



We all know that the law of causal determination operates in the universe. Events arise due to preceding events and circumstances shaping them. We are in a causally determined world of men and matter. The doctrine of Paticca Samuppada in Buddhism relates to the dependent origination of outcomes. Given factors X, Y and Z, event A may arise; when X, Y, Z cease A will cease. On the other hand, within the operative force of this general law a great deal of randomness defines so many events in our personal lives. One is often at the centre of coincidences or random occurrences in the first place. Causal determination may take off thereafter. Maybe it is a two-stage process of unfolding, as stated by William James.

divine miracle but it a description of a perfectly coincided occurrence that began at very low or even zero probability because it is only one sperm that succeeds among hundreds of millions. One specific sperm with its unique gene load has to be at the optimal place and at the optimal moment for fertilisation to occur. A coincidence of the highest order, indeed!

Thus in the creation of an individual life we can biologically observe only just two factors and none other- the successful sperm and the egg coming together. The characteristics of the process is marked by randomness and survival of the fittest. One observes no other input in the process.

If we compare our life to a train's journey we may find that throughout life we get passengers boarding the train and passengers getting off a station. Typically, our parents are our first passengers. As we will see below, it is a coincidence that they

Christians believe in a soul as a vital input and Buddhists believe in a mental input from another dead person. Biological science do not show any evidence of any such extra immaterial input needed to complete the fertilization act.

The point is that if anything exists it must manifest itself objectively for anybody who can gain access to observe. Objects, like the soul here, that claim to exist must manifest themselves in an observable way. If it is not observed before



happen to be our parents and we happened to be their offspring. A myriad of others join us as passengers-our relatives, family friends, associates, school mates, teachers, playmates and workmates etc. At random they may get off at stations as they disappear by way of parting or death. Some of these passengers are chosen to live on and some to die and here the pick appears utterly random and occurring for no reason. Some live until the nineties while others die surprisingly young. This all looks coincidental and sometimes funny. At a deeper level one can see humour in

our eyes it must be observable either through a scientific device like an X Ray or sound scan. Given that the phenomenon cannot be reached even through such devices, at least in principle it must be accessible. Arguing this way, the soul or the 'mental input' does not manifest themselves and thus for human beings they are safely deemed not to exist. If it does not exist in any shape or form to human beings then it cannot be said to exist as far as human beings are concerned. Thus, it has no influence on human birth or existence.

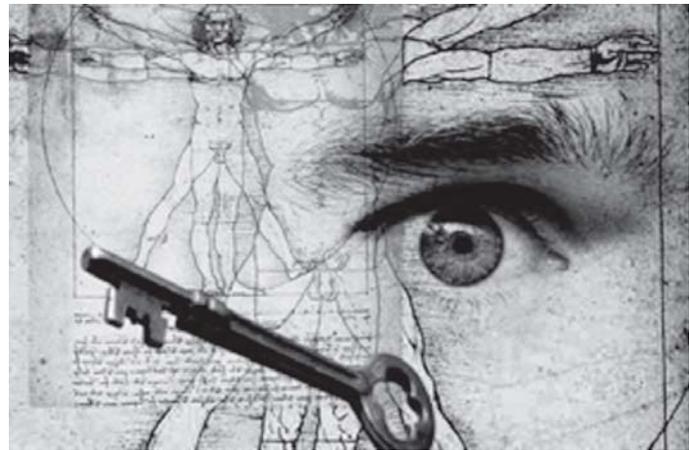
*I have heard a Buddhist monk preach that, "we have come to die."
This isn't true since we have come to live although we also die. The evolutionary process in animals has a deeply embedded survival instinct that is applicable to man, too.
We have come to try and survive.*

these happenings.

Take a look at the birth process itself and note how random it is. For a human birth to take place usually hundreds of millions of sperm swirl around one female egg in an attempt to fertilise. It is only one particular lucky sperm in close proximity and in fitting health that manages to reach the egg and merge with the latter. The survival of the fittest. In this sense a birth of a child is a miraculous thing. This does not imply any

Before the progress of biology and the sciences ignorant persons who were mystified at the magical birth of a child attributed it all to a God or some god. Scientific minds as scientific minds don't do that these days. The dominant presence of consciousness has also impressed pre-scientific man who thought it was some manifestation of a soul. We all know that with the death of the brain the mind vanishes into nothingness.

RANDOMNESS OF OUR LIFE AND ITS PURPOSE



We thus observe the randomness in our very birth and in our existence. This randomness of our birth and existence suggest that our lives cannot have any special meaning or purpose other than to continue the job of survival and to live well.

The belief about a supernatural input at birth led some religionists to believe that there is a special purpose and meaning in our living. Hindus would say that the assumed individual soul must merge with the ultimate transcendent soul-Atma or Brahma. Christians and Muslims would believe that the purpose of living is for our soul to reach heaven and unite with God or Allah.

The God of these religions, it is believed, have stipulated that doctrine. Once again, to believe in a God that the particular divine entity must exist. God cannot be deemed to exist if his existence isn't manifested.

Biology defines man as an animal. If pigs and cattle and rabbits have no meaning in their lives other than to survive and persist why claim a special meaning in the case of the life of the human animal? The survival instinct is all there are in these animals. They want to survive in some way or another and by the processes of natural selec-

tion in an evolutionary order these species of animals keep improving their chances of survival. The same with man.

A human being shows up in the world by accident. Having materialised in the world it will try its utmost to make it instinctively by following the pleasure-pain principle. This means it will instinctively seek opportunities for pleasure and avoid risks of pain. That is all the purpose that human life has. In other words, now that it is thrown to the world the human being will try hard to live it out governed by the pleasure-pain principle.

I have heard a Buddhist monk preach that, "we have come to die." This isn't true since we have come to live although we also die. The evolutionary process in animals has a deeply embedded survival instinct that is applicable to man, too. We have come to try and survive. We can argue, therefore, that in evolutionary terms man is incapable of committing suicide. Man wants to survive and not to self-destruct. The exception is, of course, when a person is mentally ill or when society gets collectively deranged as in gong to war.

The purpose or meaning of life is to live it as best as we can.

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