

WEDNESDAY --- WEDLESS DAY

(N.B: I know, I know that in pronouncing the word 'Wednesday' the 'D' is silent, and in straining towards a visual pun, I have forced the word 'wed' to act as the link between the two words in the title. My apologies. Sometimes the transcribed word has a life of its own, existing on paper separate from its spoken version; and I am hoping my readers normally read soundlessly, with their eyes, in which case they will 'see' the pun and not hear the error!)

IT was a Wednesday. Or, was it a Tuesday? Anyway, even if I am not sure which day I'm thinking of, the one thing I am certain of is that in the week of weddings I have faced since I arrived in Dhaka, that was the one day which was wedding-free! It was a wedding-less day, a wonderful Wedless day. We checked and re-checked the social calendar. "Are you sure, there is no wedding related event either, some *holud-tolud*, *biyer gaaner-aashor tashor*?" I warily ask my pet social animal, my extrovert husband, before I sigh with relief. "It's true," he says glumly, "the calendar is absolutely unmarked. How did that happen?" While he frowns over this social error, I tie my hair up into a pony tail, drag on a pair of well worn jeans and steal off to sit on my lake-facing balcony to finally enjoy the pre-sunset glow.

The day I landed in Dhaka in the early evening hours on a much delayed Biman flight, I hit the ground running. I had been warned by my husband about the wedding/reception we were to attend that evening, so I came prepared like a quick-change artist and within an hour of my entering my apartment I had changed into my sari and baubles and been sucked into the fairy land of glamorous Dhaka weddings. I have actually arrived at the tag end of the season for serial weddings and yet I am already all wedded out!

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feel that though I have sampled the buffet of human contacts, I have merely killed my appetite without satisfying fully my hunger for renewing friendships. Metaphorically and nutritionally speaking, I normally avoid snacks, preferring proper meals; in my social life too, I like the wholesome feeling of spending quality time with friends and family on a one-to-one or meaningful contexts than the encounters, which involve superficial social niceties and empty promises of 'we must get together', repeated ad nauseam in one evening.

The Winter social season is fun in some ways but not in other ways. It is great for interactions on a grand scale, but poor on individual relationships. Operating on a set with a cast of thousands requires special skills and stamina. I had them quite well honed for years, but in recent times I find them rusted. I prefer smaller productions, the home movie versions of relationships and friendships. Exhibiting oneself, displaying ones finery is enjoyable every now and then, but when it becomes a continuous parade, a daily catwalk, exhaustion sets in. I have merely been into the wedding scene for less than a week, and already dyspepsia of the spirits is showing up. I want solitude, I want a quiet evening with a few people. I want long adda sessions. I want an evening when cosmetics and high heels are exiled and one can sit cross legged on the carpet chatting.

And that is what we did on the Wedless day. A few of our friends who also found themselves relatively free came over and we ate pizza and talked around a noisy table. In the end we discussed the wedding season too. Among some of the ideas that were aired was the art of attending multiple marriage ceremonies in one day. This, obviously, seemed fine for the guests but not for the hosts. One person who had recently thrown a reception for her child's wedding was aghast that people should accept invitations and then blithely leave without staying for dinner because they had another party to attend. "But do they not realise that I am paying for every plate at the table?" It truly is inconsiderate of guests when they agree to come to a reception at a public



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