

Akhi, the beggar sage, sits at the city gates, instructing all in the dance of life.

Ask Akhi...



Dear Akhi,

My friend in medical school says there are more female students than male in his class. Women's issues are on the lips of political candidates and I have to be careful about inclusive language. I know there are cultural restraints in many eastern countries. What do you see at your gate?

--Out West

Dear OW,

These days, I see as many women as men at my gate. Many wear the traditional garb; they say it is cooler in this climate. But their dress is not what distinguishes them the most.

The men all have intent looks, some debating with others as they go by. And more recently, I have seen some men speaking on phones that have no wire whatsoever. How can this be? So animated is their conversation, sometimes they shout into the small plastic device. On a few occasions, those on the phones do not watch where they are going and step directly into camel dung. It brings Akhi joy.

The women approach more quietly, watching more than talking, some tending several children at once. Even the women in business attire seem to be more graceful. Perhaps Akhi is more attentive when the women walk by! It brings Akhi joy.

Today Akhi saw a woman who, for the last few months, was great with child. She used to walk very erect, proud, full of anticipation, and with some weariness too. As tired as she was, however, her face was radiant. Today she came by again, not with a huge tummy, but with a newborn in a sling, higher, more within reach. I could not see the child except in the face of the mother. Nor could I tell whether she carried a boy or a girl child, but she looked as though she was smelling a rose. It brings Akhi joy.

So my Western friend, I do not know if it would be fair to say things over here change from time to time, but they certainly change from face to face. Allah be praised for the difference.

All the best to you, Akhi

Spotlight on Sally Wile

A Beacon Street board member



Sally and husband Ed

Involvement with Beacon Street: Has served just two months on the board and has volunteered to assist the Personnel Comm. She has been a client when on the pastoral staff at Plymouth Church in Shaker Heights.

Occupation: Rev. Wile is a chaplain at Heather Hill in Chardon.

Preoccupation: Balancing life as a mother, a wife, and a minister.

Family: Ed Gernerchak, husband of nine years who is currently executive director for Interfaith Hospitality Network; Hallie who is 8 and Christopher who is 6.

Favorite authors and books: J. D. Salinger; and a great story about redemption though it is not an easy read, Once In a House On Fire by Andrea Ashworth.

Favorite movies: in the "romantic" category, "Gone With the Wind," and in the gritty category, "Mean Streets" with Robt. DiNero.

Hobbies: "My preoccupation does not leave much time for this."

Best thing about working with Beacon Street: "I get to work with Beacon Street from the inside now, and I can help it grow."

Motto or words to live by: "When it comes right down to it, I try to live by the Golden Rule."