



# “THE CENTRE OF OUR UNIVERSE”

## ABUL HAYAT TALKS ABOUT HIS GRANDCHILDREN

*I used to buy clothes only for my daughters, but after my grandchild was born I had to prepare a special gift for him as well. It was like a whole new thrill for the old man! A completely new happiness! Ever since I was a kid, I saw our own parents joyfully preparing presents for their grandchildren. I had also been feeling the same urge myself. It was 2003, the year my first grandchild saw the light of this world; also the year when we had the taste of spending an Eid day with our grandchild for the first time.*

Eid hardly seems happening without my grandchildren around me. Everything seems somewhat empty. They fill up all my emptiness immaculately. Even if my daughters are not around, my grandchildren do not allow me to feel lonely. It's a totally different feeling, perhaps like the age old saying, *Ashol er cheye shuder maya beshi!* We have somewhat the same case. I think it is how the universe functions by default.

I keep anticipating my grandchildren stepping into my house. Whenever I have a recess, whenever I am lounging, I expect their arrival. They come and get busy with the TV or mobile phone. Yet the remaining time that they allow their grandfather is worth cherishing, every single minute I try to find my shares in their innocent euphoria. They sit at my table, make paintings and crafts. Our daughters are very liberal about their children, just the way we have been to them. And at the same time they also make sure the children are given all the necessary parental guidance so that they don't get spoiled.

At times I suggest that my grandchildren should be given some co-curricular lessons, like music lessons or lessons on musical



instruments like the *tabla*. We did not have such opportunities when we were kids, and so I suggest that these opportunities should be utilized. But I never create any pressure on my grandchildren.

Every moment spent with my grandchildren leaves me a fond memory. Every minute that I play with them, every day of their springtime in blissful laughter gives me the feeling of paradise. Maybe one

would come and say, “Let's go and play football, Nana!” Maybe it's only throwing the ball against the wall and running to catch it. But whoever catches it first, gets to feel like the champion of the universe!

I don't know how much intelligent we were back in our days of childhood. But now the children are very smart and intelligent. I notice them, mark their witty activities, it gives me an integral comfort.

I still clearly remember an incident with my grandson Areeb Ahmed, son of my elder daughter Bipasha Ahmed. His mother was restraining him from drinking carbonated drinks, saying, “Don't drink it, it's bad for your health!” So he came to me taking the bottle out of refrigerator and requested me to pour the drink in his glass. I told him, “Do you know that only dumb people drink such drinks?” And to my surprise, he immediately responded, “Yes Nana, I am a dumb guy!” Such jolly moments of us together remain fresh in my memories always. Their innocence is what makes them so beautiful.

My grandchildren are very much interested in watching dramas. Be it one of my dramas, or of Bipasha or Tauquir's – they watch very eagerly. Except for Bipasha's son, he is only into football matches. Bed room or drawing room, wherever he goes, you will find him dribbling with a football all day. He even plays in the school tournaments.

This is how our lives revolve around the centre of our universe – our beloved grandchildren.

By Tasbir Iftekhar