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VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

## दैनिक ट्रिब्यून

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### ਯੰਮਾਬੀ ਟ੍ਰਿਬਿਊਨ

## Author Kamla Kapur's old age project

Kamla Kapur's latest book is a deep dive into life lessons



The 76-year-old impresses upon experiencing fullness of life.

by Nonika Singh

How many of us can see life more clearly, let alone sense the luminosity in it, in the light of death... How many of us consider ageing a privilege, and not an affliction? As author Kamla Kapur turns toward this inevitable stage of life, she pens a book, 'The Privilege of Ageing: Savoring the Fullness of Life', which is at once a guide and a memoir, spiritual beacon and a deep dive into life lessons, rooted as much in the material world as in the spiritual.

Overcoming the diagnosis of three autoimmune diseases, this 76-year-old refused to turn into hapless elderly. Calling herself the heroine of her latest book, the prolific author, who has taken us into the world of spirituality through books on Rumi, Ganesha and Guru Nanak, once again propels us into the realm that lies beyond the material and visible. As she puts it, "Existence is an interlude between two invisibilities." She stands firm in her belief that "if everything in nature regenerates, it's not possible that we don't, even if we merge into supreme consciousness".

Like all universal tales, the trigger for what she calls an 'old age project' came from her personal sickness. Struggling with pain and immobility, she found herself echoing the sentiments of her favourite psychologist James Hillman, "Ageing is no accident, it's necessary to human condition intended by the human soul... the final years have a very important purpose: the fulfillment and confirmation of one's character." Steadfast in her belief that 'ageing is one of the best phases of life', she enumerates many of its privileges, time for one. Most people presume that time is short as one nears one's end, but having experienced life in the slowdown phase, she impresses upon the luxury of doing nothing and experiencing the fullness of life. Of course, in sunset years, one has to take on life like a warrior and embrace the challenges that come with it. Shedding intransigence/rigidity is as important for her as having a spiritual practice. Moreover, as she states, "What you focus on becomes your reality... there is no objective reality, how you see it is how it becomes." Thus, for those who view ageing as an adversity, Kapur advises them to seize upon it as an opportunity. She adds, "Acceptance

of your ailments is a must, without it you will always be grappling.” To lead a life or even to arrive at a stage when one can look back sans rancour or regrets are difficult goals. But if you think her book is a pedantic overload, talking down to readers, she says, “Unless you tell a story, no one is interested.”

The book includes her love story, her trials and tribulations. She insists, “I have been rather brutal and in that sense, I am as much a hero as an anti-hero, acutely conscious of my foibles like egoism, and missing my father’s death as I was busy promoting my book.”

How much of her life experiences have been shaped by her life in the US and how much by the time spent in India? Shuttling between two countries, Kapur takes pride in being “an Indian to the core with cultural heritage going all the way down to the Vedas”. Guru Nanak and his verses remain her guiding light, especially the profound essence of life: ‘man jeete jag jeet’.

On the face of it, the book might seem to target the greying population, but she has had 20-year-olds responding to its intrinsic ideation.

Releasing in July in the US and sometime in August in India, the book, that tells us to look at the universe within us, is likely to be an ‘inside out’ odyssey of this woman with roots in Chandigarh.