

## **Life Supporters**

Two major developments in the field of astronomy have provided further evidence to the much-discussed possibility of life on other planets and stars in the Milky Way. Significantly, both these evidential indicators have originated from the realms far beyond the Jovian (Jupiter) system. First it was the discovery of the incomparably huge comet in the early part of 1995 discovered by two astronomers, Allen Hale from New Mexico and Thomas Bopp from Arizona, United States. This comet seen as an unusually bright object outside the Jupiter's orbit is the farthest comet discovered by amateurs and appeared 1,000 times brighter than comet Hale at the same distance. Because of its unusually huge size, it has been possible for the earthlings to view the spectacular sight of this huge mass of dirty ice ball by naked eyes.

Comet Hale-Bopp has not fascinated the astronomers just for its bright appearance and huge size, but due to the contents of this tailed alien. The comet is found to be made up of formaldehyde, methyl alcohol, methylamine, hydrogen sulphide, methane, ethylene and methyl isocyanide which are the essential ingredients to support life on a planet. According to the latest theory, comets carrying these molecules collide with the planets thereby providing ingredients to support life forms on that planet. Even the origin of earth is attributed to this theory.

Similar evidence to the life on one of the sixteen moons of Jupiter has been discovered. Europa, a part of Galilean formation in the Jovian system has indicated life-supporting environment through the images of the spacecraft Galileo. Underneath the smooth exterior of Europa, scientists have discovered the existence of a frozen sea which could possibly be a major precursor to the life on this moon. Scientists expect to obtain further conclusive evidence in this regard when Galileo flies past very close to Europa in the month of November 1997.

These two developments make it possible for us to imagine that there could be life in other parts of our Galaxy. Man's forays into exploring mysterious realities in the Galaxy of stars and planets at last seems to be revealing the existence of life forms elsewhere in the dark domains of space.

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