

Dr. Ayoob Mossanen was born in Iran. He received his medical education in England, arrived in Canada in 1966, and completed his post graduate studies in Ontario. He has been in neurological practice since 1971 in Toronto East General Hospital. The interview was conducted in 1985*

Q: How long have you been in Canada?

A: I have lived in Canada for 22 years. I was 16 years old when I was sent to London, England to study. I entered university when I was 19 and graduated from Leeds Medical School in 1963. After doing a year of internship and some post-graduate studies, I came to Canada in 1966. Principally, I came here because the training program in my specialty of neurology was much more structured and delineated in this country. Also, the opportunities for a foreigner were much less in England than in Canada. Moreover, I preferred the climate and more expansive nature of this country.

Q: What further training did you have after coming to Canada?

A: I spent five more years in a residency training program in neurology before obtaining my fellowship in December of 1970. Then I started to practice medicine almost immediately.

Q: What has impressed you the most about your success in this country?

A: For one thing, I was able to adapt quickly and accepted Canada very easily, with all its positive and, I must say, some of its negative points. I soon realized that the key to success was hard work and dedication. Also, I believe in this country if you are prepared to accept the challenges and try hard, you will have little chance of failure. I sensed much less xenophobia here than in other parts of the world and was easily accepted into the Canadian community.

Q: What do you think of the standard of medicine in this country?

A: I believe this country has one of the highest standards of medicine in the world. I am sometimes amused and amazed at the same time that the majority of Canadians are not aware of this fact, and do not know how fortunate they are to be here.

Q: What is your impression of the opportunities for Iranians in other fields?

A: I feel that the opportunities for advancement in other fields, be it professional, commercial, or trade, are excellent in this country; but one must be prepared to adapt oneself to the society and take the good with the bad. At the same time, one has to dismiss from the mind one's previous position or wealth in the mother country. In this vein, some excellent achievements made by some of our fellow Iranians within a short span of time are truly exemplary.

Q: It is easy to see that you are an energetic professional, but how do you relax when you have some free time?

A: Besides spending time with my family, I enjoy music very much, especially in the field of the classics. Fortunately, in this country there are not only rewards for hard work, but there are also means whereby you can be creative and take part in numerous recreational activities. For example, I myself play the violin in the North York Symphony Orchestra. I would like to add that one should have a sense of balance in life and try to expand one's horizons in many diverse and interesting directions, not necessarily related to pecuniary matters.

Q: How do you harmonize your own culture with that of a western country such as Canada?

A: I think we are fortunate in this country to be able to maintain our own culture. In this case, Canada is unique, because it encourages every ethnic group to preserve its own heritage. It is important to appreciate this policy since it can not only provide a balance in life, it can also give it a richer colour. In this respect, my own experience is a case in point. When I went to England at the young age of 16, I was naturally very impressed with the degree of affluence, the hustle and bustle, the glitter, as well as the educational and cultural opportunities. However, as I grew older I realized that there were inherent shortcomings in western culture which need to be complemented by something else to make life more meaningful and balanced. It was at that time that I began to reflect back on my own heritage and tried to combine the two to the best advantage.

Q: To what extent do you think one's original culture and traditions should be defended and preserved?

A:As I stated before, whilst I am in favour of maintaining one's culture and traditions one must be very careful not to be obsessive and irrational about it, lest it will create tension and other social problems. The differences in traditional, social and moral values are the focal points in my mind.

*Excerpt from *Iranians in Ontario*, by M. S. Kazemi, Mihan Publishing Inc. 1986