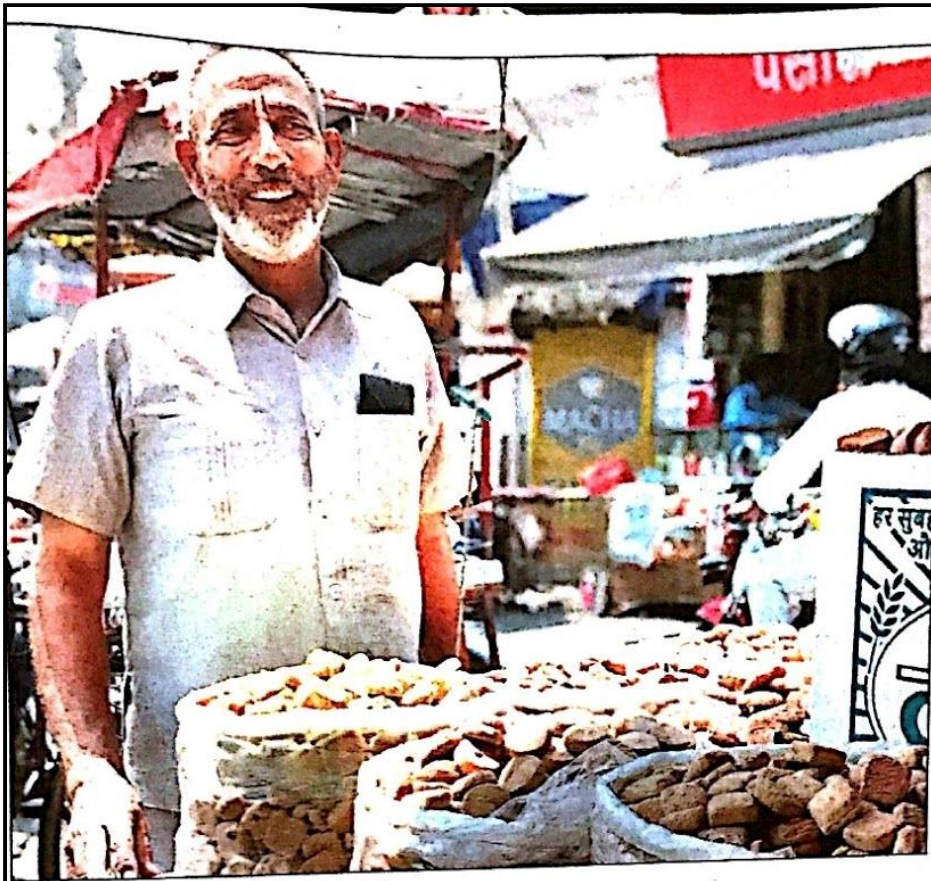
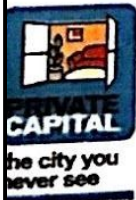


An Extra Ordinary Man



An extraordinary man

A pavement vendor whose general demeanour gives the area a special character



Every cynical person exasperated with the world and its people ought to meet him. Spending just 10 minutes in his company will make you believe again in mankind. So courteous, so polite, so dapper, always dressed in crisp safari suit. His voice is deep and warm, and when he speaks, his Urdu diction lulls you into a profound calmness—it's like listening to a man of letters. And yes, he speaks beautifully fluent Punjabi too.

Nashir Ahmed Khan is a living landmark of Jama Masjid area in Gurugram's Sadar Bazaar — a noteworthy personality of an area where everybody seems to know him. It is very easy to meet him. No prior appointment needed. The gentleman sells dates and biscuits on a rari, a pavement cart, on a lane facing the aforementioned mosque.

Mr Khan hovers about the cart, very often holding a cup of chai. Now you would see him

chatting with a rickshaw puller, now with a wealthy "lala" from the bazaar. Whatever the social or financial status of the person he is engaging with, his archetypal politeness does not vary.

"My dear janab (sir)," he says in Urdu, "I'm 65, or perhaps 66, and the one aadat (habit) that has remained my companion all these years is to treat every person whom I meet with respect and affection, as if that person has been sent by the God to me."

Mr Khan is chatting on phone. This evening too he is standing by his cart in Sadar Bazaar. One would have liked to live-chat with him on WhatsApp video.

Unfortunately, his social skills, so proper with fellow humans, are not up to the mark with the mobile. "I apologise, janab, but I don't know how to use WhatsApp."

(The photograph dates to one of the many casual meetings that this reporter had with

him over the course of several months.)

Like most street traders, Mr Khan's business is grievously suffering of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. His assistants, two brothers who would help him with manning the cart when he felt like making a round of the bazaar, or going to Delhi to get fresh stock, have gone back home. "Mufid and Muked left for their village in Bareilly a day before the lockdown began... I call them on phone sometimes, they say they won't be returning anytime soon."

Mr Khan now chats fondly of his ex-colleagues, giving a sense of their lives in the engrossing manner of an expert story teller. His tale is embroidered with beautifully structured phrases, laced with occasional dohas and shairiys. Even so, his phone conversation is punctuated with sudden breaks in which he can be heard exchanging greetings with friendly passersby. Well, that's the only flaw—if it can be considered a flaw—in Mr Khan. He wants to be attentive to everyone at the same time, and so is unable to give you his hundred per cent attention.

On one occasion last year, while chatting with a tailor who had stopped by his cart, he had swiftly handed a fistful of dates to a beggar woman for free. He momentarily turned to her, flashed a smile, and didn't utter a word while handing over the dates, perhaps to save her some embarrassment.

One would imagine that Mr Khan has been a part of this locality for decades. But his stall is only six years old. He earlier spent a great amount of years in Kuwait, where he was a "Public Relations Officer" for a burka company. "I returned to India because I was suffering from diabetes, and in those countries there is only allopathy and I wanted Ayurveda."

His diabetes remains under control, assures the sweet-natured man.

A brief interaction with Mr Khan may suggest he is a happy man who has been cushioned away from hard facts of life. Not true. One of his three sons died a few years ago. And now his business, he confides, has plummeted to a mere 10% of what it used to make in the pre-corona era.

Doesn't he feel angry sometimes?

Mr Khan responds instantly. "I believe that upar wala (God) gives and upar wala takes... we humans control nothing... all that we can do is to live with honesty and mutual respect. That is the course of my life."

You may meet Mr Khan daily outside Jama Masjid, from 10am to 6pm.

Question 1.

According to this literary piece, if I was a cynical person I would always

- a. believe people are interested in themselves
- b. think that people are trustworthy
- c. use people's emotions to our advantage
- d. have a lack of faith or hope in human species

Question 2.

Mr. Khan is generally a philanthropist at heart, but there is one most endearing style that has never left his side .What is this habit?

Question 3.

No matter how good a person may be, we all have our failings, in Mr.Khan's case what is his biggest drawback?

Question 4.

Mr. Khan , the hero of our story, is a known name in his area, but one cannot associate certain things with him. Choose the option that states facts which are not true about him.

- (i) Mr. Khan is a businessman with a small shop at Sadar Bazaar.
- (ii) Mr. Khan laments that he could not go back to his native town.
- (iii) Mr. Khan is a well read and erudite man.
- (iv) Mr. Khan shifted to Gurugram few years back.

- a. Option i & ii
- b. Option ii & iii
- c. Option iii & iv
- d. Option i & iv

Question 5.

The main message of the given story is best displayed through this saying:

- a. Good deeds are seldom remembered; bad deeds are seldom forgotten.
- b. Thinking good thoughts is not enough, doing good deeds is not enough, seeing others follow your good examples is not enough.
- c. When you are not kind to others, it not only changes you, it changes the world.
- d. How far that little candle throws his beams! So shines a good deed in a weary world.

Question 6.

If you were asked to write the pen portrait of Mr. Khan, which words would best describe him? Fill in the blanks with the words that depict the character of Mr. Khan. Remember there are some extra words too.

well- mannered	theist	elegant
loquacious	generous	remarkable
anecdotalist	atheist	

Mr. N. A. Khan is a man, who looks **(a)** _____ in his smart safari suit. He is on all occasions **(b)** _____ and polite. He is very popular as a **(c)** _____ man who has something or the other to say to everyone around him. His **(d)** _____ nature is reflected in the way he quietly helps others. Mr. Khan, the **(e)** _____, loves to share about the lives of his colleagues. He is a true **(f)** _____ as he speaks about God's grace.

Question 7.

We often come across inspiring stories and anecdotes in newspapers that do not fit the bill of a news item or a report on a current issue. What do you think the editor is trying to achieve by allowing to incorporate such a story in his daily newspaper?

CCT Weekly-ENGLISH

ANSWER KEY

1. (d)
2. He treats every person with respect as if he was God sent.
3. He is unable to give his complete attention to anybody because he wants to give attention to everybody.
4. (b)
5. (a)
6. (a) elegant
(b) well mannered
(c) loquacious
(d) generous
(e) anecdotalist
(f) theist
7. Such stories help to reinstate one's belief in mankind. There may be hatred, malice, corruption in this world but there are some kind hearted Samaritans who help us in regaining faith in mankind. The editor wants to rekindle that light of trust in humanity.

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