

# In sunshine and in shadow - Musafir's Memo



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## Chapter 4: The Indian Diaspora

Looking back, we are now a part of the Indian diaspora spread on almost all the continents, Asia, Europe, Australia and North America. I was talking to my nephew this morning (my sister's son) who lives in London, England. He has a baby girl, named Vanya. Vanya is only 3 and a half years old. I met her once but my children and grandchild have never seen her. I asked my nephew how would Vanya and our grandson know each other. The relationship will be further diluted by the time they would have their own children. These thoughts puzzle me and sometimes even disturb me.

I already notice differences in lifestyle, value systems and habits among family members living in different countries. They talk about different set of sports, politics and day to day problems. We

don't relate to each other except when reminiscing about common relatives and ancestors.

Social media plays an important role in integrating relatives from different countries and continents. Members of our extended families (My wife's and mine) keep connected through platforms such as WhatsApp. At least we know about each others' birthdays and important events and milestones which would have been, otherwise, totally neglected.

I always remember a poignant moment that I witnessed in one of my coworkers' life. His name is Tom. We were on a business trip to Strasbourg, France together. Strasbourg is on the river Rhine which separates France from Germany. One evening after work we decided to

have dinner in Baden-Baden, Germany which is only 26 miles from Strasbourg across the Rhine. While eating dinner in Baden-Baden, Tom asked the waiter to give him the local phone directory. It so happened that Tom's ancestors were from Baden-Baden. Tom looked for some names in the phone directory and became teary-eyed. When I asked him the reason, he said that his ancestors were from here. I suggested to Tom to visit

them. Tom said, "Anil there is no use doing that. They won't know me and I don't know them."

Tom's story is the story of all immigrants. It's heartrending but the river of life flows through sunshine and shadow.