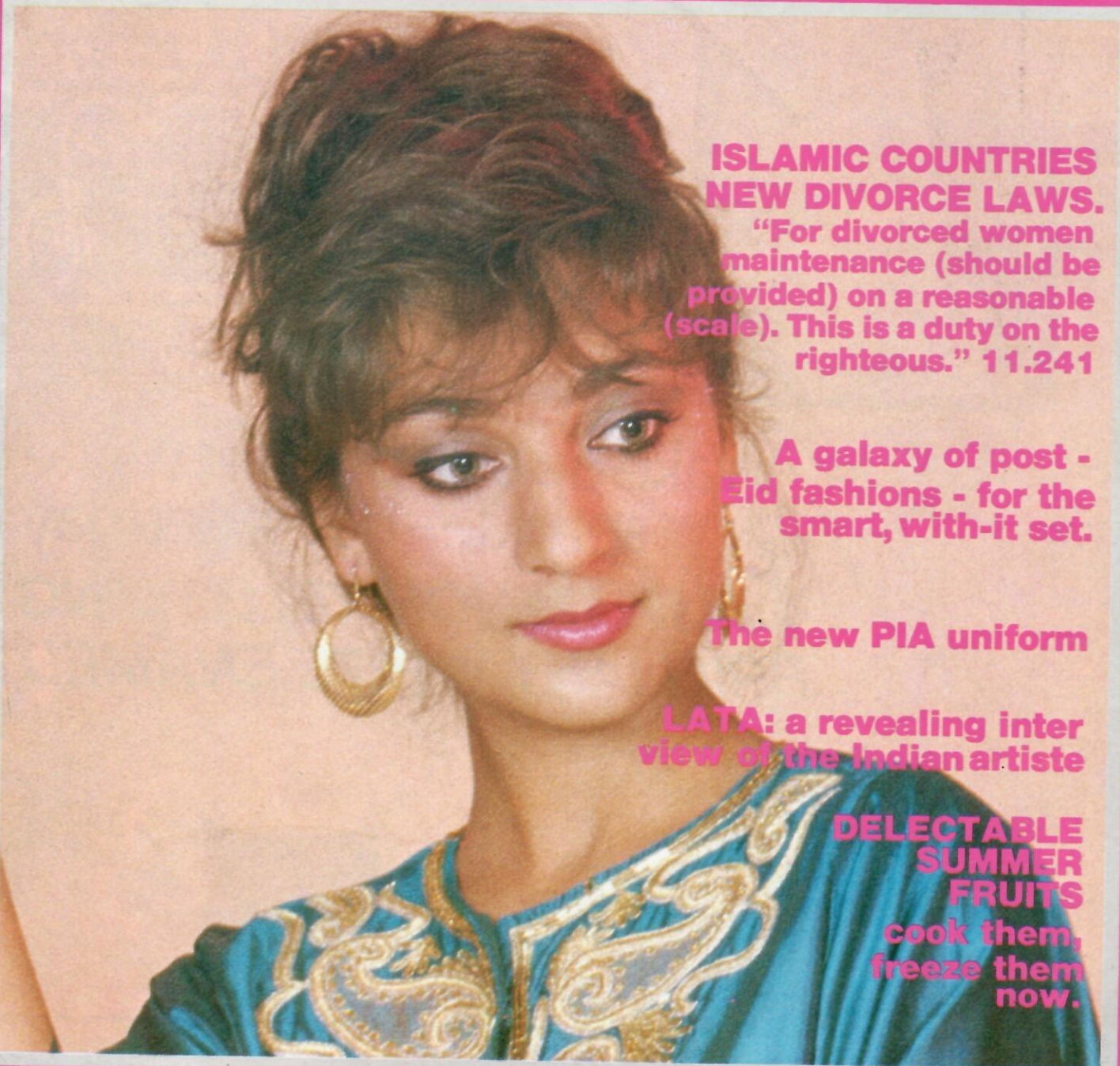


The Monthly Newsmagazine for Women

June 1986, Price Rs. 15.00

SHE



**ISLAMIC COUNTRIES
NEW DIVORCE LAWS.**
"For divorced women
maintenance (should be
provided) on a reasonable
(scale). This is a duty on the
righteous." 11.241

**A galaxy of post -
Eid fashions - for the
smart, with-it set.**

The new PIA uniform

**LATA: a revealing inter
view of the Indian artiste**

**DELECTABLE
SUMMER
FRUITS**
cook them,
freeze them
now.

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Tunisia and Iran grant maintenance after divorce to women - Are they less Islamic than we are?



PIA turns its back on haute couture and flies in the face of fashion trends.



The lady with the golden voice has unusually much to say about herself.



The drama of black and white holds a unique and timeless appeal.

COVER

The midsummer look: Cool, confident, plucky, stepping ahead in '86.



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BRIEFING

A sense of Humour

It is so often said that without a sense of humour one couldn't survive in Pakistan. So let's look at some of the events of the past month which have made us laugh our heads off.

First of all the budget. To ordinary people like us it meant a saving of Rs. 2 on every 20 litres of petrol (Rs. 20 a month?) and an additional expense of Rs. 50-100 on postage, telephone etc. There were a lot of concessions for that class of people who don't need any. The crunch was the decision to permit landowners to use their lands, at inflated values naturally, as security for non-agricultural loans, thereby creating an even bigger class of privileged, rich, absentee landlords. To make us laugh even louder, it was reported in the press the other day that some of these landlords who are ministers have outstanding loans of upto Rs. 140 million and are most reluctant to pay them off!

The next item on our list of funny ha-ha jokes on us this month has been the exciting news of water and electricity shortages. How the President or anyone else in authority could have had the gall to wish us a Happy Eid as we cooked our sewain by candle light, bathed in a mug of water and fought ourselves insane with all the monsters in charge, alternately begging and cajoling, swearing and abusing, for one truck of water. On payment of course, anything upto Rs. 250. Even the much vaunted army run NLC took 20 days to deliver.

The third source of our intense amusement this month has been Nisar Fatima — but more of her in the following pages — does she really deserve to be taken seriously? Of far greater significance is the action of the Speaker, who taking it upon himself the attributes of a Caesar, ordered Asma Jilani to be arrested and brought to trial! Are our Assembly men but just a bunch of Don Quixotes, battling against imaginary windmills, or is the Assembly just a Mad Hatter's Tea Party that is being staged for the nation's relaxation and entertainment?

Benazir has generally laid low this month, but in her Meet the Press session hosted by the Karachi Press Club, her confidence, competence and commitment were paramount. Dressed in white, barefoot, struggling to keep her dupatta on her head, she braved her questions deftly, if at times, a little too adroitly. Above all her sense of commitment to her cause came over profoundly. Like all young women of history who have had an obsession, is her lot too going to be of oblivion? Macbeth's witches pale into insignificance compared to the goings on in the portals of power in Islamabad.

We owe our readers an apology, and that is the long long wait you all had for our May issue. It was an unforgivable delay and we really regret it. We are trying hard to get ourselves back onto schedule, and inshallah, with your continued support and encouragement, we shall do so in a couple of months time.

This issue contains a new feature which is a page for children only. This came in response to a demand from an ever widening range of readers as well as our own efforts for constant variety and improvement. Your ideas and suggestions will always be welcome.

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Girls to the fore in poster competition

1985 was International Youth Year. In this connection the Pakistan National Council of the Arts had organised a poster competition. The results were declared this month and a prize-giving ceremony organised by the Idara was held. Dr. Afzal of the Islamic University was the chief guest.

from 10 to 30 years, and a ten year old cannot compete with someone so much older. The competition should have been divided into age groups 10-15 and so on, it would have been much more appropriate. Each group could then have been given one first prize and merit certificates.



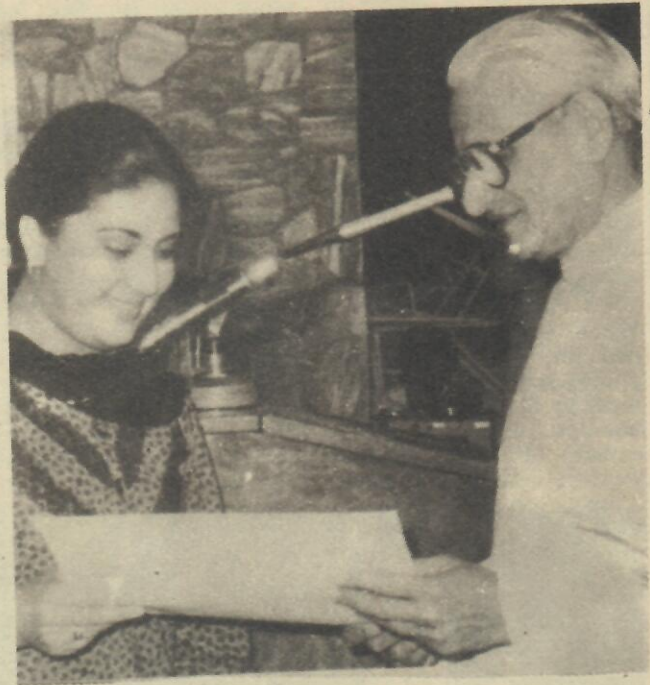
Miss Zaiba Jaffery



Miss Ayesha Ahmad

One hundred and eight entries had been received. I do not know who judged the prize winners — but the posters on display were not of a very high standard. I think the main drawback was that the age limit was

Dr. Afzal, a delightful person to talk to, in his short speech urged the young people to strive hard to bring glory to the nation and its arts. The theme of the competition was youth participation



in development programmes and peace. The objective was to provide an opportunity to the younger generation to project their ideas for the development programmes of the country and promote peace in the world. The first prize went to

Mohammad Salim Khan, the second to Ayesha Ahmed and the third to Zaiba Jaffery. There were seven winners of merit certificates. It was good to see that as many girls took part as boys.

Lahore Death by stoning

Mst. Gul Nisa wife of Fida Hussain from Haveli village, Attock, has been ordered to be stoned to death publicly under the Haddood Ordinance. Gul Nisa has been awarded the maximum punishment because she confessed to her crime of developing illicit relations with a shop keeper of her "Illaqa". Fazal Dad, the man involved, gets 7 years rigorous imprisonment with 20 lashes, (a step lower in the punishment ladder) because he refused to accept the offence. The situation seems a bit farcical that if Gul Nisa is guilty of her crime and has been proven so, how can her partner be treated lightly? Also, if there are witnesses to the act, then, did they see one party only? Also, who knows under what circumstances Gul Nisa confessed? Also, is the law not equal

for both guilty parties or is Gul Nisa more guilty because she confessed? According to a leading woman lawyer, the legal method of execution by stoning, is to throw one stone from the front and shoot the guilty party from the back. Of course, the stone thrower's aim must be as accurate as the one who shoots. The question arises, what does the law say if either misses? Also who is without sin that he shall cast the first stone?

The Gul Nisa case may be a first of its kind in Attock and if the sentence is carried out it will be the first in Pakistan, but it certainly gives all educated and reasonable people food for thought. In this age of progress and development, do we amend and modify our laws to protect the dignity of mankind or resort

to methods which are degrading and inhuman? Gul Nisa's case will be appealed and defended by a self appointed woman lawyer. An international observer is being invited to view the proceedings but will all this bring back the

respect and pride of the women of Pakistan? Or will our representatives continue to participate in International moots and swear that our women have equal rights everywhere and in everything? Only time will tell!!

Afghanis invade Lahore

Afghani refugees are becoming a part of the Pakistani landscape in all four provinces which is an undisputed fact. How welcome they were when they first arrived and how welcome they are now, is another story.

In Lahore, one sees them selling their wares on footpaths in Gulberg and along the canal but in the recent past the Afghani invasion has taken a new turn. Afghani food restaurants are now opening all over the city. These roadside cafes selling Afghani kababs, tikkas, roast leg of lamb, Kabuli biryani and other

Afghani dishes are a sell out everywhere and are new places to eat. Reasonably priced, these cafes are run by pure Persian speaking Kabuli Afghans who usually get the orders mixed up because they are still learning to speak Urdu! But the meat is tender, the service quick and the biryani delicious. Suddenly the Afghans are a little more popular than they were. As we know, the proverb is "The best way to a man's heart is through his stomach". The Afghans have replaced the word "man" with "city". Let's see how Lahore will respond!!

United we stand-WAF merger

The Women's Action Forum (Democratic) and the Women's Action Forum (National) have sunk their differences and joined once again to form a united "Women's Action Forum". The WAF came into existence in 1981 as a pressure group, defending and speaking up for women's rights. In 1983 the organisation split on fundamental issues such as election of office

bearers, membership criteria, political affiliation etc. The two groups became WAF (National) and WAF (Democratic) and began to work separately. Although joint statements were issued and both groups attended certain meetings, the division seemed final. However, now after much water has flowed under the bridge, tempers have cooled down, emotions have subsided and

reason prevailed, a compromise has been reached. Basic fundamental issues causing the split have been settled and a united Women's Action Forum came into being again from May 10th, 1986. Soon elections will be held and the new working committee will begin working. In the immediate future WAF is planning to set up a permanent office where meetings

and other office activities can be handled. Free legal advice will be available on a regular basis plus other volunteer services for women. A national convention is also being organised some time later this year which will bring all chapters of WAF from all over Pakistan together under one umbrella. The women's cause in Pakistan looks promising.

Defence for Children International

Defence for Children International is an organisation aimed at defending and protecting the rights of children all over the world. It has consultative status in the UN and is an NGO forum. It is also drafting a resolution on the rights of the child for the UN. Regional seminars have been held in Latin America, Africa and Asia to discuss the sale of children, child labour and abandoned children. It has world wide membership and recently held a seminar in New Mexico where a young

Pakistani woman lawyer was elected Vice President of the DCI. (Defence Children International).

Mrs. Asma Jehangir, a well known figure in the Pakistani law scene as well as on the women's rights scene, represented Pakistan at this seminar where 39 countries participated.

A work paper on "Abandoned Children" was given to different groups of experts who will prepare a questionnaire to be circulated all over the world. This pilot research study will be of immense value in

the underdeveloped countries where children are totally neglected and deprived of their basic human rights.

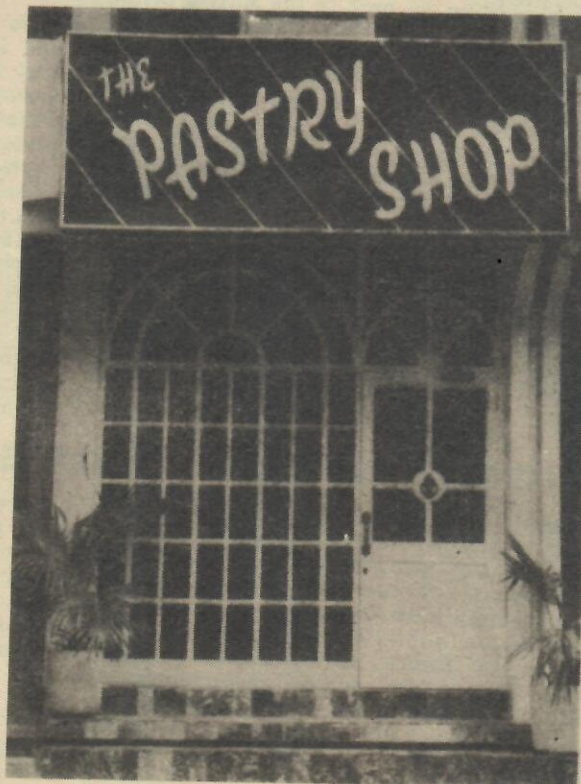
Asma is hoping to open a Pakistani section of this organisation which will be affiliated to the parent organisation. Talking about her impressions of the seminar, Asma sounded very impressed by the Latin American people. "They are so proud of their country and everything it stands for. They will only speak Spanish and not English even if they know it.

Although the United States is virtually sitting on their borders and constantly interfering in their affairs, these countries have kept this superpower at bay". Asma also found the European countries less condescending and less patronizing this time. The Third World and the under developed countries seem to have made an impression at last. Commenting on this mood of lawyers, child psychologists and social workers, Asma said, "It was a good learning experience. I'm trying to have the next meeting in Pakistan."

Zainab's Frenchified

pastry shop

Nothing can beat the Punjabi palate when it comes to being a connoisseur of anything edible and there is ample places mushrooming in the city, ranging from the local balti gosht variety to the sophisticated confectionaries. The latest on the scene is the Pastry Shop with its pastry looking red brochure. Of course, a bakery is nothing much to write home about in most cases, but in this case there is a female behind the show. And then the Pastry Shop is not just a bakery. It is what happens when a husband with a sweet tooth encourages (in jest and earnest) a wife who is already struck with baking fever. Zainab Omer, the boss on the home cooking scene for more than a decade, decided to break the barriers of the domes-



tic area and thanks to her talent for concocting edible delights, plunged with a being into the concern vaca. The pastry shop in the Liberty Plaza (Liberty Market) Lahore has a very, very Frenchified exterior and an even more continental flavour inside. A tempting array of delectable confection-aries meets the eye and the palate. Even the prices are mouth-watering. The speciality is the solid two pound "almond torte" for Rs. 55/-. Besides, there is a variety of take home, frozen stuff, just desserts and a whole salad counter. Bravo, Zainab! This is precisely what we at SHE call the "Womens Lib" a woman on a mans seat. For hasn't commercial baking been a male monopoly?

Nyla Daud

P ROGRESSIVE



Divorce is no longer an issue that can be evaded with a head in the sand attitude. It is a reality that more and more couples, parents and children, in all stratas of Pakistani society are compelled to face. In a tradition bound society as ours, where a girl is deemed a burden from her birth, where she is brought up with the sole objective of marriage in mind, the word divorce is like a death knell for her — both social ostracism and financial hardship await her, for more often than not, she has been emotionally, socially and financially dependant upon her husband. There is no recourse to maintenance from him after divorce, for our interpreters of Islamic law consider that once the contract of marriage has been broken, it is a total severing of ties.

The situation cannot be viewed so complacently in black and white. The implications are many, profound and far reaching. By leaving the divorced woman, and often the children too, bereft of financial support, it degrades the status of a wife by treating her as an easily discarded object when it has served its purpose. It endows the husband with unbridled freedom to subject her to such callousness without the burden of any financial responsibility or repercussions later, which could have otherwise served to act as an inhibiting factor. The knowledge of this cruel advantage can and is often used by the husband as a sword of

MAINTENANCE IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE HUSBAND

Damocles to subjugate his wife as he wishes. The Indian Parliament's recent decision has shocked and dismayed those who had expected a progressive trend in Rajiv Gandhi's India. This bill effectively throws the burden of supporting a divorcee and her family to the mercy of a third party. It states that a woman deserted by her husband, for whatever reason, be it a fancy for a new and younger woman or any other trumped up excuse, should be maintained by her parents or relatives. If they are unable or unwilling to take on this responsibility the rejec-

ISLAM — Divorce laws in today's Iran and Tunisia

ted woman and her children are turned over to the Waqf Boards, a public body set up for common purposes.

A blatantly politically motivated decision, it is an insult to the dignity of Indian Muslim women. For one, it sets them apart and at a disadvantage to other Indian women who are, under the constitution, granted the right to maintenance after divorce. Such a move is doubly preposterous in a democratic country. Secondly, this bill degrades and demoralizes Indian Muslim women by compelling them to seek charity from third parties totally unconnected with the divorce. It reinforces the notion of a woman being a burden by putting heavy emotional and financial pressure on the woman's parents, perhaps poor and aged, at a time when they are unable to bear new responsibilities. As for dependance on relatives, in these days of spiralling prices, not many will be happy, willing or able to feed, clothe and house an extra family.

While the passing of the Muslim Women's Bill in the Indian Parliament has put a temporary stop to the hopes of Muslim Women of the Subcontinent, it is significant that several Muslim countries in the Arab world have in recent years enacted legislation to protect women in the event of a divorce.

At the Conference of Muslim Women held in Lahore last year, delegates from Malaya, Tunisia, Iran and Libya in particular, spoke proudly of the reforms that have been introduced in their countries. These reforms do not support the contention of Indian and Pakistani traditionalists, whose interpretations and practices are both retrograde and discriminatory to women and which seem in fact to be measures to protect Muslim men's rights.

The Islamic countries who have introduced enlightened legislation have based their thinking on 'Woman is the mother of man, she is the second half of the nation in quality and quantity as in production capacity. If therefore we underestimate women and ignore the discredit and contempt they find themselves in today, we are in a way underestimating ourselves.' 'Women in our Law and Society' by Haddad.

Let us look at what has been done in Revolutionary Iran.

Life in Iran today may be austere, where reprisals against anything deemed un-Islamic are swift and harsh, where women are compelled to observe purdah, yet their divorce laws are surprisingly just and forward thinking.

The Islamic Republic of Iran Supreme Court has made it binding upon every couple to sign, at the time of the nikah, a document which clearly states the points on which divorce can be sought by either party and the details of settlement in case of divorce.

A woman in Iran can ask for a divorce on several grounds —

1. If the husband has not provided due maintenance for six months without a valid reason or refuses to do so.
2. If he is of bad character in ways that the wife cannot tolerate.
3. If he is mentally ill, or has a disease that endangers his wife's life.
4. If he is in an illegal profession or takes part in dealings which, in the view of the court, can harm his family.
5. If he has been sentenced to over 5 year's imprisonment by the court.

6. If he has some physiological defect that has rendered him sterile since five years.
7. If he disappears without reason for six months.
8. If he remarries without the consent of his wife.

It is further stated in the document that the wife's income earned during the marriage belongs to her alone and the husband has no right over it, he has to provide a separate home for her if she refuses to live with her in-laws, and that she has the right to work in any sphere allowed by Islam and the husband cannot restrain her from doing so.

In case of divorce, a woman divorced by her husband is not only entitled to her mehr and living expenses for the period of iddat, but also receives half of all his mobile and immobile property and his earnings during their marriage.

Infact in some cases, when the court has adjudged it fair, this settlement has been granted to the wife even when she has filed a case for divorce.

These divorce laws give the wife's status in marriage a dignity that cannot be easily overlooked.

The Tunisian Case

The Tunisian Code of Personal Law, instituted in 1956 by President Habib Bourgiba, is evidence of his staunch belief in the equality of the sexes. He resisted the Ulema who vociferously proclaimed that "Divorce is a matter for men only" and forged ahead with his revolutionary reforms among which was the abolishment of polygamy and verbal pronouncement of 'talaq' by the husband.

Relevant features of the Personal Code are:

1. A divorce can take place only before a court of law and must be preceded by an attempt at reconciliation.
2. Men and women have equal access to divorce.
3. A capricious divorce obligatorily entails payment of damage and, if one of the parties proves injury, this must be compensated.

In the event of divorce, the wife can claim maintenance during the 3 months period of iddat and if she is pregnant, then until the baby is born. An ex-wife, who has custody of children from the marriage, will be entitled to a separate children's allowance without prejudice to the alimony decreed by the court.

The traditional marriage conducted by imams was, though not banned, declared null and void and the 'legal marriage' introduced in its place. By thus improving the position of women in society, Tunisia is today one of the most progressive states in the Muslim World.



A head of her times —

MEHRNIGAR MASROOR

To sketch a profile of Mehrnigar Masroor... "the pen should be dipped in the humid colours of the rainbow and the paper dried in the dust from the wings of a butterfly"

Mehnigar was blessed with multiple talents, but above all she was a woman not only of her time but of the future. Her thinking and attitudes were progressive and the manifestations of her art were well ahead of the times she lived in.

She evoked admiration from young and old throughout her life. In her youth it was her physical beauty, her charm and the unique spark which enraptured all who came in contact with her and this quality lasted her the whole of her life. Wit, humour and zest for living ensured that "Age could not wither her, nor custom stale her infinite variety."

Her upbringing ensured that her natural high spirits were uncurbed and allowed full play. The daughter of Falak Paima, the original and unmatched Urdu prose stylist, committed to the freedom of the individual and the emancipation of women, encouraged Mehrnigar to experiment, exercise and develop her varied talents. All the imagination and creativity notwithstanding, Mehrnigar had ingrained pragmatism

FARRUKH NIGAR AZIZ

and an ability to be realistic, above all about herself. She saw herself as objectively as others. This was the legacy from her mother. Courage is the heritage of all women in oppressed societies, for without it the women cannot survive nor can they endure the rigours imposed on them. This inherited courage refined by the experiences of life became a dominating characteristic of Mehrni-

*"Age could not wither
her nor custom stale her
infinite variety"*

gar in the last years of her life. On the threshold of life Mehrnigar met an outstanding pilot of the Pakistan Air Force, whom she married. She threw herself wholeheartedly into being a wife and a mother, and became as ardently committed to the PAF as her husband, Air Commodore Masroor Hosain. The PAF provided Mehrnigar with a framework in which she could continue her artistic activities through the PAF Women's Clubs and

other Air Force occasions. She received full support and encouragement from Masroor. It was in this period that she wrote her early plays and experimented with the musical dance drama which eventually became her particular genre and in which her talent for original and innovative genius flowered.

The crash which ended Masroor's career at its height, left Mehrnigar bereft in her mid-thirties, but her loyalty to the PAF never faltered in the long years that followed, and the PAF reciprocated fully giving her any assistance that she requested on rare occasions, and finally when they laid her to rest, burying her with full honours next to her husband in the PAF Base named after him — the Masroor Base. A rare example of a Pakistani institution honouring those who had given it distinguished service.

After Masroor's death, the struggle to bring up two children entering their adolescence was now her primary concern. Working to supplement an inadequate pension Mehrnigar gained experiences which strengthened her indomitable spirit. She also awoke to the harsh realities that working women of Pakistan face at all levels. Through the PIA Arts Academy, Mehrnigar continued her musical dance dramas. Her ballet "Sons of

the River" had a triumphant production before the Queen of England during President Ayub's official visit to the UK. It was critically acclaimed in the British reviews. This was followed by international tours to Europe, USSR and countries of Asia.

Mehrnigar continued to produce ballets for the stage and PTV. All the themes in these works were original and showed a deep love and understanding of the Muslim cultural heritage. Her choreography often got its inspiration from the Mughal and other Indian miniatures. The technical innovations both in music and dance won acceptance from renowned musicians such as Nathoo Khan and Rafiq Ghaznavi who worked with her. Her creativity, based on real knowledge and understanding of her art, led these master artists to accept the innovations and technical advances and abandon the hidebound traditions of centuries and collaborate to produce a dance idiom special to Pakistan. Her entire achievement was based on original concepts and she initiated acknowledge that she had gone beyond Uday Shankar, the great Indian dance innovator.

Mehrnigar was aware and interested in political and social realities within the country and on the international scene. Coming from a family where knowledge, spirit of inquiry and enlightenment were given the highest value she could not fail to see the denigration of these norms as the years went by. The colonial dominance of English and the neglect of Urdu, particularly in the lack of books for children was a concern that she had cherished for many years. English nursery rhymes and Enid Blyton were preferred reading for the young and there were no means by which children could read with interest the stories and legends which were their past and needed to be integrated into their present.

The formation of the National Book Foundation provided her with an opportunity to produce children's books. Mehnigar had begun to find herself more and more circumscribed in the field of dance and a chance to contribute in a field which she considered of primary importance for the future of the nation was taken up with the usual commitment. From her prolific pen came stories both imaginative and educative. An illustrated encyclopaedia *Harf-o-Maine* for children, the first of its kind in Urdu, was a signifi-

She wrote that "the whirlpools of piety whose blows are savage" need to be restrained, "the fraud of virtue which negates human compassion" must be combatted.

cant achievement and this, together with her story books won her both national and international awards. It was a period of fulfilment, but it ended soon enough with the coming of Martial Law. The production of children's books to the military mind were of scant value as was the National Book Foundation itself.

A longstanding member of the APWA, Mehnigar began to devote more time to women's issues as the fundamentalists began to assume political power and turned their attention to reducing the status of women in accordance with their retrogressive thinking. She accepted the assignment to write Begum Liaquat Ali Khan's biography. In this she interwove the whole women's movement in Pakistan for their rightful position in the nation as led by Begum Liaquat Ali Khan. Her declared purpose was to counter the cacophony of voices proclaiming that the place of the woman was in the home, and to oppose the backward movement and crippling prejudice which was threatening the existing status achieved after a prolonged struggle. Mehnigar recognised that "Only through the power of the Word, rigid, conservative, patriarchal societies can begin to comprehend the concept of emancipation and enlightenment for women and only then can progressive ideas begin to stir in people's minds and give directions to their thoughts." The growing malaise in Pakistan society appalled her. The increasing

She was a liberated woman in the best sense of the word. Her mind was receptive to new ideas, be it science, technology or arts.

power of retrogressive forces in the name of the pristine glory of Islam were downgrading the spirit of objective inquiry, scholarship, and intellectual pursuits. Scientific and technological advances in the West would be difficult to transfer in such a climate. Cultural activities had already been banned, erosion of women's status was taking place and further suppression of women threatened by the promoters of bigotry. She recognised that the consequence of the growing intolerance between sects and belief patterns of various sections of society would take Pakistan back into medievalism.

Children's stories in the "Dawn" described the resistance of people in the past to oppressive regimes and linked them to the oppression of today. Articles defended women's rights and their freedom of action, at the same time flaying the strongholds of obscurantism in eloquent prose. She wrote that "the whirlpools of piety whose blows are savage" need to be restrained, "the fraud of virtue which negates human compassion" must be resisted and "the flames of obscurantism have to be doused by reason and justice."

Both as an artist and a woman, Mehnigar accepted the challenge and the religious and social prejudice that is the lot of any Pakistani woman who defies the stereotype role that conservative customs and fundamentalist religion prescribe for her. Mehnigar dared to be avant-garde in her thinking and in the manifestations of her art forms. She was a liberated woman in the best sense of the word. Her mind was receptive to new ideas, be it science, technology or arts. Her priorities were based on analysis and objective thinking.

The past made her present and the present outlined the future. She did not bow before the adverse blows that life dealt her — loss of dear ones and dread disease, she met with unbelievable courage, a shining spirit, an example and model to all. But in this Wasteland that we call Pakistan, where history begins today, where the value of archives is unknown and hi tech is used to eradicate, past records not preserved, who will she be an example or model for?

Mehrnigar Masroor will join so many other great spirits and personalities of this land, to be remembered only a while till the waters and sand obliterate those who knew and loved her.

DECIDEDLY BORING —

Dull, unimaginative and uninspiring are the words that first come to mind when one sees the new uniform of the PIA air and ground hostesses. Coming as it is after 11 years of what had become the tiresomely familiar purple, fuschia and green uniform, something more adventurous and contemporary had been expected. Especially since Pakistani designers have in recent years, with resounding success, given a new lease of life and an innovative look to the good old shalwar kameez. Taking into account too that PIA took a

The final 'winning' look turned out to be a simple shalwar kameez, apparently untouched by the avant garde revolution in that sphere, in pastel shades of apple green and rose pink with braid (in 1986?) along the slits (long, naturally!) and teamed with a striped chiffon dupatta in in green, pink and yellow. Maroon bag and shoes complete the ensemble. For the ground hostesses, it is a henna green shalwar kameez with dupatta striped in yellow, green and rust. The only change in this design is the addition of silver buttons —

logo incorporated in the weave, is a mix of cotton and polyester, which will get crushed quite easily. These days it seems almost criminal to restrict oneself to an old fashioned fitting shalwar kameez, not to mention illogical, as it does nothing to flatter the Pakistani girl's figure, which is usually pear-shaped. Keeping in mind the multitude of ideas and variations that our designers present each season, many of whom design for working women too, it would have been quite possible to have selected an outfit that

the new PIA uniform

tedious three years to make their decision.

It was way back in 1983 when they announced their intention to select a new uniform by a local designer and asked several of them to present their designs. Competition was stiff with three established and veteran fashion designers of Pakistan, Noor-jehan Bilgrami, Zeenat Saeed Ahmed

and Naheed Azfar participating. Fifty-two outfits were modelled, then re-modelled again and again as the military (who else!) stepped in to take over the P.I.A. committee's role of judge in the matter and ultimately it was President Zia and the First Lady who made the decision. Naheed Azfar emerged the winner but not before a lot of tempers were frayed, patience sorely tested and designs mauled as self-appointed creators of haute couture recommended changes in pattern, colour and even asked for a feature of one outfit to be added to another.

The selection is made at last. But not before a lot of tempers were frayed patience sorely tested and designs mauled.

taken from the outfit of one of the other Pakistani designers. No wonder the decision took so long!

Decidedly boring, is the general consensus. Valid also is the point that though rose pink and apple green are attractive colours they will look drab after some time and that the material, though specially woven by Sanaullah with the P.I.A.

was practical in comfort and durability, yet trendy enough with a touch of class that would have seen through five years atleast without appearing outdated.

By adhering to such a 'safe' look, P.I.A. has broken its tradition of smartly turned out air hostesses since its inception. The first uniform created by the French designer Chausee Fontaignelle, was a chic little number in bottle green and white teamed with a green cap. Though not very eastern in appearance, it continued for five years until it was decided to update it a little. Nothing more was done though, besides making the dupatta narrower in width.

In the mid sixties, PIA asked another Frenchman, the renowned Pierre Cardin, to make another change. He introduced the famous trendsetting pajama suit in fawn and moss green. The 'P.I.A. pajamas' as they came to be known were the rage of the time, particularly, with young women. The outgoing uniform seen from 1975 to 1986, was designed by

TEHREEMA-



An aesthetic evocation of love, patience, desire, rendered with grace and simplicity.

The dimmed lights came to life, revealing a beautifully postured, human statue, holding flowers.

The postured figure attired in a royal blue silk sari responded to the background music with an appealing grace, while offering flowers in a series of dance movements related to Pushp-Anjali. The performer made the offerings to the creator, the teacher and the audience. An appropriate beginning to an exciting evening of "Bharat Natyam", so well depicted at the Goethe Institute one fine evening.

The next item also strictly adhering to the traditional Bharat Natyam style, of Alaripu, was an invocation to the spirit of dance and comprised classical postures, set to the beat of Raga Nattai Karnatic.

Also traditional was the last dance on the evening's programme. Tillana- a technical dance (without a story) that begins slowly with statuesque poses with quickening tempo, transcending to quick rhythmic movements, demonstrating strength and vitality. It was set to Raga Darbari Jhaplata sung by the trio, Shahida Hussain, Tehreema and Shafqat. The fluidity of the movements, the suppleness with which she performed the postures from Moenjodaro, evoked admiration.

An aesthetic evocation of love,

MAGIC

patience, desire, longing, anxiety, was manifestly rendered with gentleness, grace and simplicity, yet with depth of expression that charged the atmosphere with thrilling anticipation of "What is next".

The elegant performer plaintively sang "Oh waters flow gently for I wait for my beloved —" in a Thumri in Raga Peelu Chanchal entitled "Nadiya Dheerey Bahona", as she expressed impatience and anxiety in her dance movements.

This item and two others to follow were experimental, since they stepped out of the sphere of the purely classical style and ventured into the periphery of the Northern Indian mode of classical singing for the dances.

It was sheer delight to watch the performer on a Khayal of Raga Malans, sung by Dr. Naheed Fatmi, "Mikh Mor Mor", light-hearted, playful, coy and provocative in her manner.

"Zara Dheerey sey Bolo" says the beloved, afraid of a scandal, the movements of the dance are soft and cautious, pleading secrecy effectively. This 'Dadra' was sung by Shahida Hussain, a student of Ustad Fateh Khan in a manner suited to the verse and dance. Unfulfilled longing, and desire, suffering and despair was portrayed in a song-dance item "Dukhi Hoon". The sadness was touching and the helplessness adroitly conveyed to the audience through facial expressions that were controlled and restrained, yet full of meaning.

The Lahore audience were indeed exposed to a rare treat of dance, verse and music in classical variations. The impressions lingered on days after the enchanting evening. There are not many around to captivate the feelings and sensations of the viewers and perhaps it will be a long time before we see this particular performer who will be leaving Pakistan to join her husband in Kenya. She is 23 year old Tehreema, a final year student of National College of Arts, Lahore.

She was accompanied on the tabla by Ashiq Hussain, flute player Khadim Hussain, and sitarist Dr. Ali Sherzoo while the tanpura and harmonium was played by Akhtar Hussain.

The diyas, flowers at the foot of the veranda, stage and antique wooden door made a pretty setting for the performance.

There had been a great conflict of choice. I was interested in art, drama, singing and dancing and am good at all," remarked Tehreema, the star-dancer of the evening. "I wanted to see how much it meant to me and how my performance affected viewers — their response." She paused, "Now I want it to become my main field. Though I shall continue to paint and hope to have a career connected with it."

Tehreema said she took her lessons from her mother Mrs. Indu Maryam Mitha from the age of four years when both found the time for it. "I joined my mother's dancing classes held for women interested in classical dancing. But whenever my father was transferred from one posting to another, I used to begin with others all over again" she smiled. It was not till 1978 when Tehreema joined college that she gave serious attention to dancing and practised throughout the summer vacations. "It became important to me and I realized it was a part of myself."

"I started singing at 10 years of age in Karachi though I did not devote much time to it. At Kinnaird College where I took my Intermediate Exam, I taught some ragas for a dancing competition." Next she took singing lessons from Ustad Hafeez Khan of Talwandi for two years, learnt to play the harmonium, but prefers the Tanpura any time. She was a production manager of one of the annual plays at Kinnaird College and enjoyed acting.

To find an outlet for her creativity Tehreema joined the National College of Arts to learn product designing, only to leave it after while for Fine Arts. She is currently preparing for her thesis to be finished this summer, after which she will be going to Kenya.

"My first performance was with my mother and before small groups at the Y.W.C.A., N.C.A., Pindi Arts Council". The Bharat Natyam stance is most difficult and boring, so most beginners leave it at an early stage. But I went on determined as I was inspired. I learnt Abhinaya



IN HER FEET

TALAT AHMAD

Hardy Amies, the Queen's designer, with a lot of help from PIA staff. He brought back brilliant jewel shades, though admittedly they did not suit many of the darker complexioned air and ground hostesses. Though the idea of having a uniform representing Pakistani culture by a Pakistani designer is indeed laudable, it is worth noting that most of the major airlines entrust this important job to trained professionals of international repute, such as Pierre Cardin who has recently been asked to create the Air India uniforms. Nowhere is the selection the prerogative of government ladies and high officials.

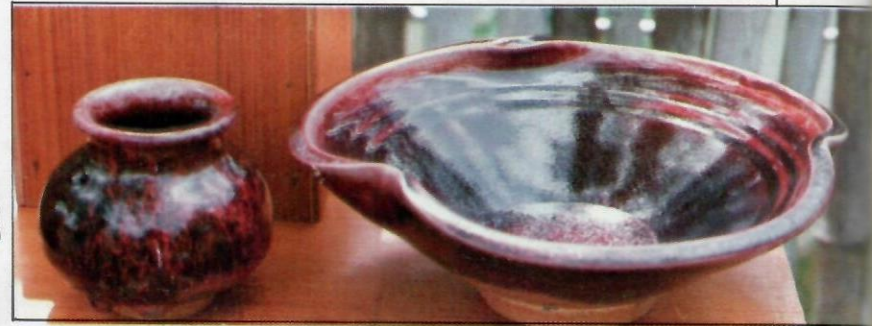
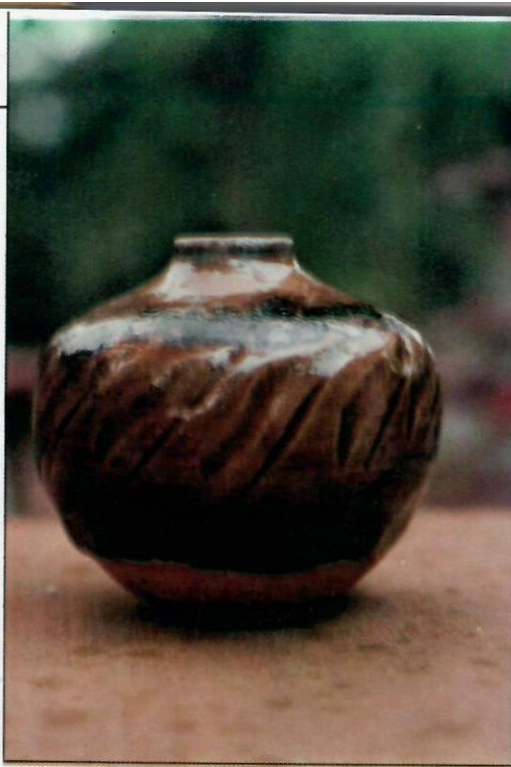
In a chat with 'SHE', Naheed Afzar said that she, along with the two designers afore mentioned, were called by P.I.A. in January, 1983. Each one was briefed separately and certain specifications were made to her by the P.I.A. committee — the outfit was not to be a traditional kurta, the colour green was not to be used, there was to be no embroidery on it and the lines must be modern and yet stay in fashion for a long time. With these instructions as a base, Naheed completed about ten outfits within a week. The first presentation was before the committee, but no decision was taken except to recommend certain changes in the designs — such as incorporating the colour green. The second presentation was again an unfruitful one. Following this there was no further communication from P.I.A. for over a year, which meant a considerable waste of time, money and effort on the part of the designers.

One day, Naheed was called out of the blue and informed that her design had been selected. However, the production, including choice of material, was entirely managed by the concerned PIA personnel.

In the face of criticism of the insipid lines of the uniform, Naheed firmly maintains that in her opinion the design is a true reflection of Pakistan. High fashion has a life of only six months whereas this style can endure and is instantly identifiable with Pakistan.

'SHE' however, aware of the talent and creativity Naheed possesses in abundance, feels that the P.I.A. uniform is a conglomerate of ideas — both civilian and military. It does not bear the stamp of haute couture at all and indeed is difficult to be accepted as Naheed's idea at all.





SHEHREZADE'S CYCLICAL WORLD OF CERAMICS

NYLA DAUD

What happens when an eighteen year old, the much loved, overly protected, only girl child of highly enlightened, broad-minded parents suddenly comes face to face with the world? Obviously the girl child is in for an identity crisis, given the background of conventional norms taught by the convent runs on to Kinnaird College and finally the National College of Arts. In the process occurs a drastic confusion of values. There is a mad desire for a placement of the self in alien surroundings, a self which had hitherto existed on the periphery of these new values. There is a sudden, abrupt downing of the limits of the self aroused by this conflicting exposure. Of course when values clash, lessons are learnt and then there is a clearing of the skies ahead.



is the intelligent mother figure, who has quietly but firmly exposed the sensitive daughter to the intrinsic values of hand craft, the symbol of the roots and the soil. But there are inhibitions too. Under the circumstances a less involved person would easily take the lethargic route to oblivion. But not so Shehrezade Alam — for the rebel in her, lying dormant had to break out and whenever this happens, the worldly are in for surprises.

"Then I realised that clay was my line. It was the thing nearest to the roots and soil which I had yearned for all along and with whom I felt a link in my very being. I developed a special relationship with the craftsman, who works with his bare hands, linking the traditions of generations past with the future".

And when such a tremendous identity crisis is resolved, an identity is discovered, how does the artist establish herself in this world of rising technology and fading cultures. The brave ones opt out.

"It was in America, meeting artisans and craftsmen that I realised that I had to opt out. I needed to get out of the rat-race, to choose an alternate life style in order to support my beliefs — because I was by now aware that the established order of society around me was not going to help me. My vision of becoming part of a ceramic designing unit to evolve a craft consciousness in these parts met an early death. Nobody was ready to take risks. I met closed doors, but then I was a product of the sixties, a time when there was a new consciousness all over the world. More important than anything else there was Zahoor's support. In fact his was the big impact which braved me on to rebel against the norms. That was the first time I really asserted myself and then I jumped into another world".



"For me the year starts in September, it is like planting a seed, so likewise my ideas are nurtured. Come winter and the ideas mature. Open spring and like the flowers that blossom in my garden, my visions of stone and clay blossom forth."

Shehrezade Alam, that brave link between modern society and the traditions of soil and culture, is no longer the shy little girl. Life for her is now a complete cycle. She is well into the rhythm of the world of ceramics, relating to it only as a woman can, being by nature more cyclical than a man.

"I discovered a rhythmic cycle in ceramic production and responded to it in totality. From the stone that comes from mother earth, crushed to clay, coaxed into a malleable mud shape of a pot and then finally glazed and heated to acquire once again the form of original stone — this is the cyclical world of ceramics. I relate to this natural process because my life too is attuned thus. For me the year starts in September, it is like planting a seed, so likewise my ideas are nurtured. Come winter and the ideas mature. Open spring and like the flowers that blossom in my garden, my visions of stone and clay blossom forth — and I am ready to exhibit to the world at large."

Shehrezade relates to the cyclical pattern of her craft and her being reverberates in agreement. This is no ordinary woman. She is a crafts



woman at heart, wedded fully to a life time's dream. As she works on the

wheel, her hands, soaked in the soil, shape each vessel. They carry her expression, each being made in a mood with never a hint of repetition. The only common feature is the rotundity of the shapes. These are bulbous, round shapes and a certain degree of happiness and satisfaction emerges from each. Shehrezade is not given to linear, emaciated shapes surely because there is not an inch of tension or confusion in her person.

"I can never mass produce, or make to order, because as I shape a pot I

CONTINUED PAGE 107

"Lata Mangeshkar is to music what Shakespeare was to literature."



LATA

Q. Is it true that you belong to the Devdasi cult and hence cannot get married?

A. It's true to the extent that devdasis are married to their art only. But questions about my marriage have been asked over a million times. Some tongues whisper scandalous things. That's just mud-slinging.

Q. But isn't it true that you have a very special relationship with Raj Singh of Dongarpur?

A. He is a very good friend. Besides, he manages all my affairs, including my trips to foreign countries. We understand each other very well. That's all. Only demented people talk loosely about our wonderful relationship.

Q. But then don't you always put 'sindoor' in your hair?

A. That's because I'm wedded to music and art. That's our tradition.

Q. Were you unhappy when your sister Asha got married?

A. She did break the tradition.

Q. What has kept you fit all these years and how have you maintained your golden voice?

A. I don't eat much lunch. I got in the habit of skipping lunch when I started singing for the movies. Singing not only requires total concentration mentally, but it also involves physical exertion. Eating bogs you down. So, I usually have something very light to munch.

Q. Don't you feel the absence of a male in the house?

A. Such hang-ups don't bother me. I have matured greatly. I have become much more profound. I always feel the joy of my music and am never lonely. And if ever there is some hang-up, I quickly overcome it. That is my key.

Q. It is widely believed that you have been raising your fees frequently and are not punctual for your assignments. True?

A. Sometimes you try to be all things to all people. Well, a great

fall through, leaving me free to be with myself.

Q. Do you think some kind of destiny is guiding your life, since you are a firm believer in God?

A. I find comfort in fatalism and inevitability. I find comfort in things like earthquakes and eclipses because I have no hand in them. They relieve me of the responsibility. I find comfort in projecting and thinking about the seasons and the sea, things like that because I have no control over them.

Q. Does your faith in God help you in singing better?

A. Both are an integral part of my life. Music is my left arm and God is my right. According to me, everything depends on fidelity. I have been very faithful to my music and to my God. I maintain a perfect communion with the Almighty. That's how I decided to dramatise the conflict between the two universes. I'm scared to sing or face the audiences alone, that is without the love of God within my heart.

Q. Did you gain instant success?

A. I think so. But I was sure of my future. I got ovations from the audience straight away. It was thrilling. More than I hoped for. Yet, I didn't put the cart before the horse. I've been building up to that since a long time.

Q. These days you are giving quite a few live performances, specially outside India. How do you feel facing the audience?

A. One is exposed, naked. The music can be extremely difficult and you can't stop as in a studio. It's a competition with one chance to win and to win is to captivate the audience. That is when they really care about what you are singing. One is not always relaxed. Sometimes there is tension, anger or pain, which is perfectly natural when one is playing for higher stakes.

Q. You must be one of the richest persons in India, having sung over

probably be less of a perfectionist.

Q. You are often accused of having a monopolistic hold over playback singing and also of trying to block the entry of newcomers. Is that so?

A. Disgusting and an utter lie. No one should use blackmailing methods to keep newcomers out. Where is the monopolistic hold? There are so many newcomers — Nitin Mukesh, Jaspal, Amit, Preeti Sagar, Vani Jairam, Anwar, Sushma Shreshtha Mankar, Anup Jalota, Pankaj Udhas and Shabbir Kumar. There is a whole new lot of music directors as well. For instance, Basu-Manohri, Hemant Bhonsle, Manas Mukherjee, Vanraj Bhatia, Biddu, Jagjit. Today, there is a complete departure from convention. Innovation is beginning to make dents. A very healthy sign indeed.

Q. What are the qualifications of a good music director?

A. One who keeps the song and frees the singer. I remember the late Madan Mohan, for instance. Once during a recording, a man sat at the back reading a fashion magazine. Madan Mohan glanced at him, but didn't speak, and the man put the magazine down. After every four or five takes, Madan Mohan, went to the control room and listened with his eyes closed. "I don't want to be distracted," he said, "I want it natural. I don't want to dupe myself or let anyone talk me into anything." He drove himself and the musicians relentlessly. He was possessed. It was uncanny how the musicians adored him.

Q. What's the best thing he ever said to you?

A. One day he was very ill. I had gone to see him and found him working. Even during that sickness he was trying to get just the right sound from the 'marimba. Suddenly he looked at me and said, "Lata, you're the heroine of the century."

Q. Do people consider you the goddess of music?

THE GREAT

tragedy in your life makes you decide it's not necessary to please everybody. I can afford to be selfish sometimes in the sense that I deliberately raise my fees so high that, in some cases, engagements should

25,000 songs and always being the highest paid. What do you think of your money power?

A. Money means freedom to work on what we want and how we want. If one doesn't have much, one would

A. If people think like that, it's very flattering and nice, though I'd prefer to be known for my singing.

Q. Do you take any precautions to protect your voice?

A. I have no fussy regimen for that.

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Q. Your knowledge about film music is as incredible as your voice. Do you also study music a lot?

A. Music is in my blood and veins. I live with it and sleep with it.

Q. Why didn't you specialise in classical music?

A. I found out when I was quite young that I could improvise. I could never really adhere strictly to classical music, could never become a good classical singer. It amazes me at what the classical vocalists have to go through to get something down so that it happens everytime. It's really superhuman to maintain the kind of quality that's required.

Q. It is said that usually you feel threatened at interviews. Is it true?

A. I've a predilection for privacy and peace. I am also too much tuned to myself, I rarely become talkative. I am occasionally edgy, and always haunted by the uncertainties and dangers of joy. An interview sometimes can be like an epileptic fit. People come to me as if they had a colouring book and ask me to fill in the colours. Besides the false rumours that get attracted to fame are exasperating.

Q. Now that you are already so rich, why don't you relax a little bit?



A. Nothing is wrong in making as much bread as you can. But then don't I contribute to so many charitable causes? I have already asked for a plot from the Maharashtra government to set up an Art

Academy for the promotion of performing arts. I have also offered to donate Rs. 8 to Rs. 10 crores myself. The government, I'm told, is considering the proposal.

Q. Who do you think have been great music directors in India?

A. It's a hazardous question. There have been many like Naushad, C. Ramachandra, Madan Mohan, Jaidev, Jaikishen, S.D. Burman or Sajjad Hussain. Sajjad was the music director in films like *Saiyyan*, *Hulchul*, and *Khel*. Now I have decided to re-record all those melodious songs for posterity. I don't want those heavenly melodies to get lost.

A. What's the difference between the present day music and the earlier era?

A. Simple. While I remember the wordings and tunes of all my old songs, today sometimes I can't remember it after walking out of the recording room.

Q. Are you happy with your life?

A. You know there is a big difference between being a happy woman and a cheerful woman. A happy woman doesn't have any cares at all. A cheerful woman might have loads of cares but she goes on in spite of it. Happy I may not be, but I'm as cheerful as I can be.

Courtesy: Probe India

Few are aware of the fact that Lata Mangeshkar belongs to the sect of *Devdasis*, the members of which are tradition-bound to stay unmarried as they are "wedded to God." Which could also be the reason why she was so upset when her sister Asha Bhonsle got married. Some, however, feel that Lata's ire was provoked not because her sister broke the time-honoured *Devdasi* tradition, but because she married a man who was a close friend of hers (Latas). Be that as it may, there is no denying Lata's single-minded devotion to her music — a devotion which in her 33-year career as a playback singer, has brought her to the pinnacle of fame and success.

Lata made her debut in Raj Kapoor's *Barsaat*. What is not generally known, however, is that it was not Raj Kapoor who introduced her to the world of playback singing but music directors Shankar and Jaikishen. In fact, Raj Kapoor was initially rather reluctant to give her the *Barsaat* assignment as she was an absolute novice. But with the release of the film, Lata raced ahead of the leading contemporary singers, including Geeta Dutt. There was no looking back for her after that — and soon, the trio, comprising Lata, Shankar and Jaikishen, was dominating the Indian film music scene.

The trio broke up with the death of Jaikishen, for whom Lata had a very soft corner. Besides, she felt peeved with Shankar because of his efforts to

promote his girl-friend, Sharda, as a singer. After Jaikishen's death, Lata never sang for Shankar. That was precisely the reason why she did not sing in Raj Kapoor's *Mera Naam Joker*, for which Shankar scored the music. By this time, however, Raj Kapoor had come totally under the spell of Lata's voice and was desperate to have her back in his camp. But to do so, he had to choose between her and Shankar. It was Shankar who lost out. And Laxmikant-Pyarelal replaced him in Raj's camp.

In the early 60s, Lata contracted an illness which almost brought her singing career to an end. She developed severe sinus trouble. For two months all her recordings had to be cancelled. And then, Lata announced on *Vividh Bharati* that, in all probability, her singing career was over. Millions of her fans literally wept. Prayers for her recovery were held all over the world, including Pakistan. Music director Naushad, the then reigning Moghul of Indian film music, footed his way every day to the Haji Ali Dargah in Bombay to solicit divine intervention for her recovery. She did recover. The first song she recorded following her illness was under the baton of music director Hemant Kumar for his own film *Bees Saal Baad*. It was a song that proved that her voice had lost none of its unmatched versatility. It was also one of the best songs of her career: *Kahin deep jale kahin dil*.

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FADS & FANCIES

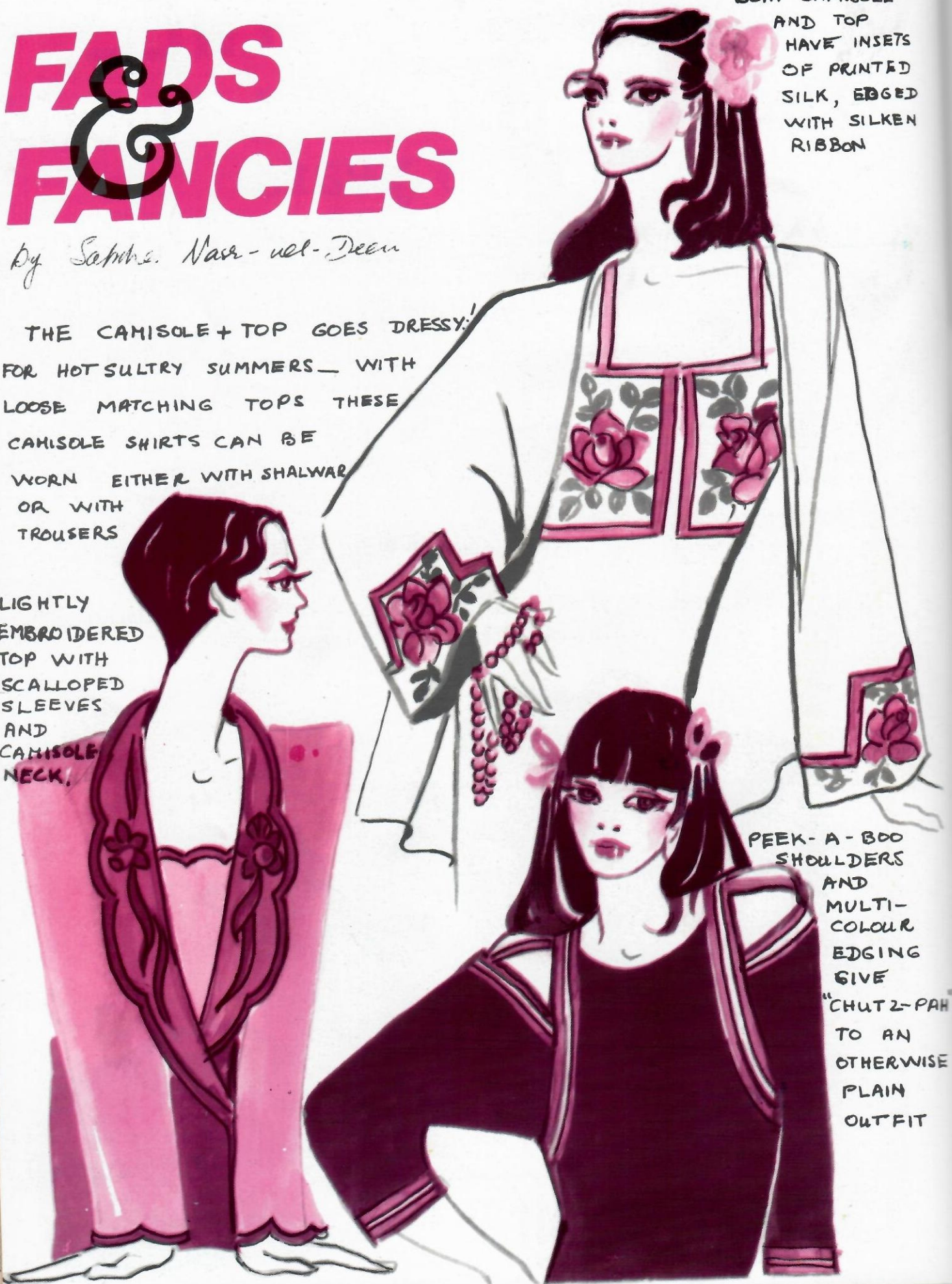
By *Sahira Nass-vel-Deen*

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