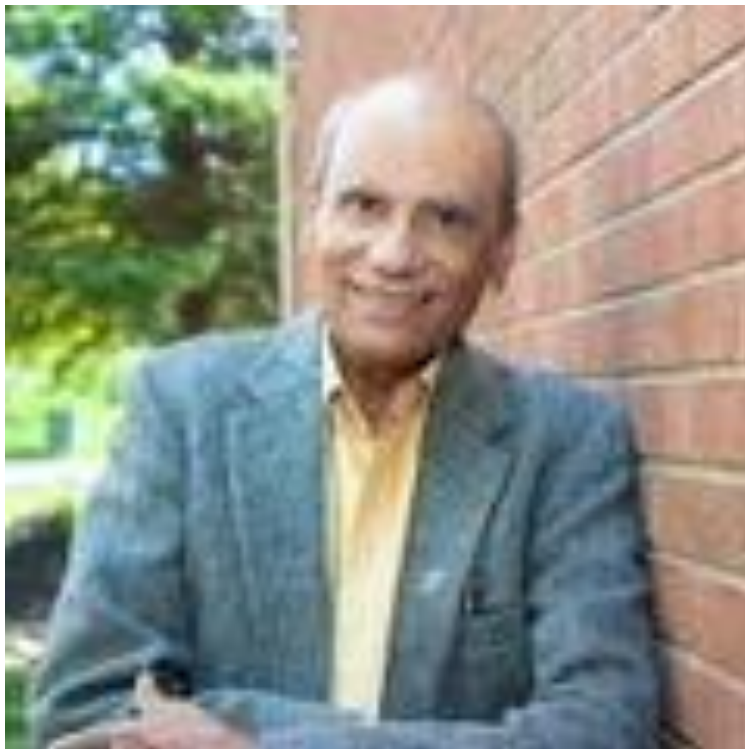




## This Is My Life”

by Anil Shrivastava ‘Musafir’



I recently realized that I have been calling my friends and relatives and making an effort to keep in touch with them without much reciprocation. I stopped calling

them recently with no upshot as no one seemed to miss my presence, anyway. This is assuring because I don't want them grieving over my absence someday.

Recently I've started seeing my father in my dreams. He appears as a lonely man staying aloof from all of us. I feel very sad for him when I wake up. He selflessly paid for my education and provided for me until I got on my own feet. I wish I was closer to him when he was alive. I've really started missing him lately.

I don't miss my mother at all since she died when I was only six months old. I've overcome many obstacles in life without any maternal bond. I don't miss

her at all, albeit, I keep her photo in my study hardly thinking about her much.

In my opinion, I am just a transitory figure for them who may be here today and gone tomorrow. However, I miss my brothers and sometimes cry for them when I am alone. I've lost all of them. Many times, I feel lonely without them. They were very loving to me, and I loved them from the bottom of my heart. The biggest drawback of living long is that you have to witness your elders and contemporaries depart.

We can miss people for a multitude of reasons, but once that emotion arises, it can be hard to shake it. I miss them when I eat certain food, listen to particular songs, smell certain scents, and visit nostalgic places. Inevitably, these things lead me to reminisce.

Coming back to where I started from, knowing that someone doesn't miss you as much as you miss them is not a great feeling. I left my old country 51 years ago. There have been social and cultural changes in me that separate me from my folks in the old country causing feelings of isolation and loneliness especially because I am viewed as an "other." That is, I am not accepted wholly by the group.

I've my own nuclear family here consisting of my wife, two sons, their wives and our grandson. Even my siblings' families are busy with their own lives. In any case, we shouldn't allow people to control our life and affect it in such a way

that it consumes us. After all, I've my own life and they have their own.

"I don't care what you say anymore, this is my life

Go ahead with your own life, leave me alone." (Billy Joel)