

7, Chalcot Sqr.
London N.W. 1
June 14, 1951

My dear Raza,

During the past few weeks I have been writing and writing that by now I've begun to hate writing — even letters to my dearest friends in Paris, and my family in Bombay.

But the news in your last letter, the wonderful news about your getting a child — that's made me leap for my pen. What! old man! so you're a father now? My goodness I can't believe it. I wish I was there to embrace you, and I wish your wife was near too.... We must form a group of Progressive Fathers now. I wonder when Padamsee will come in, but there'll be room for Bachelor Fathers as well.

I say, you're a fool to doubt your wife and all that; you've only to count the months to know, and Maria and Idid that for you, and it's O.K. The child is all in all Baby Raza, sea-scape painter on napkins.

But I burst out laughing; imagining your face when you heard the news; counting the months since you left India on your fingers, then counting them again on Akbar's fingers; wondering if you have been made a cuckold. What amazes me most is that only the last shot you fired brought the little rabbit out of the hole!

Look Raza, don't worry yourself to death - child birth is you know, universal, we wouldn't exist otherwise. The elderly women in the house hold will see ~~to~~ to every thing for your wife and your child. Primitive methods for easy labour are just as good as the most scientific obstetrics of the modern age. The world actually started in the primitive way.

The only thing that is unfortunate is that you are away from your wife; it didn't matter in which ever part of the world you were, but she ought to have been with you, because it's a terrific thing to have a child, as much for the father as it is for the mother, particularly the first born. But on the other hand, it has saved you a lot of bother - your distance from her - I know it well because it happened to me quite recently, I was behaving like a nitwit, I was walking all around London aimlessly, with a stupid smile on my face, and a vacant look in my eyes, talking to myself "I'm a FATHER now! I'm a FATHER now!" Now it's three weeks since the thing happened, and I find myself ironing "minnie" nappies, and washing feeding bottles.

Of course, although Maria and I had sex intercourse for the last five years, even before we were married, we were very careful not to have an issue in Bombay, and I am quite smart in the art of contraceptives.

But in London, thanks to the Labour Govt, child birth is free, and in fact even profitable because the parents get paid for the child. Really this baby of ours cost us only 6d, that is for her birth certificate.

Well congratulations Raza, its the happiest news you have given me.

I shall be glad to send your wife the money again. Do you know if she has received the last amount? I sent the money telegraphically through the Post Office. There was some trouble about sending it through the bank. The transfer of the £10 to your wife cost only 3s and 3d. for which I have a receipt. That means I have still about 17s left out of the extra £1 you sent, from ~~with~~ which I will use for the further sum you want to send.

I have been working most irregularly. I have hardly done a few oils, some more watercolours, and drawings. But I have done a lot of writing. I sent off 3 long articles during the last few days: one of nearly 7000 words, the others 5000, and 1500 words. My writing is getting better and better, but I fear my painting is declining. My writing has improved because I got money as well as encouragement for it; and exactly the reverse has happened regarding my painting. But I am sure, the moment I get some peace of mind and some pep, I'll resume painting with new energy.

I must quote to you a small passage from my latest ~~writing~~ article, and you'll know what kind of stuff

I write now compared to the things in "Thought." of last year. Here it is:—

" I don't belong to the future, but to the past; not the recent past, but the remote past. I belong to the age of the megalosaur, and the dinosaur, the ptarodictles and the mammoths. I am the whole recapitulation of milleniums. I belong to the time when the Earth was a whif, a cloud, a breath of fresh air; when the Earth was an embryo in the womb of the Universe. I was poured out of the cosmos, in a mixture of bristling, energy-laden jelly and exhilarating milk, into a matrix which dissolved and formed, composed and decomposed for eons and eons. The Earth is my mother, and the Sun my father. What else do I need but sunlight and the fruits of the earth? I drink from the fountain which dries in the monsoon, and springs forth from parched land. I dance through Life, the Bergsonian way, the Élan Vital polka, the choreography created in concordance to the music of the rhythmic rhyme, dancing in the hall of the universal universe, with the womanly woman; jesticulating, and articulating, summersaulting in untiring, ~~at~~ circumlocutive attempts to verify the authenticity of Truth! "

And so on and on it goes. Since I can't afford to send you photographs of my paintings, I'm sending you at least an

an extract from my writing. How do you like the paradox: "to verify the authenticity of Truth!" I think it's a stroke of wisdom.

I will give up writing altogether the moment I find myself a bit steady. I have been thinking of working on a long book when I come to Paris.

Here's something about Bakre, or at least it's the story he tells me. At the Hospital he is working, he was asked to clean all the lights in the whole building. By evening, he finished up, down to the basement. There was only one ~~small~~ small room left. He could hear inside some noise, like someone hammering in some nails..... tock tock tock....., he thought it was a workshop. He opened the door, and Ohooooo! What a horrific sight! There was a huge corpse, an enormous dead man lying on a bare table, stark naked, under a big flood lamp, stark white, a man with a large red beard. And another young man, alive ofcourse, possibly a medical student was holding the dead man's beard, and sawing of his skull!

My God! You can imagine Bakre running for his life. The doctor, or medical student, or whoever he was, also got a fright when he saw Bakre in the room; he thought perhaps that Bakre was the dead man's ghost! Later, Bakre saw that it was not a workshop but a mortuary.

I couldn't get annoyed with your letter to Maria; in fact ~~me~~ I found it ~~as~~ very pleasant, and her view you'll know from her letter. You know me well enough by now that I am not displeased by such things: I wouldn't mind any man taking my wife to bed, if he is happy ~~enough~~ to sleep with a beautiful skeleton, and if she is happy enough. Neither am I scrupulous about taking someone else's wife if she is ~~plump~~ nice and plump.

I don't show your letter to anyone. Your past few letters contained some magnificent writing, so I read a few paragraphs to Nissim, only because of the beauty of the pieces. This time Akbar's letter is top class - it's so funny. Otherwise, I don't even tell Bakre what you chaps are doing etc.

Well so long old man, and my heartiest congratulations, till we really celebrated it one night in Paris when I come (aside shoooo... at Padamsee's expence)....

your friend
Newton.

P.S.

Enclosing H.'s letter to me,
Letter to Padamsee following in a day or two.

The reference to my "silence" by H. in his letter is regarding the letter you two wrote to him. You must have said to him that Newton will write too. But I had written him 3 letters previously.