

# CURRENT SCIENCE

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## The Ramachandran map special issue

This issue documents some of the original and seminal research which G. N. contributed to the fields of peptide and protein structure. He is certainly one of the 'greats' of our generation, and his place in this increasingly important research area is now recognized. The Ramachandran map is one of the foundations of the teaching and research in peptide and protein structure, and this issue of *Current Science* substantiates its importance and continuing usefulness. Thank you for allowing a new generation to understand the fundamental contributions of G. N. Ramachandran to science.

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While the issue highlights major contributions of Prof. Ramachandran with a special focus on protein and peptide conformation, readers who may be interested in the full list of Ramachandran's publications may refer to the Festschrift volume *Conformation in Biology* (Adenine Press, 1983) edited by R. Srinivasan and R. H. Sarma, which also carries a biographical sketch.

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## Instrumentation in India

This has reference to the review of *Physics Instrumentation in India* (*Curr. Sci.*, 1990, 59, 771). As guest editor of the publication, a special issue of the *Indian Journal of Pure and Applied Physics*, it was gratifying to receive overwhelming support from several scientists in the form of the articles in the special issue. Several well-known scientists and laboratories in the country were approached on the basis of advice of the advisory committee constituted by CSIR for bringing out the special issue. It was not the purpose to cover extensively activities related to laboratories of the Department of Atomic Energy alone. However, these laboratories responded quite readily and substantially. Small-scale instrumentation activities, especially those related to electronics, were intentionally omitted. It is believed that there is still scope to cover instrumentation related to cryogenics, low-temperature physics and other fields of physics instruments in similar publications which can be edited by scientists from other organizations.

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*Mention of K. R. Rao as guest editor of the book was inadvertently omitted.*

—Ed.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### God and/or science?

The letter of R. K. Bera (*Curr. Sci.*, 1990, 59, 955) will surely warm the cockles of the heart of every true scientist. In spite of the author's invitation to refute him, I can hardly see how one can do so. His logic is impeccable and his conclusion irrefutable.

Ever since Darwin we know that life has no purpose. And ever since Freud we know that God is an illusion.

To be sure, there are many mysteries that the human brain cannot penetrate. In such a situation the proper scientific attitude is to maintain an uncompromising agnosticism. Those who postulate a God to explain these mysteries only pretend to a knowledge that they really do not possess.

The *idea* of God may be a psychological and a sociological necessity of an insecure humanity. In which case, it is man who creates God and not the other way round.

Further, when subjected to philosophical analysis the word 'God' can be rendered meaningless and, therefore, unnecessary. Every true scientist today should echo Laplace's boast to Napoleon regarding God: 'Sire, I have no need for that hypothesis.'

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