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GAHAMBARS AROUND THE HAFTA KESHWAR ZAMIN

YAZAD

TO PRAY

SAAZAD

TO PERFORM

KHURAD

TO PARTAKE

DAHAD

TO DONATE

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Personal Profiles

Finding the Path to Enlightenment Through One's True Passions

An explorative interview with a modern day renaissance woman,

Shirrin Kumaana-Wadia

An interview with Ferzin Patel

One cannot use one title to describe the multi-talented Shirrin Kumaana-Wadia. Referring to her as an architect, interior designer, dancer, or photographer and more recently, a spiritual/meditational blogger are just a few of the facets which make up the creative palette of this accomplished and versatile young woman. But as of late, this flourishing photographer is now unleashing herself through a new medium and using social media to reach out to thousands of followers who have embraced not only her photographic talents but her spiritual and positive teachings to help people see the world a little differently.

She has chosen to express her talents and ideas through various mediums. How she sees the world is beautifully interpreted through several creative portholes. She interprets the sound of a city through her dance, and visually translates the landscape/cityscape through her photography. However, presently she is reaching deep within her own soul to capture the essence of her spirit and conveying it through her blog on Facebook- *Shirrin-Love and Miracles*.

After completing her degree at Rizvi College in Mumbai in architecture, she met her husband Arzan Sam Wadia and married in 2006. They both came to the US and settled in NYC.



After years of studying dance, Shirrin is a trained semi-professional dancer in Latin Jazz, Afro-Cuban and Salsa and has performed regularly on the New York Dance circuit.

Her love for photography began two years ago by accident when she was confronted with the mortality of her ailing beloved grandfather whom she was very close with. She held his frail hand against her youthful clasp and was overcome with emotion. She reached for her iPhone to capture this moment of human fragility and hence led to the beginning of her photographic journey. *(photo left below)*

Over the course of several months she captured over 9,000 images.

After a successful debut exhibition at The Viewing Room in Mumbai titled, "To Eternity and Back" in December 2013, Shirrin is working towards future exhibitions in New York, Mumbai and Singapore in 2015.

Before I sat down with this multidimensional young woman, I was curious about Shirrin's blog so I went to her Facebook page, called, *Shirrin-Love and Miracles*. I was astonished to learn that she has a following of 19,000 and growing. She encapsulates her followers with aesthetically pleasing and beautifully captured photos of nature, elements of a dichotomous New York City, and matches them with strong healing messages of affirmations which come from her daily meditation. She began this journey in February of 2013. After completing a course in Intuitive Training with Dr. Laila Ahmed, her spiritual guide and teacher in Mumbai, she found herself receiving strong positive messages for healing and change. She began writing down these select verses and sharing them with close friends and family.



FP: (Ferzin Patel) Where do you draw your daily affirmations from?

SKW: (Shirrin Kumaana Wadia) My own affirmations

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would come to me during my daily meditation. As I expanded the reservoir of positive thinking through meditation and writing down my affirmations, I started quite naturally to seek out the thoughts and writings of others. I read many different blogs, am constantly researching new spiritual content, and am current on spiritual books and authors. When you create a positive change in your own life, you naturally gravitate towards people who share your life views and help foster them even more.

FP: Do you meditate? Has this facilitated you generating these daily affirmations and in what way?

SKW: Yes, I meditate and also say my prayers two to three times a day. I practice a powerful form of healing meditation called “White Light Meditation” that was taught to me by Dr. Laila Ahmed. I generate most of my affirmations in a meditative state, and write my affirmations down immediately afterwards in a process that is often referred to as ‘automatic writing.’ This happens only when the spiritual self is in an awakened state, and momentarily eclipses the conscious mind.

FP: What are you hoping that people will gain with sharing your ideas and feelings in your blog?

SKW: My great hope is that in some small way, I can be part of the positive changes in the world. I saw my own life transform in ways I couldn’t have imagined through a radical change in my belief systems, and I want to be able to share my inner experiences with others if only – at the moment - to plant seeds in their minds for positive change. The blog covers a diverse spectrum of thoughts, feelings, affirmations and life situations, to encourage a more positive and

generous outlook which can impact positive changes, both big and small. We can’t change circumstances or situations, but we can change the way we look at them.

FP: How do you inspire people with your daily affirmations while knowing people struggle in their daily lives and face the daily realities of life?

SKW My blog is intended to inspire, uplift, encourage and motivate people to be better versions of themselves, thereby making the world a better place. Have you ever seen an artist start with a blank canvas in front of them? Do you ever wonder what goes through their minds when faced with that infinite space, full of possibilities? We are all like that artist; we are always creating something out of nothing. If you are having a series of negative thoughts in a day, it can feel like being on a downward spiral. One positive message can change your day, and that day may change your life. My blog is not a solution to life’s problems, it is a positive aid.

FP: Are the affirmations based on how you feel? Or do you draw upon the emotions and spirituality of others around you?

SKW My affirmations come from within and sometimes they are triggered by what’s happening around me – it may be a major event like the plane that crashed a few months ago, or the struggles of someone near and dear to me, or something that is happening in my own life that needs resolution. My affirmations (and the ones I appropriate from others that resonate with me) bring a sense of balance back into my mind and restore internal order: they are always the right ones for that day. That said, I select my posts very intuitively. If you focus your mind on giving unselfishly, I believe that some of the positive energy you generate will find its way back to those who need healing.

FP: How have you grown as a photographer and used the various mediums of all your trades (dance, interior design, architecture)?

SKW: Being an architect and interior designer by profession, my visual sensibility was already very defined with relation to subject, color, design and composition when I started taking photographs. I started very simply with my iPhone since I always had it with me. I progressed to using other cameras and lenses and enjoy experimenting with new techniques all the time. Most of my photographs are shot in New York City, and a few in Mumbai and some in other

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places around the world. I take every opportunity to shoot but I would admit, that I have a special place in my heart for New York City.

FP: Of all the mediums, which one do you think encapsulates your creative prose?

SKW: Dance. When I dance, I lose myself completely. Hours can go by, sometimes I bleed from my feet, and for days my soles hurt. I realized relatively late that I had a flair for dance, but I have pursued it for several years now, getting better and better at it. Nothing gives me more pleasure – or pain! I feel totally connected to this thing called existence when I am in the middle of a dance, it's like a trance really.

FP: You say that NYC gave you so much opportunity to grow as a person. Did you come to the States with a certain perception of America? Has that perception changed living here?

SKW: I came to NYC as a young woman in my early twenties, and up until that point, I had a very sheltered and protected life. The western world to me, especially America, was a remote place in my imagination: one full of possibilities and yet, also quite overwhelming. I was very curious about America, but my first few years here were anticlimactic. I love the passion and ambition that drives people from all over the world to

this mad city to be the best, and amongst the best, in the world.

I was raised in India with very fixed perceptions of being a woman in this world that were extremely limiting. I admit I did hit rock bottom at some point in those early years in the States, and then I had just two choices. I could either sink or swim. I chose to swim, and I chose to enjoy the good things. I've had an amazing life transformation in New York. Today, my reality is construed out of all the positive things in my life. Today, I am a changed person, from the inside out.

Khalil Gibran, one of my favorite writers and a huge source of inspiration said *"Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls; the most massive characters are seared with scars."* There's beauty and truth in those words. I don't wish to lead people away from reality with my affirmations, but to look at it instead with loving eyes.

Readers can learn more about Shirrin Kumaana-Wadia or follow her on <https://www.facebook.com/ShirrinLoveMiracles>

Ferzin Patel is a Psychotherapist living and working in NY and is an active member of the ZAGNY Community.



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