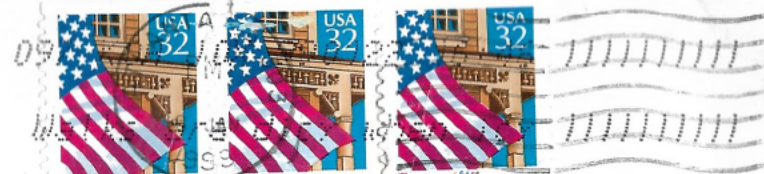
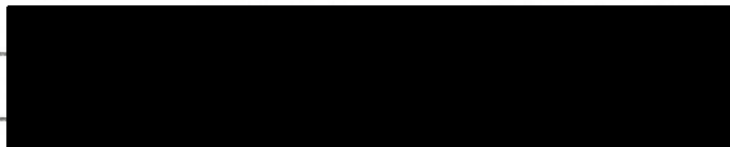
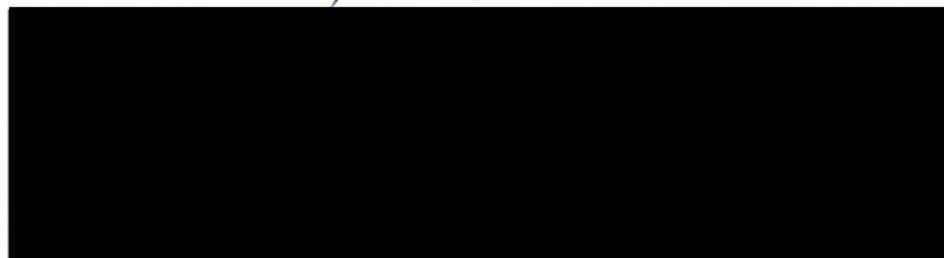


R. ZACHARIAS



Entrées gelées = danger

TO: MRS. SHIRLEY BOTHWELL (THE STY)



PERSONAL + CONFIDENTIAL

00101/2207



Jan. 18/1999

Dear Shirley,

I just received your letter this week, and since I am about to embark on an extended set of meetings for nearly two months away from home, I felt I should reply before leaving so that I could at least acknowledge the receipt of your letter.

Shirley, this is the first time in twenty-six years since the incident that anyone has even spoken to me about it. Some of the things you have mentioned are absolutely brand new to me. As you well know, we have had repeated contacts with your brother, Mike, and never once has anything like this been mentioned. In fact he has always been very warm and helpful to Margie and me, whenever we have needed help. The one time your parents met me, their clear displeasure was with Ramesh and never hinted that I had anything to do with this tragedy. They, too, have always been very kind to me. So your letter, Shirley, came as a complete surprise.

I never once to you or to Ramesh suggested what you are implying in your letter. More than half of a lifetime after the fact it is hard to even remember the details, but I well remember the exact route I took. As you well know, Shirley, they were the last days of my mother, who was going to die so prematurely and I was carrying the brunt of that situation, having been so close to her. When Ramesh told me of the possibility of what you and he were facing, naturally I was shocked and disappointed. Doubly so, Shirley, because you may not realize but months before I had warned him. It was the only time in our lives he was angry with me and spoke rudely back. I warned him to be wise in the time spent together with you and to be honoring before the Lord. I warned him to be considerate of you, of himself and his walk before God. The late hours he was spending with you prompted me to warn him that he was courting danger and that you both would get hurt. He



was terribly angry with me for insinuating that. Now I can understand why.

Therefore, when this scenario came about I was even surprised that he contacted me about the possibility of you being pregnant. Your letter tells me that there had been repeated such possibilities and I wept on reading it. With our youthfulness, and the ailing health of my mother combined with my lifelong reluctance to give any counsel to family members on matters where objectivity was imperative, I in clear and unequivocal terms gave him two steps to follow. First, I said, make sure your suspicion is true. Second, I gave him the name of two respected pastors in town to whom he should go and get counsel, so that a godly decision would be made and you both cared for through it. I promise you, Shirley, that was all the involvement I felt I could have for the sake of the well being of all of you, including the child, if indeed the pregnancy were confirmed. I do know that he went to at least one of them.

Anyhow, after I told him to go and meet the pastor, that was the last time I spoke to him about it. I am frankly, trying to recall if I was even living in Toronto or studying in Chicago during that time. I do know that during my mother's death I was still a student in Chicago, and I am not exactly sure of the month and date of your tragedy.

When nothing more was said to me Shirley, I feared the worst, and your letter is the first time I have even heard how the arrangements were made. It has been years since I have wept so deeply on reading anything. Your loneliness through this, your sense of betrayal, justifies your anger. I firmly believe that the death of my mother, (and now hearing of the particulars from you) have combined to send Ramesh on an emotional and spiritual tailspin from which I believe he has not recovered, though a quarter of a century has gone by. In those early days of his struggle I spent hours with him to keep him from personal despair. I always thought it was only the death of my mom that was the

cause, because that's what he would talk about as he would sob. Now I see the fuller picture and it explains a lot. I believe his spiritual struggle was agonizing to him and the remains I believe are still with him.

I repeatedly have sent him to get personal counsel from pastors and professionals, never knowing hard facts of this being in the picture too. Now, as I hear of your agony, it is even more heartbreaking.

Whatever you choose to believe, Shirley, I cannot blame you for your feelings, but neither do I have any share whatsoever in the mistakes and choices you both made, much as it grieves me. I just want you to know that I never gave counsel and firmly held the ground that my youth, my relationship and our circumstances disqualified me. He was to seek the counsel of older and qualified people. You may not agree with that counsel I gave him in sending him to those pastors, but that I stand by, because they would never have proposed the route that was evidently taken.

I pray from the depths of my heart, Shirley, for the healing and restoration in both Ramesh's and your heart. I have no doubt the anguish has been deep. The God of mercy and grace will graciously forgive the mistakes of youth. For the pain you felt, I am truly sorry.

So many years have gone by for all of us, since we first came to know Christ. Over the years in facing countless experiences, we have all faced many tragedies. I have learned one can either be hardened or softened, and always prayed for the latter to the God of all grace.

Thank you for the candor and the willingness to talk about it. As painful as it was, I admire your sensitivity.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ramesh", is written below the word "Sincerely".