

EDITORIAL

Life is exhibited by beings through signs of actions which indicate unity, harmony, purpose and meaning in the Universe. These actions could be sequenced as follows: inspiration, impulse, vibration, pulsation, respiration, circulation, introspection, reflection, co-ordination, direction and orientation. This series of actions which are specifically of living beings are dynamically open to fulfilment, expansion, growth, achievement, alteration, diversification, improvement and innumerable ways of adaptation to the changing habitats. Phenomenologically these signs of life are attributed to the rhythm (*rtam*) of Nature. So they are said to be natural behavioural patterns of living beings, botanically, zoologically and anthropologically.

However these patterns of behaviour are interpreted from philosophical, theological, spiritual and mystical perspectives too. Such interpretations would qualify the signs of life mentioned above as movements of an underlying foundational principle named traditionally as Spirit of God (*Ru'ah*) *Elohim/Atman*) to whom is attributed "inspiration", the act of imparting breath of life as it is recorded in the book of Genesis, and in the *Purusha Sukta* of Rigveda. Because of this initial impetus from God every form of life is said to be divine. Yet, "life-divine" philosophically and theologically understood is the higher pattern of human life lived in tune with the life of God as well as in harmony with the lower forms of life flourishing on the habitats of this planet Earth.

Spirit-infused life of man is said to be life-divine. Such a life has been described in traditional theologies as "life of Grace". Yet Grace is not a simple benevolent glance of the Almighty over man, the little creature crawling on earth; nor is it an aspersion of "good pleasure" over the dumb clay model of man, that he may be stimulated to offer a budding smile in return to His Majesty's Benevolence. Better would be to use the vivid expression of St. John the Evangelist from the prologue of his Gospel, where he identifies the initial Word of God as the life, light, truth and Grace of God for mankind, incarnated in the Person of Jesus Christ:

In the beginning was the Word,
the Word was with God;
and the Word was God.

All things were made through Him. . .
 In Him was life,
 and the life was the light of men,
 and the light shines in darkness. . .
 And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us. . .
 and of his fullness we have all received Grace after Grace. . .
 The Law was given through Moses,
 Grace and Truth came through Jesus Christ.

May be that some of us are better tuned to the vibrations of life-divine as expressed by St. Paul in his letter to the Romans 8 : 14-16 :

Whoever are led by the Spirit of God,
 they are the sons of God. . .
 The Spirit Himself gives testimony to our spirit,
 that we are sons of God.

In both citations there strikes a strong note that life-divine is God's own intimate existential availability for man in some tangible form of channel that should transform the mute matter into a life-vibrating spiritual being, capable of higher perceptions, intuitions, creativity and perfection.

Practically all religions affirm this fact though they articulate it in diverse symbolic terms. Their common resonance is this that life-divine is man's participation of the Divinity at various stages of his life from conception to final consummation. This participation of the life of God by man is oriented towards perfecting man's natural life by the touch of God Himself. It provides for him higher possibilities of God-realization to be achieved more consciously and authentically in this life itself resulting in the transformation of his material existence into a divine one. This is said to be the work of the Grace of God (*prasāda*), a divinization process, that should happen in every man. It is this theme that *Journal of Dharma* offers in the current issue.

Incidentally we may point out here that the master-piece of the late mystic philosopher Sri Aurobindo Ghosh of Pondicherry, India, was titled *Life Divine*. This issue of our Journal gives a very significant place to the insights of Sri Aurobindo who is perhaps less known to the western readers. The way he attempted to synthesise the forces of Matter and Spirit as interacting in one process of evolution to bring about unity and harmony

in human life is something unique. Though it gives a strange frame of thinking which is rather unconventional an attentive perusal is intellectually rewarding. Other contributors supplement to this hard core by presenting their materials in more lucid and conventional styles. This theme of life-divine, we hope, might help us in some way to look ahead for a few green signals of survival on our rash march on the road to the conquest of Matter which flashes red signals of "Star Wars" and Laser beams.

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