

WINING

Raw Earth Architecture

A common thread running through all architecture up to the industrial revolution was that buildings were made out of natural material — raw or only slightly transformed — that was easy to find locally. That meant stone and wood, evidently, but specially earth: earth baked at high temperature to make bricks or raw earth used as such in keeping with time-tried methods.

Indeed, since man started constructing cities some 10,000 years ago raw earth has undoubtedly been the material most employed in rural or urban societies to build houses — for the rich or poor — as well as public facilities, places of worship and monuments, however grand

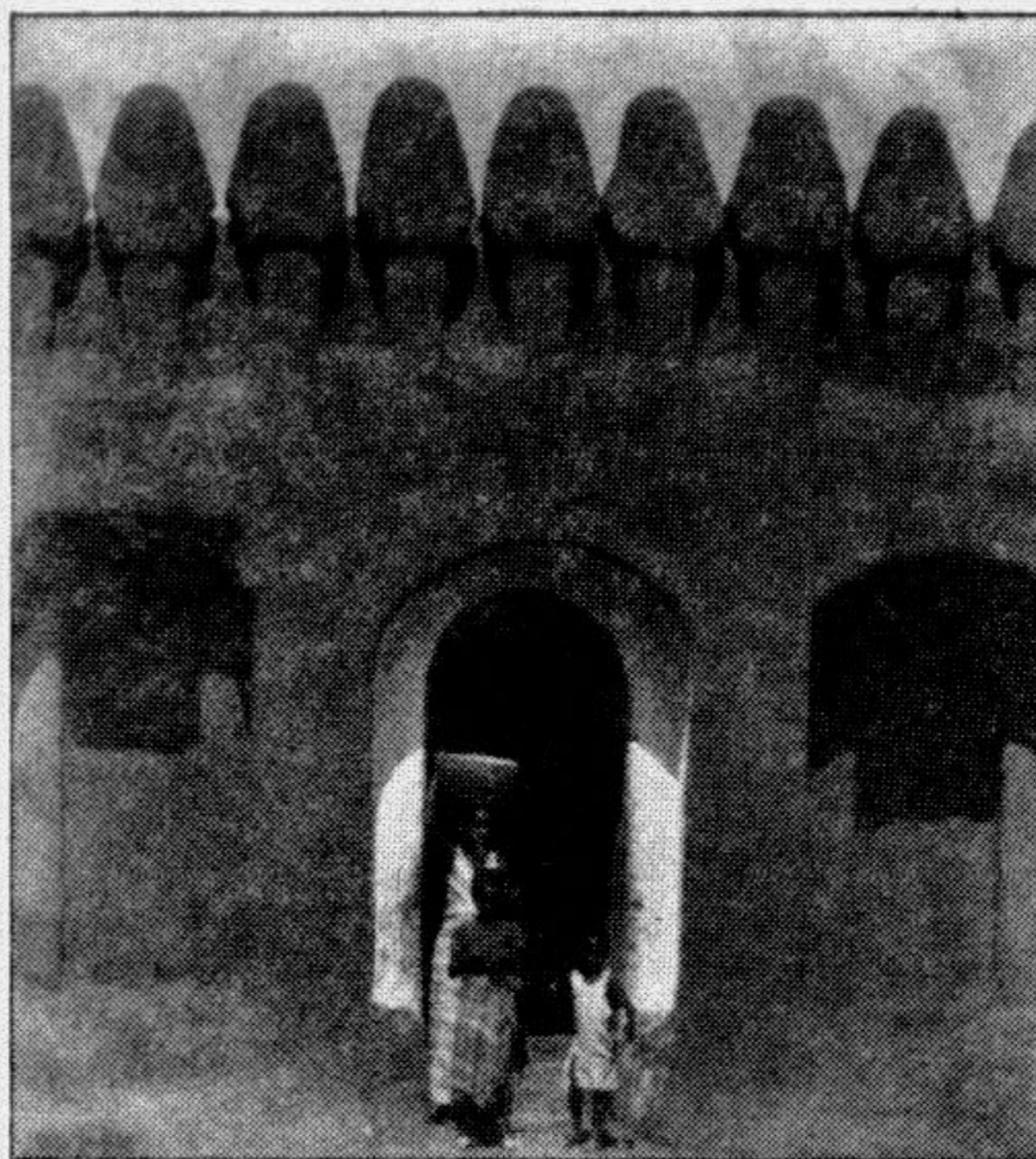
or modest. While this great archaeological or historical heritage spans five continents, it has remarkable cultural resonance in Europe, an echo extending from Spain to Sweden and from Britain to Rumania. Among European nations France had the highest number of raw earth buildings (nearly 15 per cent of all housing was still made out of earth at the beginning of the 20th century) as well as the most varied in style and in method of construction. But the tradition was also the strongest in France where raw earth architecture was put to wide and continuous use from Antiquity to the 20th century. Even today, the region between Grenoble, Lyons and Mâcon counts

many examples of the art of building out of "rammed earth," among them mansions, castles and five-storey buildings in towns. In this region up to 80 per cent of the current housing in most villages and small towns was built out of raw earth.

Up to the start of this century the material was used as well to construct schools, churches, workshops, factories and even city halls.

Thus the use of raw earth was not a marginal practice but rather a full-fledged tradition that expressed itself in specific architectural form in most parts of France and in Europe.

Raw earth came into widest use in France in the 19th century, only to fall vic-



Raw earth home of local dignitary in the town of Segou in Mali

tim between 1900-1920 to competition from material turned out by industry. Alone among natural materials — that is, unlike stone, marble or wood — raw earth was never a marketable commodity, and had not lobby to defend it. Also, it was only used locally. Thus, as a building material, earth never won backing from the construction industry or from government, a major factor in its decline in the face of industrial, commercial and technical practices between 1920-70.

Still, whenever a modern economy is struck by energy shortages or a dearth of cement and steel — such as in World Wars One and Two — people think automatically of the constructive and economic virtues of raw earth.

Also, when our society, for economic or environmental reasons, takes up cause against pollution or the excessive use of energy in heavy

industry — including the building materials branch — conditions become ripe for the age-old raw earth tradition to be dusted off and put to use in a modern context.

In any event, raw earth is irreplaceable as a building material in many countries where the majority of the population lacks the money to buy industrial materials. Consequently, raw earth traditions in those countries are bound to survive. In other parts of the world like the United States, Australia and Europe modern earth architecture is coming quickly into fashion, spurred by a demand that government or private decision-makers seem determined to cater to. As a result, the traditions of earth architecture, far from dying out, seem destined to flourish. The deep changes in our society at the end of the 20th century will serve them as a springboard into the future.

Courtesy: France Information

Bi-BOP Mania Invades Paris

by Emmanuel Thevenon

There is an unprecedented boom in the mobile phone in France. The Bi-Bop, a tiny pocket-sized phone, marketed by France Telecom, is all the rage in the most fashionable districts of Paris, before setting out to conquer other big capitals in Europe.

A typical scene in Paris life. Dr Dominique T. is having dinner with friends in a restaurant when, suddenly, there is a discreet ringing. A few of the other diners turn round, intrigued, and see the unflustered doctor take the tiny cordless phone out of his pocket, pull out the aerial, jot down the address of the patient whom he has to visit urgently, and then close up the phone and pop it back into his pocket. Outside the restaurant, three people walk up and down the pavement in the rain, patiently waiting for the phonebox to be free.

The Bi-Bop, created by the Mecelec laboratory in Lyons, belongs to the first generation of pocket phones that can be used exclusively in towns (in the streets, on cafe terraces, in stations, shopping centres, the business districts, stationary cars in traffic jams, etc). It is barely larger than a packet of cigarettes, weighs only 180 grammes and works like a standard cordless phone. The phone is digitally linked up by radio waves to a relay post which, in a range of 50 to 200 metres, sends the call to the national or international telephone network.

Covering the main Paris thoroughfares and the most frequented places called for the installation of 3,000 relay-posts, indicated by a green, white and blue strip or sign. The digital link guarantees good sound quality and prevents any prying if a phone is lost or stolen.

Although it is considerably less expensive than a carphone, it does not, however, have all the qualities of the latter. It can only be used in suitably equipped urban areas (Strasbourg, Paris and the winter sports resort of Avoriaz), whereas the network of Radio telephones covers the whole of France or even Europe. Moreover, it is impossible to phone from a moving vehicle as the system is unable to locate the telephone. For the same reason, it takes a certain amount of practice to be able to receive a call. The user has to be near a relay-post and dial a confidential identification number and, if he changes phoning zones, he

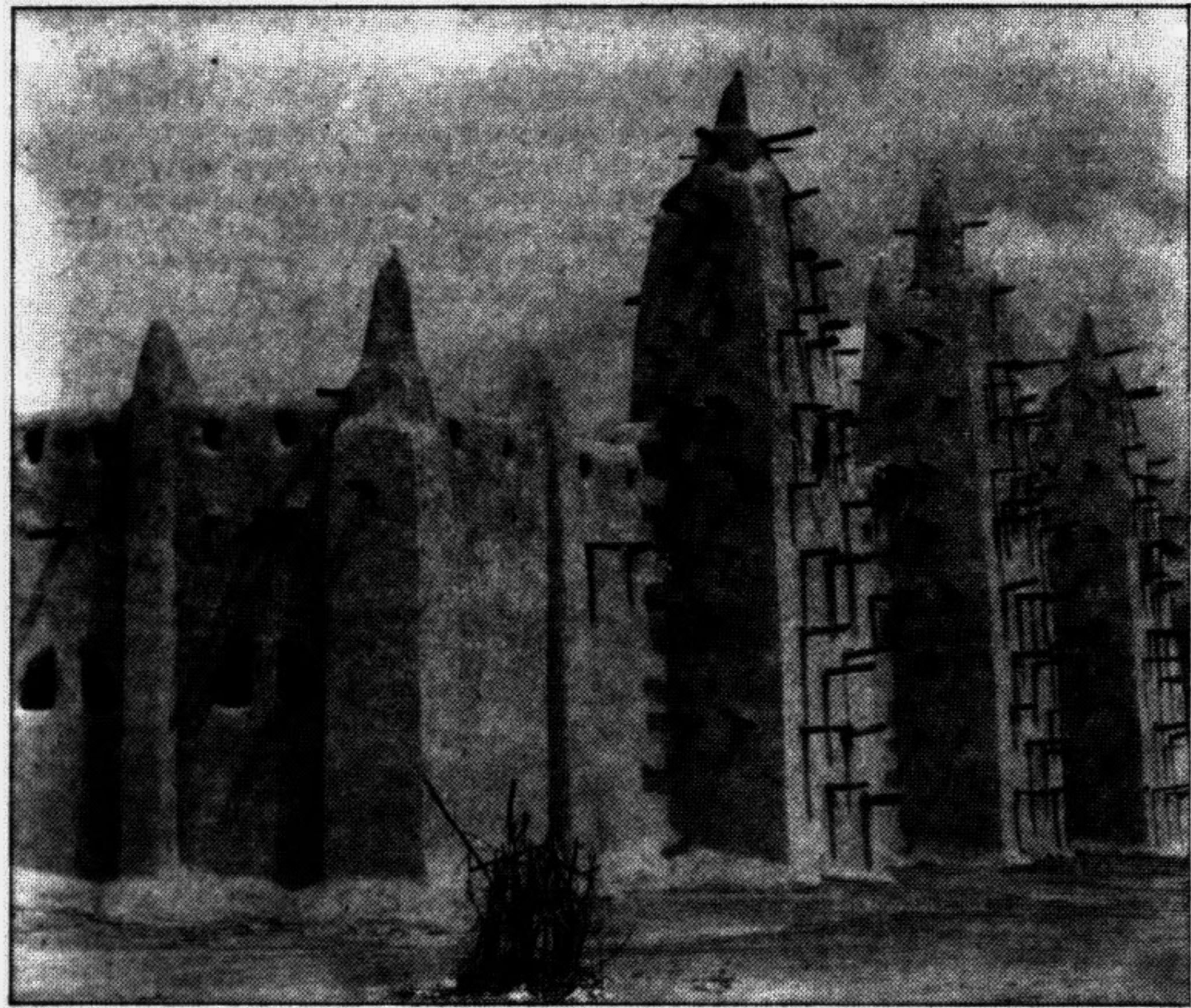
has to repeat the operation. If, in spite of these precautions, the user of the Bi-Bop cannot be reached, a caller can leave a message on the central answering-machine of the system.

The Bi-Bop, which was launched with a lot of advertising in May 1993, won over 50,000 professionals and an equal number of private users in a year and a half. That is one third fewer than hoped for. In spite of this rather slow start, France Telecom's marketing strategists and the public company which commercialises the Bi-Bop consider that they will be able to attain a total of 300,000 subscribers by the end of 1995. By that time, the network will have been extended to 300 communities in the Paris suburbs and to the Lille-Roubaix-Toucoing area in the North. Using the same CT2-CAI standard (Cordless Telephone 2-Common Air Surface), the eleven other countries in the European Community are in the process

of being equipped. It should then be possible for a Paris user of a Bi-Bop to phone Antwerp or Munich.

Tradesmen, craftsmen, doctors, business executives, representatives, maintenance and repair staff and all professions requiring frequent travel inside Paris have adopted this simple, neat and relatively cheap phone (it costs only 990 francs or \$ 180 dollars and the monthly subscription is 54.5 francs or \$ 10). A computer group has even bought 1,000 such phones for its own use alone while, paradoxically, few Paris journalists (and yet there are 20,000 of them) have been tempted by the charms of the Bi-Bop. Maybe they are waiting for the "Power-Bop" to become widespread. The latter is a portable computer with an integrated Bi-Bop which gives access to the Minitel videotex network, can be used to send or receive faxes and link up to computer bases.

Courtesy: L'Actualite en France



Mud-brick tower in Mali

Problems of Adjustment of Career Girls

by Fayza Haq

THE career girl, in search of something to occupy herself constructively, often finds herself in new surroundings. If she is not exactly the daring and adventurous type, she will find the new freedom overwhelming instead of exhilarating. She will have to search for new roots while she may have the tiring struggle of being moved from Rawalpindi to Peshawar and Lahore and then on to Karachi. Despite her somewhat outgoing spirit she needs the company of old friends and family. Some young career girls may be so nerve racked in the process that they might in time have to even rush to a doctor about their deep seated psychological problem.

The other extreme can be when boredom has crept into the surroundings and the young worker feels that she is no more than one in a crowd. Monotony of work is the lament of some who work along with many in the same position such as a young clerk or a typist or even a secretary or physio therapist.

It is up to the career girl to pluck up courage and use all her persuasive powers and initiative to change the dull, same-as-everyone-else's surroundings. She should change as much as her superiors and the office she works in will allow. There may be flowers for the window sill, magazines, books, posters and stickers for the racks, walls and the doors. She can coax her boss to allow her to have potted plants like ferns near the door or along the staircase. She can even talk her superiors around to getting a rug for the otherwise insipid little room that she occupies. She should try to be more of an individual herself by dressing up differently from others and changing her hairstyle for a refreshing inner self and outward appearances.

Often the young worker is confused about the ground of work. She might be asked to look alive and appear more individualistic one day and then be scolded for being too liberal, fashionable and out going in her approach of work. She may be criticised for being a bit too westernised or trendy. A commercial artist or a copy-writer may be blamed for the run of the mill copy or the paste-up one week when she maybe shifted back to the grind of

conventional work again at the end of another week. A young worker has the right to have the work spelt out clearly and categorically for all time.

Again, the youth may lie to herself by telling herself that a job is smashing and marvelous when really she is a misfit or is trying to tell herself that the dictatorial boss, in the form of the editor or headmaster or firm executive, is the best guide for a reporter or feature writer or school teacher or even a secretary. She should not be too much of a coward to avoid chances of a new, lucrative and better job, with facilities and amenities galore. She must not have false pride.

She should learn to cultivate self-recognition and self-realisation. She must face the probabilities and possibilities of today and tomorrow. Thus she will avoid hours of depression and anxiety about not being happy at work and yet not having the pluck to do something about the unsatisfying job.

FIGHTING BACK

Similarly when she is too keyed up, with the routine work, she should ask herself if this was really what she always wanted to do. It is time the career girl started fighting back and not letting life run all over her. She should not feel or say that it cannot be worked out or not summon the courage to face a change. She must not let things be piled up and pending and let worries gnaw her up.

Often one feels stultified in one place. Actually this comes from sitting in one position or working in one particular way such as the copy or feature writer who keeps sitting the whole day and puts on weight and also gets needlessly listless. All this is although she can easily get up and take a short walk, visit friends in other offices, go to the library or the movies or even a cafe in between work, specially in case of long office hours. She must not keep sitting and writing, or bending over and doing work such as filing in the lower drawers. She must be imaginative and work with initiative. She must mix work with leisure, recreation and relaxation like a hairdresser who cuts with the scissor and then strokes hair with the comb, alternatively, and so

has the well deserved pause and rest of the fingers, while at work. She should stretch herself for five minutes at least of every hour that she puts in. She must not work in one long killing and exhausting stretch. It is helpful to move the shoulders, head and hands in between the hours of work. She could even have portable transistor for the afternoon music read magazines and evening papers with their sensational stories.

Again, anemia and vitamin deficiency are the common complaints of the working girl. There is also often lack of minerals, specially when a girl is on a diet. She must have her tablets and capsules every day at the same place and same time. She should not break the rules out of indifference or laziness or being "too involved" in other things. Health is more important than the right hemline

for the season or the latest print and hairstyle or nail polish or the matching shoes and hand bag. Often food taken in the offices itself create the deficiency.

Yet again, the working girl should not take unsuitable jobs as just because they may be more paying or glamorous or more "respectable" if worn out in the process and it is not the type of work that she has always yearned for. She must not end up burning the candle on both ends and being barely able to carry herself home from work — after running around as an assistant in a shop or a boutique runner, playing up to the needs of the customers or putting children in order in the nursery — if the job is not her cup of tea. If she must plunge in for a career, she should see to it that she is suited to the job and is not doing it out of false prestige or hope — just because all

girls are working or it is fashionable or it means more pay or even if the friends at home suggest it and goad the girl on. She must be firm and decisive about what she wants to work at and what is good and suited for her.

Improving Sibling Relationships

by A S M Nurunnabi

CHILDHOOD resentment and jealousies often sour relationship between grown-up brothers and sisters. In a recent study covering a good number of grown-up men and women, the question was asked as to how they felt about their siblings. Nearly 75 per cent admitted harbouring rivalrous feelings. In a few cases, these emotions were sufficiently intense to have affected their entire lives.

Many adults are close, supportive and affectionate yet still need to compete. I know of two brothers who are fans of two different leading football teams. When

these two teams meet in a crucial match, the attitude and conduct of these two brothers dramatically change. At home, they enter into hot and rancorous debates about chances of winning of their favourite teams before a scheduled match. When the match is being played, the

brothers take their seat as spectators among their own supporters and do not hesitate to take part in a melee as opponents in any controversial decision of the referee. Yet, when the match is over, they turn out to be the best of friends.

It is a common that some brothers and sisters stay at arms' length, but always stop short of severing ties completely. Why do these painful relationships persist? Partly because the bonds forged in childhood remain powerful even after siblings have grown up and gone their separate ways. These relationships are so intimate that the participants share a unique closeness. But along with the affection contributing to that closeness, there is room for anger, jealousy and resentment.

It may happen among siblings that some of them get more of something than others — parental love, advantages brains or even looks. In such circumstances, it is more likely that unresolved feelings of inequality can distort their relationships.

When the rivalry between adult siblings achieves neurotic proportions, it can usually be traced back to marked parental favouritism or one sibling's conviction that the other is superior.

Social scientists who have studied adult sibling relationships say it is common for them to "blow hot and cold."

Situations that might be expected to bring them together — the birth of a child, the illness or death of a parent — are found to revive old rivalries. For instance, instead of uniting in their concern for an ailing parent, siblings often quarrel bitterly over who provides the most care, financial support or af-

fection. It is very common that bitterest quarrels erupt when siblings have to divide a parent's personal property.

It is also observed that spouses of siblings play a key role in improving or souring relationships. If spouses wish to be constructive when siblings quarrel, it is important for them to remain emotionally neutral, as the goal should be to help their mates to be more objective and not to inflame feelings further.

As they get older, many adults are heard to say they wish they were on better terms with their brothers and sisters. It is quite possible to achieve this objective, since any relationship can be improved if people are willing to put energy into making it more satisfying. People must recognize that their childhood rivalries are left over from a struggle that was very likely the fault of neither. If they can see that, it will help them to stop feeling guilty or blaming each other the way they did while they were quite young.

Another important factor is that siblings often hesitate to disclose long-concealed feelings of anger or jealousy, inferiority or guilt. But after their feelings are brought out, there is a much better chance to improve the relationship. Among some other helpful suggestions to improve sibling relationship are (i) If you were the favoured child, realize that your sibling suffered. If you were the less favoured, know it was not your sibling's fault. (ii) Offer your help to a sibling in trouble. An illness, divorce or death can provide an opportunity to show that you are more of a person than he or she realized.

It should be remembered that empathy is the key to improving any relationship. Try to put yourself in your sibling's position to grasp how you have affected him or her. When siblings can get past their rivalries, they may find they are bound by close, longer-lasting ties than those with any other person in their lives.



Italian styles of swimsuits to beat the heat.



— Courtesy: Amica