

14. Philosophy of Life in Religion

1

Philosophy of life looks at life as a whole in the context of the universe. It is arrived at through total perspective on human life and universe. It is different from piece-meal problems of life which are viewed in the light of one's philosophy of life. A business man and a man of non-attachment to money, may face the particular problem of division of inheritance in different ways. The business man for whom riches constitute philosophy of life, is meticulous in going through the Will to gain maximum share and would fight for it, whereas the altruist for whom money is secondary may ignore as to what comes to him as his share.

2

Each one of us comes to live a particular way of life. Philosophy of life is rational justification or evaluation of the life one has adopted to live. What is philosophy of life thus includes two questions:

1. What is the best form of life or ultimate good of life?
2. Why do we consider it as ultimate good of life? How is it rationally justified as the best form of life?

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The question of philosophy of life or what is best or ultimate good of life and why do we consider it best, is raised at reflective level. Ordinary men and women have neither the ability nor the leisure to raise these questions. They take to traditional round-the-mill form of life. It is enlightened minds who reflect over human life, go beyond the immediate gains of life and view it in the context of the whole world of space and time. They bring their resources of knowledge about life and universe to find out the best or ultimate good of life open to man and reflect over justification why they consider it best or ultimate.

Enlightened minds of different disciplines offer different answers to the question of the best form of life. A philosopher or a scientist may consider the life of intellect as the best form of life. Russell points out how Aristotle makes his God a professor of philosophy thinking his thoughts. An artist may consider dedication to beauty in the form of painting, sculpture, music or dance as the best form of life. A man of religion may consider his life of renunciation and solitude, purity and love for some transcendental being as the best form of life. We do find how the outlook and style of life of an artist, a scientist, and a saint are different from one another. Each one carries a different aura of truth about it.

Our discussion is limited to master views about the best form of life in different religions and consider their truth value. There is a lot of difference between how the best form of life is viewed by Upanishads, Buddhism and Dev Darshana.

Upanishads bifurcate the two experiences, the empirical and the transcendental and consider transcendental experience to reveal the ultimate truth about the best form of life.

We all live life of empirical experiences. Empirical experiences are sense experiences of colour, sound, taste, smell and touch no less of length, breath and depth. We experience that the world we live in consists of things and other living creatures-plants, animals and human beings. We experience attraction and attachment for certain things and persons as also repulsion and hatred for certain other things and persons. We experience desire and aversion, love and hate for objects and persons. We strive to obtain what we desire wealth, women and children and self-recognition in the form of social status, social prestige, and social power. This is our empirical life and we consider it the best. Our idea of the best form of life is exhibited in the biography of our empirical experiences of

knowledge of things, our passions and pursuits and success and failure in relation to those things.

This empirical life of ours involves us in frustrations and suffering. Our desires spell suffering. A desire is never satisfied with its satisfaction. Its fulfilment augments it. It serves like fuel in a flame. There is no 'enough' for a desire. Since the urge for satisfactions is unlimited, suffering is inevitable. Again, frustration of a desire breeds hatred and revenge. Hatred and revenge rob life of whatever satisfactions are obtainable. Our life is tossed about by suffering of insatiable desires and passions of the flesh.

Achievements of empirical life even leave ashes in the mouth. There is no rest from uncertainties of things and events of life. There are anxieties about losing what we hold as the meaning of life. We are consigned to whirlpool of loss-gain and deprivations and end in death as the last act of frustration.

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The reflective minds feel abhorance at this empirical life of sound and fury signifying nothing but suffering and death. They feel man has lost his way through ignorance or avidya. They try to discover what is wrong with their empirical life. Some of them come to the conclusion that the universe is not what our senses and sciences disclose to us. Our senses betray us about the world outside of us. The real world outside of us is not the world of embodied beings in space and time. The world is Brahman universal spiritual consciousness. It alone is real. It is eternal, unchanging consciousness, it is sat-chit anand. Our empirical self or 'I', of desire and hatred (Ichha and divesh) is not real. Our soul is eternal, unchanging truth in us. Our best form of life is the realization of consciousness that Atma-Brahman, Tat Tvam asi (Thou art that), and Aham Brahman asmi (I am Brahman). When a man achieves this realization that I and Brahman is one, he lives the best form of life which is free from all anxieties, all insecurities, all forms of loss of things, all pains and suffering. It is life of complete unalloyed tranquility, peace and bliss. It is life of Jivan-mukta.

Brahmanvada claims to offer better explanation of the empirical world than the theories of other Indian schools of philosophy at that period of its origination. Today, however, science shows how the working of the empirical world or natural world can be explained without bringing in any conscious spiritual principle. The empirical world or natural world is self explanatory. All events in it, physical, biological, social and even mystic experiences, have their explanation within Nature itself. Mystic experience is as explanatory in naturalistic terms as fall of rain.

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The theory of Brahmanvada is affirmed to be not speculative but statement of direct mystic experiences of Rishis as recorded in Upanishads. It is easy to point out, as Prof.N.V.Banerjee points out in his book The Spirit of Indian Philosophy that "the upanishadic characteristic of Brahman are not always uniform, but on the contrary, are sometimes mutually conflicting." So true interpretation of Brahmanvada rests on reason rather than on the experiential authority of upanishads. As interpreted presentation it is speculative.

8

When a theory is speculative, its rejection is logical, i.e. how far it is able to give us an intelligent pattern of reality.

No Vedantist is able to deny the existence of the empirical world or the Natural world. Sankara asserts the objective existence of the empirical world, the world of objects in space and time against those who try to hold that since there is no logical difference between dream object and perceptual object, we may as well consider so-called perceived object as dream object Sankara offers the following arguments:

We now apply ourselves to the refutation of the statement made by Buddha (one of the Buddhist schools) that the objects like pots and so on, of which we are conscious in the waking state, may arise in the absence of external objects, just as the ideas of a dream, both being ideas alike. The two sets

of ideas, we maintain, cannot be treated on the same footing, on account of the difference of their character. They differ as follows:

"The things of which we are conscious in a dream are negated by our waking consciousness. I wrongly thought that I had a meeting with a great man; no such meeting took place, but my mind was dulled by slumber, and so the false idea arose. In an analogous manner the things of which we are conscious when under the influence of magic or illusion, and the like, are negated by our ordinary consciousness. Those things, on the other hand, of which we are conscious in our waking state, such as a pot and the like, are never negated in any state. Moreover, the visions of a dream are acts of immediate consciousness; and the distinction between remembrance and immediate consciousness is directly cognised by every one as being founded on the absence or presence of the object.

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The objects of perception, pots and jars of the natural world are not illusory according to Sankara. They are other than and apart from the perception of them. They exist independent of the perception of them. They have objective existence. Now how to relate the objective world of Nature with Brahman. If all is Brahman how to account for the world of objects. The objective world of pots and jars are not dream objects in Brahman's consciousness. Sankara holds that there is power in Brahman which accounts for world of objects and our ignorant belief or Avidya causes us to believe that world of objects and empirical self are self-subsisting. He calls this power maya.

The question is what is the relation between the speculated Brahman and the empirical world of maya. How is the changeless, timeless eternal Brahman, one without a second, related to the world of plurality of objects and Jiv-atmas. Sankara confesses that the relation is beyond logic, i.e. understanding by reason. This is the confession of Bradley in the 19th century. He says, "We do not know why or how the Absolute (Brahman) divided itself into centres of consciousness. (Jivatmas), and the way in

which, so divided, it still remains one. The relation of the many experiences to the single experience and so to one another, is in the end beyond us. "

Dr. Radhakrishnan, the most prominent philosopher of Vedanta, states Sankara's position thus: "We can never understand how the ultimate reality is related to the world of plurality since the two are heterogeneous and any attempt at explanation is bound to fail." (Indian Philosophy, pp.566 and 573). Sankara asserts that it is impossible to explain through logical categories the relation of Brahman and the world.

10

Brahmanvada fails to present an intelligible pattern of reality. It just tells us that there is Brahman and there is Maya. without making their relation intelligible. It is thus a catalogue of reality, rather than philosophy of the universe.

Further, it is unsatisfactory from the point of view of morality or values too. Better is the enemy of the good, especially if there is escape from it. Sankara holds that mergence in Brahman is possible by some men of genius without fulfilling the duties and responsibilities of ashrams and/or Sadharan Dharma. These men can skip over duties and responsibilities of Grihastha Ashram and social life. The development of moral values of purity, sattvic loves, and benevolence are just sadhana for lesser men for attainment of identity with Brahman, the ultimate end of life. They are mere means for another reason too. The soul as such is unchanging, eternal and perfect and admits of no further development of qualitative excellence. So the soul as such is indifferent to further moral excellences which remains characteristic of the empirical self which disappears in state of mergence in Brahman. All the values of empirical goods and scientific knowledge, beauty and goodness are at best means and fall like dead leaves when atma is merged in the Brahman. Thus Brahmanvada is intellectually frustrating and valuationally disheartening¹.

¹ I have not separately dealt with theistic world-view of Christianity and Islam. They share with Brahmanvada two-

The first challenge to upanishadic speculation of Brahman or/and God, or an eternal unchanging being came from Buddha. We live in an empirical world or natural world of change. That is undeniable. No philosophy denies it. The world we live in is 'samsara', a world of ceaseless becoming. But Vedantists deny reality to change. It calls changing world as maya. Plato calls it moving image of eternity. Buddha holds that change is inner essence of existence and not maya, and it is universal. There is no unchanging eternal Brahman, no unchanging eternal atma. No entity can stay away from change. The staying reality of an entity is an instant. To be is to change. Change does not happen to things. What we call things are series of ceaseless change. The universe is continuum of transitoriness and Atma vada, Brahmavada and Ishwarvada are escape from the reality of change. Once reality of change is accepted, the idea of eternal unchanging Brahman or God and unchanging self stands rejected. Our atma is not self-identical. It is series of experiences, i.e. mental continuum. If soul means self-identical unit, there is no soul. It is ignorance to believe that "I" remains self-identical to which experiences belong. It is as ignorant as to believe that the flame maintains itself unchanged though every moment it is another and not the same flame or light. We mistake continuity of flame or light as identity of it. Buddha is famous for his doctrine of an-atmavada. It was a greater revolution than denial of God, just as Darwin's theory of evolution was a greater revolution than the discovery of the law of gravitation or the rotation of the earth around the sun, for these views did not hurt man's vanities that he was created by God, which the theory of evolution did. In the same way the denial of God was denial of some

worlds view of the Universe. Christianity speaks of earthly city and heavenly city. Christianity and Islam both consider our world as the created world in contrast to the world of God and angels. Our world of birth is a second-grade world from which we must seek promotion to God's world and gain first-grade citizenship. This theistic dualistic world-view suffers from similar criticism as Brahmanvada does. How could immutable eternal God act and create our world, for creation is an act in time and changes the agent. Immutability and change are self-contradictory. Again, how can God be defined as love when he is without feeling and suffering? How can God be both immanent and transcendental? All such assertions about God are good magic but bad logic. Further, theism (to take Augustine's view) degrades human relations no less than Brahmanvada.

outside being. But denial of soul took away the ground from under man's feet.

We fall into the error to think that a word stands for an entity other than its parts. Nagasena, a Buddhist saint, explains to King Milinda that what we call soul is aggregate of five elements-rupa (body); vedana (feeling); sanjna (perception); samskara (disposition) and vijnana (consciousness). We quote from this dialogue to clarify Buddha's doctrine of an-atmavada. The venerable Nagasena asked King Milinda: "Great King, hast thou come on foot, or in a chariot?"

"I came in a chariot, Sire."

"Then define the chariot. Is the pole the chariot? Is the axle the chariot? Are the wheels or the spokes, or the framework or the yoke or the goad that is the chariot?"

And to each of these he answers no.

"Then is it all these parts put together that are the chariot?" "No, Sire."

"But is there anything outside them that is the chariot?" And still he answered no.

And then the venerable Nagasena said: "Just as the 'chariot' on account of its having all these things-the pole, the axle, the wheels, the spokes, the framework, the yoke and the goad-come under the generally understood symbol, the designation in common use, of chariot', similarly 'soul' or 'individuality' or 'being' or 'personality' is only a generally understood symbol, the designation in common use, for the five skandhas. There is no permanent soul involved in the matter. "

The second important doctrine of Buddha is dependent origination or law of causation. This law works automatically without the help of any conscious agent. In accordance with it whenever a particular event

happens, it is followed by another particular event (the effect) or getting the cause, the effect arises. The existence of everything is conditional, dependent on a cause.

In the background of these doctrines of reality of change, of causation, of non-existence of self-identical soul, Buddha explains truths about suffering and eight-fold path for deliverance from life of suffering.

The four noble truths tell us that there is suffering, it has a cause, the cause can be known and the cause can be removed. These truths are based on the undeniable empirical fact of suffering and the removal of suffering lies in understanding causal factors responsible for it and their removal. Buddha's four noble truths can be illustrated from the practice of a medical researcher. A medical researcher starts with the fact of the suffering of the patient, holds that it has a cause, the cause is knowable and the cause is removable. Nothing can be more clear presentation of the methodology for understanding any event

According to Buddha man's suffering is caused by him due to his false belief that he is a self-identical atma persisting unchanged in spite of its ceaseless experiences, whereas his personality is aggregate of body, perception, feeling, dispositions and consciousness. There is nothing eternal or unchanging about it. Combined with his false belief about his permanent existence of soul, his love or trishna for objects of his satisfaction in the world, give him another false belief that things with him will stay permanently.

Man is to be delivered of the myth of permanent soul and trishna through reflection and meditation that cause of his suffering is in him. Man is to enlighten himself that attachment to self, is attachment to a myth and he is to control his trishna by the Eightfold Path.

The Eightfold Path is as under:

(1) Right view- The right view is knowledge of the Four Noble Truths. It is to realize that there is no way of miracles or make-belief to get rid of causal chain in suffering. The Noble Truths lay the methodology of deliverance. True view is that belief in 'I' is a myth and control of Trishna is essential.

(2) Right Resolve Knowledge is not sufficient in itself. The aspirant is to will to renounce all false attachments to 'I' and objects, to give up ill-will to others, and desist from harming others.

(3) Right speech consists in avoiding lies, unkind speech, frivolous speech, hard words.

(4) Right conduct consists of Panca Sila, i.e. avoid killing, stealing, sensuality, lying, and intoxication.

(5) Right livelihood consists in honest way of earning one's livelihood.

(6) Right effort - There are dispositions of wrong conduct done earlier. Right effort is the purification of oneself of those particular evil dispositions.

(7) Right mindedness - Whereas right effort relates to purification from past evil dispositions, right mindedness is futurist. We need to be ever vigilant that there is no permanent 'I' or 'things'. I must not think 'This am I' or 'This is mine. If we are not mindful we think, "I am permanent and things are permanent and we develop attachment for them. Since both - self and things change, we are dragged into suffering.

(8) Right concentration: The last constituent of the eightfold path is concentration. The concentration is not on a divine being or Buddha. The concentration is on greater and greater discursive thinking on Four Noble Truths. This spiritual exercise is possible after one has purified himself of his myth of atma and pollution of passions. Thus unshackled by passions, he is able to engage himself in reasoning and investigation on Four Noble Truths. In this first stage of concentration he enjoys his state of detachment from passions and his pure thought. In the second stage of

concentration, there is joy of tranquility at contemplation of truths arrived at in first stage through discursive thinking. In the third stage of concentration he detaches himself even from the joy of the second stage. The fourth stage of concentration is a state of perfect wisdom and perfect righteousness. The four concentrations show how early Buddhism is essentially an intellectual religion not Bhakti religion.

It is clear from Buddha's Four Noble Truths and Eight-Fold Path that early Buddhism is a moral religion. Prof.T.R.V.Murti, the famous philosopher and author of *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism* writes thus in his article, "The World and the Individual in Indian Religious Thought" in the book *The Indian Mind*: "If for Buddhism the fundament is the moral consciousness, and the spiritual urge is for purifying the mind of the passions, the fundament of Hinduism is God consciousness and the goal exaltation or deification." (p.326) This en-rapport relationship with God is what distinguishes Hinduism from early Buddhism.

"Salvation or, rather, freedom is freedom from moral evil, from passions and their defilement (samskara); spiritual discipline is the path of purification (visuddhi-marga; Pali: visuddhi magga), and this is achieved through self-effort and self regeneration. There is no place for outside help or divine guidance. Salvation is strictly a sustained and heroic act on the part of the individual man himself. It is not an act of God or co-operation between man and God. Buddhism, at least early Buddhism, is a moral religion, a universal religion without God, a perfection of self-discipline and self-analysis." (p.326)

It is clear that early Buddhism breaks away from supernaturalism of God and Brahman, and asks individual to seek purification from passions by his self-effort of intellect and conduct.

Buddha made the hypothesis of God irrelevant by showing how human suffering and freedom from suffering are autonomous of God. This is the manner in which science has removed God from interpretation of the Universe. It did not argue against God. It gave understanding of events

without the hypothesis of God's operation is events and thus eliminated God.

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In early Buddhism man gave up his childhood and attained maturity. Man was no more to hold finger of God to cross the road. He was to cross the road himself. He was to seek the salvation himself. His future is with him and with his confidence in his own power to meet the challenge of passions that cause suffering. Buddha did not declare himself as a guru. He played the role of a teacher, a fellow traveller with his disciples. A teacher thinks that one day his students may be equal or superior to him. When he lay dying, his disciple Anand asked him whom they were to follow. Buddha's reply was characteristic of a teacher when he said 'Be light to yourself. Buddha can well be thought of as the first leader of "Enlightenment" in the world for which leadership came to Europe in the 17th century.

Buddha's rejection of permanent identity of soul, irrelevance of God in removing suffering and making change as the reality of existence and non-imposition of his authority for truths propagated by him have endeared Buddhism to western scientific mind unhappy with fundamentalism of Christianity. It provides autonomy, illumination and culture for free thought in religion.

15

Unfortunately Buddhism became a monkish religion and over-emphasised austerity as a virtue. It denied married life to monks and therefore downgraded married life, the core institution of society. However, Buddhist insistence on celibacy came to enjoy prestige with all religions. The social ethics of inter-personal relationships did not gain prestige with Buddhism, though social service did develop with Mahayana Buddhism. Again, Buddha's disciples took flight in idealistic metaphysics and practically became vedantic with its Sunya-vada. Sunya vada implicitly affirms the

existence of a deep underlying reality beyond all empirical relations. Sankara is said to be Pracchanna Bauddha, i.e. Buddhist in disguise. Mahayana Buddhism identified Buddha with transcendental reality. The historical Buddha was held to be an incarnation of transcendental reality. It held that there were many other incarnations of Buddha as described in Jataka stories. They turned Buddha into a worshipful being to whom disciples could go for help in their spiritual journey. Buddhism did not stay firm on Buddha's empiricism of Four Noble Truths and Eightfold Path. It disappeared from India as it grew more and more metaphysical and its disciples lost more and more the moral zest and discipline which distinguished them from members of other Hindu sects.

16

Mankind had to wait for 25 centuries for a new spurt in religion. The scientific knowledge of Nature as we know it today was not available in Buddha's time. The theory of evolution was not available then. Every genius brings his own unique mind to make contribution to its field of study and action. Devatma (1850-1929) whose legal name is Shree Satyanand Agnihotri, found in himself dispositions for love for truth and goodness and hatred for untruth and evil. He developed life of complete love of truth and goodness and complete hatred for untruth and evil. He steeped himself in scientific culture. He whole-heartedly accepted scientific method as the only true method of truth investigation in the field of religion too. He writes thus in his autobiography *The Evolution of Divine Life in Me*: "The scientific method of investigation which was imperative for research into the truths about the Universe (Vishwa Tattva) and the truths about man (Manushya Tattva) gradually acquired sovereign sway over my heart. The love of experimental interrogation had so completely possessed me and had become such an integral part of my mind that it was absolutely impossible for any unverified belief to stay in it."

Here was a new religious genius who gave emphatic importance to the scientific method as the only true method of investigation for truths in the

field of religion.

Again, he took to serious study of scientific philosophy. He studied Spencer's First Principles, Prof. Dummound's Ascent of Man, Fisk's Cosmic Philosophy, and Darwin's Theory of Evolution.

In the background of commitment to scientific method and study of scientific philosophy, Devatma reconstructed a new philosophy of life for man. Further, whereas Buddha took suffering as the object of study according to the philosophic culture of his time, Devatma took to the study of as to why man deviates into untruth and evil in his thought and conduct. The scientific knowledge, the scientific method, the theory of evolution and his peculiar genius for life of truth and goodness equipped him to discover the philosophy of life for mankind. Whereas science studied the factual aspect of the events in Nature, Devatma studied their valuational aspect. In between the years 1895-98 he discovered four great truths, namely :

- (1) Principle of change;
- (2) Principle of soul organism;
- (3) Principle of relationship; and
- (4) Principle of True goal.

Says Devatma, "I cannot describe the feeling of thankfulness I experienced on being Siddharth, i.e. on having realised my fulfilment in the discovery of these truths." (Evolution of Divine Life in Me I.29.155)

17

I. The Principle of Change

The first truth stated by him is as under:

1. Being subject to the great law of change, human person ality like crores of other existences, changes both in its body and soul.

2. Through higher changes a human soul becomes nobler and more beautiful than before.

3. Through evil changes a soul deteriorates, wastes and suffers extinction.

4. The higher change in a human soul is called Vikas (evolution) and the lower change is called Vinash (destruction) The first truth Devatma propounded was that change is real and universal. Modern science started with the study of motion, and progressed to the study of evolution of species.

Evolution is affirmation of the truth of change. Darwin, interpreted evolution in non-valuational terms. Evolution of species was due to chance variation and natural selection. Devatma interprets evolution and devolution in value terms. Every change has a value aspect. A change is change for better or worse in value from the earlier state.

Since change is real and universal, Devatma rejects the view that soul is unchanging, eternal, unborn. He goes further. He is the first religious genius to speak of the extinction of soul. He rejects both transmigration and re-birth. There is complete extinction of a life-force or soul if it persists in untruth and evil conduct of life. The soul has no privileged status in matter of life and death. Human soul is just life-force (Jiwani-shakti) as is the case with life-force of animals and plants which too have Jiwani-shakti.

One of the functions of life-principle or soul is to construct the body and maintain it. If the life-force loses its capacity to construct body specific to it, it gets extinct. According to Devatma or Dev Dharma, soul loses by evil life, its vitality to maintain and construct body and by persistence of evil life he gets extinct, body and soul.

II. The Principle of Soul Organism

Devatma thus states his second truth:

1. All the organised existences of the plant, the animal and the human worlds consist of two parts, one of which is called life-force and the other body. The life-force (Jiwani-shakti) in man is called soul.
2. The life-force of all organized existences, when judged from the stand point of higher and lower development, differ greatly from one another in kind and quality.
3. The life-forces in the plant, the animal and the human worlds build their peculiar bodies. They alone keep them alive through assimilation of food. They alone procreate other living forms of the same type.
4. If the life-force of an organism of the plant, the animal and the human worlds does not have the capacity to construct a body or loses it, the organism gets extinct. So men who through evil life gradually waste the constructive power of their souls, one day get extinct as individual entities.

Devatma removes the false supernatural plumes stuck to soul and places it in naturalistic evolutionary context. What is called soul is life-force or life principle or "Jiwani-shakti". It differs from species to species and individual to individual in terms of its evolutionary characteristics. Plant life-force is nutritive and reproductive in its functions. Plants have nutritive psyche or soul. The animal life-force has besides its nutritive and reproductive functions, sensory and mobility functions. Animals have sensory psyche or soul. In the case of man his life-force, besides having nutritive, reproductive, sensory and mobile functions, has rational function. So the life-force or soul of man differs from both the life-force of the animals and that of the plants. Within the plant world life-force of one plant species differs from another plant species. The life-force of an apple tree differs from the life-force of a mango tree. Further, within the same species the life-force of each differs from another. We have varieties of apples which differ in quality and taste characteristics. The life-force of a genius is different from that of an idiot. Devatma rejects the view that life-forces or souls of all men are equal in their capacities of moksha and vikas. The life-force of millions of persons is so low in moral capacities that no moksha is possible for

them. Their life force is so degraded in conduct that extinction is inevitable. Devatma asserts and emphasises individual differences in souls and therefore their future. It is these individual differences that make worship of or rapport with the highest soul excellences or highest life-force, inevitable for lesser human souls to check their evil thoughts and conduct and evolve sattvic life and thereby attain to moksha and vikas. This view of differences of excellence in souls differentiates Devatma from all classical Indian religions which hold that all souls are equal in their future and by the grace of God or through self-effort can attain to moksha or heaven or Nirvana in course of time.

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III. The Principle of Relationship

Devatma thus states his third truth:

1. The plant, the animal and the human worlds have evolved from the inanimate world. All these worlds are related like organs of the human body in the vast body of the universe and they have close relation with one another.
2. Without the development of all-sided sublime life, no human soul can establish complete evolutionary relationship with all the four kingdoms of the universe. So it is inevitable for it to gradually deteriorate and one day be completely extinct as an organised individual entity.
3. No human soul can develop sublime life through taking refuge in, or offering prayers or devotion to one imaginary God or several gods and goddesses, or a Rishi, Muni, Paramhansa, Sadhu, Mahatma, Guru, Saint, Pir, Prophet who are devoid of sublime life or by cutting off all cosmic relations or through practising yoga or samadhi.
4. It is only by coming to know the sublime excellence of the sublime soul (Devatma) and by establishing relation of pure adoration with him, that a fit ('adhikari') soul can get that sublime light which reveals the path of higher

life and can get that unique power which can generate higher feelings. On getting these, he, on the one hand, is gradually enabled to see evil activities in his soul in relation to different kingdoms of Nature and gets anxious and able to get freedom from them, and on the other hand, he is able to develop higher feelings and thus establishes evolutionary harmony or unity with them. Devatma gives (i) evolutionary and (ii) valuational interpretation to the principle of dependent origination or causal dependence.

The living worlds of the plants, the animals and the human beings depend on the physical world for their emergence and continued existence. But for the physical world, there would have been no plant, animal and human worlds. There is complete dependence of the living worlds on the physical world. There is evolutionary causal dependence of the three living worlds on the physical world.

There is valuational dependent origination too. Devatma holds that all our conduct is in relationship to all the four orders of existence. This rootedness is indispensable for moral and spiritual life. Apart from this rootedness and relationship there is no right and wrong in conduct. Our conduct in all relationships can be one of benevolence or malevolence. It is benevolent thought and conduct which can make one's soul noble and beautiful. It is malevolent thought and conduct that degrades and makes it ugly and destroys it. This is valuational dependence.

According to Devatma the human soul or life-force cannot by itself live life of completely benevolent thought and conduct. It is inherently limited in its psychology. Its urges and desires fall victim to the pleasure of certain satisfactions which deviate them into untruthful and evil thought and conduct in relation to the four orders of existence. A man's biological urge of sex may get dominated by the pleasure ensuing from its satisfaction and he indulges in sex in excess, becomes cruel to his partner in life or may seduce some innocent woman in sex and ruin her life and life of her home. Our consumerism has denuded our forests, destroyed innocent animal species and inflicted utmost cruelty on some animals for cosmetics and

has created unjust gap between the rich and the poor. Our social urge for recognition and status may compel us to assume dictatorship in politics even in democratic polity. At all levels of thought and behaviour our psychology is found to betray us sometimes into untruth and evil thought and conduct in relation to all the four orders of existence.

Thus man needs help to make his soul-life noble and beautiful. He needs light to show him the ugliness of the excessive dominance of pleasure principle in his thoughts and conduct in a particular situation. Man needs strength to deliver himself from the repulsive aspect of thought and conduct of untruth and evil. He needs a worshipful being who can give him light and strength for soul to discharge his duties and offer meritorious services to all the four orders of existence.

20

IV. The Principle of True Goal

Devatma thus states the fourth truth:

1. To get freedom from destructive low activities in relation to different orders or kingdoms of the universe is true 'moksha' for man and to evolve higher feelings and thus gradually attain to evolutionary harmony or unity with all the kingdoms. constitute the highest ideal of life.
2. It is not the chief ideal of man to seek pleasure of imaginary heaven or enjoy pleasure of wealth, name and fame and sensory stimulation in the next birth through transmigration, or acquire bliss by practising 'yoga' or samadhi, or secure some other true or illusory happiness.
3. Only obtaining of that pleasure is proper and desirable for a human being which keeps foremost the ideal of freedom from soul-destructive-forces and the achievements of higher noble life.
4. When a man makes acquisition of pleasure as his foremost objective or ideal, he develops evil dispositions and thereby, he on the one hand harms and destroys his soul, and on the other hand harms his body in various

ways and destroys its health.

The fourth truth relates to the goal of life, i.e. the best or ultimate good of life. It is to get deliverance or moksha from those distortions of urges which lead to untruth and evil and to evolve altruistic virtues which produce surplus of good over evil, truth over falsehood. Exclusive pursuit of pleasure cannot be the goal of life or philosophy of life or ultimate end of life, for it leads to untruth and evil, which if persisted in, leads to extinction of soul life. He can take to constructive relation with the four orders of existence if he keeps to the path of truth and goodness through rapport with Devatma.

Devatma rejects all forms of Hedonism as ideal of man's life, either of heaven or of metaphysical bliss. The ideal life for a human being is moksha from evil and untruthful elements in his thought and conduct and get vikas in all noble and beautiful, altruistic feelings of appreciation, gratitude, compassion, justice and disinterested service for all.

The ideal life is ideal to the degree it is truthful and good. Pleasure has a place in human ideal within bounds of truth and goodness. There is no place for asceticism in the philosophy of life in Dev Dharma. The pleasures are not to be condemned nor patronised but are given their rightful place in the total valuational context.

After being Siddharth between the years 1895-98, Devatma continued to develop in detail till his death in 1929, the system of philosophy of life for man. The first principle for best form of life is that one must start with acceptance of these truths: Nature alone is real and nothing outside and besides Nature is real. Nature is law-bound and there is no place for miracles in violation of laws of Nature. There is process of evolution to which we owe the rise of the plant world, the animal world and the human world and emergence of men of genius in the human world who further the evolution of all the four worlds. There is the process of devolution which

explains the degeneration that takes place in the four orders of existence.

Since human species has evolved in the natural world, man is rooted in the natural world. His origin is in the natural world. His future is in the natural world. There is no future for man outside the natural world. Man cannot fly out of the natural world. His philosophy of life is in the knowledge of his natural origin and natural destiny. Devatma makes explicit man's relation to the natural world in his scripture, The Dev Shastra, I.

22

Since the natural world alone is real and its knowledge is possible through the scientific method, Devatma calls upon man to develop scientific temper as part of the best form of life. He calls upon mankind not to accept any belief unless it satisfies four criteria of truth, viz. (i) it is not supernatural; (ii) it is not against the eight-fold direct consciousnesses; (iii) it is not self-contradictory; and (iv) it is verifiable. Devatma devotes the second volume of The Dev Shastra to the scientific methodology of truth acceptance and truth discovery.

Buddha delivered man in the sphere of knowledge when he asked him to rise above the authority of scriptures and his own teachings and be 'light unto himself. Devatma further delivers man when he asks him to find out whether his own light is true light of truth by testing it by facts and laws of Nature. The facts and laws of Nature are knowable by the scientific method because they alone are ground for truth. We are to be free not only from bondage to scriptural authority but also from partiality to our beliefs by seeking and finding impartial verification of our beliefs through the scientific method. This is to be man's second equipment for the best form of life.

23

The rootedness in relationship is the womb of man's moral and spiritual evolution. He exists because other existents exist. If other existents especially human society were not there, he as a human being

would not exist.

Man exists in relation to other things and persons and acts in relation to them. He either acts in a way to improve or better them or he acts in a way to degrade them. A sculptor improves a stone, a vandalist destroys the sculptured thing. A man may look after a plant, another man ignores to water it though it is under his charge. A person cares for his dog, another stones a dog. A nurse is compassionate to a patient, another nurse neglects a patient's suffering. We cannot avoid acting one way or the other. Thinking is acting at mental level. Anger is an emotion to destroy, though one may not actually destroy the thing. Pity is emotion to help, though one may not help.

All our morality, good and bad, arises in relations. If our relation with others in contact is beneficial to the others, it is evolutionary relation and it improves the quality of our life, It makes it noble and beautiful. If our relation with those who come in our contact is destructive, it is devolutionary relation and degrades and destroys our life to the point of extinction. Devatma takes pains to lay down the altruistic feelings and conduct incumbent for the best life open to man. Devatma devotes the 4th volume of his Dev Shastra, to this third principle of the philosophy of life for man. The sadhana or spiritual exercises throughout the year revolve round reforming, refining and upgrading relationship to the four orders of Nature.

24

Devatma also deals with feelings and conduct that are untruthful and evil in relationships. We have biological urges and their satisfaction involves others. I may grow food for my survival. I employ fellow human beings as labourers. I take too much work from them and pay them less wages, i.e. I exploit labour. For sex satisfaction and making a family, man raised the institution of family. We all know how through the ages woman has been exploited by man for his satisfactions. We seek social recognition. We come to indulge in self-praise and are hostile to those who do not praise us or point out our weaknesses. We seek power over men and land

and indulge in mutual destruction at social, communal, national and international levels through selfishness and ego assertions.

Each of our biological urges and social desires is prone to feeling and conduct which harm the others. This happens because the pleasure of the satisfaction of some biological urge or social desire bewitches us and this pleasure comes to guide the urge or desire. The principle of pleasure is not the principle of good. So some of our urges or desires grown under pleasure reach to a state of intoxication and so there is misbehaviour. Devatma enlightens mankind to be vigilant of the role of pleasure in their decisions and warns them that they must not allow pleasure to be exclusive determinant of their decisions. When pleasure is the exclusive determinant of one's decisions, it breeds untruth and evil all around in whatever relationships we stand. Such determination of decisions turns our desires into low-loves and low-hates.

The fourth principle of the philosophy of life is freedom from low-loves and low-hates that violate the evolutionary law of relationship.

25

Devatma lays that the fifth principle of the philosophy of life is the cultivation of altruistic virtues like compassion, justice, affection, gratitude, love, reverence and disinterested love of service.

Devatma devotes Part III of The Dev Shastra to X-ray man's low-loves and low-hates and thus gives a red signal for the risk he is inviting for his destruction-soul and body.

Devatma holds all these five objectives of the best philosophy of life, i.e. to get illumination that Nature alone is real; scientific method is the only method to test one's beliefs; to know and perform duties in interpersonal relations; to get freedom from low-loves and low-hates; and to cultivate virtues or higher loves and higher hatreds. A man cannot achieve these five excellences of the best form of life without rapport with a person who develops life of complete love of truth and goodness and complete hatred

for untruth and evil. Devatma lives this life of complete love of truth and goodness and hatred of untruth and evil. His life emits light that shows the ugliness of untruthful and evil thought or conduct and beauty of sattvic thought and conduct in different relations. Besides emitting light, Devatma emits power which gives to the recipient the strength to give up myths about reality, methodology of knowledge, to get deliverance from low-loves and low-hates, to discharge duties in inter-personal relationships, and to cultivate sattvic feelings.

These are the five constituents of the philosophy of life for man.

26

The sixth constituent for the best form of life is love for Devrupa of Devatma.

Man seeks more than his deliverance from low passions and evolution of sattvic virtues. He yet feels himself self-centred and self-confined. He strives to rise above this stage of perfecting himself. He wants to transcend his self entirely in love. He wants nothing of his beloved deity, except permission to sing her praise.

Bhagvata describes the highest bhakta as one who does not care to accept the gift of living in the same world with God (salokya), exercising supernatural power of God (sarati), being near to God (sami), similarity (sayage) even if they are offered to him. The devotee who loves God does not care to seek even his kaivalya (highest deliverance of soul) from God much less to seek other worldly things. A similar characterization of love or bhakti is made by a Christian devotee:

"My God, I love Thee, not because

I hope for heaven thereby

Nor yet because who love Thee not

Are lost eternally.

Even so I love Thee and will love
And in Thy praise will sing
Solely because Thou art my God
And my eternal King.

The relationship with Devatma is not limited only to his utility to man's deliverance and evolution detailed above. His Devrupa offers to man the highest object of love for its delight and devotion. The Himalayan ranges have been useful to us for protection against foreign encroachment and occupation. Iqbal speaks of them as Paasbaan or guardian of the country. Today they have ceased to offer this utility with the development of air-crafts. But the beauty of Himalayan ranges remains un dimmed. It shines as bright as the sun. Even if tomorrow man is delivered of his myths and low-passions and cultivate scientific temper and sattvic life. Devatma has still a role for his Devrupa offers the most beloved object relevant for the best form of life. Its beauty surpasses the best dream of love for object of contemplation and companionship. The human soul touches the zenith of the best form of life in rapport with or bhakti of the Dev Rupa of Devatma.