

LIVING

Nurturing the Treasured Offspring

by Fayza Haq



A contented mother and a child seen overseas

— Courtesy: Baxter Healthcare Corp.

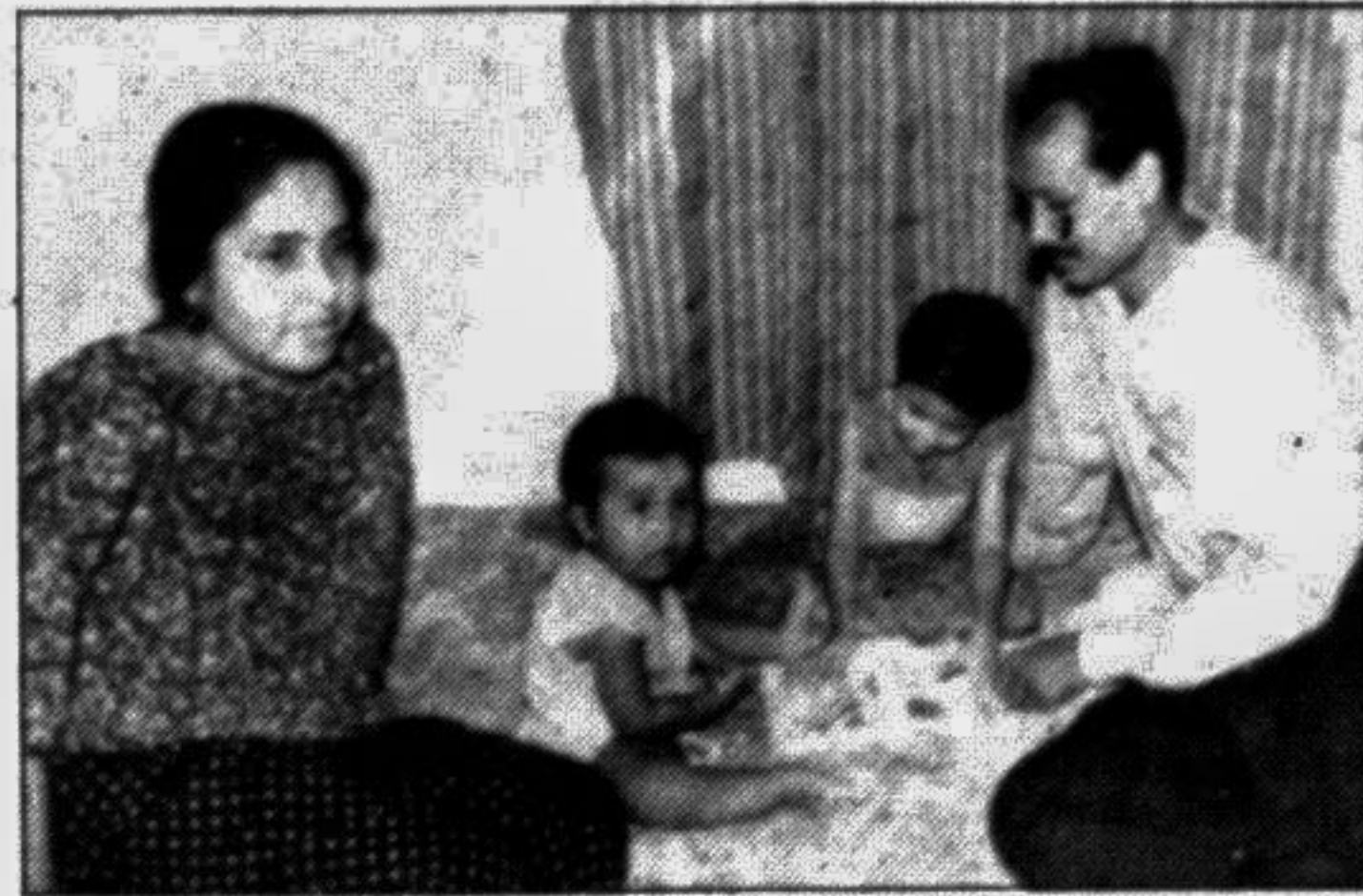
for the upbringing of the child in a normal way. No doubt, other members of the extended family, such as grandparents, uncles, aunts, and even close friends, and acquaintances, have also been known to play a key role in the child's behavioral pattern and achievements.

As a parent, one must evaluate one's own dreams and ambitions. If one has aspired oneself to be a writer or ballet dancer, one is inclined to veer the child in that direction. Parents have been known to want their sons to be doctors, engineers, lawyers or bankers. If the child is inclined to go in some other direction and wishes to study marine biology instead of, say, architecture, as the final goal, the parent should not cramp the style. It is like tying a child's left hand behind, just because he or she is left-handed, as in the case of Meggy in 'The Thornbirds'. The child should be shown the normal path, no doubt but it should be loved and protected as was the case of Magie Tulliver by her father, when she ran away with the Gypsies in 'The Mill on the Floss'.

The child, no matter how different, difficult or even handicapped, deserves sympathy and understanding as has been witnessed in the repeated shows of the film 'The Miracle Worker', based on the life of Helen Keller. So too, at one time, the darling of the once 'empire on which the sun never sets' was sent to Australia to develop more confidence and physical hardihood. It is no wonder that Philip of Macedonia, according to historical records, took such pains over his son Alexander, who extended his empire to the Indian subcontinent.

Child rearing and grooming are not limited to the metropolises or cities only. Even in the remote villages of Papua New Guinea; in the coral islands of Maldives; in the dense forests of Peru, or even among the warring Sahara population, the child is guarded jealously and provided the best of facilities and amenities, according to the parents' abilities and circumstances. The child does not necessarily have to be a talented one, born with a silver spoon in its mouth, as in the case of, say, Dr Zhivago, in Boris Pasternak's Nobel prize winning novel.

Should one be secretly disappointed in the child's report cards, help should be provided in the form of self-tutoring by the parent; or guidance by caring and capable aunts, uncles, friends, or even grandparents. If the budget permits, numerous tutors have been known to have been kept by even a single separated mother, she sold her inheritance, and even her treasured diamond nose-pin in the once far-flung district area of Comilla, in Bangladesh. Similarly, a young widow, with her two children, does her nine-to-five job and then caters to her children's needs, far into the midnight and beyond. One does not have to go far to find this admirable mother, as she can be easily located in one of the bureaux in Motijheel, Dhaka. In the same manner, a young father of two children has been known to work in two far-flung offices in Rajshahi, simply to bring home the bread and butter, it not the jam. This has been done at tremendous health risk, and job hazards as moonlighting is usually not permitted in most offices in any reputable office.



A happy family in Bangladesh

— Photo: Enamul Haq

in the world. His works, that he excels in, causes undesirable radiations that harm his eyes, nose and lungs. Men, with run-away wives, with growing children, have been known to cast off their gallivanting, once they are told that their children are going away. This has been known to take place in cases in Pabna (Bangladesh), and not just in western news reports soap operas, or pirated cassettes, found in many video shops of Dhaka.

Constant criticisms can be overwhelming. Adolescent, in the cities of both the east and west are known to have run away, to have a respite, and a change of environment. One has known many adolescent children and individuals in their early twenties to do that, giving different stories for their strange behaviour to their close friends. They have to be soothed and coddled till normal sense comes back to them. This might require the aid of a common friend but tracking down this 'guardian angel' might not be an easy task.

Parents have to be allies, and if necessary, comrades in arms with their children.

When the child comes home to its parents or parent figure, no matter at any age, the mother/father has to patiently listen to the confidences.

He/she must analyse the situation, no matter how grave or complex, by hints and moods of the confiding person — who may happen to be the friend of the person caught in a maze of a perplexing situation. Parents have to be sharp-witted and sympathetic and lend a patient ear to any difficult situation.

They must gather their wits about them and provide remedies for anything, that may extend from homeworks to possible intermittent matrimonial misunderstandings.

Parents must build up the confidence of the child whether he/she falls off the tricycle; or scores a 'duck' at cricket at college; or fails to beat the rest of the 'whizz kids' at a work place. They must not harangue, argue, constantly find faults with the child — no matters of what age or gender. A person in Chittagong is confused, she laments, because her parents tend to hassle her into an early marriage. 'I would rather do my further studies overseas.

than accept the hand of the first available parental choice,' she says. Another young man, at Pabna, gets into fits of anger because his mother fails to always appreciate his cultural activities such as dramatics and recitation. She would rather that her son took up a steady job or continue with his studies. 'There are jarring temper tantrums as a consequence with my mother,' the son confides.

Yes, the parent must discipline the child, when he/she bullies his/her class-mates; or spends time in writing billet-doux instead of studying for the medical examination; or even when he/she gossips and has marathon telephone conversations, while working at the office, — if and when this is detected and talked about by caring friends. 'My mother is so strict about matters such as coming home in time from the college. She cross-examines me, when I get back home, and this often upsets me. She even spanks me with a hair-brush, and fails to realise that I am no longer a baby, who has to be constantly corrected,' wails a teen-ager to her confidantes.

Our protection can also be harmful, even though the parent may feel that he/she must naturally keep a sharp eye on the child. If the parent does not let the child mix with friends of its same age group, this may eventually cramp the child's style and eventually lead to him/her into being an introvert. As a consequence, problems may ensue in the adult stage. One has known cases of ensuing questionable matrimonial harmony, both in Bangladesh and overseas.

The role of being an adequate parent is thus a difficult one. Yet with patience, and trust of the extended family and friends, this may be performed with satisfaction.

Civilization

by Nico den Tuinder

I would not know what to do if someone was over-run by a car. I know how to stop a nose bleed, and that is as far as my medical knowledge goes.

For this reason I always panic when I hear a loud sound gooaak! Good gracious! Somebody is choking, what must I do? Then my intelligence is restored. It is just a Bangladeshi clearing his throat. There is nothing to worry about.

Bangladesh offers a rich variety of bodily habits that make my stomach turn. Collecting a lot of saliva and then slowly dropping it; belching (especially when it is prolonged); sucking hot tea instead of just drinking it; using water instead of toilet paper; nose-picking; chewing paan (like a cow); eating with the hands (especially sticky items like rice); scratching intimate body parts; blowing one's nose without a handkerchief, and cracking one's finger joints.

I am sure some of my habits are distasteful to you as well. Every now and then I walk in short trousers. People then gaze at my bare legs as if they were born without them. I can think of more habits. Using my left hand for eating; using toilet paper instead of water; talking with a loud voice, and refusing cups of tea because of my pressing work to do.

Some decades ago the em-

inent sociologist Norbert Elias wrote the study 'On the Process of Civilisation'. In this book he took the rejection of natural impulses as an indicator of refined behaviour. By this standard the Bengalis could be considered as forming a most uncivilised community. But read my lips: I am not in favour of a reconquest of Sonar Bangla by the West, to bring enlightenment to this

part of the world.

I believe that appropriate behaviour is what the majority says it is. Some months ago, I and a colleague of mine, were the special guests at a marriage function. We were seated at a dinner table, and were given spoons and forks as the only visitors, and we even dared to use them. The video recorder paid more attention to this astonishing feat than to the married couple. If you began eating with your hands at a Dutch marriage dinner, your would probably be thrown out immediately.

The Bangladeshis are behav-

ing in a perfectly natural way. We were born with fingers to eat with, not with spoons and forks. Belching is a more natural sound than, let us say, a good curse.

And I am sure behaviour that is unacceptable now will be considered perfectly normal in a few generations. Some two months ago, I and the same colleagues went to Chittagong and visited Potenga beach. People only lifted their trousers a little bit, and walked through the surf. That is how our beach culture started a hundred years ago as well.



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Buying Jewellery

by Sylvia Saleem

is principally because of its scarcity value. The best colour should be like crené de menthe, a rich deep green. It is a soft stone, easily chipped and often heavily flawed. A flawless emerald is the rarest of all stones.

The sapphire is second in hardness to the diamond. It is beautiful and should never be so dark that at night it appears to be black. Always look at this tone in day and artificial light. Sapphires rarely look their best unless diamonds, however small, are included in the setting.

The ruby is not often found in its perfect colour, which is a rich deep red. Rubies are usually full of flaws but look particularly beautiful in heavy settings of gold. They are loved by craftsmen, who create intricate designs for them.

Semi-Precious Stones
The turquoise is opaque and the most beautiful blue, sometimes with tiny black lines running across the face. It is cut in cabochon or left in

irregular lumps. Its natural shape, and polished. It has a great range of price; tiny turquoise set in gold can look very dramatic and need not cost a great deal.

There is far too much traditionalism about sticking to diamonds for engagement rings and suchlike gifts, for a diamond can be bad and worth only a couple of pounds. On the other hand, diamonds always enhance a coloured stone. People often disregard the great beauty of an amethyst with its deep violet sparkle, set with pearls or tiny diamonds, or an olive, a lustrous olive green which can be very beautiful in a setting of tiny diamonds.

Aquamarines are of the beryl family, like the emerald but far more common and therefore far less expensive. They are one of the few stones usually free of flaws. They can be blue green or yellowish green and look impressive cut like an emerald.

The topaz is a lovely stone whose colours range from sh-

erry to pale yellow, pink and even blue. The Victorians loved topaz and mounted it in intricate gold settings, particularly in brooches and pendants. It looks equally fine in modern designs.

Garnets are dark red and can look almost black. They do not sparkle much and have to rely on beautiful settings.

Pearls

Real pearls of perfect shape and colour and perfectly graduated can cost a fortune, but today there are many more cultured pearls on the market and therefore, necklaces can be bought fairly inexpensively. Good pearls should always glow softly with shimmering rainbow lights.

So it is possible to make much of a pearl necklace as a fashion accessory. It can look as beautiful and be as correct to wear upon bare skin at night as upon a sweater during the day. You can ask for a plain, flat clasp, if you cannot afford one set with stones, which allows you to pin your favourite brooch across it. This is an excellent idea for the evening, while during the day the clasp lies quite flat beneath your collar.

Beauty Tips

YOU may have been using products that you have been using for years, which you feel do a great job. In that case, by all means stick with them. If, on the other hand, you wish to try new, natural, cruelty-free products, there are highly effective products that you can make yourself, and some of these are given below.

Normal Skin

You are lucky to have normal skin, so keep it that way by treating it with tender, loving care. Never take it for granted. Use gentle cleansers, toners and moisturizers daily and use a face mask once a week.

Dry Skin

Keep this fragile skin away from extremes of temperature and from wind. Avoid soap and instead use gentle cleansers, alcohol-free toners and day moisturizers. Always use a night cream. Use a moisturizing face mask once a week.

Sensitive Skin

Sensitive skin should be kept away from all possible allergens in the air and in cosmetic products. Use cleansers,

toners and moisturizers that are alcohol-free, fragrance-free and, preferably, lanolin free. Do not use complex, anti-wrinkle creams containing synthetic, over-processed chemicals because these can trigger adverse reactions, and you should, preferably, avoid face masks and facial scrubs.

Oily Skin

Oily skin can become 'problem skin', so do not resort to using harsh products, which can make the problem worse.

Use either a mild, soap or a cleanser, toner and oil-free moisturizer. Apply a facial scrub once or twice a week and a deep-cleansing face mask once a week. Some oily skins can benefit from a weekly steaming session.

Combination Skin

Do not fall into the trap of treating this skin as if it were oily skin. Use gentle cleansers, and toners and oil-free moisturizers, paying particular attention to the drier areas. Give yourself a facial scrub once a week on the T-zone of the nose, forehead and chin and a gentle face mask once or twice a week. — M.S.



VJ Ruby on Channel V

Wrath, Let It Not Overcome You

by Farzana Haque

O' my dear lass of yesteryears,
A sense of spirit and strength
You are bequeathed with.
How crest fallen are you,
Since yesterday, feeling blue and down?
Life holds simmering fire for you
Unhappy are you, sad too,
At the male ego, Chauvinism
Of the blood that runneth from fore fathers.
Yet you frown at the eagles view
A distressed nations resource are you
Fettered, pushed, pulled, bound and gagged too!
Call it abuse, discrimination
What are we to do
Doors of economic, social liberty
Shut from us lot
Life's cheaper rules wrought
As we make up, attire ourselves
In sweat, labour and dust
Subject ourselves to lust
Keep our heads down
As hands stoop low to homage the men
Standing tall at the front
Barring the rivers of life
Tear drops fall on green grass
Wasted, dried and trussed
You are a maiden, virtuous
Will be a spouse so faithful
A mother, contented, devoted
Life for us for always
A learner's school, a tool shed
Wrath, let not overcome you
Roses are too thorny for a bed.



Nothing like a 'saree' for suavitte Photo: Amran Hossain