

Endings

A man stands alone, in the blistering heat, eager to do anything for a good life.

He puts his hands in his pocket to find nothing, nothing and nothing every day, but despite this he still had something. It is a gift that can never be replaced, a powerful tool that can never change: he was still happy and content with the love, support and happiness his family gave. This just goes to show that despite what modern day society believes, money is not the only source of happiness and contentment. Money was not what led him to become successful in the future; it was his heart and hope that began a journey for generations to come.

Before I continue, I do not want to raise high hopes that this story will have a happy ending. This is reality and not some fictional superhero story. Real heroes may leave behind them memories that deeply scar and hurt.

1978. The conditions were rough and times became tougher so the decision was made to leave his beloved country. My grandfather and his brother migrated to Pakistan, the closest option to landlocked Afghanistan.

A jar filled with a mixture of emotions: excitement, sadness, joy and despair. The time came to leave and sacrifice his family life but it was for the best.

He knew that this would be a new experience, and a big change. This can make anyone feel anxious, weak and inferior. However, the stars were comforting and he knew that, despite the challenges he'd face, the stars would always be there, to console, relieve and reassure him of whatever fears he had.

My grandfather moved to Quetta. This city is currently part of Pakistan in geographical and political maps and is located on the so-called 'Durand line'. This portion of land used to be part of Afghanistan but in 1893 Sir Mortimer Henry Durand, a British Civil servant and diplomat decided certain bits of Afghanistan e.g. Quetta, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa should be given to Pakistan. This is why they look nothing like Pakistani cities but resemble cities in Afghanistan. This was a 100 years contract made with Pakistan, Afghanistan and Britain. However, 100 years has passed and the land has not been returned to Afghanistan.

Personally to me, my Grandfather's entire life has seemed like a never ending rollercoaster ride with multiple twists and turns. I feel that life had faced him with many challenges, but he always rose to the top determined as ever. I would describe his life as a mathematical line graph: a straight

line climbing up the charts. He managed to reach to the top from all the way at the bottom with only his confidence and determination.

At this desperate moment in time my grandfather, like any other unemployed person, was in desperate need for a job. I always considered him very talented because after doing several small courses he was able to work in the accountancy business as an apprentice. Yet he realised that this career path would just lead to a dead end at his age. Too much time had passed for him to earn qualifications for this and he did not have the money to study. Moreover, he never found this really interesting or appealing to him.

Sometimes I think to myself that why did he give up on the career of accountancy? Was it just because he disliked it? Now I realise that he wanted to start a massive franchise or business so that in the future if any of his sons were not in a great state to do something in the future, they would have a foundation to start from and need not suffer and start from scratch like he did.

Gradually, he had a little amount of money to rent a small store in Quetta. My grandfather, being the person he was, always thought big for opportunities and chances that seemed really small at the time. Steadily and progressively he managed to start his own business in selling home electronics. Day by day as time went on his business grew bigger and better.

My Grandfather a lucky and blessed father of seven children; my dad being the youngest, now had the best that money could buy for his family.

My grandfather 'Ubaidullah Khan Khilji' died on the 13th of June 2004, this was before my little brother was born (09/11/04).

He helped my parents move to the UK, he gave my father the opportunity to go live abroad as he wanted the best life for him. My parents moved to the UK in the year 2000, and then I was born on the 4th of November in Isleworth. My dad asked his dad that 'why didn't you let me stay in Quetta with all my brothers to live a lavish and luxurious life, like they are.' But my grandfather replied and said, 'I want you to be a self-made, independent man, just like I was.'

My grandfather's death is a very painful story. One sunny, bright morning he was working hard as he always does, fixing a tile on the roof of our driveway and fell off his ladder. This caused major brain trauma and he was in a coma for several months. However, it was said to be that the doctor allowed him to take aspirin causing his blood to clot in his brain. He would be alive now if it was not for the medical mistakes. If he was alive, I know exactly what he would say, 'Always forgive, and forget. Never hold a grudge as these things happen in life.' At this time, my family and I were in London. My mum was pregnant with my little brother so she could not go to Pakistan for his

memorial. So my father went for several weeks for his memorial. This was also a hard time for my mum as she had to look after two little toddlers on her own.

The business that my grandfather has started has now progressed rapidly; having three massive branches in Pakistan where some of his sons are running them. It has turned into a true family business.

Not only that but when my grandfather died he left behind a lot of money and possessions which were left to his children and wife. After my grandfather passed away, my grandmother is keeping everyone strong and the family bonded.

Most of my grandfather's sons, children and wives live in the house in Quetta and a few live in Karachi. However, other distant relatives are still living in Afghanistan. My parents, aunts, and uncles were all born in Kandahar Afghanistan and some of the ancestors in Ghazni, and Kabul.

My Grandfather's brother has an amazing story as well. After my grandfather died, his brother was committed to fulfilling his remaining goals to become educated and knowledgeable. Both brothers believed that education was the key to success. However, just because they both did not have a good educational base in their youth doesn't mean they couldn't learn new things. So now his brother in his old age is still learning new things every day. He achieved many degrees and qualifications. Just recently, when I visited him on holiday, he allowed me to look around his study room. It would seem like a very small room to anyone on the outside but on the inside it seemed even bigger than any library I have been to. As I entered the only things in the room were books. Books were everywhere, no shelf was left empty. This man was dedicated to completing his brother's desires. This was the least he could do for his brother.

My grandfather's story has inspired me. No matter who you are and what condition you are in, everything is possible and nothing is impossible. I wanted to share this story as it may inspire anyone to be grateful for what you have and know that suffering will end eventually. But take my word for it that nothing is just going to get better by some miracle or magic, you need to work hard to get what you want in life.

Sometimes we think that the future is a long way off but in reality we should always have a plan for our future. My grandfather died after most of his goals were achieved. Some may say that all his hard work was wasted but his hard work will be remembered with gratitude by generations to come. There is always a happy ending to seek in every story.

I remember the way my grandmother described his death to me. He was lying on the bed and no sound could be heard. No breathing... No heartbeat... Just the end...