Josef Lachmann (1882–1961)

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Professor *Josef Lachmann* was an outstanding example of a specialist who never lost the broad outlook on general medical problems when exploring his own limited field. In his early career, he already combined intense pathological studies (under *C. Benda* and *H. Kohn* in Berlin) with his special training in oto-rhino-laryngology (*Herzfeld* in Berlin; *Urbantschitsch*, *Chiari*, *Hajek*, *Alexander*, *Barany* and *Neumann* in Vienna). He never abandoned his scientific work, even when the troubles of the First World War and the post-war crises made it almost impossible to dedicate his efforts to research. When in 1933, with the ascent of the Nazi regime in Germany, he immigrated to Israel, he again met extremely difficult conditions, but the twenty odd papers on various aspects of the diseases of the inner ear, which he published during the period 1933–1950, give witness to his untiring struggle and optimism. Finally, in 1951, at the end of his clinical career, he decided that the time had come to devote himself entirely to scientific work. His interest then centered on the problem of nystagmus, produced by anticholinesterases. He conceived of the idea that the nystagmus, evoked by intracarotid-injection of DFP, may be due to a central rather than a vestibular stimulation and concluded that there should exist a region in the brain stem, responsible for the phenomenon. The work, leading finally to the discovery of central nystagmus by stimulation of a nystagmogenic area in the diencephalon of the rabbit, opened up a new field of research on the regulation of equilibrium and produced most interesting and unexpected results.

All those who had the privilege to work with Prof. *Lachmann* during the last and most fruitful decade of his life, were inspired by his active mind, his infatigable devotion to his experiments and his alertness to the acute problems of physiology. His kindness and dignity and the integrity of his character have left a deep impression on his many friends and his colleagues.

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