

'Einstein had a great regard for Mahatma Gandhi'

"Einstein had a great regard for Mahatma Gandhi", said Prof C V Vishveshwara, a world renowned astrophysicist, and the Founder Director of the Jawaharlal Nehru Planetarium, Bangalore. He was giving the talk titled 'Subtle is the Lord: The Legacy of Albert Einstein' at the J N Tata Auditorium, National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), Bangalore. In fact, Einstein regarded Gandhi "to be the most enlightened among all of the political men of his time", the speaker said.

In his welcome address, Dr Baldev Raj, the Director of NIAS, said, "Even if we compared geniuses, Einstein would be a first ranker". Referring to Einstein's involvements outside science, he said "Every human being can celebrate Einstein, everyday". B V Sreekantan, Visiting Professor, NIAS, introduced the speaker Prof C V Vishveshwara.

Hundred years ago, Einstein developed what is called the 'General Theory of Relativity'. The theory gave a deeper understanding of gravitation, and has revolutionised our understanding of the Universe. As a mark of respect to its creator, year 2015 is celebrated as the 'Year of Einstein'. In this context, NIAS organised the talk 'Subtle is the Lord: the Legacy of Albert Einstein', by Prof C V Vishveshwara.

In a talk filled with historical anecdotes, Prof C V Vishveshwara took the audience on a trip that showcased how our understanding of the Universe has evolved over time. He began with how scientists like Galileo, Michael Faraday, and James Maxwell, enriched science. He explained how Einstein corrected some of their work through his deep insights into nature of time. The result is two theories of relativity: special and general. J J Thomson, the legendary scientist who discovered the electron, said 'General theory of relativity is one of the highest achievements of human thought'.

Concerned over Germany's attempts to develop an atomic bomb during the Second World War, Einstein wrote a letter to Roosevelt, the then President of the United States, suggesting him to start building an atomic bomb in the USA. He also followed this with another letter urging the President to not to use the bomb on innocent civilians. Unfortunately, the second letter was ignored, and an atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima in 1945. The bomb was so powerful that it evaporated 70,000 people. However, Einstein was extremely pained by the intensity of the destruction the bomb caused, Prof C V Vishveshwara said.

The talk was followed by a question and answer session which saw a proactive participation from the audience.

Public Lecture on *Subtle is the Lord..... the legacy of Albert Einstein* delivered by C. V. Vishveshwara on 22nd May 2015 at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore.