

C. V. Raman's attitude to science

From Our Science Correspondent

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The Indian Academy of Sciences, Bangalore, the sponsoring body of the C. V. Raman centenary celebrations, concluded its two-day 54th annual meeting here on Tuesday.

In his presidential address on Monday, Prof. Obaid Siddiqui of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) spoke about the late C. V. Raman's views and attitude towards science.

Presenting a perspective on Raman from today's standpoint, he said that Raman pursued science for the sake of science, an attitude which may not be possible to wholly sustain today when science is being increasingly driven by technology and societal needs.

Today's scientist is in a state of dilemma which stems from the dichotomy of approach to science — to do science for society or science for its own sake.

Prof. Siddiqui referred to Raman's disinclination towards Jawaharlal Nehru and S. S. Bhatnagar's model of organised science that links itself to the developmental process of a developing country.

A developing country needs technology, he said. It is forced to look for it elsewhere if it does not emerge from its own scientists.

Prof. Siddiqui had no solution to offer for the dilemma faced by today's scientists.

Though many of the scientists agreed with his balanced and unbiased appraisal of Raman those who were close to the Nobel Laureate seemed to be perturbed by Prof. Siddiqui's remarks. This was reflected in the concluding lecture by Prof. S. Chandrasekhar of the Raman Research Institute, Bangalore, who talked on "Recent developments in the physics of liquid crystals". Prof. Chandrasekhar dwelt on the optical properties of liquid crystals that would have attracted Raman.

"Science was Raman's *raison d'être*" Prof. Chandrasekhar observed. For him, he said, inspiration came entirely from within. He did not have anyone to guide him." Till he died, his passion for science remained undiminished, he said. He referred to an incident when Nehru called him to Delhi and offered him the highest scientific post, but Raman had declined it saying, "I have promises to keep". He was in his sixties then and continued to do research.