

Editorial

The search for unity underlying the diversity of forms and phenomena has been an integral part of the human intellectual quest, not just in the realm of science, but also in the arts. Many decades ago, in an image that no longer seems particularly fanciful in an era in which genetic engineering is humdrum technology, the great Urdu and Farsi poet Sheikh Mohammad Iqbal said:

*Kamaal-e-wahdat ayaan hai aisaa, ke nok-e-nashtar se tu jo chhede
yaqeen hai mujhko, bahe rag-e-gul se qatraa insaan ke lahu kaa*
(Such is the unity underlying each living form that I well know
that if you prick a flower's vein, from it red human blood will flow)

Mendel's laws of inheritance, and Darwin's notion of natural selection as the driver of adaptive evolution, are at the core of genetics and evolution, between them providing what is perhaps the grandest unifying foundation of our understanding of the living world. This intertwined view of genetics and evolution has also been a core focus of the *Journal of Genetics* since its inception in 1910.

The year 2008 is replete with anniversaries relevant to the synthesis of genetics and evolution, being the 150th anniversary of the reading of the papers by Darwin and Wallace to the Linnaean Society of London, the 100th anniversary of the independent publications by Hardy and Weinberg laying out the inertial genetic state in a random mating population, and the 90th anniversary of Fisher's historic paper in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Edinburgh*. We plan to bring out a special issue of the *Journal of Genetics* this year, taking a look at the past, present, and perhaps the future of the Neo-Darwinian Synthesis. Another special issue slated to appear this year will focus on the genetic underpinnings of circadian rhythms, an area that has seen rapid advances in our understanding over the past few years.

This year also marks a change in the editorial team at the journal. It is a pleasure to thank Professor K. VijayRaghavan, who steered the journal through a fairly trying period over the last four years of transformation. I am also very happy to announce that electronic versions of all articles published in the *Journal of Genetics* since the first volume in 1910 are now available on the web at http://www.ias.ac.in/j_archive/jgenet/volindex.html. This makes many classic papers in genetics and evolution, that are often difficult to find, easily accessible to readers worldwide and I thank Mr G. Madhavan and his team at the Indian Academy of Sciences for having managed to finish this job in an impressively short time.

Unfortunately, amidst the excitement of all these developments, and the planning for these special issues, we are saddened by the demise of Joshua Lederberg on 2 February 2008. Apart from his well-known contributions to the growth of genetics, Lederberg played an important supportive role in the revival of the *Journal of Genetics* in 1985, and continued to help steer the journal as part of its advisory board. Later this year, we hope to publish special articles on Lederberg's life and work, and also similar features on Seymour Benzer and John Edwards, two other great geneticists with a long association with the journal, who passed away in recent months.

Finally, it is a great pleasure to welcome all new and continuing members of the editorial and advisory boards, and our six associate editors, to the new journal team. The rate at which the journal is receiving submissions has increased quite a bit over the past six months, and we presently accept about fifteen percent of submitted manuscripts. We have also improved our mean time from submission to decision: for manuscripts submitted in January 2008, the mean time to decision was about one month. We are also now able to make accepted manuscripts electronically available on the journal website on the Indian Academy of Sciences server once the page proofs have been corrected by authors, thereby speeding up the time from acceptance to publication, at least in electronic form. We hope to further improve on all these aspects of the journal in the future, and we seek the help and support of the genetics and evolution community in this endeavour.

AMITABH JOSHI