

EXPLORATION OF THE UNIVERSE

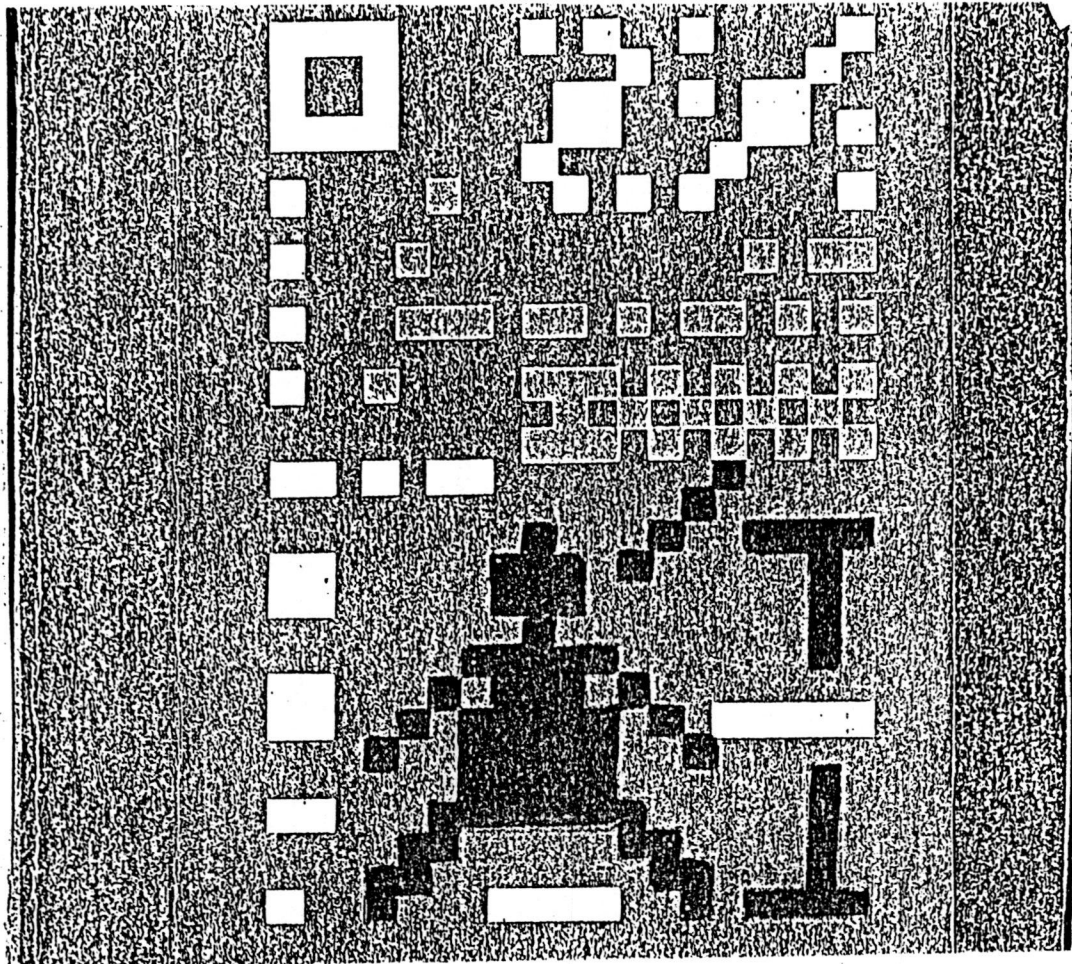
Special Lecture

by

Professor Cyril Ponnampereuma

Venue : IFS Conference Hall,
Hantana Road, Kandy

09 May, 1987



An Interstellar Message

Programme Director : *Professor Cyril Ponnampereuma*
Programme Coordinator : *Professor Kapila Dahanayake*
Programme Editor : *Daya De Silva*

TODAY'S PROGRAMME

- 10.00 am - 11.00 am *Special Lecture on,*
"Exploration of the Universe", by
Professor Cyril Ponnampereuma
- 11.00 am - 11.30 am T E A
- 11.30 am - 12.15 pm *Panel Discussion led by*
Professor Cyril Ponnampereuma
Participants : Professor K Tennakone
Dr F N Ponnampereuma
Professor S A Kulasoorya
Professor S Bandaranayake
Professor S Balasubramaniam
Professor K Dahanayake
Professor A A L Gunatilaka
- 12.15 pm - 12.45 pm *Awards Ceremony*
Distribution of Certificates by
Professor Cyril Ponnampereuma
Distribution of Prizes by
Professor Cyril Ponnampereuma
Distribution of Cash Prizes by
Ms Sumana Saparamadu
- 12.45 pm - 1.00 pm *Vote of Thanks by*
W A T Fernando
Overall Quiz Winner
- 1.00 pm - 2.00 pm L U N C H

End of the Day's Programme

The Exploration of the Universe

by

Professor Cyril Ponnampereuma

Abstract of the lecture

Are we alone in the universe? If we track the radio waves from another galaxy, what answers may we not hear if we listen more closely? If we tread on an alien dust what may we not stumble over as we walk? If we trace the origin of life on earth what secrets may we not discover about its distribution elsewhere in the universe?

How does one answer a question of such momentous importance? Three approaches are available to us. First the landing of an instrument or man somewhere in the Solar System and exploring the surface of planets to see whether there is any life present there. Of necessity this aspect will be confined to our own planetary system, since we have no technology yet to take us beyond our own Solar System. The second approach is to listen to signals from outer space. This presupposes, intelligent beings as intelligent or more than ours. The third approach is a down to earth one. Here, we assume that life is an inevitable consequence of the evolution of matter and if we understood the process by which life began on this earth, then, we can conclude that similar sequence of events may have taken place elsewhere in the universe.