

TOP MINDS INTROSPECT ON SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY



Philip Clayton of Sonoma State University makes his keynote address as (from left) Infosys Chairman N.R. Narayana Murthy, MP Karan Singh, Chief Minister S.M. Krishna, National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS) Director Roddam Narasimha, B.V. Sreekantan of NIAS and former Chief Justice of Karnataka Nittoor Srinivasa Rau view the presentation during the inauguration of the international symposium on "Science and the Spiritual Quest" in Bangalore on Wednesday.—Express Photo by Bhargavi

Two paths, one destination: Truth

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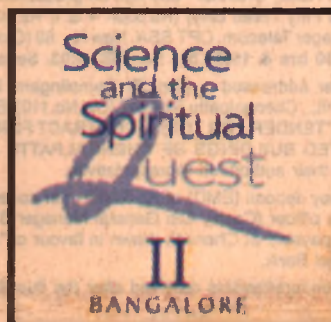
Bangalore, Jan 8: Science and the spiritual; does the twain ever meet? A four-day international meet, featuring some prominent names from the scientific and philosophical community the world over, began an introspection on science and the spiritual quest—their commonalities and tensions—here on Wednesday.

The theme of the symposium—being organised by the

National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), Bangalore and the John Templeton Foundation, US—is 'Science and beyond: Cosmology, Consciousness and Technology in the Indic traditions'.

Rajya Sabha MP Karan Singh set the ball rolling with a deeply philosophical look at the theme of the conference and called for a "global renaissance" integrating the "apparently conflicting concepts".

"Science itself is in one of its



great creative periods where old barriers are breaking down and some us, perhaps a trifle op-

timistically, are beginning to discern the outlines of a convergence between science and spirituality," Singh said.

There is a need for a "symbiosis between the various elements of our personality—the inner and the outer, the quietist and the activist, the feminine and the masculine—and in the broader dimension, between science and spirituality," he said.

Awareness of the higher

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"consciousness in all human beings could become the cornerstone of a sane and harmonious global society," he indicated. The Indian civilisation can offer astounding insights into cosmology and consciousness, he added.

Professor of Philosophy and Religion Philip Clayton of Sonoma State University, US, who laid the ground rules for the symposium, said the attempt to draw a boundary between science and the spiritual has been unsuccessful. "No compartmentalised approach to knowledge can comprehend the limits of science and what lies beyond," he said.

Centenarian and former Karnataka Chief Justice Nittoor Srinivasa Rau stated that there is

no conflict between science and spirituality since "both owe allegiance to truth". Mankind should however show wisdom and use science for doing good, he said.

For Karnataka Chief Minister S.M. Krishna, who presided over the inaugural function, the symposium was a "refreshing change from having to listen to grievances and attending to files". On a more serious note, he opined that the common man cannot think of science and the spiritual quest without education and essential needs like nutrition being met.

Any advance in technology will be worthless if not accompanied by a proper system of values, said Infosys chairman N.R. Narayana Murthy.