

SUPERSTITIONS

By Nozaira Sultana

In the Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary, the word superstition has been defined as "idea or belief held by many people for no good or logical reason." We are standing at the beginning of the 21st century. The field of science and technology is passing through a glorious period. Nowadays people do not hold any idea, which does not have any logical reason. Many strange phenomena have been explained by science. We now know the explanations behind many strange incidents which gave birth to various superstitions. Long, long ago people worshipped the sun and nature because they believed in the superstition that they control everything. If we go through history we will find out that people believed many such superstitions.

I think I am getting away from my topic a little bit. I didn't sit down with the pen and the paper to write about the superstitions of the past. I am just trying to inform the readers about the superstitions we believe in our daily life. It's quite funny to notice many educated people believe in weird superstitions. Believe me, they are serious about it. My mother can be the first example. My mom is a very educated and modern lady. But she believes in the weirdest superstitions of all. You cannot cut nails at night! She never lets me or my sister cut our nail at night. She never explained it why, it's just that you are not supposed to do it. I've seen many people believing in the superstition that if you choke while eating, someone must be thinking about you. I wonder what the other people might be thinking about that makes you choke.

But I've never seen anyone taking this seriously. Then there is this one - if a comb falls from your hand, you are expecting guests. Our 'bua' is a firm believer of this wacky superstition. I once saw her cooking for guests when a comb fell down from her hands. Guess what! The guests really came. She actually

does that every time. Black cats have been termed as unholy from very ancient times.

I didn't know anyone who believes in his myth anymore, until I met this aunt. She was afraid of black cats not because they are scary but unholy. Strange! Many people wear rings of particular stone because they think that it will change their luck. I've never seen anyone whose luck changed after wearing rings. Tabiz is another common thing people wear.

Well, there are many many strange superstitions people believe in and I guess I can write a whole book describing them. But I can't help mentioning an incident that deeply affected me. I was in my friend's house attending an 'iftaar party'. While we were having iftaar a Hindu man came to their house. He was not invited and auntie couldn't serve him anything. She explained to us that if a Hindu is fed at the time of iftaar she would be denied of 'sawaab'. Isn't a Hindu a human being? These religious superstitions are really harmful. It gives birth to unwanted incidents that are never expected.

Psst! let me tell you a secret. I believe in a superstition too. You know that "one for sorrow, two for joy" stuff. Oh no! I saw 'a' bird. Something bad will happen. The worst can be the article not getting published. A regular R.S. reader's plea to the Editor, please...



What's up this week

ROCK AND POP CONCERT.



Elixir (Green Herald School's band) is holding a concert at the Alliance Franchise at 6:00pm on Friday, the 8th of September. Tickets cost 150 Tk each and can be bought at the same location. Elixir is having the concert to raise funds for a 12 year-old boy, Amit, who is suffering from a rare form of polio. He is currently at B.S.M.M.C.H. He needs a breathinSg pacemaker (costs US \$75000) in order to survive. Each ticket sold will contribute towards his fund; so please help.

METAL-ALTERNATIVE CONCERT

Good news for concert going nerds. There are two metal-alternative concerts coming up this week. The 1st one is at Agargaon Community Centre on the 1st of September and the second one follows the very next day at the Russian Culture Centre. Both of the concerts will start at 4 p.m. And hey, sorry readers (though I am not the one to blame!) The concert that was supposed to take place on the 26th of this month got postponed to the 2nd of August, as I have mentioned earlier. You see, we really had nothing to do because by the time I received the news about it's postponement, the RS had been sent to Press! If you have any news regarding concert and its related stuff you can contact: zun_rs@yahoo.com

Album Review

Thik Achhe Bondhu...

By Adnan R. Amin

We were not granted immortality in this transient world. Yet people achieve just that in many ways. Some live on through their deeds while some do it through songs, paintings and various other creations.

It is a pity that many talents not realized or properly evaluated until they are gone. So goes the Bangla proverb 'daat thakte daater morjada nal'. It means that we don't assign the due respect to our teeth while they still hang obsequiously from our gums.

Let's not digress from the originally intended topic. I pick up the pen... or rather the keyboard today to write about a very talented musician of the country. We have seen him numerous times in the television and sometimes on the dimly illuminated stage of a concert.

His white punjabi and long, tousled hair makes this guy distinct from the others who claim to be of the same stature in the field.

Yes you've got it right, he is none other than the one and only James. I'm still confused about whether his name is spelt Jems or Gems or James. But it is probably not 'Games'...

There will be no background information about James in this article since any other interview or article on him would provide just that. Here some personal reflections are included.

What I like the most about James is that he is simply doing his own thing, not blindly imitating some western tune that the common people are sure to buy. He started a long time ago and continued with this distinct style.

In retrospect, not many people knew about him before the 'Nagarbaul' album. 'Jail Theke Bolchi' was a moderate success. But 'Nagarbaul' literally shot him into stardom. Today people have learnt to appreciate his own unique style.

One of his latest albums, 'Thik Achhe Bondhu' was an instant hit and is held by many of his fans as his best solo album. The album consists of ten tunes. They all seem to be carefully written (which is a big novelty nowadays) and composed. The songs are written jointly by Meser Mondol, Loknath and Marzuk Russel.

For a change let us first start with side B. The first song is called 'Kotha'. It is a very melodious track with a catchy rhythm. The vocals are excellent with great many variations.

The next song is 'Jaat Jai'. There is a flanged effect throughout the rhythm of the song. And the notes on the guitar that are played continuously are beautiful. The lyrics are interesting as it asks everyone to play music just as they like. Perhaps people will say that it is demeaning and inferior but no attention is to be paid to their words. Tune-wise it is a marvelous composition.

Next comes 'Shudhangshu' a track about a friend who had been side by side, hand in hand with the singer in 1952. The opening lines are,

*Mone pore Shudhangshu,
She'unish paanch dul?*

In 1971 they had been together too with their valiant hands clutching at rifles. But today when he goes to Shudhangshu's house he finds he hasn't returned after all these years. Maybe Shudhangshu is just a figure symbolic of the thousands of brave freedom fighters who never came home from the war.

'Ha-du-du' is, as its name suggests about the popular local game. It has become a signature of James to sing about elements of the folklore, rural culture and simple lifestyles of the common people of the country. This song is no different than the other fast tempo tracks with accompanying distorted guitar riffs.

'Emono Nishi-raate' can be interpreted in a number of ways. The lyrics are about how somebody came deep in the night and sat beside him as emotions swell up inside. My perception was somewhat changed with the lines,

*'Ekla ghore eleytumi
Aadim grontho haate
Shonao bondhu kabyo tomar ei raate
Juug juugantor dhore'*

(You came into the empty room with the old book in your hand. Recite your verses from the book for eons.). Perhaps the indication was towards the prophet(s) who had brought holy books to recite and preach from them.

First song of side-A is 'Epitaph' captures perhaps inadvertently that vintage Dire Straits sound. Bluesy piano notes produce the effect. Guitars are very tuned down to sound very mellow as the track progresses smoothly.

'Mira bai' is the song about a dancer. The wah-wah paddle comes into play while reverb is used to a great effect to make the song very catchy which highlights the lyrics.

It conveys a very bold message. It is about dancers who show off their bodies in 'jalsha's to earn their living. The carnal appetite of the viewers is evident in the lyrics instead of the depiction of the inhuman lives of these dancers or any hint of sympathy towards them. Perhaps it is to induce the realization that it is this desire and the demand that forces such people to take such immoral turn in their lives. Like many other songs in this one, a very realistic picture of the rural society is presented. But unfortunately, these are problems that the social reformers turn deaf ear and blind eye to.

'Potro Diyo' is another one of those songs, which give you the feeling, that you have heard it before. Some songs undeniably are becoming stereotyped and sound almost the same in my opinion. The vocals appeared somewhat distorted in the tune.

'Pakhi Ure Ja' is a masterful composition in terms of the percussion arrangement and the guitar rhythm that accompanies it. The lyrics can be regarded as allegorical if the listener chooses to do so.

*'Deenersheshe nirer tane
Mon jodi kade...
Tobe khule dao
Khule dao khacha'*

Perhaps we are incarcerated by the cares of our lives. We run around all day in search of happiness...so intently that we tend to forget our roots. 'Pakhi Ure Ja' implores that the door to the trap is opened and the soul is freed.

'Sharabe Sharab' is the last song of side-A. It is about an alcoholic who feels his life has been wasted away. Agony gives way to intoxication, as the world becomes hazy.

*Mutho khule dekhi
Rekhai rekhai koshto lekha*

With both eyes closed to reality, colored dreams play around in the mind of the writer. But when the magic is gone, everything seems empty.

It is amazing to realize the versatility of the lyrics and the compositions. They range from the types of hard rock to reggae to blues. The lyrics are thought provoking if only you are willing to let them be so.

Let us give it up for this guy who has managed to come up with such a refreshing and thought provoking album after a long while.

*'Jedin bondhu chole jabo
Chole jabo bohu doore
Khoma kore diyo amaye...'
...Ar mone rekho kebol ekjon chhilo
Bhalobashto, shudhu tomder
(Epitaph)*

not have one he just left me to restart the conversation with the girl. However, not before begging me to let him know if I found a password, as he had not been on the net for nearly two days. I could see he was showing signs of acute Internet withdrawal symptoms. Meet the new age beggar, also known as cyber beggar.

The Internet has undeniably changed the life styles of the present generation. Before the advent of the Net boys would get together and discuss sports, cars and girls. A typical conversation used to be something like this:

- ▶ Hey, my car accelerates up to 100 km/h in about 8 seconds. Now that is fast.
- ▶ Well, yesterday it took me only about 20 seconds to cross the Bijoy Sarani road with my car.
- ▶ I wish the government would reduce the price of petrol per liter.
- ▶ Forget cars guys. I met this girl in a market

the net of life

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yesterday and later we chatted on the phone for about an hour.

- ▶ Aare dosto bolish ki, so how old is she? These days the same boys would converse in a distinctly different manner.
- ▶ Hey, my server gives me about 9Kbps at peak hour. Now that is fast.
- ▶ Well, yesterday it took me only 20 minutes to download the new Bon Jovi song with my Internet connection.
- ▶ I wish the ISP would reduce the cost of Internet usage per minute.
- ▶ Forget browsing guys, I met this girl yesterday on ICQ and later we chatted for about an hour.

▶ Aare dosto bolish ki, so how old is she?

▶ Who knows? She says she is 18 and her I name is Tetul. For all I know she could be a 20 year old guy with a name like Ratul.

Chatting sessions are the rage of the new age. Everyone chats with each other on the Net by typing cryptic messages like "C U latr have 2 go, U go 2 hell". The shorter the better. All this is beginning to spill into real life (as opposed to virtual life). Recently I told a joke to my friend who replied by saying "L-O-L." That is Net-speak for "Laughing Out Loud". Whatever happened to actually laughing aloud? The shorter the better? Too lazy perhaps.

Parents always confer with other parents how the Net is making people of the present

generation (that's us) spend all day in front of computers. But there IS one good thing that comes out of all this. We all more or less know how slow download speeds are in Bangladesh. Waiting for a web page to open usually feels like an eternity. To pass the time we lean back on the chair and look up in exasperation. That's when we notice all the cobwebs hanging from the ceiling. Looking around we notice further signs of domestic abuse like the layers of dirt on the furniture in our rooms. Further investigations reveal stacks of dirty clothes stacked in different corners. We begin to notice the ways in which our housekeeping duties are not being fulfilled thus making us more aware teenagers. Of course, all this is forgotten the moment the web page opens. At least we become momentarily aware of our surroundings. Without computers to make us look around out of boredom we would be playing outside and being too busy to notice the state of disrepair in our homes.

Say, does anyone have any passwords? Heh, heh.