

A pebble is a little round stone that is found on many beaches. It means, 'You are not the only person in the world!' 'You are not the only person in your class!' You have to learn, as everyone must, how to be *both* an individual *and* one of a group. It is not easy but some of you are not learning fast enough. So we are going to be more strict with you to help you to wake up to your responsibilities. I am sure most parents will be very glad that we are doing this and helping those of them who are also trying to help you to develop this life-skill. I expect some of your parents say to you at times, "You are not the only person in this family!"

God bless you.



## STORING PROVISIONS FOR THE FUTURE

*Assembly 44 – March 17<sup>th</sup> 2003*

### *Take Cyril the Squirrel – stuffed toy/puppet*

The winter in the UK is very cold – snow on the ground and ice. Most of the plants have lost all their leaves and nothing is growing. The only green things are the special evergreen trees whose leaves are strong and leathery so they can stand the cold. Humans need fires and central heating to keep them warm – and animals that have no protection die. In most places, the farm animals have to come indoors. But some of the wild animals are very sensible. They go to sleep for the winter. It is called 'hibernation' – from the Latin 'hiber' meaning winter. This is a very clever way of managing weather that you do not like. You just go to sleep. But hibernation is a special sleep – the animal's temperature drops, its heart rate slows down. Anyone finding such an animal would think it was dead. If there is a warm day, the animal may wake up and move around a little bit, eat food that it

has stored, and then fall asleep again. One of these animals is called the SQUIRREL.

Let me introduce you to a friend of mine. (*Take Cyril out of bag.*) He is a squirrel and his name is Cyril. Cyril the Squirrel. Can you say SQUIRREL? .....You are much cleverer than I was when I was little, I couldn't say 'squirrel' – I said 'squiggle'. The native squirrel in the UK is the beautiful RED squirrel but the grey squirrels arrived and they were bigger and more aggressive and now the red squirrel is very rare and is a protected species. (What's that, Cyril? I am making him feel embarrassed? I know, you are a grey squirrel – not so exclusive but you are very nice. You need not feel upset!)

Squirrels live in trees. I have a wonderful big cedar tree next to my house in the UK and there are squirrels in it. They are very good climbers and jump from branch to branch. All squirrels hibernate in winter and, to prepare for this, they store nuts all through the autumn. You know what nuts are? Squirrels collect nuts in their mouths but (what are you saying, Cyril?) Yes, I was going to say that – you hold the nuts in your mouth but you do not eat them. (*Blow out cheeks.*) One sees squirrels going round looking like this.....and then they hide them somewhere carefully. The problem is that squirrels often forget where they have hidden their nuts. This is very good because sometimes they have put them in a hole in the ground and, if they are not disturbed and eaten, then those nuts grow into trees later. The squirrels hide the nuts so that they know that, if they wake up in the winter on a warm day, they can have a meal. Then, when they wake up in the spring, when there are no nuts, they can eat them then also. (Yes, Cyril, the nuts are very good in Bangladesh too..)

Several animals store food for the winter. In fact, people have to do that in all countries where the winter is very cold. There is nothing growing in the ground through the winter so that, in the days before refrigerators, all people had to live on was what they

had stored somewhere frost-free - potatoes, onions, carrots, salt meat, apples....

In a way, this is what you are doing in your school days. You are storing up a good education so that you can use it later in your life. You are developing good habits that will be a great help to you later. Sometimes, in school and college, you make good friends that are a source of great support and pleasure for the rest of your life. Life can bring good times but also bad times, like the British winter. Now is the time when you collect a lot of things that you will use later on when life is not so easy as it usually is, when you are a child.

God bless you.



## **HOW MUCH WE DEPEND ON RESPONSIBLE PEOPLE!**

*Assembly 45. Wednesday March 18, 2003*

I have some very happy news to announce. The Superintendent of our school Mokhlesur Rahman Talukdar is going to be married – a week on Thursday – March 27<sup>th</sup> to Sabera Rahman. We congratulate Superintendent Lenin and his future wife, Mita.

I have requested his permission to inform you of the work that his future wife does because it is so interesting and I think you would like to know. She works at Zia International Airport and, when I tell you that she is in a high tower, can you guess what her job is? Yes, she is an air traffic controller! I told him that if HE can control this school and if SHE can control all the aeroplanes over Dhaka, what will their children be able to do? I think one of them may one day be Prime Minister of Bangladesh! Who knows?

Let us think of the work of an Air Traffic Controller. Have you seen the police trying to control the traffic on the major street corners? It is very difficult – but, in the 4 years I have been in Bangladesh, I think the drivers are beginning to have a little more respect for the traffic police. Many of the drivers have woken up to the fact that, if they obey the signals of the lights and the traffic police, then they are more likely to arrive at their destination more quickly than if they push forward to fill every space and create a traffic jam.

But imagine if you are responsible for airplane traffic! This is much more dangerous. Each plane needs a lot of space in the sky. You have to say to one plane, “Come in and land now on this particular runway and the wind speed is this or that.” And to another plane you have to say, “We have no room for you yet. You must stay in the sky 10 minutes longer!” Then there are those times when there is mist and fog and the pilot cannot see and you must help to guide him down. This is very skilled work indeed. Another friend of mine is a computer specialist who produces the software that tells the plane what angle they must come in at.

When you and I go on airplanes, we must remember how many people are working so that we can travel safely. It is a very complicated business and every person in the process must do his or her job well and safely or there can be a terrible accident. In fact, there are all sorts of things that you and I do not think about – but someone, somewhere, is doing their job properly so that you and I can enjoy the conveniences of modern life.

When we turn a tap on, water comes! How does that happen? It happens because hundreds of people are working for the water company. Then there is electricity and gas and all the drains under the city that carry away the waste, all the people who sweep the streets, and repair the roads and plant the nice trees in the middle of the roads which I can hardly believe will ever grow! But some trees are so brave in Bangladesh and they grow, even in the middle of a polluted road – but someone has to care for them. So,