



BASANT K CHAUDHARY HAS GONE BEYOND HIS INHERITED ATTRIBUTES AND HAS ACHIEVED BEYOND EXPECTATIONS. HE HAS CARVED HIS OWN NICHE AND IS IN A LEAGUE OF HIS OWN. A VERY SUCCESSFUL BUSINESSMAN, HE IS ALSO A LYRICIST, SOCIAL WORKER AND HUMANITARIAN.

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LIVING with the **name**

Like most successful businessmen, Basant Chaudhary has had his fair share of failures with his earlier enterprises: The Realm, Independent and Group-3. Being born in a family of businessmen leaves one little choice when it comes to choosing a profession; the road ahead was already mapped out for him: "I am not a hard core businessman, maybe because I think more from my heart rather than my head. I am not and cannot be ruthless which are the most essential qualities for successfully running an empire." He had a premonition earlier in life, which in a way answered many of his self-doubts about his in/ability to run a business shrewdly and also opened the window to other realms. Many fail to realize their passion or their calling even late in their lives, but Basant has been lucky in this respect as early on, he understood his strengths and limitations. He adds, "I don't think I would ever give up my career or business because my father has worked very hard for it, so it's his dream that I am living and I can't let him down. Though, given a choice, I would have loved to be a poet or a singer. I believe life and mind remain incomplete and idle if one does not possess a liking for creativity."

durga lal shrestha, poet

I cannot fathom, how being a famous industrialist, Basant can spare time to write songs. Had it been me, I could not have managed. He is very generous for a businessman; very helpful. Whenever I am sick, he sends his car to take me for a check-up. Now, who would do that in this age?

Some of his ventures may not have been that successful, but that does not bother him because he says "Whatever I do I give it my best shot; if it succeeds then it's a bonus but if it fails then I have no regrets. I do not like to go back in time and think and regret about what I could have been or done, there's so much more one can do in life rather than waste time regretting about time that has passed. I always like to look ahead in life and think what I can do now for my country and people."

The Chaudharys are to Nepal what the Ambanis are to India. Both are leading business families of their respective countries, owning a large number of industries, employing thousands, living lavishly, and hogging the limelight. It almost kills the have-nots when they learn of the acres of land, countless foreign visits, unaccountable bank balance, posh villas and a fortune in automobiles of the haves. Their lifestyle is envied by the laymen with a large family living in a rented one room flat, watching them prim & proper in their tiny 14" TV screens.

Stories like his are inspiration to the masses who think every rich person is living off his father's legacy. But who would believe that Basant has not only mopped floors and sat behind the counter making bills when he started his business career as a salesman in their family run shop 'Arun Emporium'.

Basant was born in Kathmandu in 1957 and from his father he not only learnt to love his country but also how to do business and give back to

the society and country. Basant's life is no less than a fairytale that my sister reads every evening to Prajesh, her 5 year old son; about heroes who save the national treasure, of warriors who win over the world overnight and of a nobody who becomes the King marrying a Princess. The only difference is that Basant had to toil and persevere until he got what he has today. The dice had long been cast, but Basant did all the hard work himself.

Chaudhary resides in Thamel along with his younger brother's family in their family home while Binod, the eldest lives separately with his family on mutual consent. Even though this might have made Newspaper headlines, and also been the talk of social gatherings, the brothers are a close knit family and the constant scrutiny from the public is but just a small price the Chaudharys have to pay for being who they are. It is comparable to a tax.

Basant is the Honorary Consul of the Kingdom of Morocco to Nepal in addition to being the President of Agrawal Sewa Kendra, the Chairman of Norvic International Hospital, Chaudhary Biosys, Hetauda Dairy Industries, Instant Meal and many more. "My softer side is reflected in my fondness for writing poetry. It has provided me the strength to seek peace amidst life's chaos and turmoil."

The self-proclaimed lover of art has three albums under his name, the latest being Reflections of Love. His second album *Timro Naam Ma* was a collection of patriotic songs one →

kumud dugar, businessman

Basant K Chaudhary is a gem. Even if a member of his staff is undergoing some trouble, he feels that he himself is in trouble. He is not 'money minded'. He cannot say 'no' to anyone. May be that attribute at times, obstructs in his business decisions. But a person is ultimately judged and remembered by his deeds and Basant's good deeds are aplenty. He is a rare personality.

of which is the popular *Shanti Lukaun Kahan*. Only in its absence do we value an object's worth; we all loved the peace and harmony in our country, but with the escalating violence the country went through in its darkest hours, Basant preferred to pen down his anger which resulted in beautiful poems.

At his own expense, Basant runs a Charity Hospital Shree

Lunkarandas - Gangadevi Chaudhary Charity Hospital at Duhabi named after his parents. Established in 1994, the hospital provides free health service to the local community. There is also an Academy for Art & Literature under his parents' name. The Academy was established to promote and support budding artists through various art and literary awards. "The

country does not care about artists and one would be naïve to expect anything from the government. The government is only after formless political agendas. That is also the reason why I decided to do something on my own." Only an artist can reckon with the grievances of his fellow artists. Only an artist can reckon with the worth of his fellow artists. *My belief is that creation is an exquisite, unique and a wondrous work of the Almighty. God created the entire universe and everything therein, but his presence is felt and experienced only through art, music and literature.*—Basant writes in his website.

FROM TOP LEFT CLOCKWISE

We are Family; A picture-perfect family portrait. With Megha in London in 2002. Those were the days; The three brothers, Binod, Basant and Arun with parents at Laxman Jhula Haridwar. With wife Meena. The most beautiful women in Basant's life; Basant with wife Meena and daughter Megha. Honey Moon in Kashmir. I can have my mouth open as wide as daddy; Megha and Basant in a candid kodak moment.



If whatever good he is doing for his countrymen is seen as 'Corporate Social Responsibility' he is okay with that; he is only concerned with the act—'what is there in a name', wrote Shakespeare. Basant is very passionate about the causes he stands for, be it the Charity Hospitals or his tenure as a Member Secretary of Pashupati Area Development Trust. He follows four major rules in any project namely: Vision, Proper Planning, Strategy and Devotion. To him the recent Pashupatinath scandal regarding priests was 'an unwanted controversy'. "It's very important in life to do good "Karma" because it always comes back to you, since life is one big circle!" adds Basant.

Basant indulges in reading about Business, likes Yokyō Mishima and

Shiva Khera. He also likes writings of Amitabh Ghosh and Arbind Adiga, who recently won the Booker prize for his novel 'White Tiger'. In Nepali literature, he reads books by Dhurva Chandra Gautam and thinks he is one of those who are able to present the crude reality of life in a beautiful style. His other favorite novelists are Indra Bahadur Rai, Parijat and BP Koirala. He likes poetry by Dinesh Adhikary, Durga Lal Shrestha and Mohan Koirala. He believes that singer Ciney Gurung has great potential, and that she is underrated. Ani Choying is one of his favorite singers. He is not that much into movies. You would not see him during the premier shows at Jai Nepal unless it is a comedy movie. His office and private domain are covered with paintings of prominent artists

such as Kiran Manandhar. "It is like every color he uses has a different story to tell, interprets life differently... every color speaks of

different human emotion"—he comments of the painter. One of the first paintings that he invested in was by I. B. Malla.

Looking at Basant's career graph, it looks like he wanted to do things differently from his brothers. He has different tastes, interests, investments and plans. The constant comparing with his brothers must be very exhausting. In his earlier interviews, Basant confirmed that Binod is more of a businessman than him, which is the reason behind his success. 'I do not want to expand my business any more. If at all Megha wants to, then that will be her decision. I think that money should not supersede human value.'

Like every father, Basant is constantly worried about his daughter, scolds her when required and takes pride in her achievements. 'She is my angel,' the father says affectionately. "She is very much like me; she has inherited many of my qualities. She is a real papa's daughter. She shares my interest in life and music even though the genre of music is different.' He reminisces, "When Meena was pregnant with Megha, we had wished for a daughter and our wish was answered. From the minute she was born, we loved Megha so much that we thought we could not love →



nhyoo bajracharya, musician

Meetings with Basant dai is never one between an industrialist and a commoner; rather they are always between a writer and a composer. I met Basant dai in 1991, and he has always presented himself as more than just a businessman. He is a mature writer. Had the song writing been just a hobby, he could not have been able to pursue it till today. He is passionate about music and I must say, his third album 'Reflections of Love' is his best album so far.



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anyone else, so we planned not to have any other child after Megha.”

One can actually feel the hint of sadness when he speaks about giving his precious daughter’s hand away in marriage. “When Megha is married off, I’ll retire from office and my responsibilities. I will live for myself then. Lately, I have come to realize that all my life I have

not lived for myself. I ignored my likings, my interests... I want to travel, visit my friends, write... I feel that I robbed myself of the things I love doing. Nonetheless, I have come to realize that to live without something you love is an indispensable part of happiness.’ All I strive for is some fresh, unpolluted air which has become rare in our part of the world for quite some time now and given a

choice, I would love to sit somewhere where there is a lot of fresh air, greenery and peace to write some good poetry.”

When in college, we had to study a poem about Richard Cory, the rich guy who everyone looks up to and who everyone thinks is leading a perfect, ‘happy’ life. But Richard Cory’s life ends in tragedy when he commits suicide. Until then no one knew what lay beneath the beautiful façade. The poem teaches us about the fallacy that is instilled in us regarding people who live glittering lifestyles. Contrary to common belief, they are not immune to suffering and tragedies in life. The bigger the name, the greater is the tragedy.

‘My passion for social service, literature, art and music is boundless. I believe that art, music and literature are the true epitomes of life. Many a times, during disheartening situations, I find solace in them. My unquestionable faith in people and life makes me believe that I can even move mountains. I believe in viewing the physical and the material world with my spiritual and creative eyes. I believe life and mind remain incomplete if one does not possess a liking for creativity’—reads his personal website. ■