

# One...in three sixty-five

Childhood stories my mother tells me involve tales of Eid which were much different from any I have known myself. The usual Dhaka was safer, greener, cleaner, and the list is always accented by multi-angled proof of how much simpler life was four or five decades ago- a strong point of emphasis recurrently being placed upon how happy she and her three brothers were with their single set of new clothes or once-in-a-year new shoes. Forty years on, memories of that pair of shoes still make her smile, and once again it is something very different from anything I have known. But I think I understand, as best as can be understood- once a year is where the essence lies.

Today's Dhaka is a whole new city and not only for the green becoming brown or clean becoming unclean. Rising standards of living have made annual purchases remnants of folklore and the exceeding levels of appreciation or cherishment that come with having something very rarely, I cannot expect anyone to associate with; not even my mother or anyone else from her generation. Not anymore at least.

And yet should we come to think about it, we haven't really come all that far and neither have we turned our collective fortunes around completely. In every home of every family exists no less than one individual to whom Eid still is borrowed heaven and no, points for guessing domestic helps are not well deserved. Before we go further, this is not a pen-is-mightier-than-the-sword fight for its causes nor is it an attempt to make readers feel guilty

on humanitarian grounds.

On the contrary, it is to commend the many households throughout our city and indeed the country as a whole, that put a significant amount of thought into ensuring that their helping hands feel special- special in the sense of well dressed, well accesorised, well made up- on Eid, even if it just one day out of the three sixty five.

For those who do not already subscribe to such practices, make a change this year and add in just another buy or two to the dress you feel obliged to give. One bottle of nail polish, one pair of sandals, one set of earings, one dozen bangles and all in one trip to Chadni Chawk or Mohammadpur Bazaar. It is needless to quote prices, for all things aforementioned are so reasonably priced that almost anyone can incur the expense without feeling the loss.

At the end of the day, it is not so much about how much you spend financially as it is about how much you invest emotionally. The materialistic opportunity cost is probably the amount one would spend on a doughnut but the persons for whom it is sacrificed are those who do not have food if they have clothing, clothing if they have housing and housing if they have literacy.

Be it only borrowed heaven, but for one day in a year, let them feel like they have it all.

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