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Prof. O. Siddiqi
NCBS, Bangalore

3 February 1997

Dear Obaid,

Today is my first working day as the new Director of NCBS and I felt that I should write to you many of my thoughts that are difficult to express in person.

First of all, I was inspired to work in Biology by an article on temperature sensitive paralytics that you wrote [Siddiqi, O. (1974). *Genetics blocks in the elements of neural network in Drosophila. Symposium on Regulation of Growth and Differentiated Function in Eukaryotic Cell. Ed., G.P. Talwar, Raven Press, New York*]. I was visiting G. P. Talwar's lab in 1997, recovering from tuberculosis that I contracted during the "Emergency" when I was politically active and campaigning for the restoration of civil liberties. Strangely, although the elections were over and in many ways what we fought for was achieved, I felt lost about what I wanted to do next. I had decided to go to Zurich for my Ph.D. in bio- medical engineering and was admitted to the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zürich, but I was not sure that this was what I wanted to do the most. I chanced upon Talwar's book in the reading room and read your article from beginning to end and was pleasantly surprised to find that I understood it. I thoroughly enjoyed the approach and decided that neurobiology was what I wanted to do. Subsequently, when I appeared for the Research Scholar interview, I was sure that TIFR was the place for me.

In all my years at the Molecular Biology Unit, I have always felt stimulated, comfortable and was given the intellectual space to develop in my own way. This, I value greatly and the environment that allowed this feeling is due entirely to you.

Since my return from Caltech in January 1998, we have been involved in the development of NCBS. During the course of these activities, I have sometimes felt that we should have taken a different route. On all these occasions, I have found that I was wrong to be impatient; that your long-term perspective and the importance that you place on having a proper organizational structure were both correct and essential. I hope I have learnt from you in these matters and I am sure that I will continue to benefit from your advice. In dealing with the outside world, I have learnt from you and benefited greatly from the protective umbrella that your presence has offered and continues to do so.

I am very happy that Asiya and you will be moving to Bangalore soon and that you will be developing your laboratory here. Although it goes without saying, I would like to stress that I look forward to a close interaction with you in developing NCBS and that assure you of every help in growing your research in Bangalore.

P.T.O.

With warm personal regards,

Yours,

Vijay

K. VijayRaghavan