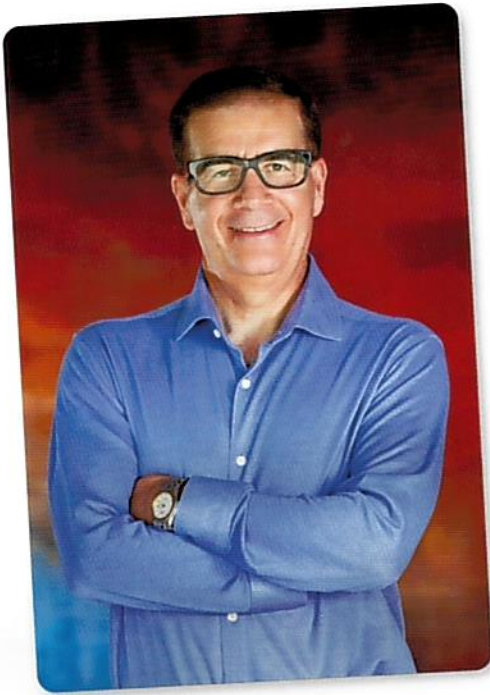


Dr. Mansur Nurdel



Imagine running for your life over snow-covered mountains in the dark, with little food. That was part of Mansur Nurdel's frightening 13-day trek to escape from Iran through Turkey. He describes the journey in his new book, *One More Mountain*.

Born in 1963 to the only Bahá'í family in his Iranian village, Mansur had an extremely turbulent childhood. Due to religious prejudice, he and his four siblings were often harassed, and a brother was seriously injured. Mansur couldn't attend college. In 1979, the family's home was destroyed by a mob, and they fled to the city of Tabriz. Mansur took pictures to record the brutal treatment of Bahá'ís, putting his life in greater danger. At age 25, he was forced to leave his family and country behind.

After 18 months in Turkey, Mansur arrived in Wisconsin, U.S. He worked as a janitor to earn money for college. After graduating from the University of Wisconsin, he went to optometry school in Missouri. Today, Mansur owns a thriving optometry practice in Colorado, where he lives with his wife, Roza, and their adult sons, Ryan and Dustin.

Q: What's one of your favorite childhood memories?

A: Playing barefoot soccer in our village with the kids and my cousin, who used to come and visit us. That was my favorite thing to do. As the only Bahá'í family [in the village], we were always persecuted and beaten, [but] during soccer . . . we were part of the group.

Q: What was the most challenging experience for you as a kid?

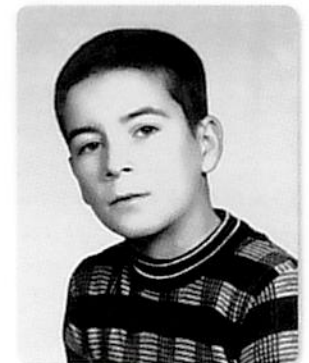
A: The persecution we faced . . . The hardest of all was that my younger brother was attacked. However, being bullied because of being a Bahá'í has solidified my love for the Faith and . . . who I am today.

Q: What prompted you to write a book about your experiences?

A: Writing this book has been the ultimate healing . . . I wanted people to know what's happening to the Bahá'ís [in Iran] today . . . This is happening right now, right in front of us . . . I hope more people will step forward to write about this and talk about it. It is not easy to open up.

Q: You were 15 when Iran became an Islamic republic. How did life change for you and your family?

A: That changed my life totally. On January 1, 1979 . . . our home was completely destroyed in front of our eyes. [A mob] looted everything we had, literally everything, [including] our livestock. My parents say it took one hour, but I thought it lasted a century . . . We were guarded by some [Muslim] family members from being hurt . . . They [told] us to either go to the mosque and recant our Faith or get out from the village. We chose the second one.



In fifth grade, Mansur loved playing soccer with his cousin in his village of Harvan, Iran.