

Anjli's Farewell to Ba

Good morning.

I think you all know me and Komal by now, but in case you don't, we're Shardaben's granddaughters. We would like to share a few words on behalf of all of Ba's 8 grandchildren:

**Niti, Neelam, Priyanka, Reshma, Amrish, Komal,
Anjli and Amar.**

My Ba has been a constant in my life since I was born. She lived with us both in the UK and in Switzerland, so I grew up with her. She was a true matriarch, not only of our family but in every community she was a part of. She was a well respected elder of Skylounge Society, the complex where mum, dad & Ba lived in Pune. Everyone would come to greet her and touch her feet during her daily catch-up/gossip sessions with the other Bas of the society. She was well known on the Chapfstrasse in Zumikon as well. In fact the neighbours knew her better than they know any of us, because Ba would go on her daily walk from one end of the street to the other, sometimes all the way down and back up the hill (it's what kept her so fit and mobile all these years). She would waive "gruezi" to the neighbours and shoo off the dogs.

She even got invited for impromptu tea one time at a neighbour's house.

I used to love accompanying Ba on these walks when I was home for the holidays.

Ba was so acutely aware of her surroundings and would point out the beauty in the nature around us...she would carefully observe the leaves on the trees to gauge how windy it was. “ek panddu nathi haltu”...”not one single leaf is moving” she would say, if the air was completely still.

I also had the privilege during these walks to hear some of Ba’s famous stories of her time growing up in Gujarat and living in Kenya. I realised that Ba was quite a modern, forward thinking woman of her time. She cherished her education

(a rare opportunity for a girl in India 90 years ago) and had a genuine thirst for knowledge and wisdom. I think her time with her friends in boarding school in Gujarat were some of her fondest memories, it came through in the way she would light up when regaling her adventures to us, and that too in such incredible detail. Just a month or so ago, I was showing Ba pictures of the last time I visited India, when I went to the Golden Temple in Amritsar, Punjab...she’d say ohh Punjab, “Tane khabar chhe Punjab etle Panch Ab....5 nadi, mane hajji name yaad chhai (she was explaining to me the origins of the word Punjab, that it meant 5 rivers and that she still remembered the names): and then she would list the rivers out “Jhelum, Ravi, Satlej, Chenab, Beas...” it was as fresh in her memory as it was 75-80 years ago.

Ba would recite tales of her adventures travelling around the world with Dadaji,

from Egypt to Hong Kong to all around the US on one flexible plane ticket, where you could hop on and off any domestic flight at your leisure (not sure we'll ever see a ticket offer like that in our lifetime).

She grew weary of travel and adventure in these last few years, but I had a chance to have a last adventure with her in 2016 when we went to Bali for Komal's 30th and mum's 60th birthdays. Ba had turned 90 just a few months earlier.

Although her enthusiasm for travel waned in her final years, her curiosity and wonder did not.

She loved to watch travel, nature and wildlife programs on TV, BBC's Planet Earth was one of her favourites.

She was fascinated by new places, cultures and creatures.

One time, I was on the phone with her from New York and she said, "I just watched a great program on Russia, tu koi divas gayi choo?" I'd say yes Ba, I've been once before...she'd say "Tu ek divas jaje jova,

Russia, Komal ke Amar saathe."

She was done with her travels but she always encouraged us to explore the worlds wonders.

As most of you know, Ba was a very put-together sort of person, she took pride in looking prim and proper, whether out at a function or at home with the family.

She was always immaculately dressed, her sari never out of place, her hair oiled and tied back neatly, and her eyebrows perfectly shaped.

She didn't always approve of my fashion sense though, in fact she really disapproved of the ripped jeans

I would wear around the house.

She would ask me, 'Tu kem ah badhu pehre che, ah fatela trousers?

"why do you wear these ripped jeans"

(taari paase paisa natthi?) you don't have money.

How about this, she'd say, I'll give you some money and you go to the shops this weekend and buy some nice new trousers. I would say Ba, thank you but,

mane nava nathhi joita,

ah aajkal fashion che...etle houn pehru chou"

(I'm wearing these because it's the fashion, I'd respond) she'd shake her head in disapproval...

"ah vari kevi fashion?"

I haven't worn those jeans since...

The house is eerily quiet without you Ba.

Nobody calling out my name, nobody bursting into song or bhajan spontaneously to bring life and energy to the house. I will miss the sound of your voice, the sight of your infectious smile, and the feel of your baby-soft skin (softer than mine even at 94 years old).

Thanks to your renowned storytelling and the wonders of modern technology, your wisdom, your life and your songs(gayano) will live on for generations to come.

Thank you Ba for your love, laughter, kindness, strength and wisdom. I'm eternally grateful for the time I spent with you these last few months.

I'm not sure how I will pass the time without you. I will miss you every day and selfishly wish you were still here. But I take solace in the fact that you lived a full, happy and meaningful life and are now at peace with your sajana (dadaji) and the rest of your family.

They have been waiting for you. You'll be forever missed and always remembered.

Jay Shri Krishna Ba.