



MANY times I have wondered what life really means. The dictionary says that it is the state of existence.

Existence — can be anything. If you are in hunger for several weeks, you still exist. If you spend your nights weeping, you still exist and if you endure the deep pain of torture, both mental and physical, you still exist. The same way I am also existing.

Having fought through the torments of life, I still exist. Since marriage I have been living where a two faced snake. With the fear of getting bitten by him I lived, like a tiger in the forest, being afraid of the hunter.

I got married to this man abiding by my father's words. He was the one I loved most, so I obviously could not disobey him. As I think of what my father had thought of him and what he really is, I go sick. 'He is a good man,' he had said, as he tried to convince me for the marriage. Good he was, but only at that time. But later his face and character changed gradually.

My eldest daughter was four and the second still a new born, when he started spreading pain all over the house. He loved my eldest daughter, Sranti; he would take her to the bazaar and even to his office. But I notice him neglecting her too and my suspicion of him as a cruel man, changed into belief. He one day shut a drawer on my daughter's hand when she was only six. I was shocked to see this on an innocent child. But I kept in silence.

My most embarrassing moment must be the day I saw my husband gambling at his own office with a dozen of his friends. It happened so, that he was being late and I got carried. It was night, and carrying my baby in one arm and holding Sranti's hand with the other, I entered his office to see him performing something which pushed me into a pool of embarrassment in front of my daughters. Sranti remembered the scene and said that it was an unforgettable one. I understood how much it must have hurt her, unforgettable to see her beloved father do such a thing. She was small but mentally, much matured, as is the common case for the eldest. Ever since that day, I tried convincing him. I tried to bring him back on the right path. I tried to make him leave all those, at least for the sake of our daughters. But I failed.

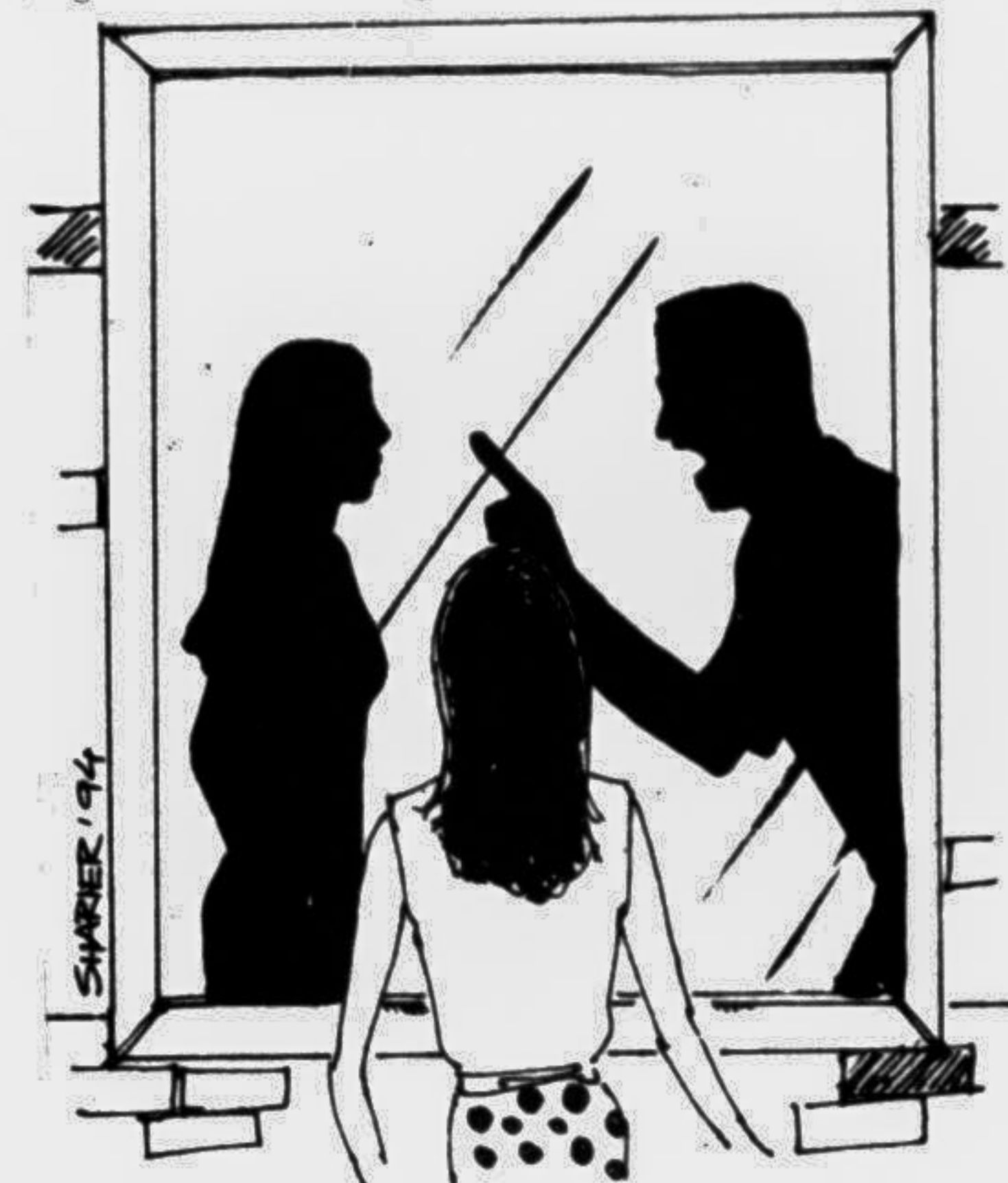
Punished for Silence

by Trishna

The fights continued, and for us a storm blew almost every night. Sometimes we even slept separately. I was old enough to bear the pain, but my daughters were not. I knew how harmful these scenes would be for them. But there was no other way — it seemed. Finally, I accepted all this, thinking it to be my destiny. But as days passed by, Sranti's hatred for her once beloved father became more and more visible. Sranti, my younger daughter, had been seeing all

which should not be pronounced in front of a child. The eight year old was too scared to take help from her father and so did everything herself. Same happened to Sranti, but she got some help from her elder sister.

Each incident happened right in front of my eyes. I heard the cruel words of my husband which he threw at his daughters but I still did not open my mouth. I still expected him to change, someday.



this since birth, so for her, all this was natural.

Both my daughters were in English Medium schools while I had studied in Bengali Medium all through so little could I do to help them with their studies. Their father could, but only if he would be home. My daughters were excellent students but due to lack of guidance, their work at school gradually deteriorated. During their exams he would come back late at night and sit with Sranti.

The sleepy, tired child managed to answer the questions, but at her slightest mistake he would shout at her and sometimes call her names

Sranti was now a teenager. She had changed. Her father was her greatest enemy and sister Sruti, her best friend. They would often complain to me about their father but I considered myself to be helpless.

One night Sranti was beaten without the slightest sympathy by her father. She was picked up from her bed, where she was sleeping and tortured tremendously. I thought he would kill her. I could do the least to stop that wild beast Sruti woke up to see this horrible scene and the nine year old began to cry. What more could a terrified child do? In the morning instead of saying a

word or two to my husband, I made Sranti apologize to him! But even after witnessing such a cruel doing, I did not dare say a word against my husband.

It is not that I did not speak for the others but I did not even speak for myself. One night as we quarrelled over gambling which he still continued he raised his hand in order to hit me and then instead pulled me out of the dressing room and pushed me on the floor of our bedroom. Hearing the noise, my daughters ran out from the other room, to save their crying mother that night and that following week I slept in my daughters' bedroom. Sranti wanted to leave home but I wondered where to go? Even after this I did not protest.

I left home once, after a quarrel, but had told Sranti that I would be in my mother in law's house. She was like a friend to me and that the 'only' one. Sranti and Sruti both requested my husband to look for me but he said without a doubt that he was sure that I was at his mother's house and would be back by night — time. He knew that I had nowhere else to go and that is probably why he acted so superior. He knew I was helpless and he took advantage of that.

Sranti would often suffer from an emotional breakdown but we gave no heed. She sometimes mentioned of suicide in her writings but we thought, it was only to make us care for her more. She never kept quiet but always protested and it was because of this that she was mostly scolded by her father.

My daughters had often told me to speak up, they often laughed at me saying that I was scared of my husband. Maybe I 'was' or maybe it was my helplessness that prevented me from speaking out.

Because of my husband, I had lost my happiness, peace and laughter long ago, but he even snatched away my daughter from me. One morning we were woken up by the screaming of Sruti. We entered the room to find my dead daughter hanging to the ceiling fan. She had been badly beaten the other night by her father and the hurt must have been too much for her to endure.

I was shaken up by the horrifying sight. A nightmare stood live in front of me and left me guilty for life. In her hand she had a note which said, 'mother, maybe now you'll speak up.'

MADE a prisoner of his body by a devastating nerve disease, a young British physicist faced early death. But with courage, determination, and a high-tech talking wheel-chair, he became one of science's most brilliant theorists and popularizers.

A mind is truly a terrible thing to waste. Less than a generation ago the British physicist Stephen Hawking would have been such a mind, stunted and silent, locked inside the prison of a nerve-degenerating disease called amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), better known as you Gehrin's disease.

Today, though almost totally paralyzed and unable to speak or write, he functions brilliantly as a theoretical physicist and mathematician. He holds the prestigious Lucasian professorship at Cambridge University, once held by Isaac Newton. Far from wasted, his mind is exploring the universe's origins and developing a 'unified' theory to explain all of reality. And he is communicating his ideas to people around the world.

Hawking's career is a story of intellectual achievement, but even more it is a drama of love and courage in the face of despair and death. In 1962, at age 20, Hawking had completed studies at Oxford as a brilliant but not very diligent student of physics. He had just moved to Cambridge to pursue a doctorate in theoretical physics and cosmology when he began to have difficulty walking. Doctors diagnosed ALS, which attacks the neurons in the brain and spinal cord that make the muscles work.

The muscles-in-speaking.

Stephen Hawking's Triumph of Mind

by Shahreen Munir

and breathing weaken and waste away. ALS usually kills within two to five years. Despairing, Hawking at first gave up most of his work and turned inward.

But two wonderful things happened. Two years passed and the disease inexplicably stabilized. Equally important, he found, as he said, 'something to live for' in his love for Jane Wilde, a fellow student. Suddenly, in spite of ALS, he longed to finish his studies and get a job so that they could marry.

He began work with a colleague on the concept of 'singularities,' also known as black holes. These are giant stars that have run out of fuel and collapsed. Gravity crushes each until it becomes infinitely dense and has no size at all. From such a singularity, Hawking argued, the universe was born in the 'big bang.' That idea, which he later amended, brought him fame. Once begun, Hawking's ca-

reer soared. He married Jane, and they have had three children. In 1974 he was inducted into Britain's highly esteemed Royal Society and in 1980 assumed his present professorship at Cambridge. He travels and teaches around the world and, when home, works nearly every day. In all, Hawking leads a vigorous life for a man so frail.

By 1985 Hawking's voice had weakened to a groaning numble, intelligible only to a few. The pneumonia forced him to have a tracheostomy, which made speaking impossible. Technology gave him back a voice, however, when his wheelchair was fitted with a computer and voice synthesizer. Now, operating a switch with a finger that he can barely move, he picks out words on his computer screen. At about 10 words per minute, he composes sentences, and the computer transforms them into speech. His only complaint now, he jokes, is that the

computer program, produced in California, gives him an American accent.

Though played by disease, in many ways Hawking considers himself fortunate. He is supported by a loving family, by bright graduate students who aid his research, and by a faithful staff of nurses. He is blessed with a prodigious memory that allows him to develop complex mathematical equations in his head. And he works in one of the most exciting areas of modern science. When one's expectations are reduced to zero, Hawking asserts, 'one really appreciates everything that one does have.'

Living with the prospect of imminent death, Hawking continues his quest for a unified theory that accounts for all of reality. 'My goal is simple,' he says. 'It is complete understanding of the universe.'

From 'The Geography of The Brain'



A Promise to Earth

—Susmita Roy

I speak of love for you, my sweet heart. You have won my heart And now that you are a part of me And I of you, I cannot part with thee.

I am not jealous of all your past and future lovers. Pride for you has smothered my envy, my sweet. I only loathe those who pretend to admire you, those fools who know not your value.

You have enough love to give away And unlimited kindness to bestow (everyday). But they who know not how to give love can never have the same. Even when you cry for some peace, Some quiet or some air, Alas, it is in vain.

For they, the pretenders and ignorants shut their ears to your pleading And return to their task of destruction.

But my love, we, today's young and gay lovers, See with our inner eye —

A bright future, or picture of love and care framed with peace. I, on behalf of youth, give you the promise of our love for you.

We will care and look after you, and never will you shed a tear. my sweet heart, no fear. Beware villain! Don't you dare to interfere!

Attention mademoiselles!

by Rabeth Khan

IT was very appalling to see that girls of modern times have become very unrealistic and self-centered. This allegations has been enhanced by some of the articles published earlier, specially the article 'I'm talking to you guys'. It not only startled me but also changed my impression. It was written by a well-known writer of this page who openly criticised the boys.

I won't go all over the mistakes as some of my fellow female writers did of the male gender. Initially, I want to throw some light on the allegations that were made against them. It was mentioned that the boys were taking drugs, hijacking and doing other unsocial activities but one of the reasons behind all these are girls themselves. They nowadays think that as the Prime Minister and the leader of the Opposition are both ladies, they have all the power in their hands.

I'm not saying that girls are only to blame, but saying that they are as much responsible. As Bangladesh is still a poor country, poverty is and of the biggest reason concerning the immoral activities. The other

main reason is the alarmingly rising unemployment rate. And of course there are the family problems. When the boys do not find anyone to share the pressure and their sorrows they look to the girls for help, rather solace.

Unfortunately, these girls utilise them for their own selfish purposes. Women discrimination is still a big issue today, but now I think discrimination and inhumanity against male is being committed too. Coming back to the point, the so called girl-friends will lure you to parties, empty your pocket and then wave you a sweet good-bye. So when there is nowhere to go for help, frustration takes over, and thus the story of the underworld begins, but ofcourse there are exceptional cases.

Of course, if the girls say that we don't want daggers, drugs syringes, then we can say that we don't want cheap minds, impure beauty and fake smiles. We all hope that, the misunderstanding between the male and female society will perish for once, leaving behind only love for each other. Finally I bid of farewell to my readers and ask them to think twice, over this article before coming to any conclusion.

Lets Talk about You and Me

Zinnia Ahmed

WHO are you? Just a Homo Sapien, i.e. a Human being? In that case both you and I have 406 bones in our skeleton and a heart which beats a hundred thousand times per day. Then why are you 'you' and I 'I'? I don't believe that we are made only of flesh, blood and bones.

Furthermore, neither the colour of your hair nor your name distinguishes you from me. Then personality? You might be a fun-loving creature — so what? So am I. Personality alone do not and cannot define us. Its the pattern of our personality that creates you and me, and differentiate you from me. Both of us might be fun-seekers. But it might turn out that you are a better joke-teller while I am a better joke-listener, both of us distinct in our way of expressing our fondness for humour.

But what builds up the unique pattern of personality in you? Part of it comes by birth i.e. from heredity. The major part is owing to the environment in which you growing up, the experiences you gathered and shall be gathering. The future tense indicates

you are not yet complete in the sense you aren't really what you think you are. Because for all you know, you can change into an entirely different, yet unique, person within the next 24 hours. You know what this means? You shall be changing perpetually till the end of time. You can never be consistent save for a small period of time. And then you shall be a person you never knew before. That's how life goes on.

Have you ever made contradictory remarks and be the victim of the consequences? Let me clarify this situation with a usual example of our age and time.

The boys/girls in your class are good-natured and co-operative. You like them as good friends. On the other hand the irritating boy/girl (next-door you) vexes you continually, until you openly remark somewhere: I hate boys. Unfortunately, a third person, who is not very well acquainted with you and thus hardly knows the reason behind such contempt-

uous remark, gets the impression that you are the anti-man type. Thus, when she sees/hears about your hanging around with the boys in school she at once thinks of you as a flirt.

The next inevitable occurrence is that the wild fire of remark spreads around with you being quite ignorant of it. Finally, whose fault is it when people, including your own friends, act hostile towards you? Nobody will own up but one thing that remains clear is somebody misjudged your character.

I want you to know me very well. Know my good qualities and my bad qualities. If the former appeals to you more than the latter you may place me in your good books. Then when you hear uncharacteristic rumors about me you'll know that either the incidents occurred in advertently or there was an inconspicuous motive behind them. And if you think my vices are too powerful to eliminate my virtues, you the better term me as only your 'acquaintance' and not go into

analyzing my character to others.

Do you believe in immortality? I do. Both you and I came into being from time immemorial and we were meant to live forever.

Life was, is and shall always be a perplexing debate among those concerned with its true meaning. Life's definition can never be deduced from mundane things because we are life itself. We represent life; life represents us. Life travels along time so do we. You are a unique part of this universe and your life is a unique part of time.

But this life is not confined to only the term on this planet. There was a life before this one, which our minds do not know, but our soul does. Then there shall be a life after this which both your soul and mine shall live through. Then another. Thus along with the passage of time both you and I shall be changing physically, as well as spiritually, but all the time immortal in our own special ways.

Just For You



* Dear Nusrat (Nusi Baby) I was surprised that you wanted a poster of Jadeja instead of your beloved Anindya. Anyway we talk on the phone eight times a day so why did you have to send a message in the just for you column?

Bye Love from your best friend Bushra



* Sergi Bruguera. Last year you amazed me and this year you did it to Bushra. Now you are in a place where you can be compared with sport stars like Jadeja, Lara or Agasi. We love you and admire you. With best wishes Nusrat

* Dear Mr/Ms Disinterested. The fact that you have made a critical analysis of my article proves that you definitely were interested. By the way, I've always wanted to get a comment on one of my articles. You just made my day. Thanks. Nishat

* To the SSC candidates of St. Joseph. I heard that you all gave an excellent exam and 20 of you are expecting to stand. If this happens then the sun is going to rise in the west. From A Known Person



Lentini — three legged wonderman

by Gazala Yasmin Hoque (Urmil)

THE doctor and the child's mother had to rescue her newborn where the midwife and had tried to hide him. The reason was obvious, Frank Lentini had been born with an almost full-sized third leg growing from the right side.

Doctors told his mother that the reason for the extra limb was part of an undeveloped twin which was attached to the spine and could not be removed for danger of paralysis or death. When he was eight, in 1907, the family (he had seven sisters and four brothers, all normally formed), left their home in Sicily to live in America.

Tempting offers from circuses were made to the Lentinis for their three-legged son to tour with them. But they

steadfastly turned down all offers in order to allow their son to live as normal a life as possible.

His schoolfellows poked fun at Frank and he became depressed until his parents took him to a home for handicapped children. Seeing the crippled and deformed youngsters, many much more deformed than he, made him determined to make the best he could of life. 'From that

LENTINI 3-LEGGED WONDER-MAN

time I never complained. I think life is beautiful and I enjoy living it,' he said later. He became a good scholar and could speak four languages by the time he left school. It was then that he decided to accept one of the circus offers.

He found the financial rewards were good and he learned to ride bicycles and horses and also played three-legged football which proved to be very popular with the public. Special three-legged suits were made for him and he always had to buy two pairs of shoes but he gave the spare shoe to a one-legged friend. Lentini married and had four normal children and lived to the age of 67, still working in the circus until his death in 1966.



The Power of the Mind

by Nahid Hussain

It is very hard to understand and elicit the feelings of one who is hurt.

His life is like that of a card from a deck of fifty-two. Just as the card is so unstable,

that can be disturbed at the slightest touch So is his mind.

Neither can he explain and share his problems with others nor does he allow to be consoled.

In the long run it is he who faces the music alone. In doing so he is affected mentally.

Which leaves nothing in this world to help him recover the lost beauty in oblivion. So strong is the will of his mind.

The damage of the mind is beyond repair. Gradually he will lose everything.

Due to his dislike to conform with the situation. If he were an extrovert now he is an introvert. Ultimately the power of mind will leave him desolate and a recluse.