

BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION



Aérogramme

Mon. S. H. Raza,
15 Rue Paul Bert,
Paris 11^e
France

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from KKHANNA-RAVENSDALE-SIMLA 2.-INDIA.

My dear Raza,

"Ravensdale"

Simla East.

5th June 1964.

Forgive me for not writing to you sooner.

I think that I have developed the habit of becoming terribly involved with day to day living and exigencies of the moment always seem to take precedence not that I am forgetful of my friends nor even that they claim less of my thinking time. It seems so much easier to think & so much more spontaneous to reflect on ones friendships than to commit the thoughts to paper. In Delhi it was a perpetual battle with dust and heat and the problems these raise for painting. I have a horror of becoming lazy, of letting the climate prevail. In a way this fear makes me work even harder. The hotter it is and the more adverse the climate, the more I want to work. Since coming back I have finished several sizable oils - one very large sumi and several smaller ones. I have also been drawing continuously. Believe it or not I have seen very few people. I feel I have changed in many ways - my sociability is one side of me which has changed. I can't be bothered with people who need schoolroom courses on art, nor do I feel the need to explain my actions anymore. A few intelligent good friends is all I need. Unfortunately Delhi doesn't serve up too many such individuals. Ravi & I meet every ten days or so and discuss work. There are plenty of charming people of course but I have so far managed to steer clear of them.

Ravi & I came up here two days ago. It is great fun being with the whole family. My brothers & sisters are here & their children. I have an excellent studio here and I hope to get cracking quite soon with work. I have plenty of paint & canvases with me & lots of ink & rice paper. The climate is perfect & the ambience is absolutely supreme. My studio is situated at some distance from the house and it is a haven of quiet. I am sitting in it now writing this to you. Only the sound of birds & distant barking dogs reaches my ears. The declining rays of the sun fall on distant hills breathing a kind of repose. It is difficult to reconcile this moment with the hard ugly facts of miserable life, the chaos & bloodshed which is continuously happening the world over.

We too have had our calamity. Panditji's death has meant a very great loss for us all. Ravi & I were in Delhi at the time and we joined the thick multitudes who came from everywhere to pay homage to a man who had spent his entire life in the service of this country. Believe me it was a very moving experience. And now the indecent question which was being asked with such vulgar frequency "After Nehru, who?" has posed itself in actuality. By being a real question it ceases to be indecent or vulgar. I think that it is a great tribute to Nehru that he founded and strengthened our political institutions. The manner in which Shastri was elected has been admirable. There has been no mad race for power and government has shown itself to be stable and mature. You can feel thankful for that. I think that it would be utterly wrong for us or anyone else to expect Shastri or any of the succeeding leaders to be like Nehruji. What is important now is that leadership will not reside in a single person but in an institution & this is a great step forward.

I wrote to Akbar some time ago but haven't received his reply. If you see him please ask him to let me have his reactions to the proposed exhibition of drawings. I wish you had

drawings to show as we would without exception have loved
to have had you show with us. - I had a brief note from George
Butcher who has extended his stay here & has succeeded in
having the date of the exhibition postponed in London. I have
received diverse reactions to him & his ideas on painting.
According to Ram he has been very impressed with really
bad & mediocre painting. I shall be meeting him in July I expect.
Have you given him your paintings? Be sure to do the whole
transaction through your gallery. Keikoo's gallery in Bombay is
doing very well indeed while Beebhooy's is non-existent. Galitonde
will be going to Paris in the first week of September on a French
Govt. Scholarship - so you will see him. Bal has matured well &
is doing very good work. News of Satish is that his show in New York was a

sell out and that the Museum of Modern Art bought a painting. I
read this in the HINDU some days ago. It also added that this
was the first acquisition of an Indian painter - & this I know
to be a pack of fibs. Sawant & Gaitonde preceded him. How about
Sengal? I don't think that he managed to get a showing in the Museum
of Modern Art in Paris - or did he? Even if he did it doesn't make him
a good sculptor, only a clever manipulator. — I have recently
painted 9 sumi pannels which can be arranged together to
make a huge number of independant paintings. It is an
interesting idea. I shall send you photographs in my
next letter. Do write & tell me if you have begun work
& how things are going with you & family. My fond love to her - to
both of you from both of us. Always, Krishen.