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Sivaraj

It was in 1959 that I returned from Berkeley to take up a faculty position in the Department of Inorganic and Physical Chemistry at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore. I was 25 years old at that time and was greatly looking forward to initiating research in spectroscopy, molecular structure and solid state chemistry. The facilities at IISc were far from satisfactory, but the pleasure of working with young students seemed to compensate for many of the problems which I faced at that time. It was during those formative months of my career that I got to know Sivaraj Ramaseshan, who was in the physics department. We became close friends in a short time, and not a day passed during that period, without our meeting each other. On many days, I used to meet him and his delightful wife Kausalya during lunch hours. When I got married in 1960, the Ramaseshans were among the few family friends we had. Sivaraj was clearly one of the most engaging and scholarly colleagues I had at IISc at that time. He had a wonderful sense of humour and we spent many a day talking about a variety of matters,

personal to universal. We had common ideas and goals in life, and shared our excitement and disappointment in research. I still remember with fondness, the long journey we took to Shillong in 1961 for a chemistry conference, and the varied

encounters during that trip. We both left IISc around the same period, he to IIT Madras, and I to IIT Kanpur, in the early 1960s. We, however, kept our friendship and met always at the meetings of the Indian Academy of Sciences.



From left, S. Ramaseshan, Dorothy Hodgkin, Kausalya Ramaseshan and Prema Pancharatnam at Crab Hill, Ilmington, UK (circa 1980).

*Dedicated to Prof. S. Ramaseshan on his 80th birthday.

S. RAMASESHAN: AN APPRECIATION



S. Dhawan (left) and S. Ramaseshan in the late 1990s.

When C. V. Raman passed away, Sivaraj took on considerable responsibility to ensure that the Academy fulfilled the dreams of its founder, by enhancing and strengthening its activities, specially its publications. I had the opportunity to work closely with him

during that period. I still remember the meetings to start *Pramana*, and the varied discussions on starting new journals, and widening the membership of the Academy. I believe that the Academy has been eminently successful in these and other endeavours. It was enjoyable working with Sivaraj closely, specially when I became one of the first secretaries of the Academy. Sivaraj served the Academy in various capacities and we all owe him much for all that he has done for the Academy.

No account of Sivaraj is complete without the mention of Satish Dhawan. My friendship with Satish also goes back to 1959. He was the moral conscience of the academic community. Satish and Sivaraj were always close friends, and I claim that I belonged to the same cluster. I have no doubt that Sivaraj and Satish were jointly responsible to bring me back to Bangalore from Kanpur in 1976. Sivaraj was then at the National Aeronautical Laboratory, Bangalore where he successfully set-up the first proper materials research laboratory in the country.

Sivaraj is a scholar and an idealist. He is a scientist inspired by two great souls, Raman and Dorothy Hodgkin. His sharp wit and eye for the essence are remarkable. He is a fine human being and is truly humane. He has been a source of encouragement to many a scientist in the country, and is one of the treasures of Bangalore and its scientific traditions. He has been blessed with a charming companion whom we all dearly love. Due to various pre-occupations, I have not met Sivaraj and talked to him as frequently as I should have in the last few years, but I have always considered him to be one of my dearest friends and well-wishers. I know that he is there, and I feel reassured with that knowledge.

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