

23rd June, 1972

Professor A.K. Solomon,  
Secretary General,  
International Union for Pure and  
Applied Biophysics,  
Biophysical Laboratory,  
HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL,  
Boston, Mass. 02115  
U. S. A.

Dear Professor Solomon,

Thank you very much for your kind letter of June 7th. Indeed, all of us, personal friends of Aharon's, would like to see at least one of his plans, which were so dear to him lately, flourish into the kind of intellectually rich and social activity which were so close to his heart. We discussed it recently, before his last trip to the United States, and the plan that emerged was that in the Van Leer Jerusalem Foundation a small research group should be set up (8 to 10 people) comprising of biologists, anthropologists, psychologists etc., who would do in-depth research on the social, psychological and educational implications of recent developments in biophysics. The very recent developments in extra-uterine pregnancy seemed of special importance to Aharon as well as the fact that seemingly we are nearing a stage of preparing artificial placentae. In the same vein, I had a long discussion also with Professor Maurice Wilkins in London, about which I reported to Aharon in our last long conversation in Boston, where he phoned me in Gerry Holton's home.

On the practical side we thought that the Van Leer Jerusalem Foundation should provide the facilities, the administrative framework and the seeding money for such a project, while the bulk of it (we estimated this around \$ 50,000 a year) Aharon thought, could be raised with IUPAB support, perhaps from the Rockefeller Foundation. If I understood him correctly, he did have some kind of preliminary talks about it while in the U.S.A., but I do not know whom he exactly met.

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I shall be most grateful for your continued interest and advice on how we should proceed. In the meantime I wrote to Professor Arieh Dvoretzky, Vice-President of the Israel Academy of Sciences, suggesting that the Israeli part should be undertaken jointly by the Academy and the Van Leer Jerusalem Foundation.

As I am a member of the International Scientific Advisory Committee of the Centre International d'Etudes Bio anthropologiques et d'Anthropologie Fondamentale which Edgar Morin is convening in the Fondation Royaumont in Paris from September 6th to 9th and as I know that many leading biologists and anthropologists will be there, perhaps that might be a good time to raise the issue. Please let me have your opinion on this.

Mrs. Ruth Goldstein, Aharon's personal assistant, was especially involved in this aspect of Aharon's work and we can also rely on her continued interest and help.

This is the way I see things at this time and I am eagerly awaiting your reactions.

Sincerely,

Dr. Yehuda Elkana  
Director

P.S.

Although this is not the kind of letter in which to enlarge upon the activities of the Van Leer Jerusalem Foundation, I think that in fairness to you, I owe you at least a brief description about the Foundation and myself.

Together with the Israel Academy of Sciences, Aharon Katzir was also instrumental in setting -up an intellectual, cultural center in Jerusalem which has been very active over the last three years, under his continued friendly guidance, under the name of the Van Leer Jerusalem Foundation. Our interests are all the interfaces between society and knowledge in the broader sense, dealing with research but also with normative applications of research in education, cross-cultural research, tradition and change, growth of knowledge

and lessons of science. On the specific Israeli scene, the Foundation makes an attempt to bring together academics and policy makers, Arabs and Jews (on this, so far the only successful attempt in Israel) and again an attempt to understand the interconnection between the life of an ideologically motivated organization - the kibbutz - and the scientification of modern life. This last too was very near to Aharon's heart.

There are some ten volumes of proceedings ready for publication and the first two of them are the recent two Daedalus volumes on "Intellectuals and Tradition".

I myself am an historian of science with a physics background and at present Head of the Department of History and Philosophy of Science at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

cc. Mrs. Ruth Goldstein  
Polymer Department  
Weizmann Institute of Science  
  
Professor Arie Dvoretzky  
Israel Academy of Sciences