

# LIVING

## Wanted: Display of Affection

WITH all the talk of liberation, emancipation and equality for women there is still not much of a difference in the measure of love and affection that a woman pours over her male. It is just that today this feeling is more of a voluntary matter for the educated woman with a liberal minded husband rather than something that is obligatory, as was the case some decades back if not exactly in the Victorian and pre-partition Edwardian days.

There can be little equation between the economic support of the regular income that the male brings home at the end of the month as a banker or an insurance agent or a doctor or even an engineer — and the hour-to-hour devotion and involvement of the woman with her male. She may be earning a meagre amount, as a teacher or part-time interior decor advisor or a freelance writer. But she certainly contributes an enormous proportion towards the well-being of the family with all its care and intricate balance of harmony.

She thinks about and worries over the moment to moment activities of the male and the children as well as any servant employed. She is responsible for everything from the regular supply of fresh meal to the monthly payment of gas bills and school fees. In return, regarding the matter even on a mercenary level, the woman surely deserves more than her remunerations of meals, clothes and free lodging, which she gets automatically as her due, being the wife. Yet the material benefits of her serving as cook-cum-nanny-

## Wanted: Display of Affection

cum housekeeper are certainly not in proportion to her input of energy — physical and mental.

A woman is conventionally brought up to have considerable respect for how a man feels or thinks. Irrespective of how her position may be in the domain of household matters and other family matters beyond that territory, the male viewpoint is highly valued by the woman. Meanwhile, despite the adulation and adoration, the male may be indifferent or slow on the uptake and may not quite recognise that the female vanity and ego hunger for the male homage in return, which she expects him to know without her pointing it out.

**Subtle Things**  
A woman today has independent views of her own. Socially and politically, her leanings may differ greatly and openly from that of her male yet her security, happiness and well-being depends on subtle matters like the look in his eye, the tone of his voice over the telephone or during a party, and reassuring or callous touch of his hand. Nevertheless, often, the male remains unaware of how much his words, looks or touch can do to a woman.

He often feels that he has lived with her for 15 years and that a woman is more of a decoration piece like some silent vase of flowers or a curio item at which one cannot go on starting for ever. On the

other hand, the woman is starved for attention and recognition, no matter how many wedding anniversaries may have gone by. A sensible wife does not expect the ardour of a youthful lover in the first flood of emotions. She does, however, demand and desire the renewal and strengthening of the bond between herself and her male. Numerous married couples have been known to sit in clubs and parks or at informal functions, without having a word to say to each other or without caring to spare one another a glance of shared feelings or experience.

These "odd couples" are surely people who fail to reach out to one another, making their marriage a biased matter, and a subject of many mornings of idle chatter of how "Shahrukh and Shakil have fallen out apparently". While among the poorer masses, public display of affection is not "done", a steady state of it is very much "in" among the more well to do bourgeoisie, that abound if not seem the city.

A woman thrives, blossoms and blooms with a man's attention. Whereas, if she feels that the magic of their relation is fast fading, she too withers and withers. On the other hand a woman becomes beautiful and interesting with a man's attention. This is only too evident in the unusual care a woman takes over her appearance when her husband is in town and how she lets herself go to

pieces when he is away in Sylhet or Chittagong. Similar would be the case if his eyes should be straying away from home too obviously and if she should feel defeated and neglected as a result and give in to despair as a consequence of crushed ego.

**Not Demanding**  
This is not to say that a wife is necessarily very demanding. A woman, however spirited and flamboyant is far too humble to ask or expect unabated showering of affection to start and end the humdrum of daily existence. A brief but fond display of approval and admiration from the male does not require much effort on his part.

Again, the wife needs the exchange of thoughts and occasional compliments like "That's a gorgeous colour of lipstick" or "What a pretty print this new scarf of yours has" or even "That top knot and loose curls look jolly good on you, I must say". There is nothing that makes a woman hold herself more proudly and surely than a verbal pat delivered with spontaneity and gusto.

No matter how ambitious a woman might be and how dearly she might prize her independent ways, she needs the constant flow of approval from her husband to back her up. In this respect, she would prefer and treasure an average gregarious individual, with a sense of humour for her every day escort than the taciturn Lancelot, who hesitates or fumbles over his everyday breakfast compliments to his wife.

## African Americans Celebrate the Extra 'A'

Mohamed Hamaludin writes from Miami

Millions of people are believed to have participated in one of the world's newest celebrations, Kwanzaa. Gemini News Service looks at a festival which honours creativity and cooperation — but which is already running into commercialisation.

### Festivals of light

**Diwali:** 800m Hindus commemorate Lakshmi, goddess of wealth in Nov/Dec

**Kwanzaa:** 15m+ people of African descent celebrate seven spiritual principles in December

**Hanukkah:** 14m Jews celebrate recapture of temple of Jerusalem in December

WHILE much of the world enjoyed the Christmas holiday spirit in some form or other, African Americans celebrated a festival that has African roots but is uniquely American.

The Kwanzaa Festival, observed for seven days starting December 26, seeks to use the spirit of the season to reinforce the heritage, spirituality and togetherness of people of African descent.

"It is not a religious holiday but it reminds us to heed our spiritual nature, to have faith and purpose in life," explains Florida State representative Alzo Reddick. "It's not a national holiday but it reminds us, too, that working together for the good of all works best."

It is not a celebration honouring the birth of a famous leader, either, but it does celebrate creation and personal creativity.

Kwanzaa is the brainchild of African American historian and philosopher, Dr Maulana Karenga, who introduced the festival in 1966. The name comes from the Swahili phrase *mantunda ya kwanza* — "the first fruits of the harvest." The extra "a" was added to make the name uniquely African.

Kwanzaa, however, is not a harvest festival, unless the celebration is taken to mean harvesting the spirit of the holidays to promote African heritage.

For each day of the festival, one of seven principles of Kwanzaa is observed: *Umoja* (unity), *Kujichagulia* (self-de-

termination), *Ujima* (collective work and responsibility), *Ujamaa* (cooperative economics), *Nia* (purpose), *Kuumba* (creativity) and *Imani* (faith).

Many US cities now join in the observance. Miami's celebrations include an *Umoja* Night. In Chicago, there is a *Karamu Ya Imani* Feast.

Kwanzaa experts estimate that between 15 and 18 million people, mainly of African descent, celebrate the festival not only in the US but also in Canada, the Caribbean, Britain and even in parts of Africa.

The prediction is that it will become even more popular. Says Sterling D Plump, associate professor of African American studies at the University of Illinois in Chicago: "The resurgence of some of the worst aspects of racism which have forced African Americans to value and reassess the importance of their institutions and traditions, also have led to the rise in Kwanzaa observances."

Besides an appeal to spiritually, Kwanzaa is also like Christmas in its gift-giving. Gifts, termed "zawadi," are exchanged.

There is also sharing of food from across the African diaspora and a daily candle-lighting ceremony in every family.

Says Professor Plump: "The celebration of Kwanzaa is based on the ideals of family, heritage and community and provides a wonderful opportunity to reflect on traditional

values.

But another aspect of the Christmas season is attaching itself to Kwanzaa — commercialism. "During last year's Kwanzaa season, we observed, and challenged, across the country, a growing trend to exploit the real meaning of the celebration," says Conrad W Worrill, who heads the National Coalition to Preserve the Sanctity and Integrity of Kwanzaa.

As examples of "over-commercialism and exploitation" he cites a radio station's attempt to promote authentic African Kwanzaa punch recipes, a business exhibition that billed itself as a Kwanzaa affair, Kwanzaa-oriented advertisements for large department stores and even an attempt by a major greetings card company "to control Kwanzaa cards by their mass manufacturing of them."

Says Worrill: "Kwanzaa is not the kind of African American celebration that would be sold to corporate America. The economic aspects of Kwanzaa urge people of African ancestry to do business with one another through the practice of *Ujamaa* (cooperative economics); to build and maintain our own stores, shops and other businesses and to profit from them together."

Kwanzaa, he says, has "become an aspect of our national identity and we will struggle against those who attempt to sell it out."

The trend towards the commercialisation of Kwanzaa has become so worrisome that even Karenga, its founder, has lashed out against it.

"First we live in a capitalist society which commodifies all things, including women's wombs," he says. "It has commercialised Christmas and Hanukkah (a Jewish festival celebrated around the same time), beginning its campaign for Christmas a full month before the holiday."

The challenge for the African community, having learned especially the lessons of Christmas, is to refuse to cooperate with the drive to make Kwanzaa another week to shop, rather than what it is.

In a country dominated by commercialism such calls are unlikely to be heeded.

What is certain, however, is that Christians have Christmas, Jews have Hanukkah and now African Americans have Kwanzaa as a feature of the American year-end holiday season.

MOHAMED HAMALUDIN is Editor of the 'Miami Times'.

## Rise of Moscow's Millionaires

An elite minority enjoy the sweet and easy life while the rest of Russia grapples with tough times. Rajiv Tiwari of Inter Press Service reports.

NIGHTS at the casino and holidays on the Côte d'Azur, expensive cars and designer label clothing, sprawling kottedzhi (cottages) with saunas built-in — these are a few of the Russian nouveaux riches' favourite things.

Add to that carpets, crystal, Italian furniture as well as anything shiny and the picture of Russia's new luxurati is complete, a recent opinion poll has found.

While millions of Russians cope with falling living standards with many subsisting on a diet of just milk and bread, a tiny minority among the country's 148 million people has never had it so good.

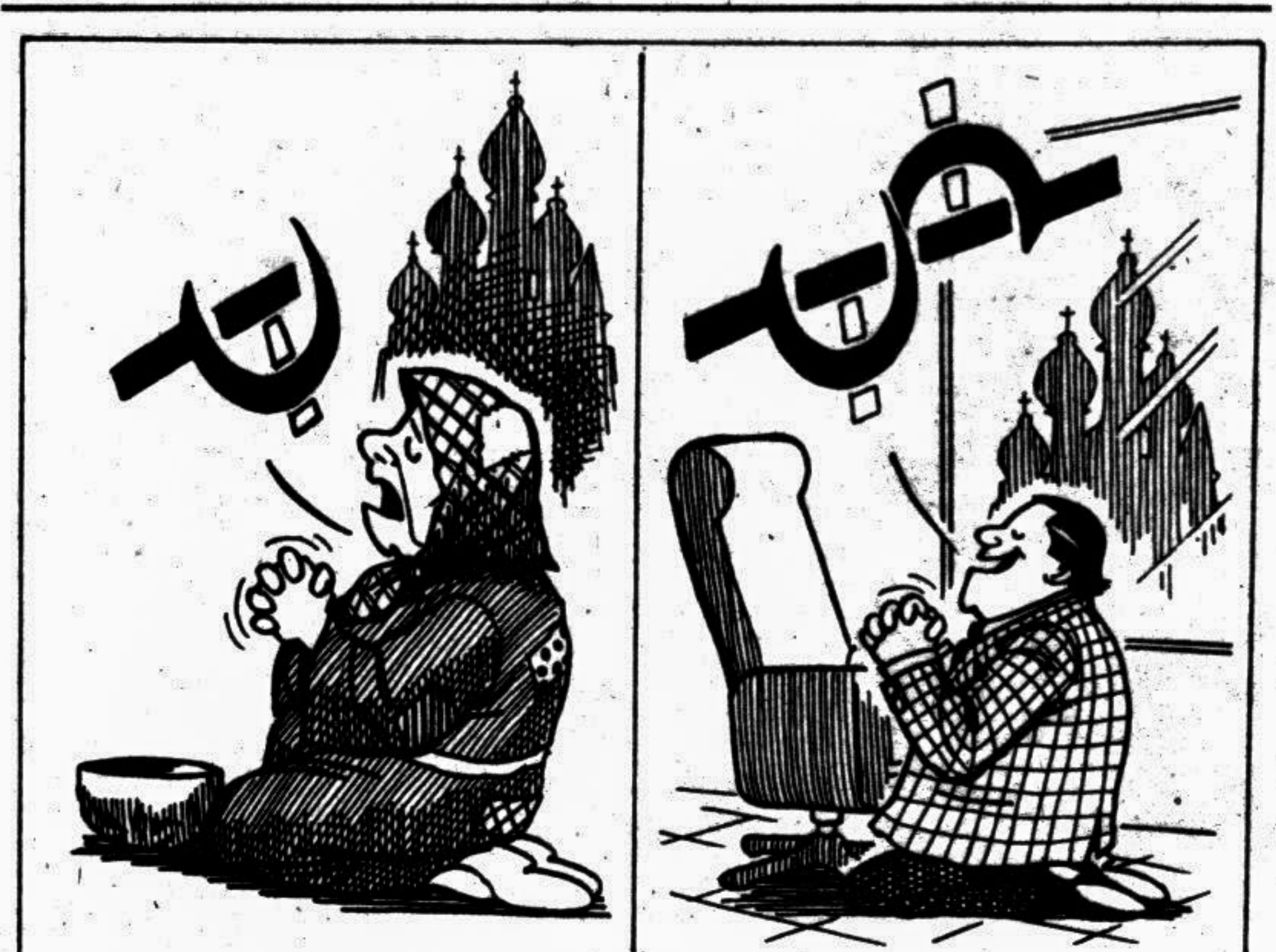
Moscow has the highest concentration of the new millionaires — seven times more than any other Russian region. But only 0.01 per cent of the city's estimated 10 million population (about 10,000 people) are considered truly rich.

From buying fancied but misnamed US\$200,000 kottedzhi — instead of the humble dacha — sprouting on Moscow's outskirts to US\$400,000 houses in London's Highgate so that their children who are studying in English schools will not long too much for home, nothing is beyond the grasp of the newly wealthy.

According to a recent sur-

## Rise of Moscow's Millionaires

An elite minority enjoy the sweet and easy life while the rest of Russia grapples with tough times. Rajiv Tiwari of Inter Press Service reports.



## Going out in Dhaka

I guess you have weeks similar to mine: some progress in your work, but also tensions at your office. You want to forget about it all during the weekend, but you face an empty agenda. Then you open the newspaper. A film you have wanted to see for more than a decade will be screened. You cheer up. Life is not that bad after all. Well, life can turn out to be bad after all in Dhaka. Hiroshima mon amour. That's the film I wanted to see the other day: the Zahir Raihan Film Society was going to show it at the Alliance française. I arrived in time, and time was what spoiled the whole film. Quite obviously, the copying of the film had been done at the wrong speed, and the whole film took only some 50 minutes. The two lovers were speaking and moving like Donald Duck in a slapstick film.

**by Nico den Tuinder**  
What a deception  
But Dhaka has more cruelties in stock for anybody wanting to have a good time.  
After the film I wanted to have a cup of coffee with the friend whom I had met at the Alliance. Of course, the cafe of the Alliance was closed. So we went to a coffee house between Elephant Road and New Market. Relaxing over a cup of coffee on chairs which belong in a fastfood restaurant when there is no fan is quite an experience. I can tell you. Then my friend bought some potato chips, to eat them at the Dhanmondi Lake. We took a stroll along the dirty and broken banks of the lake — very enjoyable, sure. Finally we sat down on one of the scarce benches near the lake. We were trying to get the taste of the chips, while swarms of mosquitoes had the same intentions with us. "Mosquito Menace Making Life Miserable" is a popular caption with newspapers here, and now I learnt what was meant by it.  
Where to go? I wanted to show my companion the phantasmagoric Chinese restaurant on Mirpur road. Of course, it was fully booked up. So we cruised the road, looking for a place to sit down — my friend was getting desperate for a shot of nicotine. Finally we found a takeaway restaurant. We could only sit near the door for the kitchen. Of course, what I wanted to have was sold out: no Sprite.  
The coke had no bubbles and was quite tasteless. To finish the list of disasters: no smoking was allowed.  
What a way to enjoy your weekend in Dhaka.

**I'M FINED FOR POLLUTING THE DHANMONDI LAKE...? BUT I THOUGHT THIS WAS NATURAL RUBBISH DUMP!**

SHARIF '95

vey by the Russian Institute for Applied Politics, among those most often mentioned by Muscovites as the lucky few are President Boris Yeltsin, ex-Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, radical reformer Yegor Gaidar, ex-parliament speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov and singer Alla Pugacheva.  
Though many featured in the list are politicians, the survey's respondents believed the new rich in their midst and money sources that ranged from trade and currency markets to robbery and drug trafficking to plain racketeering.  
Indeed, thefts of state property, illegal export of state resources such as oil and precious metals and buying and selling Western goods are known to be some of the easiest and quickest ways to make a fortune.  
About 40 per cent of the same poll's rich interviewees admitted having been involved in illegal business deals while

## Home Cosmetic Care to Improve Skin Complexion

**by Blossom Kochhar**  
INSTEAD of soap use gram flour (equal quantities of Green gram and Bengal gram) mixed in milk or rice water. Scrub the paste on the body and rinse with clear water. This is an excellent recipe to improve the clarity of the skin. Follow this cleansing atleast once or twice a week.  
**Complexion Masks**  
• Make a paste of a pinch of turmeric and a tablespoon of milk powder in two tablespoons of honey and the juice of 1/2 lime. Apply it on your face and leave it on till it dries. Rinse your face and feel the difference.  
• Take equal quantities of black and white cumin seeds and make into a thick paste with milk or cream. Apply the paste all over the face. After 20 minutes, rinse it off. Use this mask atleast twice a week for maximum effect.  
**A Simple Lightening Recipe**  
Take 2 lime and cut it into two. Rub one half on the face gently. Squeeze the other half in a cup of water, add a little rock salt and drink it. Do it for six to eight weeks regularly day after day and observe the remarkable improvement.  
**For Blackheads and Acne Blemishes**  
Make a fine paste of turmeric rhizome and mustard seeds and apply of the spots each night. Wash the spots with water and see them gradually fade away day by day.  
**Moisturising the Oily Skin**  
Use an oatmeal and sandalwood scrub (1 teaspoon oatmeal, 1/4 teaspoon sandalwood powder) to cleanse the skin. Follow it with toning with a teaspoon vinegar in a glass of water. Cut some slices of raw potato and put them all over the face and leave on for 15 minutes. Use the recipe regularly for smooth and moist texture.  
**Moisturising the Dry Skin**  
After cleansing the skin with soft soap, tone it with rose water, apply a spoon full of glycerine to which a few drops vitamin oil or amla oil have been added on the face. Rinse off after 20 minutes. Use this moisturising preparation on the face for a soft and smooth texture.  
**Facial for Smooth Texture**  
Beat an egg in the juice of one lemon and apply this mask on the face and neck. After 30 minutes, rinse it off with clear water. Use this mask atleast once in a week.  
**A Mask for Chapped Skin**  
Prepare a mixture of 4 ounces refined linseed oil, 8 ounces rose water, 1/4 ounce of tincture benzoin. Mix together and use it every night and morning.  
**Warning**  
The prevent damage to your complexion, you should avoid:  
• Perfumed lipstick applied on face in place of blush-on  
• Creams that are highly alkaline  
• Bleaching and lightening creams containing mercury  
• Strong soaps and detergents for cleansing  
• Picking of acne pustules and pimples  
— Courtesy Hair Skin & Beauty Care

