

Questions and
Answers with an
Inspirational Bahá'í



Q: How did you deal with the anxiety of living under government persecution?

A: My grandparents did not know how to read and write . . . My grandfather used to ask me to read *The Dawn-Breakers** for him . . . Later, I learned that he knew the stories. What he was doing was solidifying my faith . . . The anxiety did not bother us because we looked at [it as] “We are the current Dawn-Breakers.” [That] doesn’t mean it wasn’t hard. It gave us perspective [on] how to handle it.

Q: How did the Bahá'í Faith influence your career choice?

A: After high school, even today, there is really no future for Bahá'ís . . . My career choice [was] really defined by what Bahá'ís are able to do in Iran . . . [For example], you cannot [do] anything with food, because Bahá'ís are [considered] unclean. So I looked into the eyecare business . . . That helped me to [find] my current profession.



Above: Mansur and his family enjoy the sunset at a park near their home in Colorado (left to right: son Ryan, wife Roza, Mansur, son Dustin).

Left: Mansur examines a patient's eyes at one of his offices. He says, “I love really being able to make a difference in their vision.”

Q: Was it hard to leave Iran? What gave you the strength to keep going?

A: I really didn't have a choice. Some atrocities happened to our beloved friends [and] I took some pictures . . . So I had to leave. It is absolutely not easy to leave everything behind . . . There were two routes to escape . . . Pakistan [or] Turkey . . . But in 1988, they were not taking any refugees in Pakistan. So my only option was Turkey, which is a much harder, harsher route, [with] mountains as high as 15,000 feet . . . The total journey was 13 days of walking [in] the dead of winter. [I drew] strength from the Faith . . . and of course, relying on [my two friends] . . . We would walk at nighttime and hide in the daytime.

Q: What can kids do to help those who are persecuted for their faith?

A: Read the history of the Faith . . . plus take action . . . I don't think I could have been able to endure what I have without my reliance on the history of our beloved heroes . . . And call [your] congressmen and say, “I've learned that the Bahá'ís [in Iran] are persecuted . . . I want you to sponsor this resolution.” It will have much, much more impact than an adult calling. [Also], when you meet someone with a different language, different accent, don't make a judgment, don't [believe] a stereotype. You might be losing a beautiful story . . .

Family photo by Sandy Puć, work photo by John Leyba
**The Dawn-Breakers* is a book about Bábí and Bahá'í history.