

LIVING

The Class Act

by Parveen Anam

IT is easy for us mortals, to get our priorities all wrong. In fact, it is easier to get them wrong than right. As it is easier to make mistakes than make the correct decisions. In fact, it is a miracle we ever do anything right. By all accounts, we should be blundering through life making all the mistakes under the sun.

However, since there are a few of us still left, who think they make the right decisions, it is probably time for them to sit up and take note — note of things which can easily go astray. And amongst the things that can go astray, is our attitude towards ourselves. We would, of course, all like to be included in the Guinness Book of Records, or something equally exciting for simply

blessing the world by our noble births. Bengalis actually quite take the cake for their conceit in thinking he and they alone is the greatest of all creations and if they have their way, will not permit anyone around them, to forget it either.

For us, the concept of manners, is something rather difficult to come by. For some of us, I must hasten to add. We distinctly think and feel we can do whatever we like, when we like, anyway we like, and get away with it. That it is not always the right thing to do perhaps, would be blasphemy to the Bengali soul. It is doing it, therefore it is right. That is quite a way of looking at things, we candidly admit.

However, what the discerning amongst us, at times, will privately admit to ourselves is

that though manners may be the visible aspect of what we are, class is the invisible part of it. And class is the thing which we either have or we do not have. No matter how much the Bengalis like to huff and puff, for those of them, who do not have the class they will never have it. Money will not buy it for them much to their astonishment. Class has nothing to do with money, some of us fail to realize in our euphoria of new found wealth. In fact a very old saying goes, "It's the new rich who show off their money. Class does not need wealth to show itself."

It is the quiet and dignified moments of life, which reveal class for what it is. The small acts of kindness, of thoughtfulness, is what perhaps class

is all about. It is difficult to put your finger on it. It is natural, it is graceful. It speaks for itself not in the momentous acts but in the acts which occur without fanfare and the drums.

The most expensive diamond in the world will not buy you class; that flashy car has nothing to do with the elusive class. For class is elusive. Those who have it, are perhaps born with it. Difficult to say, actually. It is a lifelong trait, that's for sure. Class is spontaneous. Those who do not have it, can spend a lifetime trying to achieve it, but will not succeed. And those who have it, just exclude it, unconsciously.

Class is the elegant hostess, who knows without being asked, that one of her elderly guests is not feeling like sharing in the endless round of drinks, and would like to slip quietly away. It is a line of poetry, recited at the right moment, for the right occasion, without sounding pompous. It is the elusive art of paying a compliment for its own sake, and not gushing or falling over oneself to prove a point.

The lady who elegantly dabs her lips at dinner certainly shows better class than the one who ruins her hostess's serviette by rubbing away at her crimson mouth to erase all trace of the coffee! A jetset style of life or a flashy new car every six months, has nothing to do with class. But to be able to discuss quietly and intelligently, literature classics or quote that little line from your favourite poem, is class, perhaps. Or is it visible in the little gold chain he gives to her, quietly and lovingly, without being asked, maybe on an occasion, maybe just to say he cares. Why do we forget actions speak louder than words?

But then, who knows. If we did, we would write pages, and pages on it, and then everybody would perhaps have class.



Happy Marriage

by Sylvia Saleem

BOTH may feel that they can't possibly manage unless the wife helps with the weekly budget. They may think the home would be happier if she stays there. So long as there is agreement the problem doesn't exist.

But what if the husband resents the implication that he can't support a wife or the wife feels buried alive unless she can spend at least part of the day with the girls in the office? Then it helps to take a look and try to find out why it matters so much to the husband that his wife should be entirely dependent on him financially, or why the wife finds her office friends' company so necessary.

Money is much more than the coins you pass across the counter. In most people's minds it represents success. However much we may deplore this attitude, the hard fact is that the world rates us by our degree of affluence — or so we feel. No wonder the weekly budget looms so large in young people's thoughts. All these attitudes have been instilled into us very early in our lives and, once established, we take them absolutely for granted. We find it very difficult to accept any ideas or methods that are different from our own or our parents'. How much work a wife does

decide to do is all tied up with the couple's views on starting a family. Some feel that life is such fun and so full that there is no need to have children. Others think that marriage is not complete without them.

One widely-held idea is that a baby will help to patch up a marriage which is not running as smoothly as it might. This is simply not so. Do you think it is any easier to face problems after broken nights and on

laws" and music-hall jokes are inseparable. But why?

The In-Laws

A man may be divided between his love and loyalty to his young wife and his affection for his mother. Remember, too, that parents have to try to accept as sons and daughters-in-law people who are comparative strangers. Even when the in-laws live in another town, their presence may be felt very much in the new home.

When a new husband remarks that his mother always ironed his shirts such and such a way, the wife frequently assumes that he thinks that his mother irons better than she does. When a wife expects her husband to take on some responsibility his reluctance is increased when she says, "Well, my father always did..." So, as well as the couple with their real and ideal selves, we now have "what my mother did", "how my father managed", "the way my family runs" and "what your family does".

Background to Marriage

Traditionally newly-weds try to set up home on their own, and it is the establishment of this independence which sometimes causes trouble in the family.

(To be continued)



and there are a lot of opinions in between. Whatever decision you may make, remember that marriage changes everyone and people feel very differently about babies after they have been married a little while. It's a good idea to review the situation from time to time and to remember that having a baby is a family affair and not just a job that the wife must cope with alone.

days when you have no sooner finished clearing one meal than it is time to prepare the next? The effect children have depends on the quality of the marriage. If it is a good marriage, they provide the cement; if it has shaky foundations, they are more likely to drive in wedges.

Much the same thing applies to family relationships. In most people's minds the "in-

Double Standards

by Fayza Haq

A female has to fight against the rigid establishment of double standards since her childhood. As the middle-class girl child grows up, she hears the talk of going abroad to study and work from her brothers and male cousins. She sees the boys around her competing with each other to go to England, America and the Middle East. With western education, she learns to have a penchant for all that is European or American and longs to study at foreign schools like Yale, Harvard, Oxford and Cambridge. When she dares to bring up the subject of her going abroad like the rest her male clan, she is strongly rebuked and left to cry on to her peas and chicken on the plate on the dining table.

Often a teen-age girl with her coterie of girl friends have remarked that the boys in the family are treated like the lords of creation. The addition of a boy has been welcomed in every home while a girl has often been tolerated. From having unending girl friends to "bunking" and falling classes and even smoking marijuana has been overlooked in the male youth. Standing at the classroom door, a girl may be heard saying how she wants to stay back, and enjoy the college function. "I have stayed back twice this week. If I do so any more there will be terrible hue and cry at home. It is such a pity — I wanted to take part in the play but I cannot at this rate. Had it been even my younger brother, he would have been allowed to stay out, with any given excuse that he can furnish. I have had to give up my foreign language class with the same pressures at home. I had classes thrice a week and we got off at 7 o'clock. I would reach home by rickshaw in another fifteen minutes. Within that time, however, relatives, specially aunts, who happened to drop in, would pass vicious remarks about girls staying away from home after dark.

Another girl laments, "I have always been fond of singing and dancing and being on stage. But for long my love of the stage has come under sharp criticism. People see it as cheap publicity. Even my own relatives have been very unkind and rude the last time I took part in a fashion parade. All my dreams of working in the radio or TV have thus been stamped out. I have had such dreams of giving public performances of songs as a child. Now all this humiliation is never the fate of the boys in the family. They take part in films where they stay out shooting till 2 am and, no one goes to criticise them. There are others, who are paid for their playing drums and guitar for the same films, and their family is proud of them. I know some cousins of mine who even play at hotels for their pocket money. Yet none wastes their energy criticising them."

A twenty-year-old university student complains, about the same existence of double standards in her family. "My mother and the rest of the family expect me to marry a cross-eyed, pot-bellied or buck-toothed so-called eligible man that they find suitable for me from their point of view. If he has a job and a car, he is believed to be a heaven sent gift. Nobody cares to investigate deep into his life or living. Nobody bothers to notice that he chain smokes and smells like an ashtray, or that he is bloated as a fish with drinking. All these faults are carefully put aside and excused by the family who wish to promote the match and wash their hands off the girl."

She continues in the same dissatisfied tone, "All my three elder brothers have married after constant and long courtships. They sent love letters to their sweethearts, had secret rendezvous, and held long unending telephone calls with the girls who are today their wives. These girls were initially not approved by my

righteous a woman may be. If she is a divorcee or a widow or even a single woman in her late twenties and thirties, she invariably comes under heavy censure and derogatory remarks from all around her."

An office-goer in her late twenties observes, "A woman loses her reputation so quickly, while if a man has

landings. Even when he does not go out and earn, and lives off his working wife on his parents, this is conveniently excused and camouflaged, and the blame is put on someone else or something remote like an unhappy childhood broken affair. Just the fact that he is man, gives him the stamp of approval and he wins the grand prix if he so much as passes an ordinary examination



parents and family for one reason or another. One had no college education. Another came from a family that my middle-class parents could not approve of. Another had set his cap on a French girl who refused to change her religion or learn how to even wear a 'sari'. However, in time my parents made concessions for every choice and celebrated the marriages with great enthusiasm and care. Now if I had a choice of my own, it would be hard to get the sympathy of my parents in the way the boys did. My cousins too have had love marriages with girls in their class or in the same campus. Yet, if a boy ever rings me up and the men in the family happens to pick up, the phone, there is no end of scolding and quarrelling in the house. It is considered perfectly normal for a boy to have girl friends, to go dating regularly, and to be spending his pocket money or his limited earning from the part time job on his girl friend. Yet a girl is seen walking with a boy or seen riding in a rickshaw with him, she invariably gets a 'bad name'."

Yet another young woman remarks, "I happen to be a widow and this is such a pain. People expect me to wrap myself in white and cut myself away from everyday life. They tell me to play the saint and martyr. They can't bear to see me smile and pass scathing comments about even the pale, printed 'saris' that I wear. Yet I know that had I been a man I would not have to suffer similar rude remarks. Men can marry at any age and time. I have known people to divorce their wives to proceed to marry, or to go ahead and marry with four growing children at home. Yet society has never raised an eyebrow at the idea of the divorced man or widow marrying again, and that too, in a desperate hurry. No matter how talented or

three or four affairs, and even one or two abandoned wives in his past, it makes his character appear colourful and interesting. I have seen my elderly male colleagues go out dating with great self-confidence, even when they have growing daughters at home. Winning and womanising seem essential to prove a man's virility and charm. Young married men with good reputations have been seen flirting outrageously in some offices. Yet a woman can not smile at her colleague over a harmless joke without the others instantly disapproving of it. Of course, there are a few discontented women who have apparently discreet affairs of their own but these women are often invariably gossiped about and spoken against mercilessly. Thus a young woman who dares to have men friends in the open is alleged at times, to indulge in even group sex when she is only having a cup of coffee with her male acquaintances at local hotel or club."

Who is to be blamed for the state of affairs in our society, where working women have been a new phenomenon for the past few decades and when women have to be accepted as equals even in the progressive west? Even in places like London, Washington and Melbourne, a young woman is expected to be married by twenty-five, and her having a constant boy-friend for years is frowned upon sometimes by the rest of the tongue-wagging but well-meaning family members. Without a marriage by twenty-five, a young woman is frustrated, is often the comment in the east even by well-meaning female friends and colleagues.

Discrimination against the male offspring is seen only too often in the Subcontinent. The male counterparty is tolerated, even when he has no steady job and may live the life of a Bohemian. One fears that it will be decades before a woman can be taken as a equal of a man. Today, to do so, she has to definitely put in much more effort, combining her household chores with her job. University degrees and actual office performance hardly prove much when many offices prefer male workers, as they believe to be more "reliable", both in the Subcontinent and elsewhere.

It is difficult to accept the prevailing double standards and not to raise some protests. Yes, in some families girls and young women are encouraged to study and follow careers, even in the east. But such progressive families are surely few and far between.



MR X began with a trash can and rd 500 dollars — that too borrowed from a friend. Today he is a millionaire as always happens in a fairy tale. But this was no gift from God. Mr. X had to work his sweat out to reach the position where he is now. He was very enterprising and hardworking like his ancestors who made America what it is today. He conjured a formula of body lotion or his own, peddled his own products himself and with the help of lady luck found his product much in demand from the fastidious ladies who wanted a good tan of their not so attractive skin. Today the choosy ones spreads the lotion on their attractive bodies, lie down on hot beaches or around fashionable swimming pools, in cosy comfort in an effort to make themselves more attractive and adorable to their beloveds. The trash can has been turned into a modern factory turning out thousands of bottles of lotion employing around 2000 people. Nothing succeeds like success.

MR X began with a trash can and rd 500 dollars — that too borrowed from a friend. Today he is a millionaire as always happens in a fairy tale.

But this was no gift from God. Mr. X had to work his sweat out to reach the position where he is now. He was very enterprising and hardworking like his ancestors who made America what it is today.

He conjured a formula of body lotion or his own, peddled his own products himself and with the help of lady luck found his product much in demand from the fastidious ladies who wanted a good tan of their not so attractive skin.

Today the choosy ones spreads the lotion on their attractive bodies, lie down on hot beaches or around fashionable swimming pools, in cosy comfort in an effort to make themselves more attractive and adorable to their beloveds.

The trash can has been turned into a modern factory turning out thousands of bottles of lotion employing around 2000 people.

Nothing succeeds like success.

Story and Telephoto: T A Khan



Street Legal :Star Plus

Beauty Tips

IF there is any sign of gumshrinkage or pyorrhœa the gums should be massaged with firm, circular movements using the pad of the little finger.

Deodorants are substances which reduce, counteract, or destroy body odors, mainly caused through perspiration. There are many harmless and effective deodorants available in cream, liquid and powder form. Full directions are given, and their use and choice is a matter of individual preference.

Equipment. Toilet accessories should be kept scrupulously clean, burning all cotton-wool immediately after use and keeping powder puffs covered. Hairbrushes should be washed twice weekly, and face-flannels and nail-brushes, etc. boiled frequently. Keep cosmetics and equipment in a convenient drawer or box, line

it with American cloth or plastic, so that it is pleasant to look at and easy to keep clean.

1. A washing square of moderately rough texture.
2. A mild toilet soap.
3. A hairbrush of good-quality long bristle.
4. A comb having teeth with rounded edges; one with square saw-like edges breaks the hair.
5. A stiff nail-brush.
6. Pumice-stone.
7. Cotton-wool or paper tissues.
8. A washable puff.
9. A toothbrush of medium hardness.
10. Tweezers.
11. A long, flexible nail-file.
12. Orange sticks.
13. Emery board.
14. Nail-nippers.

PE

(To be continued)