

# Living

## Some Male Notions about Women's Obsessions

by Fayza Haq

It is sometimes believed by experienced, intelligent and fully sympathetic males that the opposite sex prefer to be recognised as correct rather than being reasonable. It is often believed by them that women will leap to what they believe is the correct solution to a problem with bewildering and unmatched speed. There are innumerable ways by which women clutch on to a conclusion, believe the 'wise men', universally. They believe that women have a 'hang-up' about being omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent about vital matters of the mind and heart. They do not like to be criticized or lectured, goes the common male belief. If there are important matters such as deciding which career should be chosen for the child, or whom the eldest 'heir apparent' should be affianced to, the mother, grandmother, aunts and sisters will want to have the first and last words, goes the common male belief. Decisions such as budgeting for the house, or making future plans for investment, are matters that lie in the hands of these destiny makers, men often comment. Minor matters like which plants to grow on the roof-garden or which domestic pet to be kept, often have women as the main dominating decision makers, goes the common male understanding. Women will not listen to patient guidance, or gentle or reasonable cajoling or explanations, say some men.

Another matter that puzzles the male mind, no matter how sophisticated and sympathetic, is that women, according to them are obsessed about how they look, when they are in public. They spend a large portion of the income that comes to the house, whether jointly or singly, to spend on sarees, shalwar-kameezes and the cosmetics and jewellery that are sported by them. In an average case of a middle-aged bourgeois couple in the metropolises and even in the suburbs and villages, it often may happen that money has to be put aside for children's education, clothes, transport, food and other investments.

As a consequence, the woman's apparel may be out of fashion and unmatched. The male remains confused but cannot blurt out and say to the woman, 'You are a ratbag' or 'You are not far from a stuffed partridge with your confused

and unmatched clothes and accessories' for that would be harsh and undiplomatic. To comment, 'You look perfect for the occasion' would again be a white lie that any perceptive woman could easily see through and not be gulled. There is not much, most males believe, that they can



**'Maschka with a Mask'** by Otto Mueller

Courtesy: Expressionism German Painting 1905-1920

been told about, by expert and half-baked beauticians, or even friends, family, acquaintances — setting apart what they see on the TV screen and what the video supplies them with. They swim: go in for aerobics; yoga; jogging; stand-still bicycling; morning or evening walks; they pine after figures like that of Naomi Campbell, men sometimes say. This is even though woman may appear like some scrawny chicken. They regularly weigh themselves on the bath scales, or even along the foot-paths, goes the story according to certain men. Next follow a quixotic binging on *mishiti*, *biyani*, sweet curds, cream biscuits and ice-cream, when the mood takes the women, so that they appear to possess no will-power at all, according to male comprehension and observations, as is sometimes believed.

An idea of female memories are another matter that embarrass and confuse some men. They say that while expensive birthday or anniversary jewellery is misplaced or laid aside absent-mindedly by women, they will recall trivial or minor events that may have occurred literally ages ago, which the male mind does not necessarily lock up in their grey cells. At times say, at a merry gathering, the fun of the occasion may be marred by a wife or *pette-ame* who will suddenly and unmeaningly make a faux pas, and recall the blunders of the male counterpart, on the first picnic or the honeymoon.

Such fluctuations in the mood and behaviour are surely beyond the common male comprehension. It is often said that responsible males do not gossip, while at their bureaux while they hold their official meetings; make important decisions, and give marathon dictations for carrying out of distribution of official work. Yet it is a fact that they find time to gossip and tattle over the tea-break or lunch-break. Meanwhile, the female counterpart, according to some males, behave like a prime minister or the leader of the opposition at a parliament: busy cleaning and scrubbing the house or ironing the children's clothes when she is offered a bouquet of *rajanigandhas* on an anniversary or birthday occasion.

The difference between the two adult sexes, and partners in life, is perhaps, due to an opposite outlook of life and living.

An often-heard complaint about women from men is that they follow all possible diets that they have read about in local and foreign dailies and periodicals, or they have heard or

comment about a woman's appearance, without a disastrous and dramatic crashing of crockery by the frustrated, over-worked and perplexed woman. 'To be or not to be' honest or deceptive applies here, goes the common male conjecture, who cannot be a successful smooth-tongued liar, and get away with it scot-free. Neither can he be blunt and to the point. Here, again, the every day male feels trapped in a maze of puzzles about female psychology.

Yet another common lament, confided to only best friends by males is that women tend to talk at length about unnecessary matters, while

the male remains confused but cannot blurt out and say to the woman, 'You are a ratbag' or 'You are not far from a stuffed partridge with your confused

and unnecessary matters, while

## Tribulations of a Female Adolescent

by A S M Nurunnabi

committed a misdemeanor — difficult to be easily forgiven or forgotten by her or anyone closely associated with her.

In our eastern society's life, most female adolescents, particularly of the bourgeois strata, tend to lead a confined life. Even in her leisure hours, say, in the afternoon, she is not always permitted to take a breath of fresh air on the rooftop of her house. This is because her parents may be afraid that any neighbouring wayward

mostly to the female adolescent coming from our middle-class members of society.

Female adolescents often receive obnoxious telephone calls. Again, there are few commendable parks in the city, where such an individual may spend some leisure time, without drawing unwholesome remarks or attention from unruly elements. Her male sibling, on the other hand, does not necessarily meet such embarrassing situations. This again, applies



**Taking a breath of fresh air**

Courtesy: India Perspectives

The point at issue is how to ensure the security of our female adolescents in the context of our social bourgeoisie tradition. The prime need appears to be to effect a gradual change in our mentality, so that the gap between them is finally bridged. To achieve this, it also appears necessary to put up a firm resistance to the conservative and reactionary elements, bent on stifling the growth and development of a healthy social outlook on this issue. The parents need to understand that times have changed and this results in new social values which are inevitable.

Youthful exuberance is natural in the process of development of personality of a teenager. This must be clearly comprehended and sympathised with. Youth and inexperience, which go hand in hand, may sometimes lead to the commitment of lapses. In such circumstances, parents should try to understand it with sympathy. The teenager should also try to comprehend that her parents have only her welfare at heart and that being 'with it' does not include thoughtless conduct. There is a definite necessity for maintaining trust in a spirit of mutual compromise between the parents and their teenage daughter so that both sides trust and understand each other.

therapeutic nature of painting as a hobby?

c) Tell them that it is quite atrocious?

9) You go with a group of friends to see a rather boring film at the cinema. Do you:

a) Wait to see what the other's opinions are before you say anything?

b) Announce that you would not recommend the film to anyone else, but you had a pleasant evening nevertheless?

c) Declare that you will not be going to the cinema with them again, unless you get to choose the film?

10) How many times in the last week were you forced to say something you did not really mean?

a) 10-20

b) 1-5

c) 0

Mostly 'C's'; You appear to need some more social skills.

Mostly 'B's'; You appear to be more social.

Answers: A's; Mostly 'A's'; But hard the

express your own ideas? Are you more than you have got any real

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