

Auntyji Ko Pucho By: Auntyji

Auntyji's birthday party was a huge success. The house and the pool looked fabulous. The food was delicious; the booze flowed freely and the bhangra beat was intoxicating. Auntyji wore a black chiffon saree with a backless choli and looked absolutely stunning. A lot of people came, and they all came bearing bottles of vodka. Now she has cases full of it to last her for years (not really ... but should be enough for a week or two).

Auntyji was in her element. She carefully balanced her dirty martini while nibbling on her chicken tikkas and mingling with her guests. Everyone was smart enough to pay her compliments and tell her how young she looked, and she accepted their lies graciously. Even the sudden summer rain shower did not ruin her mood ... she just burst out singing 'Ye raat bhigi bhigi' like a true Bollywood heroine and felt like Mumtaz (or Helen) when the rain drenched saree clung to her skin (a lot of you CityMasala readers are too young to know who they were ... you are lucky she did not compare herself to Geeta Bali). There was a silver lining to this rain ... in true Bollywood fashion, Auntyji got to do a costume change and re-appeared in a stunning red dress.

Now Auntyji has a bone to pick with CityMasala readers. It was her "special day", and she did not receive even one lousy card or wish, let alone a present, from any of her admirers or readers. When did they all turn into miserly banyas and marwaris? Don't you know that there is no such thing as a free lunch! You think that she listens to your problems and doles out free advice without having any expectations? If she knew she was going to get stiffed, she might as well have been filing her nails, eating Bon-Bons and watching Oprah instead. Now some of you who know her well may say that she sounds very much like her good friend Ramu when she whines like this ... get over it! Next time just remember to send her a drink.

Speaking of drinks ... Diwali is right around the corner. It is Auntyji's favorite festival. Not only does it stand for a lot of virtues - celebrating good over evil, worshiping knowledge and wisdom, celebrating the Hindu new year, a time of giving and kindness, a joyous occasion to bring together family and friends ... it also gives Auntyji another opportunity to indulge in eating (especially the barfis and jalebees) and drinking without feeling guilty. Many feel it's OK to gamble too ... so Auntyji does not argue with that and makes her pilgrimage to the casinos for some indulgence.

Diwali is also a time to be grateful for what we have and say thank you for our health, wealth, family, friends, and all the other things that we take for granted in life. Auntyji just learnt about a friend of hers who passed away from cancer and wishes her well wherever she is now. Events like this make us realize how fragile we are ... and that we should embrace every moment of life. We should be really thankful for what we have, and help those that are not so fortunate.

Q: *Dear Auntyji, my husband and I have no close relatives or relative who would be willing to take our three children if something were to happen to the two of us. We really do not have many close friends, but there is a couple we know with four children. The children are nice and the family shares similar educational and religious values as we do. Our children will not be anyone's burden, they would come with income sufficient to care for them, and enough money for their college education. Do you think we should ask this family to take care of our children or should we consider sending them back to India should anything happen to my husband and me?*
Anjali from Coral Springs

A: Anjali - aap kaun si duniya mein rehti hain? Auntyji considers herself to be a wise woman, and can give advice on a lot of issues to help people, but she would never venture to make such a decision. You want to decide the fate of your children based upon a paragraph question that you are pos-

having to raise seven kids? That is a complete lifestyle change for anyone. Have they expressed any interest in taking care of your children? You talk about sending them to India - to whom? Will they want to take care of your kids? Will your kids be able to adjust there? What would your kids want?

Auntyji is not saying that she has the answers, but she feels that you have not really asked yourself all the questions. It is a good thing that you are concerned about the welfare of your children if something were to happen to you because a lot of people never think about it. If you are financially well off, you can set up trusts in your children's names. You can direct the money specifically for their living expenses, education, to be given to them as an adult etc. Make sure that you and your husband have wills and that your wishes are clearly expressed.

If after all your considerations you still feel that this couple is the best choice, go ahead and approach them. You are asking them for a lot, so



ing to a faceless person in a magazine. Auntyji just hopes that not all decisions in your life are made in such a frivolous manner. Deciding your children's future is a very serious matter and needs more thought than you have put into it. How old are your children? How well do you know this couple? What is the financial status of this couple? How can you say that your children will not be a burden ... you may have provided for them financially, but have you thought about that couple

give them time to think. You might also want to think about compensating them in some way for doing you such a big favor. Just don't get offended if they say no. As for sending your kids to India, the same considerations hold true for whoever will take care of them there. On top of it, your children will have to adjust to a complete change in lifestyle, which can be very traumatic. You are the best judge for your children. Consider all of your options. Nothing is set in stone. Somewhere down the road you can change your mind if you meet more people or your situation changes - and hopefully, you will be fine and live to see your children grow up to become fine adults.

Q: *Dear Auntyji, you seem to have a flare for both men's and women's fashion so I thought I'd take a chance and ask you this question. It's about men's hairstyles - I am balding and decided four years ago to shave my head completely bald for a cleaner look. I received a lot of positive attention from women at the time. However, over the last year or so I have noticed more men with longer hair and women paying less attention to bald-headed men. Are bald-headed men out and longhaired guys in?*
Pawan from Florida

A: Arre babu, if you are old enough to start going bald, then you should be smart enough to know that people are attracted to the person and not the length of his hair. Fashions come and go, and you live with them or without them. If you are a balding person, there is not much you can do about it or think about having long hair. Sure, you can do the comb-over, or a hair weave, or wear a toupee, but you will just look silly and people will laugh behind your back.

You have already done the smartest thing for balding men ... either wear the hair very short or shave the head. Auntyji finds that to be a very sexy look on most men ... and she is sure that she is not the only one who feels that way. So, forget about fleeting fashions and even flightier women and show your shaved head with confidence. And, with all the money you will save on hair styling products, go buy yourself some trendy new clothes. Soon you will be attracting more women than you can handle.

Don't forget, life is short - live it to the fullest with attitude! Auntyji@citymasala.com.