



To be One of the 'Irrational Half'

by Aasha Mehreen Amin



THEY term us to be the weaker sex, the unpredictable, irrational and over-emotional sex. Some patronizingly call us their better half while others in their own stupidity say that we are dim witted and scatter brained. If only they could see what kind of crap that we get doled out to us, perhaps they would be a little less condescending.

Women, accused ever since Eve allegedly bit into the apple (although why she is to carry the entire blame is not clear), have been the victims of all kinds of discrimination in the family, work place and society in general. To analyze each one of them would take days, perhaps months, not to mention a lot of space in this section of the newspaper. And who has the time anyway to listen to another complaining article about how badly women are treated? Certainly not the 'rational' half as they would like to call themselves.

So let us just touch upon attitude — a rather vague intangible thing, but one that can lead to great well being and harmony or to the outbreak of world wars. The attitude we are talking about is the attitude towards women, of society in general.

Let's start with the home scenario. If the family has at least one male member, the woman in question, whether daughter or daughter-in-law, will be treated as an appendage, as someone who almost does not exist. It will invariably be her husband or her

brother who will be asked what he wants to eat for lunch, when he wants his tea and so on. One can hardly blame the guy in question since he has seen this all his life and just doesn't know any better. Sadly, many times it is another female that shows this kind of disrespect or disregard for her fellow sex. We must hasten to

acknowledge, of course that there are families where female members are given equal importance although this is quite rare.

Outside the home can be even worse. If you are a woman the rickshawala will charge a fare much higher than what he would have dared to ask a man. The ride itself is of course ex-

tremely painful with ogling, roving and winking eyes from all directions as if you are some kind of mutant creature which has escaped from the zoo.

If it is the bank or some other institution she has to go to for personal business, a woman will be attacked by more of those lead stares and

then bombarded by both male and females! with questions regarding her marital status, location of her home, number of kids (if any) and what her monthly salary is. This may be followed by a derogatory remark like, 'what have you got to worry, you don't need the money, your husband has enough, this is just to kill time.' It is with great restraint, practised over years of suffering, that the woman may not slap this Smart Alec's face and retort 'It's none of your business!'

At the supermarket she goes to the shopkeepers will be overly solicitous if she looks prosperous or will leer at her most obnoxiously if she is

poor. Then there is the time when she goes to a restaurant with her husband or male friend. Starting from the door man to the line of waiters, it is her male companion who will be greeted with a 'salam sir' or 'good evening sir'. After the meal when the bill comes and she is the one paying including the fat tip, guess who gets the 'thank you'? Right. The 'sir' who gets the reverence of a dignitary and you, poor woman, that of a scullery maid.

These of course, represent only the tip of the iceberg of what we have to tolerate. If it all sounds too plaintive then perhaps it should be. After all if we have the privilege of being every body's dumping ground for abuse and disrespect, surely we should have the privilege to let off a little steam?

Towards More Picturesque Cities

by Fayza Haq

square feet. The area of the project was 11.83 acres and the density was 280 persons per acre.

The Bahai Temple Complex by Mehdi Masud Khan was another interesting display. The specification by the client was that the temple should have nine roads. According to the Bahai religion, anyone from any religion could enter this temple. It had kept in mind the traditional Indian architecture. There were nine squares with the temple in the centre, which was surrounded by a school, an auditorium, library, a research centre, a vocational training institute, a clinic and an old home. The area covered was 15 acres. The temple was six storied to give monumental. The other buildings were either four or three stories high. There was no vehicular traffic in the complex. Mehdi had used cork sheet. With air brush spray different tones of brown were obtained. There were wooden trees and a glass pond. The area was 12.8 acres including the lake.

The Central Jail area development by Abdus Salam Liton had in mind that the jail would be shifted from Ghazipur. There would then be a huge gift of land and that was what was tackled in the project. Salam had retained the original gate, mosque and the cells where important political prisoners were kept. The portion towards new Dhaka incorporated socio-cultural activities, while the part leading towards Buri Ganga catered for commercial functions. There was also an open space. The site area was 30 acres while the built area was three acres.

The Biplob Uddayan Complex of Chittagong was done by Nasreen Hussain. The plan was to incorporate the centre into the growing shopping centre and also to maintain the gravity of the centre itself. There was a museum for records of the Liberation War and two auditoriums. Nasreen had also shown how commercial activities could be activated without letting them encroach the 'uddayan'. The supporting socio-cultural functions such as the museum and auditorium acted as buffers between the commercial growth and the 'uddayan'.

Each design was supported by a report which drew upon the existing body of knowledge, and rationalized the parameters and standards of design, and defined the programme.

There was a temporary Press Club, Rotary Club, library and a mosque. They had to be rearranged and amalgamated with Shilpkala complex, and the shopping centre. The existing buildings were simply rearranged. The buildings, though modern, reflected a sense of regionalism. There were eleven buildings, all double storied and interconnected. The double stories were in keeping with the scale of the 'mufassil' area.

Shakila Khan's Apartment Complex at Gulshan was another absorbing entry. The community facilities included a club, shopping centre and a central plaza. The habitable buildings were sprawled around the central facilities. There was a peripheral road which entered underground parking level at different inlets. The interior space was kept free of vehicular traffic mainly to create an uninterrupted promenade. On the southern sides, the blocks were lower to allow the prevailing wind to come in. These were four storied houses. The twelve storied ones were on the north side. There were short term parking spaces on the surface for visitors. The mass model was prepared with wooden blocks, model papers, woolen trees, beads and foil paper. It was aimed at the upper middle class. The five types of flats were 1580 square feet, 1600 square feet, 2100 square feet, 1850 square feet and 2300



"Chandpur Civic Centre" designed by Bayezid Ismail Chowdhury,

Buying a Flat

IT is not right to suppose that you can buy a flat. What you buy is not the bricks and mortar of the flat itself, but the right to occupy it for a certain time. To purchase the freehold of a flat is almost a legal impossibility.

When you "buy a flat" you obtain a lease. Sitting tenants should note that the terms of the leases they buy will, almost certainly, not be the same as the ones they have now. If the landlord suggests you buy his lease, ask him for a copy of the document and take it to a solicitor first.

It is most important that you know what is in the lease, for although you are proposing to buy it, you will have to observe all the covenants in it. It is no use saying, 'Oh, I own the place now'. All you own is the lease, and you cannot shed any of your responsibilities.

If you buy a long lease, you are safer than if you have only a monthly tenancy. You may be buying a much longer lease than the average landlord would grant to a rent-payer. If the need arises, you can sell the lease again, almost as easily as if you were selling a freehold house.

Take Advice

Snags arise if the lease you are offered is not a 'head lease'. Many people have discovered that the company or

usual work. Be prepared, too, for a charge of ten guineas or more for deducing the title to the mortgagors, and for other items.

Solicitor's Costs

When buying a house, you pay only your own costs, but when buying a lease, sometimes the lessee has to pay the solicitors' costs on both sides. By prior private arrangement, you may be able to avoid this.

After you have bought the lease, there will be no more need to fear rent day as a waste of money: every take you now pay will be savings. You will, however, still have to pay the ground rent, and perhaps a service charge for keeping gardens tidy, roof repairs, hot water, light for passageways, etc. There may, in addition, be building insurance charges.

Some of your liabilities may seem irksome, but it is much more fun to care for your own flat than for one for which you are paying rent.

Questions Answered

Q. If the building were to be pulled down would the flat owner be compensated?

A. The owner of the freehold would, and the leaseholder would claim from him.

Q. Are you allowed to make interior changes, such as partition walls?

A. Not usually, but this depends on the lease.

Q. Could the ground rent be increased?

A. Not normally, as it is a fixed sum.

Q. Does ground rent pay for outside painting?

A. Not usually. Leaseholders, like tenants, must pay their due share.



21 Annual American Music Awards '94 Nominee Janet Jackson

Removing Stains

by Sylvia Saleem

MOST stains can be removed if washed at once with soap or detergent and water in the ordinary way.

Stains are usually removed with either a solvent or a bleach. There are many proprietary dry-cleaning solvents and bleaches on the market, some for specific purposes. But some ingredients are normally available in the house or can easily be obtained at chemists' shops — these are helpful, since you can apply the gentlest remedies first and stronger ones if these do not work; also a variety is necessary as not all can be used on all colours and fabrics. Try remedies, especially hydrogen peroxide, on hems or unseen

stains on Hard Surfaces

Baths. For ordinary cleaning use a mild paste and avoid scratchy cleaners. For obstinate marks, try a cloth moistened with vinegar and wash immediately with hot, soapy water.

Hard-water marks. Soak a cloth in paraffin and rub in crushed kitchen salt — rub stains hard and wash off with hot, soapy water at once.

Green marks: Use vinegar first, wash and when dry rub over with paraffin-soaked cloth. Wash.

Pans. Discolouration of aluminum pans is not harmful but can be cured by boiling apple peelings and water in them. A burnt pan can be

soaked in hot water and salt (2

tablespoons to 1 qt) for several hours. Lift out of the water and rub with abrasive wire mesh. Repeat several times if necessary. For obstinate cases, pour a handful of salt and 1

tablespoon of abrasive powder

in the saucepan. Half fill with cold water and leave overnight. Next day, bring water in pan very slowly to boiling point and boil for half an hour. Empty and rub with abrasive pads.

Gilt Frames. Dull and discoloured frames can be restored by rubbing with a clean cloth dipped in warm turpentine. As turpentine is inflammable, warm by standing bottle in a bowl of hot water, well away from any open flame.

Wallpaper. A cube of bread, 24 hours old, will take off a surprising amount of dirt from wallpaper, but for grease stains you will need to dab with a solvent such as carbon tetrachloride. For overall cleaning, you can use a dough mixed of white (surgical) spirit flour and water — 3 tablespoons flour, 1.50 tablespoons spirit, 1.50 tablespoons water.

Add spirit first, then the water and knead to a pliable dough.

Cut-glass vases. Wash cut-glass in warm, soapy water containing a few drops of ammonia. For deposit at the bottom of decanters or flower vases shake in some salt and cover it with vinegar. Shake well and leave for a few hours. Rinse, wash and polish. Turn a decanter upside down and do not fill until quite dry.



A scene from a look-alike show