form 'both is and is not' or 'neither is nor is not'. An example is taken to illustrate such a possibility, for instance, when the extent of the universe is questioned, one can think of four mutually exclusive alternatives:

(i) The universe is finite in all respects i.e. it is finite and spherical.

(ii) The universe is infinite in all directions.

(iii) The universe is finite in some dimensions and infinite in other dimensions; this is what is meant by saying the universe is both finite and infinite.

(iv) If the universe is unreal or space was subjective, then we cannot predicate spatial attributes like 'finite' and 'infinite' for the universe. In such a situation we say the universe is neither finite or infinite. 42

In the above instance, only one and not more than one alternative may be true. The Buddhist four fold logic makes it possible to state the four alternative theses clearly as mutually exclusive possibilities and together exhaustive possibilities. Its merit is
to be judged by the adequacy for the purpose for which it is used. Propositions which can thus be stated belong to events in the space, time, cause world. Statements about Nibbāna which is an unconditioned reality fall outside the scope of logical discourse, and cannot conform to such categories of classification. It is assumed that a theory is false unless it is consistent. In the Suttanipātta, referring to mutually contradictory theories, it is questioned: "Claiming to be experts, why do they put forward diverse theories is truth many and at variance?" 43. And it is answered "Truth verily, is not multiple and at variance." 44

By adopting the logic of the four-fold alternatives, Buddhism differs from Dev Dharma.

**Distortion of Truth due to Subjective Tendencies:**

Both thinkers caution against subjective bias and man's addiction to pleasures which lead to falsehood. Devātmā states, "All these low loves and low hates are the root causes of all falsehoods and evil deeds in the human world." 45 The impact of desire on belief is also clearly recognized in Buddhism. Such desires include craving for sense pleasure,
adherence to rituals, to metaphysical beliefs or soul or substance theories because one is impelled by one's desire to believe in them. The Buddha recognized the fact that subjective attitudes such as likes (ruci) and dislikes (aruci) as well as attachment or inclination (chanda), aversion (dosa) confusion (moha) and fear (bhaya) prevent one from seeing things as they are. Attachment (raga) and aversion (patiga) that one develops towards the things of the world are said to be due to the ignorance of the nature of existence. The unenlightened human beings dominated by attachment or by aversion therefore are found to cling to the sāṅkhāras as if they were substantial and permanent. Being thus misled, individuals tend to have "Perception of permanence in the impermanent (annica nicca niccasanni), Perception of satisfaction in what is unsatisfactory (dukkha sukkhasanni), Perception of substance in what is non-substantial (annatā ca atta ti sanni), Perception of beauty in what is ugly (a subbe subhasanni)". Devatma shares with the Buddha the aim of eliminating self-craving as well as attachment to low loves and low hates.

Devatma sets out the psychological truth of man's nature that it is his clinging to low loves and low
hates that is one of the causes of falsehoods. When an individual is obstructed by likes and dislikes he is said to be unable to perceive the spiritual truths. The truths or ethical and moral qualities consist in the awakening of the various senses based on higher feelings of justice, gratitude, altruism and feelings of repulsion for unjust acts and cruelties. Buddhism and Dev Dharma alike analyze the psychological factors in seeking out the truth and expound ethical doctrines placing importance on the elimination of low loves and low hates.

**Knowledge as Means to an End:**

The parable of the arrow shows that Buddhism maintains the pragmatic attitude though it does not confine itself to the pragmatic criterion of truth only. It is said that a person who is struck with an arrow should be concerned with removing it and getting well rather than be interested in theoretical questions about the nature of the arrow, who shot it and so on. Similarly the dhamma has a practical end, when it helps one in attaining the goal, it could be discarded, even though it does not cease to
be true after it ceases to be useful. The Buddha does not adopt a mere pragmatist criterion of truth in as much as he does not assert that his teaching (dhamma) is true only by virtue of its usefulness and that it ceases to be true with the cessation of its utility. In this context, the Buddha uses the apt simili of a raft and states that a person uses the raft for the purpose of crossing the stream. If after crossing over, the person were to carry the raft on his shoulders wherever he goes, insisting that the raft was useful and that therefore he should not abandon it, that person would not understand the function of the raft. Thus the dhamma is true by virtue of its correspondence to facts as revealed by insight and possesses the added practical utility of enabling one to reach the goal.

Madhyamāpratipati or Mean in Buddhism:

Many of the truths as set out by Buddhism are found to lie midway between two extreme points of view. Extreme realism which says 'everything exists' is one extreme and the nihilist view which says 'nothing exists' is another extreme. The truth lies in the
middle. The right view (samma ditthi) refers to the transient and conditional state of things. This doctrine is another way of expressing the doctrine of dependent origination. The Buddha states: "'All exists' Kaccana - that is one extreme, 'Nought exists' Kaccana that is the other extreme; Not approaching either extreme, Kaccana, the Tathāgata (Buddha) teaches you a doctrine of the Middle way: 'Conditioned by ignorance comes the activities, conditioned by activities comes consciousness and so forth. Thus arises the whole mass of suffering. By the utter fading away and ceasing of ignorance comes the ceasing of the activities and so forth. This is the ceasing of the whole mass of ill".47

Similar antitheses which are regarded as being false are the doctrines of eternalism and annihilationism, the Materialist conception that the body and soul are identical and the dualist conception that they are different, the Determinist thesis and the Indeterminist thesis which are found to assert that we are entirely responsible or denies responsibility accordingly. Extreme hedonism and extreme asceticism is also rejected. The Buddha preaches the mean between two
extremes.

**Sphere of Nature About Which Man Gains True Knowledge:**

By virtue of the naturalistic and scientific basis Devātmā is able to demarcate the boundary between the sphere of knowledge and false beliefs. To the former are said to belong the four spheres namely:-

"(i) The reality of the various kinds of existences in Nature composed of matter and force.

(ii) The physical forms and the qualities of various kinds of real existences in Nature.

(iii) The inanimate and animate forces of the various kinds of real existences in Nature and their attributes.

(iv) The immutable processes of Nature - also called its immutable laws - under the operation of which various kinds of changes take place in different kinds of real existences in Nature and the facts concerning such changes." 48 Devātmā regards the evolvement of psychic powers as necessary to discern the truth.

In summing up it can be asserted that in both doctrines there is reference to the fact of correspondence of one's beliefs with facts which would make a
statement true. The objective nature of truth is upheld. While truth is defined in terms of correspondence with facts, consistency of coherence while not considered as the sole criterion, is also an essential factor. Hence truth is considered to be what corresponds with fact and also what is consistent in itself. Thus it is implied that one should follow the truth which had a practical bearing on the individual rather than the analysis of purely theoretical questions, uncondusive to the goal posited. Verifiability in the light of experience, is considered to be a characteristic method to discern truth, but what is thus claimed to be true is considered so only by virtue of its correspondence with facts. Verifiability is a test of truth and does not itself constitute truth. The common conclusion is that a man can and does acquire direct knowledge through one or other of his senses and consequently cannot acquire knowledge about any subject, if the sense through which alone that knowledge can be obtained is absent in him.

(f) POSSIBILITY OF KNOWLEDGE—KNOWLEDGE AND TRUTH—TRUTH

REALITY

Possibility of Knowledge:

Buddhism and Dev Dharma affirm the objectivity
of truth. The Buddha and Devatā are skeptical with regard to unwarranted presuppositions, but do not seem to be as to the possibility of knowledge. They uphold the possibility of knowledge that could be gained by normal and para-normal perception. Any experience is subjective in the sense that it is one's own experience and in both doctrines 'subjectivity' is not to be construed as any subjective arbitrariness. Neither thinker is committed to the dogmatic and solipsistic assertion that we cannot know anything but our own subjectivity. The main goal of their respective philosophical doctrines is to discover the path that leads ultimately to the realization of the truth.

Test of Truth:

In Buddhism, of theories arising out of subjective views, it is said "It is possible that one should have a perfect and clear personal knowledge of the theories apart from believing in them out of faith, likes, authority, considerations of some reasons or convictions based on reflecting on them. In the absence of a perfect and clear personal knowledge,
even if these recluses and bramins acquire a partial knowledge of them, it would be an entanglement of theirs." 49 Devātma similarly insists upon observation and experiential methods to know whether a belief is true or false and he refuses to accept any beliefs which cannot be tested by empirical means. Devatma believes that Nature functions in accordance with its own natural laws and these laws can be apprehended by natural means. It is therefore said that "Only those phenomena that happen or can happen in any of the different worlds of Nature in conformity with any of its laws are alone the true phenomena. Besides, these true and real phenomena, any other assertion which has been given out as true—even if it may not be inconsistent with any laws of Nature is not true." 50

Buddhism claims that the truth of its doctrine can be established by experience and some of its claims prove to be inductive in nature. The truth of the statement that 'On account of birth, there is decay and death' is a generalization achieved by perception or observation that all those who are born are also known to 'eventually to grow old and die.
The statement 'All conditioned things are impermanent' is derived also by means of experience and observation. A statement that asserts "Grief, lamentation, mental anxiety arise from and originate from attachment." is found in the Nikayas and this proposition is based on the observation of people who because of their attachment to loved ones are subject to and suffer such emotions when they died. Devatma asserts that Nature is the only true reality. In the manner of the Buddha he claims that knowledge is to be gained by experience and experimentation. The Dev Shastra claims "Nature alone is the treasure house of true and unlimited knowledge. Nature alone is worthy of being recognised, studied and believed by all humanity." 

Limitation of Sense-Perception:

These thinkers have recognized the limitations of perceptual knowledge. Hence both doctrines appeal to the higher type of perceptual knowledge gained by higher powers/perception which enables the disciple to apprehend the truth. The Buddha and Devatma admit the possibility of knowledge but are found to limit knowledge strictly to what can be discerned by the
powers of perception. In the philosophy of Devātma, the powers comprise of the Dev Shaktis, Dev Jyothi and Dev Tej which afford truth governing the growth of the soul’s life or its development by an evolutionary process. He states the true knowledge consists only in the constitution of the human soul and of the various truths about it. And Devātma contends that knowledge consists in knowing the facts and laws of Nature which govern the truth concerning the human soul or life force. By the manifestation of the Dev Shaktis, Devatma developed the psychic power or Dev Tej and psychic light or Dev Jyothi, all of which are said to be in consonance with the immutable laws of Nature. Similarly, the Buddha claims that knowledge can be attained by means of higher psychic powers. These powers include clairvoyance, retrocognition, psychokinesis, telepathy, claireudience and the knowledge of the destruction of defiling impulses.

Both thinkers adopt similar methods in justifying the truth of a statement. A proposition is justified on the basis of empirical data and statements which are found to conflict with empirical data are rejected.
This implies a method which is scientifically inclined and both thinkers agree with the fact that it is always factual evidence of any proposition that decides its truth and one do not rely on hypothetical possibilities in respect of what can or cannot be treated as truth.

**The Indeterminable Issues:**

The Buddha seems to have been reluctant to answer or to contemplate questions of a metaphysical nature mainly as they do not tend towards edification. These were set aside by the Buddha as being indeterminables and on these issues, the Buddha did not speculate but maintained silence. These *avyākta* (indeterminables) questions are:

(i) Is the world eternal?
(ii) Is the world not eternal?
(iii) Is the soul identical with the body?
(iv) Is the soul different from the body?
(v) Is the world finite?
(vi) Is the world infinite?
(vii) Does the saint exist after death?
(viii) Does the saint not exist after death?
(ix)  Is it that the saint does and does not exist after death?
(x)  Is it that the saint neither exists nor does not exist after death?

According to Buddhism, the first four questions cannot be decided on the basis of the knowledge available to man. In the absence of direct evidence, man has resorted to speculation determined by pure reasoning. Speculations of a metaphysical nature it is asserted were apt to be affected by one's likes and dislikes. The Buddha remarks "How can men abandon their views which they cherish as they organise them lead by inclinations and expressed with their likes?" 53 The same could be true of the affirmation to other questions – the view that there is an eternal self distinct from the body and the question identifying the soul and body. These could have been the result stemming from conscious and unconscious motives such as desire to perpetuate one's life and personality or the desire for annihilation accordingly. Finally the questions regarding the nature of the saint after death cannot be answered by any of the four alternatives. This
is due to the fact that "The person who has attained the goal is without measure. He does not have that with which one can speak of him". 54

The possibility and impossibility of gaining knowledge on certain issues is illustrated in the Vibhanga and some of them seem to be logical for e.g. 'It is impossible for two universal monarchs to be born simultaneously in the same world'. Others are causally impossible - e.g. 'It is impossible for a good consequence to arise from one whose conduct is evil.' The Buddha emphasises the elimination of the defilements of the mind so as to achieve the knowledge of the four noble truths as well as the factors influencing karma and rebirth and the consequent causal links of the chain of paticcasamuppāda or causal genesis of life. The possibility of knowledge is not doubted in Buddhism and questions not conducive to salvation were set aside. The Buddha declared that one who is sceptical should train himself in the path set out and come to realize the truth directly.

The Buddha and Devātma are reluctant to entertain unwarranted assumptions, but on different grounds.
While the Buddha rejects metaphysical speculations on pragmatic and positivistic grounds, Devātma is found to reject them due to his uncomprising naturalistic attitude and due to his adherence to the method of science. Both religions are found to confine the scope of reality to what can be seen and known by means of perceptual experience, and the method adopted is empirical in a radical sense. They emphasise 'seeing and knowing' as the only means to achieve knowledge. Thus this attitude make their theories empirical in a radical sense.

Knowledge and Truth:

The Buddha and Devātma regard the authority of corroboration by experience as the test of truth of any proposition and assert that man can develop higher psychic powers which are not outside the boundary of natural laws. Since authority, tradition, scriptural utterances and divine utterances were not recognised as independent sources of knowledge, perception (normal and paranormal) was emphasised as a proper method of 'seeing and knowing'. Higher powers of perception is regarded as a key source of knowledge.
in each of these individual doctrines.

**Knowledge and Belief:**

The truth of a belief could be provisionally assumed, subject to its further verification by experience. Further verification may well disprove the truth of an assumed proposition and knowledge results from personal verification alone. The relation between belief and knowledge is brought out in the following dialogue recorded in one of the Buddhist Nikāyas:

"Niganta Nataputta: Do you believe (sadda nasi) the statement of the recluse Gotama that there is a jhanic state (trance) in which there is no discursive or reflective thought and reflection?

Citta: I do not accept this as a belief.

Niganta Nataputta: See what a honest, straight forward and upright person this householder Citta is....

Citta: What do you think? Which is better-knowledge or belief?

Naganta Nataputta: Surely knowledge is better than belief.
Citta: (I can attain up to the fourth Jnana) ....
Knowing and seeing thus, why should I accept this on the grounds of faith in any recluse or brahmin that there is any trance in which there is no discursive or reflective thought...." 55 The Buddha's knowledge is based on insight and he is known to have told his disciple Ānanda concerning the truth of his doctrine "You say this out of faith but it is a matter of knowledge to the Tathāgata." 56 The Buddha's criticism of divine revelation and testimony of another was not entirely destructive as he qualified these sources had to be further verified by one's own experience in order to accept them as true.

Devātmā claims that the truth of any proposition is achieved by testing it on the touchstone of experience. This forms an effective way of testing religious beliefs and dogmas and the Dev Śastra imparts knowledge that is based on facts and laws alone. Devātmā states the human soul is also a part of Nature and subject to its immutable laws. He asserts "All forms of knowledge about human soul which is based upon Nature can alone be true and acknowledged as true. In other
words, the truth of such knowledge, do or can find corroboration or proof in the true and immutable laws of Nature and in the true incidents occurring under the operation of those laws." 57 Devātma emphasises that the teachings of his religion which is based on the facts of Nature should be science grounded and myth free and conversely any doctrine that is against the laws of Nature is to be regarded as false. As in Buddhism, the truth of a belief is to be decided only by virtue of its correspondence to experiential facts. Devatma employs the scientific method for testing the truth of a given belief. In adopting scientific method as the true means to knowledge, Devatma's philosophy implies that empirical accounts can be given for all events and phenomena. The truths of Nature established by such a method is as follows:

(i) Nature alone is real and apart from it nothing is real.

(ii) The various processes under which all changes take place in the animate and inanimate kingdoms of Nature are not haphazard.
(iii) As nothing happens or can happen in Nature against or in violation of its laws, therefore, all the various teachings or beliefs which have been propounded in the name of religion or in any other name by different people and which are antagonistic to any law of Nature are all absolutely false.

(iv) Only those phenomena that happen or can happen in any of the different worlds in conformity with any of its laws is alone the true phenomena. According to Devatma, knowledge is given by the different consciousnesses of the senses and the higher sensory powers and such knowledge is confined within the bounds of Nature. Anything which is asserted to be outside Nature and any statement violating its laws are regarded as being false.

Knowledge Yielded by Higher Powers of Perception:

In Buddhism, knowledge yielding higher psychic powers which can be developed by means of ethical discipline and the exercise of mindfulness; and which further enable the disciple to understand the true nature of reality are enumerated as follows:

(i) Psychokinesis — which primarily consists in
various manifestations of the powers of the will.

(ii) Clairaudience - wherein one can perceive sounds not normally audible by the sense of hearing.

(iii) Telepathic Knowledge - by which means the general nature of another's mind is known and one is able to read the thoughts and trains of thought of other beings.

(iv) Retrocognitive knowledge - which forms the means by which one can recall former existences or births.

(v) Clairvoyance - which affords the knowledge of the decrease and survival of beings and the insight into the doctrine of karma and its effects.

(vi) Knowledge of the destruction of defiling impulses - with which one is able to verify the four noble truths as well as the origin and cessation of defiling impulses. The four noble truths are known by means of such knowledge. Wisdom or pañña is characterised as knowledge of the truth which represents the nature of consciousness as well as a mode of knowing ultimate reality. Viññāna or consciousness and pañña or wisdom are both modes of knowledge and
whereas viśīśana as a mode of knowledge primarily controls the consciousness through analytical understanding, pahāna does not function as a control, as a release of the consciousness to the knowledge of the 'things as they are' and is a form of perception in that it knows directly.

Devātma emphasises the need for the acquisition of higher knowledge. For the perception of the truths relating to the phenomena of the human being, it was deemed necessary that a man should possess physical light, mental, altruistic and the highest psychic light. All these powers aid man in reaching the highest knowledge about the truth of the soul or life force, concerning its evolution or degradation and the means to the former. The Dev-Tej renders higher hatred and pain against pleasure-affording low loves and low hates. The knowledge of the truth of his religion can be known by the development of higher powers of perception. Devātma by asserting that the knowledge of Nature is to be achieved by the scientific method and experimental investigation,
makes it apparent that one cannot rely on a belief in the absence of sufficient scientific evidences. Certain questions relating to the problems of the nature of the human soul and its survival after the death of gross body in a subtle body is yet to be investigated by the biological sciences. Devātma claims that the soul can construct a subtle body after death and live in it under certain conditions. Yet he neither claims infalliability for the deliveries nor does he uphold that the principles are not to be questioned. True to the scientific spirit, he upholds that later evidence can either corroborate or refute his claims. His most basic and fundamental conclusion is that a true proposition must be in conformity with two necessary conditions, namely, that it should prove to be logically meaningful and experientially confirmable.

Science and Values:

Being influenced by the scientific attitude, Devātma places an absolute trust in the discoveries of science and scientific results. He accepts the theory of emergent evolution and asserts that man
has evolved from the animal species. As such the homo-sapien does share certain characteristics of his predecessors. Yet to be evolved does entail the fact of being in certain aspects different from that from which it has evolved. The sciences interpret variations as qualitative changes in the physical and biological sphere. Devatma attributes qualitative differences in value aspects and asserts that scientific methodology is helpful in this field also. The relation of science and values is not implausible. Sperry observes "Recent developments in behavioural sciences reopen central issues and argue for a revised philosophy in which modern science becomes the most reliable means available to the human brain for moral value and meaning." 58 Science and religion can supplement one another, not holding the view that scientific knowledge and truth is absolute or beyond question but as a dependable approach to truth. Religion cannot take on the role of science but can benefit from scientific evidence, though this entails the substituting of the natural cosmos of science in place of the mystical and other worldly concepts and references based on such views.
The conclusion that results from this perspective is that "In the eyes of science to put it simply, man's creator becomes the vast interwoven fabric of all evolving nature, a tremendously complex concept that includes all the immutable and emergent forces of cosmic causation that control everything from high energy sub-nuclear particles to galaxies, not forgetting the causal properties that govern brain function and behaviour at individual and social levels." 59

Devatmā and the Buddha are found to agree in the assertion that the truth can be realized by means of perception and that higher powers of perception can be developed. They recognise such means as yielding knowledge. Both thinkers are equally emphatic in denying the 'soul' as a eternal substance and do not recognize the mediary of any kind of transcendental or divine Being. The causal feature of 'good' and 'evil' actions entailing consequences and rebounding on the destiny of the individual is a major feature of their respective doctrines and their theories are divorced from any idealistic cannotations or implications. The fundamental differences between both
religions lies with regard to the goal posited. While Nirvāṇa is the goal of Buddhism, Dev Dharma has no such concept that could be equated with such an ideal. The knowledge of the truth as set out by the Buddha is regarded as being absolute and true for all time, whereas Devātma does stipulate that in the light of scientific evidence, new knowledge of phenomena can be gained. Dev Dharma and Buddhism in their respective doctrines emphasise the possibility of immediate absorption in the real, rather than a mere acquisition of conceptual knowledge. Pure reasoning and intellectual comprehension as ways to the truth serve only to expose their inadequacy. Experience is depicted as the key source of knowledge of the truth.

**Truth and Reality:**

The knowledge of reality is to be achieved by experience of things 'as they are' and such knowledge does not need the aid of any presupposition. The realization of truth is also meant the realization of the goal, and insight into the truth is to be gained by developing higher powers of perception.
The Factor of Conditionality in Buddhism:

According to Buddhism, what is called real is dynamic in that it can give rise to an effect. All events have essentially a functional dependence on causes and this dependence is not an haphazard series but is amenable to the objective order of reality. The doctrine of paticcasamuppāda (dependent origination) implies the fundamental nature of reality. In the process of the elimination of suffering, the Buddha discovered the causal chain of events that lead to constant birth and rebirth. In other words, suffering has for itself, certain definite and ascertainable conditions with the dissolution of which it has to come to an end. The truth of the condition of suffering is demonstrated in the cycle of causal process consisting of twelve links (causes) each of which spring from the other. From ignorance springs impressions and dispositions, from dispositions consciousness, from consciousness psycho-physical organization, from psycho-physical organisation springs sensation, from sensation springs thirst for sense experience, from thirst for sense experience arises attachment, from attachment arises the will to
be born, from the will to be born springs birth, from birth old age, death and suffering. Hence each one of the causes entail the other. The principles of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and non-substantiality are considered to be the main features of existence. The theory of impermanence was established by empirical analysis of the process of change. The process of change involves the stages of arising, passing away and decay or transformation of what exists. Again, the doctrine of transciency implies that an entity can be analyzed in terms of a dynamic process of constantly changing series and hence the term 'entity' in such a context does not connote an unchanging principle. From the fact of impermanence it follows the whole of existence is unsatisfactory.

The human personality in Buddhism is analyzed into the five aggregates of feeling, perception, disposition, consciousness and the physical body. The analysis of the psycho-physical being into aggregates is based on an unbiased perception and empirical investigation. The doctrine of Anatta establishes the truth that there is no immutable soul that could be regarded as the unchanging basis of the personality.
The **Mahatanhasankhāya Sutta**, states that a monk named Sati held the view that according to the Buddha's doctrine it is the consciousness that lives on and not another. In order to clarify what Sati meant the Buddha raised the question to "What now Sati is consciousness?" Sati's answer was "He who speaks, feels, and he who experiences the effect of good and bad deeds here and there". What Sati spoke of had reference to an agent behind the acts of speaking, feeling and experiencing. This amounts to a substantialist view and the Buddha rejects such a notion. According to the Buddha, consciousness itself is causally conditioned and contains no element of substantiality.

**Pragmatic Considerations:**

The Buddha does not answer questions pertaining to the eternity, infiniteness or otherwise of the world or the nature of the saint as to whether he does or does not exist after death. Thus the Buddha remarks to his disciple that "Whether the dogma obtain Malunkyaputta, that the saint neither exists nor does not exist after death, there still remain
birth, old age, sorrow, lamentation, misery, grief and despair for the extinction of which in the present life I am prescribing." According to Buddhism, man's attitude and outlook on life are determined by several instincts such as the 'desire to live' (jivatukāma) 'desire to avoid death (amari-tukāma), 'hankering for happiness' (sukhakāma) and 'aversion to pain' (dukkapatikkula). A theory that accords with one's inclinations or one that is merely consistent is not true in itself. Truth must be corroborated with facts and cannot cater to one's instincts. To free oneself from suffering in the process of birth and rebirth, the Buddha advocates the principle of non-clinging as it is this act of non-grasping that forms the path to the goal. The path leading to the extinction of misery entails breaking the chain of patticcasamupāda. The Buddha called upon men to practice mindfulness and cultivate qualities that tend to serenity and objected to metaphysical speculations which he regarded as futile wrangling. The theory that states the universe to be eternal or not eternal, finite or infinite, the theory that the
soul is identical with the body, the theory that the soul is not identical with the body—of these and kindred theories, the Buddha said the same thing "This theory is a jungle, a wilderness, a puppet show, a writhing and a fetter, and is coupled with misery, ruin, despair, and agony and does not tend to aversion, absence of passion, cessation, quiescence, knowledge, supreme wisdom and Nirvāṇa". 62

Similarly, Devātma opposes the theory that claims the reality of Spirit as ... he emphasises the sole reality of Nature and bases his theory on two subjects— the nature of man and the nature of the universe and thus subordinates the interest in the latter to that of the former. Just like Buddhism, Dev Dharma exhibits pragmatic associations, while not complying with a pragmatic criterion of truth. As in Buddhism, the notion of an eternal Being as Creator is rejected, and Nature is held to be a self-existent reality. While the Buddha does not commit himself to any assumption on the question of whether the world is eternal or not eternal, Dev Dharma claims Nature to be an eternal whole. Devātma states "When this Nature on account of
its being indestructible and eternal, exists always and at all time, it is nothing but a fiction or falsehood to assert or believe that there is a Creator of Nature". Devātmā maintains that man has evolved from the animal species. The life-force which is responsible for the construction, sustenance of the being explains fully the human personality which is a complex of the life force and physical body. The causal scheme of Devātmā's teaching is the dictum 'To be is to be related' and causation is considered to be emergent in nature. The chief purpose behind his teaching is to move towards the goal of evolutionary perfectibilism.

The Reality of Nature in Dev Dharma:

Reality is regarded as being co-extensive with Nature. Devātmā accepts what is given by means of perception and does not accept that the reality remains beyond the reach of the senses and nor does he assert that what we know by such means are mere appearances. One has direct consciousness of the objects of perception. The consciousness of ego or the concept of 'I' enables the person to distinguish himself from others and helps him realize responsibility for his
actions. From the consciousness of various cognitive powers like retention, imagination, reasoning and so on, direct knowledge about different aspects of Nature is possible. The consciousness of the senses and intellect together yield the knowledge of the reality of the external world. The knowledge-giving consciousness of sensual feeling, aesthetic sense, higher feeling of justice, reverence and altruism account for the capacity to appreciate different types of values—hedonistic, utilitarian, aesthetic, moral and altruistic. Devātmā declares that we can have direct consciousness of values. Ethical qualities and its development seem to consist in the awakening of the various senses based on higher feelings of justice, reverence, gratitude, higher feeling of pure and disinterested service of others, so also higher feelings of revulsion or hatred for unjust acts and cruelties. Those in whom these senses have not developed to a sufficient degree can have no direct knowledge of such truths. The other types of consciousness concern that of the Dev Shaktis due to the development of which Devātmā is held to be the discoverer of the truths pertaining to the human life-force. People benefit of these
powers consequently lack such knowledge and it is therefore essential to develop all these powers that enable persons to know factual truths which are capable of being verified by such means. Devatma holds that Nature exhibits as much a value order as a physical order. The relation between value and existence is regarded as being causal in nature. Value is a condition that furthers existence and disvalue is a condition that reduces the furtherance of existence. The process of degeneration is as true as that of evolution.

**Affinities:**

In the teachings of Buddhism and Dev Dharma alike there is a similar attitude concerning the means employed towards the acquisition of knowledge. The truth about phenomena is to be observed without bias and without conceptual precommitments of any kind. Any metaphysical reality is regarded as being but a postulate and such a hypothesis is unnecessary to explain the events of the universe. The individual is but a combination of psychical and physical powers and this is the fundamental view which both thinkers emphasise
as no metaphysical agent is posited. The Buddha and Devātmā acknowledge the reality of transiency as well as the causal nature of all events in the universe. They adopt a kind of naive realism and agree with the fact that truth can be realized by personal experience alone. The truth of a proposition was revealed by its correspondence with the facts of reality.

**Differences:**

The major difference to be noted between both thinkers lies in the divergence in the soteriological aim. Devātmā accepts a through-going scientific attitude with the aid of which he demarcates between true and false beliefs. Dev Dharma does not teach such a goal of enlightenment as is posited in Buddhism. While Devātmā asserts that further knowledge obtained by means of the scientific method could affect his claims favourably or adversely, Buddhism on the other hand does not make the claim that his theory of knowledge is in any sense revisable as the Buddha maintained that what he had set forth will be the same for whoever discovers it. Devātmā by the adoption of all scientific data, could include the scheme of
evolutionary principles of biology into his theory which was not brought to light at the time of Buddhism. Hence the basic divergence between both systems of thought would be the acceptance of scientific data on religious issues which is a unique feature of Dev Dharma. Yet the theories of knowledge do share certain overlapping similarities as they are in total agreement that the truth is verifiable by normal and paranormal perception, and that the true facts of existence are to be gained solely by its means. They caution against false beliefs largely engendered by subjective prejudicial tendencies and the cognitive powers referred to in each of the individual doctrines is not infused with transcendental overtones. Despite differences, the common ground shared by the thinkers lies basically in the sources favoured for the discernment of reality and truth.
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