

# AUSTRALIAN HINDI INDIAN ASSOCIATION (AHIA)

-the Association that cares



## Sandesh सन्देश

incorporating

Seniors Newsletter

Established 1994:

Volume 22

Issue 12

December 2021

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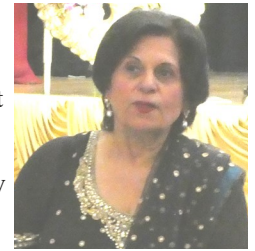
## AHIA President's December 2021 Report

Hello Every One,

I hope you all are keeping well and taking advantage of freedom to meet family and friends after mandatory quarantine and lockdowns which are over now. There are some more easing of COVID-19 restrictions expected by the middle of this month especially if you were planning to leave for overseas. Unfortunately, as we are coming out of COVID-19 Delta variant we are now facing another variant called Omicron which has reached our shores in last few days. Please follow Health authorities as they are now recommending us to take booster vaccination as soon as six months are completed from our second vaccination.

As mentioned last month, we will be meeting face to face 1 pm on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> December'21 and hold our Annual General Meeting at the Wentworthville Grevillea Room.

To this regard I am again strongly encouraging all AHIA members to attend this meeting and participate in electing new Executive Committee (EC) for next 2 years. The AGM agenda has been emailed to you all. The new nomination for the Executive Committee is now closed and will be announced in the AGM. Please note there are strict COVID-19 protocols put in place by the NSW Health Department which all attendees must comply with especially the double vaccination requirement.



I am looking forward to the new year 2022 when AHIA will be holding exciting and enjoyable functions for members in January, February and March.

Please take care and see you at the AGM.

With best wishes

Sushma Ahluwalia  
Acting President AHIA

## AHIA Secretary December 2021 report

AHIA Executive have decided to hold face to face **meeting** and Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Saturday, 11 December 2021 at Grevillea Room at Wentworthville in Cumberland Council.



Covid 19 restrictions continues to ease in Greater Sydney and Regional NSW. It is expected that most venues will be opened for community with few restrictions. The Covid 19 protocols as directed by NSW Health order and Cumberland Council will be followed.

### 1) AHIA Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2021) Saturday 11 December 2021 at 1pm:

The term of existing Executive Team has expired and members will elect new Executive Team for next 2 years during the AGM. Members were requested to nominate new members and nominations for new committee has been received. The list of nominations will be finalised after receiving withdrawals. The list of **new nominations** will be announced during AGM and then members will **elect** the new committee for next 2 years.

The members those have current membership for last one year or more and life members will be **allowed** in the AGM.

### 2) Covid 19 protocol to join AGM on 11 December 2021

As per NSW health order following is requested:

**Evidence of vaccination:** Members attending AGM to produce evidence of double vaccination. No member will be allowed to enter the hall without proper evidence of double vaccination.

**QR Code:** All members to scan QR Code before entering the Hall.

**Members will not be allowed in the hall if:**  
Having cough or fever

Travelled overseas in the last 2 weeks unless has recent Covid 19 negative test results

Any other symptoms of Covid 19 or Omicron

Mask to be worn all the time in the AGM except during eating, drinking or talking

Maintain 1.5m social distancing all the time

**3) Other functions and events:** AHIA Executives are very keen to arrange following events:

- Lohri on 29 January 2022 at Castle Grand Hall in Castle Hill. Lohri tickets are on sale and will be available to members during AGM

- Holi on 19 March 2022 at Harvey Lowe Pavillion, and

- Picnic in February 2022.

Members will be kept informed about the details of each event, including sale of tickets, entertainment, and program.

### 4) Annual General Meeting 11 December 2021

- **Notice of AGM** was circulated with Minutes of AHIA AGM held on 14 September 2019 and Financial Audit Report

- **AGM Agenda**

Welcome by the President

Confirmation of the Minutes of the Last AGM held on 14 September 2019

President's Report

Financial Audit Report – balance sheet and profit/loss

Election of new AHIA committee

Thanks, by new Vice President

Keep Healthy and safe

See all current members in the AGM

Regards

Kali Gupta

Secretary AHIA



**Very sad News** that India's foremost military officer, Chief of Defence Staff **General Bipin Rawat**, was killed in a chopper crash near Ooty on Wednesday. According to the Air Force,



**Gen Rawat, his wife Madhulika Rawat** and 11 other persons died. Sources said that 14 people were on board, of whom 13 were killed. The chopper was to land minutes before it crashed. President Ram Nath Kovind, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and other leaders paid trib-

utes to General Rawat.

Bipin Rawat was nearly two years into his term as India's first Chief of Defence Staff and presiding over the most significant transformation of the defence architecture of the country. Rawat started his career as an officer in the Gorkhas and rose to command 5/11 Gorkha Rifles, the battalion his father Lt Gen L S Rawat also commanded. Completing his full term of three years as Army Chief, Rawat made his mark instituting a number of internal reforms and being noted for his aggressive approach towards counterinsurgency operations in Jammu and Kashmir.

Wednesday's accident, which took his life, was not the first time Rawat was in a helicopter crash. On February 3, 2015, when he was III Corps Commander, he cheated death when his Cheetah helicopter crashed at Dimapur. Indeed, he took off to meet the Eastern Army Commander in Arunachal Pradesh in the next available helicopter before being medically grounded on account of a spinal injury. He had his ankle mangled after a huge stone hit him while on an operation against the Pakistanis on the Line of Control (LoC) in the Uri sector in Kashmir and had a wound medal — but he never claimed disability allowance by lowering his medical category.

News from the year long Farmers' agitation in India are quite pleasing.



The farmers' agitation which started on November 25 last year, when thousands of

farmers, mainly from Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, marched towards the national capital, demanding a complete repeal of three contentious legislations, has been called off. On November 19 this year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that the three laws would be scrapped. Subsequently, they were repealed in Parliament.

The farmers will start vacating all the border around Delhi from December 11.



We congratulate both sides for bringing this painful saga to an end. Well, "all is well that ends well."

As they say, "There's many a slip between the cup and the lip", that's what has almost happened with the Covid-19. When the masks were off, limits on meeting people were gone, borders between states and countries were relaxed and people were planning X-mas get-togethers, Covid-19 struck back with a new variant, we call by a fancy name of Omicron. This Omi fellow is said to be fast spreading and quite, if not more, dangerous than its predecessors, but luckily less fatal.

"The preliminary data doesn't indicate that this is more severe. In fact, if anything, the direction is towards less severity," WHO emergencies director Michael Ryan said in an interview.

The new variant is having a negative impact on Australian intake of foreign students as they are 'dumping' Australia in favour of US and UK due to strict border rules.

These variants will keep coming and shutting the borders is no solution.

Even within Australia, states follow different. Many countries are banning travellers from South Africa and other neighbouring African countries, kind of 'Travel Apartheid.'

But in fact, almost everywhere the planned holidays have been wrecked due to the uncertainty of rules.

Let us keep our fingers crossed and hope for the best!

Santram Bajaj

**Sandesh** is published every month. **mSandesh** is published every month by AHIA.

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#### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

\*\* The Cartoons/pictures are courtesy various Newspapers.

\*\*The Content and the opinions expressed in the writings are the responsibility of the writers concerned.

\*\* The Health tips are given in good faith and readers are advised to consult their own Doctor. AHIA does not accept any responsibility whatsoever.



## YOUR EYE HEALTH

BY

**DR. DARSHAN SACHDEV OAM**

**MBBS, DO, RCP & RCS (Lond), FRCS(Ophth)(Edin)**



### CATARACTS Part TWO

(Part 1 of this article was published in November Sandesh)

#### Cataract Treatment

When your prescription glasses can't clear your vision, the only effective treatment for cataracts is surgery.

##### *When to consider cataract surgery*

Talk with your eye doctor about whether surgery is right for you. Most eye doctors suggest considering cataract surgery when your cataracts begin to affect your quality of life or interfere with your ability to perform normal daily activities, such as reading or driving at night.

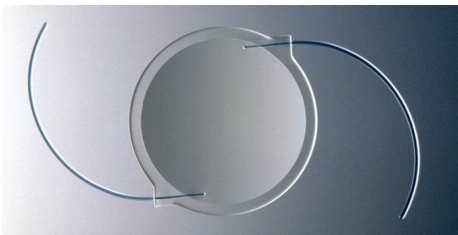
It's up to you and your doctor to decide when cataract surgery is right for you. For most people, there is no rush to remove cataracts because they usually don't harm the eyes. But cataracts can worsen faster in people with certain conditions, including diabetes, high blood pressure or obesity.

##### **IOL Implants: Lens Replacement after Cataracts**

An intraocular lens (IOL) is a tiny, artificial lens for the eye. It replaces the eye's natural lens that is removed during cataract surgery.

The lens bends (refracts) light rays that enter the eye, helping you to see. Your lens should be clear. But if you have a cataract, your lens has become cloudy. Things look blurry, hazy or less colourful with a cataract. Cataract surgery removes this cloudy lens and replaces it with a clear IOL to improve your vision.

IOLs come in different focusing powers, just like prescription eyeglasses or contact lenses. Your ophthalmologist will measure the length of your eye and the curve of your cornea. These measurements are used to set your IOLs focusing power.



##### *What are IOLs made of?*

Most IOLs are made of silicone, acrylic, or other plastic compositions. They are coated with a special material to help protect your eyes from the sun's harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays.

##### *Monofocal IOLs*

The most common type of lens used with cataract surgery is called a monofocal IOL. It has one focusing distance. It is set to focus for up close, medium range or distance vision. Most people have them set for clear distance vision. Then they wear eyeglasses for reading or close work.

Some IOLs have different focusing powers within the same lens. These are called multifocal and accommodative lenses. These IOLs reduce your dependence on glasses by giving you clear vision for more than one set of distance.

##### *Multifocal IOLs*

These IOLs provide both distance and near focus at the same time.

The lens has different zones set at different powers.

##### *Accommodative IOLs*

These lenses move or change shape inside your eye, allowing focusing at different distances.

##### *Toric IOLs*

For people with astigmatism, there is an IOL called a toric lens.

Astigmatism is a refractive error caused by an uneven curve in your cornea or lens. The toric lens is designed to correct that refractive error.

As you plan for your cataract surgery, talk to your ophthalmologist about your vision needs and expectations. He or she will explain IOL options for you in more detail.

#### Cataract surgery

Cataract surgery is a procedure to remove the lens of your eye and, in most cases, replace it with an artificial lens. Normally, the lens of your eye is clear. A cataract causes the lens to become cloudy, which eventually affects your vision.

Cataract surgery is performed by an ophthalmologist on an outpatient basis, which means you don't have to stay in the hospital after the surgery. Cataract surgery is very common and is generally a safe procedure.

##### *Why it's done*

Cataract surgery is performed to treat cataracts. Cataracts can cause blurry vision and increase the glare from lights. If a cataract makes it difficult for you to carry out your normal activities, your doctor may suggest cataract surgery.

When a cataract interferes with the treatment of another eye problem, cataract surgery may be recommended. For example, doctors may recommend cataract surgery if a cataract makes it difficult for your eye doctor to examine the back of your eye to monitor or treat other eye problems, such as age-related macular degeneration or diabetic retinopathy.

In most cases, waiting to have cataract surgery won't harm your eye, so you have time to consider your options. If your vision is still quite good, you may not need cataract surgery for many years, if ever.

When considering cataract surgery, keep these questions in mind:

Can you see to safely do your job and to drive?

Do you have problems reading or watching television?

Is it difficult to cook, shop, do garden work, climb stairs or take medications?

Do vision problems affect your level of independence?

Do bright lights make it more difficult to see?

##### *What happens during cataract surgery*

Cataract surgery involves removing the clouded lens and replacing it with a clear artificial lens. The artificial lens, called an intraocular lens, is positioned in the same place as your natural lens. It remains a permanent part of your eye.

For some people, other eye problems prohibit the use of an artificial lens. In these situations, once the cataract is removed, vision may be corrected with eyeglasses or contact lenses.

Cataract surgery is generally done on an outpatient basis, which means you won't need to stay in a hospital after the surgery. During cataract surgery, your eye doctor uses a local anaesthetic to numb the area around your eye, but you usually stay awake during the procedure.

Cataract surgery is generally safe, but it carries a risk of infection and bleeding. Cataract surgery increases the risk of retinal detachment.

After the procedure, you'll have some discomfort for a few days.

Healing generally occurs within a few weeks.

If you need cataract surgery in both eyes, your doctor will schedule surgery to remove the cataract in the second eye after you've healed from the first surgery.

##### **Risks**

Complications after cataract surgery are uncommon, and most can be treated successfully.

Cataract surgery risks include:

- Inflammation
- Infection
- Bleeding
- Swelling
- Drooping eyelid
- Dislocation of artificial lens
- Retinal detachment
- Glaucoma
- Secondary cataract
- Loss of vision

——— Cataract..... from Page 4.....

Your risk of complications is greater if you have another eye disease or a serious medical condition. Occasionally, cataract surgery fails to improve vision because of underlying eye damage from other conditions, such as glaucoma or macular degeneration. If possible, it may be beneficial to evaluate and treat other eye problems before making the decision to have cataract surgery.

How you prepare

Food and medications

You may be instructed not to eat or drink anything 12 hours before cataract surgery. Your doctor may also advise you to temporarily stop taking any medication that could increase your risk of bleeding during the procedure. Let your doctor know if you take any medications for prostate problems, as some of these drugs can interfere with cataract surgery.

Antibiotic eyedrops may be prescribed for use one or two days before the surgery.

Other precautions

Normally you can go home on the same day as your surgery, but you won't be able to drive, so arrange for a ride home. Also arrange for help around home, if necessary, because your doctor may limit activities, such as bending and lifting, for about a week after your surgery.

What you can expect

Before the procedure

A week or so before your surgery, your doctor performs a painless ultrasound test to measure the size and shape of your eye. This helps determine the right type of lens implant.

Nearly everyone who has cataract surgery will be given IOLs. These lenses improve your vision by focusing light on the back of your eye. You won't be able to see or feel the lens. It requires no care and becomes a permanent part of your eye.

A variety of IOLs with different features are available. Before surgery, you and your eye doctor will discuss which type of IOL might work best for you and your lifestyle. Cost may also be a factor, as insurance companies may not pay for all types of lenses.

IOLs are made of plastic, acrylic or silicone. Some IOLs block ultraviolet light. Some IOLs are rigid plastic and implanted through an incision that requires several stitches (sutures) to close.

However, many IOLs are flexible, allowing a smaller incision that requires few or no stitches. The surgeon folds this type of lens and inserts it into the empty capsule where the natural lens used to be.

Once inside the eye, the folded IOL unfolds, filling the empty capsule. Discuss the benefits and risks of the different types of IOLs with your eye surgeon to determine what's best for you.

During the procedure

Cataract surgery, usually an outpatient procedure, takes an hour or less to perform.

First, your doctor will place eyedrops in your eye to dilate your pupil. You'll receive local anaesthetics to numb the area, and you may be given a sedative to help you relax. If you're given a sedative, you may remain awake, but groggy, during surgery.

During cataract surgery, the clouded lens is removed, and a clear artificial lens is usually implanted. In some cases, however, a cataract may be removed without implanting an artificial lens.

Surgical methods used to remove cataracts include:

- Using an ultrasound probe to break up the lens for removal. During a procedure called phacoemulsification, your surgeon makes a tiny incision in the front of your eye (cornea) and inserts a needle-thin probe into the lens substance where the cataract has formed. Your surgeon then uses the probe, which transmits ultrasound waves, to break up (emulsify) the cataract and suction out the fragments. The very back of your lens (the lens capsule) is left intact to serve as a place for the artificial lens to rest. Stitches may be used to close the tiny incision in your cornea at the completion of the procedure.
- Making an incision in the eye and removing the lens in one piece. A less frequently used procedure called extracapsular cataract extraction requires a larger incision than that used for phacoemulsification. Through this larger incision your surgeon uses surgical tools to remove the front capsule of the lens and the cloudy lens comprising the cataract. The very back capsule of your lens is left in place to serve as a place for the artificial lens to rest

This procedure may be performed if you have certain eye complications. With the larger incision, stitches are required.

Once the cataract has been removed by either phacoemulsification or extracapsular extraction, the artificial lens is implanted into the empty lens capsule.

After the procedure

After cataract surgery, expect your vision to begin improving within a few days. Your vision may be blurry at first as your eye heals and adjusts.

Colours may seem brighter after your surgery because you are looking through a new, clear lens. A cataract is usually yellow- or brown-tinted before surgery, muting the look of colours.

You'll usually see your eye doctor a day or two after your surgery, the following week, and then again after about a month to monitor healing.

It's normal to feel itching and mild discomfort for a couple of days after surgery. Avoid rubbing or pushing on your eye.

Your doctor may ask you to wear an eye patch or protective shield the day of surgery. Your doctor may also recommend wearing the eye patch for a few days after your surgery and the protective shield when you sleep during the recovery period.

Your doctor may prescribe eyedrops or other medication to prevent infection, reduce inflammation and control eye pressure. Sometimes, these medications can be injected into the eye at the time of surgery.

After a couple of days, most of the discomfort should disappear. Often, complete healing occurs within eight weeks.

Contact your doctor immediately if you experience any of the following:

- Vision loss
- Pain that persists despite the use of over-the-counter pain medications (like Panadol)
- Increased eye redness
- Eyelid swelling
- Light flashes or multiple new spots (floaters) in front of your eye

Most people need glasses, at least some of the time, after cataract surgery. Your doctor will let you know when your eyes have healed enough for you to get a final prescription for eyeglasses. This is usually between one and three months after surgery.

If you have cataracts in both eyes, your doctor usually schedules the second surgery after the first eye has healed.

Results

Cataract surgery successfully restores vision in the majority of people who have the procedure.

People who've had cataract surgery may develop a secondary cataract. The medical term for this common complication is known as posterior capsule opacification (PCO). This happens when the back of the lens capsule – the part of the lens that wasn't removed during surgery and that now supports the lens implant – becomes cloudy and impairs your vision.

PCO is treated with a painless, five-minute outpatient procedure called yttrium-aluminium-garnet (YAG) laser capsulotomy. In YAG laser capsulotomy, a laser beam is used to make a small opening in the clouded capsule to provide a clear path through which the light can pass.

After the procedure, you usually stay in the doctor's office for about an hour to make sure your eye pressure doesn't rise. Other complications are rare but can include increased eye pressure and retinal detachment.

Summary

1. Cataract surgery is very advanced and gives good vision.
2. Discuss with your eye surgeon:
  - Pre and postoperative care in detail
  - Type of implant you will need
3. Always follow the instructions and advice given by your eye surgeon.
4. Maintain a healthy lifestyle and dietary control before and after surgery.

Please forward your questions to the Editor Sandesh. Dr Sachdev will answer them through Sandesh next month.



## CROSSING THE LINE- A Documentary film based



on the real stories of the people affected by the partition of India in 1947 written and produced by well known community personality and Radio producer (SBS) **Anita Barar** in 2007 is back in the news again.

It has received Special award at 'Yatha Katha' International Film & Literature Festival in Mumbai, India. The film was screened on 25th

Nov 2021 in the special section 'Amrit Mahotsav - 75th year celebration of India's independence' of this festival.

The people featured in the film were from India and Pakistan ,now settled in Sydney . They narrated their personal experiences at the time of the partition. Most of the Indians in that film are AHIA members.



Mrs Vimla Luthra and Mrs Aliya Khatoon

The Pakistani community members whose stories are equally horrifying were invited to AHIA Seniors meeting at Westmead .We had a common bond of suffering and were happy to meet each other.

The inaugural screening was done at the Riverside Theatre , Parramatta on August 2007.

Premiered in Sydney in 2007, this film has been recognized at the various International Film festivals around the world over the years. It

has also been screened for ICAS (International Conference for Asian Scholars) in Adelaide and Chiang Mai Thailand. Recently, BIMTECH India has also screened and recognized the film.



The documentary earned special awards at the International festivals. A copy of the documentary was placed in the Amritsar Partition Museum in 2017 and will be included in the Manchester Museum next year.

The Promo/ teaser of the film

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b4B1g4ctBwk>

We hope to screen the film at our meeting sometime next year, during the celebration of ' Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav' - 75 years of India's Independence.



India is celebrating 75 years of Independence—'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav'-75 week celebration ,which commenced on 12th March 2021 and will end on 15th August 2022. It is an embodiment of all that is progressive about India's socio-cultural, political, and economic identity.

The Mahotsav lays emphasis upon the five pillars – the struggle for freedom, ideas that will help emerge new India, achievements of our country , the essential steps to be taken and the resolutions made by the citizens of the country on the eve of 75th Independence Day.

On 12th March ,2021, the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav commenced with padayatra from Sabarmati to Dandi for 25 days . This was exactly 91 years after the iconic Dandi March which took place on 12th March, 1930 under the Civil Disobedience Movement launched

by Mahatma Gandhi.

The Government of India and other organisations are planning many events to celebrate it.

In Mumbai, 'Yatha-Katha International Film Festival awarded a special award to a documentary film—Crossing the Line—produced and directed by writer, and radio personality Anita Barar (SBS-Australia) producer.

AHIA has a special connection with this documentary which had already won many international awards and recognition. 'Crossing the line' is a powerful narration of the stories of people from both sides of the line, who were caught in the middle of 1947 partition of India.

We, at AHIA are thankful to Anita Barar ji for recording such an important piece of Indian history for the future generations and wish her the best for the future.

Santram Bajaj

## KINDNESS

Kindness, compassion and giving to others are associated with improved happiness, good mental health, with strong immune system, reduced anxiety, stress and depression, improved relationship and with long life.

Kindness is vital to the human existence and has important value to harness. In fact it is most important to be kind to others. We also get more happiness by giving to others who are poor and needy. We should act and speak in a compassionate way to others. The more we care for the happiness of others, the greater is our own sense of well-being. It is the ultimate source of our success in life.

Right from the moment of our birth, we are under the care and kindness of our parents and then later on in our life in our old age and sickness, we are again dependent on the kindness of our children, friends, relatives and others. Therefore, it is our moral duty to be kind to others. Be kind to others wherever and whenever it is possible. A good mind, a good heart and warm feelings and to be a good humane are essential part of our life.

Children in schools should be taught to treat others with respect, generosity and kindness. They should carry the value of these qualities throughout their life.

A heart full of love and compassion is the main source of inner strength, will power, happiness and mental tranquility. Compassion, kindness, loving, caring and thinking of others brings inner peace.

Whatever is given by God and how we lead our life according to our karmas is His mercy and a gift to us. The degree to which we are awake to this truth is a measure of our gratefulness. For example, a power failure makes us aware of how much electricity is beneficial to us. A sprained ankle lets us appreciate walking as a gift. Eyes see light, ears hear sound, but a listening heart perceives meaning. Everything is a gift. Grateful living is a celebration of the universal give-and-take of life. Gratefulness is the key to a happy life because if we are not grateful, then no matter how much we have, we will not be happy. One aspect of compassion is to respect other's rights and other's views. That is the basis of compassion.

Hence, for our life to be of some value, we must develop some basic good human qualities such as warmth, kindness, love, compassion, generosity, happiness, spirituality, humanity, humility, presence of mind, positive thinking and enjoying the present moment by living in the will of God. It is said that if you are showing love to your fellow human beings, you are showing love to God. As Christ has said, love thy neighbour. Worship to God with love and devotion may clear all our karmas, and by experiencing the love of God within, the soul can be free from the bondage of birth and death. Meditation is the key to spiritual growth which causes peace of mind, bliss and happiness.

This example of kindness is quoted. In 1871, there was a girl named Elizabeth, who lived in England in a beautiful house and had a happy life. However, she was not very happy. She said, "I would like to be kind to those people whom no one else think about and this would make me happy." She continued visiting hospitals. She had a smile and kind words. The sick people were happy to see Elizabeth. They were glad that she cared enough to come and sooth them. She also started visiting women at Newgate prison. She noticed that the prison was filthy, air was bad, and one could hardly breathe. There were four hundred women living in four little rooms, and fifty children had been imprisoned with their mothers. They were clothed in filthy rags. There were no beds, no bedding, no toilet, no heat, no ventilation and no light.

In short, Elizabeth started a school for the children of the women prisoners at Newgate. She also started a school for women prisoners where she taught them reading and writing and sewing and knitting, with the result they became self-sufficient and started living a happy life.

Similarly if a person visits a prison and finds that prisoners do not get good food and he supplies quality food to them. That will be an act of kindness. If he supplies blankets and other necessities of life, that will also be an act of kindness, but they will still stay in the prison. But if a person has the key to open the prison doors and let them be free, that will be great act of kindness.

Roshan Lal Gakhar

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Poonam Kathuria

Benny Sembi

Vipen Dogra

Rajinder Kang

Preeti Thadani

Ravi Kanta Mittal

Perminder Cheema

Sharda Sharma

Krishna Sardana

Bindu Kalra

Alka Anand

Subhashini Channa

## HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Krishan and Asha Sood

Jagdish and Kamlesh Mitter

Asha and Narender Prakash Sanghi

Aman and Milan Bassan Pabla

Raj and Manju Saneja



## कर्तव्य ..... संतराम बजाज

रविवार का दिन था, मैं बरामदे में रिलैक्स कर रहा था। मौसम मेरे अनुकूल थोड़ा गर्म था।

फोन की घंटी बजी।

“हैलो, अंकल! मैं प्रभा बोल रही हूँ, सुरेन्द्र विज की बेटी।”

“हाँ, बेटा। सब ठीक तो है,” मैं ने घबराहट में पूछा, क्योंकि विज साहिब को मिले काफी समय हो चुका था।

“ठीक नहीं है, पापा अस्पताल में हैं और आप से मिलना चाहते हैं।”

“क्यों, क्या हुआ?”

“सीढ़ियों से गिर गये थे, लेकिन खतरे वाली कोई बात नहीं है।”

मैं ने अस्पताल का वार्ड और बैड नम्बर नोट किया और शाम को वहाँ पहुँच गया।

सुरेन्द्र विज से मेरी मुलाकात किन हालात में हुई, मुझे एक दम याद आ गया, हालांकि वह कई वर्षों की बात है।

मैं नया नया सिडनी में आया था और कोई खास जान पहचान नहीं थी। अभी मुझे नौकरी भी नहीं मिली थी, हालांकि शिक्षा विभाग वालों ने पूरा भरोसा दिया था कि शीघ्र ही वह मुझ से सम्पर्क करेंगे और वह भी टेलीग्राम द्वारा, क्योंकि उन दिनों मोबाइल फोन तो होते नहीं थे और मैं एक छोटे से होटल में ठहरा हुआ था। इस होटल का नाम सुन कर तो पहली बार मैं बड़ा इम्प्रेस हुआ था और साथ साथ घबराया भी था।

‘Peoples’ Palace’ सिडनी सेंट्रल स्टेशन से २०० मीटर की दूरी पर ‘पिट स्ट्रीट’ पर था और बहुत सस्ते रेट पर छोटे छोटे कमरे थे।

बाथरूम कई कमरों के लिए शेयर करने के लिए होता था। 2 डॉलर प्रतिदिन उस का किराया था। आजकल वह बंद हो चुका है। मुझे ठीक लगा क्योंकि न तो मेरे पास नौकरी थी और न ही इतने पैसे। भारत सरकार, उन दिनों, जहाँ तक मुझे याद है, केवल 8 डॉलर का foreign exchange लाने देती थी।

दूसरे दिन मैं होटल से बाहर निकला कि कुछ खाने को ले लूँ। किसी रेस्टोरेंट में जा कर कुछ खाऊँ, मन तो कर रहा था परन्तु जेब की ओर ध्यान जाते ही रुक गया और एक फिश एंड चिप्स की दूकान पर जा पहुँचा। चालीस सेंट में दो फिश पीस और इतने चिप्स कि दो आदमी भी खत्म न कर सकें मिल गये। एक बहुत बड़े पेपर में लिपटे हुए बंडल को मैं ले बाहर निकला और दूकान के बाहर लगी कुर्सी पर बैठ पैकट खोलने लगा, कि एक हिन्दी भाषी आवाज़ ने मुझे चौंका दिया, “क्या अकेले अकेले ही खायेंगे?”

मैं ने हैरानी से मुड़कर देखा, एक ऊँचे लम्बे क़द और गोरे रंग का, छोटी छोटी मूँछों वाला आदमी मुस्करा रहा था। मैं ने सीट से उठ कर हैलो कहा और उसे साथ वाली कुर्सी पर बैठने को कहा, “लीजिये, आप भी खाईये, अभी ताज़ा ताज़ा हैं।”

उस ने दो एक चिप्स लिए और बातों का सिलसिला शुरू हो गया।

उस ने अपना परिचय दिया। नाम सुरेन्द्र विज, दिल्ली के करोल बाग़ से था और यहाँ आये हुए करीब एक साल हो चुका था और वह रेलवे में टिकट काउंटर पर काम करता था। वैसे वह सिविल इंजिनियर था।

“आप तो मेरे पड़ोसी निकले क्योंकि मैं दिल्ली के वैस्ट पटेल नगर से हूँ।”

“फिर तो खूब जमेगी।”

“आप कल 10 बजे तक तैयार रहना, मैं आप को सिडनी की सैर कराऊंगा।”

और वह दूसरे दिन वादे के मुताबिक मेरे होटल पहुँच गया।

“पहले आप को यहाँ का मशहूर हार्बर ब्रिज, जिसे ‘कोट हेंगर’ भी कहते हैं, दिखाता हूँ।

“वह तो मैं देख चुका। बताया था ना कि मैं शिक्षा विभाग में गया था, जो ब्रिज स्ट्रीट पर है, वहाँ से फिर ओपेरा हाउस, हार्बर ब्रिज और पार्लियामेंट हाउस, स्टेट लाइब्रेरी, सब देख लिए।”

“आप तो बड़े होशियार निकले। चलिए तो ऐसी जगह चलते हैं, जो दिल्ली वालों के लिए बिलकुल नई है। यहाँ का बहुत मशहूर बीच है, बोन्डाई बीच।”

“वाकई बड़ा सुन्दर बीच और दृश्य है,” मैं ने वहाँ पहुँच कर कहा। मील भर लंबा रेत का साहिल और नीला नीला लहरें मारता हुआ समुंद्र, एक दम मन को लुभाने वाला। मेरे लिए एक तरह से ‘कल्चर शॉक’ था, जब मैं ने देखा कि अधनंगी औरतें और मर्द कैसे गर्म गर्म रेत पर लेटे हुए थे। काफ़ी बच्चे और जवान पानी में तैर रहे थे और खूब मौज मस्ती में डूब रहे थे।

वहीं सामने एक कॉफी हाउस में बैठ हम लोगों ने हल्का सा लंच लिया।

और फिर थोड़ी ऊँचाई पर एक छोटी सी दूकान में हम लोग गये। विज ने बताया कि सारे सिडनी में केवल यही एक दूकान है, जिस की आप को बहुत ज़रूरत पड़ेगी, क्योंकि भारतीयों के लिए खाने का सामन जैसे आटा, चावल, दालें आदि यहाँ से मिलेंगी। मालिक का नाम शायद Ezi था, और उसका मालिक भारत से यहूदी धर्म से था। वह और उस की बीवी, दूकान को चलाते थे। विज ने थोड़ा बहुत सामान लिया और हम वापिस आ गये।

शाम को विज मुझे अपने साथ अपने घर ले गये, जो थोड़ी दूरी पर ऐशफील्ड नाम के सबर्ब (उपनगर) में था। उन की पत्नी पुष्पा, तीन वर्ष की बेटी प्रभा और एक साल का बेटा दीपक था उन का परिवार। बड़े तपाक से मिले और बातें होती रहीं और रात का खाना खाने के बाद वह मुझे ट्रेन स्टेशन पर छोड़ गये और मैं ट्रेन लेकर होटल वापिस आ गया।

उस के बाद करीब करीब रोजाना ही मिलने लगे और अच्छी दोस्ती हो गई।

मुझे एक सरकारी स्कूल में नौकरी भी मिल गई और मैं ने स्कूल के पास ही एक दो कमरे का फ्लैट किराए पर ले लिया, 20 डॉलर प्रति हफ्ते पर।

मेरे बीवी बच्चे दो महीने बाद भारत से आ गये थे और हमारा एक दूसरे के घर आना जाना खूब हो गया। उनका एक बेटा, एक बेटी और मेरी दो बेटियाँ और एक बेटा थे। बच्चों को भी कम्पनी मिल जाती थी। कुछ ही दिनों में और दोस्त भी बन गये और अच्छा टाइम पास होने लगा।

करीब दो साल बाद, विज को मेलबोर्न शिफ्ट होना पड़ा क्योंकि उसे वहाँ एक अच्छी नौकरी मिल गयी थी। लेकिन उस की पत्नी को वहाँ का मौसम रास नहीं आया और न ही वह सिडनी की नौकरी छोड़ना चाहती थी, इसलिए 6 महीनों में ही सब लोग फिर सिडनी आ गये। फिर वही पार्टियाँ, वही रौनक।

मेरी सलाह पर उन का बेटा दीपक हाई स्कूल पास करने के बाद ऑस्ट्रेलियन आर्मी में भर्ती हो गया था। बड़ा अच्छा लगा कि भारतीय मूल के लोग भी इस देश का हिस्सा बन रहे हैं और अपना योगदान दे रहे हैं।

..... शेष अगले पन्ने पर .....



..... कर्तव्य ... पिछले पन्ने से .....

धीरे धीरे समय बीतता गया, बच्चे जवान हो गये। मेरे बच्चों की शादियाँ हो गई। अब हमारा आना जाना कम हो गया। इस बीच हम दोनों की धर्म पत्नियाँ भगवान् को प्यारी हो गई। और आहिस्ता आहिस्ता कांटेक्ट लगभग छूट सा गया।

और फिर अचानक आज विज की बेटी का फोन आया कि विज साहब अस्पताल में हैं। मैं उसी दिन उन्हें देखने गया।

“विज साहिब, क्या छलांगें लगाते फिरते हो, इस उम्र में भी,” अस्पताल पहुँच कर मैं ने उन्हें ‘चीयर अप’ करने के लिए कहा।

“नहीं यार, वह बस पता ही नहीं चला, सीढ़ियों की कारपेट से पैर फिसल गया। वह तो शुकुर है कि सिर फर्श पर नहीं लगा, नहीं तो बस छुट्टी ही थी।”

“छुट्टी हो, आप के दुश्मनों की।”

“थैंक यू! आप आये, अच्छा लगा।”

“सच बताऊँ, मुझे भी बहुत दिनों से आप सब की याद आ रही थी। मैं रास्ते भर हमारी पहली मुलाकात को याद करता रहा। याद है जब आप ने बोन्डाई बीच की सैर कराई थी।”

“और वह जो रेत पर लेटी लड़कियों को तुम कैसे आँखें फाड़ - फाड़ कर देख रहे थे, जैसे भूत देख लिया हो।”

“हाँ, वह मेरे लिए एक नई चीज़ थी, एक तरह का ‘कल्चर शॉक’ था। अच्छा यह बताओ ज़िन्दगी कैसी चल रही है और वह तुम्हारे साहिब-ज़ादे दीपक की क्या खबर है, अब तो अफगानिस्तान से वापिस आ गया होगा? अब तालिबान ने जिस स्पीड से काबुल पर और सारे अफगानिस्तान पर कब्ज़ा कर लिया, देख कर हैरानी होती है।”

“क्या बताऊँ, लम्बी कहानी है। दीपक तो दो साल पहले ही लौट आया था।

याद है, दीपक ने तुम्हारी सलाह पर ही ऑस्ट्रेलियन आर्मी ज्वाइन की थी। हाई स्कूल की पढ़ाई के बाद ही उस ने कैडेट के तौर पर, आर्मी स्कालरशिप पर आगे की पढ़ाई की थी मेडिसन में। बड़ा होनहार था और फिर उस ने ऑर्थोपेडिक में विशेषज्ञता प्राप्त कर ली थी। तिमोर और इराक़ में भी रहा है, पिछले 2 साल से वह अफगानिस्तान में था। पिछले कई महीनों से जब तालिबान का जोर बढ़ रहा था, और अमेरिकन वहाँ से निकलने का प्रोग्राम बना चुके थे, ऑस्ट्रेलिया ने भी अपने सोल्जर्स और सलाहकार आहिस्ता आहिस्ता कम करने शुरू कर दिए थे।

फ़ौजी लोग, परिवारों से दूर, पराये देश में जहाँ चारों ओर दुश्मन ही दुश्मन, खतरा ही खतरा, भला कैसे दिमागी संतुलन ठीक रखते हैं, ये तो केवल वे ही जानते हैं।

वैसे सैनिकों के लिए क्या विकल्प रह जाते हैं, उन पर तो वह मशहूर अंग्रेजी कवि टेनिसन (Tennyson) की **The Charge of the Light Brigade** की सुप्रसिद्ध पंक्तियाँ ठीक ही लागू होती हैं।

“Theirs not to reason why,  
Theirs but to do and die.”

‘उन्हें कोई तर्क नहीं करना उनका काम है लड़ना और मरना’-  
चाहे वह फैसला ठीक हो या गलत।

मैं उनकी वकालत नहीं कर रहा, पर जब दुश्मन सामने खड़ा हो तो

कौन पहले वार करता है ज़िन्दगी और मौत का सवाल बन जाता है। और फिर यदि दुश्मन तालिबान जैसा भावहीन हो। वे बच्चों और किसानों को आगे करके, हमले करते रहे हैं।

ऐसे हालात में कुछ एक का दिमाग ‘चटक’ जाता है और वे कुछ उल्टे काम कर जाते हैं, जिन्हें देख कर हम सब शर्मिन्दा होते हैं। उन्हें केवल मानसिक रोगी कह कर माफ़ भी नहीं किया जा सकता।

दीपक तो डॉक्टर के तौर पर वहाँ जानें बचाने का काम करता था, पर लड़ाई की पूरी ट्रेनिंग उसे दी गई थी।

दीपक को आम शहरियों, किसानों और कैदियों को इस प्रकार मारने वालों से बेहद नफ़रत थी और वह समय समय पर प्रोटेस्ट करता रहता था, जिस के कारण कुछ लोग उस से खार खाते थे और कुछ उस पर हँसते थे, कहते थे कि वह बुज़दिल है और असली ऑस्ट्रेलियन नहीं है। एक दिन उनका यूनिट जीप में कहीं जा रहा था, रास्ते में छिपे हुए तालिबानियों ने अचानक हमला कर दिया, जिस में दो सोल्जर शहीद हो गये और दीपक समेत चार को बहुत गहरी चोटें आईं। हेलिकोप्टर द्वारा अस्पताल ले जाया गया, खून बहुत बह चुका था और जान का पूरा खतरा था। डॉक्टरों की मेहनत से वे बच तो गए लेकिन दीपक की एक टांग और एक दूसरे साथी की दोनों टांगें काटनी पड़ीं।

“इतनी बड़ी बात हो गयी और आप ने बताया तक नहीं,” मैं ने विज से कहा।

“क्या बतायें, टूट सा गया था, उस की यह हालत देख कर। कुछ सूझ ही नहीं रहा था।

दीपक की मानसिक स्थिति देख कर डर लगता था कि कहीं कुछ कर न बैठे। लेकिन उस ने जो हिम्मत दिखाई है कीई विरला ही दिखा

सकता है। उस ने तो अब अपनी ज़िन्दगी का मिशन बना लिया है और ऑस्ट्रेलियन डिफेन्स फ़ोर्स(ADF) के अस्पतालों में ऐसे दूसरे लड़ाई से ज़ख्मी होकर वापिस आये सिपाहियों को फिर से सोसईटी में अपने दम पर जीने में सहायक हो रहा है। आप अंदाजा नहीं लगा सकते कि किस तरह के मुश्किल हालात में से गुज़रे हैं ये लोग। जब सेना में किसी के अंग भंग हो जाते हैं, हाथ या पैर कट जाते हैं तो इन लोगों को बड़े चैलेंजर्स का सामना करना पड़ता है, खासकर मेन्टल हेल्थ में। वे समझते हैं कि वे बेकार हो गये हैं और समाज पर एक बोझ बन गये हैं।

उन्हें फिर से इज्ज़त से ज़िंदा रहने की हिम्मत जुटाने का काम आसान नहीं है। कई तो आत्म-हत्या कर चुके हैं।

मैं भी वालंटियर के तौर पर हफ्ते में दो दिन वहाँ जाता हूँ। थोड़ा बहुत कागज़-पत्र का काम या मरीजों के साथ कुछ बातचीत आदि करता हूँ। जितनी सेवा इन लोगों ने इस थोड़े समय में की है और जो कुर्बानी देश के लिए दी है, आम आदमी तो सारी उम्र भी नहीं कर सकता। जब मैं उन्हें बताता हूँ कि यह जो डॉक्टर उन की देख - रेख कर रहा है, उस की एक टांग अफगानिस्तान में तालिबान ने ले ली थी और वह मरते मरते बचा है, पर हिम्मत नहीं हारा। और जब मैं उन्हें बताता हूँ कि वह मेरा बेटा है तो उन की आँखों में चमक देख कर मुझे खुशी होती है, एक तरह से पारिवारिक माहौल बन जाता है।”

सुरेन्द्र की बातें सुन मेरी आँखें नम हो रही थीं, मैं बिना कुछ कहे उठ कर बाहर बरामदे में आ गया।

## त्योहार मनाने का दिन

एक भारतीय ईसाई परिवार में एक विदेशी लड़की रहती थी। वह संगीत सीखने के लिए रिक्टर जारलैंड से भारत आई थी, उसका नाम था शर्ली।

बड़ा दिन का त्योहार निकट आने लगा। परिवार के बच्चे शर्ली से पूछने लगे - "तुम कौन-कौन से उपहार खरीदोगी? किसे किसे दोगी?"

प्रश्न पूछे जाते पर वह गंभीर होकर कुछ सोचने लगती। 25 दिसंबर (जब बड़ा दिन का त्योहार मनाया जाता है) से 2 दिन पहले उसके मन में विचार आया - जिनके पास बहुत कुछ है उन्हें उपहार देने से क्या लाभ है। जिनके पास नहीं है कुछ, उन्हें ही देना चाहिए।

24 दिसंबर को वह एक दुकान पर गयी। पैसे तो ज्यादा नहीं थे उसने छोटे बच्चे की नाप का एक स्वेटर और एक टोपी खरीदी। उन्हें एक सुंदर से कागज़ में पैक करवा कर वह दुकान के बाहर आई।

शर्ली ने एक फकीर से पूछा - तुम किसी ऐसे गरीब परिवार का क्या सकते हो जिसके पास छोटा बच्चा हो वहीं एक टैंकरी वाला खड़ा था उससे भी शर्ली ने पूछा। पहले उसने शर्ली से पूछना चाहा क्या कारण है जानने का? शर्ली ने कहा मेरे पास बड़े दिन का उपहार है किसी गरीब बच्चे को देना चाहती हूँ। दोड़कर थोड़ी देर सोचता रहा फिर बोला मैं आपको ऐसे परिवार के पास ले चलता हूँ आप मेरी गाड़ी में बैठिये।

शर्ली ने कहा "मेरे पास किराया देने के लिए बहुत धन नहीं है, आप कितना किराया लेंगे?"

दोड़कर बोला किराये की बात बाद में करेंगे आप गाड़ी में बैठिये। टैंकरी मुगगी म्होपडिकी की कहती के पास रुकी जहाँ एक गरीब परिवार रहता है। उसके एक छोटा बच्चा भी है।

शर्ली ने कहा - मैं स्वयं नहीं जाना चाहती फिर लोग मुझे धन्यवाद देने लगेंगे। यह तो मैं भगवान की प्रेरणा से भगवान की ओर से दे रही हूँ।

इतना कहकर उसने फिर विनय पूर्वक कहा कृपया जाकर आप इसे दे दीजिए और कहिए, किसी ने इसे भेजा है। थोड़ी देर उसने शर्ली की ओर देखा और कहा ठीक है मैं जाता हूँ। शर्ली वहीं वहीं सोचती रही बच्चे ने स्वेटर, टोपी पहना होगा।

दोड़कर लौट कर आया तो बोला चलिए आपको आपको घर छोड़ देता हूँ। शर्ली ने कहा मेरे पास पैसे नहीं हैं, मैं पैदल जाऊँगी। दोड़कर न कुछ न सुनकर गाड़ी चला दी और बोला बेटी मैं भी ईसाई हूँ।



## फिर अपनी कहानी याद आई

कानपुर के ग्रीन पार्क क्रिकेट ग्राउंड में भारत और न्यूजीलैंड का मैच बड़ी रोचक स्थिति में चल रहा था। भारत जीतने के कगार पर था और न्यूजीलैंड ड्रा के लिए कड़ी मेहनत करता दिखाई दे रहा था। हम आस्ट्रेलिया में बैठे बैठे भारत को स्पोर्ट कर रहे थे। क्योंकि क्रिकेट हमारे परिवार का सब से अधिक मन पसंद खेल रहा है। शर्मा जी तो अपने कालेज और सर्विस के दौरान क्रिकेट के कैप्टन रहे हैं। दिल्ली के हिन्दू कालेज में पढ़ने के कारण हिन्दू कालेज और सेंट स्टीफन कालेज के फाइनल मैच कितने रोचक और कितने जोश से भरे होते थे मुझे आज भी याद है। अपने कालेज के स्पोर्ट में क्रिकेट ग्राउंड न जाए ऐसा हो नहीं सकता था। आज जो मैच देख रहे थे, हमारा ग्रैंड सन भी साथ में बैठा था। अचानक मैं 73-74 साल पूर्व पहुँच गई। इसे मैं कहानी इस लिए कह रही हूँ क्योंकि जब मैंने कहा कि हम भी तीन चार साल कानपुर में रहे हुए हैं, वह एक कहानी के रूप में ही सुन रहा था। मेरे लिए तो यह मधुर याद थी, आप बीती थी, पर उस के लिए कहानी ही थी। मैं उस बच्चे की तारीफ़ करती हूँ जो हमारी बीती बातों को सुन लेता है।

भारत की स्वतन्त्रता और विभाजन के कुछ समय बाद ही हम कानपुर चले गए थे क्योंकि पिता जी की वहाँ नौकरी लग गई थी। वहाँ जिस स्कूल में मैं और मेरी छोटी बहन पढ़ने के लिए जाते थे, वह स्कूल के साथ साथ बी. ए. तक का कालेज भी था, जो हमारे घर से (मुझे ठीक से याद नहीं) 2 या 3 कि. मी. की दूरी पर था। हम दोनों बहनें पैदल ही स्कूल जाते थे। धूप, सर्दी, वर्षा सभी मौसमों में क्योंकि बस या अपने आने जाने का कोई प्रबंध नहीं था।

मुझे अपने मिडल स्कूल के अध्यापिकों के नाम कम ही याद हैं, लेकिन श्रीमती चाकू हमारी भूगोल की अध्यापिका का नाम और पहरावा मुझे बहुत अच्छे से याद है। यह शायद इसलिए की नाम कुछहट कर है या मेरी भूगोल में रुचि थी - मालूम नहीं।

दूसरे अध्यापक म्यूजिक टीचर थे। नाम उनका भी याद नहीं, पर वह सूरदास थे। यह मुझे याद है। संगीत मेरा प्रिय विषय था। उनके द्वारा सिखाया गया कबीरदास का भजन मेरा प्रिय भजन है -

“अपने राम रिझाऊँ, अब मैं अपने राम रिझाऊँ।  
डारी तोड़ू न पाती तोड़ू, न कोई जीव सताऊँ  
डाल डाल मैं राम रमत हूँ, वाही को शीश झुकाऊँ।  
अपने राम रिझाऊँ

गंगा जाऊँ न जमुना जाऊँ, न कोई तीरथ जाऊँ  
घाट घाट मैं राम रमत हूँ, वाही को शीश झुकाऊँ।  
अपने राम रिझाऊँ।

औषध खाऊँ न बूटी खाऊँ, न कोई वैद बुलाऊँ  
कहत कबीर सुनो भई साधो, आवागमन मिटाऊँ।  
अपने राम रिझाऊँ।”

राग तो और भी सीखे लेकिन इसी भजन को ही सदा गाया। 6वीं, 7वीं, 8वीं कक्षाओं में केवल राग ही सिखाए जाते थे। हरमोनियम बजाना या तबला बजाना बड़ी कक्षाओं में सिखाया जाता था। लेकिन मैंने हरमोनियम और तबला दोनों ही कुछ कुछ सीख लिए, कालेज के विद्यार्थियों को देख देख कर। एक बार मैं तबले पर तीनताल बजा रही थी। उसी समय गुरु जी कमरे में आ गए। तबले पर मेरे हाथ को छू कर बोले, तुम ने यह कहाँ से सीख लिया। कहने का अभिप्राय यह है कि ईश्वर अगर एक इंद्रि कमजोर करता है तो अन्य इन्द्रियों को शक्तिशाली बना देता है।

इस प्रकार भारत और न्यूजीलैंड का मैच तो ड्रा रहा लेकिन मुझे मेरी मीठी यादों में ले गया।

शारदा शर्मा

## मैं ने हंसकर जीना सीखा है

मैं ने हंसकर जीना सीखा है  
ज़िन्दगी को बादलों की झुरमट में  
चाँद तारों की तरह छुपते देखा है  
तो पूर्णिमा की चांदनी में  
खिलखिलाते भी देखा है।

हाथ पकड़ कर अचानक -

चौराहे के अनजान मोड़ पर भी -

छोड़ा है ज़िंदगी ने।

पर मैं ने मुस्करा कर जीना सीखा है।

अनन्त के प्यार ने प्रेरणा दी है -

आस्था विस्वास ने शक्ति दी है।

यही तो कारण है कि-

मैं ने रसहीन ज़िन्दगी में भी रस पाना सीखा है।

मैं ने हंसकर जीना सीखा है।

..... कैलाश भटनागर

## How clean plant-based diets are proving to be beneficial for women's health

Consuming a plant-based diet is more than just following a fad and if done the right way, the results work wonders for your body in the long term.

A clean plant-based diet is the best way to make a switch to a healthier lifestyle not just for losing weight but for many other benefits. Not only that but recent studies have revealed that the diet is great in maintaining a woman's health.

As per Harvard medical school studies, "cutting back on meat and increasing our plant-intake is one of the best ways to boost our immune systems". It states that as plant-based foods are easier to absorb, they are also great for our digestive tract."

"When we talk about women's health, vaginal health is often ignored. It is extremely important for women to maintain vaginal health as this directly affects the overall wellbeing. Multiple factors like pregnancy, hormones etc, can impact vaginal health" says Aarti Gill, co-founder of Oziva.

"Eating a plant-based diet has been found to support the generation of good bacteria which is necessary for combating disease-causing microbes. It also helps maintain its natural pH balance" says Gill.

Add a lot of whole foods, greens, and fresh fruits because not only do they help regulate your period cycle but also contribute in maintaining a healthy vagina. Seasonal fruits and vegetables like cranberry help the vagina in maintaining its odour and keeps urinary tract infections at bay which is caused by the presence of bad bacteria. A plant-based diet also helps the vagina to naturally clean itself thus keeping it free from infections.

### Plant-based items to be consumed during menopause

"Females undergo maximum changes during menopause with women often facing symptoms like mood swings and hot flashes. While one can't eliminate this natural process completely, a lot of the symptoms can be managed with a holistic and clean lifestyle" suggests Gill.

A few food items that will come to your rescue to help you easily navigate through these symptoms are:

**Black cohosh:** "This flowering plant supports female hormones and reduces hot flashes," says Gill. Not only that it also aids in the reduction of sweating during your night-time sleep.

**Shatavari:** This age-old Ayurvedic herb improves estrogen levels and also relieves one of issues of vaginal dryness. It also has a positive impact on your mood.

**Red clover:** "Night sweats that are experienced by women during menopause can be controlled by red clover, also known as **Tripathra** (in Hindi). It also helps improve bone density," says Gill.

While other medicinal herbs like Ashwagandha and Lodh Bark help soothe the uterus and control menopause symptoms.

### Plant-based items to be consumed if you have PCOS

Likewise, hormonal imbalance in women causes serious disorders like Polycystic Ovary Syndrome aka PCOS. While it has been found that almost one in every five women in India suffers from PCOS, it is important to note that the same can be fairly regulated through adequate exercise, shift in lifestyle and consuming a diet rich in plant-based foods on a daily basis.

"Eating whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables, walnuts, chia seeds, flax seeds and fresh herbs and condiments like Tulsi, cinnamon and turmeric have also been proven to improve insulin resistance and decrease cortisol levels. This helps the body lose excess weight and control other symptoms of PCOS" says Gill.



A clean plant-based diet can do wonders for improving overall health in women. "From managing symptoms of menopause by regulating hormones to sustaining healthy female genitalia, the merits of plant-enriched diets cannot be stressed enough," shares Gill.

## Plant-based diet helps people with type 1 diabetes, improves insulin sensitivity:

"Decades of research have proven that a plant-based diet can be beneficial for those with type 2 diabetes. Now, these groundbreaking case studies are offering hope that the same may be true for those with type 1 diabetes," said Dr Hana Kahleova

New case studies have shown that plant-based diets are rich in whole carbohydrates, which help in improving insulin sensitivity and other health markers in people with type 1 diabetes.

One of the case studies followed a female type 1 diabetes patient. At the time, her A1c was 8.7 per cent. She initially adopted a low-carbohydrate (less than 30 grams of carbohydrate per day), high-fat diet that was high in meat and dairy. Her blood sugar stabilised, but she required more insulin per gram of carbohydrate consumed. Her total cholesterol also increased from 175 to 221 mg/dL.

After the patient shifted to a plant-based diet (eliminating dairy products, eggs and meat), she was able to decrease her insulin dosage. A drop in the cholesterol level was also noted.

"This study challenges the misconception that carbs are the enemy when it comes to diabetes. The patient in this case study experienced the opposite: Adding more healthful carbohydrates to her diet stabilized her glycemic control, reduced her insulin needs, and boosted her overall health," study author Hana Kahleova, MD, PhD, director of clinical research at the Physicians Committee, was quoted as saying.

The second case study followed a 42-year-old male type 1 diabetes patient. And the results were similar.

The researchers noted that a small study done earlier supported the case study results — high-carbohydrate, high-fibre diet improved glycaemic control in 10 people with type 1 diabetes.

Low-fat, plant-based diets also benefit those with type 2 diabetes, research has shown. Those who eat a plant-based diet have approximately half the risk of developing type 2 diabetes, compared with non-vegetarians.

Courtesy: Lifestyle Desk |(Indian Express)



## Mental Health

You often come across people talking about fitness, eating better, earning more, and spending more time with friends and family. But, very few people take out time to sit down and reflect upon one of the most important aspects of their life: the state of their mind.

“All human beings have the potential to become great leaders. But sometimes daily challenges and unforeseen circumstances can build walls that alter the path of our missions. Read further to understand the first steps to improving your mental health, and your long-term career and leadership success,” says Vijal Sejpal, psychologist, who also consults on Practo.

### 1. Get enough sleep

The more time you allocate to resting, the more efficient your performance will be when it comes to ticking items off your list. Getting between 7-9 hours of sleep each night is crucial to stay focused the next day. This will automatically also keep you motivated throughout the day.

### 2. Drink water

Feeling irritable is a common consequence suffered due to dehydration. Drinking 1.5-2 liters of water is essential, especially if the majority of your day is spent staring at the computer and there is a lack of high-intensity physical activities. Drinking enough water relieves fatigue, promotes weight loss, flushes out toxins, boosts immune system, prevents cramps and sprains and improves skin complexion.

### 3. Exercise 30 minutes per day

Like sleep, many adults say they cannot find the time to exercise. But exercising is the best natural remedy for stress relief. Increased heart rate due to exercise pumps oxygen and nutrients to your tissues and helps improve your cardiovascular system. Not only will you feel better, your sculpted, toned and muscular body will also thank you for it.

mental health, taking care of mental health, mental health issues, how to manage mental health and emotional well-being, tips for better mental health, indian express news Drinking enough water relieves fatigue, promotes weight loss, flushes out toxins, boosts immune system. (Photo: Getty/Thinkstock)

### 4. Consider your diet

The popularity of take-away foods, sugars, high-energy, and snack foods has risen over the past few decades, correlating with the growth of depression and anxiety. The regularity of eating and portion control should also be taken into consideration when considering a dietary modification. Eating a large meal before bed is likely to make for a very dazed wake the next morning, which is a result of your blood sugar spiking and crashing before you even wake up, resulting in fatigue.

### 5. Feel positive

Improving confidence is a key component of a healthy mental



state, and dressing well helps foster a more positive mental outlook. Everyone wants to be remembered when making that first impression. Being well-dressed is a small step investment that creates momentous benefits for your mental health.

### 6. Don't just be prepared, stay prepared

Time management is not only about ticking items off the list, but also having enough time left for things that are important to you. Each morning, try focusing on three priorities for the day. Keep bringing yourself back to them, by removing all distractions.

### 7. Give yourself

Previous research indicates that volunteering is linked to good mental health and emotional well-being. In many cases, volunteering gave people a sense of fulfillment and purpose which, in turn, positively impacted their motivation, commitment, and overall mental well-being.

### 8. Set goals

Setting goals that are specific, challenging, and achievable will improve your performance as you are less likely to be distracted. The 'feel-good' chemical released in your brain when you achieve something is dopamine. Each time you check something off your checklist, you get a shot of dopamine.

### 9. Talk it out

Take some time out for social interaction — whether it is a chat about the weekend, or offering assistance to a teammate or even a heart-to-heart with a friend. Voicing how you feel will assist in putting problems in perspective and also boost your morale.

### 10. Manage your finances

If you find yourself worrying about finances and investments, it is recommended that you create a specific strategy to manage your money or even ask for professional help.

## Learn to put the glass down

A psychologist, while teaching stress management to an audience, raised a cup of water and asked, “How heavy do you think this glass of water is?”

The audience expected it to be yet another, “half-empty/half-full” type question; they enthusiastically replied with answers. They quoted various weights and the psychologist replied with a cryptic message.

“Well, the absolute weight doesn't matter. It depends on how long I hold it. A minute won't be a problem, after an hour I might feel a dull ache in my hand and if I hold it for an entire day, my arm would feel paralysed,” she said.

The psychologist continued, “The weight of the water never changed, although the longer I held it, the heavier it felt.”

Continuing, she added that **stress and worry are just like a cup of water. If you think about them for a short while, nothing will happen. But, think about them for longer periods of time and it begins to hurt.**—————

## Longing

I grew up in Delhi, India where our home was our castle or the Indian version of that, our Taj Mahal.

Every space, every corner, every sun-filled room was marvelled at by others.

A uniquely designed home executed with imagination and aesthetic aplomb.

It wasn't just bricks and mortar, it was a home. A place where we laughed, a place where we cried, a place where we created so many memories together.

The most special part about it was that it was designed by my grandfather, an accomplished architect and town planner.

Someone who experienced the partition of a country. Having walked from Lahore, Pakistan to Jalandhar, India as a child, with nothing more than the clothes on his back. Then getting an education in India and London before becoming the Head of the Architecture Department at one of the best Universities in India.

My grandfather's keen eye for detail and artistic flair ran through the entirety of our home.

Each room had a balcony or a lush front yard. It had ample light, cross ventilation, high ceilings and a split-level void. For those who have no training in design or construction, in lay man's terms it was the perfect family home. Plenty of room to roam, to retreat. It was a sanctuary, it was a celebration, it was a place where we were protected from everything that lay beyond its walls.

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Who's getting the top bunk tonight? That was the daily argument between my sister and I, now sharing a room in our small, suburban, two-bedroom apartment in Sydney. We argued over the same thing night after night. While I liked that I could stare out the window from the top bunk, being the older sister, I often conceded. Feeling the weight and responsibility of being older. Having heard so many times that my parents had left everything behind just for us, to give us a better life. I often caved, and this attempt at bargaining over the best bed, was no exception.

Mum, Dad, my sister and I migrated to Australia, always living close to a train station.

A car was a luxury and one which came after many years. From small apartments to a weatherboard home years later. One in the correct catchment zone so that my sister and I could go to the best public school in the area. Our house was a vehicle for a better education and in turn a better future. Here we were, new migrants in a new country. A new language, a new culture. Having left our nearest and dearest behind, grandparents, cousins, family friends.

The shift was synonymous with wanting things to needing things. We occupied space rather than the space consuming us. We simply existed rather than thrived. The buildings we inhabited had form and function but connection and character, these came much later.

Constantly traversing between the life that was and the life that is. Converting dollars to rupees with every purchase, rebuilding our lives one day at a time.

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Having spent 21 years apart, with his son and his family in a distant land, my grandfather longed for his son's next visit. Every Diwali, which coincided with Halloween in Australia, my grandfather hoped and prayed that his son would come back to visit him in India. To the house he had designed,

where a room lay vacant with its own kitchen and bathroom, always for his son and his family. He had the routine well-rehearsed, chocolate eclairs would be bought from the University canteen, and he would buy a bottle of whiskey to share with his only son.

In India, life was busy, loud, and hectic. The noise of the traffic and the dust from the pollution alone meant after a day out on the town you would come home exhausted and weary. Ready to dig into the local cuisines, a spicy roadside treat or a sweet lassi to quench that thirst.

The exterior walls of the house where my grandfather lived often had to be painted as the thick smog and pollution left the walls dirty and in need of restoration. Much like the walls, we all needed to be rescued. Just like when nature would take over if the garden was unkept for a few weeks, the surroundings just consumed us. We couldn't feel the summer breeze anymore and if we did all we took in was smog. No longer being accustomed to anything local, after every trip back, our lungs through the large windows and well-ventilated rooms, quickly became choked up.

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My father was truly his father's son. A successful architect and town planner in Sydney. After almost 20 years in local government, there were few who didn't know him as the head honcho of development and planning approvals in his local government area.

Trips to India were getting far and between. Leave was difficult to line up and life was getting busier with more responsibilities for all. Sydney was now home, as imperfect as it was. We called my grandfather on Skype or Facetime. He told us about his latest projects, the aged care home he had designed or the clients who had come home to thank him for designing their dream home. The line was often disrupted, his voice less clear. In his 80s, he even joined Facebook so that he could stay connected with his grandchildren that lived so far away. Despite the interruptions he knew his son would return each Diwali, where he would sit with him over a glass or two.

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So along came 2021, when we found ourselves in a global pandemic. In fortress Australia, inside our gilded cage. Where borders were shut, and international travel banned. When my grandfather contracted COVID-19, just as India found itself at the height of its second wave, just as the 'India travel ban' was announced in Australia. Where anyone who attempted to travel to India would not just be fined but jailed for their attempts. No guarantees on return even if you were to get an exemption. Tax paying, hardworking Australian nationals abandoned overseas. Amongst those separated from their loved ones, my father felt helpless, as his own father gasped for oxygen and passed away in an Indian hospital without his son by his side or even the chance to say goodbye.

True to his roots, my father turned to what he knew. Burying himself in the job of building a new house for his family in Sydney. Casting his keen eye for detail over every plan and every design. Drawing into the night, sketching changes to the plans, making alterations and additions.

So once again we carry on, grieving for those who've left us, paving a way forward, filling our wounds with cement, brick by brick.

.....**Rimmika Shankar**

(SBS Writers Competition Entry by the author.

'Between Two Worlds: Stories from a diverse Australia')



## The best of Dharmendra:

**On Dharmendra's 86th birthday (December 8,1935), here's looking back at one of his most fruitful partnerships with director Hrishikesh Mukherjee.**

The duo collaborated on Satyakam, Chupke Chupke, Anupama and a few other films.

Dharmendra gave one of his most nuanced performances in Hrishikesh Mukherjee's Satyakam.

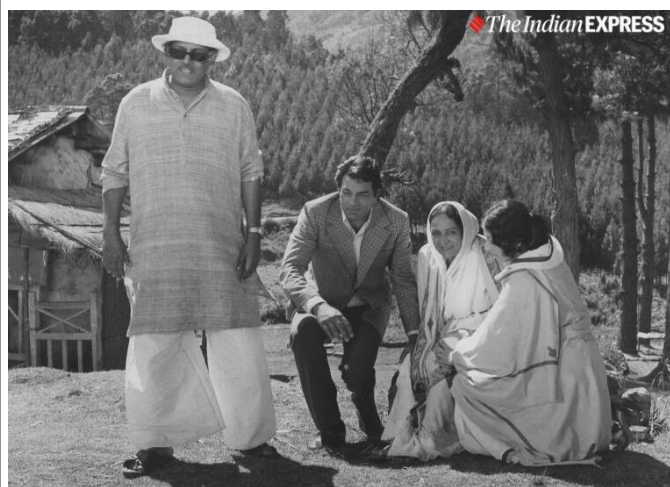


starts questioning his idea of life. He has been brought up in a gurukul with his grandfather who has instilled the ideas of living a morally righteous life but as Satyakam moves on, the filmmaker explains that absolute morality can be achieved living in isolation but when faced with the moral conundrums of living in a structured society, choosing right over wrong isn't always black or white.

Dharmendra was once known as the 'He-man' of Indian cinema and given the number of action roles that he has done on screen, he is often associated with that persona to this date. Playing the 'jat yamla pagla deewana' in films like Pratigya, and the many screen outings he had with his wife Hema Malini, Dharmendra was often slotted in the box of an action hero, who loved with all his heart, and could flex those comedy muscles when required. But before the Sholay star made it in the big league, his true potential as an actor was discovered by director Hrishikesh Mukherjee.

In a 1998 interview with Filmfare, Hrishikesh Mukherjee was asked that since he had once called Dharmendra his favourite hero, if he still sticks to that. To this, the famed director said, "By favourite actor, I didn't mean just his acting talent. I meant the human being also. I cast Dharmendra as a professor in Chupke Chupke. He was also in Satyakam, the most satisfying film I've made." Dharmendra and Hrishikesh Mukherjee collaborated on Satyakam, Majhli Didi, Anupama, Guddi and Chupke Chupke. Of these, Chupke Chupke has possibly become one of his most famous films – considering the number of times it has been broadcast on satellite television but the director's most "satisfying film" Satyakam, was Dharmendra's most actualised performance on screen.

Satyakam is often labelled as Dharmendra's most underrated yet most nuanced work in Hindi cinema. For the uninitiated, Satyakam is the story of a man who believes that his morality



cannot be compromised, no matter the hindrances in his way. His ideals often face the reality checks of real life, but his Satyapriya Acharya always chooses the path that is righteous, no matter the consequences. He turns a blind eye when a woman is raped, but this incident shakes him to the core and he then

Dharmendra intricately portrayed a character who is the torchbearer of truth but has started to realise that making decisions that are morally upright on paper, aren't always the right decisions. In the scene where Satyapriya is bedridden with a terminal disease, and finally decides to commit the 'one sin' of his life, his dilemma is evident. His eyes brimming with tears, and his last attempt to do something right, serves as a strong reminder of the time where the idea of building a perfect society, in the post-independence era, had disintegrated.

Dharmendra and Hrishikesh Mukherjee collaborated together in Anupama, Majhli Didi and Guddi as well. All three of these films had female protagonists but Dharmendra played characters who were integral to the protagonist's journey. In Anupama, he played Uma's (Sharmila Tagore) confidante who supports her through her emotional crisis and builds her confidence enough so she can stand up against her father. In Guddi, he plays a fictional version of himself and helps Guddi (Jaya Bachchan) in realising that there is a dark side to the glamorous world of films. Her infatuation with Dharmendra's on-screen image is such that Guddi believes it to be his real-life persona but his character directs her to find happiness that's away from the reel life. In Majhli Didi, Dharmendra plays the husband of Hema (Meena Kumari), who marries her against his family's wishes but stops offering her any kind of support after his opinions clash against hers.

Chupke Chupke – the film that is now known as their most popular collaboration, Hrishikesh Mukherjee brought the best out of Dharmendra as he got him to play a professor who disguises himself as a driver at his in-law's house. In an ensemble that also starred Amitabh Bachchan, Jaya Bachchan, Sharmila Tagore, Asrani, Om Prakash among many others, Dharmendra was at his most charming self.

Dharmendra has had a long and glorious career where he has been celebrated for his action avatar and while the actor has made an unforgettable mark in that space, his delicate performances in Hrishikesh Mukherjee's films offer a glimpse into the actor who was probably cast more on the basis of his looks, rather than his acting calibre.

At 86, Dharmendra is still seen frequently on television as he graces various reality shows as a guest. His upcoming films include Rocky Aur Rani Ki Prem Kahaani and Apne 2.

Courtesy: Sampada Sharma (Indian Express)|



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