

Decoding Red

As clichéd as it may read,
 hearts are drawn in red:
 the colour of love,
 seduction...lust!
 But is that all?
 The stencilled palmed
 impressions on walls of a
 cave are the earliest
 signs of human intelli-
 gence. How primitive
 minds created two-
 dimensional images of
 moving beasts they saw
 wandering in grasslands is
 as puzzling today as it
 was the day we discov-
 ered traces of those ear-
 liest men.

The impression of red in our prehistoric psyche is conceivably what we carry today. No child is born with a blank slate, or a palette. What we see, what we observe, and differentiate are based on footprints on our cells through thousands of years of evolution from a bestial existence to an intelligent form.

Yes, red is also blood; it is a symbol of the carnal desire; it is the fiery hue that still brings out the animal within us. But are these now not the very negativities that puts humanity to shame?

Subtleties surrounding red are aplenty. There is something curious about the 'tomato reds' and 'berry reds,' whichever you prefer. And there is a side of auspicious reds that no Bengali can set aside, ever!



Autumnal grace is akin to poetry in the cycle of the Bengali seasons, and it also ushers the fiery celebration of Durga stepping into her mortal abode.

A broad 'paar' in the reddest hue, off-balanced with the silky touch of the purest garad is P for puja Perfection. Weary of the blazing sun, just cool it down with a white-red taant and you dazzle anyway.

The ancient Greeks saw demigod-like power in red, the Christians see redemption, and we are not too different. We see hope in red, we see purity. Red is energy and a symbol of the primal life forces, and all our current symbolisms of red arise from its powerful associations of the past. It is a legacy passed not from one generation to another, but one epoch to another.

Any fashion crazed soul will vouch for the innate audacity of red, its power to grab attention amidst a crowd of hundred. As the red belle in an evening gown sways through the crowd, quivering hearts make their gaze follow her trail. Unmistakably, red captures attention even if it is amidst a thousand other reds.

Passion we have already stated; love, piety, and hope covered in all its standing, but that is not life in its entirety. Battlegrounds too are red, as are illusory boundaries that divide real people. Ideologies made us bleed and we still spill blood on sacred earth for what we believe, or what we do not want to assert to.

But ask a child to draw the sun, ask a child to draw us...its undeniably red...red...red!

Mesmerising red makes us move forward, it gives us a sense of purpose even when everything seems to fall apart. But one thing all should bear in mind that at times, red means to STOP —a traffic sign, just more like a divine order.

Context is key. Placed against the darkness of our lives, red illuminates in an otherworldly fire; on a white background it appears dull, but in contrast it takes on an unmatched radiance. No matter which aspect you try to see life, there is red, because you see, green may be the symbol of life, but it is red that is the colour of vitality.

By Mannan Mashhur Zarif
Model: Azra Mahmood
Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed
Wardrobe: LS Desk
Jewellery: Glued Together
Make-up And Hair: Noyon Ahamed And Niloy
Styling: Sonia Yeasmin Isha
Location: Mermaid Beach Resort, Cox's Bazar