

REMEMBERING SIR CV RAMAN

On his 125th birth anniversary, the man who taught Raman the Russian language recollects the experience

by S Narayan

I was taking a look at the calendar for the month of November. Suddenly there was a rush of old memories in my head, as it happened to be a memorable month for me. pandit Nehru's birthday, Indira Gandhi's birthday, Sir CV Raman's birthday (7th Nov.) Anniversary of the October Revolution in USSR (7th Nov.), my own birthday and many more fall in November.

I started reminiscing about my rendezvous with a colossus of physical sciences - Dr CV Raman. The events connected with that monumental meeting started crystallising and coming into place. The year was 1958 and the Indian Institute of Science was preparing to celebrate IRS Golden Jubilee and it was my Alma Mater. I had then been posted in the Department of Metallurgy as a lecturer, on deputation from Steel Authority of India - Bhilai steel plant.

Just a few months ago, I had returned from USSR after peaking training in some of the best steel plants of the world at that time. One fine morning, I was poring over some books and lecture notes preparing myself to deliver a lecture the same afternoon to my students - nay my colleagues. I looked up after a while and lo and behold! There stood before me Dr CV Raman holding the lapels of his coat with both his hands in his characteristic style.

I came back from my reverie into the real world and immediately stood up in reverence to the great man. He put me at ease and told me that he had heard from Dr Bhagavantam (then Director of IISc) a little while ago that I knew the



Lalitha Narayan and S Narayan | MIDHUN RAGH

Dr. Raman told me that he had been invited to visit USSR to receive an award. He added that he would like to address in the Russian language. The language I had taught him in those few weeks was too rudimentary to undertake such a mammoth exercise

Russian language fairly well.

I hesitantly nodded my head. Without anymore ado, he asked me if I was free to accompany him to his Institute for a while. At the Institute, he made me feel at home and told me that the Lenin Award (the Russian equivalent of the Nobel Prize) had been conferred upon him.

Those were the days when Indo-Soviet relations were at the peak. I was transported with joy and astonishment.

He added that he had received a large number of congratulatory messages, but they were all in the Russian language. The Russian scientists had literally showered encomiums upon him. He was eager to acknowledge those messages - but was wondering how. I hesitantly told him that I would try my best to help him.

He patted me on my back and pumped confidence into me which I lacked at that

moment. Soon a large heap of over hundred letters was lying before me, brought in by his secretary. I first took a cursory look at the heap and asked him what exactly he wanted from me. With a disarming smile, he exclaimed! Of course, I want to reply to them in Russian language within the next two weeks. I checked with his secretary if they had good Russian dictionaries in their library and was assured that they had.

In my youthful enthusiasm, I told Dr Raman that I would be able to complete the Assignment in 2 days instead of 2 weeks. Dr Raman's joy knew no bounds and he was on 'cloud nine'. Since the next 2 days happened to be Saturday and Sunday, I worked hard and was able to prepare ap-

propriate replies to all those letters in Russian script and delivered the the bunch of replies to him next Monday. He desired that he would personally sign those letters in Russian. In a short while, it was done without much ado and the letters were passed on to his staff for mailing.

Dr Raman expressed his gratitude and appreciation in his unique style. He took time off and personally took me around his rose garden explaining the subtle nuances of over 200 varieties, which he tended himself. This was a unique pleasurable experience in my life as Dr. Raman had pervaded my entire personality by this warm gesture.

A couple of weeks passed and we were plunged in our routines.

One day, his chauffeur came and told me that Dr. Raman wanted to see me. At his institute Dr. Raman greeted me with the utmost warmth though our acquaintance was only a few days old.

He enquired where I stayed and whether I would be able to teach him Russian Language. I told him that I stayed in 18th cross, Malleswaram and learnt that Raman's residence was 'Panchavati' at 15th cross, Malleswaram.

I had some apprehensions about my competence to teach Russian and a probable mismatch of our respective ages. (I was 27 and he was 72). He immediately put me at ease and said that he would fully co-operate.

The next couple of months passed with my visit to 'Panchavati' every morning with a Russian Primer in hand, authored by Potapova.

■ Continued on: Page 5
■ A report on Raman Research Institute: Page 5

The other side of science

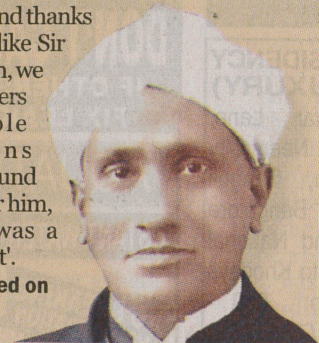
by Vyas Sivanand

Bangalore : When CV Raman was on a voyage to England in 1921, it was a time when many questions still remained unanswered. Unlike today, when there are too many answers to a question.

So when he questioned Lord Rayleigh's explanation about the blueness of the sea as just a reflection of the colour of the sky, Raman speculated that 'it was the result of the scattering of sunlight by the water molecules.' And seven years later, his speculation won him the Nobel Prize for Physics. And thanks

to people like Sir CV Raman, we have answers to simple questions that surround us. And for him, 'science was a creative art'.

■ Continued on Page 5



**VISIT JORDAN!
THE LAND WHERE
JESUS WAS BAPTISED**



HOLY LAND TOURS