

LIVING

Who is the More Inhibited One?

by Fayza Haq

It is not the female alone who should be condemned for being withdrawn, uninterested or shy in the business or game of love. All the psychotherapy, sex-manuals, and communications through exclusive magazines do not sort out the muddle about male indifference.

The woman has the terrible feeling that by nature, she is not adequate enough. Inevitably the woman is blamed for lack-lustre love composition. But it is conveniently forgotten that he too can be as much vulnerable to inhibition as some 20 year-old convent-bred bride—fed on novels of a century back.

He is often so wrapped up in the business of social climbing—doing overtime desk work without pay and extra-hours for his intellectual, economic and egocentric satisfaction—that he has spent all his reservoir of energy. He might remember the paying of bills and taking the children for the week-end outing or an occasional gift for the woman in his life. But he just has not the time or the inclination—or at least he says and feels so. It is no wonder that he is turned off when it comes to decoding the magical mystery waves of love. Buried in files, drowned with telephone calls, overloaded with meetings of business concerns, he is just too beaten up—physically and emotionally.

The circumstances and surroundings are of utmost importance too. The front door ringing, the telephone buzzing, the movement of the neighbours or servants orurchins or even other members of the family can just have him on his edge.

The noise of the car in the street below or in front, children playing, women gossiping, teenagers giggling over their shared secrets can all be overheard during the crucial time. Other things besides the noises also irritate him. The adjustment of furniture, the dust piled up here or there, the awareness of even a pet cat in the adjacent kitchenette can cool his ardour.

The Oedipus complex is just not an old bogey. Today it is real enough when the male's family feelings and interests do matter—especially as the aftermath of the first wild fling and the unexpected results to the embarrassment of more than one individual.

He is concerned about the opinion of his mother, sisters, and aunts who have nursed him through his first phase of measles. He has been in the power of his mother and other women in his family for ages and cannot throw them aside because his woman refuses to get along with the rest of the female brood.

Even in the west, and of course much more in the east,

despite the disruption and deflating of the concept of the joint-family harmony, the feelings, likes and dislikes of the family members remain of vital impact. Take the case of a well-known actress who had her husband as the fondest lover in the days of courtship and yet when the child was due, he grew distant. Despite the marriage he cares little now—and all because of the grip of the first wife and the entire family involved in the scandal of the season.

The male suffers from more subtle complexes as well. He is

harm him—it ought to stimulate him and give him more confidence. And yet he ponders and fusses as he grumbles about the dampness or the speck of dust on the floor or on the furniture.

By his late thirties, a man tends to get prosaic and biased—specially when he is caught up in an active career and has worries—like growing daughters and dependant nieces to be married off, according to the elaborate customs and traditions of the family. Yes, some men, even in their sixties and seventies have

may not be aware of it, or may try to ignore the fact, or even camouflage it from the eyes of the constantly cynical, ridiculing, wagging tongues.

The male chauvinist's notions about men may again be receiving severe and traumatic jolts. Women today, with their education, think and act independently. They are no longer the passive playmates. Women's lib has its own female ego symbol to flourish and cherish. All that energy and intelligence—unleashed with equality of education—bewilders the man and some times leaves him cold and uncaring.



A couple seen against a Parisian backdrop

Courtesy: Marie Claire

often unable to summon enough courage to express his intense and passionate drive—being not quite sure of his masculine prowess or ego.

Fossilised conceptions that women from good families and of good taste should not enjoy love or at least pretend not to enjoy it or talk naturally about it to her female friends, and that she must play the doorman, and not try wearing the pants, or taking the initiative where that intimate matter is concerned, may also make him nervous, frustrated and not quite sure of his grounds.

Outdated thinking in the line of losing one's vitality and capacity of creating, working, playing on TV or for the silver screen or even taking a morning class with effect can make him refuse to be affectionate to her too much of love—as they measure—can hardly

"superdrive." These, however, are the rare poetic cases, though no one is so "dumb" as to believe that the instinct is dead in a man just because he is 75 or 85.

Believing the latter myth would be like going in for the obsessed with public image—who feels that the "drive" should be hoarded for some brainstorm in his photography career, or for better designing of houses in is firm or going into more details in his medical research. Work is undoubtedly a substitute for one's love life; but why should that come in the way of one's career instead of being complementary to it?

The male can again be unknowingly suffering from problems such as blood pressure, anaemia or diabetes and so may not feel up to a demonstration of love although he

Of course, the male inhibition is not all to be blamed. There are countless women, especially in the east, who feel that a physical demonstration of love is something unpleasant or wrong. Whatever it is, it remains tabooed in the subconscious layers of her mind. Such women naturally have to be made to feel overpowered physically and mentally so that the guilt complex is written off. There are other women who take their charm for granted and are too smug and complacent. If such types put off the male the latter is consequently hardly to be blamed.

The fault, in any case, lies not in any single quarter or section of the playing court. For the smooth play of rapport it takes two to have it rolling with a gusto and flamboyance to the finish.

with their names. I lived in the Tuna Fish Street, and other people in the Trout Street. I was lucky to have an appetite for fish. Without green fingers it was better not to rent a house in an area with names of flowers. Would you like to live in the Banana Street? I would drive me bananas. The fancy for homely street names reached its pinnacle in the eighties. Feminism demanded their share in the naming of streets, and people ended up having to write name like Anna Jacoba, van Beieren-Huurdemans Street on envelopes.

At least it was possible to find your way around in such an area, once you have succeeded in memorising and pronouncing the tongue-twisters. That is, if you were lucky to find a non-vandalised public street map or an old resident in the area. Residential areas are built in no time, youngsters come in, and they hardly know the name of the streets surrounding their own home. They move by car and can only locate the supermarket and their own house. To ease these problems ingenious systems are designed to let you find your way around. I know of one experiment, however, which was so complicated that the residents thought it was meant for the outsiders, and the outsiders... Well, you can guess the end of that sentence.

There is one consolation in Bangladesh. You do not have to buy maps. According to my map of Gulshan, my house has number 8. My opposite neighbour would have the number of my house.

Dash it! I have given so many clues you could almost find my home.

Lost in Dhaka

by Nico den Tuinder

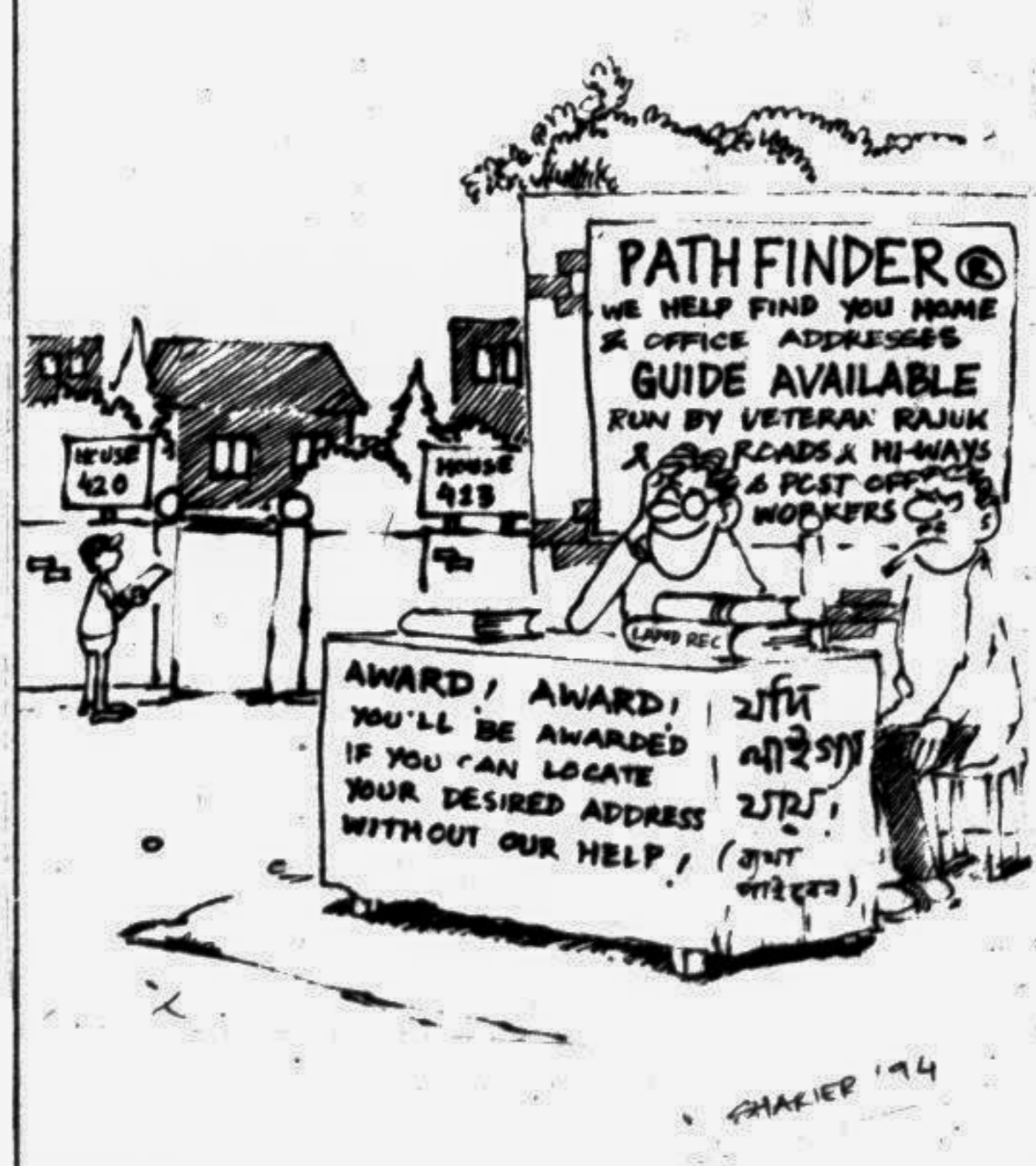
I am not going to tell you where I live. I believe that I have become quite famous in Dhaka by now, and I want to keep some privacy.

You would not be able to find my house without precise instructions anyway. To start with, there are two houses with my *bart number* in my street. Of course, they are not situated next to each other, and not even at the same side of the street.

The counterpart of my house number is at the beginning of the street; I live in the middle. By the way, you are lucky that there are only two houses with the same number. Some weeks ago I received a letter for a house with the same number, situated on another road. That one had three houses with the same number, as I found out trying to deliver the letter.

Everybody knew one house with the number 1 was looking for, and I spent some ten minutes going up and down the street, making a fool of myself. Virtue has its price in Dhaka.

My road presents just minor problems. One road in Gulshan starts off as number 99. After a bend it is reborn as number 96. At that place, you can live on road 96, while your opposite neighbour has the pleasure of living on road 99. Then the road renames itself again to number 104. After yet another bend, you suddenly find yourself walking on number 113. While still on 104, you will find a decent numbering system on your left. House number 2 is aptly situated next to number 1. On your right side, there is another number 2. Next to it is house number 422, and then number 21. Number 412 follows, then comes yet another number 2. I



Between the Indus and the Nile

by M S N Menon

THE region between the Indus and the Nile was the greatest theatre of human history. Some of the most memorable events took place here. Says historian Arnold Toynbee in his book *Oxus to Jamuna*: "One glance at history from the Indus basin told me more than 50 years of my studies."

Historians have pieced together a long history of six thousand years, three thousand to them well documented. According to Sir John Marshall, India and the Middle East were closely united by common bonds of civilisation. The pioneers of Mohenjodaro and Harappa, and later the Aryans, were in touch with the Sumerians, Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Greeks and Persians. These contacts were snapped one by one by the destruction of Alexandria, the greatest seat of learning in the West, by Khalif Omar; Baghdad and Damascus by Mongols; Persepolis, capital of Persian empire, by Alexander in 330 BC, and finally Persian power by Arabs in the 10th Century. Scholars have done little to unearth these past bonds, which is why the peoples of the region remain strangers to each other. This alienation must be overcome if new bonds are to be established.

That there was considerable interaction among the peoples is, now beyond doubt. They borrowed extensively from each other. This disproves popular claims to "Uniqueness". A few instances may be cited: the conflict between gods and titans, between Devas and Asuras, between good and evil—perhaps the earliest myth—can be traced to the conflict of Chaos (Tiamat) and Order (Marduk), the Sumerian creation myth. In god-making, the peoples of the region produced at first the nature gods and then invested them with moral and super human qualities. India was the first to expound monistic ideas. Similarly, magic, a concept as old as man, can be traced to the *Megis* (magicians) among the *Medes* (an Iranian tribe). The word became "magos" in Greek and "magus" in Latin.

Being ahead of others in thought, India was more often the giver. When Iranians were composing the *Avesta*, India had already reached the pinnacle of its philosophic quest, giving way to the skepticism of Buddhism. Industry was better organised in Mohenjodaro and Harappa than anywhere else in the world. And these centres had better civic life. Thus, India was like the sun, radiating its civilisational influence throughout Eurasia.

There is no doubt that the Aryans, played the most historic role in the region—from Turkey to the Indus. The entire region had a strong Sanskrit base. In India, the Aryans developed the most profound philosophic thoughts, while their cousins in Iran (derived from Aryan) built the most powerful empires, which spread the civilisation of the region to the entire Eurasian continent and beyond. A universal empire (the first in history) came into being under Cyrus extending from Libya to India. Darius built a palace, for which he drew building materials from as far as Egypt to India.

The *Rig-Veda* was partly developed in Iran before the Aryan tribes moved into India. There is much that is common in Sanskrit and Avestan languages. The caste system was common to India, Iran and Greece.

References in the Bible and Greek and Roman history show that commerce existed between India and the Middle East from very early times. Strabo tells that Indian goods were borne down the Oxus to Europe by way of the Caspian and Black Sea. In 975 BC Hiram, King of Tyre, sent a fleet to Ophir (at the mouth of Indus) to buy ivory, peacock, etc. so that he could present them to Solomon for the temple at Jerusalem.

The Mauryan empire was in touch with all the Greek provinces founded by Alexander, and Ashoka sent Buddhist missionaries to these. Greek governors with a view to convert them to Buddhism and to promote his mission of world peace. In any case, Ashoka's empire itself extended beyond Kabul. His stupa, found in Kandhar, contains his edicts in both Greek and Aramaic, the two "intentional" languages of the region in those days. The royal road from Pataliputra to Taxilla and beyond was well-trodden in those days by merchants and scholars.

Bukhara became a major centre of Buddhist learning and had a great library. Ibn Sina (Avicenna), a great philosopher of

Islam, was born and educated here. He was familiar with Indian thought and achievements.

After Ashoka's death, the Bactrian Greeks established themselves in Punjab. Menander (2nd c BC) was the greatest of them, and his conversion to Buddhism is recorded in *Milinda-Panha* (Questions of Milinda) a Platonic dialogue in Pali, in which sage Naga Sena plays the role of Socrates. The Bactrians left a profound legacy—the Gandhara school of art and architecture. Afghanistan remained Buddhist till the 9th c AD, when Islam overpowered

religions. Charaka, one of the greatest men of medicine, was his court physician.

Apart from its religious and philosophic thoughts, India gave to the region its astronomy, its numerals and knowledge of mathematics, its chess and fables. The influence of the fables was extensive in both Middle East and Europe. Based on such classics like *Panchatantra*, *Suka Saptati*, *Jataka*, *Hitopadesa* etc these stories were first translated into Persian and Arabic and then into Spanish and other European languages. They were not only entertaining as stories,

in the 8th c AD, was in fact based on Buddha's life. In 16th Century, Josephat was declared a Christian saint.

The Nestorian Christians played a crucial role in spreading Indian thoughts and achievements. After Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople, was banished for his unorthodox views, he migrated to Persia, where with the help of the Persian monarch Nushirvan (531-79) an academy was established at Jundeshapur. After Justinian closed the



Alexander



A sculpted figure, Mohenjodaro



A royal lady, Egypt

the whole region.

With the decline of the Mauryans in India, and Greeks in Bactria, the Sakas and Parthians, Iranian tribes, poured into India. This was followed by the Kushans from Central Asia, whose empire, with its capital at Peshawar (Purushapura) reached its maximum expansion (from Oxus to Jamuna) under Kanishka. Although he became a convert to Buddhism, he respected all

philosophic school (529 AD) in Athens, Greek scholars also migrated to this centre. The Nestorians and Greeks came in contact with Indian, Persian and Syrian sages and scholars. Nushirvan sent his own son to India to collect Indian books on medicine. Even after the advent of Islam this centre continued to flourish.

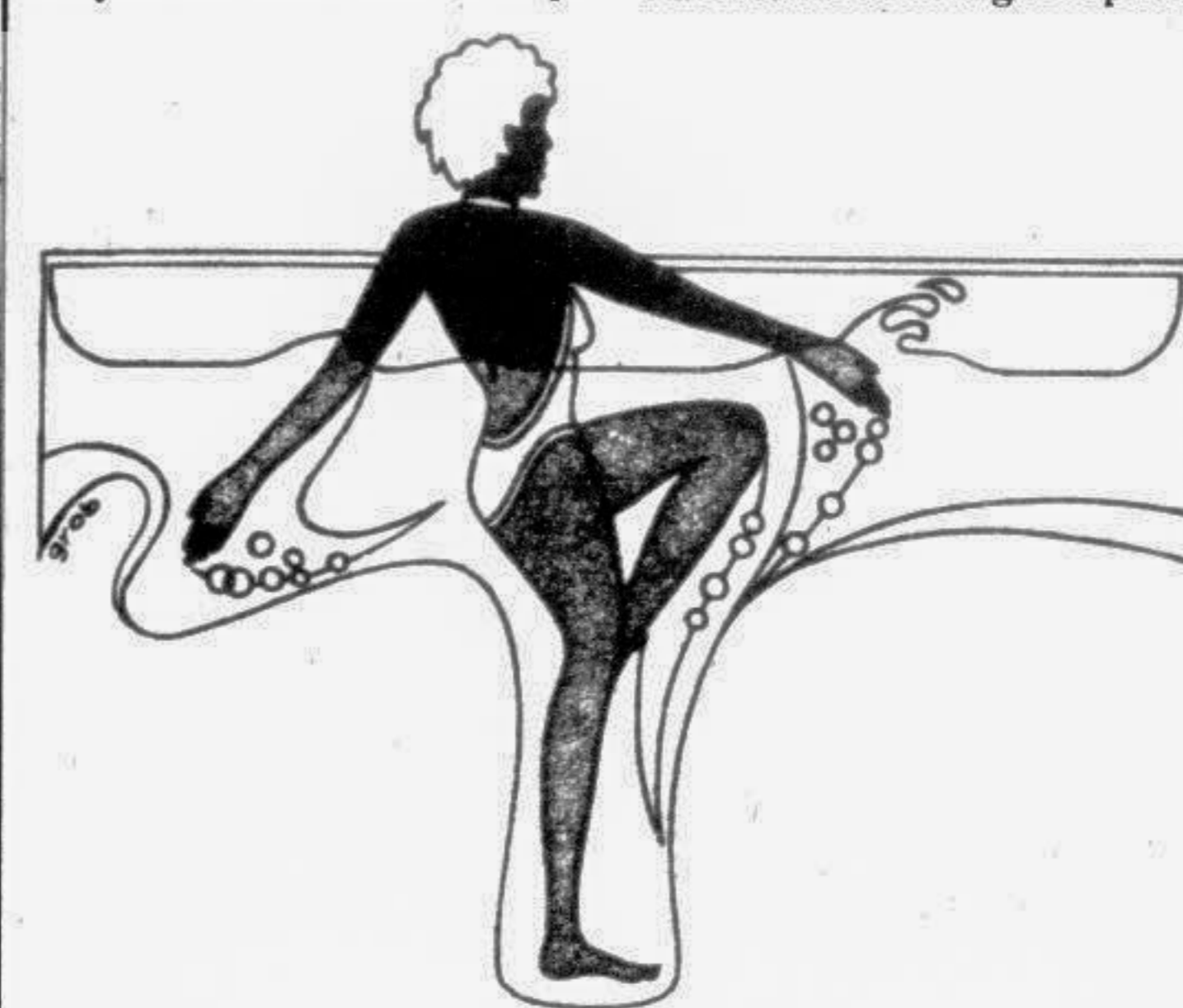
Courtesy: India Perspectives

Swim Yourself Trim

SWIMMING is one of the most popular active sports. It is also an excellent aerobic physical-conditioning method—and an enjoyable and efficient way to tighten and tone your winter-weary figure. No matter how old you are, what kind of shape

you're in or what other fitness program you participate in, your figure can benefit from following these workouts.

1. **Outward Leg Swing** (tones thighs, hips, shoulders). Stand with back against gutter, hands holding gutter. Raise left foot as high as possi-



Sequins and silk for the cool evening look

Courtesy: The American Look

ble with leg straight; swing leg to left side. Return by pulling leg vigorously to right. Repeat with right leg.

2. **Toe Touch** (legs, chest). Stand in waist-deep water. Raise left leg, bringing right hand toward left foot while looking back and extending left hand toward rear. Return to first position. Repeat on opposite side.

3. **Leg Crossover** (thighs, hips). On back, hold on to gutter, extend legs. Swing legs far apart; bring legs together, crossing one over the other. Repeat, reversing leg positions.

4. **Legs Together** (thighs). On back with legs together, hold on to gutter. Spread legs as far as possible, then pull together vigorously.

5. **Treading Water** (legs, arms, shoulders). In deep water, upright and not touching bottom, kick in bicycle, scissors or frog-style. At the same time, "scull" with hands: To scull, keep your hands flat in the water with fingers together and thumbs close to forefingers. With your thumbs up rotate your wrists and bring palms forward. Then turn palms downward and backward, keeping pressure constant.

6. **Side Straddle Hop** (thighs, hips). In waist-to-chest-deep water with hands on hips, feet together, jump so that feet land two feet apart. Jump back.

7. **Bobbing — Legs Sideward** (legs, buttocks). Stand in waist-to-chest-deep water. Take breath. Submerge with left leg in squatting position, left foot on bottom, right leg extended sideward. Exhale as you shove off bottom. Reverse position of legs and inhale while out of water. Repeat alternating legs sideward.

8. **Knees-Up** (abdomen, shoulders, arms, back). On back, hold on to pool gutter with hands, legs extended. Bring knees to chin. Straighten legs. Repeat.

9. **Bobbing — High** (upper, middle and lower body). In water one to three feet over head, squat, hands out to side, palms down. Pull hands sharply to thighs and do a frog kick. Inhale at peak height. Then drop, exhaling, until feet hit bottom. Squat, jump upward, pulling arms downward in a breaststroke position and shoot to surface with arms and shoulders out of water.

10. **Bobbing — Legs Astride** (legs, buttocks). Stand in waist-to-chest-deep water. Submerge with legs astride, right leg forward. Exhale as you shove off bottom, inhale while out of water. Repeat, switching legs.

(Condensed from Shape)