

## CHRONICLES OF SAM Q

BY SAM Q



# Two cents worth

I am in one of my moods where I seem to be donning many hats to suit the swings, but can't seem to figure out which role to play. Maybe I ought to have the husband over to release the endorphins. Just by chatting and eating. Guys, get your minds out of the gutter for a change.

**A**NYWAY, enough chit-chat. Now, to come down to the actual case of my self-inflicted melodrama -- I need to go and visit the doctor, but, I don't want to. Let me say it again, if you have not understood the intensity of my feelings. I would rather die than go to be poked, prodded and bled (by bled I mean, a blood test). Hence, the topic of the day "when educated people go drastically wrong."

I consider myself a somewhat educated person. But, I sure act and feel like a village idiot once my number comes up. I am a total moron in this scenario.

I know, I know, nobody except a select few, likes going to the doctor. If you gotta go, you gotta go! But, with me, it is like, I am willing to suffer to the last micro milli nano second before I succumb to peer pressure. And off course the drama does not end there.

As most of you know, the first thing required is the standard blood test. I then put on a show, which I kid you not, is a show worthy of Benedict Cumberbatch, Jeremy Irons and Ralph Fiennes all rolled into me. And then I play the fat, old lady card by acting out how I will faint once I see the hardly-there -needle and smell the 'injection' smell and how the thin compounder man will not be able to lift me up from the floor.

Then secondly, with lots of grunts and snorts and a last minute added limp, I put on THE face which says do-it-gently, and I gingerly put out my granny arms towards him to do the needful. The best part is, every time it is a breeze. But, unfortunately, every time is like the first time.

So, if this does not make me the worst of the uneducated lot, maybe the ones I am going to mention now, will.

Let me elaborate. Just the other day, a thousand other sufferers and I were sitting at one of our usual traffic jams, when suddenly my Zen like trance was jolted by blaring sirens. I looked around, thinking, it must be an ambulance and how desperate the people inside must be feeling, because, no way in heaven they were going to the hospital soon. But my crestfallen face changed to disgust when I realised where the unbelievable sound was coming from.

There it was -- a diplomatic car, with yellow number plates, coming with full gusto, with police cars at the front and back, waving their glow sticks like mad men at the right of way commuters, to get out of their way, as if they were lepers. The worst was to see the flag swaying merrily on the car, letting us all know that the highest official of that embassy was inside the car,

letting this stupid, uneducated thing to happen.

I really wished that I could get down from my car, cross over, and tap on his tinted window, to tell him that, everybody like him was looking forward to going back home too. Unfortunately, we all don't have flags, yellow plates, police cars, fluorescent batons and most importantly, diplomatic immunity.

It is bad enough our own law enforcers do it to us every single day. To have the foreign community joining the band wagon shows what fantastic role models we are.

Then this horrific Bangla New Year thing happened. Much has been said and written about the shameful episode. I personally have nothing to add. But, a friend of mine on Facebook, made a simple comment which touched the saddest part of my brain. She said, "I am so ashamed. I will never celebrate another Bangla New Year again". Still now, nothing seems to palliate the pain.

And finally, the most uneducated of the lot, the to-be candidates of the mayoral elections. First of all the noise pollution. Omg! The last two weeks especially. The mumbled jargon from those blaring megaphones. I shudder to think about the poor rickshaw pullers' ear drums.

But what really got my goat was the posters. Okay! So you need to decorate the whole city with these posters with their faces and their trade marks. The sheer amount of them lining the streets made me gasp for breath. But then I consoled myself saying, at least they are bio degradable. But then to my jaw dropping surprise, one windy evening, I see each of the posters wearing transparent raincoats!

O.K, so I exaggerate a bit, but they were actually covered in plastic covers. Each individual one. I mean, even after a fifteen minute drizzle, our city turns into a swamp land and our cars into water spraying ferries, and here were our 'new-generation' leaders trying to drown us in polyethylene. I truly rest my case.

You know what, so much has been said about these issues time and again. Nothing seems to have changed much. So, once again the ramblings of an old, uneducated woman will go unnoticed and ignored. But, my husband begs to differ from me. He says, somewhere, sometime there will be some effect beyond our knowledge. For that we have to keep at it the way we know best.

I hope he is right, some time, any time.

So, have a somewhat good day, the Sam Q. way.



## #ChooseBeautiful

# A beauty that comes from within

**T**HIS year Dove featured an all star panel for the "Choose Beautiful" campaign. It was aimed at raising awareness for women across all creeds. The primary message was that every woman is beautiful and they are not to be judged based on skin value.

The panel had the likes of Maheen Khan, Sara Zaker and one of Bangladesh's finest cricket players, Jessica. Sitting beside them were the two youngsters

Mehereen and Nilandry. Each of them provided us with their own unique perspective on the topic of beauty.

Among them was Dr Shaheen Islam, a renowned counsellor and educator of Dhaka University. She is the Director of the Student Counselling and Guidance office. She

was asked to give her professional opinion on why women struggle with identifying themselves as beautiful.

Dr Shaheen does not skip a beat in answering.

"I think we are all born pretty okay" she smiles. "But it is society who convinces us that we're not. They aim to turn us from a princess into a frog instead of the other way around."

She says from an early age women face a parental pressure, which most boys do not. Women have to talk a certain way, walk and dress appropriately. They cannot laugh too loudly lest it scares away potential spouses. Some claim women are even graded on their exams according to their looks. But how do women strip away these unrealistic societal pressures from their tired shoulders?

"We must respect ourselves. And society needs to respect us. Truth is the real beauty." Now she takes a pause and tells us with a knot in her throat of the breast cancer patient who lost one of her breasts. But still she takes her newborn baby to her remaining breast and feeds her. "Real beauty is that mother."

But she ends on a hopeful note. The harsh world of Bangladesh and other like-minded third world countries is not a new phenomenon. Before the West had developed itself so, the same events that occur here today happened then as well.

100 years ago western women fought for their right to vote. They too were treated according to their exterior appearance. But today, we see women like Hilary Clinton who is about to embark upon the journey of running for president. We see Angela Merkel, who is arguably one of the most successful women alive.

She looks at us steely eyed and raises a clenched fist. "If they did it, so will we."

By Daneesha Khan

Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed



Dr Shaheen Islam, counsellor and educator, Dhaka University

So, how do you choose to define yourself?

