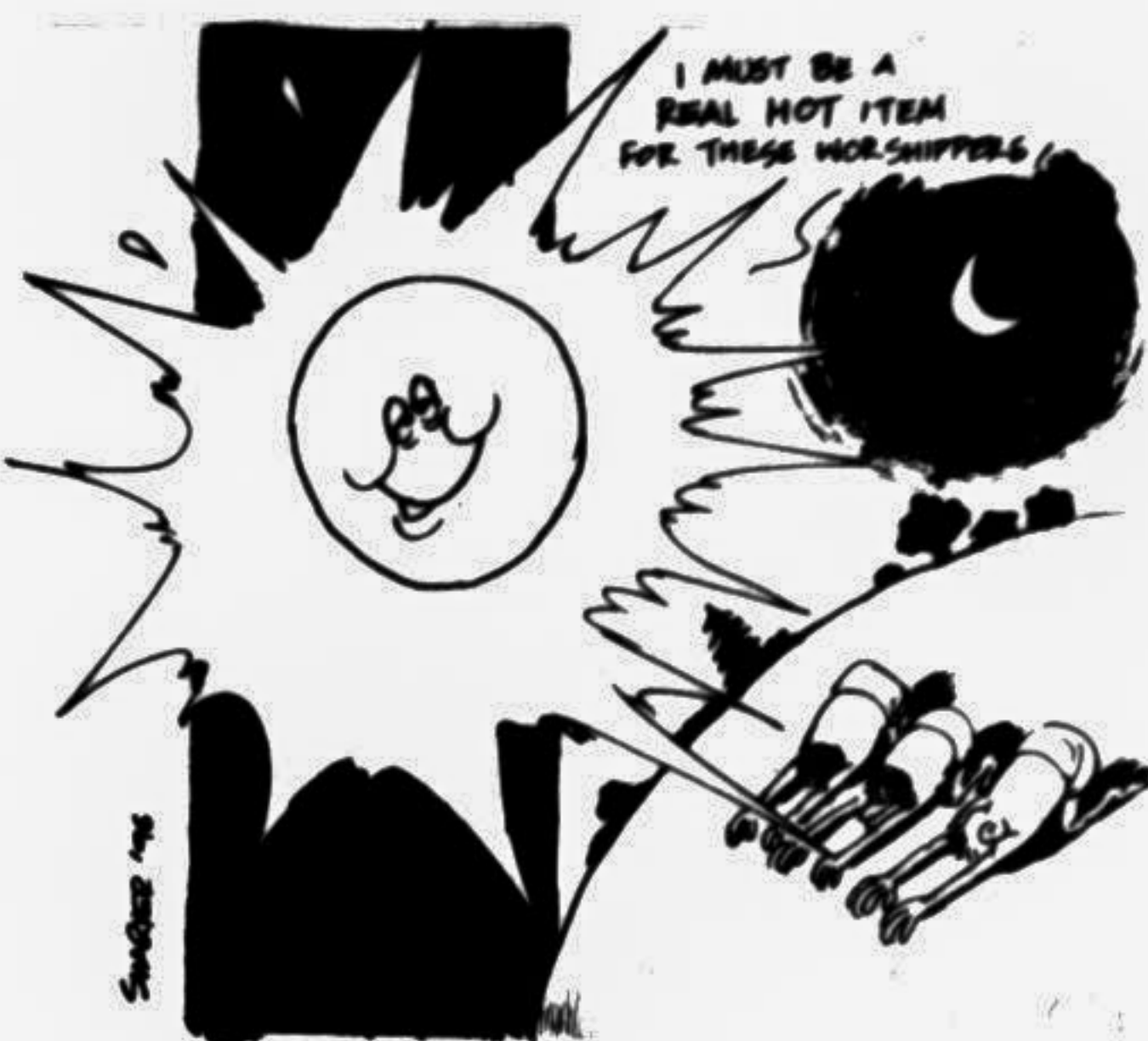


TEEN S and TWENTIES

Meeting the lord

by Mostofa Sarwar Farooki

**"From whom all goodness and virtue doth proceed;
Of thy support all creatures have need.
Assist me, good Lord, and grant me of thy grace
To live to thy pleasure in word, thought and deed,
And, after this life, to see thy glorious face."
— John Skelton**



cal charm of tribal society was mingled with uproarious screaming. It was, indeed, a quite poetic idea that God might be reproduced.

The image of God may be originated from a believer's imagination. But it created a different imbricatio when it drew lines of imparity among the people, and upheld a new "purahit" class whose role was not for away from that of a middleman.

As the level of human knowledge heightened further more man's search for his Lord reached a new station. A new epoch started up. Though it seemed much more logical, it didn't either make any mistake from mistaking as the long ambiguous hand of a mediator remained working. Prophet Mohammad (SM) led his pilgrimage. The pilgrims accepted that Allah (God) is a kind of power. He can't be pictured or made. Nor can He be compared to any mundane matter. But in what time and on what space this power had been originated still remains undiscovered.

However, according to the holy book, it is not impossible to meet the supreme power Allah, if He becomes generous enough to give the beloved a much-prayed encounter, as we see in the holy book, once Prophet Muhammad (SM) met the Lord, Prophet Musa (AM) too had the rare moments of meeting Allah.

Now, I want to draw the

readers' attention to the prominent word 'He'. Generally, it is replaced by any noun word which bears a person's name. The curiosity springs from the term person. Whom do we call person? Do we confine force by person?

If Allah is a kind of power existing everywhere in the world, why did the Prophet go upwards? Does it mean that the tale is influenced by high-low physical greatness belief?

Prophet Muhammad (SM) reached the seventh sky, which Allah occupies, by a strange horse like carrier named 'Borak'. It was almost a horse with wings on its back and womanly face. He experienced seven Hells and the same number of Heavens on his way. Allah, Heavens are full of soft, soothing breeze, with enormous bewitching trees and lakes, he experienced. There are beautiful ladies, but no gents for the female inhabitants' entertainment, and eudaily little boys waiting for male virtuosities' sexual pleasure. If it was a fact, then why had Islam prohibited sodomy on earth?

The Persians knew an unearthly paradise which they used to call 'Paridaz-za'. It is reported as being delightful mountain-top gardens watered by a four-headed crystal river, their fruit-trees laden with flashing jewels; and a wise Serpent always haunts them. Almost similar to the Babylonian and other middle-

eastern paradises.

Greek mythographers told of a paradise on Mount Atlas, the 'Garden of the Hesperides' guarded by a hundred-headed Serpent. This paradise belonged to a mother-goddess.

Christians chose to identify the Serpent in Eden with Satan. They preached that Jesus Christ, a 'second Adam', lives permanently in paradise and is ready there to welcome all believers on the Day of Judgement.

Indian myths suggest of almost the same paradise. Full of fruit-trees, flowers, soft breeze, and, of course, Gandharva-Kinnari for the male believers' entertainment. Suffice to say, hollow reconciliation for the women.

Why do paradises follow a traditional pattern? Hells to standing on iremire-fire and wild beasts?

Does it testify Jung's theory of the 'collective unconscious' true? Man can't go out of their personal experiences and hidden informations supplied by collective unconscious? Do we see, for this reason, the Prophet was riding on a horse-back instead of a space-car? Did he wear necessary space-jackets? Was 'Borak' a super-sonic carrier? How could Borak away her wings in an air-free zone? How did he see Allah? A gale of wind and strong light? Why light? Because light is considered as the source of all goodness?

In fact, paradise-hell-Lord, all these are derived from great men's self-knowledge they perceived as to what is good for human being and what is bad. Their search for the central power led them to different mental state. They attained it through self-searching and nature-observation. They got power from their own Lord to get on, just as a dedicated poet's personal Muse. Paradise, in fact, seems to be a subjective vision.

As Jesus himself said: 'The kingdom of heaven is within you.' The jewelled Garden can be attained by the purity of heart without undergoing so austere a regimen as to become alienated from their friends. Many young women have a secret garden which they frequently visit. The love-feast, for all who attend in a state of grace and with complete mutual trust — by no means a simple condition — strengthens human friendship and at the same time bestows spiritual enlightenment, which are the twin purposes of most religions. Whether the soul visits a non-subjective paradise or hell on quitting its body, let theologians dispute.

Wallpaper for the Mind

IN 1994, America became addicted to autostereograms — those swatches of psychedelic wallpaper that dissolve into three-dimensional images when you stare at them cross-eyed long enough. What the slack-jawed millions may not have realized, though, as they stared at books and posters, is that they were experiencing an enduring mystery of neurology. When the brain perceives a 3-D object, which comes first, the object or the 3-D?

The mystery has its roots in a previous 3-D craze, back in the nineteenth century. Victorian researchers discovered that they could create a 3-D illusion if they took photographs of an object with two cameras a few inches apart and had a person look at the images through a stereoscope, which allows each eye to see just one of the photos. The first stereograms were both a commercial smash and a neurological breakthrough: scientists realized that depth perception arises from the way the brain compares signals from the two eyes, which see an object from slightly different angles.

For over a century researchers assumed that the brain needed to recognize the signals as an object before it could compute the object's 3-D shape. In 1960, however, Bela Julesz, a psychologist now at Rutgers University, challenged that idea with a new kind of stereogram made of two identical fields of randomly scattered dots. In each field he drew an imaginary square around some of the dots and shifted them slightly to one side, filling in blank gaps with more dots. If you looked at either field alone, you couldn't see the square. But when Julesz put both of them into a stereoscope, people saw a dot-covered square floating in front of a similar background. He and others concluded that depth perception is one of the first things the brain extracts from the visual signal, by comparing the left-eye and right-eye images dot by dot. Object recognition must come later.

Autostereograms, which can be viewed without a stereoscope, were invented in 1979 by psychologist Christopher Tyler. They consist of repeating vertical strips, like wallpaper, in which the pattern elements random dots or something more complicated — have been shifted to one side, a la Julesz. They've been shifted in such a way that when you look at the pattern cross-eyed (or in some cases look through it), the neighboring strips overlap. The pattern elements then fuse into left-eye and right-eye images of

a single hidden object, which appears to be floating in space.

Although Bela Julesz can be considered the grandfather of the autostereogram craze, it turns out he wasn't entirely right about how the brain perceives 3-D objects. Vilayanur Ramachandran of the University of California at San Diego has shown as much by making a stereogram out of an optical illusion. The illusion consisted of three circles, each of which had a wedge cut out of it, arranged so the wedges formed the corners of an imaginary triangle. Even though there are gaps in the sides of the triangle, you see it whole because your brain fills in the gaps. Ramachan-

comparison of left and right images that Julesz thought was essential to depth perception.

Ramachandran thinks the object-recognition and depth-perception regions of the brain may work in tandem, bouncing signals back and forth. That might explain the sensation some people have when looking at autostereograms: When they

start to see the outline of a hidden object, the 3-D illusion suddenly kicks in. "The regions may be like two drunks," says Ramachandran. "Neither one can make it down the street alone, but if they lean up against each other, they stay upright."

Courtesy: Discover

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Dr weirdo's Column for Romeos and Juliets

HELLO Romeos and Juliets! I know you are out there looking for someone to help you and tell you the meaning of (chhok). I am here to help you out. But remember, I am no ordinary Psychiatrist. I failed thrice in Psychology honors final and twice in degree exams. But still, I am a teenager at heart.

I will give you a demo on the skill I have in dealing with teenagers' insane problems:
Q: I am a handsome boy of 16. Recently I fell in love with a girl on a passing rickshaw. I winked and whistled at her and she winked back at me. I do not know her name or address. What am I gonna do?

A: Dance (break dance recommended). By the way, try to be legsome instead of being handsome for a change! That way girls may find you less egoistic to talk to.

How do you like my skill? (I hear YEECH from distance). Well like it or not, I am dealing with the teenage mental cases here. Hmm, here are some questions and answers I dealt recently. These were exchanged at personal level. Let me share them with you.

Q: I am an intelligent boy of 14. I am in love with a pretty girl who is 15 months older than I and I have regular telephonic conversation with her. She says I am only her friend just like three other boys she knows. How can I make her love me?

— Frustrated one, Dhan-mondri.

A. Dear Frustrated one, you are nothing but a goof who is being fooled by a pretty girl. Pretty girls of 13 to 16 usually like to be appreciated and pampered by a lot of boys and not just by one. It satisfies their newly developed self-esteem and ego. Of course, its very

stupid of them. But don't you fall for it. Girls of this age seem very mysterious to boys because boys tend to take the affairs of the heart very seriously while girls take it lightly, just to boost their ego (obviously there is a lot of exception!) It appears that she is just taking you as her fan and enjoying your stupid acts, take it easy pal... you are almost a man now and should be able to digest candid insults). There is no way you can make her love you at the present circumstances. I suggest you laugh it off on her face with a good sense of humour (she enjoys the fact that you love her hopelessly).

Q: I know a lot of girls and they are crazy about me because I am very attractive....

— Chapbaz, Dhaka.

A: You are lying. Next.
Q: I am a 15 year old girl. One of my cousins is in love with me and wants to marry me. My parents came to know about the boy and they got fired! I am indecisive about dumping my cousin because I feel it would hurt him so much that he might even start taking drugs.

A: He wants to marry you? Huh! It's nothing uncommon! All the Romeos of the world want to marry Juliets in their teens. And what role did you play to encourage him to want so? OK, I won't pinch you further. Listen, these incidents are very common. People think they fall in love and then they break up. Nothing happens then. If this cousin of yours is a man enough and you a woman enough you can safely breakup. Nothing will happen. If he resorts to drug he would have done it anyway. Perhaps he has given you this impression so that you do not desert him. To be honest, I don't think romantic relationship between cousins is smart. Its very irrational.

On College Admission

by Adnan R. Amin

DURING my 'short' (according to the SSC registration card, but other wise p-r-e-t-t-y long) lifespan, if there's one Hercule's task I have accomplished, then it is getting admitted in a college. Nowadays college admission has become appallingly difficult, owing as much to the inconsiderate attitudes of the college authorities as to the complicated procedures of the board. And consequently, the students invariably suffer.

First of all, the results are a big shocking blow to most of the students save a few rare exceptions, because they render many a children disillusioned whose expectations had skyrocketed during the brief gap between the exams and the results. The marking system in our education system is, I must confess, frightfully far from being perfect.

Last year, to the best of my recollection, about five thousand examinees, received twelve marks less in the mark-sheet than they actually obtained causing many of them to hinder considerably. This year still the callous attitude lingers on.

I know of a person (whose identity I cannot disclose for obvious reasons) who swore that she had answered only 75 marks in the pure maths (elective), test, yet got a letter in the subject! But this was lucky break — think about a classmate of mine who screwed up during filling up the set code and received zero — yeah — absolutely zero in his English second paper objectives. Disclosing these are aimed at establishing that the examination, evaluation and marking system in this country consists of all sorts of flaws.

Again marking standards differ from place to place. So, evidently, college admission based on marks is a fatuous and unreliable method.

This year two of Dhaka's best colleges, the Dhaka College and Notre Dame College,

"Incidentally" set their last date for admission on the same day! Of these two, one published a primary list of the applicants they were going to accept. In the other, there was a viva and written tests to judge whom they were to accept. But unfortunately by the time the results in the latter institute was announced, the time for enrollment in the former had expired. So if anyone had been refused admission, he was doomed, destined for annihilation — in easy words 'dead meat'!

In the girls college, several lists were given out, first only the exceptional one's were admitted. Then others went to...to...rather inferior and not-so-famous colleges. But then again, in most cases, they were eventually admitted in that college.

Lastly — the subject I want to discuss, is a bit touchy and sensitive issue. During the last few months I've come in direct contact and exposure with all sorts of inconsistencies of the system. I've come to learn that in many institutes there are reserves seats for various political party members.

Infact — I myself know a person who has been admitted to a very esteemed institution in such a process. Some colleges are "unofficially" rumoured to have as many as one hundred seats for this purpose. I have always hated, loathed, and abhorred politics in educational institutes. So this is something that has infuriated me.

The practice is unfair, as many other more qualified and eligible students are deprived of this unique opportunity. Moreover think of all the youths, who are, through this act, get more and more encouraged everyday to engage in active politics and perhaps derive more advantages such as these.

So — it is our earnest hope that politics be abolished from such cases immediately. This will certainly take us one step forward towards making the system perfect and foolproof.

Dying When My Laksmi Is Near

'Apni khushi na aye, na apni khushi chaley
Lai hatyat aye, kaja ley chali chali'

THERE are times when you become scared to trust people around you, and interestingly, I suffered from similar mental agitation for a couple of times. Those were years ago and my Rajlaksmi was always there to help me walk again.

Even in those days when I needed to lean on, which I did not always want, she was there with her close-set aanchol covering my soul. The other day, as I now vaguely remember, I forgot to sleep — and she brought me a glass of warm milk, made me drink it, placed her soft hands on my forehead, put out the lights and disappeared. And today, I cannot find her any where, for she has left a note saying 'As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods; They kill us for their sport...' But surely I did notice a new star in northern sky.

Over the last couple of

months, I have been thinking about death wholesomely, or may be, in the web of Penelope. It became more evident when one of my acquaintances — who does not like a rickshaw-ride with me — asked me to do her a favour by killing her only because she does not want to live any more, and she herself was unable to commit suicide.

My mind twinkled and it appeared obvious she would turn out to be my leaning company (my Laksmi) instead of a mere acquaintance if I can stop her death-wish.

So I agreed, putting 'one' condition before she dies. With endless eagerness she heard my words: 'I understand you are in great pain, and to relieve you from that I can do what you are asking me to do, but you will have to permit me to go along with you.' "Why?" she asked. "Because I simply cannot let you go alone wherever the post-an-

nihilation takes you; this could be a place more painful than what it is now." By the time she became confirmed that death is 'inevitable' with some more words of mine — "It will come religiously to you with all its sunny and sanguine-ness; what you will have to do is to wait for it keeping yourself within your threshold of pain and misery" — I succeeded in becoming a 'friend' from the layer of an acquaintance. And I brooked my friend to waste some favourite time with me.

Well, that gave me a humane opportunity to contemplate death — a situation when my Laksmi would have spread her long black hair on my face and recited from Browning: 'For I say, this is death, and the sole death./When a man's loss comes to him from his gain./Darkness from light, from knowledge ignorance./And lack of love from love made manifest.' Well then, I would have told her that to me death is peace-time, a time before sunrise when the sky wears three colours when everything — even the birds — is silent, and you know Laksmi, "silence is eloquence." Anyway she was not there to hear this; and perhaps she knows, for there were millions of minutes she pampered me with her warm pristine

heart. And that was sheer home-felt eloquence.

By the way, a couple of years back I became clandestinely envious of my uncle when he was being cremated at twilight. I was absorbed by the absolute beauty and redolence of the terra firma. And early this month, we left the soul-less body of one of our cousins at Buddhijibi Gorosthani; and I was the last person to leave the graveyard at about nine-o'clock in the evening. A very primitive thought overshadowed my mind, as I noticed most of the graves were of women's (there were nameplates with each of them). I failed to find any logic behind the prohibition put on women by the scriptures to enter a graveyard — ironically, it seems they can only go there when they are dead.

And again, I was wondering how did mankind (as I was one of its members) arrive at the conclusion that death is inevitable. At this point my "friend" realised my yearning for death, and said: 'Wait for me.' "But you are going away to Daruchini Deep?" I melted while asking, "I am going away only to come back again; and in the meantime, you will catch on who I am," she said.

There were light and rain, and she was gone! Laksmi!

— EK

The Night

by Farhana Yusuf

The night comes in all its splendour,
Coaxes all the weariness of the day to surrender;
The night is free, full of candour,
Life at night seems pleasant, beautiful and tender.

The night gives a new meaning to life and living;
Uplifts one with the ultimate sense of giving;
The night hides the deep dark secrets of life,
Covers the confusion, the suspicion and the strife.

The warmth of the night teaches one to care;
The night binds, builds and makes one share;
The beauty of the sky at night is incomparable and rare,
The night is wise, thoughtful and fair.

The night sets the hope of a glorious tomorrow,
Urges life to forget the past sorrows;
The night has depth, meaning and sight,
It may be dark but inwardly the night glows with the brilliance of light.

