

LIVING

Tears : Signal for His Attention?

by Fayza Haq

needs comfort, attention, reassuring words and an unlimited, unabashed demonstration of affection. After all, the husband has come home too late for the matinee show or the wedding she had her heart set on! He has, undoubtedly had his meal with his friends at the cafe when he knew well that she would be sweating over the gas cooker to make his favourite "biryani" for the midweek cuisine delight. He should also conjecture how humiliating it will be for her to repeat her "jamdani saree" at every function, now that he has frittered away the savings and cannot even get her the pink satin he had promised her for days. Having infuriated and deflated her ego, it is now for him to comfort and reassure her to

the best of his ability. There's no sense in his pretending to be afraid of her ocean of tears. She won't swallow or drown him in her deluge and tidal wave of unhappiness.

A few tender words will work miracles for her trampled ego and leaving her alone will only make things bitter and no better. No matter how liberated a woman might be, she is not always the first to come and discuss and sort out a misunderstanding. Even in the days of the rampant women's lib, a woman does cry with disappointment, misery and agony. Just as he has his right to his silent rages, she has some liberty for her temper tantrums amidst her swamping sobs.

There are times no doubt when she may choke and whine like a lost kitten when she gets her romantic moods of defying her male whom she puts on the pedestal, as long as her whim dictates. A woman's tears then are an expression of her unchecked affection for her male, which she may not be able to express in words, what with all the romance magazine that she sometimes swallows whole in her free time, even when she is a blue-stocking lecturer of philosophy at the women's college. What she wants is a large dosage of pampering from time to time and the tears are the signals for the call to rescue of an overworked, tired and temporarily not too happy a woman, with her endless in-

hibitions, taboos and moody temperament. She might feel that all the passages of Shelleyan poetry and Shakespearean dialogue are just not adequate to reassure her amorous overtures for the week, with the children away for a spell at their grandparents. When she knows that all the magic spells and aphrodisiacs like raw snails will not "turn him on" as her tears amidst her latest perfumes, will undoubtedly why should the male hesitate or hum and haw, rather than play the unchallenged gallant by just whipping out his ruffled and partly soiled handkerchief?

The woman might just be in an emotional mood of being nostalgic and playing the "proud parent" role. Hence the husband might find her in a pool of not exactly "glistening like pearl" tears, as she rummages through old mail dating back to the days, when she was at boarding school herself, now that her children go to the same school and send her similar "love letters". Comparing and contrasting old and new letters, photographs, cards and presents in the form of trinkets, are a hobby dear to the hearts of some women.

Now that her eldest daughter is married and left home, if she cries at sweet old memories when Shireen first went to school, while watching a TV play which reminds her of her own daughter, she should be discreetly left alone or perhaps have her male join in the reminiscent mood. Touching films, even local ones, do send some wives into a wave of sobs. If she fidgets for her clean tissues to blow her nose or wipes her glasses, or whatever, all that the onlooking male can do is play the silent cavalier.

He should not be shocked that the woman, who goes in for rough college or even office union politics, will fall into the trap of a good old tearjerker. He should understand and appreciate that there is a "time and tide" even for his wife's tears, despite her having been a militant campus politician, and gregarious social-worker with a team of a hundred at her back and call.



Grameen Check: To Make a Dress for the US First Lady

by Bibi Russell

There were many things to think about. The dress had to fit her personality as well. The colour, design and cut had to fit her taste. They also had to fit into the purpose and the surroundings. It had to convey the right message. It also had to be comfortable.

It was 8:00 pm in the evening of Monday, March 27 and I was preparing dinner for me and my son. Chopped onions were bringing tears to my eyes. Suddenly the phone rang. It was Professor Muhammad Yunus, Managing Director of Grameen Bank. "Bibi, Grameen management has decided to give Hillary a special surprise gift. We are going to give her a dress made of Grameen Check which hopefully she will wear when she visits the Grameen borrowers in a village in Jessore. Would you please make a dress for her? Remember, you have only five days. That should be enough time," he said.

Enough time perhaps, but certainly not enough information. Of course, I have seen many pictures of Mrs Clinton. But what does she really like? What colours would she like? Which particular check, among the 100 or so checks by now Grameen has developed, would she like? What kind of cut would she prefer? What are her measurements, any way? Tens of questions popped in my mind.

There were many things to think about. The dress had to fit her personality as well. The colour, design and cut had to fit her taste. They also had to fit into the purpose and the surroundings. It had to convey the right message. It also had to be comfortable. I also realized that it was an important project. I was not just designing a dress for the First Lady of the United States. I had an opportunity to make something completely out of natural materials from rural Bangladesh to be worn by perhaps the most visible woman in the world. It was an extraordinary opportunity to celebrate beautiful natural materials from Bangladesh.

I finished cooking as soon as I could. My son and I ate

quickly. Then I dived into hundreds of magazines I have stored and found several pictures of Mrs Clinton. She seemed to like dark colours such as blue and black. But dark colours in the Bangladesh village under the bright sun would make her look too official and aloof. She would not probably like to appear aloof. She probably wanted to blend in with the Grameen women. Therefore, the research had to continue. I did not sleep well, thinking and searching for the right solution.

Next morning, I gathered many more magazines and collected nearly 200 pictures of Mrs Clinton. I began to sense what she would like. Of course, I avoided calling the American Embassy in Dhaka; the gift is supposed to be a surprise. Finally I got a break on Wednesday evening. I suddenly remembered that Mrs La Combe, the wife of the French Ambassador in Dhaka, had some contact with Mrs. Clinton. When Mrs La Combe learned what I have been trying to find out, she got me some of the measurements from her own detective work and a few tips on her taste. I made up my mind on the specific check. I picked one with fine dark checks against a khaki or dirty-blonde background. With similar research, I also chose the stuff for Chelsea.

But I had only three days left now. I knew I needed two days for sewing by my trusted tailor. Noor Husain who knows how I like things. I got several artisans to work on bags, caps, earrings and bangles, all to be made from natural materials from rural Bangladesh. For instance, water hyacinth, was the chosen raw material for earrings. Seeds of local fruit such as jujube, soapnuts and tamarind worked out well as buttons or decorations on dresses.

Two days later I learned that Mrs Clinton was "ecstatic", as Dr Yunus put it, to find the dirty-blonde dress. The US First Lady happily wore a dress, 100% made by hand in Bangladesh and with materials found in our villages. The value of this dress, for which all the materials cost less than Taka 300 (about US\$7), to me was incalculable. It was a validation of the tradition of handcraft in Bangladesh.

It was also a validation of the efforts of Grameen Uddog, an organization created by Grameen Bank to help rural weavers in Bangladesh. For the last several years, Uddog has been slowly reviving the traditional weaving of thousands of craftsmen, by providing quality yarns to weavers and marketing their fabric around the world, under the brand name Grameen Check.

Thus when one of the most visible women in the world wanted to see what Grameen borrowers were doing, Grameen Bank wanted to put this fabric to test. And I wanted to make sure that I did not do anything to the dress to get the fabric a lower grade. Rather I wanted to expand on the concept of a hand-made wear and natural fabric by incorporating natural accessories as well. This concept was more important to me than incorporating any trend. We were lucky to have Mrs Clinton, well-known as an independent woman with her own thoughts and visions, who did not need to follow any trend. She is capable of setting new trends herself. It was her excitement with the dress that multiplied my excitement. It was a bigger thrill for me to see a distinguished westerner to come to our country to happily accept our fabric and our design than the thrills I have gotten through my personal success in fashion designing in the west.



WHEN she weeps endlessly and sobs unconsciously into her pillow or handkerchief — when she can't get the "saree" she wanted for the party, or the new rug in time for Munna's birthday — the wife is being demanding and spoilt. However, giving in to her wilful desire apparently may avoid needless trouble in future.

Nature has given the woman the ability to bring in tears at will, which is the only fatal weapon, apart from cosmetics, as Napoleon once said. The husband — whose own tear ducts cannot work overtime and only work in case of an "SOS" — at funerals of the beloved grandmother at best — is benumbed and overwhelmed completely at the steady stream from the female tear ducts, which are in a mood of a perennial shower at all times. The tear-jerker sessions arise when the new tear-tray is not brought home in time, or if the tickets for the weekend matinee show are forgotten or when the trip to Chittagong to her parents is cancelled irrevocably because he has frittered away the extra sum at a game of poker, no amount of cajoling or fresh promises appear to bring her around to her usual sunny self.

Even as a child, the female has learnt to have her ways by bursts of the "ready, aye, ready" water supply, this has been interpreted as feminine and ever so "becoming" for the weaker sex, as it brings the male back to the knight-in-shining-armor role. Sensitivity and gentleness have been credited to her as laudable epithets when she has indulged in unabated crying sessions. Her upbringing has thus pampered her weakness — both emotional and physical — and her mental framework has further indulged her "damsel-in-distress" act in imitation of the medieval maiden who is locked up in tower.

It is most often not just unabated anger that has led to the spate of "great salt lakes", intense emotion slakes up the respiratory system and when she whimpers unconsciously into her "dupatta" or "saree", she

In Love with Fashion

by Farhana Yusuf

HOW amazingly fashion conscious we have become today! How quickly do our moods change as different fashions come and go everyday! But surprisingly, we never ever get bored with it. Each time a new fashion comes, our minds swing along with it, vibrate with excitement and expectation, the various ideas dancing in our brains until we try it. Fashion revives us and offers immense refreshment. A part of our life is always committed to work, household chores or other matters. If, after all these commitments, we sit down for a while, look through magazines, go through newspapers and give some time to fashion, we'll find that life appears to be light and relaxing. You go to work, feeling good. Why? Because you're looking good. Getting one or two admiring glances or even compliments pleases you and even then the fact that you feel good yourself helps a lot in boosting your self-confidence. Wearing fashionable clothes doesn't always mean that you're looking good — you have to specifically notice whether the fashion suits you or not. More importantly, you must be comfort-

able in whatever you put on. If you feel awkward in a particular attire, it is likely that you'll look awkward, your thoughts show in your appearance. Therefore, see that the particular attire suits you, the colour highlights your complexion, and that the design fits comfortably with your body. These are important because it's not always what you wear that matters it's how you wear it, that counts. Make-up is also a part of fashion, and a carefully made up face always attracts a great deal of attention. It should be applied after deciding what you'll be wearing — taking into account the colour and the type of attire. A luncheon requires the minimum amount of make-up in proportionate amount. People will see that you're looking very beautiful — let them not see or be aware that you've applied a lot of make-up in order to come to that stage. At a dinner party, make-up must be done more heavily but proportionately (but only if it is required) since the occasion is at night and you're likely to dress up in a formal expensive and eye-catching attire.

Then comes the shoes. If your shoes are not well-chosen and suitable, then the dressing up is in vain.

Really, admit it or not arranging your hair is a troublesome business. But careful, because your hairstyle can change your appearance. If your hair looks good, you're face, even without any make-up, looks good. A very different hairstyle — simply but extraordinarily done sets a person apart from the rest especially if it highlights the bone structure in the face.

Earlier I said that we've become very fashion conscious but this overwhelming interest did not come suddenly. Cable TV has brought the world of fashion to our doorstep gradually but in a considerably short time. The quality and quantity of our advertisements have improved — so much so that not only have our enthusiasm been aroused, a sense of creativity prevails on in our mind's giving us free access to our individual choices. All these gives us a sense of awareness, we suddenly become conscious, look about ourselves, and gather up enough enthusiasm.



COOKERY

Baked Custard

1 pint milk
Sugar to taste
2 eggs
Flavouring (vanilla essence, lemon, orange or almond)
Beat the eggs, milk and sugar together, and add flavouring as desired. Pour the mixture into a buttered pie dish and stand it in a tin of water in a moderate oven to prevent curdling. Add a cupful of cold water to the tin in about 20 minutes. Cook in a very slow oven for 30-40 minutes.

Baked Banana Custard

3 eggs
3 bananas
Nutmeg or cinnamon
1 oz. castor sugar
1 pint milk
Break eggs separately into a basin, add sugar and beat thoroughly, then add the pulp of the bananas and the milk. Pour this into one large or two small buttered pie dishes, grate over a little nutmeg or powdered cinnamon and bake in a moderately heated oven (in a tin containing water) for about 35 minutes. Dish up and serve hot.

HAIR, like human beings, has a life-cycle. Every hair that grows must fall out one day. New hair will grow at the same place, after some time.

There is a natural balance between the rate at which hair falls and the rate at which new hair grows. Any disturbance in this balance can result in an emotionally discomforting condition of either an excess fallout of hair or hairiness all over the body.

Now-a-days, excess loss of hair is very common. It happens for various reasons such as emotional and physical stress of city life, local scalp infection, adverse drug reaction, hormonal imbalances during teenage and pregnancy, etc.

Factors That Determine Hair Loss

Over the past several years, dermatologists have made some interesting statistical findings that explain the pattern of hair loss. Curiously enough, the phenomenon of falling hair is provenly related to the rate of hair growth, length of the hair, age and even the colour of hair.

It is normal to shed from fifty to eighty strands of hair a day. It is normal for each of those hair to be replaced by the hard-working follicles. On any given day, about 90 per

Dealing with Falling Hair

by Blossom Kochhar

cent hair are in the growing stage. This period lasts for about 1000 days. Ten per cent hair are in the resting stage which lasts for about 100 days before the follicles eventually grow out.

Hair grows on an average of 6 inches a year, and *shortfall in the normal hair growth is accompanied with a hair loss too*. Apart from the day-to-day loss, we shed more than usual hair during six periods of our life: from birth to age three; at ten; at twenty-two, around the age of twenty-six, at thirty six and around fifty-four. This happens due to hormonal changes that occur in our bodies during these periods of our lives.

How to Prevent Excess Fall Out of Hair

Hair in normal and healthy conditions does not fall out at an alarming rate. The excess fall out occurs mostly when the hair condition is extremely dry, rough and damaged.

Conditioning and nourishing of hair are the top priorities to prevent excess hair loss. Cream rinses help the dry and rough hair to regain its

flexibility. Generous application of moisturisers and oil preparations replenish the moisture and oil in the dry hair.

Massage is a very important element of the scalp treatment to control excess fall out of hair. It invigorates the blood circulation, giving hair an increased supply of nutrition and oxygen for healthy growth. Massage also stimulates the dormant hair follicles to grow fresh hair.

The Home-Made Cosmetic Care

Try these age-old recipes.

The Hair Rejuvenating Ointment

Powder 10 gm each of lime seeds and black pepper. Make a fine paste in plain water or if possible in ginger juice. Apply this paste on the head every night. Leave it on for at least a couple of hours. Then rinse it out. Massage your scalp with your finger tips for five minutes while applying the paste.

The Magic Recipe to Treat Spot Baldness

Make a paste with a few small sticks of *Mulathi* in milk cream. Add a little saffron and apply it on the bald patches at night. Rinse it out with clear water in the morning. If possible, mix some ground *Dhatura* seeds in the paste. It increases the potency of the recipe.

The Wonderful Oil Massage

Castor oil is excellent for hair re-growth. If combined with white iodine which is available at the chemist shop, it can produce the desired results. Part your hair in small sections and apply the oil to the scalp with cotton. Massage it in with your finger tips. If you are able to get white iodine solution, use it similarly on every alternate day.

Squeeze the milk out of 1/2 a coconut, add the juice of half a lime and massage into the scalp. Leave on for 4 to 6 hrs. Wash with a mild shampoo or crushed *Hibiscus* leaves mixed with a tablespoon of crushed fenugreek seeds and made into a paste.

Do's and Don'ts

- In case of baldness due to fungal, viral or bacterial infections, consult a dermatologist.
 - Use a soft brush with well-spaced bristles.
 - Sanitise your implements, i.e. brushes, combs, etc. at least one a week.
 - Drink a glass of carrot juice to which juice of half a lime has been added and 2 yeast tablets (Brewer's yeast).
 - Take iron tablets in case you are anaemic.
 - Improve the protein content of your diet.
 - Take birth control pills with a prescription.
- The most important aspect of any treatment is the correct diagnosis. Unless it is well determined by observing the physical characteristics and studying the other causes for hair loss, the treatments given may not work efficaciously. It is advisable to seek professional help in cases of severe hair loss.