
Editorial

Philosophical and Divine Perspectives of Light

The year 2015 commemorates the United Nations Year of Light and Light-based Technologies. The current edition of Vidurava has hence been dedicated for this commemorative occasion.

Diversity in the advancement of our knowledge in the cross-disciplinary use of light in techniques and technologies involving natural and synthetic physico-chemical transformations could be seen from the articles published in this number.

Light as we know was one of the primary natural phenomena that led to the creation and evolution of life on earth. Hence conceptually it could be assumed that light-based technologies in a bio-physical context, originated right from the birth of the Earth planet during the late Precambrian era. It is therefore no surprise that light was also inspirational in a theological or theosophical context, in origination of ‘objective realism’, as well as of divinity and spiritualism from ancient times.

Thus Buddhist philosophy with a focus on realism expounds a highly complex but convincing analysis of light, as one of the functional elements of the cognitive process of observation or seeing of a visible object. According to Buddhist commentaries, several essential conditions must exist for what has been expressed in philosophical terms as the “eye door process”. These are, 1) eye sensitivity (*cakkhuppasāda*), 2) a visible object (*rūparammana*), 3) light (*āloka*), and 4) attention of the mind (*manisikāra*).

When an external object or image impinges

on (or contacts) the “eye door”, an eye consciousness (*cakkhu-viññāna*) arises followed by the investigating consciousness, which causes origination of the determining consciousness, which in turn discriminates the observed object.

In other religious faiths, divinity or providence is the prime focus on light. In Christianity, according to Biblical references, the first specific creation of God (Genesis – 1) was the creation of light. As the first chapter in the Bible refers to light, so does the last (Revelation 22:1-5), which says that the only light necessary in heaven is God Himself. In Samuel 22, David said: ‘For you are my lamp O’ Lord, and my God lightens up my darkness’. This is claimed to be the first time God’s presence and communication with humans is compared with light.

In Hinduism, Diwali or Deepavali is described as the ‘Festival of Lights’. From ‘darkness unto light’ – the light that empowers to commit to good deeds that which bring people closer to divinity. The illumination of homes with light and the skies with fire crackers is considered an expression of obeisance to the heaven for the attainment of health, wealth, knowledge, peace and prosperity. The concept of light in Islam is reflected in the parable of *Al Nur*. According to which, “Allah is the light of the Heaven and the Earth. The parable of His light, is as if there were a niche: And within it a Lamp: The Lamp enclosed in Glass: The glass as it were a brilliant star, Lit from a blessed Tree”. Thus we see how light had enliven the existence of human beings through the millennia.

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