

Figure 2. An illustration of the polio virus, an icosahedra virus. Different colours are used to differentiate individual capsid proteins on the surface; the genetic material is protected inside. The structure of one of the capsids is shown at the atomic level. The white lines have been used to emphasize symmetry (p. 56; 57).

dealing with topics such as air, hexagonal diamond, nanotubes and buckyballs, alpha helix and beta sheet, icosahedra virus, screw dislocation, perovskite morph, epitaxial growth and penrose tiling. In their own words, the authors have chosen each of these subjects 'because it illustrates how atomic structure creates a property such as hardness, color, or toxicity; because it has a great story; or sometimes simply because it is beautiful'.

The content is replete with clear illustrations (see Figures 1 and 2) and concise essays. The text conveys interesting information. For example, a different way of looking at atmospheric oxygen that was almost not present in the early atmosphere – '...A pollutant, a vile poison, a toxic byproduct of green-plant photosynthesis'; 'A dollars' worth of silver iodide, sprayed into moisture-laden air, can release more energy than a hydrogen bomb'; quasicrystal-coated pans used for cooking are stick-resistant at high tempe-

ratures and are scratchproof; the carbon nanotube with one set of carbon-carbon bonds in the hexagonal carbon lattice running around the tube conducts electricity better than copper, while the nanotube having lines oriented along the length of the tube can only be an electrical semiconductor (at best).

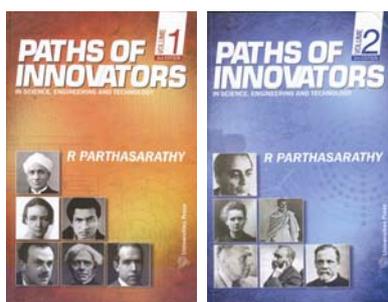
The essays deal with the subjects at the level of electrons, atoms, molecules, crystal structure, history, latest advances, patents and applications. Many of the illustrations were made from X-ray dif-

fraction data available on databases of atomic structures, the links to which are given at the end. The book would be suitable for students and readers who have a background in science, especially chemistry, and as a source of inspiration to others to find out more about these subjects.

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Paths of Innovators: In Science, Engineering and Technology (Volumes 1 and 2). R. Parthasarathy. Universities Press (India) Pvt Ltd, 3-6-747/1/A and 3-6-754/1, Himayatnagar, Hyderabad 500 029. 2012. xvi + 439 pp. and xx + 523 pp. respectively. Price not mentioned.

The books under review are revised editions (third) comprising short biographical sketches of legends in science, whose contributions have helped mankind rejoice a comfortable living. Both the volumes, compartmentalized into sections on engineering, mathematics, physics, chemistry and life sciences, are brief accounts on the lives, scientific achievements and hardships faced by the pioneers of science, both in India and across the globe. Though the contents of the books have remained more or less the same, they have a new look and format with 12 new essays. The earlier editions (2000 and 2003) were published by the East West Books (Madras) Pvt Ltd, Chennai.

Though the author has been successful in compiling lives of 282 scientists and their contributions in two volumes, he has missed out mentioning the seminal contribution made by G. N. Ramachandran to crystallography, for which Ramachandran was also bestowed with the Ewald Prize (1999). The text requires careful proofreading. For example, in vol. 1, p. 315, 'Wali' has been misspelt as 'Wahli'. Similarly, on p. 213, the name of the book, *Journey into Light* has been mentioned as *Journey unto Light*.

Overall the books are informative and useful for school children or anyone interested in biographies.

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Erratum

B. P. Radhakrishna (1918–2012)

R. Srinivasan [*Curr. Sci.*, 2012, **102**, 1062–1063]

In the second paragraph on page 1062, BPR's parents name is printed as Puttaiah and Subhadramma; it should read as *Puttaiah* and *Smt Venkamma*.

In the third column on page 1063, Millennium Award of the Geological Society of India (2000) should read as Millennium Award of the *Geochemical Society of India* (2000).