



Protham Bohag - 2013



Magh Bihu - 2014



Rongali Bihu - 2013



Autuman Festival - 2013





A Random Collection of Personal Glimpses



Nagendra Chandra Dutta

Gandhiji was involved in a month-long unsavory controversy in 1924 involving dogs. It is reported that Ambalal Sarabhai, a big textile mill owner of Ahmedabad rounded up sixty stray dogs that frequented his large industrial premises and had them killed. Having done this, Sarabhai was stung by a sense of guilt. He shared his anguish with Mahatma who remarked, 'What else could be done?' When the report was published there was uproar of condemnation. Many of the opponents sent strong protests. Gandhiji published these letters in his "Young India" together with his replies that apparently did not satisfy so called votaries of non violence.

Finally, wrote Mahatma Gandhi, 'It is sin to feed stray dogs. It is a false sense of compassion. It is our insult to



a starving dog to throw a crumb at him. Racing dogs do not indicate the civilization or compassion to society. The lower animals are our brethrenWe do not know how to live with carnivorous beasts and poisonous reptiles because of our ignorance. When man learns better, he will learn to befriend even these. Today, he does

not know how to befriend a man of 'different religion or from different country'. That was the logic behind Gandhiji's observation, 'what else could be done'. He however believed that if people were really religious, dogs would have owners. An apparently contradictory act of the votary of non-violence lays bare a deeper meaning of 'AHIMSA' in the context of self-defence. For those who sincerely practice non-violence, each situation in life is unique and requires a fresh and vital approach for universal welfare.

Helena Petrova Blavatsky (1831-1891) was co-founder of the Theosophical Society. 'The Secret Doctrine' authored by her is a masterly synthesis of religion, philosophy and science. Apart from this work her 'Isis unveiled' and other works have given the world a cogent analysis of occult philosophy. She was a Russian by birth, but accepted American citizenship at a later stage of her life. From her childhood she was in possession of psychic powers. Her marriage with General Blavatsky broke down soon and thereafter this extraordinary lady started living a new life. She visited a number of countries including Sri Lanka, India, Japan, Burma, Italy, Tibet, Syria, Egypt, Lebanon and several countries of North and South America. She joined the War of Unification of Italy, under Garibaldi's banner and was seriously injured. She acquired wealth of experience, particularly about ancient wisdom propagated by seers of different lands. Meanwhile, she was guided by Master Kuthumi of 'White Brotherhood'.

In 1873 she was directed by the Master to sail from Paris



to New York. Madam Blavatsky purchased a ticket in the 1st class cabin and arrived at the port. Before embarking the ocean-going ship, she noticed a woman with her young children crying inconsolably looking for someone. The helpless woman attracted attention of Madam Blavatsky who would gather from her that the unsuspecting young lady was duped by a person who fraudulently collected all her savings promising to get her tickets for New

York. Now the ship was about to depart and there was no trace of the unknown fraud. Alone in a foreign land, she had no money and none to look for help. Madam Blavatsky acted promptly; she sold her first class ticket and purchased tickets for the lady, her children and herself, in the deck. She chose to travel in the deck together with this lady in distress, because sale proceeds were just enough to purchase only those tickets. Madam Blavatsky was immensely pleased to see the mother and her children being united with her relatives at the end of the journey. She was least perturbed by all the miseries of the long and arduous voyage.

While visiting different places in connection with propagation of Theosophical teachings she, at times, utilized her psychic powers and produced successfully such wonders that left her friends dumb-founded. Mr. A.P. Sinnet, an Englishman, based in Simla, was the editor of the Pioneer and at a later stage became the President of the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society. In his famous work 'The Occult World', he gives a number of instances of Madam Blavatsky's inexplicable powers.

Ernest Hemingway, the Nobel laureate was a man with lot of zest and life. 'I have seen every sunrise of my life' said Hemingway to one of his friends. 'I rise at first lights and I start by reading and editing everything I have written to the point where I left off. That way, I go through a book several hundred times, honing it until it gets an edge like the bullfighter's sword. I rewrote the ending of 'A Farewell to the Arms' thirty nine times in manuscript and worked it over thirty times in proof, trying to get it right'.

As an 18 years-old Red Cross volunteer on the Italian front in the First World War, he was in trench with three infantrymen when an Austrian soldier scored a direct hit on them, killing two of the Italians and mangling his own right leg. Badly wounded as he was, Hemingway managed to hoist the Italian who was still alive, on to his back and carry him across a field that was being raked by machine-gun fire. The soldier was dead by the time he got him to safety, but for the exploit Hemingway was accorded two of Italy's highest medals. A surgeon later on removed twenty eight pieces of



metal from his leg.

He had similar close calls in the Spanish civil war. During the Second World War, he went to France as a war correspondent, but quickly abandoned that role for active combat. Some people find warfare nerve-racking, but Hemingway took it in his stride.

Winner of Pulitzer and Nobel prizes, he was dumped with rejection slips at the early part of his literary career. Printed rejection slips attached to stories he wrote with love and lot of labour pained him so much that he could not help crying; but was never disheartened.

(The writer Nagendra Chandra Dutta, I.A.S.(Retd.) is a resident of Guwahati. He visited Kuwait in 2011 on a personal trip and recalls fondly the beautifully maintained city of Kuwait and the Assamese community residing there.)

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Arithmetic of Time



DwaiPAYAN Bora

Reading, Writing and Arithmetic are the measures that determine literacy. Being literate is a prerequisite to acquire knowledge. Knowledge helps one make a living. In families having small children, it is customary for the mother to take the lead in teaching her kids. But it is recognized that in most of the families, as the child grows, the mother's responsibilities will be restricted to the first two measures, while the father concentrates on the Arithmetic. As with most families, I was also constantly nagged by my better half to give our bundle of joy the basic teachings on topics related to numbers and counting. Though I thought that this would be an easy ride, I was painfully proved wrong in my assumption, and I hit my first road block the day I had to relate and teach her the concept of time - second, minute, hour and day.

The first question that baffled me was why the counting of time is in base 60, while most of the counting in this mundane world is in base 10, which is quite easily recognized as the decimal system. To the uninitiated, Base makes counting easier; it helps large numbers manageable to be expressed easily. Thus my pursuit for an answer to this puzzle started, which is elaborated here.

In earlier times around 8000 BC, small clay pieces with markings were used as tokens that recorded number of things, such as sheep to be bought and sold. It was the birth of what we now understand as numbers. In the fourth millennium BC in Sumer (present day Iraq), this evolved into a script written with a reed on soft clay. This script called cuneiform marked the beginning of Western writing systems. In cuneiform there were symbols only for 1, 10, 60 and 3600, which means that the system was a mixture of base 60 and base 10. It still remains as one of the greatest unresolved mysteries in the history of arithmetic, the reason why the Sumerians grouped their numbers in sixties.

The Babylonians who made great advances in astronomy, the Egyptians, followed by the Greeks embraced this Sumerian system. Hence the time-counting method based on the Babylonian Sexagesimal base was adopted by different cultures – which is why to this day, there are sixty seconds in a minute and sixty minutes in an hour. We have adopted this system so well that we never question its basis.

However, this was not always the case. Innovative thinking and questioning attitude is a part of human nature. Revolutionary France saw this as an inconsistency. In 1793 when the National Convention introduced the metric system for weights and measures, it also tried to decimalize time. A decree was signed with the following divisions of time – a day will have 10 hours, each containing 100 minutes, each of which contained 100 seconds. Thus the new day will have 100,000 seconds compared to usual 86,400 seconds. The revolutionary second was thus a

fraction smaller than the normal second. This decree came into force and decimal time became mandatory in 1794 and watches were produced with the numbers going up to ten instead of twelve. However the new system became completely bewildering to the populace and was abandoned in about six months. This is inconvenient as 100 do not have as many divisors as 60. This failure of decimal time signalled a small victory for dozenal thinking.



Recently in 1998, the Swiss conglomerate Swatch launched Swatch InternetTime, in its campaign to decimalize time. The day was divided into 1000 parts called beats (equivalent to 1 min 26.4 seconds). The manufacturer sold watches that displayed its 'revolutionary vision of time' for a year or so, before sheepishly removing the product from its catalogue as the campaign flopped.

Almost everything evolves with time. However it is interesting to note that the concept of Time has not evolved and we practice the same format of counting that was laid out thousands of years ago. It is not a paradox. If time would have evolved we would have lost our reference making time useless.

This ubiquitous time and its counting method are so deeply ingrained into our mind that we never question its rationale. But its significance can be gauged only when we put thought behind it. I loved my journey into the past millennia to discover the essence of time. Hopefully you will also agree with me.



Aim In Life.....



Jayanta Bardalaye

It just crossed my mind.....has my aim in life been constant? Does it remain constant, especially during the early part of our life? I am sure all of us go through different phases wanting to be someone when we grow up.

The earliest memories I have on this issue is from the time I was around 5 – 6 years of age (or was it 7 – 8 years?). Those days we had filament light bulbs. No tubelights. CFL was not invented as far as I know. One problem with the filament light bulbs was that with any sudden change in voltage, the bulb went off. “Light fuse hol” Ma would shout out to Deuta. It was fascinating to see either him or any neighborhood electrician replacing the fused bulb with a new one. Since voltage fluctuations were pretty common, I had a big collection of fused bulbs – transparent, coloured, different shapes. I also had some lamp shades – the ones looking like an inverted cone with a hole in the middle and put above these light bulbs. With this collection and some wires and discarded portable light holders, I used to do my own wiring in the house – especially in the pillars of the verandah. I would climb on a chair and put the bulbs (with holder and shade) on each pillar. All I wanted to be, when I grew up, was to be an “Electrician”. No job can be better than this!

Then came teenage – a period of utter confusion. Like all boys of my age I too liked to play cricket. In standard XI-XII, when we were in Tezpur, I took up cricket seriously. When all my classmates were busy preparing for engineering and medical tests, all I could think of was how to get into the Asom state cricket team. Early morning - before tuitions, and afternoons – after classes, were regularly spent at the cricket ground. And what wonderful dreams I had!“I am Kapil Dev’s opening bowling partner. India is playing against the West Indies. Kapil Dev is getting hit all over the ground for sixes and fours. But the likes of Clive Lloyd and Viv Richards are finding my bowling unplayable. I have already accounted for 9 West Indian wickets. I was about to pick up my 10th wicket of the innings when Ma woke me up for my morning exercises”. That’s it – I decided what I wanted to be in life – I’ll play cricket for India.

For a long time since my childhood to mid teens, I didn’t go to watch movie in a cinema hall. When I was a kid, my parents took my sister, brother and myself to see an Assamese movie “Taramai”. I still remember the scenes that put me off films for such a long time. There was a gentleman riding a bullock cart and singing a song – and the bullock cart never seemed to move. Also, the actors were crying most of the time. I thought there were better thing to do then be so depressed by watching a movie.

So, when I was in the latter half of Class XII, and one of my friends suggested that we go to see a new Hindi movie, I was skeptical. He assured me that it had a very beautiful actress who danced really well. Due to his coaxing we went for the matinee show of “Tezaab” one day bunking

a few afternoon classes.....and it was mesmerizing! It became very difficult to concentrate in my studies after that. I open my Maths book, and there was Madhuri Dixit dancing to “Ek, do, teen” on top of it! Same while trying to study Physics and Chemistry. Oh, if only I could marry her! My aim of playing cricket for India (as Kapil Dev’s bowling partner) and having Madhuri Dixit as my wife turned out to be a killer combination - I flunked in two subjects in the Higher Secondary Test Examination. That’s when Ma decided its enough of cricket for me (I presume she didn’t know about the Madhuri Dixit part). She made me bath with cold water and take an oath before God in our ‘Goxain Ghar’ that I’ll not play cricket till I pass my class XII exams. I was dejected but didn’t dare to protest after my excellent results.

Class XII exams were over and by then cricket season was also over. Not having prepared for any engineering or medical tests, it was clear I would have to go for B. Sc. But what should I major in? Around that time there was an Axom Xahitya Xabha session in Biswanath Chariali. We went for a visit and in the adjoining book fair, I picked up a book on Archeology. It was very interesting. I also saw my first Indiana Jones movie in one of my friends house just a couple of weeks back. The thought of finding a hidden treasure someday was too enticing! Decision made – I’ll become an Archeologist. Deciding was easy, but where can I study Archeology? I asked Deuta. He said he had no idea and advised me to go and meet the Director, Guwahati Museum if I am really serious about it. “He can guide you” Deuta assured me. Off I went to Guwahati to meet the Director of Guwahati Museum. “So what do you want to know from me, young man?” he asked me. I told him about my desire to become an Archeologist. He told me I need to study History first before I can take up a course in Archeology. But since I was from a science background, he said I could also go for it after graduating in Anthropology and advised me to try to get admitted to that department in Cotton College.

“We’ll have to put you in the waiting list as the seats are already full. Why don’t you take up Geology?” the counselor suggested. “What’s Geology?” I asked. “Well.....you’ll study about the earth and planets, rocks and minerals”. Then I remembered. When we were staying in Silchar, my brother and I came across a collection of beautiful stones with a mark on it lying on the roadside. On enquiring we found out that the collection belonged to a Geologist and was discarded by his family after his death. Thus I took up Geology and since then earning my bread and butter from it.

Sometime back I was watching National Geographic and they were showing some exotic places. Won’t it be great to have a job where one can visit such places all year through? “Deuta, Vidhi is disturbing me when I am studying!” Sigh.....forget it.



Brilliance of the 'Dark Ages'



Iqbal Hussain

In David Lean's majestic film "Lawrence of Arabia," the beleaguered Arab leader Prince Feisal reminds his British Army adviser, T. E. Lawrence, of a glory that once was. "You know, Lieutenant," he says, "in the Arab city of Córdoba were two miles of public lighting in the streets when London was a village". "Yes, you were great," Lawrence says. To which Feisal replies ruefully, "Nine centuries ago."

There lies the heart of the problem. An awfully long time has passed since anyone thought of the Muslim world in general, let alone the Arab world in particular, as an incubator of great ideas in science or technology.

The Dark Ages is a historical periodization used originally for the Middle Ages, which emphasizes the cultural and economic deterioration that supposedly occurred in Western Europe following the decline of the Roman Empire. The label employs traditional light-versus-darkness imagery to contrast the "darkness" of the period with earlier and later periods of "light". In the West, those centuries (6th to 13th) are considered as a period of intellectual darkness, or the Dark Ages. People had been led to believe that there was this long period of nothing after the heydays of Greece and of Rome. Then, poof, out of nowhere, up sprang the Renaissance. This notion "defies logic".

That era which has been projected as Dark was anything but dark. Discoveries made in Islamic societies provided "the continuity, the smooth graph, of how ideas travel in humanity."

James Al-Khalili, a scientist and historian, says "There is no such thing as Islamic science – for science is the most universal of human activities. But the means to facilitate scientific advances have always been dictated by culture, political will and economic wealth. What is only now becoming clear (to many in the west) is that during the dark ages of medieval Europe, incredible scientific advances were made in the Muslim world. Geniuses in Baghdad, Cairo, Damascus and Cordoba took on the scholarly works of ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Persia, Greece, India and China, developing what we would call "modern" science. New disciplines emerged – algebra, trigonometry and chemistry as well as major advances in medicine, astronomy, engineering and agriculture. Arabic texts replaced Greek as the founts of wisdom, helping to shape the scientific revolution of the Renaissance. What the medieval scientists of the Muslim world articulated so brilliantly is that science is universal, the common language of the human race."

Some of the great inventions made by scientists from the Muslim World have left a permanent mark in the modern world. Advancements made by scholars of the Islamic world during this period have been further developed by others to literally change the world. Although all such advancements are far too many to pen down in this piece of write-up, but the following could be a list of the most wonderful ones –

Ibn Al-Haytham (965-1040CE) - Physicist

The greatest scientist of the medieval world was a 10th century Arab by the name of Ibn al-Haytham. Among his many contributions to optics was the first correct explanation of how vision works. He used the Chinese invention of the camera obscura (or pinhole camera) to show how light travels in straight lines from the object to form an inverted image on the retina. His work represents the first major advance in optics after Euclid and Ptolemy and in visual physiology after Galen. We must wait until Kepler and Newton in the 17th and 18th centuries for further fundamental understanding of the nature of light and until at least Helmholtz in the 19th century for further advances in understanding visual perception. The importance of Ibn Al-Haytham's idea of point-to-point projection of the visual world into the brain cannot be over-emphasized. Indeed it forms one of the bases of modern Visual Physiology.

Al-Idrisi's (1100-1165CE)- World Map

In Muslim Spain, the passion for keeping travelogues thrived which inspired the compilation of the most comprehensive world atlas of the time by a highly celebrated Moroccan Scholar Al-Idrisi. He enjoyed exalted status at the court of Roger II in Palermo mainly because of the accuracy of 70 maps which he produced charting previously undocumented territories. He plotted the entire continents of Europe, Asia and Africa, north of the Equator two centuries before Marco Polo. He was so remarkable that he was nicknamed the Strobe of the Arabs. He described continents joined at Suez and identified mountain ranges including the Mountains of the Moon, the source of the Nile in present day Uganda.

Ibn Firnas (810-887CE)- Flying contraption

Abbas Ibn Firnas was a legendary ninth-century inventor and the Da Vinci of the Islamic world. He is honoured on Arabic postage stamps and has a crater on the moon named after him. He made his famous attempt at controlled flight when, aged 65, he built a rudimentary hang glider and launched himself from the side of a mountain. Some accounts claim he remained airborne for several minutes before landing badly and hurting his back.

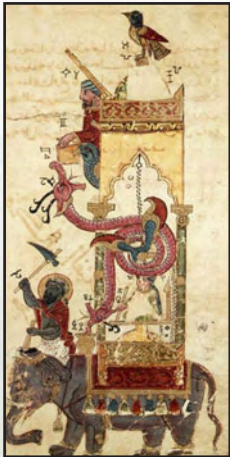
Al-Zahrawi (936 – 1013CE)- Father of Surgery

Born in 936 CE just north of Cordoba in Al Zahra, Abu al-Qasim Khalaf ibn al-Abbas was known to contemporaries as Al-Zahrawi, and his name was latinized to Abulcasis. He was the first to use catgut for internal sutures, silk for cosmetic surgery and cotton as a surgical dressing. He used ink pre-operatively to mark incisions on his patients skin, now a standard procedure worldwide. He made plaster cast for fractures which was not adopted in Europe until



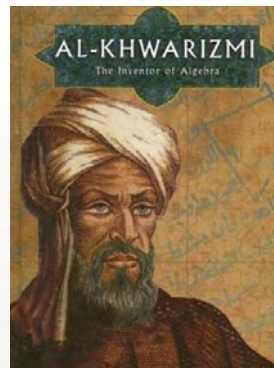
19th century. His work was hugely influential in Europe and many of his instruments are still in use today. Among his best-known inventions were the syringe, the forceps, the surgical hook and needle, the bone saw and the lithotomy scalpel.

Al-Jazari (1136-1206CE) – Genius Mechanical Engineer



He was an inventor and Mechanical Engineer who gained fame and glory with famous book of mechanics. His double acting piston pump incorporates i) an effective means of converting rotary into reciprocating motion through crank connecting-rod mechanism, ii) makes use of double-acting principle and iii) first pump known to have had true suction pipes. One of the most significant inventions was the 'Elephant clock' consisting of a water powered clock in the form of an elephant. The various elements of the clock are in the housing on top of the elephant. The various elements that compose this clock move and make a sound every hour.

Al-Khwarizmi (800-847 CE) – Father of Algebra



He was one of the greatest scientific minds of the medieval period and most important Muslim mathematician who was justly called the 'Father of Algebra'. He wrote a book called 'Kitab Hisab al-adad al-Hindi' on arithmetic in which he used Indian numerals including zero and the decimal notation by position for the first time. He wrote a book on al-Jabr, whose Latinized form algebra, has found its way into the modern

languages, whilst the old mathematical term algorism is a distortion of al-Khwarizmi's name.

How those inventive juices happened to dry up, or how they might be restored, is another story. The fact, however, is that some of history's finest scientists and scholars once emerged from predominantly Muslim societies, extending from Spain to China across a long stretch of time that began in the seventh century.

One is reminded, though, of Lawrence's response to Prince Feisal: "Time to be great again, my lord." Long past due, some would say.

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Journey Of Faith



Mehtab Sultana Alam

A couple of years back, when my husband told me that we would be going for the Pilgrimage to Mecca, I was at first apprehensive. The thought of leaving my 4 year old son for so many days made me sad. But when my husband made me understand that he would be in safe hands with his brother's family, I was no more worried.

Hajj is totally different from other visits to Makkah. There are many rituals which have to be done in a specified time with 3 million or more people doing the same things. This makes it a very arduous exercise for the elderly and the weak. I feel myself to be amongst the fortunate ones to perform this holy duty at a relatively younger age and in good health.

We boarded the flight from Kuwait to Jeddah on the 20th Oct'2012. It took us about 2 hours to reach Jeddah. As we landed in the Hajj Terminal I could see how big an affair it really was. Three special terminals are readied to receive the pilgrims from all over the world. On arrival, Pilgrims from each Country are given a tag with different color codes. We were provided yellow colored tags. The formalities, although elaborate, were handled by our Agents. This took around 7 hours to complete, during which time we were provided refreshments and lounge facilities. Finally we boarded a bus towards our accommodation which was in Aziziya near Makkah. These accommodations were villa houses, rented specially for this special occasion.

We had to perform the lesser pilgrimage i.e. Umrah on the first day. As we were approaching the holy Masjid, known as Masjid-Al-Haram, we saw a sea of people. Pilgrims from different countries, speaking different languages, of different race and color and having different food habits were there for one purpose. The purpose was to please the Almighty Allah by performing the various rituals as shown by our Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). It is mentioned in the Holy Quran that this pilgrimage to Mecca is a duty that mankind owes to Allah. The pilgrimage of Hajj is considered to be one of the Pillars of Islam and is mandatory for all Muslims who can afford this journey.

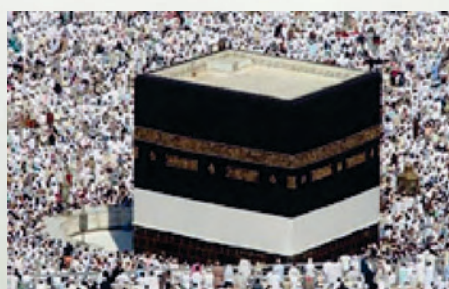
This holy Masjid, although known for its Kaaba (House of Allah) mostly, houses other sacred things like the footprint of the prophet Abraham on a stone known as Makaam-e-Ibrahim. There are also 7 pieces of stones known as the Hizr-e-Aswad (Black Stone) which are believed to be from Heaven. Kissing this stone is among the rituals of this pilgrimage. The source of the holy well, known as Zamzam, is also within the Masjid complex. Drinking water from this well is considered holy.

The pilgrimage of Hajj starts on the 8th of Dhul-Hijjah (a Muslim month). On that day, we put on our Ihram dress, which is the same for ladies but men have to wear a 2 piece cloth. We also have to say the intention in our hearts, regarding performing the Hajj, solely for the pleasure of Allah. Our buses took us to the borders of Mina, which is about 8 km from Makkah. Mina looks like a city of tents, where thousands of tents are set up in perfect order and

numbered according to different zones of the world. Space

for each pilgrim is at a premium here, and all that he or she gets is just enough space to lie down. It surely is a test of patience and humility to live with so meagre means in a sea of humanity. The 3 nights that we spend here taught us many lessons of sharing and caring for fellow human beings.

The next day which is the 9th Day of Dhul-Hijjah, is the day of 'Arafat', where all the pilgrims assemble in a place called Arafat. This is considered to be the most important ritual of this pilgrimage, and giving it a miss will mean re-performing of Hajj again. We spend our day in supplication to the Lord of the world, Allah, until sunset. We were fortunate enough to be housed in a spacious tent with good food.



The less fortunate ones usually spend it out in the open with no facilities. But the purpose for all assembled here remains to please the Almighty Allah. It is said that an accepted Hajj brings nothing short of Paradise

for the believer.

At sunset we leave for Muzdhalifa where we have to spend the night under the open sky. Again, we were fortunate to be provided with sleeping bags and we settled down for the night in the open under the stars shining so brightly.

Early next morning, after freshening up at our base camp, we headed for a ritual called 'stoning the devil'. We reached the bigger of the devils – Big Jumera, and threw 7 pebbles each on it, which were collected on the way. After this we came back to the camp, and have to slaughter a sacrificial animal as ordered by Allah. This was taken care of by our Service Provider and the men came out of Ihram after shaving their head. The womenfolk have to snip a short length of their hair as a ritual. This ritual of 'stoning the devil' is carried out for the next two days without fail.

The next ritual is circumambulation of the Kaaba which is known as Tawaaf, seven times. This is followed by Sae'e where all pilgrims have to run a circuit between the hills of 'Safa' and 'Marwa', seven times. This is in remembrance of the incident from Abraham's life, where he leaves his young baby and wife in this mountain as ordered by Allah. His wife Hajera ran between these mountains in search of help for herself and her baby Ishmael, when the Angel Gibrail appeared to provide them with water miraculously from the dry desert ground forming the source of the Zamzam well (which flows till today).

The Hajj rituals finally end on the 13th of Dhul-Hijjah, and the pilgrims start heading for home. We headed for Medina, where praying at the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH)



mosque is considered very holy. Finally we headed for home after two days at Medina.

The faithful hope that the Hajj will bring about a deep spiritual transformation, one that will make him or her a better person. If such a change from within does not occur, then the Hajj was merely a physical and material exercise devoid of any spiritual significance. As all great religions

teach, we are more than mere physical creatures in that we possess an essence beyond the material world. Indeed, this is why all great religions have a tradition of pilgrimage. In the Islamic tradition, Hajj encapsulates this spiritual journey toward this essence. Hajj teaches one to show sincerity and humility in one's relationship with God. The result of a successful Hajj is a rich inner peace, which is manifested outwardly in the values of justice, honesty, respect, generosity, kindness, forgiveness, mercy and empathy.

Debunking Myths About Skin Diseases And Skin Care



Dr. Anindita Medhi Saikia

“Science must begin with myths, and with the criticism of myths.”- Karl Popper

There are many misconceptions regarding skin diseases and



skin care. Some are because of misleading ads by cosmetic companies, while others are part of our folklore and have become deeply entrenched in our psyche.

Myth-1. A patient with chicken pox should have only boiled food and should avoid a bath!

It is to be kept in mind that varicella is caused by a virus; so to boost up the immune system adequate nutrition is a must. There is some logic behind the commonly held belief regarding avoidance of “hot” food. The patient's appetite tends to get decreased and the medicines are likely to induce a “gas” problem. The patient should have a daily bath and maintain a good hygiene to prevent the risk of secondary infection.

Myth-2. Tonsuring leads to better hair growth!

This is an exaggerated conception deeply instilled in us. Our hair type is based on our genes and orientation of hair follicles which will not be altered in anyway by shaving.

Another related myth is that shaving the hair on the face leads to increased hair growth and also thickened hairs.

Myth-3. All skin diseases are infectious!

‘Scary’ looking diseases like psoriasis and vitiligo are not contagious and lead to unnecessary ostracization of the infected individuals.

Myth-4. Anything herbal is filled with nature's goodness and hence harmless!

If that is so, why are some of the most poisonous substances of plant origin!! All substances whether natural or synthetic have interaction with the human physiology and can lead to severe allergy and infections. For example the so called pomegranate body lotion is in reality packed with synthetic compounds and perfumes which can lead to various types of skin rash.

Myth-5. Skin medicines are harmless!

At the end of the day they are drugs too and not cosmetic products. They can cause internal and external side effects if they exceed their dose. Example adapalene cream which is prescribed in acne should not be used during pregnancy as they can lead to serious birth defects in the baby.

Myth-6. All skin rashes filled with fluid are chicken pox!

Insect bites, allergies, infections, immunological disorders and drug reactions can mimic chicken pox leading to a misdiagnosis.

Myth-7. Sunscreens are not required on a cloudy day!

The sun's harmful UV rays are present even on a cloudy day and can cause allergy, pigmentation, early aging and skin cancer.

With rapid advancement in the medical field more and more age-old beliefs have been proved wrong; and therefore it is imperative that we abandon these long-held myths.



The Delightful Similitude Connecting Indian and Middle Eastern Cuisine



Parimita Barooah Bora

Like Indian cuisine, Middle Eastern cuisine encompasses all the distinct flavors of different cultures and influences to which it has been exposed since ancient times. The culinary traditions of both the regions are a reflection of their rich cultural heritage. Being an Indian but settled in Kuwait for the last 7 years, I have the opportunity to sample a wide variety of Middle Eastern cuisine. So, I'm writing this article



to share with you my discoveries of Middle Eastern food, some of which are quite similar to Indian food.

Food is an influencing factor that binds countries and cultures together. Centuries of trade relations and cultural exchange resulted in a significant influence on each region's cuisines. Middle Eastern cuisine or West Asian cuisine is the cuisine of the various countries and peoples of the Middle East.

The cuisine of the region is diverse while having a degree of homogeneity. The cuisine of India is characterized by sophisticated and subtle use of various spices, herbs and other vegetables grown in India. India's religious beliefs and culture have played an influential role in the evolution of its cuisine. However, India's cuisine also evolved with the subcontinent's cross-cultural interactions with the neighboring Middle East and Central Asia as well as the Mediterranean, making it a unique blend of various cuisines from across Asia.

The Gulf States have a similar cuisine due to the shared geography and history. Indian spices are widely used, due to the impact of the ancient traders who traveled from India carrying the spices through the Gulf States on their way to the Mediterranean states.

There is a strong emphasis on the following items in Arab/Middle Eastern cuisine:

- **Meat:** lamb and chicken are the most used, with beef, goat, and camel used to a lesser degree. Other poultry is used in some regions, and fish is used in coastal areas. Pork is completely prohibited—for Muslim Arabs, being both a cultural taboo and prohibited under Islamic law.
- **Dairy products:** dairy products are widely used, especially yogurt and white cheese. Butter and cream are also used extensively.
- **Herbs and spices:** mint and thyme (often in a mix called za'atar) are widely and almost universally used; spices are used much less than in Indian cuisine, but the amount and types generally varies from region to region. Some of the included herbs and spices are sesame, saffron, turmeric, garlic, cumin, cinnamon, and sumac.
- **Beverages:** hot beverages are used more than cold, coffee being on the top of the list. However, tea is also served for instance in Egypt and Jordan tea is more important hot beverage.
- **Grains:** rice is the staple and is used for most dishes; wheat is the main source for bread. Bulgur and semolina are also used extensively.
- **Legumes:** lentils are widely used as well as fava beans and chickpeas.
- **Fruits and vegetables:** Arabic cuisine also favors vegetables such as cucumbers, eggplant (aubergine), zucchini (courgette), okra, onions, and fruits (primarily citrus), which are often used as seasonings for entrees. Olives as well as dates, figs, and pomegranates are also widely used. Dates are a particularly important staple in the Arab diet, often eaten with coffee.
- **Nuts:** almonds, peanuts, pine nuts, pistachios, and walnuts are often included.
- **Greens:** parsley and mint are popular as seasonings in many dishes, while spinach and mulukhiyah are used in cooked dishes.



- Dressings and sauces: the most popular dressings include various combinations of olive oil, lemon juice, parsley, and/or garlic, and tahini (sesame paste). Labaneh (thinned yogurt) is often seasoned with mint, onion, or garlic, and served as a sauce with various dishes.

Notably, many of the same spices used in Arab/Middle Eastern cuisine are also those emphasized in Indian cuisine. Prominent among the meat preparations are grilled meats, or kebabs. Kebab is a traditional dish of Middle East and is equally liked and enjoyed in India. There are a wide variety of these grills with many regional specialties and styles. Shish Taouk, the dish originates from the Middle East consists of cubes of chicken that are marinated, then skewered and grilled. Though originated in the Middle East, but is made in kabab houses in many cities around the world including Indian cities. Tikka is of the same variety but is of Indian origin; is made of chicken cutlets in a marinade. The marinade used in the preparation of chicken tikka is made from a mixture of aromatic spices and yogurt. Paneer prepared in a tandoor is also known as paneer tikka. The Indian pulao is elevated by our mastery of spices. While the Middle East throws badam, kaju and kishmish into everything, our chefs use our spices to create more sophisticated flavours. And our kind of biryani is totally unknown in the kaju-kishmish world of Arab cookery. Jalebi is another item you find it all over the region under different but similar names. Our version differs from the Middle East original in that it tends to be thinner, crisper and less sweet. We don't use yeast which they tend to do in the Middle East. We often use other kinds of batter apart from maida (besan, rava, urad dal, or rice flour) either for binding or as part of the recipe. We are less dependent on honey and rose water (though we may use both) than the Turks. And our jalebis are not as sweet. But there is still nothing to beat the original jalebi, fried in much the same way as it has been for hundreds of years all over India. Its sophistication, texture and colour remind us of how quickly Indians can take dishes from other parts of the world and make them our own. Our ancestors instantly transformed the Middle Eastern zalabiya into something much more refined. And as their descendants, we have kept that tradition alive. Middle Eastern desserts are so sickly sweet that they make Bengali mithai seem teekha in comparison.

Halva or halawa refers to many types of dense, sweet confections, served across the Middle East and India. In Bahrain, the most popular form of halva is a jelly-styled sweet also known as halwa Bahraini in neighboring countries. In Kuwait, it is made of sesame paste and called rahash. Various types of halva from India are distinguished by the region and the ingredients from which they are

prepared. The most famous include sooji (or suji) halva (semolina), aate ka halva (wheat), moong dal ka halva (mung bean halva), gajar halva (carrot), dudhi halva, chana daal halwa (chickpeas), and Satyanarayan halwa (variation of suji halwa, with the addition of detectable traces of banana), and kaju halva (cashew nut). Kashi halva, made from winter melon or ash gourd, is a famous and traditional sweet of Karnataka, and mainly makes a regular appearance in traditional Brahmin weddings. In the Indian state of Kerala, halva is known as haluva or aluva. Kozhikode (anglicized as Calicut) in Kerala, is famous for its unique and exotic halva, which is popularly known as Kozhikodan Halva. Significant Arab and Middle Eastern influence in this region, through ancient trade routes via the Arabian Sea and through Arab traders who settled here, contributed to the evolution of Kozhikodan Halva.

The world is a small place and it is proved again and again that whichever corner of the earth you visit, you are sure to find some similarity in the food items.

Move, I must



Atul Shah

The mountain, one stone a time
The goal, one step a time
The journey, one experience a time
The dream, one wish a time
The character, one thought a time
The habit, one action a time
The years, one day a time
The life, one breath a time
The learning, one lesson a time.
But Move, I must.
To move is to live
And to stop, perish.



My wife's creative writing, with capital 'w'!!!



Siddharth Sharma

“One can know a man from his laugh, and if you like a man's laugh before you know anything of him, you may confidently say he is a good man.” - Fyodor Dostoyevsky

It was a hot balmy afternoon as Kuwaiti winters go. 99.7FM Radio Kuwait on the go as we made our way through the Express Motorway # 30. My boy was screaming his displeasure at his sister's persistence on using her mother's phone, where I presumed she would be playing some odd games in the backseat, much to the chagrin of her kid brother. Milady, in full Wayfarer sunglass armour as she was then, and which she always is whenever she puts up her dark glasses to face the sun. She was in her usual self whenever she stared at the cars often with contempt to those whizzing zig zag through the gaps of the endless stream of cars: behind us and beyond us, as we effort fully edged our way to home.

‘We should turn off the darn radio.....!’
I turned around to counter the Wayfarer eyes by my side.

‘Dixa...are you listening?’ The dark eyes now turned towards my daughter, our self-appointed DJ of the family, for compliance.

‘...for a start, we should talk than to listen all the way to such noise. We should talk...a family needs to talk. Dixa, you better learn to use up your time more usefully instead of phone, games and noise on the radio...Daiwik, will you keep quiet for a second!!!’
I nodded my head.

‘She is saying something important’ I thought... Dixa should listen!!!

‘Dixa you better listen to what your mother is saying...’
This one was from me.

‘Okay...’ and then some short jibes, ‘ok, ok, ok...’ I could see Dixa complied.

More confirmation came from short grunting sounds of my boy that actually conveyed his triumphs over his elder sibling.

I could see Dixa handing over the phone back to her mother.

With the radio being turned shut to silence, peace and quiet returned to our car with only the slight hum of the AC making the rounds.

‘Well, Diku baby, how's your art school going on?’ I enquired genuinely.

‘Obviously she needs to improve, she needs to practice more!! She is such a natural, does she realise that?’ My wife's remark while she was shaking her head.

‘She is always worried! Mothers....they are always the same’.....I thought.

‘She could have done so much better in the last Art Competition. I would agree her exams were just around the corner and she maybe was a little tight, but for a natural like her, she could have done so much better...But does she ever practise?No, never!’

‘But you said she is a natural...!’ I thought.
I kept quiet. But I nodded my head.

Just to keep our precious little family talk rolling on, I turned

to my wife “How about your creative writing? How did it go?”

It was just a snappy little thing to do....Mriganka did a fine job of convincing....I so very much not wanted to do it....I just wasn't prepared to write anything....It's been such a long time, you know.

‘But you write wellI like your writing!’ I consoled her.
‘What you had written?’ I asked.

‘Well, um...they gave some topics....like a memorable incident during Bihu....and something like it.’

‘And, I took up the incident thing and wrote a story’ She continued with this.

‘Well, what story you made up?’ I replied.

‘What could you say?Bihu, Dhol, rice fields, gaon...and to add some colour, me waiting for someone and tragedy, because he does not turn up....and that's sort of thing!’

‘Seems you spiced it up pretty well, that's story of yours’ I said.

‘Yes, your honour, guilty as charged’ she let out a giggle.
I could hear complete silence from my back seats. I knew both of my little guys are snoring hard. They know only two things to do in a car: make and savour noise in the radio or snore through the way till home.

So for the heck of pushing the cart of family talk on, I asked
‘Why you have written about you?’

‘It's my incident, remember?’ She replied with a wink.

‘Aha, so I seeWell then, what was the name of the protagonist you wrote about?’

‘Come on, the protagonist is me, don't you see? The sidekick is Joon’ she corrected me.

‘Well then, Joon who he is?’ I carried on.

‘My imagination to fill up the gaps in my creative writing of a story!’

At this, I laughed out. She joined me. We both laughed for a while. I even reckoned she might have a chance to win something.

‘She writes well...’ I reminded myself.

The cars before us were by then clearing up. I jammed my foot on the pedal. We raced our way back home. We had two sleeping kids to take care of.

The exit 212 was come. 212 meant we were nearer home. I heaved a sigh of relief. It was then her phone sent out a beep. A harmless beep of an incoming spurt of a tweet, or maybe a message.

She looked up her phone. She turned red, or I thought so maybe, but sure there she was laughing the heck of it.

I could not get it. By the time I reached the traffic red light, I put the car to a halt and asked her what it was.

She turned towards me, smile on her face, the kind of smile of hers I get lost, and she replied rather mischievously ‘A request for friends-to-be in my wall, face book!’

‘So what!’ I continued shrugging my shoulders ‘from whom?’

‘...it's from Joon, mon ami’, she replied, ‘mon ami.’

She then closed her phone and winked at me!!!

‘So much for family talk...but I liked her laugh!’I convinced myself.

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Mitali Goswami

I endeared----those cherished moments



Having a place to go is a home.
Having someone to love is a family.
Having both is a blessing.



Family is where we find the solace of life. In the mundane sky, family is like the ever glittering Sun - showering rays of comfort & happiness all around the members. All our worries, tiredness and fatigues vanish here. The world has now started to recognize the importance of our traditional family value. A typical Indian family means children, parents and grandparents staying together in one roof happily year after year.

I was born and brought up in a family with very close bonding to each-other. Papa, Ma and my naughty younger brother-my life used to revolve around them before marriage. The last three months has been like replaying the early days of my life, when I spent those lovely golden days with my Papa,

Ma and dear brother. This opportunity to re-live my life once again made me younger by 20 years.

Those were the days when, when every moment I lived to the fullest, my parent tolerated me and my naughtiness. I was very naughty, a Tom-boy character. After coming back from school, I just drop the school-bag, change dress and rush out to play Football, Kabaddi, Pithu, Marble etc. In our days, there were no computer, TV or iPod/ iPad. So we enjoyed lots of outdoor games. My mom kept on calling me for food, but her shouts went in to a deaf ear. She really tolerated me a lot. When my Mom & Dad visited me in

Kuwait, I wanted to live those moments again. But when I see my daughters living my cherished moments with my parents, I am more than delighted.

During my school and college days, I was very much involved in extra-curricular activities of my school and college. I used to do plays and I was a Tennis and Carom player. When my parents visited Kuwait this time and saw the CD of the play we performed in Autumn Festival, I saw the same happiness in their eyes as I used to see years back.

When I was in India, my parents never stayed with us more than 10 days. But these three months with my Papa and Ma, made me their little girl once again. I remember how we used to enjoy our vacations with Papa taking us to different places. To re-live those moments I roamed around in Kuwait with Papa and Ma. We went to the famous places in and around Kuwait. These were so childish yet so loving moments with my parents around. I can feel the satisfaction in their heart and the smile in their faces- which says my daughter has really grown up well to be a wife and a mother. Now when they are gone back to India, I miss them very much. They are the only people in my life who love me unconditionally as I am.

What it's like to be a parent? It is one of the hardest things you ever do, but in exchange it teaches you the meaning of unconditional love.

I love you Ma & Papa.





A Glimpse Into The Future Of Medicine



Dr. Anjol Saikia

Medical science has always been about a struggle for power over life and death, the ability to heal the sick and prolonging life.

The rapid advances in molecular genetics has heralded a new era in science with the possibility of having ones personalized genome available in a CD- ROM or a chip which could be the “owner’s manual”. It would be like holding the blueprint of the body and reading the intimate secrets, including dangerous diseases and ancestral history. Then by using powerful computers to determine the precise location of these mutated or damaged genes, gene therapy may be applied to cure these diseased genes which are responsible for many genetic diseases and cancerous conditions.

Cancer would possibly continue to torment the human race throughout the century. However there would be promising new treatments and therapies which include:

1. Nanoparticle therapy or “smart bombs”.
2. Gene therapy, especially for p53 (linked to almost 50% of common cancers).
3. Drugs specifically targeting only cancerous cells.
4. Newer vaccinations against viruses that cause cancers. (We already have human papilloma virus vaccination (HPV) against cervical cancer in women).
The main focus would probably be on prevention through constant monitoring for cancer cells years before a tumor forms.



By midcentury, many believe gene therapy would become a standard method of treating many single genetic diseases. Scientific advances may go beyond just fixing genes to actually enhance and improve them; and “designer babies” could become a reality. Enhancement could be in physical (athletic ability, looks) or mental abilities (memory, attention span) by altering certain key genes. These genetic enhancements may even become indispensable if we are to explore the solar system and live on inhospitable planets. Thus the human race may be split into different genetic factions - the enhanced and the unenhanced.

However many important diseases like diabetes ,schizophrenia, Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s and heart disease ,which have a definite genetic pattern but involve many genes and environmental factors controlling them ,may not be easily amenable to genetic therapy.

By the mid-century mark, it might be possible to slow down the aging process by the use of stem cells and gene therapy. By the end of this century, it might be possible to reverse

the effects of aging by accelerating cell repair mechanisms.

In the future extending life span may be a combination of several methods:

1. Growing new organs via tissue engineering and stem cells.
2. Ingesting a cocktail of proteins and enzymes to increase cell repair mechanisms, reset biological clock and regulate metabolism.
3. Using gene therapy to alter genes to slow down the aging process.
4. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle (exercise and good diet).
(Lowering calorie intake by 30 % has been shown to increase lifespan by 30% in every organism studied so far including primates).
5. Using nanosensors to detect diseases like cancer years before they become a problem.

There may be these tiny DNA sensors in our clothes, body, and bathroom, constantly monitoring our health and detecting diseases before they become a danger. So every time we brush our teeth, we may have a thorough checkup for a variety of diseases.

Thus the future of mankind holds that there should be reasonable power over life and death by the end of this century which would not just be limited to healing the sick but used to enhance the human body and even to create new life forms. This would mostly be attributable to developments in the field of biotechnology.



Rubi Dutta Bordoloi

Fabulous Facebook



Now-a-days a popular and new word has come into our vocabulary. The word is 'Facebook'. This is the most popular social networking website on the internet.

Facebook became an important part of our lives. It is a good service and is completely free to contact people anywhere in the world.

The story of Facebook is similar to that of the internet. The internet began in 1969 as a medium to exchange information among the military officers; and the Facebook was founded in 2004 to connect the students of Harvard University.



Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg is one young genius committed to change human lives drastically during 21st century.

With more than 1 billion users, Facebook is the world's largest online social network site and it gives people the power to share and make the world more open & connected. But, in our society some of the people take this venture too seriously, becoming Facebook addicts. The amount of time users engage in Facebook activities like updating status, posting photos, commenting & liking posts has also been increasing with smartphones, wherever & whenever we are.

Some may ask what's wrong if somebody uses Facebook frequently as a means of entertainment or as a means to relieve stress. When Facebook activities start interfering with our day-to-day life and become detrimental to our daily functioning at work or in school, we might have a problem. Some of us keep checking news feed, notification whenever we have the chance! Some of us get restless while we wait for others to comment or 'like' on what we have posted and so we just keep checking and re-checking Facebook to see if there are any new notifications. One of my friends check Facebook first thing when she wakes up and many a times during the day and last when she goes to sleep! One Facebook addicted incident is such that Daisy's 12 years old daughter asked her for help with homework, but Daisy didn't want to help her because she was too busy on Facebook! So her daughter went to her room and sent an e-mail asked her help but Daisy didn't see the e-mail because she was too busy on Facebook!

But, Facebook has some advantages also like finding long-lost friends, close & distant relatives. It's somewhat useful for assembling groups of people interested in a topic and distributing information to them. For those who have a few idle minutes to fill, it is the easy way to find stimulating material! There is always new and entertaining on the feed! Some sites are really inspiring and interesting.

Here are some myths on Facebook:

- Facebook is going to sell your picture: Reality is: founder M. Zuckerberg insists that Facebook has no intension of selling users pictures for any reason.



- Facebook destroys social skills: In reality there is no denying that Facebook makes it easier to connect with old friends & distant relatives. A Cambridge University study of Facebook users found that the site can be a useful tool for maintaining relationship that might otherwise be lost as well as useful for getting a better rounded view of their friends, family & giving more options for how they interact with others.

- Facebook is going to start charging it: In reality the company currently has no plans to start charging for the service. Facebook is making profits & growing quickly based only on the strength of its advertising revenues.

Do you know?

- The world's biggest social networking site Facebook has tightened its rules on posts relating to guns.

- Amitabh Bachchan's Facebook page crosses 10 million likes.

- Recently Facebook implemented Facebook video chat features with Skype.

Last but not the least Facebook is a great innovation! It's a cool tool! It offers an opportunity to interact with an expansive universe of new people!



A Complete - Nutritious Baked Meal



Madhuchanda Nath

A PLATTER OF BAKED FRENCH LOAF, POTATOES AND TILAPIA IN GREEN SAUCE

Grilling and baking has been popular as little oil is used and there is no deep frying. These recipes are healthy and you can make them in no time.

BROWN CHEESE GARLIC FRENCH LOAF:

Ingredients:

1 brown loaf
100gm mozzarella cheese
1tsp chilli flakes
1tsp oregano
Few garlic flakes(grated)

Method:

Cut the french loaf into pieces(inclined way).Put garlic and a thin layer of mozzarella cheese on each piece of loaf . Sprinkle little chilli-flakes and oregano on it. Grill in an oven till the cheese melts.

BAKED POTATOES:

Ingredients:

500gm potatoes
2tbs olive oil
1tsp oregano
1tsp chilli flakes
Salt to taste

Method:

Cut the potatoes into small square sizes. Par boil the potatoes and strain.Toss these potatoes with olive oil, chilli flakes, oregano and salt. Place in a baking tray and grill them till a brownish tinge is seen.

TILAPIA IN GREEN SAUCE:

Ingredients:

A fish
green chutney
1 or 2 onion cut into rings
4 to 6 cherry tomatoes
2tbs olive oil

Marination:

Marinate the fish with a dash of olive oil and the green chutney made of mint, coriander leaves, garlic, ginger, green chilli, lemon juice, salt, sugar for half an hour. Then make a big packet of aluminum foil with the marinated fish, onion



rings and cherry tomatoes inside and sealed on all sides. Place in a baking tray and bake for 25 mins. Open the packet and grill the fish for 2-3mins.

Assemble the french loaf, potatoes and tilapia and serve hot along with a choice of any salad or other boiled veggies.

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Amitabh Talukdar

Smart Phones & Security



Introduction

Nowadays smart phone has become an essential part of life among all type of users specially youngsters & urban users. Let's go back to the late 1990s and look at how smart phones evolved. That time many mobile phone users had dedicated PDA (Personal Digital Assistant) device, running various operating systems such as Palm OS, BlackBerry OS or Windows CE/Pocket PC. Nokia released the Nokia 9000 which became their best-selling phone of that time. It was a palmtop computer-style phone combined with a PDA from HP. In 2007, revolution began with Apple Inc. who introduced the iPhone, one of the first mobile phones to use a multi-touch interface. The iPhone was notable for its use of a large touchscreen for direct finger input as its main means of interaction, instead of a stylus, keyboard, and/or keypad typical for smartphones at the time. In 2008 HTC first introduced Android based smartphone – and the smartphone era has begun.



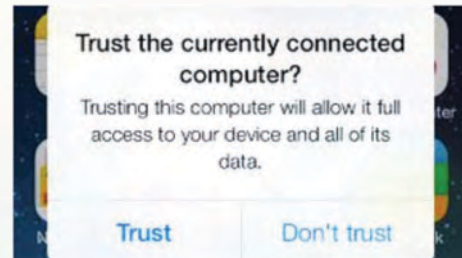
Now, along with the evolution of smartphone, another concern has been raised which is all about security of smartphone & data privacy. With the

tremendous growth of smartphone, hackers target have been gradually shifting towards smart phone from personal computers. Let's see how smartphone users are segmented based on operating system according to the 2013 data shown here.

From the above pie chart it's more obvious that hackers will target Android based phones since it's used by about 79% of world's smartphone users. There is another reason why android is attracting more numbers of hacker is that Android is a very versatile open source and highly customizable operating system to fit into any device of various manufacturer. Also, most of the applications of Android are freely available in Play Store. Hacker has taken this advantage to target Android users to retrieve as much informations as they can. Now let's see how hackers attack smartphones:

Hacking of iPhone:

iPhones are well secured compared to other smartphones because of it's robust operating system iOS and applications are available only through Apple store where Apple thoroughly inspect each and every applications for malicious codes. But iPhone is also not



completely safe from hackers. Here is one example how iPhone can easily be hacked using ordinary looking USB charger and injecting a malicious code into the device. Once the USB charger is plugged in the phone (with iOS 7), and when the passcode was entered, the sign-code attack began

and all the passwords/informations stored in the device were made available to hacker. Hackers mostly use familiar applications like Facebook app for this type of attack.

Apple has now claimed to fix this flaw in the latest patch. But to be on safer side avoid using USB charger available in public places or if you get similar prompt never press "Trust" with unknown charger.

Recently Georgia Institute of Technology has successfully demonstrated how an app which they call "Jekyll apps", which have the outward appearance of being benign but contain vulnerabilities that allow them to be exploited remotely. GIT was able to publish the app successfully in App Store as a proof of concept passing all the inspection layers of Apple.

Hacking of Android phones:



Along with popularity, there is another alarming factor that rings in our mind is all about it's security. Android phones are highly vulnerable to hackers through Trojan applications. This is a real important step because not all apps in the Google Play Store are safe. Let us look at how easy it is to hack an android smartphone. Android smartphones are hacked using various available hacking tools like backtrack etc. The process is very simple, first hackers release a fake application in Play Store which contains some malicious

codes. Once user installs the fake application it opens certain network port in the infected mobile and hacker can take full control of the phone and exploit it by changing contacts, make calls from your phone, retrieving the saved passwords of various sites like Facebook, twitter, email accounts etc. For example recently Play Store was flooded with large numbers of fake BBM (BlackBerry Messenger) apps.



Once user installs fake apps, hacking tool e.g. “back track” can take control of your phone remotely.

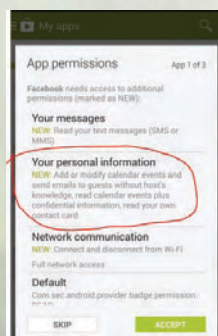
How do I know if my phone has been hacked?

If your phone has become very slow, your data usage shows an abrupt rise in volume & your phone has started behaving abnormally then your phone security might have been compromised.

How to secure my phone:

Now going to the most important part of the story, how to secure my smart phone from hackers:

The importance of app permissions:



For Android users, before you begin installing an app from Google Play, a list of requested permissions will pop up to show you what permission the app requires. Apps require permissions to do things but not all of them are necessary.

Always read through the permissions to make sure they make sense and correspond to what the app actually

does e.g. Games app does not require a permission to access your text messages and all personal informations. This is a real important step because not all apps in the Play Store are safe. Google takes 2 -3 weeks to remove malicious app.



This helps you understand more about what the app really does without trying it out firsthand.

Do Not Save All of Your Passwords

Many users tend to save their passwords to online services and sites on their device, never thinking about what it would



mean to a person who got their hands on the phone. Avoid

having all important passwords saved in your device particularly when it comes to banking or payment apps.



Antivirus for your phone

There are many antiviruses available in the market and some of them are free. They are sufficient

enough to protect your phone from malicious code and Trojan attack. One of the best free antivirus is AVG for both iPhone & Android:

Finally backup you phone:

A backup of your precious data is a must-have in the day and age of smartphones. In the worst case scenario where your device has been stolen or hacked, you can restore the data from your personal computer.



Although

iCloud and Dropbox has made life easier by syncing the data on the fly, still backing up your phone in a laptop is still wise idea to restore lost data due to hacking or any other attack.

There are many more utilities available like track your device, remote wipe out, encrypt my device etc. to protect your phone from hacking or theft etc. Going forward the wise advice is that you should not try to be an early bird always, let a new app become familiar with other users and read the review before experimenting it on your own device.



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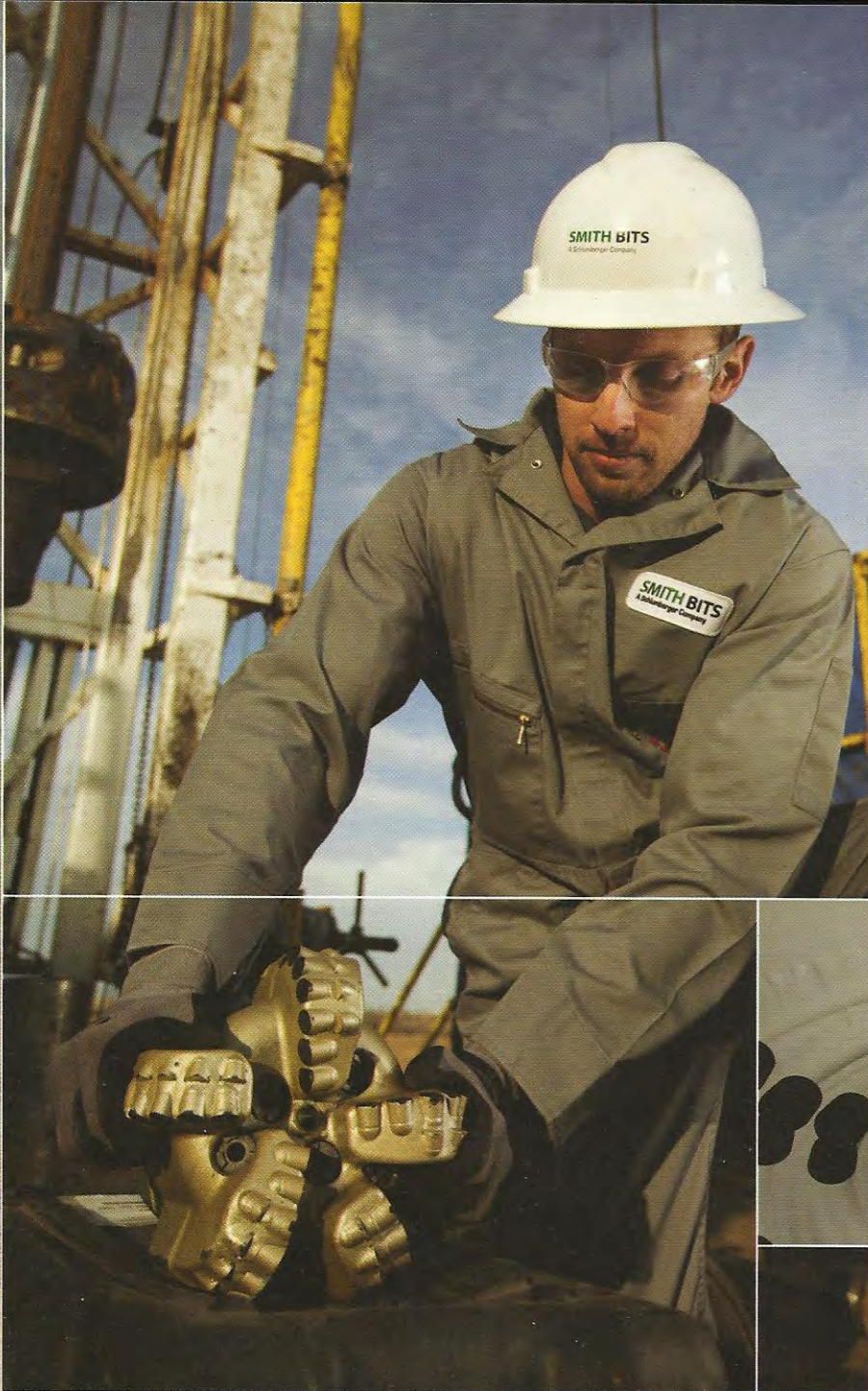
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