

I Went for a Mountain. I Came Back with a Country. By Mohamed Isa

On 13 May 2022, I stood at Everest Base Camp, 5,364 meters above sea level. My legs were screaming, and the air was so cold that, for once in my life, I was grateful I had no hair left to freeze! In my hands was the flag of Bahrain, snapping in a wind off the roof of the world.

But let me tell you a secret. The mountain was never the real story. Nepal was.

I did not reach that rock alone. Our guide, Ganesh Bastola, read the trail like a book, and our porters carried bags heavier than they were, smiling the whole way. One of them, Ashok, was our cheerleader. Watching those Nepali porters and guides shoulder our loads and lift our spirits taught me the most important leadership lesson of my life, without a single word: nobody climbs alone.

I went to Nepal for a mountain. I came back with a country. And in the years since, Nepal has proven that lesson again and again. Let me share three ways.

A Brother in Two Homes

After the mountain, I wanted to know Nepal beyond the trail. So, I wrote to His Excellency Tirtha Raj Wagle, the Ambassador of Nepal to Bahrain, and asked for a meeting.

We clicked from the very first minute. Today, I do not call him an ambassador. I call him a brother and a friend.

And here is what a brother does. When I told him my dream of studying leadership in the



mountains, he opened a door. He introduced me to Professor Udhav Pyakurel.

Once again, I was not climbing alone. A Nepali friend was showing me the way up.

The Date That Changed Twice

Let me tell you about a single date: 4 December.

On 4 December 2015, I cleared my desk and walked out of my office for the last time. After eleven years, I was no longer a Chief Financial Officer. That evening, I boarded a flight and stepped into the unknown.

Exactly nine years later, on 4 December 2024, an email landed in my inbox. It was my admission letter to the PhD program at Kathmandu University. My research: leadership under extreme conditions, with Everest as the case study.

Think about that. On the very same date, I gave up my old identity, a Nepali university handed me a new one. Nine years to the day. I do not believe that was an accident.



I am working toward becoming the first Bahraini ever to earn this PhD. Nepal did not just give me an adventure. It became my teacher.

Not a Holiday. A Curriculum.

I had one more thing to do: bring Nepal to my family.

In December 2025, I took my wife and my nine-year-old son, Ali, on a 16-day journey through Nepal. It was not a holiday. It was a curriculum. He crossed his first suspension bridge and rode an elephant through a jungle larger than all of Bahrain.

Then a helicopter lifted the three of us to Annapurna Base Camp, at 4,130 meters. We raised the

Bahrain flag together, and I told my son, “Ali, you are the youngest Bahraini ever to stand here.”

We finished in the Sir Edmund Hillary Suite at Kathmandu Guest House. I sat with Ali beneath Hillary’s photograph, with Tenzing Norgay beside him, and retold him how two men, one from New Zealand and one a Nepali Sherpa, reached the top of the world. Because they reached it together. Nobody climbs alone.

I did not want to show my son a museum. I wanted to show him a path.

Thank You, Nepal

Since that first trek in 2022, I have returned to Nepal nine times. No longer a country I visit, but a second home.

This is why this Silver Jubilee means so much to me. For twenty-five years, the Nepali Club of Bahrain has been a home for its people and a gift to Bahrain.

The Nepali community here in Bahrain is the bridge between two homes I love. You carry the warmth of your mountains into our islands. Bahrain is richer because you are here, and I am richer because Nepal opened its arms to me.

So, on this Silver Jubilee, let me say what your country taught me to feel: thank you, from the bottom of my heart. Dhanyabad. And a very happy Silver Jubilee to the [Nepali Club of Bahrain](#). Here is to the next twenty-five years.

Mohamed Isa is a Leadership Keynote Speaker & 5-Time Amazon Bestselling Author.

