of you can organize just one extra hour's sleep between now and the exams? Make friends with your body. Respect the God who designed your body! God bless you.

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YOUR HUMAN RIGHTS!

Assembly 104 – July 27th 2003

Not all ideas from the developed countries are good ones but the idea of Human Rights (*Manobodhikar*) – and especially Human Rights for children and women, have been totally accepted by the Bangladesh government and people in theory. Children have rights. And one of your rights is to your body. Let us go on thinking about making friends with your body. You have the right to say where your body is touched and how and by whom. Each of us have parts of our bodies which are especially private and no one should touch us there without our permission. You have the right to say NO if anyone touches you there when you do not want them to. I am not talking about ordinary fun and games of course or, indeed someone having to separate you from someone you are fighting with or having to discipline you. I am talking about private things.

Sometimes if you go to the doctors, the doctor has to touch your private parts but there should always be someone with you when the doctor does that so you know that it is all right. And if you are a girl, you can always ask to be seen by a lady doctor and sometimes that is possible. You have your rights and you have the right to say NO when someone touches you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable. Shall we practice saying NO….. That is not loud enough! You must say it very firmly so that the person knows you are serious! ……Now stamp your foot when you say it! Good! It is good to give reasons for your NO so you can say,

"No. Do not do that. It is wrong and I do not like it!" It is OK for you to say that. You have your rights!

Now, there is another matter. You and I know that some secrets are very nice secrets. Maybe there is a family birthday coming up and you are planning a surprise and people say, "It is a secret. Shhh! Do not say anything. If you do, you will spoil our fun!" But some secrets are very bad secrets and you should never keep secrets about things that are wrong. Sometimes people do bad things and then hope you will not say anything. They say, "This is our little secret. You must not tell anyone." Secrets can be used by bad people to stop them getting into trouble. But you do not have to keep such secrets. You can tell. You *must* tell. Because if something bad is happening, you have the right to tell, so that it stops – immediately! Tell someone whom you trust and tell it loud and clear and, if the bad things do not stop, you tell another person. You have the right to protect your own body from anyone who touches it in the wrong sort of way.

You are very precious. Your body is very important and private to you. Just because you are a child, or just because you are small, that does not mean that you have to suffer any bigger person touching you in any way you do not like. But again, I say, sometimes, if you have to be disciplined, people have to get hold of you, which you may not like!

And I say also to you older ones. Just because you are getting bigger does not give you the excuse to abuse little ones in any way. If you abuse a little child, it would be better for you if a big stone was put round your neck and you were thrown into the deepest part of the sea. Jesus said that and I am sure your prophet said something like that also. Children are human too and they have Human Rights. God bless you.