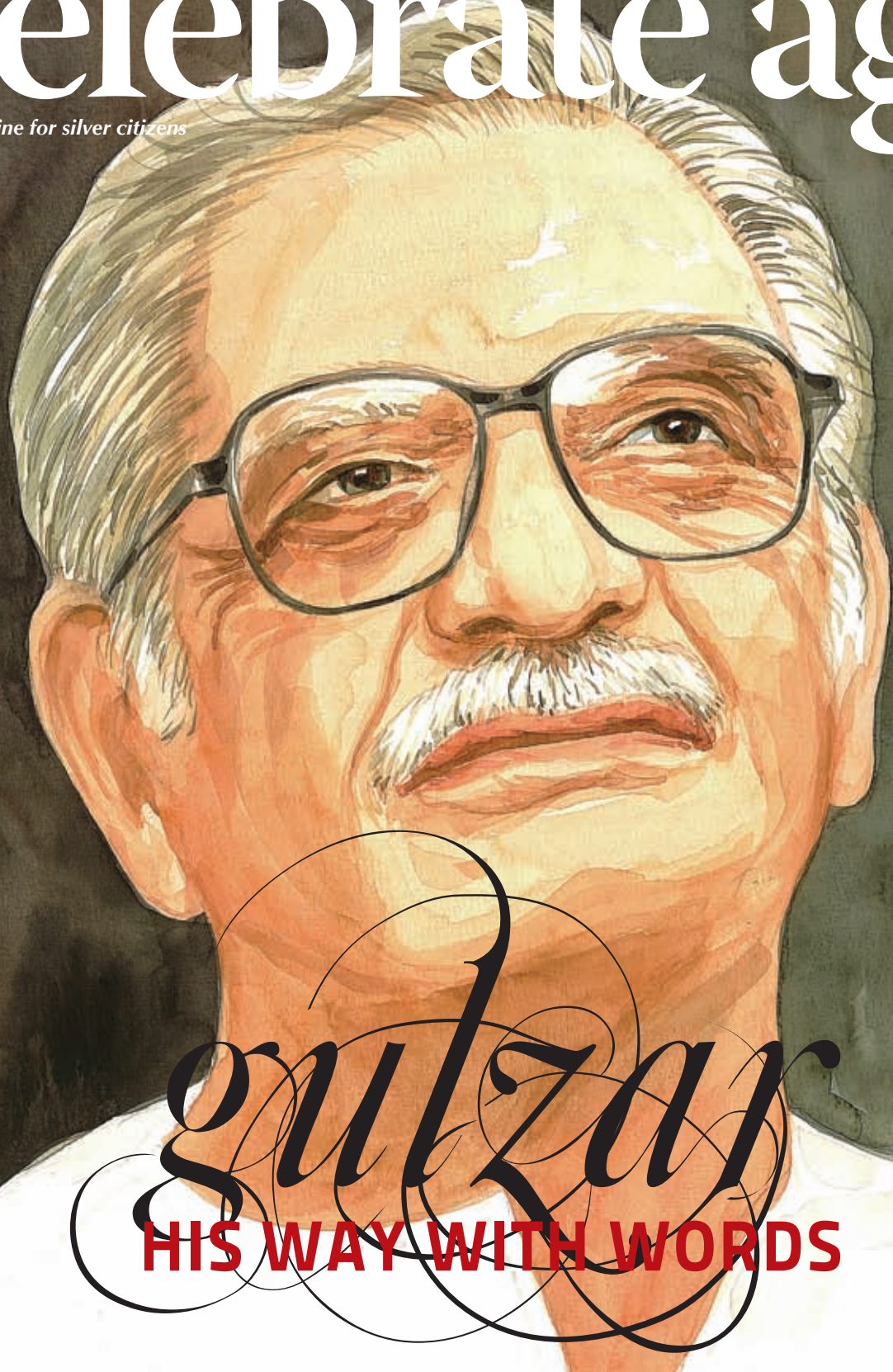


harmony celebrate age

OCTOBER 2014 ₹ 40

The magazine for silver citizens



gulzar
HIS WAY WITH WORDS

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• DR G G PARIKH KEEPS GANDHI'S LEGACY ALIVE • A WALK THROUGH THE HOUSE OF TAGORE





श्री अखिलेश यादव, माननीय मुख्यमंत्री, उत्तर प्रदेश



समाजवादी पेंशन योजना

इस योजना से 40 लाख गरीब परिवार लाभान्वित होंगे

लाभान्वित परिवार को पेंशन के रूप में रु. 500 की आर्थिक मदद के साथ ही शिक्षा, साक्षरता तथा स्वास्थ्य सम्बन्धी निम्नांकित सुविधाएँ भी उपलब्ध होंगी



• 14 से 35 वर्ष के आयु के सदस्य के इच्छुक होने पर निःशुल्क कौशल संवर्धन प्रशिक्षण।



• 06 से 14 वर्ष आयु के बच्चों को विद्यालय में नामांकन की सुविधा।



• परिवार में महिला मुखिया को लाभार्थी बनाया जायेगा।



• 0 से 06 वर्ष के बच्चों को नियमित टीकाकरण एवं आंगनवाड़ी केन्द्र सुविधाएँ।



• 06 से 14 वर्ष के प्रत्येक बच्चे का वर्ष में कम से कम एक बार स्कूल में स्वास्थ्य परीक्षण।



• गर्भवती महिला को संस्थागत प्रसव कराने की सुविधा।



• 15 वर्ष से अधिक उम्र के प्रत्येक निरक्षर सदस्य को साक्षर कराने की व्यवस्था।



• स्वास्थ्य बीमा योजना अन्तर्गत प्राथमिकता पर स्वास्थ्य बीमा काई।

दूर रहे सारी सुविधाओं से अब तक जो गरीब परिवार, पेंशन की यह नई योजना उनके लिए लायी समाजवादी सरकार

- योजना का उद्देश्य ऐसे गरीब परिवारों तक लाभ पहुँचाना है, जिन तक कोई योजना नहीं पहुँच सकी है।
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- शिक्षा एवं स्वास्थ्य के उन्नयन से जुड़ी हुई देश की पहली पेंशन योजना।
- शिक्षा, साक्षरता एवं स्वास्थ्य से सम्बन्धित मानकों की पूर्ति होने पर प्रत्येक वर्ष मासिक पेंशन की धनराशि में रु. 50/- की वार्षिक वृद्धि।
- देश में पहली बार 18 वर्ष से कम आयु के बिकलांगों को भी योजना से लाभ।



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Web of ideas

Sometimes you can sift through the doom and dross to find some real gems on the Internet.

A recent browse through the online edition of the *Wall Street Journal* led me to a fascinating initiative by two New York City-based organisations—The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Centre for Elder Abuse Prevention and 32BJ SEIU union—to stem elder abuse. Realising that victims are often isolated from the community at large, they have roped in doormen, concierges, cleaning personnel and deliverymen in apartment buildings to ring the alarm bell. Identifying potential volunteers through the union, the Centre offers a 33-minute online course to help the viewer spot signs of the five types of abuse (physical, emotional, neglect, sexual and financial) with interactive quizzes and exercises and provides resources and contact information for agencies that can step in. Heart-wrenching stories by victims serve to drive home the need for help.

Such an initiative may not be replicable in India but it is laudable for its out-of-the-box thinking, something we must reflect upon. Indeed, there is much food for thought available on the Net, a rich source of not just information but perspectives that can inspire and delight.

Take the TED talk series, for instance. Launched as a conference on technology, entertainment and design (thus the name), today TED (www.ted.com) has evolved into a platform that shares ideas across the spectrum of issues in over 100 languages, on the Web through short, powerful talks, and through events held all over the world. The speakers span the gamut of age, profession, nationality and expertise—what binds them is the power of the idea and the ability to share it with the audience.

Suresh Natarajan



Chilean author-activist Isabel Allende revels in that ability and it is manifest in every minute of her eight-minute TED talk on living passionately. The 71 year-old, whose books like *The House of the Spirits* and *Eva Luna* replete with passion, metaphor and magic realism have delighted audiences world over, speaks with zest and humour about dropping body parts, the fear of losing her independence, the freedom of having nothing to prove, her lightness of being, and her erotic fantasies about actor Antonio Banderas! “Retirement in Spanish is *jubilación*,” she proclaims. “Jubilation. Celebration. We have paid our dues. We have contributed to society. Now it’s our time, and it’s a great time. Unless you are ill or very poor, you have choices. I have chosen to stay passionate, engaged with an open heart. I am working on it every day. Want to join me?”

I certainly do. And on the occasion of World Elders Day, I urge you to do so as well!

Tina Ambani

A Harmony for Silvers Foundation Initiative

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SHOWING THE WAY
Cancer survivor Arundhatee Dutta shares her experiences in her new book



Legendary writer-poet Gulzar shares lesser known nuggets of his life

Cover sketch: **DINODIA**

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column one

He is truly a Renaissance man. The formidable oeuvre of writer-poet-lyricist-filmmaker Gulzar imbues both passion and protest, a timeless repository of words and wisdom from a man whose creative force stems from a true of understanding of the self. "As I understood my strengths and weaknesses, and became aware about what I'm comfortable indulging in, I drew these lines around me, defining what I should be doing and should not be doing," he tells us in "Poetic Confessions," our cover feature. "When you know yourself like that, those 'boundaries' travel with you. But to get there, I think it is important to just be yourself. And when you stay true to yourself, you start knowing even others a little better." This month, though, it has been our privilege to have got to know him a little better.

It's October, and we have the Mahatma on our mind. While author Virendra Kapoor tells us about his book, *Leadership: The Gandhi Way*, we explore how Dr G G Parikh has channelled Gandhian philosophy and precepts to transform Tara, a village on the outskirts of Mumbai, and enhance our understanding of *Ahimsa* through Gandhi's own words.

Elsewhere, Dr Sandra Desa Souza, the pioneer of cochlear implant surgery in India, urges silvers to come forward and fine-tune their hearing with the help of the latest aids. And Rekha Sarin glides through the treasures of Jorasanko Thakurbari, the home of the illustrious Tagores.

Finally, we rewind the clock—literally—to showcase the evolution of the portable watch, from its 16th century origins to the headline-grabbing 21st century iWatch. Time really does fly!

—Arati Rajan Menon

Like every month, the August *L*issue, which offered a toast to our 68th Independence Day, was very absorbing. I particularly liked "Unsung Patriots" ('Legacy'), which turned over the pages of the Ghadar movement, and "Lost and Found" ('History'), about the archives of the 1947 Partition. I am 75 years old and have been a witness to Partition and its painful moments. I congratulate *Harmony-Celebrate Age* for bringing out this special issue at a time when the present generation is seeking to revive and preserve the memories of heroes who sacrificed their homes and lives for the country's freedom.

J S Bakshi
Ahmedabad

It was pleasant reading the July and August 2014 issues of *Harmony-Celebrate Age*. I am a 79 year-old consumer activist, passionate about public affairs. Being a Padma Shri recipient myself in 2014, it was a pleasure to read articles about my fellow awardees animator Ram Mohan ('Encounter', July), children's writer Manorama Jafa ('Etcetera', August) and the review of Padma Bhushan Ruskin Bond's book ('Etcetera', August). The magazine has so much to offer for silvers. I loved reading articles about Alyque Padamsee ('Cover Feature', July) and Nikhil Desai ('Speak', August). They

ERRATUM

Thank you for publishing my article "Colours of Happiness" in the 'Your Space' section in the September 2014 issue. There is a small error I would like to correct. In my original article, I never mentioned that only the artistically inclined can paint. In fact, I have always been insisting that with Len Hend's speed painting technique, anyone can paint. I did it at 76 with no painting experience before that. You can do it as well.

Guru Nath
Chennai

The error is regretted.

—Editors

seem to be crusaders like me in their chosen fields. Also geriatrician Padma Shri V S Natarajan's columns on health issues related to the aged were an interesting read. Editor Tina Ambani's clarion call for universal design for silvers ('Connect', July) was timely. As she rightly mentions: "It's time to design a change—for the better."

Dr Hasmukh C Shah
Thane

AN INVITATION FROM HARMONY

We are looking for contributions from our readers. Write to us if...

- You had an experience related to money
- You faced a serious health problem and conquered it
- You know of someone who has done something exceptional after the age of 55
- You have a hobby or an interesting travel experience to share
- You have a funny or insightful anecdote about your grandchildren ...and we'll print it in the column 'Your Space'

Mail us at Reliance Centre, 1st Floor, 19, Walchand Hirachand Marg, Ballard Estate, Mumbai-400001. Or email at contact.mag@harmonyindia.org



► NEWSWORTHY

HEALTH GAINS

Taking a first step in its long-term goal to open the Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS) to the general public, the Union Government has announced that **silvers will be granted free access to facilities of 20 CGHS clinics in Delhi and NCR** from 1 September. These include clinics in Pusa Road, Daryaganj, Kalkaji, Chandni Chowk, Vasant Vihar, Vasant Kunj, Kasturba Nagar, Sarojini Nagar, Sarita Vihar, Rajpur Road, Jangpura, Noida, Sahibabad, Chanakyapuri, Gurgaon, Pandara

Road, Kali Bari, Greater Noida and Mayur Vihar. While the facilities will be available between 1.30 pm and 3 pm on all working days, non-CGHS card holders will not be given medicines from these centres at present. "This is a pilot project for now," Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan tells media. "We will see how much demand is generated for these clinics and their ability to handle the demand from the general public before we extend the service to more people in more cities."

BLACK HOLE

Former employees of Coal India Ltd have demanded a revision of their pension. As media reports suggest, the current pension scheme was implemented over 15 years ago and some retired employees are drawing as less as ₹ 73 per month.



Orissa on alert

To combat the increasing incidence of crime, a senior citizens' security cell has been launched at Khetrajpur police station in Sambalpur, Orissa. It will soon be followed by similar cells in Town, Dhanupali and Ainthapali police stations. The police has urged silvers living in these areas to register themselves and their household help with their station.

HOME TRUTHS

The American dream clearly does not extend to all its denizens. A new report by Harvard Joint Centre for Housing Studies and the AARP Foundation, titled *Housing America's Older Adults: Meeting the Needs of an Aging Population*, establishes that the US is not prepared to meet the housing needs of its silvers. Here are some highlights from the report:

While the number of adults in the US over the age of 50 is expected to grow to 132 million by 2030, housing that is affordable, physically accessible, and coordinated with supports and services is in very short supply.

High housing costs force a third of adults over the age of 50—including 37 per cent of those over the age of 80—to pay more than 30 per cent of their income for homes that may or may not fit their needs.

Disconnects between housing programmes and the healthcare system put many older adults with disabilities or long-term care needs at risk of premature institutionalisation.

Much of the nation's housing inventory lacks accessibility features, such as no-step entries, extra-wide doorways, and lever-style door and faucet handles, preventing elders with disabilities from living safely and comfortably in their homes.

With a majority of older adults ageing in car-dependent suburban and rural locations, transportation and pedestrian infrastructure is generally ill-suited to those who aren't able to drive, isolating them from friends and family.

While a majority of people over 45 would like to stay in their homes as long as possible, 70 per cent of those who reach the age of 65 will eventually need some form of long-term care.

You can read the entire report at www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/jchs.harvard.edu/files/jchs-housing_americas_older_adults_2014.pdf



Om shanti!

The integrated township being developed by Adani Township and Real Estate Company Pvt Ltd, an arm of the powerhouse Adani Group, already has Gujarat abuzz. Now, we hear in media reports that **Shantigram, the swank development on the outskirts of Ahmedabad, will also house world-class retirement homes.** For the project, which will be launched by the end of the year, the company has tied up with Age Ventures India, a private not-for-profit trust formed in association with HelpAge India, which has used knowledge capital from Methodist Housing Association of the UK to provide “best in-class designs and services” for silvers. “Keeping in mind the mindset of elders, the group has decided to develop the retirement home as part of a larger mixed generation community, a concept that will replace isolation with inclusiveness, which is one of the main



characteristic of Age Ventures India’s model of retirement homes,” goes a press release from Adani Group. Apparently, Age Ventures India will be responsible for key services like dining, housekeeping, club room, medical care, transportation and ambulance, nursing and care-giving. Go to www.atreco.co.in for details on the Shantigram project.



Club class: Sector 20, Noida, is now home to The Senior Citizens’ Club, the first of its kind in the area. Housed in the sector’s community centre, the 1,500-sq-ft club has three rooms—one each for yoga, library and recreation.

GADGET GURU

Technology isn't just an option any more, it's an imperative. According to researchers from the Universidade do Sul de Santa Catarina in Brazil, **modern gadgets can help prevent cognitive decline associated with old age.** "Increased use of Internet and email is associated with significant improvement in delayed recall over time intervals," writes study leader Andre Junqueira Xavier in *The Journals of Gerontology*. "Digital literacy increases brain and cognitive reserve or leads to the employment of more efficient networks to delay cognitive decline. Countries where policy interventions regarding improvement in digital literacy are implemented may expect lower incidence rates for dementia over the coming decades."



FOOD FOR LIFE: RESEARCHERS FROM UCL (UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON) HAVE DEMONSTRATED HOW INTERPLAY BETWEEN NUTRITION, METABOLISM AND IMMUNITY IS INVOLVED IN THE PROCESS OF AGEING. THE TWO NEW STUDIES, SUPPORTED BY THE BIOTECHNOLOGY AND BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES RESEARCH COUNCIL (BBSRC), COULD HELP TO ENHANCE OUR IMMUNITY TO DISEASE THROUGH DIETARY INTERVENTION AND HELP MAKE EXISTING IMMUNE SYSTEM THERAPIES MORE EFFECTIVE. THEIR STUDY IS PUBLISHED IN JOURNAL, *NATURE IMMUNOLOGY*.



The insomniac brain

SLEEPLESS AND SILVER? BLAME THE BRAIN. A NEW STUDY FROM RESEARCHERS AT BETH ISRAEL DEACONESS MEDICAL CENTRE IN BOSTON AND THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO OFFERS A NEUROLOGICAL REASON FOR INSOMNIA IN ELDERS. THEY CLAIM THAT A CLUSTER OF NEURONS CALLED THE VENTROLATERAL PREOPTIC NUCLEUS, WHICH ARE ASSOCIATED WITH REGULATING SLEEP PATTERNS, WITHER AWAY WITH TIME. "THE MORE OF THESE CELLS YOU LOSE FROM AGEING, THE HARDER TIME YOU HAVE SLEEPING," LEAD RESEARCHER CLIFFORD SAPER TELLS WEBSITE *THEHUFFINGTONPOST.COM*. AFTER FINDING THE LINK IN LAB RATS, SAPER EXAMINED OVER 1,000 SILVERS OVER A 17-YEAR PERIOD TO CONFIRM THAT FEWER NEURONS LED TO GREATER SLEEP FRAGMENTATION WHILE THE LARGEST AMOUNT OF NEURONS WERE ASSOCIATED WITH LONGER, UNINTERRUPTED SLEEP. WHAT'S MORE, THE LINK BETWEEN FEWER NEURONS AND LESS SLEEP WAS EVEN MORE PRONOUNCED IN PEOPLE WITH ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE. THE FINDINGS ARE PUBLISHED IN JOURNAL, *BRAIN*.

Also read 'Food Facts': Page 26



HorsePower

A trusted steed is now a valuable source of information. Scientists from the University of Liverpool and Queen Mary University of London have examined **the mechanisms that cause ageing in the tendons of horses, which have similar tendon properties to those of humans**, to determine what makes them so prone to injury and age-related wear and tear. As London newspaper *The Independent* reports, their comparison of young and old horses revealed marked differences in proteins found in both. "Injured tendons are extremely painful and limiting in horses as well as humans and we know that this increases as we get older," says team leader Peter Clegg. "We're now starting to get to the 'why' of this process by showing that the proteins produced by the cells to repair damage alter as we get older. Certain protein fragments appear in greater quantities in older horses, suggesting that they are released as the tissue is slowly damaged over time. In contrast, damaged tendons in younger horses contain more of the proteins used in healing than damaged samples from old horses. This now opens up the possibility of better treatment strategies to address tendon injuries in both veterinary species such as the horse—and man."



Sometimes, dogs have it better. Japanese company Aeonpet, which already runs specialty pet stores, animal hospitals and a luxury pet hotel, is now opening what is probably **the world's first canine retirement home** in a Tokyo suburb. As London newspaper *The Telegraph* reports, the home, initially equipped for 20 dogs, will feature down-feathered beds, a grooming room including a hair salon, a playground and a swimming pool. And of course, a veterinarian will be on call 24/7. "Many Japanese people have pets now, but of course they get old and it can be difficult to care for them," says Nanako Oiishi, spokeswoman for Aeonpet. In fact, last year Japan enacted legislation requiring citizens to provide lifelong care for their pets, making the home an excellent business proposition. Of course, such luxe care doesn't come cheap. Costs will vary, based on the breed and care regimen required for the dog; the expected range is from 100,000 yen (about ₹ 60,000) a month for small pets to double that amount for larger dogs.

PET PERKS

COWS COME HOME If Japan can build a retirement haven for dogs, why leave our beloved cattle behind? According to media reports, the **Guruvayur Devaswom board, which manages the Sri Krishna Temple in Thrissur, Kerala, is planning to convert a cattle-rearing centre into an "old-age home for cows and bulls"**. The move comes on the heels of a PIL alleging gross neglect of abandoned cattle on the Devaswom's 90-acre premises in Mallapuram district where four to five are said to die every month on average. At the new home, ageing animals will be given proper veterinary care. And, oh, bulls will be isolated so that cows in poor health will not have to face their "unwanted attentions".

LobeJob

They do sag with age; some even bend and sway a little—is that enough reason, though, to get this pair fixed? (Yes, we're talking about your ears.) London newspaper *Daily Mail* reports that an increasing number of women are turning to **ear rejuvenation, popularly known as 'eartox'**—it involves the injection of dermal fillers to plump up lobes. And, in extreme cases, where the lobe has sagged tremendously from age or prolonged use of heavy earrings, there's suturing.



SKIN STUDY

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER AND ALLIANCE BOOTS, PARENT COMPANY OF BRITISH HIGH STREET BEAUTY RETAILER BOOTS, HAVE ANNOUNCED A FIVE-YEAR PARTNERSHIP TO RESEARCH SKIN AGEING. THEY WILL EXPLORE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF SKIN AGEING AND THE IMPACT OF ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS, AS WELL AS AGEING IN DIFFERENT ETHNICITIES AND CAUSES OF ACCELERATED SKIN AGEING LIKE INFLAMMATION.

SHOW AND TELL



HERE'S AN EXAMPLE OF GREAT MARKETING. TO INVITE PEOPLE TO LEARN MORE—AND BUY—ITS NEW CELLULAR ANTI-AGE LINE, GERMAN COSMETIC GIANT NIVEA IS LAUNCHING A SERIES OF 'POP-UP BOOTHS' ACROSS THE UK, CALLED FACE FACTS BOUTIQUES. HERE, A SKINCARE EXPERT FROM NIVEA WILL GUIDE CONSUMERS AS THEY ENJOY DEMOS, FREE CONSULTATIONS AND PRODUCT TRIALS. "THIS IS A MOVE TOWARDS THE IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE THAT TODAY'S CONSUMER CRAVES, AS STUDIES HAVE PROVEN," A SPOKESPERSON FOR THE COMPANY TELLS MEDIA. "WE CREATE REAL INTIMACY BETWEEN THE BRAND AND ITS AUDIENCE AND CLOSE THE GAP BETWEEN AWARENESS AND TRIAL, CHALLENGING THE INERTIA MANY WOMEN FACE WHEN IT COMES TO CHANGING THEIR SKINCARE PRODUCTS." WILL THE POP-UP BOOTHS VISIT INDIA? NO WORD YET.

GOOD LOLLY!

THE JAPANESE have raised the anti-ageing bizarre bar once again! Tokyo eatery Zenyaren has introduced a 'collagen meat popsicle' to zap wrinkles and firm up the skin. A grilled skewer of meat encased in a frozen block of collagen gelatine, it is eaten like an ice lolly, reports London newspaper *Daily Mail*. (Collagen, which stops the skin from sagging, diminishes with age.) A two-lolly serving costs 430 yen (about ₹ 250), an affordable, if weird, snack! "It is delicious especially when you are trying to keep cool on a hot day," says 47 year-old Koma Izuma, a regular at Zenyaren. "Refreshing and nutritious at the same time—and great for your complexion." However, when the paper asked the British Skin Foundation for a comment, the answer was unequivocal: eating collagen does not benefit the skin in any way. Hmm.



CHEEK-Y!

You'd be forgiven if you mistake it for your grandson's headphones. But the **facial toner** by **StriVectin** is an anti-ageing gizmo that you wear on your cheeks—not ears. In a media release, the company claims it will preserve facial muscle mass with the help of 30-milliamp electric currents to stimulate the skin and facial muscles, making the skin more elastic and youthful. In a 12-week clinical study, 94 per cent of users reportedly said their skin was firmer; 90 per cent vouched for a more toned face; and 80 per cent agreed their face looked lifted. The whole kit, comprising the device itself, the handheld controller, batteries and six sets of gel pads (which need regular replacement)—costs \$ 199 (about ₹ 12,000). To learn more, go to www.strivectin.com/facial-toner.html

AGE, WITH GRACE: NOT ANTI-AGEING BUT *HEALTHY* AGEING. THAT'S THE MANTRA OF THE BEAUTY PLUS, AN ONLINE SITE THAT DELIVERS BEAUTY AND STYLE TIPS TO ADULTS OVER THE AGE OF 45, PROVIDING THEM FASHION AND STYLE ADVICE, MAKEUP TIPS, HOW-TO GUIDES AND PRODUCT ADVISORIES TO HELP THEM EMBRACE THEIR AGE—AND THEMSELVES. SEE FOR YOURSELF AT WWW.THEBEAUTYPLUS.COM

TOP SHELF



LIVING AIDS



If you find it difficult to grip a pen while writing owing to arthritis, try an adjustable plastic writing ring that comes in various sizes. Or check out the pill cutter, a safe-to-use, small device the size of a stapler that cuts your meds into perfect halves. How about bent spoons and forks with

a comfortable non-slip grip that reduces wrist motion? From foldable walking sticks and a nail cutter with a magnifying glass to glow-in-the-dark tape that prevents you from bumping into furniture in the dark, **there's no dearth of products to make silver living easier at**

www.seniorshelf.com, an online store launched early this year.

According to founder Rahul Upadhyay, the idea for the site came from the frustration of having to search high and low for simple but vital living aids such as a blood pressure monitor for

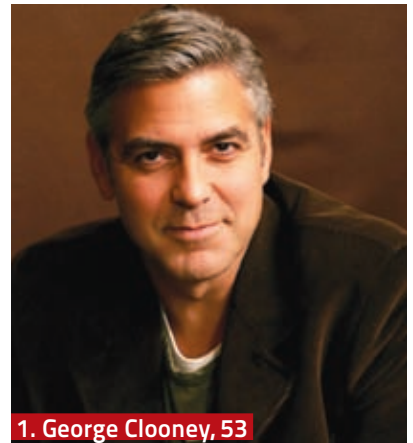
his mother. The daily living aids on Senior Shelf include products that can be used at home, in the bedroom and bathroom, and a range of walkers and walking sticks.

Choose from a list of wheelchairs—power steering, stair climbing, and more—or look into different hearing aids with specific features. In the pharmacy section, you'll find diabetic care products such as socks that prevent diabetic foot ulcer and test strips, while elsewhere there are nutrition supplements, orthopaedic products and machines that check blood pressure, height and weight. Also featured are services such as health insurance policies, home healthcare services and bill payments. What's more, everything on the site is economically priced, with free delivery across India. Log onto **www.seniorshelf.com** or contact (0) 9819529534.



The silver fox

Here's a poll the *Harmony-Celebrate Age* team endorses wholeheartedly! American actor **George Clooney, 53**, has come in first in a list of 'Tinseltown's leading MAGs (Men Ageing Gracefully)'. The survey of 1,000 people was commissioned by Crown Clinic, a leading hair transplant centre in Manchester, England. "Clooney is a worthy winner and the fact that he has refused to dye his hair makes him even more remarkable," says Asim Shahmalak, a surgeon at Crown Clinic, to London newspaper *The Telegraph*. "He has been a global sex symbol for 20 years and he has just as many female fans now as when he first emerged on TV series *ER*. He has happily embraced middle age and looks just as sexy as a brooding silver fox as he did as a hunky young doctor in his breakthrough role." Here's the complete Top 10:



1. George Clooney, 53



2. Brad Pitt, 50



3. Johnny Depp, 51



4. Daniel Craig, 46



5. Hugh Jackman, 45



6. Matt Damon, 43



7. Matthew McConaughey, 44



8. Will Smith, 45



9. Sean Penn, 54



10. Colin Firth, 54



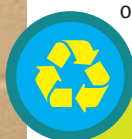
THREE TO TANGO When 62 year-old filmmaker Rob Reiner directs Michael Douglas, 69, and Diane Keaton, 68, in a rom-com-drama, you expect an accomplished silver tango. Unfortunately, *And So It Goes* never quite rises above the ordinary. Douglas plays a self-absorbed realtor who's caught off guard when his estranged son saddles him with his granddaughter, whose existence he was unaware of. To tide him over the crisis, he turns to a widowed lounge singer—Keaton—who teaches him some valuable lessons about life and love. Predictable? Yes and sadly so, considering the star power on offer.

Stand and survive. Staying on your feet for longer periods of time can do wonders for your lifespan. According to a new study by Karolinska University Hospital in Stockholm, standing—even when you are not engaged in exercise—might be the best anti-ageing technique as it keeps the length of your telomeres intact; sitting down for long periods of time has the opposite effect of shortening them. (The length of telomeres, the protective caps at the end of the chromosomes, is linked with longevity). The study was published in the *British Medical Journal*.



Then: Frying pan Now: Kitchen chalkboard

So your frying pan has stopped cooperating on the stove. Maybe it's time to move it out of the line of fire and let it sit pretty in your kitchen—as a decorative chalkboard memo. All you need, besides the used pan, is a small can of chalkboard paint, available at any paint store. First, clean out the inside of the pan entirely. Don't worry if there are scratches on the surface; it will still be usable. Next, apply a thin coating of the chalkboard paint on the pan. Let it dry completely and check to see if it sticks to the pan. If it does, begin applying more layers of the paint, waiting for a while after each layer so it doesn't clump anywhere. Now that the chalkboard is done, you can paint the handle of the pan, or even give a colourful border at the rim of the pan. Hang the pan on a hook anywhere in the kitchen. (You can use the leftover chalkboard paint on anything—from old plates and trays to an unused wall.)

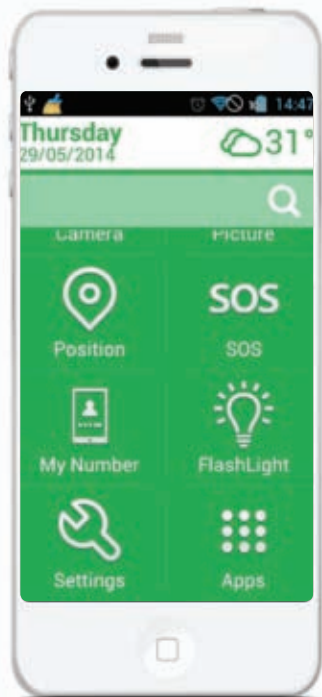


RECYCLING FACTS

- Recycling the aluminium in crockery can save enough energy to produce power for three hours of TV, and is equal to half a gallon of petroleum.
- Metals can be recycled and used again, endlessly, saving huge amounts of energy: recycling aluminium, for instance, can save 95 per cent energy, compared to 75 per cent for iron and steel.

MORE RECYCLING IDEAS...

1. USE THE PAN AS A MIRROR SIMPLY BY STICKING A CUT PIECE OF MIRROR ON THE INNER SURFACE OF THE PAN.
2. IF THE PAN IS DEEP, REUSE IT AS A CONTAINER BY REMOVING THE HANDLE.



NECTA LAUNCHER

Available for: Android 2.3 and up

What it's about: For those of you who just cannot get a hang of the latest Android version, with its swipes and taps and pinches, Necta has come up with a launcher that overrides the default Android user interface and replaces it one that is simple, and easy to use. Featuring big buttons, cool colours that are easy on the eye, and everything you need within one or two clicks, this free app is designed specifically for silvers and children. The clean and mindful design is not the only reason it stands out from the other launchers out in the market; this one also comes with a SOS function. Even the camera, weather, Internet browser and GPS-based maps are integrated for easy use.

After installation: You can add or remove buttons you want to see on the home screen in the settings tab. You can also add other apps (other than the ones already integrated). Change the colours according to what's comfortable for you—choose from blue, green, red or black. Remember to set up the SOS contacts and the quick dial numbers.

There's an app for everything these days—even the recipes your cookbook does not have. Check out **Ask Chitvish**, an app for smartphones and tablets with over 2,500 recipes, ranging from Indian cuisine to international fare. The cookery wizard behind this app is 74 year-old Chitra Viswanathan from Chennai, who has over 40 years of experience in perfecting all kinds of cuisines. The app features an easy-to-use search bar to look for recipes, and the ingredients and instructions are presented in a simple list format, along with pictures. Cheesecake, Tamilian *akkaravadisal*, Mexican fajita, *kozhakatta*, pasta in Arabiatta sauce—there's something for everyone, available for a small price. **Get the app for ₹ 218 on Android and ₹ 243 on iOS.**

CAREZONE SENIOR

Available for: Android v4.0 and up; iOS 7.0 or later

What it's about: An integrated free app for seniors and their caregivers, it has an array of features: a journal to post updates with email notifications, medication manager with reminders, an inbuilt to-do list, memo, and contact list. You can add a number of 'helpers' and they'll all be connected to you through the app. Notes, lists, and journal posts can be shared among caregivers, and you can upload medical records and important documents. Safe and secure, it saves the trouble of calling up too many people to coordinate or jotting down important information at various places (and losing it). The app can also be accessed from tablets and your personal computer.

After installation: After signing up and creating an account, select what you want to do from the left-hand side bar. You can post a journal entry, check out the calendar and add events, upload photos and files, edit your profile for contact information and profile picture, check out and add contacts, and even choose who shares or views the notes, to-do lists or journal entries. In the 'medications' tab, you can add medications (click on the three vertical dots on the top right). The app will run in the background automatically so you can get medication reminders and notifications about new entries.





Night alert

Active days can lead to peaceful nights. According to researchers at the Stritch School of Medicine at Chicago's Loyola University, **exercise reduces the risk of nocturia, a condition in which you need to urinate frequently during the night.** Nocturia reportedly affects nearly 50 per cent of all men over 45, with the risk increasing as you grow older. Causes range from an enlarged prostate squeezing down on the urethra in what is called benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) and sleep disturbances to just low bladder control. The team studied about 30,000 men between the ages of 55 and 74 to analyse benign prostatic hyperplasia and its effects. They found that those who were physically active for an hour or more a week were 13 per cent less likely to be diagnosed with nocturia and 34 per cent less likely to have severe nocturia (waking up three or more times during the night to urinate) than those who indulged in no physical activity. In their view, increased levels of physical activity are associated with decreased body weight, better sleeping patterns and low levels of systemic inflammations, all of which can lead to better body functionality and a healthy prostate.



Potassium plus: For postmenopausal women, including potassium-rich food in the diet can reduce risk of stroke by 12 per cent and death from stroke by 10 per cent, according to a study by Albert Einstein College of Medicine, New York. Potassium, found in food such as potatoes, bananas, and white beans, is known to reduce hypertension. The researchers studied 90,137 women between the ages of 50 and 79 for 11 years, whose average potassium intake per day was 2,600 mg (as food, not supplements). Those who did not have hypertension and had a daily intake of potassium were 27 per cent less likely to have ischemic strokes and 21 per cent less likely to be prone to other strokes. Those who were diagnosed with hypertension had a reduction in risk of death but potassium intake had no effect on their risk of stroke, proving that intake of potassium is beneficial before high blood pressure develops.

GIMME RED!

IN INDIA, prostate cancer ranks No. 5 on the list of deadly cancers in men, with the number of cases rising from 31,311 in 2011 to 37,055 in 2013. Now, a new study conducted at Bristol University in the UK reveals that **men can reduce their risk of prostate cancer by 18 per cent by consuming at least 10 portions of tomatoes a week.** It could be tomatoes in any form—fresh juice, salads, even baked beans—as it has the antioxidant lycopene, which protects DNA from cell damage. The researchers

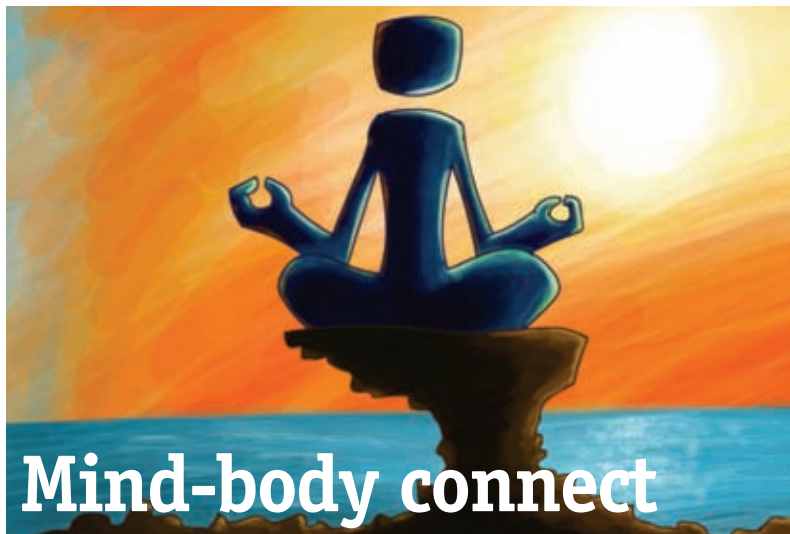


analysed the lifestyle habits and diets of about 20,000 men between 50 and 69 years of age and concluded that diets that have an optimum amount of three components—lycopene, selenium (found in flour-based products)

YOU ARE AT RISK FOR PROSTATE CANCER IF YOU ARE

- Over 55
- Overweight
- Suffering from hypertension
- Genetically predisposed
- Prone to a fat-rich diet

and calcium—can help reduce the risk of developing prostate cancer in men. There was a reduction by 18 per cent in people who had tomatoes in their diets, while there was a further 24 per cent reduction of risk in people who included the recommended daily intake of five or more servings of fruit or vegetables compared to those who had two-and-a-half or less servings.



Mind-body connect

Poor cognition may not just be the fallout of a stroke—it may contribute to one. According to a study by Rush University Medical Centre in Chicago, **cognitive problems could be a risk factor for stroke with memory and attention skills having the potential to impact cardiovascular health in silvers.** The researchers studied the cognitive skills of 7,000 people over the age of 65 years of age at three-year intervals, testing their short-term and long-term memory, awareness and attention, among other cognitive functions, before and after a stroke. They found that those who scored low on cognitive skills before a stroke had a nearly 61 per cent chance of getting a stroke, while they faced a decrease in cognitive function twice as fast after a stroke compared to before the stroke.



Scheduling mentally challenging tasks in the morning is more effective for silvers, according to a study conducted at the University of Toronto. The study, comparing 16 young adults and 16 silvers between the ages of 60 and 82, revealed that the morning hours were best for improved cognitive functions in those regions of the brain that were involved with decision making and analysis. They also found that the ability of silvers to concentrate and ignore distractions was better in the morning than younger adults; by afternoon, their mind went into an 'idling' or restive state.



Busy = happy

On 12 September, silvers at the Harmony Interactive Centre in Girgaum, in South Mumbai, learnt about the possibilities of homeopathy in an engaging session with Dr Rahul Joshi (*see picture above*), homeopathy consultant and honorary homeopath to the Governor of Maharashtra. In a detailed discussion, Dr Joshi touched upon all kinds of geriatric ailments and homeopathic remedies for them. Besides homeopathy, he also talked about the various psychological aspects one needs to be careful about—anxiety, depression, mood and sleep disorders—offering a catchall solution: keeping positive. “Taking responsibility of something, like organising picnics or excursions, can help you boost your self-esteem, bring change in your routine and give you many happy and proud moments,” he advised.

Building on this idea of staying busy to be happy, the next session on 19 September was on retirement, by entrepreneur Dr Madhu Gupta (*see picture on right*), founder member of Shatabdi Mahila Sahakari Bank and a chairperson of Stree Shakti Welfare Association in Thane. Busting common myths about retirement, her talk helped silvers reassess their perception of retirement. “The commonly believed definition of ‘work’ is that it is something that pays, and so the day we stop working, earning ends. This unquestioned mindset is wrong,” she explained, “If we look at it by separating it from money, then by engaging ourselves in any activity—either planned, routine or voluntary—we are never retired.” This way, we will be able to appreciate all the paid or unpaid activities we do, and no one will ever be considered retired, she added.



Dr Gupta then discussed ideas for being active within a group, battling fear and restlessness, active involvement in the lives of grandchildren, and the importance of believing that there’s no limit to learning new things—all interspersed with uplifting tidbits and amusing stories. No doubt all the silvers who attended these sessions went back home motivated and eager to begin their second lives—we sure feel like it!



BIRTHDAYS

- Actor **Vinod Khanna** (left) turned 68 on 6 October.
- Russian President **Vladimir Putin** turned 62 on 7 October.

● Superstar **Amitabh Bachchan** (right) turns 72 on 11 October.

● American fashion magnate **Ralph Lauren** turns 75 on 14 October.



- Actor and Bharatanatyam dancer **Hema Malini** (left) turns 66 on 16 October.
- Theatre artist and Indian and international film actor **Om Puri** turns 64 on 18 October.



OVERHEARD

"I feel even old people can do a nice love story, but here we don't make that kind of films. In the West, such films are being made and they make a nice romance. My film with Helen Mirren, *The Hundred Foot Journey*, is an example. The film's story is about a French and Indian restaurateur and their rivalry. It's a very warm film with a parallel love story. Every person wants to stretch himself and widen his audience. As Hollywood films are shown all over the world, it's obvious that every actor would want to do an English film and explore himself. I have no regrets at all. I have done quite well for myself. I didn't have a conventional face but I have done well and I am proud of it."

—Actor **Om Puri**, 63, in a media interaction

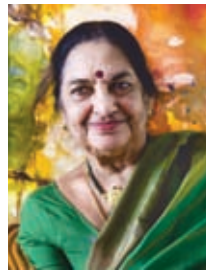


IN PASSING

● British director **Richard Attenborough** (left), who made Oscar-winning film *Gandhi*, died on 24 August. He was 90.

● American comedian and talk show host **Joan Rivers** died of cardiac arrest on 28 August, at the age of 81.

● Historian **Bipan Chandra** (right) died of prolonged illness on 30 August. He was 86.



● Kathak dancer **Dr Maya Rao** (left), featured in our May 2014 issue in 'Footsteps', died of cardiac arrest on 1 September, at the age of 86.

● American actor **Richard Kiel**, best known for his role as villain Jaws in the James Bond franchise, died on 10 September. He was 74.

● Freedom fighter and journalist **Jitendra Chandra Paul** died at the age of 101 on 11 September.

MILESTONES



● A renowned environmentalist and professor of biology at the University of Massachusetts in Boston, **Dr Kamal Bawa** (left), 75, won the MIDORI Prize in Biodiversity on 8 September for promoting sustainable development and his revolutionary research on climate change in the Himalaya.

● Eminent journalist **Vinod Mehta** (right), 72, was selected for the GK Reddy Memorial Award on 2 September, honouring his contribution to journalism. The award will be presented in December.



HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY?

THIS IS THE PLACE TO DO IT. REACH OUT TO FELLOW READERS WITH INTERESTING ANECDOTES, INSPIRING STORIES AND HEARTWARMING MOMENTS FROM YOUR LIFE. WRITE IN WITH FULL CONTACT DETAILS, AND MAKE THIS SPACE YOUR OWN.

TALKING HANDS

When a friend asked me to consider teaching English to undergraduates and junior college students at the Deaf Enabled Foundation (DEF) in Hyderabad, I was more than hesitant. I had only taught at regular schools and was not keen to take a different path. I went, anyway, to satisfy my curiosity.

That trip, in October 2010, was a turning point in my life. For starters, everyone in the organisation was hearing-impaired, including the founder, teachers and students, of course. Everyone spoke with their hands and the silence that prevailed everywhere was uncanny, so different from the noisy hallways of regular colleges and schools!

My challenge was especially difficult as I was asked to train their instructors, who were also deaf. I was given an interpreter but I found that didn't really work as a lot of information was lost in translation. So I took classes in sign language and was also tutored by one of the instructors at the institute. Initially, it was tough as sign language has a very limited vocabulary but I eventually mastered it and was soon communicating beautifully with my students.

Among my many observations in this new world, I found that the students did not really trust 'hearing' people, which is why very few of them venture here. Their distrust stems from experiences where they feel discriminated against. So first, I had to win their trust, more than anything else. They had to believe I loved them and respected them for who they are, before they could begin to learn from me. It took me a couple of months but I got there. They realised that this one was going to stay, unlike the other 'hearing' teachers who came in, spoke and wrote things on the blackboard and went home.

Gradually, I grew more and more involved in their quiet world, and they accepted me as a friend and mentor. For instance, these young adults make excellent short films and I was happy to help them with the subtitles. They are also brilliant with computers and taught me a thing or two! Sometimes, they would ask me to help them with per-

sonal tasks, like Ravindra, who requested me to speak to his mother who was very sick in their village. He wanted me to tell her he was okay. She was happy to hear about him but sad that she could not take care of him as she was bedridden.

So I began to take breakfast for Ravindra, who got married in a few months, to a deaf girl. I attended their wedding in Vijayawada with all the other students. After the couple returned to Hyderabad, they had to find a place to stay and till they did, they lived with me just like any family member. Shortly after that, his mother passed away.

My experiences with these wonderful people have showed me facets to my personality I didn't know existed. I am a much more compassionate person and very grateful for an opportunity that has expanded my world.

—Nalini Florence Chatterjee, Hyderabad



Shyamola Khanna

Chatterjee found resonance in silence

WORLD AT MY FEET

I shudder to wonder what would happen if I couldn't travel like I do. In the first nine months of 2014, I visited Antarctica, Brazil (twice), Uruguay, Chile, Argentina, the US, Canada, Mongolia and Macau—and the list will grow as the year winds down.

When millions of people were glued to their television screens to watch the recent FIFA World Cup, I travelled from one match venue to the other in Brazil, and experienced the excitement firsthand. I am a former footballer and just being there was a dream come true. Apart from seeing the greats of the game up close, it was awesome to see the stadia, which are architectural marvels. Sitting among football fans screaming for their favourite teams was an unbelievable experience. Unfortunately, I couldn't visit Pele's home town but I met Didi, now almost 75, who has been styling the hair of the 'king' for over 50 years, in his salon opposite Santos Football Club. The bright red canopy screams, 'Cabeleireiro do Pele' (Barber for Pele).

This was not the first time I have travelled overseas for an international sporting event. I have visited France, Japan, South Korea, Germany and South Africa for earlier FIFA World Cups, the Olympic Games and Asian Games.

I have always wanted to experience the unknown, confront unforeseen challenges, and learn about unfamiliar cultures. I am about to leave for Mongolia, where I want to visit the Genghis Khan Statue Complex on the banks of the Tuul River. Thus far, I have only seen pictures of this statue, which is 40 m tall, but now I will see the real thing! Looking at pictures is no substitute; one can learn about the history of new places only by visiting them.

Some may consider my passion for travel a colossal waste of money. But I point out that I don't spend it basking in the sun on beaches all over the world, nor do I visit night-clubs and bars in the countries I visit. While on tour, I eat simple meals and dress modestly. I only splurge on souvenirs every now and then. And I am a bachelor, so I don't have a family waiting for me to bring gifts back home! My mementos include a bottle of water from the Amazon, a



Ghosh gives in to wanderlust

jerry can of water from the Nile, a few laminated tickets of World Cup matches and some autographs of important people I have met on my travels. Initially, I had to borrow money to fund my pastime. In 1998, when I went to watch the World Cup in France, I borrowed ₹ 80,000 and I spent the rest from my savings. I also live a Spartan life, so that keeps costs down.

I have learnt that if you want to live a life of peace, you have to stay away from greed and ambition and you must shun cheap pleasures. Of course, you must have a passion to pursue or you will never truly experience the meaning of life, the wisdom that purifies your inner self. I mean, how can you beat watching wild animals catch their prey in places like Kenya and Tanzania? And there are only a few, including myself, who have felt that adrenaline rush on reaching the base camp of Everest. I have given away the few possessions I have to my relatives, and have saved only my energy and spirit to see the world.

—Pankaj Ghosh, Kolkata

The leaf doctor

**SHANKAR RAO, 68,
BENGALURU**

I come from a family of mechanical engineers from Tumkur, a small town 70 km south of Bengaluru. For most of my life, I have worked in government appointments, tried my hand at an entrepreneurial venture, and then went back to working for a private organisation.

I was married in 1974 and have a daughter and a son; I am very proud that they both chose my field for higher studies. In 2004, my wife Geeta was diagnosed with hormonal cancer. She breathed her last in 2005, at the age of 50, a little more than 30 years after our marriage. It was a very disturbing time for me; the doctors said she could be treated, and for a while she was getting better, but then it was not to be. My wife's sister and her husband, K R Rotti, had suggested that I take a look at the simarouba tree and its medicinal properties as a possible cure for my wife's cancer. But at that time I was not impressed by it, mainly because it was still unknown and I wanted to take the better-known path of chemotherapy.

After Geeta's passing, coming back to an empty house was a huge challenge for me. I was quite lost and without any sense of purpose. But I kept getting this feeling that Geeta was asking me to do something worthwhile, that I was wasting my time. Meanwhile, Rotti suggested once more that I go along with him and meet Dr Shyam Sundar Joshi, the man who had an ongoing research on the simarouba tree.

Many decades ago, the Agriculture University of Pune had brought in the saplings from the rainforests of Brazil



Shyamola Khanna

and Mexico. Dr Joshi and his wife, both agro-scientists, had managed to get five saplings from Pune to the Gandhi Krishi Vidyalaya, Karnataka (GKVK), and were doing extensive research on it, exploring the medicinal benefits of the tree. They were also giving out free saplings to anyone who sought them. The tree has been known for over 300 years and a lot of

research has been done worldwide. Unfortunately, in India, the Joshis were the only ones working hard to disseminate information and raise awareness about this miracle tree.

In 2007, I brought home some saplings and began experimenting on them myself. Before I could ask anyone else to try out the medication,

“The simarouba has become my life, so much so that even when I am travelling, I am thinking of various ways of sending out the benefits to as many people as possible”

I wanted to be convinced myself. Most of the time, the experiments worked well, except this one time when I started bleeding from my nose and throat; it meant that the decoction had generated too much heat inside me, so I applied the coolers and brought down the intensity.

At the beginning, Dr Joshi was my guide and mentor. Then I broke away from his suggestions, and my engineering temperament kicked in. Of course, I had a lot of queries for Dr Joshi, some of which he could not satisfyingly answer. Logic suggested that the body weight of the person was crucial. I knew nothing of the human anatomy or physiology, but from my experiments on myself I had come to the conclusion that the dosage and strength of the decoction has to depend on the person's body weight.

I found that after studying the patient's medical reports and judging his body weight, I could determine the specific dosage for the person. It worked for a broad spectrum of ailments, especially those connected with respiration and digestive problems. The first person I treated was my 68 year-old sister who had arthritis. I gave her two leaves for every 10 kg of her body weight, asked her to make a decoction with water, and drink the clear, tasteless, odourless liquid. It took her six months to get relief.

In my initial experiments with the leaf, we pounded it, boiled it and dished it out to people. I also gave everyone who came a free sapling to

plant at home. Then I realised that if the leaf was so effective, the bark must also be very effective; the information on the Internet had advocated the use of the bark but no one had tried it in India; so we set about working on that.

I was giving it all away for free till April last year, when the GKVK clamped down on the research funds for Dr Joshi. That was when we began to charge money for the dosages. We had to maintain some helpers to look after the trees, and needed a few people to do the really hard work like breaking and pounding the bark.

So far, I have treated nearly 800 people and they have given me positive feedback. I have worked with renal failure, nervous disability, diabetes, rectal cancer, juvenile diabetes, acidity, weight loss and cancer. There are eight women with breast cancer who are now in remission. One 78 year-old patient had prostate cancer and Vellore Medical College had given up on him. But my medicine worked wonders and he was in remission for four years, till he died of a heart attack from a fall at 83.

I have worked out a grinding machine to grind the bark without heating it. Next on my agenda is to convert the powder into tablets of definite gram-mage. I am in talks with a pharma company to bind some inert compounds with the powder so its efficacy is not lost. I am also trying to set up a website to put up my clients' pictures and testimonies with their permission. In today's tech-savvy generation, this will help raise awareness about this medicinal plant.

The simarouba has become my life so much so that even when I am travelling abroad, I am thinking of various ways and means of sending out the benefits to as many people in India and abroad as possible. So, for someone like me to be called the *ellay* doctor (*ellay* meaning 'leaf' in Kannada) is an honour.

—As told to Shyamola Khanna

I am a retired banker and my wife is a retired teacher. Both of us are animal lovers. We chanced upon the idea of pet-sitting when we went to the US recently. We want to start something similar in our home. How do we go about it?

Pet-sitting is a relatively new field in India, coming up in urban areas. It's a concept where people leave their pets at a sort of day care or home stay while they go to work or on long vacations. In such a business, your customers will look for three things: credibility, hygienic conditions, and reasonable pricing. Increased customer interaction and presenting innovative services (such as celebrating pet birthdays) can help you establish a loyal customer base.

Initially, you can choose to offer pet-sitting as a day-care option, and take on home-stay clients gradually as you get a hang of market needs (and have appropriate infrastructure). You need to decide and experience whether you can tackle different kinds of animals, or only offer dog-sitting, feline or ferret care. If you live in a place with a huge backyard, it could be an added bonus. Knowledge of animal first aid, behaviour and nutrition is important not just for building credibility with your clients but the well-being of the animals that will be thrust into your care. You can take up short courses online or in institutes. You can also hire one or two people to take care of cleanliness and maintenance. Visiting pet-sitting facilities within India is the best way to learn more.

—Armaan Shah is an independent pet-sitter and animal foster parent in Delhi



Eat right, sleep tight: Make your nights better with the right diet

I am a 62 year-old woman suffering from disturbed sleep for the past three years. As a result, I feel sluggish through the day. In fact, I don't even feel like playing with my grandchildren because of my drowsiness and lethargy. Please help!

With age, there are normal changes in sleep pattern. Some individuals might experience early sleep; some have disturbed sleep, short sleep, or what we call insomnia. But this tossing and turning should not become a part of your daily sleep routine as it could result in lethargy, tiredness, depression, memory problems, irritability, emotional stress and more.

Probable causes

Insomnia can occur at any age, but it is particularly common in the elderly affecting almost 50-60 per cent of seniors. As you age, you will experience physical, psychological, social, and situational changes and conditions that can wreak havoc with your sleep. Although the exact cause of insomnia is still unknown, potential causes range from physical and psychological to social and environmental. Here are a few:

- Changes in noise, lighting, temperature or other conditions of the sleep environment

- Medications (especially those that stimulate)
- Consumption of stimulants such as coffee or nicotine close to bedtime, inducing a 'wired' feeling
- Consumption of alcohol—it initially acts as a sedative and promotes sleep, but later inhibits REM and fragments sleep
- Pain or stress owing to arthritis, osteoporosis or other conditions that cause physical discomfort
- Menopause
- Nocturia (night time urination)
- Difficulty finding a comfortable sleeping position
- Waking during the night and being unable to return to sleep—movement and sleep disorders, restless leg syndrome, periodic limb movement disorder, snoring, sleep apnoea and others are linked to insomnia
- Daytime sleepiness, irritability or anxiety
- Neurodegenerative disorders such as dementia, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's and Lou Gehrig's disease, among others

Dietary dos

Mild insomnia can often be prevented or cured by practising good sleep habits and including the following in your diet:

- Carbohydrates like whole grains, whole wheat, brown rice and oats that promote serotonin production—this chemical created by the body acts as a neurotransmitter and enables better sleep
- Warm milk with honey—milk contains tryptophan that induces sleep when converted into serotonin
- Foods rich in Niacin (Vitamin B3) like legumes, peanuts, nutritional yeasts, fish and poultry
- Melatonin-rich foods like walnuts and fresh and dried cherries





READERS ASK

I am 58 and have always prided myself on having a great set of teeth. Please tell me how to keep my smile intact as the years roll by.

Your smile is a vital element of your personality and the healthier your teeth, the more beautiful your smile. With age, we are at a higher risk for dental problems but many of us pay scant attention to our oral health. Along with regular visits to the dentist, some simple tips and dietary care can go far in keeping our teeth strong. Remember—your toothbrush isn't the only weapon capable of protecting your teeth; your diet helps too!

- Calcium is extremely important for healthy teeth. Opt for calcium-fortified juices, milk and other dairy products as they are rich in calcium and Vitamin D and help promote healthy teeth and bones. And calcium isn't hiding in the fat—skim milk and low-fat yoghurt are just as good.
- Cheese is a very healthy option for teeth as the calcium in cheese mixes with plaque and sticks to the teeth, protecting them from the acid that causes decay and helping to rebuild tooth enamel on the spot. Moreover, cheese is a good source of protein for the elderly.
- Folic acid, primarily found in green leafy vegetables and brewer's yeast, promotes a healthy mouth and supports cell growth in the entire body.
- Eating high-fibre foods like whole grains, fruits and vegetables keeps saliva flowing, which helps create mineral defences against tooth decay. Rich sources of fibre are dried fruits such as dates, raisins and figs, and fresh fruits, like bananas, apples and oranges. Other options include veggies, such as beans, Brussels sprouts and peas, along with peanuts, almonds and bran.
- Enjoy your tea. Black and green teas contain polyphenols—these antioxidant plant compounds prevent plaque from adhering to your teeth and help reduce your chances of developing cavities and gum disease.

Include magnesium-rich foods like green leafy veggies, almonds, cashews, whole grains, pumpkin seeds, bran cereals, oatmeal and bananas in your diet to prevent insomnia

- Magnesium-rich foods like green leafy veggies, almonds, cashews, whole grains, pumpkin seeds, bran cereals, oatmeal, bananas
- L-tryptophan rich foods like turkey, chicken, fish, nuts, milk, soy, sesame seeds
- Chlorophyll-rich foods like leafy green vegetables and lettuce
- Turkey, bananas, figs, dates, yoghurt, milk and whole-grain crackers in the evening

The don'ts

- Refrain from coffee, tea, spicy food, colas, alcohol, foods with additives and preservatives, canned foods, refined carbohydrates and MSG (monosodium glutamate), which is often found in Chinese food.
- Avoid too many ingredients in a meal and too much food late at night.
- Eat a high carbohydrate snack and avoid high protein foods in the hour or two before bedtime.
- Avoid bacon, cheese, chocolate, eggplant, ham, potatoes, sugar, sausages, spinach, tomatoes and wine close to bedtime.

- Limit your fluid intake a few hours before going to bed.
- As the digestive system slows down at night, avoid late and heavy meals before bedtime.

Namita Jain is a wellness specialist and celebrity nutritionist at Diet Mantra and has written bestsellers on diet and fitness. Visit www.dietmantra.in. If you have any questions for Namita Jain, write to contact.mag@harmonyindia.org



SILVER LINING BY V S NATARAJAN

Stomach afire: Understanding and treating peptic ulcers

The stomach is a graceful organ—it keeps calm most of the time, quietly performing the entire task of food accumulation, processing, digestion and transportation to the intestine, and tolerating many an insult in the form of oily and spicy food, irregular meals, painkillers, nicotine, tobacco and endless cups of coffee. Once the insults cross the threshold, though, the stomach begins to fume with rage, its anger and resistance manifested as the development of ulcers!

The ulcer that develops in the stomach (gastric) and/or in the first part of the small intestine (duodenal) is called a peptic ulcer. It happens when the acids that help you digest food damage the walls of the stomach or duodenum. A peptic ulcer of the stomach is called a gastric ulcer and that of the duodenum, a duodenal ulcer.

Who gets peptic ulcer?

Acid is still considered the primary cause for ulcer formation. However, latest research suggests that ulcers are caused by a stomach infection from bacteria called *Helicobacter pyloricus* (H Pylori). H Pylori is very common, infecting over a billion people worldwide, and its eradication is associated with more rapid ulcer healing and a

decrease in ulcer recurrence. Other major causes of ulcers include the chronic use of anti-inflammatory drugs, commonly known as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs, or painkillers), smoking and alcohol consumption. It is believed that a lower incidence of peptic ulcer in pregnant and pre-menopausal women is because of the protective effect of hormones.

Symptoms

In silvers, peptic ulcer is frequently atypical. Symptoms of classic ulcers are rare—the characteristic abdominal pain occurs only in about 35 per cent of silvers and abdominal discomfort is absent in about 50 per cent of silvers using NSAIDs. Pain, if present, is often vague and poorly localised.

Apart from indigestion, heartburn and anaemia, the most frequent symptom is dyspepsia, which is abdominal pain or discomfort associated with bloating, early satiety, distension or nausea. When dyspepsia occurs, it is often localised in the upper part of the stomach, occurs two to three hours after a meal and is relieved by food or antacids. Nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, weight loss, vomiting of blood, malena (tarry, foul-smelling faeces owing to pres-



ence of blood) may also be a feature of peptic ulcer.

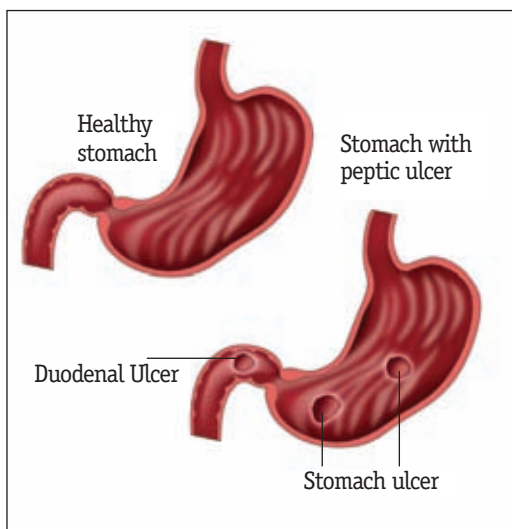
Diagnosis

Empiric use of an antiulcer drug as a diagnostic trial may be appropriate in patients with mild or intermittent epigastric (upper part of the stomach) symptoms. However, in patients over the age of 50, diagnostic tests should be performed because symptoms and complications can be atypical and the risk of gastric malignancy increases. Endoscopy is the most sensitive for assessing mucosal abnormalities in the upper gastrointestinal tract. It can often be performed without sedation using local anaesthetics in the throat alone.

Complications

Complications occur in about half of silvers over the age of 70. The high death rate (up to 30 per cent) may be owing to the presence of associated illness like hypertension, diabetes and heart ailments.

- Bleeding, the most common complication, occurs in about 10-15 per cent of ulcer patients of all ages, most commonly the elderly. Bleeding is related to increased use of NSAIDs. Elderly patients with ulcers have more frequent and more severe bleeding than younger patients and are more likely to require surgery.
- Perforation occurs in about 5-10 per cent of ulcer patients. The use of NSAIDs increases the risk of perforated peptic ulcers in patients over the age of 65. The elderly may postpone seeking medical attention because of lack of symptoms and diagnosis may be delayed because physical findings are absent. Most perforations require prompt surgery, which often involves a simple closure.
- Gastric outlet obstruction (the stomach getting contracted and closed at its outlet) occurs in 2-5 per cent of ulcer patients. Obstruction owing to inflammation and oedema usually resolves with drug treatment while obstruction owing to scarring may require endoscopic dilatation or surgery.
- An ulcer may develop into stomach cancer—H Pylori is the major factor here, making it three to six times more likely for this to happen.



Management

Diet plays a major role in the reduction of symptoms. Frequent, smaller meals are easier on the stomach than two or three large meals a day. In selected patients, less oil and less spicy food are recommended. The food must be chewed well in the mouth. Patients should stop the intake of painkillers, alcohol, tobacco and caffeine. Alcohol may stimulate acid secretion in the stomach while tobacco and caffeine delay healing of ulcers.

The most effective drugs in ulcer treatment are those that neutralise acid, inhibit acid secretion and

promote healing through stimulation of mucosal defence mechanisms and eradication of H Pylori. When there is H Pylori infection, treatment should be taken with one of the many 'triple-therapy' (antibiotic plus proton pump inhibitors) regimens—such as Amoxicillin, Clarithromycin or Metronidazole and Omeprazole 20 mg—for six weeks. Proton pump inhibitors, such as Pantaprazole, Omeprazole, Lansoprazole and Rabeprazole, suppress gastric acid secretion. Long-term use (over five years) of Omeprazole is safe. In the absence of H Pylori infection, a proton pump inhibitor will be sufficient. Surgery is reserved for ulcer patients who don't respond to drug treatment and those with complications.

Take care

Here are a few stomach-friendly recommendations to keep ulcers at bay:

- Let us remember that we eat to live, not the other way around. Food should be valued on the basis of nutritional quality, not taste.
- There's a time for everything and everything has its time—eat your meals at scheduled times.
- Life is all about balance, and that applies to one's diet too. Keep your intake moderate.
- Keep adding healthier, more wholesome food in your diet and reduce spice, oil, alcohol and caffeine.

Padmashri Dr V S Natarajan, a specialist in the field of geriatric medicine, runs Memory Clinic, a service for silvers in Chennai. If you have a question for him, write to contact.mag@harmonyindia.org



Get soft and silky: Fight itchy, scaly skin with yoga

One of the most common yet rarely discussed problems of silvers is dry skin. This, in turn, gives rise to the most common problem of dermatitis: skin inflammation that causes red or unsightly patches; dry, scaly skin; infections; and ulcerous conditions that, when left unattended, can lead to skin infections.

All this is set off by reduced fat storage; reduced capacity of the skin to repair itself and repair local damage or remove debris; less blood circulation in affected parts owing to forced inactivity; and decelerated lymphatic drainage, among others. Many yogic practices help deal with these underlying causes. One of the most obvious and immediate healing impacts of a consistent yoga practice is improved blood circulation, which helps with many other causes listed above.

Sun salutation (*surya namaskar*) is a complete body workout that can facilitate this. Barring inversions or twists, the sequence of sun salutation contains most of the obvious features of a complete yoga practice. It may be done according to one's capacity to ensure perfect, glowing, robust

skin. In case of lower back or knee problems, a yoga expert can teach a modified version of a sun salute flow with similar benefits.

Other practices that support skin health are healing breathing practices (*pranayama*) like skull-shining breathing practice (*kapalabhati*), victory breath (*ujjayi*) and reversing natural order practice (*anulom vilom*).

These must be done regularly to facilitate healing from inside and make it last. Inversions are also powerful to improve blood flow to those parts of the body where gravity and advancing years otherwise cause shutdown. The simplest and easiest one is the psychic union gesture (*viparita karani mudra*). This may be done with either the wall or a bolster as support to hold longer and without strain for those who are nervous about the concept of inversions. This is also dubbed the cardiac pose as it is taught in a phased manner to those with heart problems to help the heart heal. As it works on powering the heart, it helps overall blood circulation and is therapeutic for most skin problems.

YOGIC MOVES

Psychic union pose, with bolster variation (*viparita karani mudra*)

Lie down on your back with your hips facing the wall to use the wall as additional support. Bend the legs at the knees. Roll a bolster under the bent knees. Using your palms, ease the bolster under the hips, as shown, lifting the hips lightly to do so. Then, inhale, raising your legs up to rest the heels against the walls. This takes the strain off the back and makes it very soothing and relaxed. It is very healing for most problems. Continue normal breathing throughout. Initially, do for half a minute. However, with regular practice this may be extended to a minute, or even two. To exit the pose, fold your legs at the knees to drop the feet back to the ground. Ease the bolster away to roll hips back



to the ground. Hug the knees to the chest firmly to release any stiffness at the back. Then stretch and lie back in corpse pose (*shavasana*) for a while. **Benefits:** With props, this is the safe-

est whole body workout and keeps you young from inside. It keeps the skin glowing; prevents age-related hair loss; and tones the torso, and all the organ systems stacked inside. It is also a powerful de-stressor that soothes the mind and calms anxiety.

Model: Dattaram K Vaidya,
Harmony Interactive Centre
Photographer: Haresh Patel

Shameem Akthar is a Mumbai-based yoga acharya. If you have any queries for her, mail us or email at contact.mag@harmonyindia.org. (Please consult your physician before following the advice given here)

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HIS LADLE LOVE BY PRATIBHA JAIN

One-pot wonder

K NATARAJAN • CHENNAI

An engaging series about silver men who wield a deft ladle in the kitchen

Until his mother passed away, he was the typical Indian male with no role in the kitchen. And then, a chance trial at making buttermilk brought K Natarajan into the taboo space—and there has been no looking back! The kitchen is now a place where he experiments, explores and creates joyous moments. His wife Manjula swears by his tomato *shorba*, potato fry, *katharikkai saadham* (aubergine rice), *avarakkai saadham* (broad beans rice) and, of course, his signature buttermilk with the juice of banana stem. The 59 year-old Tamilian, a chartered accountant by profession, lives in Chennai with his wife and son. He is a great believer in ‘OPOS cooking’, a path-breaking method systematised by Mr Ramakrishnan of Chennai. I met Natarajan at his cosy home in Chennai to chat over steaming hot *idli* and a variety of chutneys, fresh from the kitchen.

Namaste. Before I quiz you about OPOS, tell me when you discovered your love for cooking.

A late discovery in life, just about three years ago! I come from a traditional Tam-Brahm family from South Arcot district in Tamil Nadu where men had no role in the kitchen. I have never ever seen any men from our household enter the kitchen, neither my grandfather nor my father. A few months after my mother passed away, I found myself wandering in and out of the kitchen. I started experimenting with simple recipes.

How else did you nurture your newly discovered interest?

Manjula (wife): By nagging me! He would stand beside me and go on questioning me about ingredients, vessels and the way I was cooking. Invariably, I would request him to leave the kitchen so I could get on with the cooking.

Natarajan: I like to know why a dish is prepared in a certain way. I would

“OPOS is a simple method that demystifies the Indian way of cooking. Under this procedure, food is prepared in a pressure cooker which helps in preserving nutrients and enhancing taste”

ask her about alternate ingredients and cooking styles! She says I am more of a laboratory scientist than a cook. She laughs at me while I make the buttermilk because I do the distilling with different strainers and take more than half an hour over it. My argument is that as I only cook once in a while, I can afford to be unhurried and meticulous.

Manjula: But honestly, his interest in cooking was kindled by OPOS. When I told him the entire cooking could be done in a pressure cooker without using any other pots or pans, he was so fascinated.

Kindly elaborate on OPOS for the benefit of our readers.

K Natarajan: OPOS stands for ‘one pot one shot’. This is a term coined by Chennai foodie Ramakrishnan who has brought out a cookbook where dishes are prepared in a pressure cooker in one shot, right from seasoning. It is a simple procedure that demystifies Indian cooking. Many people have adopted this way of cooking. It preserves nutrients and enhances taste. When Manjula started following this method, I was quite enamoured and tried my hand at a few recipes. The rest, as they say, is history.

Please give me an example of an OPOS recipe.

I enjoy making a rice dish with broad beans. I start with the seasoning in the pressure cooker, add the broad beans, spices, rinsed rice and enough water. I pressure cook for up to two whistles and in 10 minutes, the dish is ready. As simple as that. You can replace broad beans with any vegetables of your choice.

Are the flavours captured well by OPOS? How would you compare it with childhood food flavours?

In OPOS, the flavours are preserved because of the pressure cooker. Childhood memories are something else. They are connected to festivals and celebrations.

Tell me more.

I grew up in a typical, traditional house with courtyards in the front and back. I remember how large the kitchen was—almost 1,200 sq ft! During festivals and family functions, a stove would be dug up in the backyard that had an area with a tiled roof. This stove, known as *kottai adappu*,

was like a linear rectangular trench 1-ft wide, 15 ft in length and 1.5-ft deep. Once dug, firewood would be added as fuel. Then, the cooks would place huge vessels on this stove and cook rice. I distinctly remember the jute cloth used to strain the rice. Even for small functions, at least 150 people would gather. During Krishna Janmashtami, two ladies would pound rice with a wooden pole known as *ulakkai*. The powdered rice would be mixed with salt, water and spices to prepare *murukku*. I remember how us children would sit and watch my mother, hands on our cheeks, waiting!

So you were always fascinated by the happenings in the kitchen.

That is so true. It was just that there was never any need to enter the kitchen. I was also the only son born after four daughters so I guess I was totally pampered. To add to that, once I was married, my mother-in-law started living with us. So between my mother and mother-in-law, there was really never any need for me to enter the kitchen.

This is fascinating. Please tell me more about these two elderly women at home.

Soon after Manjula and I were engaged, her father passed away. Manjula is the youngest of four sisters, so after our marriage her mother was alone at home. My father told her that she was like a sister to him and that she must come and stay with us. She agreed and moved into our house. My mother and her got along like a house on fire. They went shopping together, cooked together, watched English, Hindi and Tamil movies, enjoyed television serials and had a common taste in reading as well. After my dad passed away, they became even closer. When my mother-in-law passed away, my mother missed her very much and passed away after three years.

That reflects the ease and space you have as a family! How did your



Chennai Pix

family and friends react when they found out about your newly discovered love for cooking?

Pleasantly surprised, I guess. When my wife's sister visited us recently, I asked them to enjoy their shopping spree one evening and told them I would handle the dinner.

Manjula: I still remember how surprised my sister was when we returned and found that he had actually prepared dinner with rice, potato fry and *rasam*. His *rasam* is like a delicious tomato *shorba*!

Do you also participate in online food communities?

I am an introvert by nature and stay away from social media. My wife, on the other hand, is an active member of the Facebook group 'United by Food' where she shares her passion for cooking. I believe true joy can be found in real relationships that exist in this real world and not in the virtual world of the Internet. No amount of arguments put forth by my friends or my wife has convinced me otherwise.

BROAD BEANS RICE
(*avarakkai saadham*)

A simple one-step *pulao*, this is a good example of the OPOS (one-pot-one-shot) style of cooking. Natarajan says you can replace broad beans with

any vegetable (baby aubergine is his personal favourite) in this recipe.

Ingredients

- Basmati/Ponni raw rice: 1 heaped cup
- Broad beans: 8-10; remove strings and cut horizontally
- Pepper-cumin powder: 1 tsp
- Salt: to taste
- Coriander leaves: chopped fine for garnishing

For tempering

- Sesame oil: 1 tbsp
- Mustard seeds: ½ tsp
- Urad dal: 1 tsp
- Curry leaves: 7-8
- Green or red chillies: 2-3; halved
- Asafoetida powder: a pinch
- Turmeric powder: a pinch (optional)

Method

Wash and soak rice for 10 minutes. Strain and set aside. In a pressure cooker, heat the oil for tempering. Add the mustard and as it starts popping, add the urad dal. As it turns golden, add the other ingredients for tempering. As they begin to crackle and release their aroma, reduce flame and add the chopped broad beans, rice and pepper-cumin powder. Add 1 cup water for basmati rice and two cups for Ponni raw rice, along with salt. Pressure cook for 2 whistles, on medium flame. Allow the steam to settle down completely, gently fluff the rice with a fork and garnish with coriander leaves. Garnish with ghee-fried cashew nuts for a rich look and good flavour. Serve fresh with crispies.

FLAVOURED BUTTERMILK

This unusual buttermilk is made healthier with the addition of banana stem juice and acts as an excellent diuretic.

Ingredients

- Banana stem: 6-7 inch piece; chopped
- Thick yogurt: ½ litre, not sour
- Juice of half a lemon
- Salt: to taste
- Coriander leaves: a few sprigs



Yamini V

For tempering

- Mustard seeds: ¼ tsp
- Asafoetida powder: a pinch
- Ginger: 1-inch piece; grated
- Green chillies: 2; chopped fine
- Curry leaves: 8-10; torn roughly
- Gingelly oil: 1 tsp

Method

In a wok, heat the oil for tempering. Pop the mustard and add the asafoetida powder. Switch off the flame and add the remaining ingredients of the tempering. Grind this tempering along with yogurt, chopped banana stem, coriander leaves and salt. Now strain the mixture meticulously ensuring smooth consistency without any thicker remnants. Natarajan likes to first strain it through a metal mesh and then a plastic double strainer. He

says that what comes out is thick, flavoured buttermilk. Add 1-2 glasses of water depending upon your preference, combine well and add a dash of lemon. Serve at room temperature or chilled. Natarajan says zedoary (*manga-inji*) is an interesting substitute to ginger. Seasonal gooseberries can also be added while grinding.

Pratibha Jain, an author and translator from Chennai, is the co-author of two award-winning books Cooking at Home with Pedatha and Sukham Ayu. Her area of specialisation is documenting Indian traditions through research, translation and writing

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Legacy of love

Endow and empower your grandchildren with apt investments, urges **Priya Desai**

Financial planners are nowadays reporting a new trend: grandparents increasingly investing in favour of their little tykes. Though it goes without saying that you love your children, the love for grandchildren knows no bounds. This is more so the case with the skip generation. However, the flood of affection you feel for the grandchild should be laced with the right amount of prudence. The investments you make should not eat into your own retirement funds.

Points to ponder

When it comes to investments, the adage, 'different strokes for different folks', holds true. While the prudent ones will carry an umbrella even if they spot dark clouds on the distant horizon, the aggressive ones are willing to take risks and venture out without any protection. Similarly, while some seniors will tread cautiously and invest in time-tested instruments like savings accounts and post office schemes, others will look for unconventional options like mutual funds, ETFs and trusts.

While investing, it's also important to consider the personality of the beneficiary. When it comes to spending, grandchildren come in different hues: the good, the bad and the ugly. While one grandchild might be a cautious spender, another might just fritter the money away. Though you love your grandkids equally, you don't want the impetuous one to blow up your hard-earned money. These are a few relevant questions you should be asking yourself before investing:

- What's the amount I want to gift?
- Do I want my grandchildren to actually have access to that money

right now? Or do I want them to have access when they reach a certain age?

- Do I want the money to be used only for educational purposes?
- Should I consider a tool that has moderate growth, but is safer, or should I opt for one that can potentially grow faster but has a higher risk attached to it?
- How is this investment going to affect taxation, both for me as well as my grandchildren?

Estate planning is very important, and an everlasting gift for your family. It takes a lot of strategic thinking and careful planning. It should be the result of a combination of abiding love and foresight

Winds of change

For generations, gold, cash and property have been gifted to children. That worked well in the past, but times have changed and it's time to get bolder and look beyond gold. Let's look at a few options:

- **Savings account:** This is probably a basic investment. If you are a natural guardian, you can start a joint savings account with your grandchild with the right to operate the account resting with you. Once your grandchild turns 15, it

is best to start a recurring deposit. You can also consider setting up a PPF account. Regardless of the account you open, ensure that its operation is not heavy on your pocket. Check the interest rates, fees, fines and overdrawn amount rules. Once your grandchild turns 18, that account will have to be turned into a normal account, with the sole right to operate it resting with your grandchild.

- **Post office:** As a silver, you will enjoy high interest rates for deposit schemes at the post office. The Senior Citizens' Savings Scheme (SCSS) and fixed deposit schemes are a great way to save money. Income of up to ₹ 300,000 is exempt from tax for a senior citizen. Though you can still invest in your name, you can add your grandchild's name as a nominee. To ensure a smooth transfer, you will have to mention it in your will.
- **PPF accounts and NSC:** It is possible for a grandparent to open a PPF account for a minor grandchild with parents as guardians. In case the parents are no more, the account can be opened with the grandparent as the guardian. But the glitch is that you cannot claim tax benefits under Section 80-C. You can purchase NSCs to avoid tax leakages. These can be purchased directly in your minor grandchild's name.
- **Indian domestic trusts:** The creation of a trust, an important component of an estate plan, ensures that the money managed by the trustee is specifically set aside and will be made available to the beneficiaries when they reach a specific age. Despite distinct advantages,



they are generally very complex in nature, and take time to set up and oversee. You get to choose exactly how much each grandchild will receive, at what intervals and for what purpose. Domestic trusts still have no tax benefits, but they are perfect for succession planning strategies.

- **Insurance schemes:** There are a number of different life insurance schemes that you can invest in for your grandchildren. For instance, at the start of the year 2014, LIC launched the LIC Single Premium Endowment Plan. Under this plan, the premium has to be paid only once. As soon as the required term has been completed, the policyholder receives the entire amount. This particular policy has a minimum term of 10 years while the maximum term is 25 years. Jeevan Kishore, Jeevan Chhaya and Jeevan Baalya are other insurance policies that are beneficial. You also have the option to give your children money to buy individual/family-floater

health insurance that will cover the grandchildren.

- **Mutual funds:** Mutual funds are a good option. Some schemes also offer insurance benefits and scholarships but, like all mutual funds, they are market-linked and vary based on instrument selection, asset allocation and market conditions, with the returns not being assured.
- **Stocks and bonds:** If you plan on passing on your stocks to your grandchildren, you should ideally hold onto them for a minimum of one year to avoid short-term capital gains tax. After that, they can be transferred to your grandchild's Demat account, with the parents as guardians. You can also gift bonds to your grandchildren, provided someone can undertake to track the maturity/ liquidation dates and realise the proceeds on schedule.
- **Immovable assets:** If you want to transfer any of your immovable assets like property and land to

your grandchildren, you will have to write a will. When you transfer property to them, it will attract taxation. On the other hand, registration by will does not attract stamp duty. In addition, transferring in gift form will also mean that the minor child's income (like rent from that property) will be clubbed with the parent's income (which again will be taxable for the latter). Thus, it is best to transfer immovable assets via a will.

- **Gold:** If you wish to gift gold to your minor grandchildren, ask the parents to store it in their locker. Another preferred option can be Gold Exchange Traded Funds (Gold ETFs). This takes away the risk of managing physical gold.

Do I pay gift tax?

Monetary gifts from grandparents to grandchildren do not entail any tax liability for either the giver or receiver under the Income Tax Act definition of a 'relative'. But any income derived from this gift by the receiver is liable to be taxed, as it gets clubbed with the receiver's income. The form of gift should be decided based on tax efficiency considerations.


Plan it right

Estate planning is very important, and an everlasting gift for your family. Setting up a seamless inheritance isn't really as hard as you think it is. Financial gifting should ideally proceed in a very deliberate manner, with some help from a financial consultant. Just like other intricate processes, it takes a lot of strategic thinking and careful planning. It should be the result of a combination of abiding love and foresight. But when you are distributing the investment chocolate to your grandchildren, ensure that it's locked up in the right cabinet, with a timer lock to boot!

The writer is a Mumbai-based economist

A 'star' is born

Nurtured on Gandhian philosophy and raised to be self-sufficient, Tara village and its surrounding areas, on the outskirts of Mumbai, are the pride and joy of Dr G G Parikh, discovers **Candida Moraes**



At first glance, there appears to be nothing unusual about Tara, an ordinary village near Panvel on the outskirts of Mumbai. This village of over a thousand people looks like any other agricultural settlement, with people going about their daily business, children skipping home from school and cattle sheltering under trees to escape the midday sun.

It is only when you speak to people that you realise that the Tara of today is unrecognisable from the village it once was. Forty-five years ago, there was just one *pucca* road flanked by undulating fields and huts. Now, paved roads crisscross the village. And that's just as well, for where the villagers once owned nothing more sophisticated than a few bicycles, many now own motorcycles, and some even cars and trucks.

The extraordinary story of this very ordinary village lies in its very simplicity. Tara has evolved into a model village in terms of sustainable development owing to the numerous initiatives of the Yusuf Meherally Centre (YMC) and one of its pioneering co-founders, Mumbai-based Dr G G Parikh, veteran freedom fighter and staunch Gandhian.

It has taken a long time to transform Tara and, while doing so, YMC has adopted a bottom-up approach, where the villagers have not been recipients of charity but proud participants in an amazing story. The rural economy has been transformed by the many sustainable employment-generation programmes. "The minds of people have changed a great deal; the women are now very articulate about what they want and need. The population has barely risen from 700 to 1,100 owing to our family planning and medical initiatives. Most families here have just one child and are very happy to have small families," says Dr Parikh, who was born in Surendranagar, Gujarat, and grew up in many places across India as his father was a doctor with a transferable government job.

Birth of a dream

The astonishing story of Tara actually took root well before YMC began work in this settlement. It goes back to when a young 'GG', as Dr Parikh is fondly called, attended a lecture delivered by Yusuf Meherally in his college in 1942. The young student was fired by the ideals propounded by Meherally, a freedom fighter and founder of the National Militia and Bombay Youth League.

It was a good 19 years later, in 1961, that YMC was set up in Meherally's memory. The initial objectives of the centre were to promote national integration and undertake intellectual and cultural activities. But in 1967, the focus shifted to rural development in keeping with the Mahatma's philosophy that the very soul of India was in her villages.

Vehicles of change

Through its work in Tara and surrounding villages, YMC set out to create a replicable model of rural development by initiating projects in micro-watershed development, organic farming, non-conventional energy, dairy farming, and village industries—such as oil and soap. Education was another core area and in 1990, YMC set up a Marathi-medium school and later added a junior college offering the humanities stream. The centre also runs an Urdu-medium high school and a Marathi-medium school in villages near Tara.

Hundreds of villages in rural India have abysmal health services and Tara was no different. "Dr Parikh's contribution to YMC has been stupendous and his idealism should be emulated," says YMC's general



secretary Gaurang Puthli. Today, thanks to the vision of YMC and Dr Parikh, Tara has a 20-bed hospital with two operation theatres, a pathology laboratory, a dental unit and an X-ray department. In the years YMC has been working in Tara and the surrounding areas, it has treated around 700,000 patients, restored the eyesight of 25,000 people and reduced morbidity through timely intervention, dealing with malnutrition and imparting health education. Medical initiatives include a Sunday clinic-cum-diagnostic centre staffed by doctors from Mumbai. There is also a regular dispensary and mobile clinic run by the centre's resident medical officers, reveals Dr Parikh, who at the age of 90, is still part of the Sunday Clinic and sees patients at his modest Grant Road residence in Mumbai.

Naturally, the people of Tara are very grateful to Dr Parikh and the staff at the centre. Among them is Mani-

sha Waghmare, a 20 year-old tribal woman who had heard about the work being done by YMC when she was a ninth-grade student. She came to the centre as she wanted to study further and improve her prospects. She was enrolled in one of the schools near Tara and lived at the YMC's Adivasi hostel. Today, she is pursuing her bachelor's in education.

Manjula Patil approached the YMC when her husband abandoned her. She was in a pitiable state with absolutely no income and a young daughter to look after. YMC rehabilitated her by employing her in its oil unit in the Tara area. Thanks to the centre, Patil has a regular income and was able to get her daughter married.

Learning experience

The progression in this model village has not been linear and the centre has had to overcome some serious chal-

lenges. "Local politics was our first obstacle. When we initially started work in Tara, there was another organisation working nearby and, owing to political reasons, it had to shut down. This was a huge learning experience for YMC," reveals Dr Parikh, who is currently the chairman of the centre.

Thus, going forward, the centre chose to take up issues common to everyone and eventually different political parties became willing to work under the YMC banner. The centre also set up committees known as 'Kriti Samities' and through them received the cooperation of different political parties. "We also took a policy decision to never intervene in local elections and promised that we would not be affiliated to any political party," he adds.

Speaking of challenges, Dr Parikh says changing the mindset of the peo-



ple will take time although the centre has made some strides in this direction. "We are also working to develop a green economy, which is a very big challenge for YMC."

Dr Parikh is careful to emphasise that YMC promotes Gandhian values through its work in Tara. Thus, replicas of *Bapu Kutir* and *Ba Kutir* have been recreated in the Tara region to showcase the values of *Satya* and *Ahimsa* (truth and non-violence); *Samata* and *Samyam* (equality and self-control); *Shrampratishttha* and *Shramdan* (dignity of labour and voluntary labour); *Shanti* (peace); ethics in politics and business; and *Aparigriha* (non-possessiveness). On Dr Parikh's leadership style, Haresh Shah, joint secretary, YMC, says, "Dr Parikh has helped us ensure that the values of the centre have remained relevant in today's times. He has helped us think out of the box whenever and whenever necessary."

Why Tara?

Quizzed on why YMC chose to develop Tara as a sustainable model of rural development, Dr Parikh tells us how an accidental intervention became a permanent mission for YMC. "After YMC was set up, we had a life member called Umanath Puthli, who was giving a lift to an Adivasi woman from Tara in his car. The woman accidentally fell out of the car and he had to drive all the way to Panvel to get her medical help. Puthli later suggested to the YMC committee that we should provide some medical assistance to people in that area as they had none."

A group of doctors and friends, including Dr Parikh, took some medicines to Tara on a Sunday. "The next Sunday, the villagers returned, hoping the doctors would be back. But they had to go back disappointed. When we learnt of this, we realised we could

start a weekly intervention that would greatly benefit them. This Sunday Clinic grew into a hospital, and the village has ultimately become a full-fledged rural development area."

He adds that YMC also grew in tandem with its work and now has branches in Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Bihar, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh. "We have about 400 staff members across the country, including over a hundred in Tara village. Our volunteers are in the hundreds all over India."

Despite 70-odd years of sheer hard work, Dr Parikh is not a man to rest on his laurels. Asked if he is satisfied with his body of work, he replies, "When we are satisfied with what we are doing, all activity stops. I believe one should continue to say that what one has done so far is not enough and continue to work harder." ❀

Sound remedy



Over 45 per cent of silvers suffer from age-related hearing loss but it can be fixed if treated in time. Pioneer of cochlear implant surgery in India, Dr Sandra Desa Souza advises us to shed our inhibitions and opt for hearing aids in an interview with **Neeti Vijaykumar**

It usually starts small, when you start asking people to speak up or when the voice at the other end of the telephone sounds vague and inaudible. And as the problem doesn't appear serious, many silvers tend to ignore it. And then comes a time when hearing loss becomes an impediment to normal living. At this point, you're confronted with two options: go into denial or get help.

Denying the problem because it may be too 'embarrassing' to wear a hearing aid snowballs into other problems. According to a study by the University of Gothenberg, Sweden, which assessed the personalities and mental and physical aspects of seniors aged between 80 and 98, hearing loss tended to make them significantly withdrawn. Indeed, hearing disabilities are more widespread than one might think. According to a government report published in 2011, among functional disabilities in silvers in India, hearing loss is second only to locomotor disabilities, followed by visual impairment. Still, more often than not, it goes unreport-

ed and, therefore, untreated. Studies by NGOs in the country reveal that as many as 65 per cent of silvers suffer from some form of hearing loss—yet, according to most studies, fewer than 1 per cent use hearing aids.

Age-related natural hearing loss is very common. Called presbycusis, it develops owing to physiological ageing inside the ear, particularly ageing of the cochlea, the organ of hearing located in the inner ear. Presbycusis accounts for 45 per cent of hearing loss in the elderly, compared to 19 per cent owing to illnesses and 2 per cent from exposure to loud sounds, according to a study conducted by the International Institute for Population Sciences, Mumbai, in 2008. Hearing disabilities may also be caused by viral or bacterial infections, heart conditions (diabetes or hypertension), stroke, head injuries and physical trauma. While presbycusis cannot really be prevented, there are ways to fix it. Hearing aids have proved to be a blessing for silvers, while cochlear implants (also called 'bionic ear') are recommended for those with severe loss.

In 1987, Dr Sandra Desa Souza, director of the ENT Department at Mumbai's Jaslok Hospital, and ENT consultant at Breach Candy Hospital and at Desa's Hospital, was the first to perform cochlear implant surgery in India. This pioneer, who recently conducted an international symposium on cochlear implantation, shares her expertise about hearing loss among silvers with us. Excerpts from the interview:

What is presbycusis and why does it develop among silvers?

Presbycusis is a condition where hearing loss is purely age-related. It usually manifests at the age of 65 but can occur earlier if there are predisposing factors such as a history of trauma, diabetes, blood pressure problems or exposure to loud noise. The condition can be broken down into sensory, neural, metabolic and cochlear conductive presbycusis; each type results in a different type and pattern of hearing loss.

In the sensory type, the individual first loses the ability to hear high

frequency sounds and then sounds at all frequency levels. Hence, in the initial stages, the individual can still hear normal speech. In the neural type too, the loss of hearing first affects high-frequency sounds, which is followed by lower pitch deafness. But in this case, the individual cannot discriminate between speech sounds. Metabolic deafness is the third kind and runs in the family. Here, the audiogram is a flat curve, which means the person cannot hear high or low-frequency sounds. Finally, there's cochlear conductive presbycusis, where the cochlear basal membrane becomes stiff. As a result, hearing loss is a curve from high to low frequency, accompanied by difficulty in speech discrimination.

All patients of presbycusis have difficulty hearing when there are many people talking around them. If they are sitting in a silent room, they wouldn't have much of a problem understanding what someone is saying. Also, they are unable to tolerate loud sounds as the decibel levels sound louder than they would to others. They might also develop tinnitus, a ringing sound in their ear.

Besides natural ageing, what are the other causes of hearing loss in silvers?

Deafness in the elderly can be caused by trauma, viral infections, osteoporosis or infections or discharge from the ear. Diabetes causes neuropathy, which is well known, so it can also affect the nerves in the ear. Other heart conditions such as high blood pressure affect blood supply, which invariably affects the supply to the ear. But these conditions can afflict anyone, not only the elderly.

Can presbycusis be prevented?

Not usually, and the age of onset differs from one individual to another. I have come across many people who suffer from only 5-per-cent hearing loss at the age of 70. One could delay

it by taking certain neuro-vitamins but these only slow the process.

Can hearing aids compensate for this type of hearing loss?

An individual with difficulty hearing sounds of 55 decibels and higher can benefit from a hearing aid. But the sad part is that a large number of silvers do not want to wear a hearing aid. It's a mental block. People don't mind wearing spectacles but a hearing aid makes them feel old or disabled. They wear one only if they absolutely have to; for instance, if they hold a senior position at work.

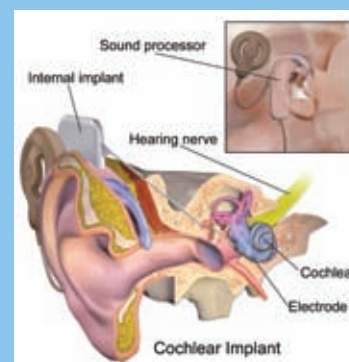
How can a hearing aid alleviate their condition? What are the different types of hearing aids available?

A hearing aid amplifies sound till the patient can hear all sounds clearly. Those who have difficulty hearing only high-frequency sounds can use a special digital hearing aid, which amplifies only sounds in that frequency range. In contrast, analogue hearing aids amplify all the sound they capture. I believe digital aids are better.

Today, individuals with hearing problems have many options. There are indigenous and international brands. We generally don't advise the pop-in hearing aid, which costs ₹ 6,000-8,000, unless the patient cannot afford other types. Otherwise, behind-the-ear hearing aids are the best, although they are more expensive. There's also one called inside-the-concorde, which is visible when one wears it, and a variation called inside-the-ear, which slips inside the ear canal and is not visible when worn. But I must add that for those who have severe hearing loss, the inside-the-ear hearing aid is not advisable because it is not powerful enough.

When does one have to go in for a cochlear implant?

Usually, patients who develop presbycusis do not progress to total



What is a cochlear implant?

A cochlear implant is a hearing device surgically fitted under the skin behind the ear. It consists of two parts: an external sound processor, which takes in the sound, analyses it and converts it into signals, and an internal receiver coil with a long wire with electrodes, which receives these signals and passes it on to the cochlea, which transmits it to the brain through the hearing nerve as usual.

hearing loss. Those who do are individuals who suffer from predisposing factors, and as presbycusis advances, they could become totally deaf. Even the most powerful hearing aid is not effective for these individuals but they would benefit from a cochlear implant. But there are some conditions that must be met. For instance, an implant is ruled out in senile individuals as one has to be active enough for the next 10 years to know how to use the implant; he or she has to be healthy enough to undergo general anaesthesia; and should not have had cardiac surgery shortly before the implant surgery. In India, cochlear implant surgery is not covered by health insurance—it may cover the hospital stay but not the implant itself. That's an important deterrent to this surgery. They prefer to just 'get by'.

HEARD THIS?

Auditory technology can make the difference



Completely-in-the-canal (CIC): Fits completely in the canal of the ear and is for mild to moderate hearing loss. Being small, it's the least visible type available, but uses small batteries which have a shorter life.



In-the-canal (ITC): Fitting partly into the canal of the ear, this type is for mild to moderate hearing loss. It's less visible than larger hearing aids, but needs to be checked for ear wax accumulation.



Behind-the-ear (BTE): Hooking over the ear, this one comes with a tube that connects it to an earmold, and is for all kinds of hearing loss. It's bigger and more powerful at amplifying sounds, though latest models are going minimalistic.



Receiver-in-canal (RIC): Similar to the behind-the-ear style, the only difference is that the speaker in the canal is connected through a wire. It is less visible behind the ear.



In-the-ear (ITE): This comes in two styles—the full-shell, which fills the bowl of the outer ear, and the half-shell, which fills the bowl of the lower ear. Though visible, it has features like volume control, and uses longer-lasting batteries.

Open fit:

Keeping the ear canal open, this is a smaller behind-the-ear type that is less visible. The special feature is that it allows low-frequency sounds to reach the ear naturally, while amplifying high-frequency sounds.



How many patients actually opt for hearing aids?

In India, the acceptance rate is very low, unlike in the UK, for instance, where 80 to 90 per cent of those who need hearing aids actually wear them. This may be the case because health insurance covers the cost of the device in some countries, unlike in India.

Let's say someone has started experiencing difficulty in hearing. The person decides to see a doctor about it. What kind of doctor should they approach and what happens next?

Usually, elders who develop hearing problems don't want to admit they have a problem as it is difficult to accept. Once family members and others around them point it out, they generally bring them to an ENT specialist, who examines the patient. Sometimes, the hearing loss is because of accumulated wax in the ear canal, which is promptly cleaned. Their hearing improves by roughly 10 per cent. If the problem persists, the individual is referred to an audiologist, who checks their hearing abilities at different frequencies in a soundproof room. The patient is also asked about other health condi-

tions such as diabetes, blood pressure problems and cardiovascular conditions. It's the hearing test that decides whether the individual requires a hearing aid. Sometimes hearing loss is minimal (such as the inability to hear whispers) and they can do without a hearing aid. In such cases, neuro-vitamins are prescribed. If the individual needs a hearing aid, the audiologist takes an aided audiogram test, where the hearing test is repeated with the individual wearing a hearing aid. Finally, a hearing aid consultant asks the individual to try different models and determines what kind best suits the patient's budget and needs. ✨

Experience

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celebrate age



Photographs by **Amit Gaur**



He was recently awarded the Dada Saheb Phalke Award, the highest award in Indian cinema. But legendary writer Gulzar's legacy transcends the confines of filmdom. A recorder of our times, the versatile writer-director-storyteller shares some lesser known nuggets of his life with **Deepa Narayanan**

His songs have long played on our lips. Gulzar, born Sampooran Singh Kalra, may have captured the public imagination essentially owing to his association with the film industry. But the prolific writer draws from his reservoir of experiences of a childhood in Deena—a village in present-day Pakistan—where he was born to Makhan Singh Kalra and Sujan Kaur; the Partition; initial years in Delhi; his deep connect with Bengali culture; and years of struggle as a poet in Mumbai. Decades later, the pain of Partition still smolders in *Raavi Paar And Other Stories* in which he writes, *Mera watan jo udhar rah gaya aur mera mulk jo idhar hain, dono mein main batt gaya* (My motherland, which I had to leave behind on that side, and my home where I now live, on this side, so divided do I feel in between these). Talking about the influence of life on literature, he tells us, “When literature starts relating to life, you just begin transcribing it from your own life.”

Even as he modestly admits that he is trying to keep pace with changing times, Gulzar has been far ahead of his times, as evident in his thoughts and works. Credited with pioneering *Triveni*, poems with three-lined stanzas, Gulzar has also tackled social issues through films like *Maachis* (terrorism), *Mausam* (prostitution), and *Hu Tu Tu* (corruption). He has also been an avid advocate of children's literature, closely associated with the *Karadi Tales*, and other stories including the 'Bosky Series,' a collection of stories he wrote and presented to daughter Meghna (her nickname is Bosky) on each of her birthdays as she was growing up. His lyrics for the popular television series *Jungle Book*, "*Jungle, jungle pata chala hai, chaddi pehenke phool khile hain*," become an anthem of sorts for children, as did *Lakdi ki kaathi* from the movie *Masoom*. In fact, such is the power of his pen that *Humko mann ki shakti dena*, a song he penned for the film *Guddi*, still reverberates in the prayer halls of many schools.

While the accomplishments of Gulzar, who recently turned 80, have made him a celebrity, his distaste for the limelight and its encroachment into his personal life have made him draw a thin but perceptible line. When we request an interview with the writer-poet a few months after he is honoured with the 2013 Dada Saheb Phalke Award for Lifetime Achievement, we can sense his cautiousness to yet another replay of questions coming his way—about his career and life. We are given 45 minutes, a timeframe we are painfully aware is unrealistically short to meet a man this legendary, about a life this enriching. Hoping not to miss out on any of those granted minutes, we arrive at Boskyana, his residence-cum-office in one of the lush green suburbs of Mumbai—named after his daughter—15 minutes earlier than scheduled. Countless Filmfare and

National Awards, the 2002 Sahitya Akademi Award, the Padma Bhushan in 2004 and the Academy Award for best original song *Jai ho* with A R Rahman at the 81st Oscars in 2009, all adorn his shelf. Even as

EXCERPTS FROM THE INTERVIEW

You seem to be particular about your boundaries. When did you feel the need to build them?
Really? Do I seem like I have bound-



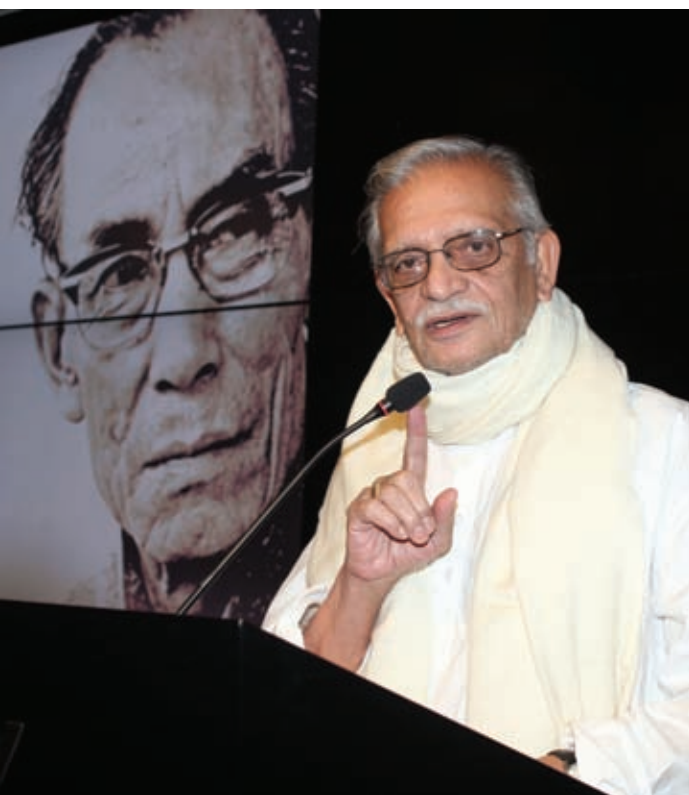
With daughter Meghna; (opposite page) at an event

we are shown in his office, Gulzar *sahib* appears in his trademark crisp white cotton *kurta* pyjama, smiling, his eyes glowing with warmth and anticipation of what new he may find during this conversation. His only request is not to ask oft-repeated questions. As we settle into his study, he offers us tea, and soon we begin the interview with questions that have long played on our minds. Thus begins a candid and emotional conversation that goes way beyond the stipulated time we have been allotted.

aries around me? That is interesting! I have never done that deliberately—denying someone entry into my life. I have only welcomed others into my life. Probably the boundaries you are referring to are the ones I have created for myself, not venturing into areas that I'm not too comfortable with. As I understood my strengths and weaknesses, and became aware about what I'm comfortable indulging in, I drew these lines around me, defining what I should be doing and should not be doing. When you know yourself like that, those 'boundaries'

boundaries

Really? Do I seem like I have boundaries around me? That is interesting! I have never done that deliberately—denying someone entry into my life. I have only welcomed others into my life



Fotocorp



Director's CUT

Mere Apne (1971)
Parichay (1972)
Koshish (1972)
Achanak (1973)
Aandhi (1975)
Mausam (1975)
Khushboo (1975)
Kinara (1977)
Meera (1979)
Angoor (1981)
Namkeen (1982)
Lekin (1990)
Maachis (1996)
Hu Tu Tu (1999)

travel with you. But to get there, I think it is important to just be yourself. And when you stay true to yourself, you start knowing even others a little better.

Not many people live by that principle.

Of course, I realise it is not easy to get there—to define one's likes and dislikes and stick by them without putting on a façade for someone else. I think it all depends on the circumstances you have grown up in, your family and friends. It may not be easy to live the way you want to. But I believe it is easier to just be yourself

without pretending to be someone else.

When was this need to express yourself born?

I don't recall any particular point or moment. Since childhood, all of us are recording things that are happening around us. If I were to use an analogy, it would be of a covered vessel kept on coal, with water in it. When the water starts boiling, at one point the steam starts shaking the lid, making it clang against the vessel. I'm like that *dhakkan* [lid]; I started clanging so violently that I had to let the steam out. [Laughs.]

When did you start writing?

I started writing while I was still in school. As I mentioned, there was this strong urge to express myself. I could never memorise the lessons taught at school; I have never really bothered about marks, which is also why I never graduated. However, I soon realised that what was narrated in the textbooks actually related to life. And, when I understood that, those lessons went beyond the written word for me. For instance, I remember reading *Idgah*, a short story by Munshi Premchand about a boy who watches his grandmother using her bare hands to pick up roti from the hot *tawa*, burning her hands in the process. During *Id*, the boy asks his granny for some money as *Idi*. She gives him some pennies she has kept aside. But he asks for more. Assuming that he wants to sit on the rides at the fair, she pulls out a couple of pennies more, telling him to have fun at the fair. In the evening when the boy is back, she asks him about the rides, and is surprised when he tells her that he sat on none. When she rebukes him about what he may have done with the money, he gives her a pair of tongs, so that she doesn't ever have to burn her hands while making roti. I could relate to the story as my mother too used to make roti in the tandoor, burning her hands every time she put them in or took them out. So a story that was meant for children to write essays on was more than mere words for me; it was something I could relate to. Gradually, I started reading literature meant for my older brothers. I remember taking *Bal-E-Jabreel* by Allam Iqbal, my older brother's textbook, and not returning it. It's only recently that I told him about it; he was under

the impression that he had lost it somewhere else. [Laughs.] Literature and books became a passion with me and soon I started writing poetry.

You seem to be totally fascinated with poetry compared to other forms of literature.

Yes, my passion for writing initially manifested as poetry. Though I love telling stories and have written some short stories, my primary passion has been poetry. But I am not sure I can explain why I prefer poetry to other forms of expression. It is like asking why you are wearing a particular dress. You may not have an answer to that, would you? [Smiles.]

Your father didn't approve of your engagement with literature.

That was the case with every parent back then. They didn't want their children to eke out a living from literature because, as a profession, it wasn't rewarding enough. My father used to say, "*Shayari-waayari karnee toh theekh hain; gurudware mein paddh lo yah kuch. Par kaam kya karoge?*" (If you want to render a poem or two at a gathering or in gurdwaras, it's fine. But, finally, what profession are you going to take up?) For my father, art didn't make sense economically. But things have changed now, and writers are being looked up to; people even come to take interviews of *shayar*.

Not every writer is interviewed, Gulzar sahib.

[Smiles warmly.] My father wanted me to learn something more so I would get a stable income. His concern was understandable. I loved referring to my father as *Abbu*. [Chokes.] In a recent book on me, *In The Company of a Poet*, written by Nasreen Munni Kabir, I have dedicated an Urdu verse to my *Abbu*. (Given below is the English translation.)

*Father, There is much to say that is left unsaid
If you were here, I would speak*

You were so despondent on my account

Fearing my poetry would drown me some day

I am still afloat, Father

No longer have I the desire to return to shore,

The shore you left so many years ago.

Did he get to see your success?

He suspected that I was on to something. If my poems or stories were published, he carried them around, proudly showing them to his friends.

Whether it is *Mora gora ang lai le* or *Chaiyya chaiyya*; *Bunt* or *Bubli* or *Omkara*, your lyrics resonate with the generation you are addressing. Is this born out of your need to 'earn your bread'?

Honestly, my motivation has never been earning my bread. Though I struggled, I was never consumed by the fear of failure. In fact, no one starves to death because you don't earn enough by writing. You can always eat less. Of course, you can earn enough to live, even as a labourer.



Even if he did not broach the topic on his own with anybody, I could see he was proud. But back then, I was still unknown and a struggler. Though my works were getting published, I knew that my father still worried about me.

In fact, he would say, "*Yeh bhaaiyon se udhhaar maangega aur langhar mein khaana khaayega.*" (He is going to borrow from his brothers and eat at the *langhar* served in gurdwara.)

He did not see my success. He has only seen my struggle.

[Chokes again.]

I wanted to be a writer. That was my only passion. I have even done some silly things. I remember there was a book of short stories by Guy de Maupassant that I read enthusiastically. I wanted to see how my name would look on the cover. So, I stuck my name over Maupassant's name. Years later, my daughter Meghna saw it and asked me about it. When I told her what I had done, she took that book from me. She has mentioned this in her book *Because He Is*, with a picture of that book as it is now. That is how badly I wanted to be a writer!



Chart

BUSTERS

- *Mora gora ang laiye le* - *Bandini* (1968)
- *Hamne dekhi hai un aankhon ki* - *Khamoshi* (1969)
- *Wo shaam kuchh ajeeb thi* - *Khamoshi* (1969)
- *Maine tere liye hi* - *Anand* (1970)
- *Bole re papihara* - *Guddi* (1971)
- *Hum se watan hamara aur watan se hum* - *Koshish* (1972)
- *Beete naa bitaayee raina* - *Parichay* (1972)
- *Musafir hoon yaaron* - *Parichay* (1972)
- *Dil dhoondta hai phir wohi* - *Mausam* (1975)
- *Maajhi re* - *Khushboo* (1975)
- *Tum aa gaye ho noor aa gaya hai* - *Aandhi* (1975)
- *Tere bina zindagi se koi shikwa toh nahi* - *Aandhi* (1975)
- *Tere bina jeeya jaaye na* - *Ghar* (1977)
- *Aaj kal paaon zamin par nahi* - *Ghar* (1977)
- *Thoda hai thode ki zarurat hai* - *Khatta-Meetha* (1977)

- *Naam gum jaaega* - *Kinara* (1977)
- *Tujhse naaraz nahi zindagi* - *Masoom* (1983)
- *Lakdi ki kaathi* - *Masoom* (1983)
- *Surmai ankhiyo me* - *Sadma* (1983)
- *Mera kuchh saaman tumhare paas* - *Ijaazat* (1988)
- *Yaara seeli seeli birha ki raat* - *Lekin* (1991)
- *Dil hum hum kare* - *Rudaali* (1993)
- *Chappa chappa charkha chale* - *Maachis* (1996)
- *Goli maar bheje me* - *Satya* (1998)
- *Dil se re* - *Dil Se* (1998)
- *Chhaiya chhaiya* - *Dil Se* (1998)
- *Chhai chhappa chhai* - *Hu Tu Tu* (1999)
- *Tu hawa hai fiza hai* - *Fiza* (2000)
- *Aaja gufuaon me* - *Aks* (2001)
- *Saathiya* - *Saathiya* (2003)
- *Dhadak dhadak* - *Bunty Aur Babli* (2005)
- *Kajra re* - *Bunty Aur Babli* (2005)
- *Beedi jalaile* - *Omkara* (2006)
- *Barso re* - *Guru* (2007)
- *Jai ho* - *Slumdog Millionaire* (2009)
- *Dhan te nan* - *Kaminey* (2009)
- *Dil to bachcha hai* - *Ishqiya* (2010)
- *Yaaram* - *Ek Thi Daayan* (2013)

Honestly, my motivation has never been earning my bread. Though I struggled, I was never consumed by the fear of failure. In fact, no one starves to death because you don't earn enough by writing

But wasn't it through films that you earned your bread initially?

I was working at a motor garage when I was pushed into writing a song for a movie. I had no interest in the film industry and was happy just reading and writing poetry. I was close to Shailendra, the lyricist, whom I had known since my stint with the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA), Progressive Writers' Association (PWA) and from my trade union days. He had a tiff with Sachin *da* [Sachin Dev Burman], the music composer of *Bandini*, who was on the lookout for another lyricist. So, I wrote my first song, *Mora gora ang lai le*. Afterwards, Bimal Roy, the director of the film, came looking for me. He had heard from someone that I had studied Bengali only to read Rabindranath Tagore. Bimal *da* must

have seen something in me—either talent or hard work. He said, 'I know you don't like to write for movies, but come and join me for a director's meeting; you will like it. No matter what you do, please don't go back to that motor garage. Don't waste your life there.' That was a very emotional moment for me and I broke down. Thus, I got into writing for films, and here I am. However, books have remained my enduring passion. I did films for a while and then came back to my books.

That disconnect from films is evident in your works.

It is not exactly any disconnect. Besides writing lyrics, I have made verbose films, the kind writers tend to make. For instance, *Mere Apne*, *Parichay*, *Koshish* and *Aandhi* were

all a writer's films. It is after *Kitaab* that I started learning the visual medium and its language. That is why my later films like *Maachis*, *Kitaab*, *Mausam* and *Hu Tu Tu* were all filmmaker's films. But I was beginning to miss the writer in me, and all that I wanted to do was write. I also wanted to write for children. Do you know that there is hardly any literature in India for children other than in Bangla, Marathi and Malayalam? There was a big world outside films that I wanted to be a part of. I did not really care about money or fame, and I had nobody to prove anything to. Films were not the anchor for me, books were. They remained with me, and I came back to them.

What are you working on right now?

"No singular person in the Indian film industry has grown with the times as Gulzar *sahib*. Consistent in style, he has never compromised with his art. Gulzar *sahib* is a true genius; a storehouse of ideas. The beauty of his writing is such that it will percolate deep down into your subconscious. When I had started off, I had hoped to work with him. Now, 23 years later, my dream is finally coming true with Gulzar *sahib* writing for my film *Mirzya*."

—Writer-director Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra

I am currently working on two volumes of Tagore that I have translated from Bangla. I hope I will be able to get the nuances right. Tagore's own English translations are not as good as his Bangla poems; he used to edit his pieces rather drastically. I have translated Tagore's poems for children into English because I want children all over India to read him. There is so much that needs to be done. [Pointing to his table with a pile of books and stacks of files] This is a pile of 400 to 500 poems from over 30 Indian languages by different poets, including those from Nagaland, Assam and Manipur. I'm selecting 365 poems from these to compile into a book called *A Poem A Day*.

So yes, films have brought me a lot of fame, and there is a sense of gratitude but there is so much more to life

beyond. When you start exploring life around you, you will realise the vastness of the universe and the cosmos. I write songs for a couple of reasons. For one, I love poetry, and songs let me indulge in that. Second, with all of my qualifications of an Intermediate failure, nobody will employ me for even ₹ 1,500. [Laughs.] So the songs bring home the money. Beyond that, the film industry is only one medium and it takes away all your time.

The film industry is known to be cutthroat, breaking hearts and killing spirits. But your lyrics and poetry still ring with a sense of freshness.

No matter what your creations, they reflect your own personality. That is why the renditions of Kishori Amonkar and Pandit Bhim Sen Joshi will be different even if they sing the same *raag* on the same stage the same evening. On the same lines, cynicism will show in your works only if it exists in you.

You have been an avid advocate of children's literature and have published books since the early 2000s, beginning with the Bosky series for children. How is writing for children different?

My earlier books for children were a process of learning and understanding them. When we write for adults, we communicate in one standard language. So it is easier to write for adults than kids. When it comes to children, you need to communicate differently with different age groups. You cannot tell a three year-old stories meant for a 10 year-old and vice versa. But most writers think it is easy writing for them and keep making the mistake of speaking to kids in a static tone they use for adults. Also, you have to first indulge children before you learn how to write for them. It is sad that a major language like Hindi hardly produces children's literature. There is nothing in Hindi except translations from *Panchatantra* and other languages. That can hardly be classified as children's

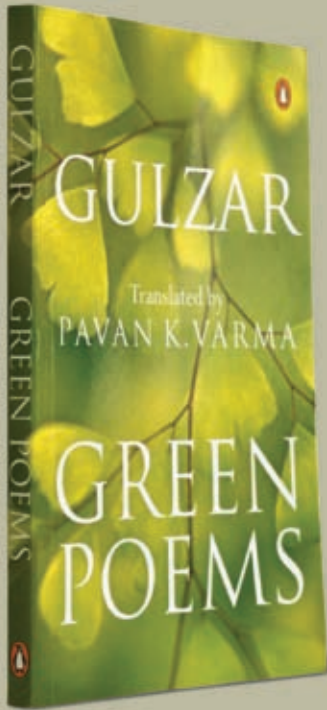
"I am charmed by his humility. I remember the speech he gave at my college, the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies in Shimla, on the oral tradition in India. His words stood out because they were well-researched, deeply felt and insightful. I am privileged enough that he agreed to translate my work, *Poems Come Home*."

—Poet-author Sukriti Paul

literature. Children's stories need to be based in one's own time.

Have you ever hit a writer's block?

Everybody hits a block, even a potter. Sometimes his fingers don't move. In fact, some days even a cow doesn't give milk. There is nothing to worry if you can't write or if you have forgotten a line that you thought of. But you have plenty to worry about if you have forgotten where you have left your wallet! [Laughs.] My advice to writers would be to stay real and not take oneself so seriously. Just because you have become a writer, you aren't meant to be flying around! As a writer, I am just as professional as a plumber is. You have to play your role in society. Through writing, you record the times you live in. You are a historian and the aesthetics and human relations you are creating make you as indispensable to society as a plumber. A writer is not a privileged being. In fact, I believe a plumber is more practical and useful to society than a writer. It is important to create utility through your writing for the society in which you are living. ✨



By personifying nature and endowing it with a soul and letting the falling leaves, trees, forests, mountains, clouds, rivers and earth speak, the poet drives home the message in a more succinct manner

Nature **SONG**

*On the branches of these wild plants
Some words occasionally sprout
But never a full poem.*

— 'Dalit Plant'

A lasting testament to a poet's abiding concern for nature, **GREEN POEMS** (Penguin; ₹ 250; 131 pages) brings to the fore the thoughtless destruction of ecology at our hands. This outpouring of anguish reminds us of the need to alter our lifestyle and get in touch with our roots, once again. As **Gulzar** himself states in the introduction to the book, "Some dry leaves dropped from the tree. The season was changing. But the rustle of the leaves had something more to say. I heard them. What they said was profound, to save the globe from rotting."

Written over a span of 15 years as a painful reaction to what he saw, the poems capture the rapid degradation of the environment owing to unchecked urbanisation. By personifying nature and endowing it with a soul and letting the falling leaves, trees, forests, mountains, clouds, rivers and earth speak, the poet drives home the message in a more succinct manner. As he says in the poem 'The Sky':

*The seams of the sky have begun to separate from the firmament
This tent is now coming apart in so many places
Using the stitches of my poetry
I spend my whole day darning!*

In his inimitable manner, Gulzar addresses human alienation from nature. Likening trees to our ancestors, he voices their concern in 'The Forest':

*Now you have begun to walk
But once you too were like us
With your roots in the ground...
But once, standing on both legs, you could run
You did not return
You became a part of the rocks, of the mountains!*

This meditation on nature, narrated with a sensibility that is empathetic, packs minute details and vivid images. The poems, peppered with earthy imagery, colloquial idioms and witty expressions, are often short. Nonetheless, they paint enduring images, like that of the ageing river in 'The Aged River-3':

*Muttering to himself this aged river keeps flowing on.
His waters within are slowly drying up
Shrunk in size, he looks emaciated
Now, the stone, from which he used to earlier leap down,
Gently suspends him below
And tells the next stone:
Hold this old man's hand and help him across!*

Translated impeccably by **Pavan K Varma**, who had earlier collaborated on Gulzar's *Selected Poems* and *Neglected Poems*, this new collection celebrates the poet's innate connection with nature and serves as a timely—and eloquent—wake-up call against reckless development.

—Srirekha Pillai

What is 60?

The number of push-ups you have to do this week.

The number of movies you have to catch up on.

The number of bad jokes you cracked last month.

The number of times you told your grandson
to get away from the TV set and get a life.

The number of places you have to travel to.

What it's not, is your age.

At least not in your head.

Or in your heart.





If you're above fifty five, we believe Harmony is just the magazine for you. Filled with human interest stories, exciting features and columns, Harmony encourages you to do just one thing: live young.

harmony
celebrate age



The main entrance to
Jorasanko Thakurbari



The house of TAGORE

A visit to Jorasanko Thakurbari in Kolkata evokes the glorious cultural heritage of Bengal and leaves us intrigued

❖ 📷 Rekha Sarin

We stand mesmerised by the red-pillared mansion with its curious, eclectic architecture that reflects a bygone era. Somewhere in the background, we hear the lilting strains of Rabindra Sangeet, a musical genre part of the cultural heritage bestowed to Bengal by Rabindranath Tagore, India's pride, the first non-European to be honoured with the Nobel Prize as far back as 1913. This is Jorasanko Thakurbari, home of the illustrious Tagore family, where the poet was born with a high legacy only to gild it further with his own life of letters, art and deep philosophy, and where he returned to spend his last living moments.

The overcast monsoon sky of Kolkata is impregnated with an uncanny calm. But then, I reflect, aren't all places of history bestowed with this strange quietude? It is as though time has placed so many layers over the past that it results in muffling the cacophony of the present. Today, Thakurbari stands shrouded in a mantle of memory. It has seen several generations of the Tagores, the family name being a derivative of the original title, *Thakur*, traced to the ancestor Panchanan, who moved from Jessore, now in Bangladesh, to Govindpur, which was later to become Fort William when the British established their foothold after the Battle of Plassey in 1757. Of such noble nature was he that he came to be addressed as *Thakur*, meaning of godly nature, and the name took on the pronunciation of Tagore by the western tongue. Later, in 1782, his grandson Nilmoni established his own holding on this piece of land, on which stands the *Thakurbari* or mansion. Over 200 years later, it has become an emblem of history, a museum with its premises also being part of Rabindra Bharati University.

It was a chance reading on Tagore that aroused my interest and attracted me here on a visit to Kolkata, but my host, a long-time resident of the city, was equally curious and enthused to see the property and offered to accompany me. It is not surprising that this is his first visit too for it



The arcade of arches with its black and white gleaming marble floor in the Prayer Hall is a marvel in symmetry

appears no tourism hype has been generated here; we see no crowds.

We have traversed the city to its northern parts that lie not far from the river Hooghly where, around the area of Chitpur, the landed *zamindar* and high-born families of Calcutta made their early homes. Once, there ran a small stream in this locality that was bridged by two (*jora*) wooden bridges (*sanko*), thus giving the area its name. The lanes here are narrow, lined with bazaars loud with bustle and noise through which we drove, amid a clamour of Kolkata's historic trams, rickshaws and horns, until we made a turn into Rabindra Sarani or 6/4, Dwarkanath Tagore Lane, another little alley, to enter through a pink archway that opens out to this charming oasis of magnificence and tranquillity, taking us completely by surprise.

A driveway embraces a lawn beyond which stands the three-storey mansion guarded by tall trees that reveal glimpses of a ground floor with colonial arches and upper verandas supported by a colonnade of Doric pillars interspersed with shuttered green wooden venetian blinds pulled down midway, obviously designed to keep out the

heat. White iron fretwork balustrades go with the medallions that embellish the bordered roof of the upper floor in a blend of character that combines ethnic Indian with classic European.

The mansion speaks of the age of the Bengal Renaissance, when the Tagores rose to the fore to participate in the pursuit of liberal arts and the revival of Indian culture, even as they held the respect of the British colonists by virtue of their pragmatic ideas borne by high education. It was Nilmoni's grandson, Dwarkanath, and grandfather of Rabindranath Tagore, who brought Thakurbari its first glory. He had amassed a great fortune with his business acumen and had even established a firm, Carr, Tagore and Company, in partnership with English merchants. He was also on the board of directors of The Bengal Tea Association that was set up simultaneously with Assam Company in London, the first ever commercial tea company in the world. Evidently, he was well respected by the colonists and moved in distinguished circles. By dint of his wealth, he built a three-storey building within the compound of the family home at Jorasanko that was called the Baithak Khana, so named as it was meant for entertainment or *baithak* that were attended by eminent figures and high government officials.

Unfortunately, this particular building was demolished in 1940, overrun by the tide of time and we find ourselves standing on the very lawns where it would have once existed. In any case, much of the glamour of Dwarkanath's Jorasanko was reduced after his untimely death at the age of 52 in 1846, when he took ill during a trip to England. Left without any direction, his businesses at home eventually failed and his company went into liquidation. It was left to his eldest son Debendranath to pay off debts and rally finances so that from glittering affluence, the family came to be of modest, though comfortable, living. However, during his short lifespan, the brilliant Dwarkanath did leave behind a moral legacy that would mark the Tagores for times to come. For, besides enjoying a life of success, Dwarkanath also used his influence to bear upon the British rulers to help in social reformation and was among the band of liberals who, along with Raja Ram Mohan Roy, pressed then Governor General Lord William Bentinck to abolish the practice of *sati*.

The mansion continued to be the hub for the resurrection of national pride and culture, where intellect and talent percolated over subsequent generations of the Tagores, some of whom lived here, adding rooms and extensions to the house, while others moved away to settle in other parts of the city. It is also believed that two of Nilmoni's sons lived here for some years in the northern wing of the premises, which is now the Rabindra Memorial Hall, where special cultural shows are organised from time to time. It has lately been renamed Rathindra Man-

cha, after Rabindranath's son, Rathindranath. On the south side of the lawn is the Vichitra Bhawan, which houses the museum.

We first choose to absorb the building and its environs and pause to photograph a beautifully expressive bust of Rabindranath Tagore, manuscript in hand, that presides over the lawns. Just as we begin to wish that there were more signs that would give a bearing to the history that appears to whisper from every corner and crevice of the mansion, we come across a brass plaque outside what we presume to be the entrance of the main building. It proclaims some part of the story: this is Maharishi Bhavana, built in 1284, and named after Debendranath, father of Rabindranath who, in keeping with his spirit of responsibility, was also of a serious and deep-thinking nature. Learned in Sanskrit and the *Upanishad*, he was profoundly influenced by Ram Mohan Roy's Brahmo Samaj movement and, in later years, set up his own following, the Adi Brahmo Samaj, so that he came to be known as *maharishi* or saintly. While Dwarkanath had willed the Baithak Khana to his second son Girindranath, this main building was bequeathed to Debendranath.

Step inside and the ambience reflects the piety of its inheritor. The red façade of the mansion gives way to a rectangular inner courtyard with the surrounding buildings painted white, although carrying over the same architectural theme. An elevated prayer hall on a dais at one end bears a sign that asks visitors to remove their shoes before they enter. This is a marvel in symmetry with its arcade of arches, unusual fluted pillars and gleaming black-and-white patterned marble flooring. The Brahmo Samaj evolved as an antidote to Hindu idolatry and ritualism, so there is only a simple marble seat against one wall that was probably used for discourses and meditation. For the rest, the simple expanse of space ensures calm. The rooms beyond the deserted courtyard are closed, and the twitter of birds and call of the crows only add to the echoes of the past.

We must move on to the actual museum at Vichitra Bhawan to know more about Jorasanko. No more photography allowed and we store our cameras in lockers and remove our footwear before we ascend the staircase and pause at the landing to appreciate a long portrait of Rabindranath Tagore as a young man.

During his later years, after the age of 60, Tagore chose to give vent to his creative urge through the medium of art that took the form of abstract brushstrokes. Some say, these, perhaps, bore a similarity to the swirl of corrections he made with his pen on his manuscripts

The sweet notes of Rabindra Sangeet we heard faintly earlier now accompany us through the rooms and corridors that recreate some of the life and achievements of the poet who was born here on 7 May 1861. Being the youngest of a large family of brothers and sisters, he was left mostly to his own resources. He was at first indifferent to his lessons at home, until, it is said, he came across some lines with a rhythmic meter that described nature while he was learning the Bengali alphabet. And the poet in him was born. Rabindranath, of course, was also influenced by his father Debendranath, who introduced him to Sanskrit literature and astronomy. He took him on one of his meditational trips to the Himalayas, where he lived in the lap of nature, which would always be an inspiration for all his works. Rabindranath's older siblings, in fact, all had their talents,

some of them being writers and poets, besides being highly educated. His fifth son Jyotirindranath was a talented pianist and a dramatist as well and, along with his wife Kadambari Devi who also loved poetry, bore great influence on Tagore as a young boy. Indeed, the Tagore women were educated and encouraged to participate in their husbands' lives; this enlightened attitude was admirable for an age when social orthodoxy for women was common.

We see the simple earthen hearth in the kitchen where Mrinalini Devi, Rabindranath's wife, cooked meals, the

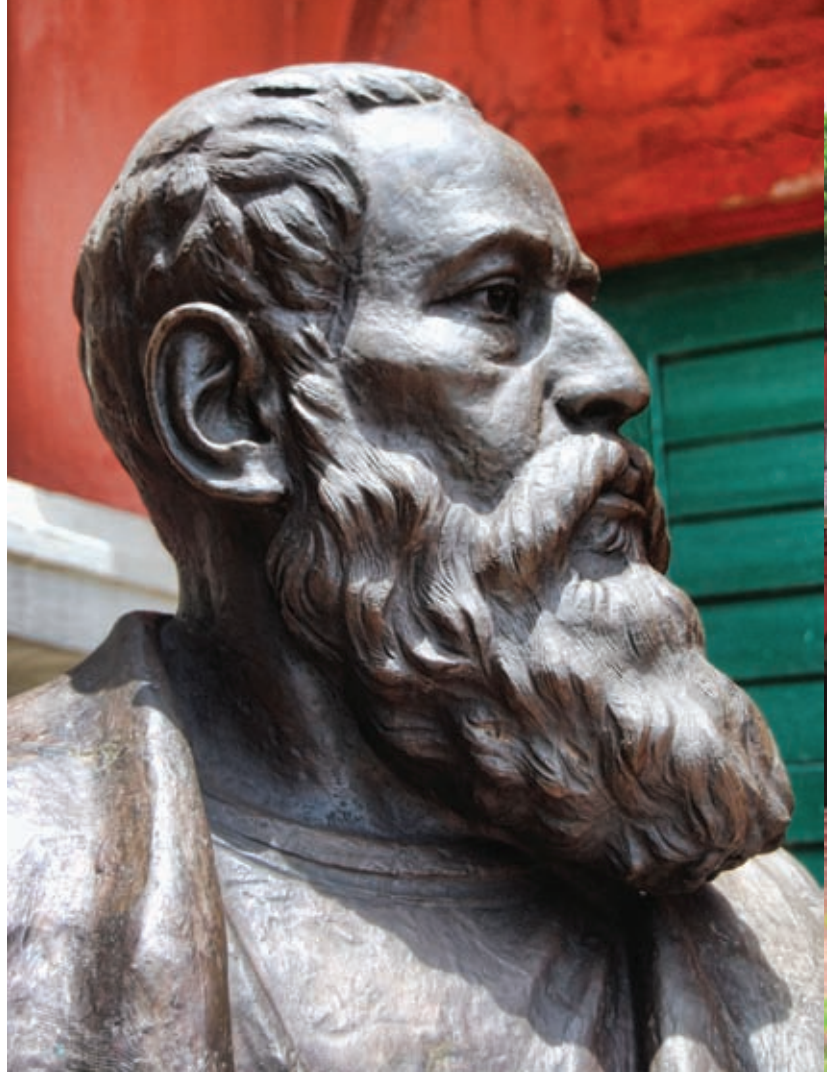
dining space with its low table and glass cupboards filled with tea ware and crockery. Spartan simplicity is the hallmark of the living quarters. I am particularly fascinated by the poet's dressing room adjacent to his bedroom, with its large dressing mirror with a stool and glass armoires that display his signature long robes. Also displayed is a costume he wore while acting in his play, *Falgami*, as his writings extended to scripting and acting in plays that bore a social message.

There is much to observe if one is interested to peer and read the captions below the numerous framed photographs of the Tagores that line the walls in these rooms. They speak volumes as I soak in the knowledge of this celebrated family that endowed Tagore with his extraordinary talent and vision. For instance, I was unaware that Rabindranath had made several trips overseas, over 10 journeys between 1916 and 1934 alone. Having gained so much fame with his deeply philosophical poetry and writings, he was invited by Europe, Canada, the US, South America and Russia as In-

Jorasanko, which gave birth to Tagore, also gave him his final resting place. Between these years, not only did he receive the Nobel Prize for his book of poems, *Gitanjali*, but created a unique system of education amid the outdoors he loved at Santiniketan

dia's spiritual ambassador. There were cultural exchanges and discussions, where he enriched audiences with his lectures filled depth of knowledge and expression. My reverie is broken by a tap on my shoulder as my friend cautions me that there is much more to discover ahead and I must not tarry too long here. As I quicken my step, I pass the room where Tagore breathed his last after undergoing surgery in 1941. It is eloquent by way of sheer simplicity, embellished with a beautiful *rangoli*, a floor painting part of Bengali art. In the centre stands the memorial urn that symbolises the profound spirit of a great personage.

Jorasanko, which gave birth to Tagore, also gave him his final resting place. Between these years, not only did he receive the Nobel Prize for his book of poems, *Gitanjali*, but created a unique system of education amid the outdoors he loved at Santiniketan near Bolpur where, eventually, Visva Bharti University was founded in 1921. He spent much of his time here, besides making regular visits to his ancestral home where he used to meet aspiring young writers, and held literary sittings on the first floor of Vichitra Bhawan, where he formed a cultural association called the 'Vichitra Club'. Today, the Rabindra Bharti Society takes care of these premises to preserve the soul of Tagore and the family's living quarters that open out to the museum wing ahead. This area is more organised; in fact, admirably so, as there are well-lit, temperature-controlled galleries that showcase great works of Bengal and European art besides paintings by the poet himself. During his later years, after the age of 60, Tagore chose to give vent to his creative urge through the medium of art that took the form of abstract brushstrokes. Some say that these, perhaps, bore a similarity to the swirl of corrections he made with his pen on his manuscripts. Of actual fame was Abinindranath,



The bust of Rabindranath Tagore; (opposite page) Thakurbari has several wings that were added by different members of the Tagore family—Vichitra Bhawan in the south wing houses the museum

the grandson of Debendranath's brother. Besides Tagore art, many more paintings of great artists like Jamini Roy, Prashanto Roy, Nandalal Bose and Indra Dugar provide delight for the art lover. There is also a gallery of paintings in western styles so the confluence of both art forms represents the era.

'Gurudev' or the great teacher—as he came to be affectionately known for his wisdom of thought and learning—showed a great interest in cementing bonds with Southeast Asia with whom he found a cultural affinity. The Japan Gallery is dedicated to cultural exchanges with the country and is atmospheric with a statue of the Buddha complete with an exhibit of the tea ceremony. We learn of Tagore's great interest in this country where he made three visits, in 1916, 1924 and 1929. In 1922, Japanese artist Tenshin Okakura came to Calcutta with Josephine McLeod, a disciple of Swami Vivekananda, and was introduced to Tagore at the instance of the Swami by Sister Nivedita. Artists



Taikan and Hishida came to teach Japanese brushstrokes and wrestler Takagaki Shinzo was invited to teach judo and martial arts to students.

The China Gallery is equally astounding. In décor, it is a contemporary rendering of Tagore's link with China complete with a replica of a red gateway that opens to a room with calligraphy scrolls, old artefacts and typical furniture. There are photographs and accounts of his journey to China where he stayed for four months in 1924, visiting Shanghai and Beijing. The great Chinese artist Xu Beihong of that period, when he came to India, was most impressed by Tagore and painted his portrait, which is found in this gallery.

This, and many more interesting nuggets of art, personal effects, manuscripts, books and tapes that capture the life and culture of the exceptional House of Tagore, can be garnered at this museum. Sadly, the melting hours do not allow us to absorb it all, and we must leave. It would be worth the while to return another time. I would, for instance, have liked to capture the details of the wonderful collection of philatelic tributes to Rabindranath that catches my eye. Had we envisaged the museum to be brimming with so much interest, perhaps we should not

have spent so much time rambling through the building earlier. But then, how else could we have imbibed the spirit of Jorasanko?

Another thought does come to mind: a map of the building and gallery layouts would certainly help visitors to chart their course through the exhibits to ensure a more planned distribution of time. As we collect our belongings from the lockers at the exit, we see posters of a 'Sound & Light Show' but, ironically, these too belong to the past and have been discontinued. A revival of these shows, we feel, would be a wonderful medium to relive lost glory and we wish that the main building tour arrangements were as methodical as the galleries that make up the exhibits in the museum.

I suppose this is but a small glitch in the romance that Jorasanko Thakurbari presents. In all, the experience has been satiating. The clouds have burst and, veiled through the rain, the mansion looks all the more enigmatic, soaked in the allure of history. We scramble to our car and retrace our journey through the noisy streets of Burra Bazaar. Regardless, the sweet notes of Tagore's melodies continue to ring in our ears. ✨

HOSPITALITY AND HISTORY



Photographs courtesy: The Taj Mahal Palace

HERITAGE

The dome that features in every artist's etchings of the Mumbai harbour is offering a glimpse into its rich history. On its 110th year anniversary, coinciding with the birth anniversary of industry doyen late J R D Tata, the luxurious Taj Mahal Palace has opened its archival corridor to the public. The hotel—that has played host to heads of state, monarchs, maharajahs, captains of industry and iconoclastic artists—is offering an exquisite walk down its imposing banquet corridor for a peek into its legendary memories and framed memorabilia that date as far back as an advertisement release in 1903. The installations include an image of British memsahibs sipping tea on the lawns of Apollo Bunder in the late 19th century and Lord Mountbatten's first speech to independent India. As deputy general manager Parveen Chander Kumar says, "This hotel is about several firsts. It was the first to get an elevator, first to have a ballroom, licensed bar, electricity and fans. It's a structure of great historical significance and we are celebrating it."





Clockwise from above: Jazz musician Leon Abbey, who got swing to Mumbai in 1935, at Taj; last of the British Troops leaving via the Gateway of India after Lord Mountbatten announced Independent India; a poster dating back to 1940

Opposite page: Construction of the tower of the Taj Mahal Palace Mumbai in 1972; the hallway





The game of life

WITH A GLORIOUS PAST AND DYNAMIC PRESENT, MOHUN BAGAN ENTERS ITS 125TH YEAR WITH GREAT EXPECTATIONS, REPORTS **PARTHA MUKHERJEE**

FIFA fever may have abated but celebrations are just around the corner for our home-grown Mohun Bagan Athletic Club, now known as McDowell Mohun Bagan. And every time the boys—known as Mariners—wearing the logo of a ‘country boat with a sail’ on a green and maroon jersey walk out to play, our hearts miss a beat! The year 2014 marks the club’s quasiquicentennial (125 years) and plans are afoot to celebrate this October. “The club has always put its heart and soul in the field and will continue to do so in the future,” says Anjan Mitra, present honorary general secretary.

On the occasion, the highest award of the club, Mohun Bagan Ratna, will be conferred on 1962 Asian Games gold medallist footballer I Arumainayagam; sports personalities like Leander Paes, Wriddhiman Saha, and Japanese footballer Katsumi Yusa will be felicitated. It will be a busy season for

the players as Mohun Bagan will participate in the Calcutta Senior Division Football League, Indian Premier League and Indian Special League. “Though it’s time for celebration, our whole attention will be on the performance of the team,” affirms Mitra.

Born on 15 August 1889 at the Mohun Bagan Villa of Maharaja Kirti Mitra in Shyambazar, north Kolkata, the club was named ‘Mohun Bagan Sporting Club’. The educated and business class Bengali *babu* got together to form the club, whose fan base was predominantly from western Bengal. Football had just arrived in colonised India and the native population started playing the game wearing folded dhotis, short *kurta* and sometimes bare-chested. In fact, ‘foot-ball’ was played true to name—barefoot. As the club was conceived at a time when nationalism was growing in the country, it was naturally steeped in patriotic fervour.

SPORT

THE ORIGIN OF FOOTBALL OF INDIA

Bengali boys first played football in 1877 when Calcutta resident Nagendra Prasad Sarbadhikary founded the Boy’s Club. There is an oft-repeated story that a native man’s first attempt to kick a football came when one such ball was found under the *phaeton* (horse carriage) carrying Sarbadhikary and his mother. He got off the carriage and kicked the ball back to a group of English soldiers who were playing with it on a ground nearby. As history has it, Sarbadhikary went on to become the father of Indian football.

Mohun Bagan played friendly matches against neighbourhood clubs and academic institutions before it emerged as a strong opponent against the formidable English teams that had first played the game in the city before the club was born. Matches between Calcutta Club of Civilians



"It wouldn't be wrong to describe the club as a holy shrine where football is not played but venerated."

—Samar 'Badru' Banerjee, captain, 1954 Melbourne Olympics



"Mohun Bagan embodies a nation; it triggers hope and aspiration among the young generation."

—Chuni Goswami, captain, 1962 Asian Games

Photographs by Shilbadra Datta

versus Gentlemen of Barrackpore, Etonians versus Europeans living in Kolkata were played on the ground near Esplanade in 1854 and 1868. The first decade of the 20th century can be described as a purple patch for Mohun Bagan. The club scripted several victories in the Cooch Behar Cup, Trades Cup and Minto Fete Tournament. Mohun Bagan's epochal victory in the IFA Shield final in 1911—beating East Yorkshire of Faijabad 2-1—won the hearts of millions of Indians. "Mohun Bagan had become synonymous with the national battle cry for *Vande Mataram*. Their matches against the European team were perceived as battles against the British Raj," wrote famous sports historian Boria Mazumder in one of his columns.

Gradually, the fame of the club travelled beyond the country and invitations for matches poured in from beyond the borders. It took another 24 years to win the League Championship. The year 1935 bears special significance in the club's history—the players started playing in boots! And the year 1939 set another landmark in the annals of the club when it won the coveted championship of the Calcutta Senior Division Football League for the first time.

Indeed, much water has flown down the bridge since a group of boys took up the game with spirit and determination. During its long journey, Mohun Bagan Club has experienced both agony and ecstasy; witnessed ups and downs. The club, which has won several laurels, has also been a receiver of brickbats. Yet it found resonance in the hearts of millions. After a match in 2008, legendary goalkeeper Oliver Kahn, of Bayern Munich and Germany, said, "My football playing career came a full circle after the match against Mohun Bagan, a club with such a rich heritage."

Today, the club speaks proudly of its four youth brigades (under 13, under 15, under 17 and under 19) and a fully functional football academy at Durgapur. "To us, Mohun Bagan means life and we have committed ourselves to regain its glorious past," says Debasish Dutta, finance secretary of the club.

The club has been recruiting the best talents from across the world. "By roping in star footballers like Pierre Boya (Cameroon), Alao Fatai Adisa (Nigeria), Soni Norde (Haiti) and Katsumi Yusa (Japan), we are trying our best to enhance the standard of the game in India," adds Mitra. "Let us see how the tree bears fruit now."

His best shots

In his 46-year career, his photographs have found pride of place in virtually all the Hindi and English newspapers of Jaipur. City-based silver photojournalist **Surendra Jain Paras** recently unveiled *Chhayankan*, an exhibition of his eclectic photographs ranging from panoramic view of historic monuments and portraits of commoners to rare shots of wildlife. "I never use the tripod and prefer manual focus even in a digital camera," he reveals. "Yeh hai mera tripod [this is my tripod]," he says enthusiastically,



pointing to his shoulder.

Though open to learning new techniques, the 67 year-old feels 'art' goes missing in digital photography. "How can we forget the quality of black-and-white pictures taken from old cameras? The print may fade away but the quality remains intact." Adjudged Best Photojournalist in Rajasthan four times, he has won several accolades including many for his wildlife photography. "I have learnt to control breathing while capturing the flight of birds or any wildlife movements," he shares. In fact, our sparkling silver is also well-versed in playing the tabla, writing and singing Jain *bhajan* and playing the harmonium with both hands. Truly, a man for all seasons!

—Abha Sharma

Fancy dress!

Jayanthi Somasundaram unravels a costume for every occasion at Chennai's 104 year-old K Nathamuni & Sons



Photographs by Chennai Pix

The one with the peacock feather!" exclaims bespectacled Meenakshi Ammal, pointing to the jewelled crown of Lord Krishna, as an assistant behind the wooden desk displays small-sized dhoti and *angavastram*. For over three decades, this 56 year-old, a teacher by profession, has been a regular client at K Nathamuni & Sons, one of the oldest costume rental establishments in the George Town area of Chennai. She has come back this time with a list for her school cultural event, to deck up little Radhas, Mohinis, *asura*, even Brahma! And Nathamuni & Sons' extensive collection has been a one-stop-shop for all her costume requirements. "We have costumes for every season and for every occasion," say brothers K C Udaya Kumar and Rabinendra Kumar Babu, who have inherited and cultivated their grandfather K Nathamuni's legacy. In fact, for the brothers

who managed to supply 400 Krishna costumes for an event recently, the teacher's requirement was business as usual.

In the early 1900s, K Nathamuni was a tailor who stitched costumes for *therukoothu* (street-theatre) artists. "Theatre was the only form of entertainment then and my grandfather got a lot of work because he had an eye for detail and colour essential to design the costumes," says Rabinendra Kumar, who owns a branch of the shop in the heart of tinseltown, Kodambakkam. "My grandfather was a pioneer in the costume rental sphere, adding glamour to theatre with his props; he catered to the British as well," says elder grandson Udaya Kumar.

As Udaya Kumar manages the space, he recollects how boxes of costumes and props used to be transported on

bullock carts to theatres located at various places. "When theatre artists would travel to Burma and Ceylon for shows, so would our costumes and props," he notes. While their grandfather worked with theatre artists, it was their father Chitti Babu and uncles (father's brothers) who established ties with movie production houses. "In the black-and-white movies of stalwarts like MGR and Sivaji Ganesan, titles used to proudly proclaim 'Set design 'Nathamuni & Sons'." The business increased manifold owing to this," he recounts.



business but planning sees them through. "We keep reinventing ourselves. For instance, *Kochadaiyaan*, the new movie starring Rajnikanth, has inspired us to recreate the costume he wore. We have managed to create one piece, fit for an adult; it took much research on our part."

Another costume that has garnered a lot of interest is that of Hollywood blockbuster *Avatar*, a hit among children at birthday parties.

After their father passed away in 1983, the brothers decided to develop the business further. "My brother had just graduated, I had just completed my 12th, and together we took the plunge, only because I was more inclined towards the business. Though both of us didn't have a background in tailoring or designing, we have had the opportunity to observe and learn on the go," says Rabindra Kumar.

As they learnt the ropes, they realised they needed to be in step with the times and trends to survive stiff competition. From Dora to Draupadi, soldiers to thieves, angels to vampires, princesses to astronauts, the duo is always looking out for new ideas and designs. The brothers have an extensive network of tailors to support their needs. "When my grandfather and father ran the business, they had tailors who were passionate about their work. Today, it is rare to find such tailors. We keep ourselves updated about the costumes in demand and always have them in stock," says Rabindra Kumar, who admits it is tough to be in the

ties. "Customers seek something different every day and we strive to provide that. Fifty years ago, we had supplied crowns made of gold plates and copper sheets with heavy embossed work. Today, people want something lighter, so we work with papier-mâché artists to recreate the same piece," says Udaya Kumar.

Surrounded by Burma teak pillars with Belgium mirrors embedded in them and rosewood wooden cabinets, the cavernous shop was designed so that customers can choose a costume and try it on. Also, the shop has maintained the system of a two-hour lunch break. "Our father believed the break would allow the staff to relax and we could complete some backend work," shares Udaya Kumar.

Weekends are busier for the brothers, as their phones keep ringing continuously. Summers are relatively quiet and that's when they take complete stock and work on designs for the following year. Interestingly, many of their customers consider their costumes lucky mascots for competitions and shows. "They believe they will win and many, in fact, have," they say, smiling.

EXPLORING IDENTITY

BEST KNOWN FOR HIS SCULPTURES IN VARIED STYLES AND SCALES, ARTIST **DHRUVA MISTRY** HELD HIS NEW SHOW *SOMETHING ELSE* IN MUMBAI LAST MONTH. THE SHOW FEATURED A SERIES OF STEEL CUT-OUTS REVEALING SILHOUETTES OF FEMALE TORSOS IN VARIOUS POSTURES AND HUES, EVOKING NAVARASA (NINE UNIVERSAL EMOTIONS) AND EXPLORING MAYA (ILLUSION). "SOME OF THE MOST SHAMEFUL INCIDENTS OF RAPE, MURDER, SEXUAL ABUSE AND FEMALE FOETICIDE PRESENT DEMONIC DESIRE, BRAZEN STRIFE, SOCIOECONOMIC DISCORD AND IDEOLOGICAL CONTENTION. CUT-OUTS OF SILHOUETTED TORSOS CREATE A KIND OF METAPHORICAL ABSTRACTION THAT DETERS THE PERCEPTION OF FEMALE FORMS AS POPULAR SEX OBJECTS," MISTRY SAYS IN HIS NOTE ON THE SHOW. HE CONCEIVED THE SHOW IN 2008 WHILE RECOVERING FROM A SEVERE PARALYTIC ATTACK. "THE FORM OF *SOMETHING ELSE* REMAINS AN ENGAGING IDENTITY BECAUSE IT IS EVERYTHING AND NOTHING," ADDS THE 57 YEAR-OLD.

TIMELINE

THE INTRODUCTION OF APPLE'S MUCH-VAUNTED iWATCH PROMPTED US TO WALK THROUGH THE HISTORY OF THE TIMEPIECE FROM ITS ORIGINS TO MODERN DAY. WHAT NEXT? ONLY TIME WILL TELL



1851

Aaron Lufkin Dennison began the first watch mass manufacturing factory, later incorporated as Waltham Watch Company in Massachusetts.

1860

Keyless winding was introduced—you wound the crown instead of using a key.

2014

Apple introduces the iWatch, to be released in 2015, while the Samsung Gear S (with built-in 3G connectivity) is rumoured to be out before that.

1984

The RC-20 Wrist Computer by Seiko with a mini keyboard and a dot-matrix display featured a calculator, memo scheduling and world time.

1972

Swiss company Hamilton revealed the first digital electronic watch with a LED display, called the Hamilton Pulsar, encased in 18-carat gold.

2013

The Pebble E-paper Watch became quickly popular for its low-power display, seamless integration with both iPhone and Android smartphones through Bluetooth, and custom applications.

2010

iPod accessory maker Griffin Technologies came up with a case, called Slap, for the sixth-generation iPod Nano that could be worn like a wristwatch.



1822

The seconds hand was introduced by French watchmaker Nicolas Rieussec.

1961

HMT set up the first watch factory in India, in Bangalore. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru released the first batch of HMT's hand-wound wristwatches.

2005

Seiko used the e-ink display for the first time in watches, featuring an electronic 'paper' display with a high contrast, ultra-thin screen.

1812

Swiss horologist Abraham-Louis Breguet created the first wearable wristwatch ordered by Queen of Naples Caroline Murat.

1923

British watchmaker John Harwood invented the first self-winding watch.



1870s

Cheaper methods of producing watch parts began to be widely used, making it possible for the working class to own watches.



1610

Glass was used for the first time on the face of the watch.

1657

The addition of a balance spring by British physicist Robert Hooke helped reduce errors by hours and minutes.

1984

Titan was launched in India, quickly becoming one of the largest manufacturers in the world. It introduced quartz technology in India.

1880s

Wristwatches began rising in popularity, as military men began using them instead of the more inconvenient pocket watches.

1680

In Britain, the minute hand was introduced in pocket watches for the first time in the world.

Nearly every major tech giant (Samsung, Acer, Microsoft, Sony, Google) is involved in developing and designing smart watches. 2013 was called the year of smart watches.

1998

The father of wearable computing, Steve Mann, built the first Linux-based watch. Developed by IBM two years later, the software development was done from India.

The pocket watch trade spread in India as the British Empire increased its stronghold. It was predominantly still a luxury item studded with precious gems and carved in gold or silver, favoured as gifts by kings and wealthy landowners and traders.

Watches and timepieces were introduced to India through Chinese, Middle Eastern and Portuguese settlers and traders.

Flat and round pocket watches started appearing around this time, worn specifically by men in their waistcoats.

21st century

20th century

19th century

18th century

17th century

16th century

2004

Automobile giant BMW released the BMW MP3 watch with a memory capacity of 256 MB. It could also be used as a voice memo recorder and data storage device.

Japanese company Seiko introduced quartz watches in 1969—running on a quartz-crystal battery, these got rid of moving parts and winding, and made watches cheaper and more accurate.



1759

Lever escapement was incorporated into watches, which allowed the hands to move at a steady rate and not stop during jerky motions.

The first portable timepiece, called the 'clock watch', was drum-shaped, cylindrical and made of heavy brass, displaying only the hour. It was worn on a chain around the neck, and was impractical and, often, inaccurate.

1920s

The first digital wristwatch, Cortébert Digital Wristwatch, was introduced by Breguet. This still used the keyless winding method.

1765

French clockmaker Pierre Le Roy solved the problem of temperature changes affecting the balance spring by inventing the bimetallic temperature compensated balance wheel.



Understanding *Ahimsa*

We pay homage to the Father of the Nation with an extract from *Third Class in Indian Railways* (1917) that discusses non-violence, one of the key tenets of Gandhism

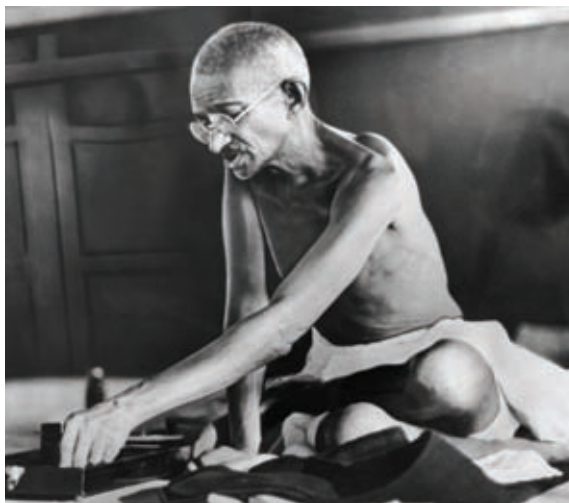
By birth I am a Vaishnavite, and was taught *Ahimsa* in my childhood. I have derived much religious benefit from Jain religious works as I have from scriptures of the other great faiths of the world. I owe much to the living company of the deceased philosopher, Rajachand Kavi, who was a Jain by birth. Thus, though my views on *Ahimsa* are a result of my study of most of the faiths of the world, they are now no longer dependent upon the authority of these works. They are a part of my life, and, if I suddenly discovered that the religious books read by me bore a different interpretation from the one I had learnt to give them, I should still hold to the view of *Ahimsa* as I am about to set forth here.

Our *shastra* seem to teach that a man who really practises *Ahimsa* in its fullness has the world at his feet; he so affects his surroundings that even the snakes and other venomous reptiles do him no harm. This is said to have been the experience of St Francis of Assisi.

In its positive form, *Ahimsa* means the largest love, the greatest charity. If I am a follower of *Ahimsa*, I must love my enemy. I must apply the same rules to the wrong-doer who is my enemy or a stranger to me, as I would to my wrong-doing father or son. This active *Ahimsa* necessarily includes truth and fearlessness. As man cannot deceive the loved one, he does not fear or frighten him or her. Gift of life is the greatest of all gifts; a man who gives it in reality disarms all hostility. He has paved the way for an honourable understanding. And none who is himself subject to fear can bestow

that gift. He must, therefore, be himself fearless. A man cannot then practice *Ahimsa* and be a coward at the same time. The practice of *Ahimsa* calls forth the greatest courage.

It is the most soldierly of a soldier's virtues. General Gordon has been represented in a famous statue as bearing only a stick. This takes us far on the road to *Ahimsa*. But a soldier,




who needs the protection of even a stick, is to that extent so much less of a soldier. He is the true soldier who knows how to die and stand his ground in the midst of a hail of bullets. Such a one was Ambarisha, who stood his ground without lifting a finger though Durvasa did his worst. The Moors who were being pounded by the French gunners and who rushed to the guns' mouths with 'Allah' on their lips, showed much the same type of courage. Only theirs was the courage of desperation. Ambarisha's was due to love. Yet the Moorish valour, readiness to die, conquered the gunners. They frantically waved their hats, ceased firing, and greeted their erstwhile enemies as

comrades. And so the South African passive resisters in their thousands were ready to die rather than sell their honour for a little personal ease. This was *Ahimsa* in its active form.

If we are unmanly today, we are so not because we do not know how to strike, but because we fear to die. He is no follower of Mahavira, the apostle of Jainism, or of Buddha or of the *Veda*, who being afraid to die, takes flight before any danger, real or imaginary, all the while wishing that somebody else would remove the danger by destroying the person causing it. He is no follower of *Ahimsa* who does not care a straw if he kills a man by inches by deceiving him in trade, or who would protect by force of arms a few cows and make away with the butcher or who, in order to do a supposed good to his country, does not mind killing off a few officials. All these are actuated by hatred, cowardice and fear.

Ahimsa, truly understood, is in my humble opinion a panacea for all evils mundane and extra-mundane. We can never overdo it. Just at present we are not doing it at all. *Ahimsa* does not displace the practice of other virtues, but renders their practice imperatively necessary before it can be practised even in its rudiments. Mahavira and Buddha were soldiers, and so was Tolstoy. Only they saw deeper and truer into their profession, and found the secret of a true, happy, honourable and godly life. Let us be joint sharers with these teachers, and this land of ours will once more be the abode of gods.

A photograph of an elderly man with a grey beard and a young girl with dark hair, both smiling and playing in a pond. The man is in the water, and the girl is sitting on a wooden dock, splashing water towards him. The water is dark blue, and the dock is made of wooden planks.

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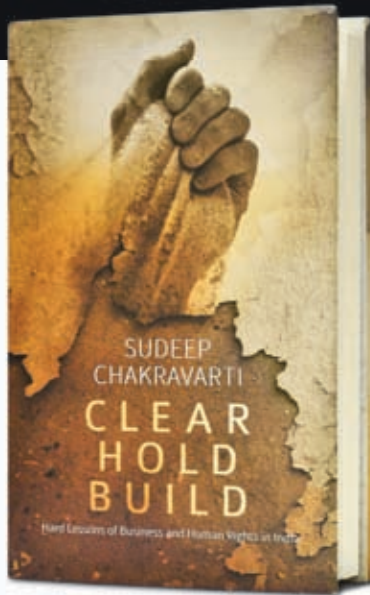
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HM1/OCT 14/Mag



Bringing to the fore the corporate social 'irresponsibility' so rampant today, **Sudeep Chakravarti** asks some tough questions on blatant human rights violations by reputed corporations and their close ties with government in **CLEAR. HOLD. BUILD** (Harper Collins; ₹ 599; 278 pages). Discussing infamous examples like Vedanta, Tata Steel, Posco and Kudankulam, his journey for answers takes him to gritty, dusty villages and dirty, neglected townships as he meets environmental activists, lawyers and tribal communities in the conflict zone on one

side, and tight-lipped executives and corporate decision-makers on the other. While highlighting the dangers in government extending state protection machinery to corporate houses to be used against its own people, Chakravarti goes beyond mere criticism to offer suggestions and recommendations on how to do things better—and how to do right by the many. Poignant and thoughtful at some places, critical and revealing at others, this is an important lesson in human rights management for responsible business houses.

When two literary brains decide to “strike sparks off each other”, it’s only apt that they take refuge in the world of pen and paper to set off an epistolary dialogue. Touching on almost every subject under the sun, **HERE AND NOW: LETTERS 2008-2011** (Random House; ₹ 899; 248 pages) chronicles the correspondence between **Paul Auster** and **J M Coetzee** spanning three years and several continents. They discuss Kafka and Beckett, their disappointment in American poetry since the 1960s and their own literary journeys. And when they appear to get stuck for topics—like many living room conversations—the discussion veers towards sports, cinema and politics (in Israel, South Africa, Cuba and the US). There’s also a lot of good-natured banter on ageing; Auster and Coetzee seem to be comfortable with their status as grumpy

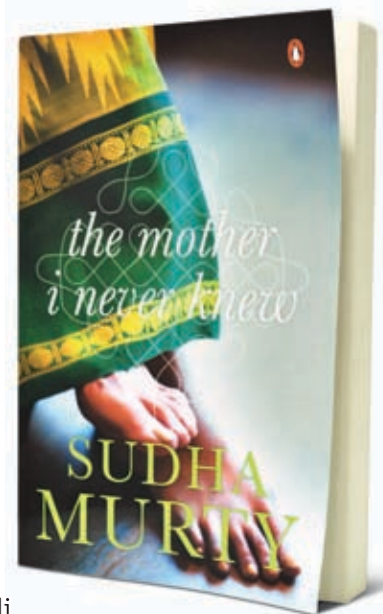
old men. “The truth is, griping can be fun, and as rapidly ageing gentlemen, seasoned observers of the human comedy, wise grey heads who have seen it all and are surprised by nothing, I feel it is our duty to gripe and scold,” affirms Auster merrily. Admitting they are technophobes, on one occasion, the gentlemen express their frustration at hotel rooms not being equipped with typewriters! The effortless camaraderie makes for a most engaging read.



THE MOTHER I NEVER KNEW (Penguin Books; ₹ 250;

207 pages) brings together two poignant tales of sons in search of mothers they never knew existed. The novellas are stitched together into one book in which **Sudha Murty** explores subtle human emotions, adding an element of mystery. These are stories of discovery, of making difficult choices and finding one’s true identity.

From Bengaluru to Hubli to remote parts of Karnataka, the stories traverse at a leisurely pace. At times, there seem to be too many coincidences, but the stories move forward with the quickness of a movie. Murty’s detailing in the geographical settings lends a credible touch. So does her focus on specifics of local traditions and customs. However, in terms of depth, the book leaves you a bit wanting. The simple, straightforward storytelling works in parts but, at times, there are clichéd portrayals like that of a politician’s wife and sometimes characters are oversimplified. Given the similar premise in both novellas, it may have been a better idea to stick to just one story and delve into the nuances of each character. Ultimately, what stays with the reader is the peep into human conscience and emotions that drive a person to make the right choice.



Following Gandhi

He brought *jugaad*, the Indian street smart ethos, into the domain of formal management education. An alumnus of IIT - Mumbai and founder-director of the Management Institute for Leadership and Excellence (MILE) in Pune, **Virender Kapoor** is known for his innovative approach to leadership. His books *The Rise and Rise of Jugaad* and *Heart over Matter* have been translated in many languages. In his latest, *Leadership: The Gandhi Way* (Rupa Publications; ₹ 195; 136 pages), Kapoor derives leadership lessons from the Mahatma's life. The key, he reveals, is to adapt, rather than adopt, Gandhi's philosophy in action. In an interview with **Srirekha Pillai**, the author tells us what makes Gandhi an unmatched and unparalleled leader.

What is the relevance of Gandhi today?

I have written several books on leadership, where I have looked at inspiring leaders. I thought of revisiting Mahatma Gandhi as the recent protest by Anna Hazare is a prime example of the relevance of *satyagraha* even now. People from across the country participated in the Hazare movement. It reminded me of how Gandhiji took on the South African regime more than a century ago. Gandhiji understood perfectly well that armed conflicts against administrations hardly succeed. On the other hand, it's easier to garner numbers for a *satyagraha* as protestors are not expected to pick up arms and fight a pitched battle, making it easier even for women and children to participate.

What leadership lessons can we imbibe from him?

Leaders need to have tremendous will power and determination, which stem from conviction about their cause. Gandhiji was convinced about the need to end the discrimination of Indians under the British Raj. Once you are good to go, you need to demonstrate absolute integrity so no one can question your intentions and actions. Leadership is all about integrity. Gandhiji was above board and exercised a will power that can rarely be matched.

What was it about this physically frail leader that brought the mighty British Empire to its knees?

Gandhiji was a very intelligent man and understood the psyche of both the British rulers and Indian masses. He knew that the freedom struggle would be a long one because he had to convince and involve everyone, irrespective of region and religion. He was also a great event management expert. All his movements were well-timed and planned. The Dandi March, Quit India and Non-Cooperation Movements were based around sensitive issues



and well-orchestrated. He was able to involve the entire nation in these movements. Further, he was a brilliant organiser; he created organisations from scratch, and participated in hundreds of rallies, conferences and *dharna* involving the entire nation.

What was Gandhi's appeal vis-à-vis Jinnah, Sardar Patel, Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhash Chandra Bose and Bhagat Singh?

All of them played key roles in our freedom struggle. Subhash Chandra Bose was not for *Ahimsa* and was at the opposite end of the spectrum. Bhagat Singh died too young, but was definitely a high point in our freedom movement. While Gandhiji came up with a philosophy of his own, none of the others, including Nehru, Patel and Jinnah, could come up with a better one in that given time. Though all of them were national leaders, Gandhiji had a much more compelling appeal. And as Gandhiji was not after any office, he became the national conscience keeper.

In the fight for independence, were the Gandhi *topi*, *charkha* and *khadi* well-thought-out symbols?

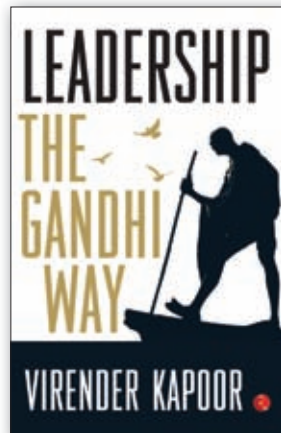
Gandhiji was undoubtedly a great brand manager. Imagine, in those days when there were no image consultants, he came up with these original symbols. Symbolism goes a long way in creating an enduring leader. Gandhi was a nondescript lawyer and his popularity was no mere accident. It was hard work, determination and out-of-the-

AUTHORSPEAK

box thinking. He was very intelligent and created these national symbols after a lot of thought. The colour white, the chosen colour of the *satyagrahi's* attire and *topi*, represented purity and honesty. *Charkha* and *Khadi* were great symbols of self-reliance at a time when people yearned for *swadeshi* rule. The Gandhi *topi* was created as Gandhiji was criticised for wearing a pith hat. He immediately thought of the *topi*, which is affordable, easy to make, and comfortable to wear. If you look at our politicians, you will agree that the Gandhi *topi* is having a great run even now.

Can you name other leaders who have come close to Gandhi in terms of mass appeal and leadership skills?

Nelson Mandela had a similar philosophy and impact on his people. Winston Churchill's hands-on approach was vastly different from Gandhi's struggle. In the present context, Narendra Modi enjoys great confidence. His philosophy of taking the bull by the horns works very well in today's context.



You have brought *jugaad* at the centre of management skills.

Though *jugaad* has always had a negative connotation attached to it, I feel it is the highest form of emotional intelligence. Dealing with a difficult situation and a nasty boss is all part of doing *jugaad*!

Tell us a little about yourself.

I turned writer with books on information systems and telecom. Being from an IIT gave me the edge. But I found that there was no elbow space for creativity in technological writing. After all, five volts will always

be five volts. That is how I changed gears and started writing self-help books, as I presume I have some experience in dealing successfully with people and managing situations.

What is next?

My next book is about 'Passion Quotient', and titled *PQ: How it matters more than IQ*. It should hit the stands by end of October. *Inventing like Einstein* is next on the list.

After celebrating your 25th anniversary, celebrate your first.

The first time your eyes met.
The first time you mustered up the courage.
The first time you bared your heart.
The first time you heard "Yes".
The first date.
The first time you held hands.
The first fight.
The first time you made up.
Shouldn't you be celebrating, that first rush of love before life and the babies and the bills intruded?
Because for the first time you're at an age when you can fall in love with each other all over again.

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harmony
celebrate age

The roadmap to happiness

Seek the fountain of perpetual joy that resides within, urges Paramahansa Yogananda

You want a thing as long as you are not able to get it; when you have secured it, sooner or later you will tire of it, and then you will want something else. Have you ever tried to find that will-o'-the-wisp of 'something else' you seek at the end of all accomplished desires?

No matter what you seek, you must seek it with joy, in expectation of having joy by possessing it, and you must feel joyous when you actually get it. When seeking different things directly or indirectly, in reality you are seeking joy. When seeking all things, it is really joy that you seek through all these things and the fulfilment of all desires.

Then, why not seek joy directly? Why seek it through the medium of material desires and material things? You do not want those things in life which bring you sorrow. Neither do you want those things which promise a little joy in the beginning but sink you in deep remorse and suffering in the end.

Why seek joy by supplicating the favour of short-lasting material things? Why depend upon short-lasting material things for short-lasting joys? Material things and fulfilment of material desires are short-lasting; therefore, all joys born of them are short-lasting. Joys born of eating, smelling fragrance, listening to music, beholding beautiful objects, and touching pleasing things are short-lasting. They last only as long as the sensations born of the senses of taste, smell, hearing, sight, and touch last.

You do not want a tantalising joy; you do not want a transitory joy which brings sorrow in its trail; you crave joy which will not disappear like the sudden flicker of gossamer wings beneath the flash of lightning. You should look for joy which will shine forever steadily, like the ever luminous radium. The joy that rhythmically changes all the time like the different poses of an actor and yet remains unchangeable in itself is what all of us are seeking. Such joy can only be found through regular, deep meditation. Such an ever-new, unchangeable fountain of joy alone can quench our joy-thirst.

If Nature gave to us all at once everything we wanted—wealth, power, and lost friends—we would sooner or later get tired of all of these, but one thing we can never get tired of, and that is joy itself. By its very nature, ever-new joy is



the only thing that can never tire the mind or make it want to exchange joy for something else.

In the pursuit of evil or good, you are always seeking joy. The former promises joy and gives sorrow; the latter may promise sorrow but will surely give lasting joy in the end. Lasting, ever-new joy is God, and when you have found Him, you have the eternally elusive will-o'-the-wisp 'something else' which you always seek at the end of all fulfilled desires. Finding this something else, you will not seek any farther. Finding this ever-new joy, you will find everything in it that you ever sought.

Material objects which give joy remain outside of the mind; they only gain entry into the mind through imagination. Joy, from its very nature, is something born of the mind and lives closest in it. External, material objects can be destroyed, but this joy within can never be destroyed if one knows how to keep it and unless the possessor of joy changes his mind and becomes sorrowful. This joy is ever-new and indestructible. This joy is not an abstract quality of mind, but it is conscious, self-born, and is the conscious, self-expressing quality of Spirit. Seek it and be comforted forever. And when you have found your own nature of unchangeable joy, you will be able to enjoy everything, either pleasant or disagreeable, with your unchangeable, indestructible joy. Your joy will stand unshaken amidst the crash of breaking earthly pleasures.

Yogananda (1893-1952) was an Indian yogi and guru who introduced the world to Kriya Yoga. His life story, Autobiography of a Yogi, is counted among the most important spiritual books of the 20th century

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King of civil rights

His life's work can be summarised in two simple words: equality and non-violence. In 1964, 35 year-old Martin Luther King Jr became the youngest recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, when he was honoured for championing civil rights and combating racial inequality through non-violence. Influenced by the guiding principles of our very own Mahatma Gandhi, King and his followers refused to take recourse to violence despite police brutality. The moral edge he thus earned turned him into one of the most influential voices in the western world.

King was the driving force behind many well-known civil rights movements in the 1950s and 1960s, including the boycott in Montgomery in 1955 of buses that insisted on African-Americans riding only in the backseats. King's protests drew support even outside Montgomery,

putting pressure on bus companies all over America to revamp rules to allow passengers to sit anywhere irrespective of their skin colour. In 1957, King formed the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) to protest against discrimination in schools, hotels and public places. His March on Washington in 1963, during the course of which he gave the iconic 'I have a dream' speech, predicting a day when freedom and equality would become a reality, established him as one of the finest orators in the history of mankind and defined the moral basis behind the civil rights movement. Further, it gave impetus to landmark legislations like the Civil Rights Act of 1964, prohibiting racial discrimination in public places and calling for

equal opportunities, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, providing for inclusion of all Americans.

In 1963, TIME named him 'Man of the Year'. King, ironically, was hated and loved in equal measure. He was assassinated on 4 April 1968 in Tennessee, where he had travelled in support of black sanitary public works employees, calling for fair wages and better treatment. In 1977, he was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award in America. His life and work is honoured in the US with an annual national holiday and schools and public buildings have been named after him. King's legacy to the world: making it a more equal place.



THIS MONTH, THAT YEAR: OCTOBER 1964

- On 10 October, the Summer Olympics opened in Tokyo. Yoshinori Sakai, who was born on 6 August 1945, the day of Hiroshima atomic bombing, lit the Olympic flame.
- On 15 October, the Labour Party won parliamentary elections in the UK, ending 13 years of Conservative Party rule.
- On 21 October, the film version of hit Broadway musical *My Fair Lady*, with Audrey Hepburn in the title role, premiered in New York City.
- On 22 October, the Nobel Prize for Literature was awarded to French philosopher Jean Paul Sartre, despite the fact that he had declined it in advance.

SCHOOL-POOR

adj. Having little ready cash owing to the cost of sending one's children to expensive schools.

Example. Not quite our family, as it happens, and not that it's anything to be ashamed of; indeed, the **school-poor** families are probably the ones who are sacrificing the most for their children's educations.

—Eugene Volokh, "School-poor",
The Washington Post, 2 September 2014

stacking

pp. Simultaneously performing multiple tasks using multiple screened devices.

Example. We're quickly becoming a world of multitaskers. While you're reading this, you might be watching TV or using a second device—smartphone, tablet or laptop. In a study of the multiscreening behaviours of audiences in 30 countries, the US ranks first in **stacking**, spending on average 91 minutes a day watching TV while also doing something unrelated on a second device.

—Joline McGoldrick, "Tuning into multitasking", The Economist Group,
25 April 2014

Snowden effect

n. The increased awareness of the extent and scope of illegal or excessive surveillance in the wake of Edward Snowden's revelations; the increased desire to be protected from such surveillance.

Example. The **Snowden effect** has been significant for the business. "It was the 'Pearl Harbour' moment that brought the Americans into the war," he says. "It really rammed home to the public and companies that personal data was an issue that has to be dealt with."

—Rebecca Burn-Callander, "How data protection emerged from shadows",
The Daily Telegraph, 30 May 2014

“To be happy, we must
be true to nature, and
carry our age along with us.”
—British essayist William Hazlitt (1778-1830)



BUZZ

If you enjoy working with your hands—woodworking, putting together a radio or even traditional DIY crafts—head over to Maker's Asylum in Bandra, Mumbai, for a unique learning experience and a chance to be a part of a community of 'makers' and mingle with innovative folk. Part of the Maker Movement, a culture in the US that is turning more people into creators and not just consumers, this 'trash-into-treasure' DIY culture goes beyond simple cutting and sticking and includes hardcore technical innovation. The studio, initiated by Vaibhav Chhabra, a mechanical engineer from MIT, is a full-fledged space for DIY projects; by being a member for just ₹ 1500 a month, you can use its space and tools (including a cool 3D printer), and attend weekly training sessions. Or you can enrol for a one-off training session where you'll get to learn to use the tools and the 3D printer, although it's a sure bet that once you meet the people there you wouldn't want to stop at just one session. It's open to anyone with a will to learn, from 12 noon to 9 pm. For more details and to sign up, call (0) 7710991000 or go on to Maker's Asylum at Rizvi Palace, Hill Road, Santosh Nagar, Bandra (West), Mumbai.

usie

n. A group photograph taken by one of the members of the group.

Example. When you take a photo of yourself, a 'selfie' (I really don't like that word), or with two or more people, an **usie** (I like that one even less), remember to stretch that arm out as far as it will go and hold the phone or camera up so you have to look up. Just don't tilt your head back, or you'll have a photo of your nostrils.

—Bonnie Bing, "Bonnie Bing: Forget laugh lines—now, there's 'tech neck'", The Wichita Eagle, 1 July 2014

ACQUIHIRE

v. The purchase of a company for the skills and talents of its employees rather than for its products or other assets.

Example. Terms of the deal weren't disclosed, but the pieces fit together like that of a smaller purchase/**acquire**: the Directr product will live on (now free) under its own branding, but the team behind it is joining YouTube's video ad team.

—Greg Kumparak, "Google acquires Directr, an app for shooting short films on your phone", TechCrunch, 6 August 2014

COVEILLANCE

n. A form of surveillance in which every person participates in the monitoring and recording of others.

Example. In this version of surveillance—a transparent **coveillance** where everyone sees each other—a sense of entitlement can emerge: Every person has a human right to access, and benefit from, the data about themselves.

—Kevin Kelly, "Why you should embrace surveillance, not fight it", Wired, 10 March 2014

OTHERHOOD

n. The state of being a woman who is not a mother; women who are not mothers collectively.

Example. We have gone without definition or visibility for too long. I am offering **otherhood** as a name for our misunderstood group of women doing our best to live full and meaningful lives despite the frustrations of some of our most cherished longings. We, the Otherhood, who have yet to find our rightful, equitable, requisite place in society, deserve one. Our otherhood denotes our state, our condition, our character, our nature, and our tribe.

—Melanie Notkin, *Otherhood*, Seal Press, 25 February 2014

connectivity aircraft

n. A drone or similar aircraft outfitted with networking equipment that enables it to provide Internet access to the area over which it flies.

Example. The deal would give Google a major boost in its race with Facebook to connect remote parts of the world to the Internet. The social network has been working with experts from NASA's Jet Propulsion Lab and Ames Research Centre to develop its own **connectivity aircraft** for the purpose.

—Sophie Curtis, "Google boldly goes into space with Virgin Galactic", The Telegraph, 13 June 2014

“When your friends begin to flatter you on how young you look, it's a sure sign you're getting old.

—American humorist and writer Mark Twain (1835-1910)

defensive architecture

n. Architectural designs and features that aim to deter unsanctioned uses of public or private spaces or buildings.

Example. For more than a decade **defensive architecture** has increasingly been creeping into urban life. From narrow, slanted bus shelter seats—not even suitable for sitting on, let alone sleeping on—to park benches with peculiar armrests designed to make it impossible to recline; from angular metal studs on central London ledges to surreal forests of pyramid bollards under bridges and flyovers.

—Alex Andreou, "Spikes keep the homeless away, pushing them further out of sight", The Guardian, 9 June 2014

“It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness”

Vraj Patel, 58, Mumbai, runs a library for civil service aspirants



Amit Gaur

There is an almost hushed silence at the Vasant Smruti and Maharshi Dayanand Foundation IAS Academy in the bustling Mumbai suburb of Dadar. Presiding over it all is 58 year-old **Vraj Patel**, an understated man armed with the sole aim of helping IAS and IPS aspirants achieve their goal. “Thirty years ago, I failed all three attempts at clearing the IAS entrance examination because I lacked proper guidance,” says Patel, who is a superintendent of service tax. “I was determined to try and help others like me who lacked proper guidance.” As word spread about Patel’s impressive collection of books, students from the neighbourhood started seeking his help to prepare for the exams. With tomes popping out from every corner of his house, Patel started stacking his books at his friends and neighbours’ houses. What began as a modest lending library is now an impressive collection of over 100,000 books—on arts, commerce, medicine, and general knowledge—at the 4,000 sq-ft centre provided by Vasant Smruti, an NGO. Today, the academy not only

offers the services of its library but has a bright and airy classroom for guidance and orientation lectures, taken by Patel and others. The academy’s reading room is open all year round. Harashwardhan Nawathe, the first participant to win ₹ 10 million on *Kaun Banega Crorepati*, was Patel’s student. So was Vishwas Nangre Patil, the additional commissioner of police, Anti-Corruption Bureau, Mumbai. Every week, the academy gets over 150-200 new students for career guidance. Patel has been invited to over 1,000 seminars across colleges and social gatherings for guiding aspirants for the civil services. Plans are now afoot to open an academy in Surat. Rushing between his regular job and his work at the academy, it’s not surprising that Patel has not taken a family vacation since 1998. “My wife is used to this life of mine; besides she’s just grateful that she does not have books lying all over the place in the house!” he says, with a chuckle. To get in touch with Vraj Patel, call (0) 9867222210 or email vrajppatel@gmail.com

—Candida Moraes

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