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**JANUARY 2013**

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## THOUGHT OF THE MONTH



*The New Year brings new opportunities for everyone. They may not be obvious at all times. However, the challenge is to discover them. Sometimes we need to be creative and innovative and create opportunities. Let this be the year when we engage our energies in positive, productive and divine vocations with a selfless interest.*

**Happy New Year 2013.**

**-Pandit Roopnauth Sharma**

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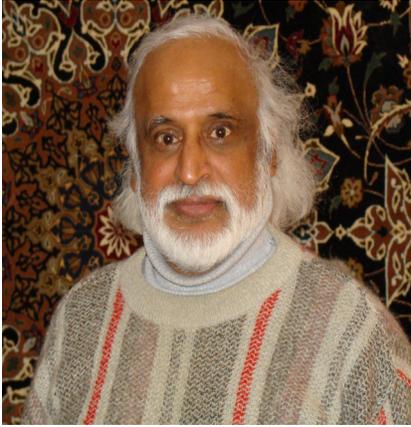
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# The Tree of Bliss



**Dr. Sehdev Kumar**

In the city of Ahmedabad in Gujarat, in 1573 was built a mosque by Sidi Saiyyed, a slave. In one of its windows is carved a palm tree – a symbol of paradise – in such exquisite details, and with such finesse, it be one of the finest works of art ever created by human hands.

That a slab of stone could be chiselled with such delicacy, and with such mesmerising sense of harmony, speaks volumes about the Muslim artisans who were forbidden to make an image of a human, or even of an animal, in a mosque or in their other sacred monuments

But to employ their genius – and genius it was – the same artisans created exquisite figures of Jain, Hindu and Buddhist deities all across India. They traveled from one part of the country to another; their sons became their pupils; in their hands a piece of marble or limestone or even granite was as malleable as ivory. With an ordinary hammer and a chisel they created works of such grandeur that they do not cease to speak to us even today, hundreds of years later.

Christmas is a festival of the Christians all over the world; as a festival, however, for many of

us who have chosen Canada as our home, it is the season for celebration, of Christmas Tree, and of feasts and music, gifts and blessings. For us, and our children, the Christmas Tree is not Christian symbol of goodwill; it belongs to all of us.

A tree is a tree is a tree, but when as a symbol it travels through history over millennia and across lands, cultures and communities, it becomes symbolic of life, of life's journey, and its falls and blossoming. Indeed one cannot find a culture, however remote and however ancient, that does not have a symbolic reference to some tree.

Then why is it that some people are said to be offended to see a Christmas tree in a school, or office or in Parliament Building? Do we have to be so blatantly secular to deny and erase all symbols that have marked the human journey so gloriously in all seasons – in the winters of our discontent no less than in the springs of our joy?

The Tree of Life in the 16th century mosque in Ahmedabad has sometimes been referred to as Kalpa Vriksha – ‘the tree that fulfills all wishes’, with reference to Hindu mythology. Indeed, for centuries Hindu sages and seers are known to sit under the shade of the fig tree to seek enlightenment, hold discourses and conduct Vedic rituals. The Bodhi Tree under which Gautama is said to have sat and become the Buddha is a peepal tree, venerated to this day.

The tree of life teaches us differently. In the illuminating words of German poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe: “All theory, dear friend, is gray, but the golden tree of life springs ever green.”

# The Tree of Bliss

Whether in Ahmedabad or in Jerusalem, in Kashiji in India, or in the sacrificial pit at Sanxingdui in Sichuan, with bronze trees, as high as 12 feet, dating back to 1200 BCE; in German paganism or in Norse mythology, we see the human story being narrated time and again with the same alphabet of life to weave the same dreams: a tree laden with fruit, a tree with thick foliage providing shelter to a weary traveler, a tree rendering an abode for serenity and contemplation: "A soothing tongue is a tree of life; but perverseness therein is a wound to the spirit." "[Wisdom] is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her, and happy is every one that holdeth her fast."

In the Book of Ezekiel, the vision of restoration of the prophet for the weary hearts and spirits includes: "Along the river, on either bank, will grow every kind of fruit tree with leaves that never wither and fruit that never fails; they will bear new fruit every month, because this water comes from the sanctuary. And their fruit will be good to eat and the leaves medicinal."

It is thus that Charles Darwin in his search for an abiding and endearing metaphor for the great ladder of evolution refers to the Tree of Life in his revolutionary book, *On the Origin of Species*:

"From the first growth of the tree, many a limb



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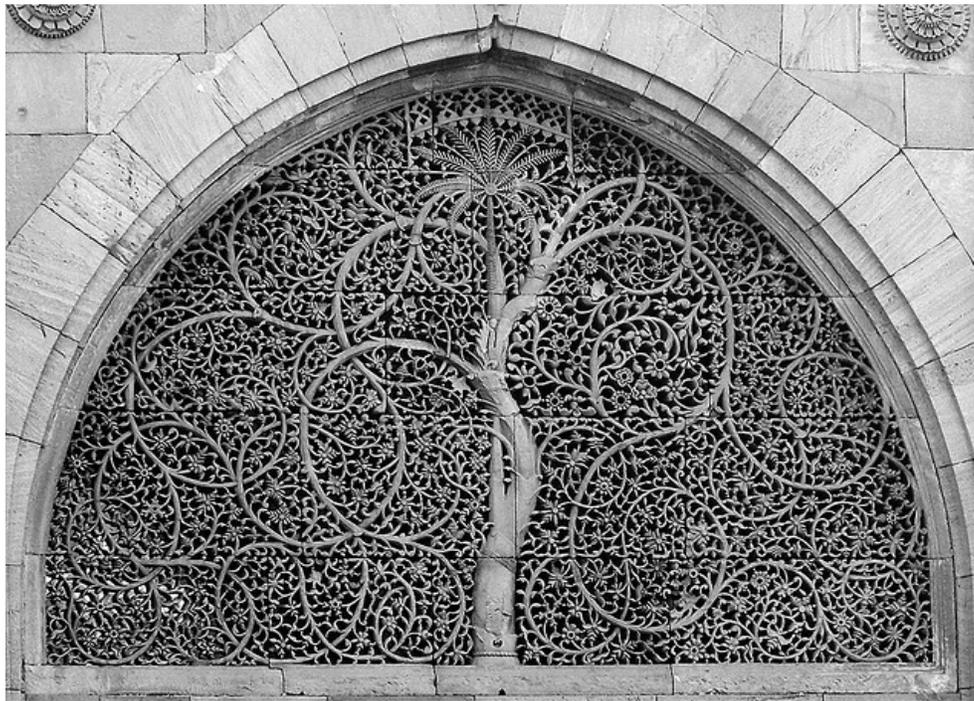
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# The Tree of Bliss



**The Tree of Life, 1573, Ahmedabad, India**

and branch has decayed and dropped off; and these fallen branches of various sizes may represent those whole orders, families, and genera which have now no living representatives, and which are known to us only in a fossil state. As we here and there see a thin, straggling branch springing from a fork low down in a tree, and which by some chance has been favoured and is still alive on its summit, so we occasionally see an animal like the Ornithorhynchus (Platypus) or Lepidosiren (South American lungfish), which in some small degree connects by its affinities two large branches of life, and which has apparently been saved from fatal competition by having inhabited a protected station. As buds give rise by growth to fresh buds, and these, if vigorous, branch out and overtop on all sides many a feebler branch, so by generation I believe it has been with the great Tree of Life, which fills with its dead and broken branches

the crust of the earth, and covers the surface with its ever-branching and beautiful ramifications.”

One winter day in 1992, standing under a snow-laden evergreen tree, near Lake Columbia in the City of Waterloo, my father revealed to me the secret of happiness: “To plant trees under whose shade you would not sit.”

It is a message I have struggled to carry all these years.

To feel a part of this sumptuous Tree of Life, in this great country that we have made as our home, my children and I set up and decorate a Christmas Tree with the same gusto as others from Europe and Americas do. We decorate it,

**continued on Page 22**

# Oral Warning Signs Can Indicate Serious Medical Conditions

Regular dental exams not only help to decrease a patient's risk of oral diseases, such as cavities and periodontal (gum) disease, but they may also help to diagnose other, sometimes life-threatening, medical conditions.

Dentists are able to assess a patient's overall oral health and may recognize symptoms of serious diseases, including diabetes, cancer, and eating disorders, which often manifest as signs and symptoms inside of the mouth.

## Diabetes

More than 25 million people in the United States alone suffer from diabetes.

Today, more than 9 million Canadians live with diabetes or prediabetes as reported from the Canadian Diabetes Association's website.

"Because diabetes reduces the body's resistance to infection, the gums are at risk for gingivitis, an inflammation usually caused by the presence of bacteria in plaque," says Academy of General Dentistry (AGD) spokesperson Neil Gajjar, DDS, MAGD.

"Additionally, those with diabetes can experience high incidences of oral fungal infections and persistent bad breath."

## Oral Cancer

Oral cancer is one of the most common cancers, with approximately 35,000 new cases reported annually in the United States.

In Canada, oral cancer is the 13th most common cancer (of the 23 reported cancers), as reported on the Health Canada website.

"Indicators of oral cancer may include bleeding sores, lumps, or thick, hard spots, as well

as changes in the way teeth fit together," says Dr. Gajjar.

Oral cancer is sometimes difficult to self-diagnose, so routine dental exams are recommended. A dentist will feel for lumps or irregular tissue changes in your neck, head, cheeks, and oral cavity and thoroughly examine the soft tissues in your mouth, specifically looking for any sores or discolored tissues.

## Eating Disorders

"Eating disorders, including anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa, can rob the body of much-needed vitamins and minerals," says Dr. Gajjar. "Without proper nutrition, the gums can lose their healthy pink color and become increasingly soft and tender, bleeding easily." Disorders that involve excessive vomiting, such as bulimia, can cause discoloration and erosion of the teeth due to constant contact with acid from the stomach. People who have eating disorders also may experience swollen salivary glands, dry mouth, sensitive teeth, and loss of tooth enamel.

Diseases negatively impact your general health, but they also can damage your oral health. Regularly scheduled dental exams allow dentists to detect or monitor your health.

"Patients should inform their dentists about any and all medical conditions and medicines that may affect their oral health, as well as any changes in their medical history," says Dr. Gajjar.

"Remember, maintaining a healthy body includes taking care of your oral health."

--Dr. Neil J. Gajjar

# *Why I like the Practices Customs & Traditions of my Dharma*

**H**indu practices, customs and traditions are the pillars and the foundation of Hinduism. Born in a very strict Hindu family I am blessed to be exposed to these pillars of what make Hinduism so unique. With every religion there are likes and dislikes on opinions and views of how one perceives their religion to be. With Hinduism there is no difference. Since Hinduism is more of a way of life I embrace the fact that one can set rules based on the practices, customs and traditions and at the same time make choices on how to stay within the boundaries of their Dharma.

My religion is so vast that anyone with minimal knowledge of the scriptures can attain some sort of inner gratification by practicing certain basics. I can read the Bhagwat Gita, Ramayan or the Shiv Purna all of which teaches me how to be a better person. I have the choice of praying at a temple or home and praying in the morning, noon or night.

The choice to focus on a particular form of god and with them being so many, any will lead me to my destination. By choosing a prescribed lifestyle to incorporate the Practices, Customs and Traditions of my Dharma they become a part and parcel of me and for these reasons I adore my Dharma. I like to be part of all the practices, traditions and customs of my dharma.

My daily routine is praying every morning and I was brought up to practice this every day. This daily practice gives me the boost to start my day. I enjoy going to temple and participating in Puja, Archana, Abishek & Artii. Going to the temple connects me with people of my religion, it also gives me a sense of belonging, reminding me who I am and where I am going. I am exposed to many practices and traditions. Attending temple helps me to widen my spiritual

knowledge.

While visiting my place of worship I embrace the custom of taking off my shoes before entering the temple and dressing appropriately in traditional clothing. Shoes are considered to be very dirty and most are made of animal skin, since our dharma promotes cleanliness is next to Godliness I am very proud of this custom. In fact this custom is practiced in Hindu homes as well. Personally dressing appropriately stimulates my frame of mind and allows me to focus on what I set out to do. My ultimate goal of attending temple is to try to interact and connect with that supreme divinity. Dressing inappropriately to perform puja and offering prayers will certainly have a distracted affect on my focus and besides I am proud of my traditional clothing.

For many Hindus, vegetarianism in more than a way of life, it is a tradition. I am very proud to be a vegetarian and not just because it's linked to Hinduism but for the health reasons as well. Our body is considered to be a temple, and if my body is a temple then what I put into it must be pure and have the vital nutrients to keep me healthy. Our home is also considered a temple so why keep it unclean.

These two basic rules are the key for practicing vegetarianism and I love that our Dharma promotes this tradition / way of life. These customs and traditions of my Dharma have been in practice from inception, however with the passing of generations it seems as though some of our customs have been modified or new ones have come along and is evolving to accommodate today's society. I have found that merging Hindu principles and values into the Canadian way of life allows for greater strength of mind and – ...

**continued on Page 29**

# Effects of Social Media: A Student's Perspective



**Tarisha A. Beniprashad**

Many people today are connected to each other through social media. In 2012, it has become a primary mode of communication for many. There are definitely pros of participating in social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter, but there are also downsides.

As you may have heard or experienced yourself, social media websites are a huge source of distraction for high school and college or university students alike. Because so much of the learning material and supplements are now online, students often use their computers or laptops to complete assignments or communicate with instructors. This makes it painfully easy to get sidetracked when your mind wanders. It takes less than a second to open that web browser to look at pictures from the weekend and abandon that essay in progress. It's a difficult task to stay focused on something you probably don't even want to be doing in the first place, and social media doesn't make it any easier.

Social websites don't just affect the academic pursuits of students; it also has a profound impact on their actual social lives. Facebook enables not only students, but just about anyone, to interact with people they probably wouldn't in a face-to-face situation. In a sense, it can isolate individuals while they accumulate "friends"

online. The Atlantic Magazine published an article in May 2012 exploring this very issue. Entitled "Is Facebook Making us Lonely," the article uses the unfortunate example of Yvette Vickers' death. In short, she was a movie star, best known for her role in *Attack of the 50 Foot Woman*. She'd become very lonely in her senior years, and practically lived her life through social media. She died alone in her home, and lay dead in her bedroom for the better part of a year. The author explains that through the use of social media, Vickers' web of connections grew broader, but shallower; she kept in touch with distant fans but not close family.

Although many students' situations may not be as extreme. Less serious but similar situations are a common occurrence. For some, it's actually become easier to become "friends" with someone on another continent using Facebook, than to walk over to a stranger at the same school and start a conversation. Being behind a computer screen gives people a sense of confidence; they're less vulnerable and therefore are less fearful of being rejected. Many students would rather add someone they're interested in getting to know on Facebook, rather than go up to them and have an actual dialogue. In this day and age, it's as easy as clicking a button to make a new friend. Many people now have broader but shallower social connections with others. Whether this is a good or bad thing for social interaction, it's completely dependent upon your perspective.

Despite all of that, social media isn't always a bad thing. It's used in many productive ways by students. It enables them to connect with peers for help on assessments as well as complete group work. As a university student myself, I know it would be significantly more difficult to

# Effects of Social Media: A Student's Perspective

get help on assignments without social media. Professors aren't always prompt in returning e-mails, but I can always count on someone being online, and willing to lend a helping hand.

Another example of how social media, namely Facebook, helped me in university is the groups and pages that were established before school even began. There were groups promoting social events that were to take place the first week of school, and others creating a community for the class of 2016. As an intimidated recent high school graduate, this encouraged me and helped create communities that I was excited to join once I began school. It helped ease my nerves and make me that much more

excited about starting university.

All in all, social media definitely has its pros and cons. The way students utilize this very powerful tool can determine whether it's actually a tool or just an interference with academic goals. With or without Facebook and Twitter, students will find something to divert their attention while trying to do their work; it just so happens that in 2012 social media has been made one of the most alluring distractions of all.

Marche, Stephen . "Is Facebook Making us Lonely?." The Atlantic May 2012: Web. 11 Dec. 2012.

-Tarisha A. Beniprashad

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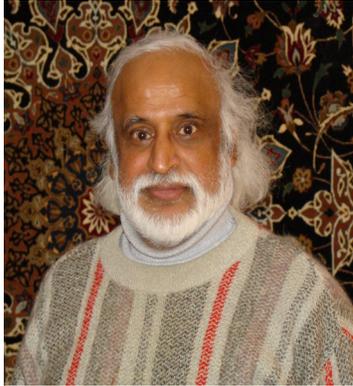
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# Apology in International Relations and for World Peace



**Dr. Sehdev Kumar**

Like an individual or a family, nations and communities too can harbour resentments and anger against a real or perceived slight for years and decades, and sometimes for centuries. This is how resentments and hatred have bred and festered in different religious and ethnic groups for decades and centuries: Between the Christians and the Jews, the Sunnis and the Shias, the Hindus and the Muslims, the Catholics and the Protestants.

In our new globalized world, for the sake of world peace and for inter-cultural and inter-faith harmony, this millennium calls for ways of offering apologies for wounds inflicted decades or centuries earlier.

It was thus that in March 2000, Pope John Paul II made a historical visit to Israel and prayed for forgiveness at the Western Wall in Jerusalem, The Pope was asking the Jews for forgiveness for two thousand years of pervasive anti-Semitism that had culminated, only six decades earlier, in the killing of six million Jews in the Holocaust, most fiercely in his own homeland, in Poland. "I assure the Jewish people that the Catholic Church, motivated by the Gospel law

of truth and love, and by no political considerations, is deeply saddened by the hatred acts of persecution and displays of anti-Semitism directed against the Jews by Christians at any time and in any place," he said.

There are few, if any, such vicious thoughts that have flourished in one community against the other for two thousand years, and in so many parts of the world, and in such myriad garbs, as anti-Semitism amongst the Christian nations. What was the way out of such an abyss except through acknowledgement and forgiveness? The Pope's gesture was, in the words of Rabbi Michael Melchior, "beyond history, beyond memory."

When the exquisite web of life gets enmeshed in the piercing barbed wires of resentments, anger and hatred, a heart-felt sincere apology serves as a healing balm. How to prepare the ground for this to happen is crucial to international disputes, however old, however convoluted.

The preparation for such mediation is never easy; in fact it is invariably ridden with evasions, half lies, denials, lapses of memory, cynicism. "Let the sleeping dogs lie," some argue in the name of realpolitik. Let time heal, they say.

The apology from John Paul II was in fact many decades in the making: twenty years after the end of war, in 1965, the Second Vatican Council, in a declaration entitled "Nostra Aetate," reversed the traditional condemnation of Jews as the murderers of Jesus and there were many more steps after that, until 2000.

# *Apology in International Relations and for World Peace*



Religion has been only one of the sources of conflict; in the long and exploitative history of imperialism, unspeakable things were done by imperial powers – Britain, France, Holland, Belgium and Germany – in the colonies. In November 1995, the Queen personally gave her royal assent to a New Zealand Act of Parliament explicitly acknowledging the injustice suffered by a Maori tribe at the hands of the British. Yet the old guard at *The Observer* in U.K. wrote sarcastically: “We’d like to express our deep remorse for the treatment of Afrikaner farmers during the Boer War, the execution of Joan of Arc; the murderous antics of the Black Prince; and for our rotten behaviour during the Crusades.”

An Empire that controlled the lives of hundreds of millions all over the world for centuries had indeed much to apologize for. In 1997, Prime Minister Tony Blair, for the first time in British history, expressed apologies for the death of over one million people in the great potato famine in Ireland. “The famine was a defining event in

the history of Ireland and Britain,” he acknowledged. “It has left deep scars. That one million people should have died in what was then part of the richest and most powerful nation in the world is something that still causes pain as we reflect on it today. Those who governed in London at the time failed their people.”

Indeed, the head of the English Treasury had casually remarked in 1848, as the Irish were dying by tens of thousands, “To feed or clothe the dying would be to interfere with the free market.”

Would the British offer apologies for the Bengal Famine in 1940s that killed over 3 million people for their policies? Will they offer apologies for the Jallianwala Bagh, where in 1919, hundreds were killed during the Baisakhi Festival?

In a multi-ethnic and multicultural world new forces of globalization are making it imperative for all countries and nations to ‘come clean’

# Apology in International Relations and for World Peace

about their past, and to acknowledge what they did to others, under whatever pretext. For over 50 years, for instance, all successive governments in Poland had persistently echoed the lies of their masters in Moscow about the 1940 massacre in Katyn in Poland where over 26,000 Polish army officers were summarily executed by the Soviets. The truth was finally established in 1992, when secret documents were delivered to president Lech Walesa by the Russians that proved conclusively that Stalin had ordered the execution.

The impact of this acknowledgement on Poland was enormous. Since the perpetrators had denied their guilt for so long and so persistently, the fierce bitterness had lain like a sword on Polish consciousness. Now, its public confirmation somehow made this agony, if not entirely vanish, at least bearable. This is the great healing, even redemptive power of acknowledgement and apology.

Closer to home, in January 1998, Canada apologized to the country's Inuit and other aboriginal peoples for decades of destruction of their culture and for the abuse of native children in government-run schools, and set up a \$250-million "healing fund" to help those who suffered physical and mental abuse.

"Mr. Speaker, I stand before you today to offer an apology to former students of Indian residential schools," the Prime Minister Stephen Harper said in June 2008, surrounded by a small group of aboriginal leaders and former students, many of whom wept as he spoke. "The treatment of children in Indian residential schools is a sad chapter in our history," he admitted.

In post-modern age, history is being discovered and revealed from many different points of view, and not just those of the victors. It is thus that all over the world, everyone is clamouring for a place on the banquet table of history. Now everyone – the vanquished, the marginalized, the discarded – are insisting on telling their story. In July 2012, the President of France apologized for 'betrayal of trust' for an event that 70 years earlier, on July 16 and 17, 1942, had brought shame to a proud nation. On those two days, the French Police arrested 13,152 Jewish men, women and children from Paris and its suburbs, and sent them off to concentration camps. Of these only 811 survived; all others perished. In total, seventy-six thousand French Jews were deported to the death camps. Only 2,500 returned.

It is hard enough for a person to offer an apology to another. How much harder it is for a community to another, and a nation to another. Often an apology – or even any acknowledgement of heedlessness or wrong-doing – never comes. History of nations is replete with such unacknowledged pain. Yet however the process may be, it is crucial for world peace and harmony.

**- Dr. Sehdev Kumar**

*Dr. Sehdev Kumar, Professor Emeritus at the University of Waterloo, now lectures at the University of Toronto on Bioethics and Science/Religion Dialogue. He is author of 'Lotus in the Stone' and 'Jain Temples of Rajasthan'. He is also Distinguished Professor of Culture & Communication in Himgiri Zee University, India. sehdev.kumar@utoronto.ca.*



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# Career planning



**Pandit Roopnauth Sharma**

The New Year has arrived and many are thinking of the future and their Career. It is a natural time of reflection and resolutions and ideal for decision making about the future. Those in University in their final years are faced with the reality of making a choice as to where in the job market they will begin their search and those who are in first, second and third year may still be in decision mode as to where to focus their education. These are the common scenarios in the evolution from student to worker and professional. Of course the subject of choosing a career has always been an item of discussion in everyone's life at a certain age.

In some families this decision is made by parents and in others it is with discussion with parents and children and family advisors and in some cases it is left entirely to the student. Which of these approaches is the best will continue to be an interesting subjection for discussion.

The reality of career choices is that when I speak to many people I find that there are many different approaches to a determining a career. Research for this article was supported by a questioner that I sent to a few professional who kindly responded with their personal experiences. I chose people from different professional back-

grounds and different countries to highlight any significant factors that may be because of where they were born and the countries of origin and cultures that they were exposed to in their early years of education that may have lead them to their career choice.

**The following are the questions posed:**

- 1. When did you decide on your career ( what stage of your life)**
- 2. What influenced your decision( a suggestion from someone, encouragement from parents etc.,)**
- 3. Is your current career your first choice?**
- 4. How did your career evolve from the time of starting to present?**
- 5. Share any other info that you think would be meaningful.**

The following are the responses received:

**Lata Grover**



1 and 4). Although I am just entering my first career in a workplace, it has been constantly evolving. I felt like I was going to be a biomed-

# Career planning

cal engineer in my undergraduate education. I then went into my Masters and quickly switched my focus over to industrial engineering after obtaining a thesis that I thought was very interesting. Throughout my Master program, I networked as much as possible to really figure out what kind of setting I should practice my industrial engineering skills in. Through this, I realized that to get where I wanted to be in life, consulting would be the best first career for myself. Engineering to consulting is a big jump, so I read and talked to as many people in the field to make sure I was taking the right route. I know that I will constantly be re-evaluating what career my direction will be going into. However, in no way have I lost the engineering skills I have learned. I am constantly building up on the skills that I have attained during my formal education and working positions.

2) Working and talking to those in the industry best helped me. I think that school is a great way to gain an immense amount of knowledge in a short time. However, until you apply it, it is hard to tell if it is what will be rewarding to you and if you enjoy doing it. Working gives you that knowledge and also opens up other career choices

that you probably have never heard of it. Talking to those in industry will do the same. It is great to develop a mentor, someone who you can look up to and someone who you would like to reflect their personality traits/success in the future.

3) My current career or the one I will be entering is not definitely my first choice. It is not one that I would have even considered 6 months ago. It is the knowledge that I had gained from “experts” in the field that opened up consulting to me. I know it will not be my last career as well. I have a long term goal (10-15 years) that does not involve my current career choice. However, I know that the skills I will gain in my current career will help me get to where I want to be.

5) Don't be afraid to talk to people. I think I had this fear before I started networking. I believe those who have achieved a lot in their lifetime want to give back and also want to talk about their hard respectable work. You will always learn something from them and you may even gain a lifelong mentor.



## Parmanand Prasad



I was born at Anandale, Guyana. I went to LBI primary school before coming to Canada. I

# Career planning

went to school in Toronto and Scarborough. Received B.A. from York University in 1984 and Juris Doctor degree (J.D.) from Cleveland State University in 1994. Admitted to the Bars of Ontario, Ohio, New York and various Federal Court jurisdictions in the U.S.

1. I always wanted to have a career dealing with people. It was going to be accounting, law or medicine since I was a child.

2. I entered university to become a chartered accountant after high school as I kept winning the awards each year in high school. I found it to be incredibly boring while in university and decided that I would rather be a lawyer. I graduated with my bachelor's degree and worked in the business world for a few years, got married etc.

I decided one year after I got married to go back to school to become a lawyer. I wrote the LSAT and went through the application process. I was offered a partial scholarship and I enrolled in law school when my daughter was just under 1 year old. It was the best career decision I ever could have made. I excelled in law school and graduated with the doctor of jurisprudence (JD degree) with honours.

3. Like everything else, it takes time and experience to develop a good practice but I became successful because I generally like dealing with people and trying to solve or mitigate problems. My practice as a U.S. and Canadian lawyer took its own turns as it is a unique practice involving criminal, personal injury and immigration law. After 18 years, I can look back and say that it

was definitely the right choice and fit for me. One always has to consider personality traits when considering a career. My advice is if you like dealing with people; law is a great career choice. If you don't like dealing with people, find something that minimizes interaction with people.

## Jayant Patel

I was born in Salisbury, Rhodesia now known as Harare, Zimbabwe. My primary and high school education was completed in Zimbabwe. I obtained my Pharmacy degree from Sunderland University, England. I practiced pharmacy in Zimbabwe for 10 years before immigrating to Canada in 1989.

I recall as a young boy going to get a prescription filled at a Pharmacy then, they were commonly known as Chemists. In those early days the Chemist (Pharmacist) had to make the medications by mixing the different drugs according to the doctor's instructions. I sat there looking at the Chemist putting the ingredients together and this really interested me. I recall him grinding some powder in a mortar and pestle and mixing some liquids together and the final result was going to help me. It was at this juncture that my interest in science was born. From there on science was my interest.

My parents did not influence me in any way. Their approach was we are sending you to school and we will support you in whatever career you choose. Their advice to me was "if

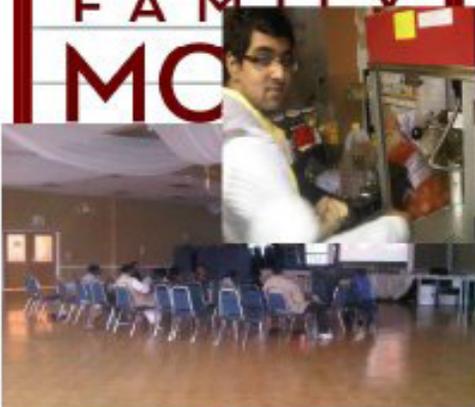
# MISSISSAUGA RAM MANDIR YOUTH GROUP

**T**he Mississauga Ram Mandir Youth Group is exactly what it sounds like: the collective youths of the Ram Mandir family coming together to raise money for charity and have fun while doing it. Although some of us appear to be adults, we are all purely kids at heart and that's what helps us come together to make a difference in the community and eventually, worldwide. It's the reoccurring spirit within all of us to not only be kids who can do big things, but also be young adult activists that can make a world of change.



M.R.M YOUTH GROUP PRESENTS

FRIDAY, JUNE 1ST  
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There are a tonne of ideas inside the young, aspiring minds of the youth group members but we've handpicked a few to take on as projects. As we are still gelling as a group, these projects are underway and will be unveiled at a later time when everything is in place for their execution. So for now, we will share our core values as a group:

**S**ANATAN DHARMA:  
The love for our religion is the biggest inspiration and guiding factor to reach out to the community.

**U**NITY:  
To continuously create bonds and become stronger and wiser each day.

**R**ESPECT:  
Our first duty is to honour every person within and outside the group.

**E**ARTH:  
Our sacred mother who gives life to all beings and breathes beauty into our lives.

# Career planning

that does not work then you can always join your brothers in our family business.” I could not see myself selling clothing and hardware all my life.

With primary school finished next was high school. During my early high school days my peers in the higher grades, whom I looked up to had a certain amount of influence on me.

Most of whom I spoke to all wanted to become doctors or engineers. Engineering did not interest me so I suppose doing medicine became my new career goal however the pharmacy option always kept echoing in my mind.

At the end of high school I applied to pharmacy school in Zimbabwe and England. I was accepted to Pharmacy school in England and that's where I headed. My parents and brothers were very supportive and encouraged me to further my education.

At the end of pharmacy school which pharmacy field to follow, industry, hospital or retail. Retail Pharmacy, I felt had greater opportunity and I have not had regrets going into this area of pharmacy.

I have been practicing pharmacy for over 30 years now. Pharmacy has changed markedly over the years. With the introduction of so many newer drugs in addition to filling prescriptions our roles have changed to educating the patient and making sure that the medication prescribed is best suited for that patient.

My advice for anyone wishing to pursue retail pharmacy is if you like to impart knowledge and are a people oriented person then this is a very

rewarding career.

## **Sam Persaud**

Place of birth: Industry, East Coast Demerara, Guyana

Country of Education: Guyana

1. Q. When did you decide on your career ( what stage of your life)

A. When I was at University.

2. Q. What influenced your decision (a suggestion from someone, encouragement from parents etc.)

A. I developed a love for Accounting as a result of having to complete two accounting courses as part of my under grad.

3. Q. Is your current career your first choice?

A. Yes.

4. Q. How did your career evolve from time of starting to current.

A. It has evolved better than I thought. I have been incredible lucky to have been given the opportunity to get to the pinnacle of my career through the generosity of others. When I contemplated a career in Accounting, I thought of a position in the corporate world somewhere in the Caribbean. Instead, I was given the opportunity to further my education overseas and to develop my career in Europe and now in North America.

I always believed in the following. Dream big. Do Good and good will follow you.



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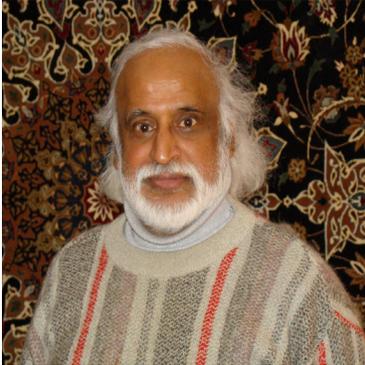
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# Career planning

## Sehdev Kumar



Place of Birth: Sunam, Punjab, India

Education:

B.Sc. (Hons.) and M.Sc., Physics, Panjab University, Chandigarh, India

M.A., Radiation Physics, Ontario Cancer Institute, University of Toronto

Ph.D., History & Philosophy of Science, University of Toronto.

1. Q. When did you decide on your career (what stage of your life)

A. I do not recall 'choosing' my career in India; it just got chosen by a number of expectations of the parents, family background, and what was 'cool' at the time. My father was a lawyer, and everyone in the family was generally well-educated. My older brother had gone into engineering at IIT. Though I too was selected into IIT, I decided I would go into physics and become a researcher, a scientist and a professor. I would say I just drifted along.

2. Q. What influenced your decision (a suggestion from someone, encouragement from parents etc. )

A. My decision was not so much a decision as a way of drifting along. Now, as I see with my two daughters at the university, there are endless choices and careers. For us in India, there were not many choices. There were no explicit pressures on me to go into one profession or another, it just happened.

3. Q. Is your current career your first choice?

A. Yes, I would say. Teaching at the university is my first choice. I find it endlessly new, innova-

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# Career planning

tive, youthful and at the frontier of new ideas and thoughts. Yes, it is a wonderful profession.

4. Q. How did your career evolve from time of starting to current.

A. I have stayed in the same career all these years – teaching at the university. However, two other ‘careers’ have developed out of it. One is writing. I spend a lot of time and energy writing about a large range of topics and in many different genres. I find it very exciting. Second, working as a Mediator, helping resolve conflicts about issues that sap so much energy in a family, or an institution or a community. This too I find very rewarding.

5. Q. Share any other info that you think would be meaningful.

A. Life is not a straight line that one walks on all one’s life. There are twists and turns, not always of one’s own making. Some are pleasant and some not so pleasant. How to prepare oneself to be a person for all seasons is a very valuable lesson to learn.

As you will note everyone had unique experiences in their career path and some have stayed with their original choices while others varied along the way. I am convinced that all of the above approaches are all very prevalent and there is very little influence from the country of birth. This is evident in the fact that all of the people surveyed have come from different parts of the world mainly Zimbabwe, Guyana and India and there are similarities in their career path. I believe that there are some other Factors that were not mentioned that I am sure were influential in the career development of all of our professionals. That is the Luck factor, the fac-

tor of being in the right place at the right time. Meeting the right people and the kindness of teachers and mentors and most important the grace of God. These are only a few examples of career paths that we have been able to get to tell their story.

Maybe you have an interesting Career story that you would like to share.

Please send your story at  
**Ptroopsharma@gmail.com**

We will be doing a follow up article on this subject and would be happy to share your story with our readers.

**-Pandit Roopnauth Sharma**

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**continued from Page 6**

-- place gifts under it, share our yearly joys and bounty with each other, and feel restored in our hearts and spirits that we celebrate a symbol that is part of our human heritage. It exalts our spirits and deepens our being, because it reaches out to touch the sky, it bears fruit. And because it never forgets its roots!

**- Dr. Sehdev Kumar**

*Dr. Sehdev Kumar, Professor Emeritus at the University of Waterloo, now lectures at the University of Toronto on Bioethics and Science/Religion Dialogue. He is author of ‘Lotus in the Stone’ and ‘Jain Temples of Rajasthan’. He is also Distinguished Professor of Culture & Communication in Himgiri Zee University, India. sehdev.kumar@utoronto.ca.*

# *Are timeless beauty traditions the best?*



“A potent sensory experience and intense repair for hair” was the descriptor of the service at one of Toronto’s top spas.

The blurb continued: “It begins with scalp, neck and shoulder massage—with up to 12 aromatherapeutic essential oils—to increase scalp circulation while targeting pressure points that release tension. Then hair is treated with one of two intense repair formulas: Moisture Immersion, for up to 71% softer, smoother strands; or Strength Infusion, for up to 71% more resistance to combing breakage. At every step, aroma-therapy elevates, soothes or recharges.” They call it the “Botanical Hair & Scalp Therapy” and you can experience this luxury treatment at upwards of a \$100.

But wait a second. Isn’t this “Botanical Hair & Scalp Therapy” just an impressive way of saying Tel Maalish (oil massage)? That good old fashioned South Asian beauty tradition where your aunt (or grandmother, mother, sister, cousin, etc.) heats up some EVOO, sits you down in front of her, and starts chatting off your ear while she massages, sometimes excessively so, the oil into your head.

Beauty traditions are embedded into the cultural fabric of every society, and in addition to attempting to strike a balance between East and West in all the other facets of their lives, South Asian women also have double the beauty options at their disposal. And with competing claims between grandmothers and service sellers alike, one is left wondering what the best option is. Whether it is kajol vs. eyeliner or henna vs. hair colour, Suhaag enlisted the help of beauty professionals and medical experts to break down the best of beauty from the East and West.

## **Traditional Tel Maalish vs. Spa Treatment**

Will a spa oil treatment for hair fare better than your grandma’s? In short, no. When it comes to treating one’s hair with oils, Dr. Poonam Rajan of Rosedale Dermatology Centre explains the science behind the tradition: “The main benefit of both these treatments is that it increases the circulation to the scalp, which increases the blood flow, and the blood flow is what carries the nourishment to the hair follicle, so

# *Are timeless beauty traditions the best?*

the primary benefit is just that.” The oil that you’re massaging into your hair repairs the cuticle, which is the outer most portion of the hair shaft, and repairing the cuticle is what helps achieve that sought after shine. But “whether it is done in the spa, or at home, you’re getting the benefit,” says Dr. Rajan. Susan Hay, a Medical Esthetician at Rosedale Dermatology Centre also points out that, with the luxury therapy, “it’s nice to treat yourself, but it’s not a onetime thing.” Like most treatments, to really reap the benefits you have to make them a regular in your beauty regime. So how often can you treat your hair with oils? With home hair-oil treatments, Amla oil massages can be done as frequently as twice a week, and the maximum benefit is achieved if it is left on overnight and washed out the next morning, says Dr. Rajan.

## **Henna (Mehndi) vs. Hair Colour**

Mehndi, known as Henna, is a plant used within many cultural traditions, including South Asian, to dye hair. How does it compare to mainstream hair colour? Emily Trinh, Senior Colour Technician at Industry Hairdressers (formerly Toni & Guy), comments that the choice between using henna over a chemical hair colour is simply a personal preference.

One of Trinh’s clients brings her own henna into the salon, “She just prefers it. It’s more of a translucent coverage, as opposed to more of a solid coverage.” Trinh also explains that, “Some people that go for henna may be into everything that is all-natural, but when it comes down to it, if someone were to use henna, and then opt for a chemical colour, you can’t guarantee that the results will be what she is looking for.” Meaning, if you use henna at home, and then come into the salon for a dye job, chances are the colourist won’t know what to fully expect, and

you run the risk of compromising your colour. Trinh also adds that: “The colour that we use in the salon will give you six to eight weeks of coverage, and the staying power in the hair will be better than henna. Henna will also fade out more orange in tone, especially on grey hair.” The considerations also go beyond the cosmetic. Dr. Rajan explains that some people can have allergic reactions to some of the components in hair dyes – basically to certain chemicals – and allergic reactions don’t always develop immediately.

And when it comes to henna, Dr. Rajan says, “there is traditional henna that people used to make by grinding it and combining it with something acidic to release the colour, but when you buy it in the store, you don’t know what additives are in the box.” This means that if you are unfortunate enough to have an allergic reaction, you won’t know what exactly it is you are reacting to.

## **Traditional Kohl (Kajol) vs. Eyeliner**

Traditional kohl products known as kajol or surma are a popular cosmetic within the South Asian continent. But how do they compare to eyeliners manufactured by major cosmetic companies in the West? “When it comes to any kind of eyeliner, from a dermatologist perspective, we are concerned with whether people have an allergic reaction to the products they are applying,” says Dr. Rajan.

Beware of lead content: While eyeliner allergies are not very frequent in terms of makeup, one should be aware that a lot of times the chemicals or certain additives within the product can cause a reaction. In fact, Health Canada is advising Canadians that some varieties of traditional—

**continued on Page 29**

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## *Hindi words to learn*

|                            |             |
|----------------------------|-------------|
| गुलाब (Gulab)              | Rose        |
| कमल (Kamal)                | Lotus       |
| फूल (Phool)                | Flower      |
| हल्दी (Haldi)              | Turmeric    |
| तेज पत्ता (Tejpatta)       | Bay leaf    |
| लहसुन (Lahasun)            | Garlic      |
| जीरा (Jeera)               | Cumin seeds |
| अदरक (Adrak)               | Ginger      |
| नारियल (Nariyal)           | Coconut     |
| दीपक (Deepak)              | Lamp        |
| बादाम (Badam)              | Almond      |
| केसर (kesar)               | Saffron     |
| साबूदाना (Sabudana)        | Sago        |
| शिमला मिर्च (Shimla Mirch) | Capsicum    |
| बेसन (Besan)               | Gram Flour  |

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**-continued from Page 24**

– kohl products have been found to contain lead, and several children in Canada exposed to kohl have been identified with elevated levels of lead in their blood, putting them at risk of serious health problems. After analyzing traditional kohl products, Health Canada found that Hashmi Kohl Aswad from Pakistan, Khojati from India, and unlabelled kohl from Morocco all contain high levels of lead, and advises against the use of these cosmetics.

In many cases, ingredients are not labelled on traditional kohl packaging, and Health Canada does advise that if you have any doubts about the content of your kohl, discard it immediately. Modern eyeliner does undergo more stringent product controls than imported traditional kohl products, and has not been found to contain lead. That said, when it comes to eyeliner products, Dr. Rajan advises that it is prudent to change them after six to eight months.

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**...continued from Page 8**

.. focus while providing for greater adaptability. This has allowed me to better see my path towards my dharma and provide me with greater strength to overcome the challenges that I may encounter in life.

In conclusion, by practicing the traditions, customs the way they were instilled in me has become my way of life. I cannot imagine another way of living a balanced life. I cherish the old traditions and customs my Dharma is associated with and will always contribute to preserving them

**-Neil Ramchand**

**Mississauga Ram Mandir Youth Organization**

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# Stuffed Spicy coconut Petís



**Madhu Mistry**



## Ingredients for Stuffing:

1/2 Bunch fresh Coriander chopped  
1/2 Bowl of ready fine sevian  
1/2 Cup fresh blended coconut  
1/4 Cup cashews coarsely ground  
1/2 Tbsp cooking oil  
1/4 Tsp Jeera  
1/2 Tsp Dhana Jeera powder  
1/2 Tbsp Sesame seeds  
1 1/2 Tbsp Lemon Juice  
1/4 Tsp Ginger crushed  
1/4 Tsp Green chillies crushed  
1/2 Tsp Sugar (Optional)  
Salt to taste  
Blend all of above together

## Outside Layer for Stuffing:

2 1/2 lbs Boiled Potatoes  
2 slices of soaked bread in water squeezed out  
Bread crumbs mixed with salt to taste  
Oil for Deepfrying

- 1) Mix Coconut, fresh Coriander, Sevian, Dhana Jeera, Lemon juice, Salt & Sugar (optional), in Blender to mix well.
- 2) Heat oil add jeera, cashews, chillies, sea-same seeds, ginger.
- 3) Add the heated oil mixture to blended coconut and mix well.
- 4) Roll into small balls and set aside.
- 5) Mash boiled potatoes, add prepared bread slices, salt and breadcrumbs, mix well.
- 6) Form potato ball.
- 7) Press each potato ball into round disc and place coconut mixture ball in the centre. and wrap in potato mixture. Make sure no cracks should appear.
- 8) Fry Petís in hot oil until golden brown.
- 9) Serve with your favourite Chutney and enjoy.  
Makes 25 to 30 Petís

**-Madhu Mistry**

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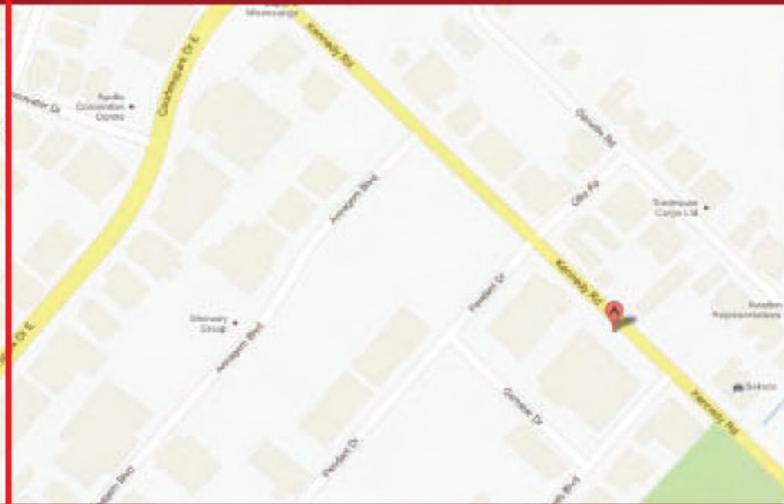
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