

# Editorial

*N Mukunda, Chief Editor*

Many readers have written to us with words of appreciation after having seen the initial issues of *Resonance*. They have also made several valuable suggestions for improvements. We are grateful for the former, and will pay attention to the latter as we go along. Slipping into the jargon of the times, we want to make *Resonance* 'reader-friendly' and 'author-friendly', neither stiff nor dry like a conventional research journal in science. An informality of tone in writing, while being accurate in content — that is what we would like to achieve.

Jayant Narlikar's article in his series on the "Origin (?) of the Universe" moves up to the Big Bang. Soon after Einstein formulated his field equations of general relativity in 1915, he modified



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them in 1917 by adding the so-called *Cosmological Constant* term. This was in a bid to avoid solutions which described an expanding universe — in 1917 such solutions appeared to Einstein to be unphysical. But with Hubble's discovery in 1929 of the expansion of the universe, the situation was reversed; Einstein ended up calling his earlier modification “the biggest blunder of my life!”

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Jean -Marie Lehn, one of three Nobel Prize winners in Chemistry in 1987, is essentially the creator of the new field of supramolecular chemistry. He has visited India several times, most recently in December 1995 to deliver the Rajiv Gandhi Science and Technology Lecture at Hyderabad. We are thankful to CN R Rao for making it possible for *Resonance* to publish the text of this lecture in its entirety. Lehn highlights the stupendous qualitative leaps that chemistry has taken over the past century and a half — from a mechanistic view of structure and function, the “lock and key” concept of Emil Fischer, to a much deeper view encompassing the ability of molecular structures to capture, create and handle information. In this sense is the bridge to biology established. At the same time, as Lehn emphasizes, while biology scores over chemistry in complexity, the latter comes into its own in the diversity of the materials and structures that can be created.

In describing Fermat's work in the January 1996 issue (inside back cover), in a burst of enthusiasm we described his principle of least time in optics as the earliest example of a minimum principle in physics. This was a fortunate error, as it inspired Gangan Prathap to correct us and so tell us about the “Alexandrian Hero” in this issue!

