

HEALTH

It's a whole new world

"Don't move, doctor," goaded the gentle voice of Dr. Khoda-

bakhsh. I must have imperceptibly shifted a little despite the tape anchoring my head to the operating table.

"Concentrate on the three small circular lights and a red dot, doctor; do you see them now?"

"Yes," I drawled. I was in La-La Land under light sedation.

The red dot hovered at the edge of my vision-field like Mars at the horizon. "Tell me when the red dot is at the center of the white lights," Dr. Khodabakhsh instructed and manipulated the implanted lens carefully in my right eye. The white lights and the red dot moved around slowly as if in a waltz dance.

"Now, It's in the center," I whispered.

The whole procedure, from incising the corneal edge, sucking out the emulsified cataract, introducing the intraocular lens (IOL) and expertly adjusting it took about 15 minutes.

Cataract surgery has become a very sophisticated and safe out-patient procedure now. Various IOLs that meet your needs are available. You can choose an IOL, a single focal (monofocal) one for distant vision and use glasses for near vision. You may prefer a monofocal IOL for near vision and use glasses for distant vision. Or you may opt for a near vision IOL in one eye and a distant vision IOL in the other eye and avoid using glasses altogether. There are other choices as well.

Multifocal IOLs are the latest in cataract surgical field. Some newer IOLs can provide for near, intermediate, and

distance vision: these multiple focus lenses are called multifocal IOLs. Generally there is no need to wear glasses. The IOLs that treat astigmatism are called toric IOLs. I had cataract just in one eye and because I need to see the ear drums close, work with a computer and drive, I chose a multifocal IOL called, "Crystalens". It is FDA approved; this lens flexes like the natural lens and generally restores full range of vision. Talk to your doctor which IOL is appropriate for you.

Before and after the operation, eye drops to prevent infection, allergy and inflammation are given. Operative complications due to anesthesia, bleeding, infection, retinal detachment, swelling of retina and other mishaps may develop. Some people with multifocal IOLs may see halos around headlights of incoming cars; they may encounter poorer vision making driving difficult in fog and dim light.

Dr. Khodabakhsh removed the translucent sheets covering my eye and applied eye drops. The intense lights in the operating room dazzled me; instantly I closed my eye. "We are done, take the doctor to recovery," he announced. A few minutes later in the recovery room I opened my right eye gingerly at the suggestion of Christine Nehme, the surgical coordinator. Wow! With my operated eye, I could see my wife and daughter, the nurses and others around, sharp and clear, their dresses more colorful and the lights intensely brighter than ever. This is because the implanted lens is crystal clear. A whole new world opened up for me shining, shimmering and splendid, by the way, without any help from a magic carpet or Aladdin.

► **Dr. Raghavendra Rao is a pediatrician in Porterville. He writes periodically for The Recorder.**



Dr. Raghavendra Rao
True Stories