



## **RACISM IN BANGLADESH – FAIR AND LOVELY!**

*Assembly 18 – January 30<sup>th</sup> 2003*

Not everything about one's own culture is good. People of other nations used to say that the British were snobs because we thought we were better than anyone else. In particular, they said, that the British, with their white skin (well it is a pinky-brown actually) thought they were better than people with black or brown skins. This is called RACISM – and it is a horrible prejudice and has caused much unhappiness and injustice. In the past, some British people DID think that people with darker skins were inferior. We were racist. I was brought up by people who had listened to that criticism and said, "That is true. Some of us are snobs and racists and we should not be – and we will see that our children are not like that." So I was brought up NOT to be a snob and NOT to be a racist – not to think that anyone with a different colour of skin to me was inferior. I was taught in church that the Creator had made all people to be brothers and sisters and he had made us all different and he loved us all, as we were.

Then I came to Bangladesh and what did I see but advertisements for creams that make your skin more white – Fair and Lovely! And I heard people say that some girl's parents would find it difficult to find her a nice husband because her skin was dark – and I was shocked. A lot of Bangladeshis are racist! I still find it hard to believe this!

I want you to know that I think you are all beautiful and none of you are inferior because your skin is a little bit browner or a little bit whiter than other people's. I would like to tell you a nice story that I heard, about a Bangladeshi boy who was very nice and very clever and his parents were looking for a wife for him and

they found a very nice girl and introduced him to her. Afterwards, he said that he was very disappointed because her skin was dark. His parents asked him, please, to think again as she was a very nice girl and they were sure that they would be happy together. In the end, the boy agreed with them. That was 40 years ago and the marriage has been a very strong and very happy one.

I do hope you will be very critical of this part of your culture. Just because something is in our culture, does not mean that it is good or bad. We all have to decide which part of our culture we want to practice because it is good and which part is bad. There are parts of my British culture that I do not like at all. I do ask you to think very seriously before you copy the racist thinking that is in Bangladesh and I invite you to say, "NO!" to racism because it makes people think that, because their skin is darker, then they are less beautiful or less valuable than others. The Creator made us all and he made us all to be loved and respected by him and each other.

God bless you.



## **FORGERIES – AND THE REAL THING!**

*Assembly 19 February 2<sup>nd</sup> 2003*

*(Take a forged 500 taka note) What is this? (Show note round and when they say, "It's 500 taka," note, shake head.) When I tell you that this note was returned by the bank with a little note with it, can you guess why?*

**FORGED!** It is not a real 500 taka note but a forged one! It is a very good forgery but it was discovered by some well-trained person in the bank. The bank people are trained now, as are some people in shops, to tell the forged note from the real one. Some people try to be clever and forge bank notes – that is they try and

copy the paper, colours and designs in order to cheat (*nokol*) people. In the Second World War, the Germans tried to destroy the economy of their enemies by flooding Europe with forged notes. It can be very dangerous to the economy.

An American called Billy Graham was one day on an aeroplane going somewhere and he got into conversation with the man beside him and he asked him what his work was – and the man said he worked for his bank to protect it against forged notes. Billy Graham said, ‘You must have handled a lot of forged notes!’ But the man said, ‘No, I handle a lot of real notes – so that when I feel a forged note, I know it.’

Do you understand what he was saying? He always picked up and handled real notes, true notes – he got to know how they felt, how they looked, he held them up to the light and saw what they looked like then – he got very used to them. THEN, when he picked up a forged note, he knew immediately that there was something wrong with it.

It is very important for all of us, but especially young people, to get as much experience as possible of what is good, what is true, what is beautiful, what is honest, what is pure – to fill your life with these things. Then, when you meet people and things that are not good and true and beautiful and honest and pure, *you will know* that there is something wrong – that this is something you do not want – and you can make correct judgments.

There is a lot of rubbish around for young people. There are bad books and magazines, bad programmes on television and on the internet. There are things that are full of ugliness and horror and evil. Do not fill your mind with such things. Switch them off! Choose what is good and true and helpful.

One day, if not already, you may meet people who are like forged bank notes. They pretend to be good, and honest and skilled – and they are not. They pretend to like you when they just want to use you. They are not what they seem. At best, they are a nuisance and waste a lot of time. At worst, they can hurt you very

much. Learn, while you are young, what real people and experiences are like. Develop a taste for them. Learn to be like that yourself. This will protect you, later, when you meet people who seem to be OK – but they are really like a forged note because, really, they are different - their lives are not honest. Focus on the truth and your eyes will learn to be able to see what is not true. You too can become like the specialist in forged notes! In this way, you are educating yourself for life. God bless you.



## HYPOCRITS!

*Assembly 20<sup>th</sup> February 2003*

We were all very sad, and some of you were surprised, when Mrs Tahera Hamid left us last Thursday. She has been a remarkable teacher and has done a lot for our school. The management of the school had known for some time that she wished to leave teaching and take another career but we did not know quite when this would happen. So we lined someone up to take her place who is now officially appointed. We welcome Mrs Naeema Quayes as the new Coordinator of the Junior School and wish her all the best in her new position.....

*(Show the forged 500 taka note)* Do you remember, yesterday, I showed you this? What is it? What is the best way of knowing whether a note is forged or not? *(Handling the real notes as much as possible and getting to know them so that you know immediately when a note is not real.)* I told you that life will bring you people and experiences, some of which are not what they seem on the outside so you have a life-skill to learn.

I want to talk about the same subject in a different way today. Do you know what a mask is? Maybe some of you have taken