

Scientists ponder over science and religion

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India can contribute immensely to the increasingly debatable "dialogue between science and religion," due to its inherent strengths like enduring ancient history, profoundly and developed system over the centuries, Templeton Foundation Executive Director Prof Charles Harper felt here today.

Delivering the keynote address at the international seminar on "Science and Metaphysics", a discussion on Consciousness and Genetics here, Prof Harper said the dialogue provided vast ethical challenges and opportunities to transform one-third of the world's poorest population.

A serious research approach to developing scientifically and intellectually rigorous the dialogue between science and religion has excellent potential to engage a sci-

entific and metaphysical issue constructively, he said.

He said the topic whether consciousness and life can be understood only by particle and fields have become increasingly debatable these days.

He quoted several scientists, philosophers, mathematicians and personalities from various fields who had been deliberating on this issue.

In his inaugural address, Centre for Studies in Civilisations Chairman Prof D P Chattopadhyaya who dwelt extensively on the concept of myth and described it as symbolic mapping for reality while metaphysics was speculative mapping of reality. The distinction between the mythical and metaphysical can be understood through patient and perceptible linguistic analysis based in the principles of philology and etymology, he said, quoting several examples.

In her presidential address, Governor V S Ramadevi said despite rapid development of science, the answers to the origin of life, nature and universe are beyond realms of science.

The questions whether body, mind and science are related to each other are yet to be properly understood though there has been scientific developments like Genome project, she said.

Briefing about the seminar, the programme co-ordinator Prof B V Sreekantan said with new vistas in brain research, there has been a greater understanding of physiochemical processes in the brain and has provided an insight into the mechanisms that are operating in the brain. These developments and their implications will also be discussed during the course of the seminar.

As many as 40 lectures and two panel discussions one on metaphysical implications of science

and the other on science and religion. will be held during the next three days of deliberation. Over 130 delegates including life scientists, neuroscientists, psychologists, physicists and philosophers are participating the seminar organised by National Institute of Advanced Studies and John Templeton Foundation.

Speakers include eminent nuclear scientist Prof Raja Ramanna, Prof R C Pradhan, Indian Council of Philosophical Research, Prof P N Tandon, National Centre for Brain Research, Prof G Padmanabhan, director, Indian Institute of Science and others.

Among the international speakers include Prof Philip Clayton, Sonoma State University, Prof Jeane Staune, Universite Interdisciplinaire, Paris and Prof Paul Watson, director of science and religion programme, Templeton Foundation.