

# LIVING

## Chivalry is Still Alive and Kicking

by Fayza Haq

ALTHOUGH feminists, the world over, are trying their level best to make people aware that women are not Dresden dolls or chattels to simply bear heirs and do household chores, confined within the walls of their houses, there is sometimes the complaint that chivalry is perhaps dead.

When in Paris, a young woman narrates that when she had not the strength to pull her own luggage at railway stations, men always gave her a hand. Another matron says that while travelling between Bonn and Stuttgart, her German was not good enough, but men helped out and even paid for her frantic phone calls as she had been so perplexed that she had misplaced her wallet. When in London, a female teacher says that she hardly ever lost her way for the Bobbies and station masters there, as well as male shopkeepers, always helped her out.

While travelling to the Maldives from Calcutta, another woman says that although she had a limited budget, had lost her passport and her travelling cheques, was overweight with her baggage, she did not have much difficulty in getting to her destination. Another lady narrates a long winded story of how her male colleagues at Lahore, Pakistan, taught her how to drive, as it was essential for her to use her car to get to and from work. She also tells of an incident when her tyre burst over a bridge, so that she appeared to be drunk, when she had to go for an important function. It was her male colleagues, she said, who rushed to the scene of the accident and gave her back the confidence to sit behind the wheel once more.

When passing through Bangkok, Singapore, Jakarta and Kathmandu, a lady doctor tells of how she was rescued from many awkward and perplexing situations. This was because there were patient, understanding and helpful men around at the hotels, in the shops, banks and at the taxi stands overseas — apart from the airport itself.

An NGO worker, visiting her relatives at Melbourne and Brisbane, has similar accounts of help rendered by men when at supermarkets, bus-stops, art galleries and bookshops.

One does not have to go far to discover ample proof of male consideration for the opposite gender. Sitting at Dhaka, a 47-year old secretary was once mugged near her house at Crescent Road. This happened at 9 pm. It was the male passersby who came to her aid, despite the late hour, and even offered to accompany her home along with his family. Similar incidents have occurred in other parts of the city, and one notices that it is the men who try to soothe and help out the harassed, and confused victims of cruel street attacks of people with guns and pistols and dire need or mania for money, who resort to nocturnal crimes and outright bullying by day.

A widow, with three children, says that she would be absolutely lost and confounded, had not a helpful finance officer, who was related to her cousin, and worked out her financial debits and credits, as she is poor at maths, and has a mental block where mathematical figures are concerned. He did not charge her anything, and offered coffee and cake every time she came.

with her hair askew and her "knickers in a knot."

Another woman, a divorcee, with two children, confided that her male colleagues at her bank took pains to soothe her nerves and run her life within her budget, by providing her with light novels, such as those by Somerset Maugham and Danielle Steele.

A mother of three boys tells her women friends, whenever she finds time during her busy schedule, of how a part of her typing at work is surreptitiously done by her male colleagues as she has no professional training as a secretary, and her children's intermittent illnesses keep her absent-minded, and reduces her confidence in her own capability. Similarly a thirty-year old novice journalist, who entered the profession when her husband was bedridden with partial paralysis due to an accident, confesses that her male colleagues helped her with her 'types' and 'fonts' when her boss was away.

A lady who had to have a D and C, and had to remain at home for the necessary three days' rest, says, that her junior colleagues at her advertising firm covered up for her absence, without charging overtime or even informing the managing director. She felt that these men were angels in

human disguise.

A thirty-five year old college teacher residing at Mohamm adpur, tells of how her pile of school copy-books corrections — when she was busy with her brother's marriage — were corrected by a younger colleague. His command over English was better than hers, and he had the pile of term exercise books done in no time. Similarly a jovial and affectionate colleague of a nine-to-five worker helps her regularly with her Faxes, as he is better acquainted with both commercial jargons and English vocabulary.

Two women — bosom friends — at a large firm, pressed for time, and funds at the end of the month, say that they were once offered a lift to go home to their separate houses by a male colleague, who possessed a car. They did not accept this offer as they were die-hard feminists. Yet the gesture of politeness will always be remembered by them, they say.

Another woman reporter, having financial problems, was touched deep to the core of her heart, when the canteen lad, aged ten, offered to walk an entire block with her, when she was returning from her assignment at 9 pm and felt forlorn and consumed with self-pity. She too says that this incident has left an indelible mark on her mind.

Yet another boy, a teenager doing his "O" levels, and called Shahzaad, helped his ex-teacher, when she was once overworked and in need of a confidant. He treated her with chilled "Coca-Cola" and delicious biscuits, and reminded her how to work out problems by listing them according to priority basis, and ticking them off when each had been adequately dealt with.

There are ample cases of male friends, colleagues and relatives, who in Dhaka alone have helped out women in distress by giving them confidence; providing them with a filip in life by a lively tune; and even helped out with finances — when they normally believe in following the well-known quotation from a translated French poem "We ants never borrow, we ants never lend".



A man running to the rescue of a damsel in distress

## Ways to Lose Weight

WHEN it comes to weight loss, success is in the details, whether it is finding a tastier way to dress up a non-fat food, making an exercise a little bit more effective or marshalling more motivation to get you going, it is the little things that matter. And those little things are just what you need to drop the steady one pound a week that experts agree is the safest, healthiest and most effective schedule for permanent weight loss.

That is why you have been given many realistic ways to drop that pounds. Some tips take just seconds to do. Others require you to make minor adjustments to things you are already doing. There are tips for the dinner table, tips for

### Have a pre-exercise snack.

Before exercising it may help to eat, too. Not a meal, mind you, but a snack. Roughly, two hours before working out, have a tidbit like a piece of fruit. It can give you some extra energy and alertness while holding off the hunger gremlins until you get home. If you go too many hours without eating, you are more likely to gorge at that post-exercise meal.

### Try some 'green' protein.

If you have given up meat, you do not have to give up protein. Try the top two fresh vegetable sources: Lima beans and green peas. A 3/4-cup serving of li-

new flavour, try chilli sauce — it is a great no fat potato pleaser.

**Urge surf.** Generally, after food urges start, they come to a peak and then nose dive. If you can ride that urge you can save on guilt and pounds. To "urge surf" find an alternative activity — shower or walk, a bike ride — anything that is incompatible with eating. If you just spend 5 to 10 minutes doing this the urge may go away. But do not mistake real hunger for an urge. You still have to eat.

**Keep a diet diary.** If you seem to be gaining weight even though you think you're

grapes or sliced fresh fruit).

Go with cocoa. When you are looking for dessert recipes, choose one that uses cocoa instead of baking chocolate. If you cannot find a recipe that uses cocoa, combine 3 tablespoons of cocoa powder with one tablespoon of vegetable cooking oil which still saves you some fat. You can also use cocoa to make a low-fat frosting or combine it with fat free treats like meringues, fresh fruit and frozen yogurt.

Courtesy: Health and Nutrition



the exercise room and tips that can just make it a little easier to keep your motivation at an all-time high. Use a few; use them all.

### Fat-skimming secrets.

If you already skip the lashings of ghee on your parathas and the cream in your morning coffee, you know small changes can slowly chisel the weight away. Here are a few more edible moves to keep you up to fat-fighting snuff.

**Dash, then dine.** Do you eat and run? Just reverse the order. Eating after exercising may help ignite a potent calorie burn. The thermic effect of food, which causes resting metabolic rate to "rev" up after munching, may get an extra boost in combination with the higher metabolic rate that also occurs post workout.

mas has 7 grams of protein, while the same amount of peas contain more protein than a whole egg or a tablespoon of peanut butter. You get the body-building protein without the fat.

### Review your battle plan.

Make a list of five strategies that are most helpful in maintaining your diet success (e.g. eating only low fat snacks, not buying high fat snack food, packing your own lunch, and so forth). Every month, check the list to be sure that you are doing all those things. We often experience a subtle falling away from our goals. You are able to correct the problem easily within a short period of time if you check what you're doing each month.

**Top this spud.** You cannot get much better than a baked potato, sans the butter pat, topped with low fat sour cream. But if you are craving a

sticking to low-fat foods, try jotting down what you eat for two or three days out of one week. Be sure to include one weekend day. Sometimes people can really fool themselves about what they are actually taking in.

One nutritionist describes how he kept a log on one person and noticed that he tended to eat a lot of fast food while driving. A short term log may help identify and target diet crushing patterns like that.

### Stash emergency snacks.

You do fine during the day but still fall prey to late night, high fat gorging. The solution? By keeping healthy snacks in other parts of the house, you can head off hunger without heading into that den of temptation known as the kitchen. Try popcorn by the television. (Even better, try

## The Treasures of Chester Beatty Europe's Finest Collection of Islamic Art

by Janice Turner

IRELAND is famous for many things — its whiskey and Guinness, its brilliant writers from George Bernard Shaw to James Joyce, and not least its own impressive heritage of Celtic and Christian art. But almost unknown to outsiders, tucked away in the library he built in Dublin's quiet Shrewsbury Road, is the priceless treasure trove of one of the great collectors of all time. Familiar to the world's curators if not to modern Dubliners, Sir Alfred Chester Beatty single-handedly created Europe's finest collection of Islamic art, a collection which, its guardians say, deserves to be far better known. Chester Beatty himself came from a vigorous mixed ancestry — born in New York in 1875, he boasted English, Irish and Scots among his forebears. A successful mining engineer whose company secured the diamond concessions of Sierra Leone and also developed the Phodesian copper belt, he soon became a millionaire and began casting around for some outlet for his wealth. His love affair with the East seems to have begun in Cairo, where he bought a set of illuminated manuscripts in a bazaar.

From there, Beatty's interests spread far and wide. The collection now boasts an extensive range of Iranian paintings of the Middle Ages.

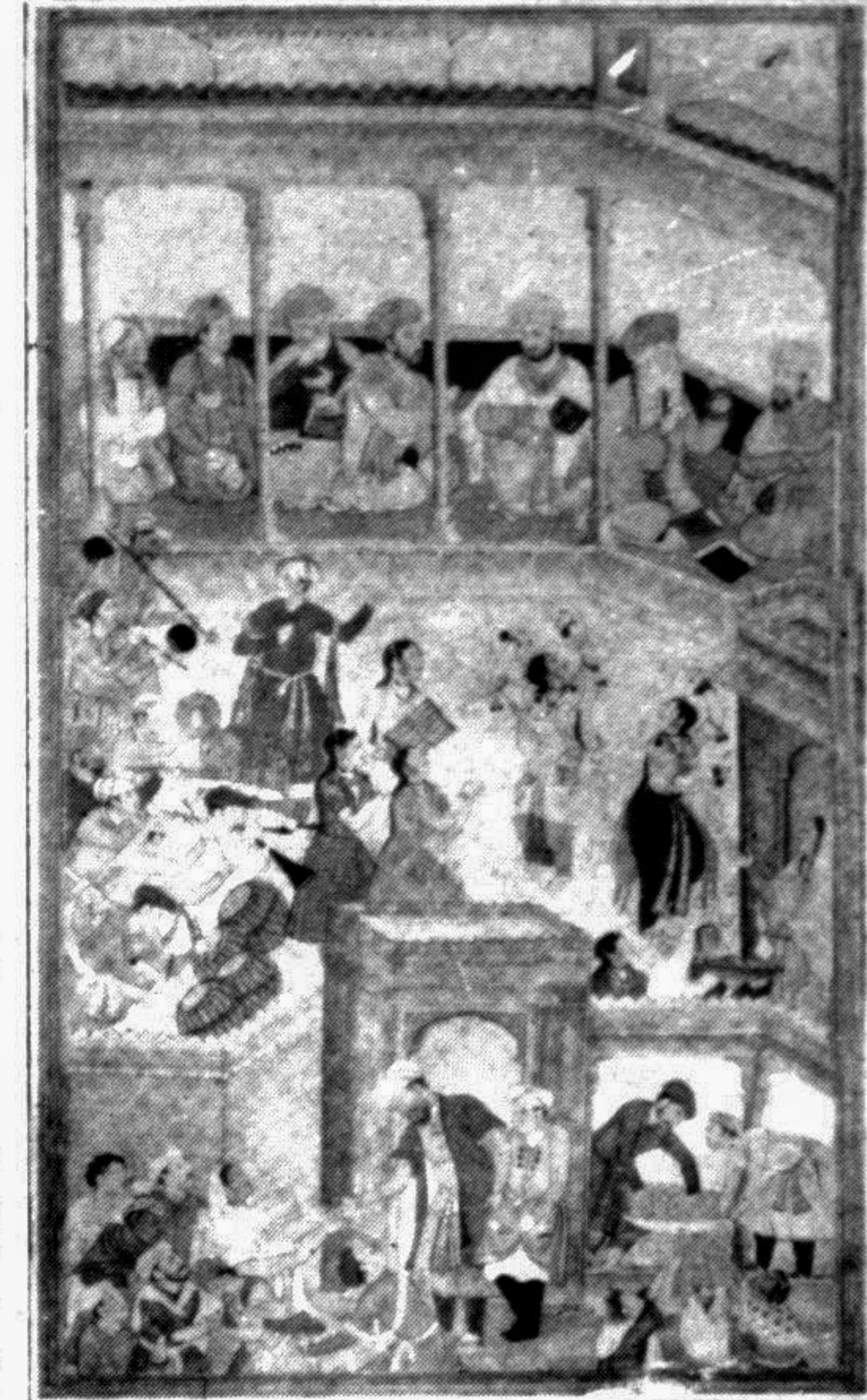


Royal Albums (Akbar-Namah). As the margins of this picture have been closely cut, both the name of the painter and the original number are lost. Rejoicings at the birth of Salim, money and bread are being distributed to the poor, dancing-girls and musicians display their skill, and the learned draw up the horoscope of the baby prince.

featuring the period after 1300 when the court artists of Iran first came under the influence of those of China. The glory of old Persia is also represented by a set of paintings executed by Sultan Husayn of Herat some time between 1470 and 1500, featuring the work of Behzad, Persia's most distinguished artist. Among the Turkish treasures, most highly prized are 'The History of Suleyman the Magnificent' from 1579, and 'The Cream of the Histories', a history of the world dating from the creation to the end of the sixteenth century.

Perhaps most interesting of the paintings, however, is the important group produced for the seventeenth-century Moghul emperor Jahangir and his grandson Shah Jahan. These paintings were preserved in special portfolios within the royal palace, where they were used by successive emperors as aids to character diagnosis, according to a precept laid down by the Emperor Akbar, ruler of India in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. Akbar believed that portraiture was the key to revealing the mind's construction in the face, and so had all his courtiers, politicians and neighbourhood rulers painted as a means of understanding both his friends and enemies.

The jewel in the crown of the Akbar collection is the Akbar-Nama or 'The History of the Great Emperor', an illustrated sixteenth-century manuscript of great richness which incorporates the work of a number of court artists, with several painters sometimes working on one picture. From the reign of Akbar also comes another much-admired manuscript, the Tuti-Nami or 'Tales of a Parrot', a lavishly illustrated production that is



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unusual in containing a collection of comic stories.

Beatty was not only interested in writing on papyrus and vellum. His collection is unique in tracing the evolution of the written word from around 3000 BC through to the Christian era. Particularly prized are the rare specimens of potsherds, the earliest form of writing ever evolved by making markings on wet clay, which was then baked hard in the sun. Over 100 of these come from the Sumerian and Akkadian periods at the dawn of human civilisation in the Middle East. In addition, the library holds examples of Mesopotamian cuneiform and Egyptian hieroglyphs, including the Book of the Dead of the Lady Nesken, and an enchanting group of Egyptian love songs inscribed on papyrus and dating from around 1000 BC.

Among such riches, the only regret of the museum's curators is that the collection is not better known. Its quality should ensure it a home under the wing of a university, they say, where it could be used as a study resource and teaching aid. Meanwhile, shortage of cash prevents the collection from receiving the world-wide publicity that it deserves. To all lovers of Islam, the collection — uncounted riches from throughout the Islamic world as well as Moorish Spain, North Africa, Persia, the Middle East, Pakistan, Turkey and Moghul India — offers the warmest welcome. If you ever go across the sea to Ireland, do not miss the priceless opportunity to see the treasure trove of Chester Beatty with your own eyes. Courtesy: 'Libas International'

## Messages from Hither Thither and Yon

by Sylvia Saleem

MESSAGES come in various ways in Bangladesh — whether they are overseas ones or local ones. When desperate remedies are sought such as consultations for medical purposes with doctors overseas, or even some other country in the sub-continent, this can be done by Fax or calls on a digital telephone. Homesick daughters, or pining sons call up their parents in Bangladesh from London or Toronto or even New York, and the matter is settled in minutes. Sometimes there are marathon conversations too, and people in Bangladesh wonder how relatives can parley at such length. Salaams for Eid and news of liver problems are thus conveyed with ease and simplicity — unless the phone at Dhaka needs to be changed or repaired, as the case may be in Bangladesh. If nothing is working at home, in Dhaka, there is always the T and T office, as a last resort.

There are then the telegrams, which are produced in any city in Bangladesh, with the hackneyed joke "Mother serious," meaning that the mother is supposedly ill. The purpose of this message is to get leave quite often to be back in the village home, when one is up to one's eyes with work. Similarly, there are billet-doux from, perhaps Norway to Dhaka, saying "Happy Birthday, princess," and many serious decisions in life may then ensue.

One might find busy office workers of both genders, who will take time off in their busy schedule, to catch up with their correspondence within the office premises. Postcards, greeting cards, letters and even mini dissertations may be written and sent through an obliging peon at the office. Candies and cards may be brought or delivered to the bureau and in this manner one may be highly embarrassed. This is because friends may have remembered one's birthday when one, on the other hand, may have entirely forgotten those of the friends in return. Next quick consultations may follow and the birthday dates may be tracked down over a brief dinner at a suitable close by restaurant. Parcels of authentic Eau de Cologne, brought from Germany, may be left at one's parents house to thank one for a favour one might have done, for an up an coming bright banker and thus a merit is delivered.

In the same manner when one is playing "Hop Along Cassidy" behind a friend's motorbike one may know that a colleague will be absent for a month, because of her coming marriage. Next schedules may immediately be worked out the following day resulting in "All's Well That Ends Well" situation at the office, a place which might lend one some enchantment.

Similarly, during a tyre puncture, en route to Uttara, one might learn of a divorce of a close friend via another friend. One may then take up the sometimes exciting task of match-making — a pleasant pastime of some women.

Friends and families are there, both at home, and abroad to soothe one's nerves and provide one with luxuries and necessities which one's

heart may hanker after. When one's mother dies, it may be brief but soothing letters and telegrams that may help one to face the world again, and be normal and natural, even though one might feel at such time that the skies had fallen, and one's entire world in a worse state of confusion than the two World Wars or even the Cold War.

Also, when one finds oneself confused and perplexed, it might be a courtesy call from one's ex-student's sister's friend, informing one that the ex-student, who is now studying for his "O" levels, is himself distraught. One might next pay him a brief visit in between office hours and an important chehullam, and one finds him an expert at dealing with people who need to be put on the couch. "Remember how you taught me to work out my answers. Mark the important ones, and sort the ones out according to priority basis," he may advise. One may be amazed at the intelligence of an adolescent of sixteen, when one has been "baiting and bowling" for nearly half a century.

One's life may not be a series of messages of one form or another but if one is optimistic, they are there, when ever one needs them, even if one does not necessarily always have to tighten up one's belts and pull up one's socks for them. The ways and means of getting and sending them remain successful — given the gulf, gumption — even though one may require little bit of luck too.



Dhaka - London hook up