

## God players: Genetic engineering

Though there is no dearth of wonders and amazing incidents in every field and scientists have made miraculous inventions, US geneticist Craig Venter and his dedicated and committed team have excelled by creating life powered by manmade genes – a bacterium whose entire genome was developed in the laboratory by a process using four bottles of chemicals. It is a breathtaking incident and a very incredible scientific achievement, no less than a miracle, adding another milestone in the human inventions which will lead a long way in protecting the subsistence and survival of life. The successful formation and construction of the first self-replicating bacterial cell opens and paves the way for making and manipulating life on a previously impossible, inconceivable and unattainable scale, calling into question the basic assumption of creation. Previously, scientists had distorted, altered and manipulated DNA piecemeal to produce a variety of genetically engineered plants and animals. But the ability to artificially devise and design genome – the “Book of Life” that controls an organism’s functions – puts a different spin on the meaning of terms, i.e., creation, evolution of life.

The most remarkable thing about the synthetic cell is that



its genome was brought to life through chemical synthesis without making any pieces of natural DNA. This invention is a turning point in the relationship between man and nature when humankind has generated life from the scratch in a laboratory with the ability to pre-determine its properties. Innovation and research are heading so fast that in the coming years we may expect another miracle.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. G. Damle', written over a horizontal line.

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