

Desis of Silicon Valley Speak: An Oral History
Shyamal Roy and Alodeep Sanyal Interview

00:00:01.180 --> 00:00:01.920

Interviewer (I) Okay.

00:00:01.960 --> 00:00:20.090

(I) Right. Thank you, Mr. Roy and Mr. Sanyal for agreeing to do this interview, for Desis of Silicon Valley Speak: An Oral History at the San Jose State University Library. This is going to be a conversation about the contributions of the Asian Indian or the Desi community

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(I) to the largely understood Silicon Valley.

00:00:22.810 --> 00:00:28.550

(I) But I would also extend the word Silicon Valley to the Bay Area in general, because Silicon Valley is, I think

00:00:28.580 --> 00:00:31.809

(I) parameters have expanded over the years.

00:00:32.100 --> 00:00:47.889

(I) So we'll start with a brief introductions that if you tell each one of you, if you take turns and tell us a bit about yourselves and about your journey up until now, both as professionals and also as theater personalities.

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Alodeep Sanyal (A.S) Shyamal Da (Da = older brother in Bengali) why don't you go ahead.

00:00:52.680 --> 00:00:53.480

Shyamal Roy (S.R) Okay.

00:00:54.420 --> 00:01:00.940

(S.R) Hold on let me increase the volume because I, I could barely hear. I could hear Mantra very well, but I could barely hear you.

00:01:01.310 --> 00:01:03.230

(S.R) But anyway.

00:01:03.510 --> 00:01:04.489

(A.S) Can you hear me now from my end?

00:01:04.870 --> 00:01:08.310

(S.R) Yeah, I think it's better, better now.

00:01:08.560 --> 00:01:18.179

(S.R) Well, thank you Mantra for inviting me. I mean, you know, this is an exciting project, and I'm extremely happy to be able to participate in that.

00:01:18.370 --> 00:01:36.569

(S.R) Just to introduce myself professionally, actually, I am...my background is engineering, and although I slowly have moved from industrial engineering to proportion research, now I do mostly general management and financials, role, that's the role that we play.

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(S.R) Theatre wise, I came to the love of theatre long time back. When I was in high school, you know we used to do play, and I was in a residential high school, Ramakrishna Mission, Narendrapur, we had events every month or so for different. So for that,

00:01:54.090 --> 00:01:58.290

(S.R) some of them will be a place where we, we participate in the play. Then we;

00:01:58.380 --> 00:02:10.909

(S.R) I, I still only remember that, you know my final year in Class 11, we had to do a 'jatra' (folk theater form). So I did the 'jatra' also. That was a really interesting thing. But then in IIT Kharagpur, I participated quite a bit. IIT Kharagpur at that time was

00:02:10.979 --> 00:02:21.140

(S.R) I mean it's really... what should I say... it's a hotbed of theaters, because we counted at one point of time, every year, approximately about, about

00:02:21.180 --> 00:02:22.460

(S.R) 80 to 100

00:02:22.520 --> 00:02:36.719

(S.R) plays were being staged, but under different contexts with other like interhall, open IIT, intercollegiate, and all kind of things like that. So I basically fell in love with that. And I, I

00:02:36.850 --> 00:02:43.579

(S.R) and in my third and fourth year I could, I would say that I was spending more time on theater than I spent time in... studying.

00:02:43.640 --> 00:02:52.150

(S.R) But after getting out I mean, you know I did haven't done much in Kolkata after that. I was in four years, then I came back here,

00:02:52.290 --> 00:02:58.770

(S.R) couldn't get much time, but I mean I definitely did one of the things that I did in the theater, which I think really

00:02:58.950 --> 00:03:01.750

(S.R) helped me quite a bit. Understanding is that

00:03:01.780 --> 00:03:08.270

(S.R) I came to Case Western Reserve University, and in Case Western Reserve University, they had a theater, you know, department of theater

00:03:08.410 --> 00:03:15.249

(S.R) and head of the department was Kenneth Albert, who was also head of Cleveland Playhouse. So,

00:03:15.290 --> 00:03:31.569

(S.R) and they use to give tickets, you know I mean to the former graduate students. They will give a ticket on the weekday show and 2 tickets for \$2. So I totally used that for all 5 years for every play that they are doing it, and they have discussions, and you know, discussion sessions on the plays and everything.

00:03:31.580 --> 00:03:36.790

(S.R) So, and you know that sounds like, in totally did a few plays here. But when I came to the Bay Area again,

00:03:36.810 --> 00:03:40.810

(S.R) for various reasons didn't participate much. I mean, you know we were, but now

00:03:40.950 --> 00:03:46.459

(S.R) opportunities come up one or two. But now, with the BAAT (Bay Area Amateur Thespians) you know, mostly with Alodeep and

00:03:46.510 --> 00:03:58.989

(S.R) Anindya's initiative the BAAT was formed. I joined slightly later, and with that we have now opportunity to do more meaningful theaters and in the Bay Area.

00:03:59.060 --> 00:04:10.670

(I) Right, thank you and Alodeep your introduction please.

(A.S) Yes, thank you Shyamal Da for such an elucidated introduction. And in all sense he's my senior,

00:04:10.770 --> 00:04:15.240

(A.S) from all perspective, and I learned a lot from him everyday.

00:04:15.260 --> 00:04:34.400

(A.S) So just like Shyamal Da and like you as well Mantra, we all started our you know...early childhood, as well as the early years in India. We moved to different parts of the United States, and eventually all converged to Silicon Valley, which I think is a,

00:04:34.410 --> 00:04:36.240

(A.S) is really a melting pot

00:04:36.720 --> 00:04:39.970

(A.S) of different culture and their confluence

00:04:40.050 --> 00:04:50.769

(A.S) and their influence on society. So like Shyamal Da, I also have an engineering background. I did my undergrad as well as doctoral studies all in

00:04:50.900 --> 00:04:53.939

(A.S) computer science and computer engineering. And

00:04:54.100 --> 00:04:57.550

(A.S) before moving to Bay Area I started my career as a...

00:04:57.650 --> 00:05:00.699

(A.S) as a technologist.

00:05:00.730 --> 00:05:09.710

(A.S) and after changing two jobs right now I, I run my own startup on a health-related health tech, med-tech related product.

00:05:09.760 --> 00:05:12.170

(A.S) But apart from that,

00:05:12.230 --> 00:05:16.740

(A.S) whenever I feel like you know, to put my mind aside from

00:05:16.870 --> 00:05:21.619

(A.S) a heavy duty work that I, I do on a daily basis

00:05:21.810 --> 00:05:24.099

(A.S) and nightly basis, I feel like

00:05:24.140 --> 00:05:27.920

(A.S) theatre gives me that opportunity to completely take off my mind...

00:05:27.970 --> 00:05:29.569

(A.S) From

00:05:30.120 --> 00:05:36.080

(A.S) this work towards something more creative, more innovative,

00:05:36.140 --> 00:05:42.110

(A.S) more kind of connecting to the different personalities and and lives of people.

00:05:42.240 --> 00:05:46.310

(A.S) and by that I mean that not only that the Desis

00:05:46.350 --> 00:05:58.290

(A.S) of the Bay Area, you know we we do have a synergy in our lifestyle, mostly, because we all come from pretty much similar family background, upbringing, and...to

00:05:58.380 --> 00:06:05.619

(A.S) a kind of translation or transformation of our life to living that everyday life here. But as well as I think

00:06:05.720 --> 00:06:09.670

(A.S) you know, theater also attaches and connects us with...

00:06:09.740 --> 00:06:28.180

(A.S) with people of different communities, including people who were born and grew up here. I have always seen that whenever in any conversation I mentioned that we have a, we have a the-, you know, thespian team, and we do perform stage theaters every now and then every year.

00:06:28.190 --> 00:06:32.300

(A.S) To other community members like to that, to the Americans and other

00:06:32.340 --> 00:06:48.899

(A.S) communities. We, we always have got a very high applause and and very high appreciation and acceptance right, I mean by the fact that we do have such a different kind of interesting creative outlet. Now, talking about

00:06:48.960 --> 00:06:51.699

(A.S) how my interest grew on theater.

00:06:51.730 --> 00:06:58.530

(A.S) I think my affinity toward theater grew, thanks to my parents,

00:06:58.720 --> 00:07:03.800

(A.S) who always had a very deep affinity toward theater. I used to go with them

00:07:03.830 --> 00:07:07.280

(A.S) you know, my childhood was always in Kolkata

00:07:07.350 --> 00:07:10.469

(A.S) especially on the northern side of Kolkata, where there are,

00:07:10.540 --> 00:07:18.699

(A.S) it's the birthplace of the Bengali Theatre. And every year I remember starting my

00:07:18.860 --> 00:07:20.360

(A.S) third or fourth grade,

00:07:20.760 --> 00:07:27.640

(A.S) I have seen at least 15 to 20 theaters every year where, going with my parents.

00:07:27.710 --> 00:07:34.379

(A.S) And apart from that, I have seen my dad performing actively in theater as a director, as well as,

00:07:34.500 --> 00:07:37.440

(A.S) you know, sometimes playwright, as well as,

00:07:37.610 --> 00:07:45.119

(A.S) actor on the plays that they used to do in their office for their annual cultural program.

00:07:45.390 --> 00:07:48.510

(A.S) And he occasionally, he also have acted in

00:07:48.620 --> 00:07:59.139

(A.S) an amateur theater which was run by a a good friend of his. So, so basically I have seen him rehearsing at home as well as

00:07:59.210 --> 00:08:05.210

(A.S) on the theater, theater value and multiple times you know it has,

00:08:05.250 --> 00:08:08.400

(A.S) he has carved out some time out of our family time,

00:08:08.420 --> 00:08:15.120

(A.S) and I've seen how my mom was considerate toward that. So this all kind of got instilled in me

00:08:15.170 --> 00:08:19.219

(A.S) from that early childhood. As a student

00:08:19.270 --> 00:08:37.719

(A.S) in the, in the school, in the high school, I did not perform much on the, on the, actively on the theater. Rather, I've seen my dad doing that. But from my college life, as Shyamal Da pointed out, IIT was one of the hotspot. In our college we didn't have that many theaters, but at least

00:08:37.890 --> 00:08:39.810

(A.S) we used to have like two

00:08:39.840 --> 00:08:46.620

(A.S) admiral, like a sub-annual kind of programs. On every program theater was one element.

00:08:46.660 --> 00:08:51.680

(A.S) and that's where I kind of started writing short skits

00:08:51.750 --> 00:08:57.669

(A.S) and, and short plays. So my journey started more like a writer

00:08:57.750 --> 00:09:07.949

(A.S) than an actor. I did not act much in my undergrad days. I wrote scripts for, for other people like my

00:09:08.290 --> 00:09:16.349

(A.S) my friends have acted and played in it, but I pretty much I was a writer, and once I directed a play that was my,

00:09:16.760 --> 00:09:20.930

(A.S) my experience concerned with the theater when I was in India.

00:09:20.970 --> 00:09:23.179

(A.S) But then, after I came to U.S.

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(A.S) especially when I was doing my doctoral studies at the University of Massachusetts,

00:09:28.640 --> 00:09:34.279

(A.S) I had the opportunity to write an English script

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(A.S) as well as,

00:09:35.910 --> 00:09:39.799

(A.S) you know, one time I directed it, another time, another

00:09:39.850 --> 00:09:45.220

(A.S) person who wrote a script and I acted on it. So there were two or three occasions during my

00:09:45.390 --> 00:09:48.369

(A.S) a PhD days that I was able to

00:09:48.400 --> 00:09:52.449

(A.S) a get actively involved in theater. Then, after that there was a long pause.

00:09:52.520 --> 00:09:57.560

(A.S) I did a postdoc, I moved to Bay Area, and pretty much I was outside the cultural scene

00:09:57.580 --> 00:09:59.610

(A.S) for a while. Initially you know,

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(A.S) since you have been interviewing the Indian diaspora, there is one common element

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(A.S) among the, the first generation immigrants from our countries. That in the beginning of their career they they tend to be too much serious

00:10:13.790 --> 00:10:32.879

(A.S) about building their career. Primarily out of the fear that they should not lose their job right, and losing job has many consequences. So, so that was also in me, so I primarily focused on my career for first 2, 3 years. By that time I slowly started getting

00:10:33.000 --> 00:10:41.469

(A.S) kind of middle into the the social community, especially the Bengali community, as well as outside Bengali community a little bit.

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(A.S) And I started getting to know who are the people

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(A.S) who have a creative mindset, creative outlet. And, and they do kind of

00:10:49.920 --> 00:10:58.950

(A.S) sometimes, they do they, they perform the you know plays. As well as singing and dancing kind of those kind of stage performances.

00:10:59.010 --> 00:11:01.480

(A.S) And then slowly I got involved in

00:11:01.630 --> 00:11:08.700

(A.S) in, in acting in a theater. I acted in a couple of theaters, a couple of plays with a few fellow friends.

00:11:08.810 --> 00:11:10.580

(A.S) And then eventually

00:11:10.620 --> 00:11:29.119

(A.S) we got into this collective initiative, which is called the the Bay Area Amateur Thespians and says our BAAT, as Shyamal Da was mentioning. Anindya Da, Shyamal Da, Sudipta, there were a few of them who all kind of got together and created this community. I, I also got

00:11:29.140 --> 00:11:31.299

(A.S) involved in it, and over the last

00:11:31.370 --> 00:11:34.479

(A.S) 2, 3 years it has really gained a lot of steam.

00:11:34.630 --> 00:11:36.100

(A.S) and now

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(A.S) we do see a lot of energy and

00:11:39.930 --> 00:11:46.700

(A.S) an opportunity of doing multiple forms of plays on a given year.

00:11:46.720 --> 00:11:50.100

(A.S) And it is very heartening to see how

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(A.S) a bigger part of the community is getting slowly, getting interested toward

00:11:54.400 --> 00:11:57.080

(A.S) a creative outlet like a theater.

00:11:57.110 --> 00:12:06.109

(A.S) and and we have been able to... you know, instill that inspiration of the, of the interest in the bigger part of the community.

00:12:06.670 --> 00:12:09.810

(I) Okay, great. Thank you very much. So,

00:12:09.940 --> 00:12:24.599

(I) because both of you have very similar backgrounds, right, you were introduced to theater as children, and then your interest grew from there. Then a couple of years of intense higher education that we all do in India, right you know, going into college

00:12:24.610 --> 00:12:41.659

(I) and then coming for graduate school here. But the love for theatre stayed with you, and then both of you came and ended up in the Bay Area. And then you have been technologists here, and engineers, and worked in various fields, in addition to cultivating your love for theatre. So, having...

00:12:42.160 --> 00:12:52.959

(I) come to Silicon Valley, first in your careers like as you're technologists, as engineers right, in the Bay Area broader Bay Area. And then

00:12:53.050 --> 00:12:59.969

(I) developing this cultural form on the side right. In this perspective, what does Silicon Valley mean to you?

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(A.S) Maybe Shyamal Da you can go again and start.

00:13:07.400 --> 00:13:17.500

(S.R) So for me actually the Silicon Valley geographically means what we call as a more of a South Bay, you know that, that area.

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(S.R) And so which I can say that is kind of Fremont and south of Fremont on the other side. Again, it starts to say for example about...

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(S.R) in Palo Alto and south, you know that that geographically.

00:13:32.070 --> 00:13:37.599

(S.R) But people used to work there, they lived all over, you know. So for me also as a...

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(S.R) mentally, the Silicon Valley is all of San Francisco,

00:13:41.730 --> 00:13:45.059

(S.R) I mean San Francisco Bay Area. That's the way I've been on boarding it.

00:13:45.140 --> 00:13:49.750

(S.R) and it, it brought in one of the main big advantages to Silicon Valley is that it brought in a lot of

00:13:49.820 --> 00:14:07.069

(S.R) different kinds of people. I mean especially a lot of Indian diaspora from different states, different, you know, languages and all that, and you know, and it gave up kind of for us. I the way I look at it is that it gave us a platform to do something more, and it's some all the other, I think.

00:14:07.110 --> 00:14:19.489

(S.R) it made the people a little bit more adventurous than I have seen in Midwest, or whatever it is. I mean, you know that that's, that is definitely is there. I personally did not come to the Silicon Valley. I personally you know, I was in East Bay.

00:14:19.500 --> 00:14:33.979

(S.R) And when I first moved in on my company, actually, office was in city of San Francisco itself, and I'm in the field of transportation logistics. So, but I touched Silicon Valley quite a bit because we have the clients and customers, and we you know work with them. So this something that I've seen that, you know.

00:14:34.120 --> 00:14:37.860

(S.R) What the main thing that Silicon Valley has given me, and you know, is that

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(S.R) it has given me

00:14:40.330 --> 00:14:48.370

(S.R) desire to try something new. Desire to do something different and do something new. And it's okay to fail.

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(S.R) you know you can fail and because you learn from that and do something on the new stuff.

00:14:53.080 --> 00:15:10.450

(S.R) That's the way I I looked at it.

(I) Absolutely, and I assume that this is the same spirit with which you approach your Thespian life?

(S.R) Yes exactly, you know try something new. I can, I can kind of measure. I can say that when we were working with,

00:15:11.360 --> 00:15:14.000

(S.R) when we were planning and trying to do

00:15:14.020 --> 00:15:24.549

(S.R) on the play, that we recently staged 221B. And I think I was the one who actually brought in this you know, I mean brought in the script and trying to do the work.

00:15:24.560 --> 00:15:42.140

(S.R) But some people are doubters who are always there. They were doubting when, and I kind of said that no, this is something give me a platform, like I said to try something new, with the wow factorm with the stage and everything. And I think we should, we should go ahead and do

that. And you know I'm glad Alodeep persisted, and we could get it done, and I think it was very successful play.

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(S.R) And with that I think I'll give it to Alodeep to add on and his perspective on that.

(A.S) I, I totally agree with you Shyamal Da. One thing for sure I, I my observation is absolutely in sync with you. You have lived in other cities and states in the kind in this country and so do I.

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(A.S) And I have really seen that

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(A.S) although you know both mine and Shyamal Da's experience in living other states and other cities whereas as students, because you know that time we were students. And now our our exposure to the bigger community was also limited.

(I) Of course.

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(A.S) Mantra you have also noticed that. (I) Yes, of course. (A.S) As a student primarily mingle around students (I) Yes, of course.

(A.S) and your your objectives are pretty much same. The time when you metted within a student group, you talk about the the papers that you are submitting and getting rejected every now and then, and all those kind of things, but

00:16:36.390 --> 00:16:55.249

(A.S) so we didn't. We didn't leave as professionals in other States. I think it applies to Shyamal Da as well. I think Shyamal Da also started his career in Bay Area right Shyamal Da?

(S.R) No, no, no, I actually I said it wrong. I was student I mean, I came in '81 and I finished my PhD in end of '85,

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(S.R) and then I worked.

00:16:57.100 --> 00:17:08.580

(S.R) and I came to the Bay Area in '95. So I had actually for 10 years I, I have worked to different places and different things.

00:17:08.619 --> 00:17:12.099

(A.S) So you have a little bit bigger exposure as to working professionally, living in different cities and states. But I think the main observation is

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(A.S) the interest and the participation toward a theater

00:17:16.950 --> 00:17:23.499

(A.S) is way more perceived in Silicon Valley, for some some reason or the other. Although I haven't said that

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(A.S) as a one charter of BAAT, we have really formed a big kind of a brotherhood or a kind of fraternity, you know, with

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(A.S) with the theater groups of different cities. For example,

00:17:38.920 --> 00:17:57.199

(A.S) we are very much in sync with the theatre groups in Seattle, in Chicago. You know one of Shyamal Da's junior in in IIT, and a very well-known playwright Sudipta Da, Sudipta Bhawmik, he has his own group in New Jersey so now we know, because of BAAT's exposure to other

00:17:57.210 --> 00:18:05.209

(A.S) theatre groups. We know that there are a lot of theater groups that exist in, in U.S. But having said that, I think

00:18:05.350 --> 00:18:22.470

(A.S) with our; my personal exposure to different communities in other cities and states, I think that the overall exuberance toward the involved getting involved in participating in a theater is, is bit more in, in Silicon Valley. That's that's a very

00:18:22.480 --> 00:18:29.579

(A.S) personal observation. It may be true, may not be true, but as far as I have seen in my own life.

00:18:29.730 --> 00:18:32.190

(A.S) And one of the reason is that

00:18:32.570 --> 00:18:38.540

(A.S) if you look at the working professionals in this area of the world,

00:18:38.820 --> 00:18:44.970

(A.S) mostly it's the melting pot of new technology, new ideas. That's how Silicon Valley

00:18:45.030 --> 00:18:48.610

(A.S) is perceived...to the rest of the world.

00:18:48.680 --> 00:18:55.239

(A.S) And because of that interest towards doing something new, something that doesn't exist

00:18:55.580 --> 00:18:59.869

(A.S) also easily gets translated into a very different...

00:19:00.110 --> 00:19:04.400

(A.S) format which probably is a creative art format.

00:19:04.570 --> 00:19:24.180

(A.S) People are way more willing to set aside their daily mundane chores at and...put some of their time, voluntarily, and not not being paid at all. (I) Right.

(A.S) There's no compensation at all for doing all this, right? But people, we have seen both Shyamal Da and myself

00:19:24.200 --> 00:19:37.150

(A.S) doing full-scale theater, you know, on stage we have seen people coming, coming to us and helping by by spending multiple hours of their, of their work day, as well as weekend

00:19:37.230 --> 00:19:39.670

(A.S) you know, with no

00:19:39.690 --> 00:19:51.339

(A.S) expectation of remuneration or any kind of capital... gain out of that. It's just purely out of passion, out of trying to do something, contribute their own skill

00:19:51.450 --> 00:20:05.800

(A.S) toward you know the staging of a creative, you know artifact like a theater. For example. I would like to you know, give a little bit of personal experience from 221B, which was our last year's

00:20:06.110 --> 00:20:09.759

(A.S) major, two-hour kind of a full length two-act play.

00:20:09.830 --> 00:20:15.799

(A.S) That was very well received in Bay Area. Two things that I wanted to particularly mention.

00:20:15.820 --> 00:20:16.890

(A.S) One is,

00:20:17.110 --> 00:20:23.650

(A.S) for this play, many of you have seen that we had a very elaborate set.

00:20:24.060 --> 00:20:29.360

(A.S) Meaning that, you know there was part of the set that was ground up constructed

00:20:29.400 --> 00:20:39.219

(A.S) by by our fellow team members. And there were furniture and other props, heavy props, that we needed to you know, collect

00:20:39.310 --> 00:20:41.989

(A.S) from from different places, and and

00:20:42.010 --> 00:20:45.670

(A.S) they all add you know, were part of the set itself.

00:20:45.740 --> 00:20:46.570

(A.S) Now,

00:20:46.880 --> 00:20:53.520

(A.S) talking about the the, this furniture that we collected from different, you know places like,

00:20:53.640 --> 00:21:02.050

(A.S) I remember we pretty much traveled all the way from Novato in the Marin County to Berkeley area, to all the way to Santa Cruz

00:21:02.200 --> 00:21:08.740

(A.S) to to collect these these furnitures. And these are all free items, we we did not have money

00:21:08.870 --> 00:21:18.719

(A.S) to pay you know, like a a good like 30, 40, 50 bucks for this furniture items. Most of these items are free, at most \$10. And

00:21:18.750 --> 00:21:22.249

(A.S) these were all kind of; we collected from Craiglist ads.

00:21:22.580 --> 00:21:24.520

(A.S) And one thing I noticed

00:21:24.680 --> 00:21:28.029

(A.S) whenever we went and we picked up these items,

00:21:28.300 --> 00:21:31.340

(A.S) people were voluntarily giving us these things.

00:21:31.440 --> 00:21:39.299

(A.S) Sometimes they didn't even, there was a charge there was a cost. But when they heard that this is going to be used in a theater as a prop, they gave it for free.

00:21:39.450 --> 00:21:59.220

(A.S) So, so that's very interesting that; and these are not people from Indian diaspora. They're primarily Caucasian and other American communities. And when we mentioned that we are picking it up because we'll be using them as a prop in our upcoming play, they were said oh, take it you don't need to pay, right.

00:21:59.230 --> 00:22:08.399

(A.S) And and that was a tremendous kind of a mental booster for us. That people have a very high sense of support

00:22:08.450 --> 00:22:09.280

(A.S) toward

00:22:09.320 --> 00:22:19.329

(A.S) these kind of creative activities, right. And now the second part of the sake that I wanted to elucidate on, is the is the sake that we constructed ground up.

00:22:19.400 --> 00:22:21.890

(A.S) There were, there were team members.

00:22:21.970 --> 00:22:24.070

(A.S) We, there was one guy,

00:22:24.090 --> 00:22:25.890

(A.S) we used his backyard...

00:22:26.430 --> 00:22:31.330

(A.S) for like two months. He created that entire two-story set

00:22:31.370 --> 00:22:37.839

(A.S) on his backyard and we rehearsed in his backyard, and part of the time he was even not present in his house. He,

00:22:37.930 --> 00:22:45.399

(A.S) he visited his son, but he gave gave us access to his backyard and his restroom and everything, right. So

00:22:45.450 --> 00:22:49.429

(A.S) the amount of time and effort and the

00:22:49.570 --> 00:22:52.849

(A.S) the provision that he provided

00:22:52.910 --> 00:23:04.729

(A.S) for this play is... outstanding. There was another guy who also equally contributed during his work day, during the weekends, and they made a fantastic set.

00:23:04.890 --> 00:23:10.419

(A.S) altogether. It was a two-story set. When I drew the the engineering plan,

00:23:10.560 --> 00:23:13.330

(A.S) I had no expectation that this will be

00:23:13.420 --> 00:23:26.130

(A.S) implemented. This will be actually executed. But you know we had such innovative people who made it possible. And the reason I brought up these two aspects of the theater is that

00:23:26.210 --> 00:23:33.760

(A.S) oftentimes by thinking of theater we only think of a script, or a direction, or you know the people who act on it.

00:23:34.040 --> 00:23:43.810

(A.S) But these are the roles which have no, you know, front and visibility. People don't even know that, how these things are done. And,

00:23:44.150 --> 00:23:57.020

(A.S) people who came up and contributed. And, and they are the guys who are like our permanent team members. Whenever we do play it's not that they did it one time, they do it repeatedly. And this is their passion, they don't want to get onto the stage.

00:23:57.050 --> 00:23:59.710

(A.S) Even when I was giving my thank note,

00:23:59.790 --> 00:24:06.619

(A.S) note of thanks, at the end of the play, I was calling them on stage, they were reluctant to come.

00:24:06.790 --> 00:24:07.979

(I) Yes.

00:24:08.220 --> 00:24:27.790

(A.S) Because it's not their interest. Their interest it is just to build something from scratch, where you know people will be acting, walking up the stairs, walking down the stairs, moving around right. And so many innovative items, just as an engineer's or engineering standpoint, they designed, they created. That was a fantastic experience.

00:24:27.800 --> 00:24:46.240

(A.S) I think these are the things that we find very, I'm sure that in, in other cities our friends who do the play, they have the similar people who do that the same things. But these are the things that I think... highly worthy of mentioning.

00:24:46.330 --> 00:24:50.299

(A.S) Because this is not the traditional things that we think of when we think of theater.

00:24:50.540 --> 00:25:10.420

(A.S) But they are all needed. Theatre is the most complex execution of all art forms. Because you, you have a, you know depending on your play, you have a minimal to very sophisticated set requirements, you have a very complex audio requirement, and if you want to

00:25:10.430 --> 00:25:11.620

(A.S) play with light

00:25:11.860 --> 00:25:29.599

(A.S) then then that's a completely different aspect of of the play, right? Because if you do a play on a wash light versus if you do a play on with spots, a light going up and down, and those kind of things. This is one other thing I I think I would like to mention.

00:25:29.690 --> 00:25:32.600

(A.S) In our, in this 221B in this play

00:25:32.770 --> 00:25:35.780

(A.S) we had a specific part of the play

00:25:35.920 --> 00:25:36.850

(A.S) where

00:25:37.130 --> 00:25:40.739

(A.S) two different time zones were getting enacted at the same time.

00:25:41.270 --> 00:25:46.810

(A.S) So, one guy was narrating something that happened three hours ago

00:25:47.340 --> 00:25:48.929

(A.S) to another friend of his,

00:25:49.290 --> 00:25:52.930

(A.S) and that narration was getting executed in another part of the stage.

00:25:52.970 --> 00:25:57.389

(A.S) And, and our team member, one of our team member Anindya Da,

00:25:57.650 --> 00:26:02.780

(A.S) he actually took the space from me on how the lighting has to happen

00:26:02.900 --> 00:26:07.030

(A.S) and really executed that. So the way we executed it,

00:26:07.510 --> 00:26:11.809

(A.S) whoever is having an active dialogue at any given moment will have a spot,

00:26:11.840 --> 00:26:12.760

(A.S) spotlight.

00:26:13.060 --> 00:26:16.999

(A.S) The other part of the stage will remain pretty low light, dark.

00:26:17.110 --> 00:26:20.979

(A.S) And as the time changes to that, that narrative part

00:26:21.100 --> 00:26:39.700

(A.S) that is getting enacted, then that, that part gets light and, and the narrators, now they get frozen and they stay in a low light. So that's how we kind of implemented the, the two timezone kind of switch or journey on the time, timelines right at the same time.

00:26:39.950 --> 00:26:41.880

(A.S) So we went...

00:26:41.980 --> 00:26:45.840

(A.S) bold enough to experiment all these on stage.

00:26:45.880 --> 00:26:48.249

(A.S) because we have these people with us.

(I) Right.

00:26:48.520 --> 00:26:50.580

(A.S) Because, you know,

00:26:51.460 --> 00:27:05.029

(A.S) you know I, I selected someone who's a kind of a one of our team member Anindya Da that he will do the light. He could easily come to me and say that, hey you know I, this is way too complex, not possible I'm not gonna do it,

00:27:05.320 --> 00:27:17.019

(A.S) right. Or the guy who did the set could could easily come to me and say that, you know this two-story with with stairs and all, too complex, I'm not going to do it. But they didn't say that, they took up the challenge.

00:27:17.040 --> 00:27:17.810

(I) Hmm.

00:27:17.960 --> 00:27:20.490

(A.S) And that is the main fun

00:27:20.590 --> 00:27:24.240

(A.S) that we get out of doing it. Because, end of the day,

00:27:24.340 --> 00:27:28.990

(A.S) what is theater to us? Because we are not professionals, we are not professional thespians.

00:27:29.260 --> 00:27:30.610

(A.S) To, I think

00:27:30.670 --> 00:27:32.090

(A.S) theater to us

00:27:32.140 --> 00:27:38.539

(A.S) is our way of connecting with our friends and our, our community and our diaspora.

00:27:38.950 --> 00:27:45.349

(A.S) And, and and basically trying to do something that creates a sense of unity.

00:27:45.410 --> 00:27:48.490

(A.S) Right, and also it has a secondary objective

00:27:48.540 --> 00:27:51.800

(A.S) of creating an example to the next generation.

00:27:52.120 --> 00:28:03.939

(I) Right. (A.S) Right? Because if that inspirational part is not there, I think some of us will, will not feel as much enthusiastic as we are today. For example, I can tell you that I have two kids,

00:28:03.960 --> 00:28:19.939

(A.S) and one of my primary interest is they, they literally visibly see how we do it, and they bring it up. And, and they, they actually, you know, grow their interest. As an example, yesterday my son was showing me a picture

00:28:19.960 --> 00:28:21.059

(A.S) that he drew.

00:28:21.420 --> 00:28:24.489

(A.S) Few of them will be acting a play in their classroom

00:28:24.860 --> 00:28:27.280

(A.S) and he's the one who is designing

00:28:28.340 --> 00:28:42.769

(A.S) how the set will look like. And the the first thing he showed when I went to home, look Baba this is what I drew, this is what will happen, and I'm going to be one of the main actors. I'm like, okay great I understand you. So these things come

00:28:42.920 --> 00:28:54.459

(A.S) as we do this actively, practice this actively in our life. And Shyamal Da has two kids, you know they, they are fully grown up, and they, you know, because of his interest and Shyamal Da will be able to share that.

00:28:54.680 --> 00:29:07.520

(A.S) they have grown this interest. I mean his daughter came to our show. She made tremendous amount of constructive feedback. What could have been done there? And this is amazing, surprising.

00:29:07.800 --> 00:29:11.589

(A.S) The amount of understanding and the complex thinking that they have

00:29:12.010 --> 00:29:15.500

(A.S) will really kind of make you mesmerized

00:29:15.540 --> 00:29:20.970

(A.S) that, that how they perceive it. Right, and that's the main success today.

00:29:21.080 --> 00:29:26.069

(A.S) The main successes is our next generation has really picked it up. And they are so,

00:29:26.110 --> 00:29:30.070

(A.S) so, they, they have learned how to work things sophisticated way

00:29:30.180 --> 00:29:36.149

(A.S) about a creative art, and I think end of the day that that is what we would like to leave on with.

00:29:36.680 --> 00:29:41.130

(I) Sure, sure. So I, I hear a couple of things. One is of course,

00:29:41.170 --> 00:29:51.399

(I) you know the the art of theater, but also the way the stage was designed. The lights right, so it's kind of seems like engineering and art really mingling together.

00:29:51.470 --> 00:29:53.050

(I) Right? So,

00:29:53.410 --> 00:30:18.560

(I) and one of my questions is actually about why, why is Desi culture, like Asian-Indian culture so vibrant in Silicon Valley? And some of it Alodeep you already touched on it. That there is the, the arts for creativity is very strong among us. So, so Shyamal Da would you, would you say that

that is what really drives our the Desi community here, the creativity and what else drives them so much here?

00:30:19.470 --> 00:30:27.570

(S.R) A couple of things I think I'll, I'll tell you what, you know I came in this country in 1981, so more than 40 years ago.

00:30:27.970 --> 00:30:37.850

(S.R) So at that time, you know, there was not that many Desi people in that area you know, especially in Cleveland, Ohio, or you know I sailed, and whatever I stayed in Miami, or not that.

00:30:38.080 --> 00:30:38.890

(S.R) So

00:30:38.970 --> 00:30:43.910

(S.R) one of the things that happens is that, you know, I mean, I as a percentage wise one thing

00:30:43.940 --> 00:30:49.400

(S.R) That since, because there are more number, more people in the Bay Area, there are more creative people also.

00:30:49.450 --> 00:31:09.320

(S.R) This is one of the fact. I mean, you know there may be one or two creative people in a place like Cleveland, Ohio, or Miami, Florida. Now, I mean, you know there are a lot more in Bay Area. The second thing also, in 40 years a lot of things have changed. In this sense that people in by nature those are coming from India, they are lot more creative, and

00:31:09.400 --> 00:31:11.020

(S.R) they are now getting

00:31:11.140 --> 00:31:14.649

(S.R) I mean, they are now getting an upbringing that it's okay to be creative.

00:31:14.760 --> 00:31:18.129

(S.R) I mean, when we were growing up, when we're coming in,

00:31:18.380 --> 00:31:35.410

(S.R) Don't spend time on theater, don't spend time on movies, don't spend all these things. These are all this kind of useless things. That's the general thing right. But now I mean it's, you know, with so much of TV going on, so much of movie going on, good news is going on. People are, I mean, accepting more and more of the familiar. It's okay to be, you know, a little bit, you know.

00:31:35.420 --> 00:31:39.450

(S.R) And I mean, indulging in those kind of things. I mean. So,

00:31:39.480 --> 00:31:42.930

(S.R) as a result, what happened is that because of those two factors,

00:31:43.000 --> 00:31:44.660

(S.R) and if you look at it that

00:31:45.360 --> 00:31:51.620

(S.R) you know now more creative and more acceptability means people are trying more and more a lot of new things. I mean

00:31:51.640 --> 00:31:56.550

(S.R) the number of people those who have; I mean just give you an example. I mean, I said, kind of a...

00:31:56.600 --> 00:32:13.960

(S.R) say, forget theatre it's a dance. You know the number of people that you know, and like our cultural events like Saraswati Puja or Durga Puja, they're coming up with their; I mean even Diwali or even for other communities, you know they have a similar kind of thing. The number of people that are coming in and

00:32:13.970 --> 00:32:24.120

(S.R) and joining the I mean, you know, and joining this dance call, or, or similar kind of events, is substantially more because of tourism. Number one is that;

00:32:24.160 --> 00:32:41.139

(S.R) and a lot of them haven't learned any classical dance or anything like that back in India. But now, number one is that this is acceptability. Yup I can go, even at the age of 40, can start learning something new to dance, and I'll do that. That mental change thing has changed, you know people are shy. But secondly, is that lots of people are there;

00:32:41.320 --> 00:32:56.110

(I) Yeah. So sorry. I just want to add that does that have to do with Silicon Valley you think?

(S.R) Yes. (I) That at age 40 I can go and start learning dance.

00:32:56.120 --> 00:33:08.659

(S.R) Exactly and that has to do with Silicon Valley because at age 40 I can go and learning new things and do new things. That mentality has come up, I mean, I'm pretty sure it has come up to some extent with the with the time with the age. But Silicon Valley breathes that mentality, that it's okay to take up something new. It's okay to try something new and okay to fail.

00:33:08.700 --> 00:33:19.720

(S.R) These three things I mean tremendously encourages trying new things and and being successful.

(A.S) I think I would add that, to you know Shyamal Da's point I think he touched up on a very interesting point.

00:33:19.770 --> 00:33:22.500

(A.S) And the reason this is part of the culture,

00:33:22.600 --> 00:33:27.479

(A.S) the metal of Silicon Valley, is because people here

00:33:27.610 --> 00:33:40.400

(A.S) often change their day job, the very nature of their day job at pretty much any age, at 40, at 50, at 60 right? Because you have so much, so many diverse opportunities out here.

00:33:40.440 --> 00:33:44.570

(A.S) I mean, if you I mean, in other parts of the country.

00:33:44.950 --> 00:33:57.239

(A.S) you typically see people working for 20, 30, 40 years in, in one one company, because you do not have that many diverse opportunities around you. It's not your fault. No issue is that

00:33:57.280 --> 00:34:00.769

(A.S) you don't have that many diverse opportunities that are opening up.

00:34:00.920 --> 00:34:18.399

(A.S) Pretty much on a daily basis. But in Silicon Valley, because there are so many different opportunities opening up on a... a sustaining way. Right, people often change their job the very nature of their job, they completely change their skill set

00:34:18.560 --> 00:34:20.840

(A.S) at any given minute. Because of that

00:34:21.150 --> 00:34:23.210

(A.S) inherent kind of

00:34:23.460 --> 00:34:29.329

(A.S) acceptance, and you know what would, I would say the acclimate, the acclimate decision

00:34:29.389 --> 00:34:35.749

(A.S) of their, of their mentality. Right, they can easily do that for other things which are not related to their

00:34:35.840 --> 00:34:55.409

(A.S) to their day job, for their creative outlets also. I used to do, I mean, I'm just giving an example. Someone who is a good singer may pick up good you know thespian skills 10 years down the lane, right. Or may switch to a dance form, or, or painting, or something else. Because they have that in that,

00:34:55.520 --> 00:35:11.830

(A.S) kind of acceptance towards something new has already been part of their you know, mental and physical journey for many years. Fact, the fact that they are there in Silicon Valley. They are already mentally conditioned to it.

00:35:12.250 --> 00:35:18.650

(S.R) I, I will add something to this, and and funny incidents. You know Alodeep said

00:35:19.390 --> 00:35:20.640

(S.R) in 19-

00:35:20.840 --> 00:35:34.699

(S.R) in 1990 actually we did a play. I mean I, I did the play before Badal Sarkar's "Michhil." It's very iconic play, you know. I did that couple of times in Kharagpur [inaudible]

00:35:34.830 --> 00:35:45.269

(S.R) and then in 1990 in Cleveland, we said that, hey, you know, I mean we got an invitation to NBC in Washington DC. And said, okay, we'll take this play and we go this way.

00:35:46.380 --> 00:36:10.169

(S.R) And so when we say that we will go and take it in all. But first of all is that we are not finding enough actor, actresses to come forward and do this, and it is only one actress because they're in those, in the, in the 70s with a place where it is that we don't we I mean Bengali. They're not more than 1 or 2 actresses in any play, because they were not that much available. So you know, one actress we got, and one of the all the other actors and everything that.

00:36:10.690 --> 00:36:22.659

(S.R) I mean, we just had a tough time. I mean, we got 2 of them, 3 of them to have they were acting. And I said, okay, you know what they came forward, and the other one we just couldn't get. As a result, there was a set of 5 people, I mean, you know.

00:36:22.720 --> 00:36:26.250

(S.R) who actually represented the crowd that comes over and over again.

00:36:26.430 --> 00:36:42.920

(S.R) and how to cut it down the skit to make it to set of 5 people, because they just wouldn't get one of the actor. Today in Silicon Valley that's not going to happen. I mean, you'll get for every role level, you get 5 people who will be able to take it up. You know whether they do good or bad, the simple issue. But you will be willing to go and try it out.

00:36:43.070 --> 00:36:47.340

(S.R) and more people willing to go and try it out when you know where the performance will be.

00:36:47.800 --> 00:36:48.849

(S.R) Simple.

00:36:48.870 --> 00:36:50.210

(I) Right, so

00:36:50.280 --> 00:37:00.409

(I) I mean, I'll just tag along another question. And you know, because you have lived and worked in other parts of this country right, and Alodeep you have been a student in other parts of this country. So

00:37:00.860 --> 00:37:13.720

(I) I mean A) the numbers, right the number of I mean, I think even today I mean proportionately. I mean, of course, communities have grown all over the country, but proportionately, I think it's still one of the most heavily populated Asian Indian population here right?

00:37:13.750 --> 00:37:14.640

(I) So

00:37:16.290 --> 00:37:23.109

(I) the attitude towards professional life, or doing creative forms around the professional life.

00:37:23.170 --> 00:37:26.529

(I) Do you think it's still distinct, very different,

00:37:26.540 --> 00:37:45.950

(I) and like between the Silicon Valley, and people living in the other parts of the country? Like there are theater groups in other parts of the country, right. There are probably, you know cinema groups, or you know, some kind of you know, interest areas in other groups. Music, classes, dance classes everywhere, right? But how is it different here? Because you, you may know the statistic that it said that Carnatic music,

00:37:46.500 --> 00:37:54.069

(I) the flourishing of Carnatic music, is the second highest in the world in Silicon Valley, and it's only second to Chennai.

00:37:54.270 --> 00:37:54.990

(A.S) Wow! I did not expect that

(S.R) I believe, I believe it.

00:37:55.270 --> 00:38:07.300

(I) And why does that happen? Because there are South Indians practicing Carnatic music all over the country. But why is Silicon Valley, that place where you know, and that's an example.

00:38:07.460 --> 00:38:20.630

(A.S) Right. I think one other thing that just came to my mind. First of all, you have the share numbers. Right, so you have the just by statistics, you have more, you know, available people for
(I) Sure.

00:38:20.790 --> 00:38:34.300

(A.S) Second of all this mindset, which we talked about, that people are, you know, more willing to accept new challenges, and, as a matter of fact, I would extend them in saying that some, I have seen people here. They actually

00:38:34.330 --> 00:38:48.720

(A.S) willingly want to get to new challenge, because otherwise they just feel bored. So some of them, and and that is a very unique mentality I've seen here, and that might be because I have spent most of my you know, career

00:38:48.870 --> 00:38:54.259

(A.S) professional life here as opposed to other places. The third thing that I noticed,

00:38:54.330 --> 00:38:55.769

(A.S) and this is I noticed,

00:38:55.880 --> 00:39:00.290

(A.S) you know, just by doing a comparison of the quality of work

00:39:00.710 --> 00:39:12.140

(A.S) that we often see between, you know the, the the work that we produce here, and other parts of the country. I, I don't want to be kind of judgmental or anything.

(I) No, no. Sure.

00:39:12.420 --> 00:39:13.399

(A.S) I feel like, you know

00:39:13.420 --> 00:39:20.049

(A.S) our sense, or basically our push toward perfection or push to our professionalism,

00:39:20.080 --> 00:39:23.490

(A.S) is bit higher compared to the

00:39:23.580 --> 00:39:36.419

(A.S) the quality of place and the quality of performances that we have seen. Because one of the thing we have done in the pandemic time quite a, you know, quite regularly like, I think we have done at least 3 such events is a completely Zoom-based theater event.

00:39:36.550 --> 00:39:38.910

(A.S) Right, this is something we picked up.

00:39:38.970 --> 00:39:44.840

(A.S) First of all via request from a very well-known thespian Debshankar Haldar from Kolkata

00:39:44.880 --> 00:39:51.859

(A.S) who actually came on and requested us that can we do a fundraiser, because people that the theater and related people in

00:39:52.270 --> 00:40:02.790

(A.S) Kolkata, they completely lost their living. Right. It started and we did a fundraiser. We were able to raise a good like, you know, \$12-13,000,

00:40:02.850 --> 00:40:06.660

(A.S) which was decent to go back to Indian rupees, and

00:40:07.160 --> 00:40:22.460

(A.S) same to them we were able to help to some of them to some extent, which we feel very kind of proud about that we were able to do that and the right make up time. Then we actually extended that, and we created events, Zoom Events. And what we have noticed is

00:40:22.600 --> 00:40:24.089

(A.S) the, the

00:40:24.250 --> 00:40:33.650

(A.S) push toward perfection, push toward professionalism, and push toward satisfaction about the final quality of the production,

00:40:33.800 --> 00:40:41.830

(A.S) I think it is, it is a bit higher here than we have noticed in other places. It could be many reasons. The one reason could be that

00:40:42.050 --> 00:40:54.009

(A.S) you know a a bigger place, more exposure, more people meaning that you also have a sense of competition, than some other places where you don't have much competition.

00:40:54.070 --> 00:41:06.310

(A.S) And because you don't have competition, you don't have better references, and you feel like this is enough that we I have kind of attained the level that I wanted. But when you really get compared against

00:41:06.430 --> 00:41:16.079

(A.S) the productions from Bay Area, then you see that. In fact, it happened that our...fellow from you know, teams from other things, from the fraternity,

00:41:16.180 --> 00:41:21.770

(A.S) they reached out to us. They actually they were quite open about it, that some of the things we did

00:41:21.830 --> 00:41:29.460

(A.S) They wanted to to learn, the know how that how could we do that. And we have actually given tutorials

00:41:29.520 --> 00:41:42.989

(A.S) and and trainings to our other community members. From, for example, we have fraternity all the way to Australia, and they they reached out to us. They, they needed a help with the specific execution

00:41:43.160 --> 00:41:50.849

(A.S) on a Zoom-based play, and we, we helped them. Same thing happened with another team from Chicago. So bottom line is,

00:41:50.940 --> 00:41:55.049

(A.S) I think, because here we have more references

00:41:55.300 --> 00:42:07.209

(A.S) and people are more kind of. I think the sense of perfectionism is is bit higher in Bay Area, for some reason I don't know what the reason is.

(I) Does it not have to do with Silicon Valley?

00:42:07.800 --> 00:42:14.839

(A.S) It probably does have to do that, because you know here the kind of the main job or the day job that we do,

00:42:15.190 --> 00:42:23.430

(A.S) I think that also drives us toward more perfection, because we typically don't let go at a pretty...

00:42:23.680 --> 00:42:30.269

(A.S) even at a pretty fine stage. I mean, we really drive it to the finest extent. And again, all these

00:42:30.510 --> 00:42:36.690

(A.S) these things, basically these these attributes of, of a person's mind.

00:42:36.840 --> 00:42:47.010

(A.S) It actually translates from one phase of their life to the other phase of their life. What you do in your daily day job and the daily work life,

00:42:47.380 --> 00:42:49.429

(A.S) you actually carry those...

00:42:49.480 --> 00:42:58.639

(A.S) those basically attributes when you do something else like a creative art as well, and it might also have a downside that, because of that

00:42:58.670 --> 00:43:10.160

(A.S) sense of high kind of perfectionism, sometimes we lose out on time, sometimes we may may lose out on some other, you know aspects of the, of the art.

00:43:10.580 --> 00:43:17.459

(A.S) But that's a different story, but that I have noticed a generally a higher sense toward

00:43:17.630 --> 00:43:18.750

(A.S) perfection

00:43:18.790 --> 00:43:20.849

(A.S) and professionalism,

00:43:20.920 --> 00:43:36.050

(A.S) by the productions that are done, not by, not by us only but by other teams as well, compared to some of our other... you know other fraternity members from other parts of the of the country, and and also from other countries.

00:43:36.060 --> 00:43:41.420

(A.S) That's one observation, Shyamal Da you want to add?

(S.R) I would add one thing I mean, I'll tie them up.

00:43:41.440 --> 00:43:43.450

(S.R) Another thing that plays here,

00:43:43.680 --> 00:43:47.160

(S.R) it's this, I call it a sense of pride of being Indian.

00:43:47.570 --> 00:43:55.929

(S.R) When we came in 1981, and even today in Silicon Valley, and even today in Midwest, and other part of the country,

00:43:56.980 --> 00:44:03.249

(S.R) in general when the parents come in, they first thing they want to do is that their kids, how quickly can you learn English and speak in English.

00:44:03.470 --> 00:44:08.790

(S.R) You know that, that is that is absolutely, immediately they'll start. You know how, you you know. I mean, forget

00:44:08.920 --> 00:44:10.139

(S.R) being Indian.

00:44:10.170 --> 00:44:15.440

(S.R) How quickly that, or you can be acclimatized with your friends and whatever like that, so that you don't have to.

00:44:15.560 --> 00:44:32.659

(S.R) But Silicon Valley, number one, because of the numbers, number of because it's, you know. I mean, they're saying that hey, you know, it's possible a lot of Indians are in the very key positions, they are, you know, contributing to the economic quite a bit. There is a sense of pride that you know. It is okay to go and learn

00:44:32.670 --> 00:44:46.289

(S.R) Carnatic music. It's okay to go and learn Bharatanatyam. It's okay to go to, you know... learn say Odissi and put that in your resume for the, for the college. That sense of pride is very much there.

00:44:46.300 --> 00:44:53.889

(S.R) It is not there when I came in 1981. Even in Silicon- even today, that sense of pride is not so much in the Midwest, and other part of the country.

00:44:53.960 --> 00:44:57.090

(S.R) It's very much in Silicon Valley. It is also quite a bit prevalent

00:44:58.200 --> 00:45:21.210

(S.R) ...in in the East, in New Jersey, New York area, and that maybe determines the numbers. Because there's so many people in there, they're contributing so many different ways that they feel proud to be saying that, yup I'm, I'm Indian. You know, and I, I love my culture right that's what I do. And that, that kind of has transcended it towards the next generation. A lot of people that doing it, they feel pride, you know, I mean as simple as that. And sometimes you may not like it,

00:45:21.220 --> 00:45:37.190

(S.R) but you know a lot of people are taking on Bollywood dance lessons, I mean, whether they want to call it I mean, good or bad, is that different question. But the point that they're doing it because people started taking pride on that part. So that is a big factor, and I think to some extent Silicon Valley has quite a bit of influence on being proud

00:45:37.310 --> 00:45:50.859

(S.R) of being Indian, is, because there's so many successful Indians in the Silicon Valley companies who are actually in very high positions, who are contributing you know, to the economy, and who are contributing to this total and political aspects.

00:45:50.870 --> 00:46:08.959

(I) Right. So, so their role models. We see more role models. (S.R) Kind of, yeah

(I) I mean for younger generations. (S.R) Yeah, it will not be explicit, but implicitly it is there. I mean, you know, I mean...If you look at this one. I mean, just as an example in the political sense Ro Khanna you know is a House Rep from Silicon Valley.

00:46:08.970 --> 00:46:17.949

(S.R) and you'll see Ro Khanna a number of times. Ro Khanna comes up in NPR or CNN, or in our, our

00:46:17.970 --> 00:46:34.350

(S.R) CNBC. And I'm saying it and coding because that key is kind of a face of Silicon Valley, and that's the main thing. And, and when we people see it's Silicon Valley, you know, like my, my kids look at us, and we have a Ro Khanna yes, he's an Indian, and that's what he's doing everything that

00:46:34.390 --> 00:46:38.939

(S.R) So we got another, another...So I'm saying that, that sense of pride

00:46:39.240 --> 00:46:55.519

(S.R) has generated some instance of Silicon Valley has its influence on it, and, and that is, that is, you know. As a result, people are doing more and more of this kind of things, you know. And another thing that Alodeep has said the sense of being more perfections, is I think too Silicon Valley also has two aspects of this. One is

00:46:55.530 --> 00:47:05.030

(S.R) cultural. Silicon Valley is that you have to be like a little more perfect, a little bit better than somebody else, otherwise, why do it, this is already there. The second part that I also comes in is that

00:47:05.440 --> 00:47:08.889

(S.R) in...you know. I mean it was in the part of numbers, in a sense that

00:47:09.440 --> 00:47:13.229

(S.R) if you're a mediocre, there are 20 people better than you.

00:47:13.540 --> 00:47:16.990

(S.R) In...you know...is that 20 people is better than me in Silicon Valley.

00:47:17.370 --> 00:47:32.770

(S.R) But if you're in Midwest, if you're mediocre there's only one person better than you, you know. As a result, I mean, you assume mediocre is okay. You know that is not okay here. So there is already pushing in that one there with the numbers that, hey you got to do good, otherwise, yeah.

00:47:32.850 --> 00:47:34.810

(S.R) You can't just be mediocre.

00:47:34.920 --> 00:47:40.729

(I) I'll add another aspect to this. That question I think, and both of you can answer it. So, and you know that

00:47:41.580 --> 00:47:52.870

(I) the fact that, say a like in any cultural art form, right like the theater, or you know, a music scene, or the you know, dance scene or something. Right, so you need audience right, artists need audience.

00:47:52.900 --> 00:47:54.540

(I) Right? So,

00:47:54.810 --> 00:48:04.920

(I) the fact that there is, you know Silicon Valley is known for its fabulous tech salaries as well, right, and that's a that's a perception of Silicon Valley.

00:48:05.000 --> 00:48:14.150

(I) Do you think the fact that people have the money to attend theater shows, disposable income, to attend many theatre shows, to attend the dance shows that they would like.

00:48:14.610 --> 00:48:20.129

(I) You know, to attend this show in addition to meeting all the expenses and living well.

00:48:20.340 --> 00:48:29.560

(I) Because a tech salary will probably support it, but not maybe in other parts.

(A.S) Absolutely. Silicon Valley definitely has a higher average disposable income

00:48:29.720 --> 00:48:38.999

(A.S) compared to many other parts of the country, and that definitely contributes toward amateur teams like us, or the dance teams, or the or the musical teams,

00:48:39.080 --> 00:48:55.880

(A.S) to, to be more kind of adventurous, as in having more than one show, plan for more than one show a year, and still expect that people would come, buy the ticket, and watch. And also related to that, I would say, connecting back to my previous point, on the on the sense of perfection,

00:48:55.900 --> 00:49:04.719

(A.S) is that competition that it creates, because in Silicon Valley on a given year. Pretty much on every summer weekend.

00:49:04.910 --> 00:49:10.669

(A.S) Right, you will not get a free spot to do your event. So many things happening.

(S.R) I mean more than one. (A.S) Right, more than one happening every summer weekend.

00:49:10.740 --> 00:49:26.709

(I) And as an audience member it's so hard to choose.

00:49:26.720 --> 00:49:42.950

(A.S) You have the choices. There is a dance event going on. There is a music event, classical music event going on. There is a Bollywood music event going on, there is another play. You know, the whole host of things happen all the time. So because of that, since the audience that the the perceived audience has so many choices throughout the year, also pushes us toward perfection, more professionalism. Because

00:49:42.960 --> 00:49:52.330

(A.S) otherwise you will be lost out. People will not come because people have other choices as opposed to other parts of the country where people do not have that many choices.

00:49:52.340 --> 00:50:04.430

(A.S) there is a Bengali play happening one weekend. Probably around that particular weekend, many weekends, there is nothing else, so people will go there because ultimately people will have to;

00:50:04.810 --> 00:50:09.580

(A.S) everywhere people will, you know there are culturally inclined people who will like to see something.

00:50:09.760 --> 00:50:15.389

(A.S) But here we have that that utter sense of competition that also thrives the

00:50:15.600 --> 00:50:24.799

(A.S) the perfection. But I would like to also point out a downside that I have noticed. In...our way of practice in any art form,

00:50:24.950 --> 00:50:29.169

(A.S) is that and and maybe this is also kind of hinged into our

00:50:29.190 --> 00:50:36.640

(A.S) kind of the attributes that we have gathered living in this part of the world for so many years. Is that sometimes we get

00:50:36.690 --> 00:50:41.839

(A.S) too much, you know, ingrained into the nitty gritty and technicality.

00:50:42.180 --> 00:50:45.299

(A.S) Because of a basic engineering background mindset,

00:50:45.490 --> 00:50:48.599

(A.S) right. Sometimes that also pulls down

00:50:48.700 --> 00:50:51.350

(A.S) the art aspect of the presentation.

00:50:51.540 --> 00:50:53.100

(A.S) I have seen that I have,

00:50:53.210 --> 00:50:55.660

(A.S) I have suffered from it. I have seen that

00:50:55.700 --> 00:50:57.899

(A.S) in many productions that sometimes

00:50:58.190 --> 00:51:10.370

(A.S) too much nitty gritty into the into that basically the technicality and the technical aspects of the production actually overwhelms the artistic flavor of the production.

00:51:10.530 --> 00:51:13.160

(A.S) That also happens, I have seen that I have,

00:51:13.490 --> 00:51:16.840

(A.S) I have gone through it, I have suffered from it. And the other thing is

00:51:17.300 --> 00:51:25.930

(A.S) because you know, most of the people here are engineers, they have that engineer background. Engineering background also brings in one

00:51:25.960 --> 00:51:28.150

(A.S) kind of mindset, which is like

00:51:28.320 --> 00:51:30.760

(A.S) you have a, you always create a pipeline.

00:51:31.360 --> 00:51:45.879

(A.S) You have, you form a pipeline, then you push an input and an output will come out from the other side of the pipe. It also happens for the, the creating exercise as well, which is probably show subconscious that

00:51:45.940 --> 00:51:50.800

(A.S) subconsciously people create a pipeline. I, I did one play.

00:51:50.920 --> 00:51:52.649

(A.S) I did this, these things.

00:51:52.860 --> 00:51:55.239

(A.S) The input came out to this output

00:51:55.300 --> 00:52:07.970

(A.S) and now this is a pipeline. I'm going to do that repeatedly, and it's not only us. It happens anywhere in many places. But I think I relate that to some extent to our inherent nature and the subconscious

00:52:08.050 --> 00:52:09.689

(A.S) kind of training,

00:52:09.980 --> 00:52:15.009

(A.S) of that engineering discipline that you create a, you know you have an execution path,

00:52:15.160 --> 00:52:26.769

(A.S) and once you have mastered it, you have a natural tendency to are falling back to that. So you have an aversion toward completely you know, deconstructing it.

00:52:27.270 --> 00:52:32.150

(A.S) And... and start doing something ground up. That is also there, in us.

00:52:32.400 --> 00:52:35.550

(A.S) So, so I, I wanted to bring that up as well.

00:52:35.700 --> 00:52:39.360

(S.R) I think, I think Alodeep you brought up an interesting point.

00:52:39.420 --> 00:52:56.919

(S.R) but that is very totally antithesis to what Silicon Valley stands for. Silicon Valley is very good in this constructing and trying something new, you know.

(A.S) That also happens, but I've also noticed that creating a... (S.R) So I, I think I...I would, I would tell you on this aspect

00:52:57.030 --> 00:53:18.270

(S.R) that there is a successful formula and repeat it. And actually, you know, I mean; basically don't try to repair a machine that is not broken. You know, as simple as that that particular mentality is very much of an Indian. That is something that one thing that Indians, we Indians, have not picked up from Silicon Valley. Silicon Valley is very famous for deconstructing, as simple as that. They create something, they deconstruct it, do something better.

00:53:18.290 --> 00:53:23.649

(A.S) You and I have noticed that from our own experience, once we have a successful formula,

00:53:23.780 --> 00:53:38.660

(A.S) We have a natural tendency towards just not;

(S.R) It's the same, I mean, oh we created that particular set of, I mean, couple of couple of backdrops, use let's use the backdrop.

00:53:39.020 --> 00:54:03.059

(I) So so you're saying that challenges are good, and I think that something innovation is good, and I think those are things that the community in general probably has adopted, and has adopted them well. But the risk taking, the disruption of, of a process, and then the risk taking is probably we could do better with it.

(S.R) Yes, I, I think so. I think that could definitely take some little bit more, and and done something there and then that,

00:54:03.070 --> 00:54:04.680

(S.R) that almost I mean, you know.

00:54:04.750 --> 00:54:07.369

(S.R) I, I it's what can I say is that

00:54:08.200 --> 00:54:16.600

(S.R) to some extent it is very personal, individual. There is people who will take risk. There are people who will not take risk. So I would say among the Indian community today,

00:54:16.710 --> 00:54:22.880

(S.R) that more people will not take risk than less. But they're taking on an average you compare to another city.

00:54:23.210 --> 00:54:41.879

(S.R) People over here take more risk than compared to other cities in the Midwest, or something like that. But among them I think they could have a lot more.

(A.S) I think it is generally a more Indian attribute that we kind of try to repeat the;

(S.R) Right, it's not a Silicon Valley attribute.

00:54:41.890 --> 00:54:50.689

(I) Yeah you feel more, one feels more secure. Right... I think yeah. So I know it's it's lovely listening to both of you about this. This, this is great. So I'm also going to ask you. So,

00:54:51.330 --> 00:54:55.809

(I) How does being Desi help you in your work in Silicon Valley?

00:54:56.250 --> 00:55:01.369

(I) Both as thespians as well as maybe in your immediate day jobs.

00:55:01.440 --> 00:55:05.459

(I) How does being Desi help you in your work in Silicon Valley?

00:55:06.550 --> 00:55:15.299

(S.R) I, I mean I really don't work in Silicon Valley per say. I you know, but I collect and work with them. And to, to me

00:55:15.390 --> 00:55:23.430

(S.R) I think being Desi has not helped at all. I mean you know, I mean it has not. I mean I, I think what does it helped me more of, you know.

00:55:23.680 --> 00:55:35.709

(S.R) I mean what has helped me more of an, you know I mean engineering degree, not not anything else it's given an analytical mindset, you know. And, and you know I mean, I worked for four years, and then came here in this country. So whatever

00:55:35.940 --> 00:55:51.939

(S.R) management, wise managerial theory, whatever I learned is learned it here. You know, and there is nothing to do with Desi. I mean, I I know engineering and analytical part, I learned it in IIT Kharagpur that has remained with me. You know, but beyond that I mean just being analytical beyond that to be on the other,

00:55:51.950 --> 00:56:06.779

(S.R) other, what we call, as I don't know why they call it, but we call it a soft skills. And all of those kind of things, and, you know, attributes. I picked it up here and that's nothing to do with Desi. I mean it's nothing Desi, this is just I picked it up. We were working in different companies, different things, and you know just there. So

00:56:06.790 --> 00:56:19.620

(S.R) I... want to say. I mean I, I wouldn't say that it just brought me down, no, I mean it's just, hasn't contributed. Everything being Desi that has contributed is my upbringing in IT, you know as an engineer, being an analytical person, that's all.

00:56:19.650 --> 00:56:43.399

(I) And your BAAT work of course, is; (S.R) And BAAT work also I mean the same way. You know BAAT work, I mean in running a theater company, whatever it is. It is not only just technical. It is that they have a lot more non-technical people management skills are there. I would say all the people wearing the skills and all of this I picked up here in this country while working for

working, you know, and...and that, you know. But, but the analytical part is also needed that I picked up from India.

00:56:43.410 --> 00:56:50.510

(I) Sure sure, Alodeep.

(A.S) I totally agree with Shyamal Da that that being a Desi doesn't really help in the work environment.

00:56:50.940 --> 00:56:57.430

(A.S) One thing that happens is that, in the technology workplace in Silicon Valley,

00:56:57.500 --> 00:57:06.449

(A.S) of course, Silicon Valley has much more presence of Desi than that anywhere else, so that creates a sense of comfort, safety, and an acceptance.

00:57:06.510 --> 00:57:10.360

(A.S) Right, among people that you know most of my fellow workers

00:57:10.390 --> 00:57:12.650

(A.S) are Desi, as well as,

00:57:12.730 --> 00:57:21.549

(A.S) another interesting recent trend that many of these top, you know, the tech companies are currently run by the

00:57:21.580 --> 00:57:27.489

(A.S) at least from the top management perspective by the Indians. It's also creating a sense of

00:57:27.530 --> 00:57:31.810

(A.S) acceptance and you know a sense of accomplishment

00:57:32.050 --> 00:57:45.779

(A.S) for Desis, and that, that is, that is really flowing well in Silicon Valley. Because all these top tech companies are primarily headquartered or primary operation here. So that is, that is, that is translating well.

00:57:45.840 --> 00:57:52.790

(A.S) But I would like to give you another very different perspective, because my current day job is very different

00:57:52.860 --> 00:57:56.810

(A.S) from, you know, like working on a day to day work space.

00:57:57.350 --> 00:57:59.270

(A.S) You know, I have built a startup

00:57:59.610 --> 00:58:08.540

(A.S) and, and and one of the things that is most challenging for a startup before it releases the product and gets to revenue is to constantly raise capital.

00:58:08.600 --> 00:58:11.919

(A.S) And...and fund your operations

00:58:12.020 --> 00:58:15.590

(A.S) toward the product release. And, and raising capital

00:58:15.730 --> 00:58:17.650

(A.S) is way more challenging for a Desi

00:58:17.740 --> 00:58:19.060

(A.S) than, than

00:58:19.330 --> 00:58:23.150

(A.S) a person who has been born and brought up in this country. And,

00:58:23.180 --> 00:58:35.239

(A.S) and sometimes even you know, the skin works. The skin tone has an influence on that, unfortunately (I) Yes, that's true

(A.S) and, and and I, I have been suffering through it, and I know that

00:58:35.340 --> 00:58:39.770

(A.S) that you know it has, the the problem has

00:58:39.960 --> 00:58:50.759

(A.S) got the roots so deep that under the Biden administration now they are opening up 100 million, 200 million, 500 million dollar government initiatives

00:58:50.920 --> 00:59:02.269

(A.S) to provide grant to minorities and minority communities, you know, for the, for the startups and businesses. Because this problem is so well,

00:59:02.720 --> 00:59:12.549

(A.S) you know it's, it's so highly visible and deep-rooted that is, the current administration took a note of it and and they are actually opening up some of these

00:59:12.720 --> 00:59:20.930

(A.S) you know the the grants and programs. So bottom line is, you know, for an independent entrepreneur

00:59:21.120 --> 00:59:24.849

(A.S) being a Desi doesn't really help. It actually hurts.

00:59:26.040 --> 00:59:33.899

(A.S) For a technocrat in Silicon Valley, as a Desi probably gives you a sense of comfort, safety, and acceptance because of

00:59:34.020 --> 00:59:38.060

(A.S) the sheer presence of the the fellow the Desi workers.

00:59:38.370 --> 00:59:43.649

(A.S) And from the theatrical perspective,

00:59:45.420 --> 00:59:49.519

(A.S) since Silicon Valley has this kind of environment of

00:59:49.660 --> 00:59:53.299

(A.S) a kind of affinity toward different art and cultural forms,

00:59:53.580 --> 00:59:56.339

(A.S) being at Desi gives you an opportunity to...

00:59:56.370 --> 00:59:59.369

(A.S) to basically reinstalled the Desi

00:59:59.700 --> 01:00:01.310

(A.S) forms of art

01:00:01.490 --> 01:00:03.290

(A.S) and and culture.

01:00:03.350 --> 01:00:06.479

(A.S) It gives you the opportunity to practice, because

01:00:06.700 --> 01:00:09.469

(A.S) the...environment is supporting.

01:00:09.640 --> 01:00:13.510

(A.S) The overall Silicon Valley Bay Area environment is

01:00:13.550 --> 01:00:24.429

(A.S) very supporting for for art forms. People, people go to watch theater, dance programs, musical programs, you know very, very at a very high...

01:00:25.050 --> 01:00:26.439

(A.S) presence, right,

01:00:26.710 --> 01:00:33.529

(A.S) from different communities. And that also inspires the Desis like, hey why don't we reinstalled the

01:00:33.740 --> 01:00:37.690

(A.S) the the cultural heritage that we got from our country.

01:00:38.450 --> 01:00:51.349

(A.S) And... and reroute here, because the environment the ambience is supportive of that. So that helps from the from the Thespian, or or any other artistic standpoint. That

01:00:51.410 --> 01:01:04.180

(A.S) you know you... you got up, you got a kind of a good soil to put your seed right, and that inspires you that motivates you to put the seed then, and naturally to... to grow the plant.

01:01:04.290 --> 01:01:07.230

(I) Right. Thank you. Thank you. Yeah.

01:01:07.270 --> 01:01:08.060

(I) So

01:01:08.400 --> 01:01:14.119

(I) I guess I'm coming down to the last few, last two questions actually. So when you look back at your journey,

01:01:15.300 --> 01:01:18.200

(I) does Silicon Valley influence your identity

01:01:18.370 --> 01:01:19.959

(I) as a Desi?

01:01:23.490 --> 01:01:25.230

(S.R) To me, yes.

01:01:25.450 --> 01:01:29.440

(S.R) I'll tell you why, I mean although, as I said, that Silicon Valley is really

01:01:29.580 --> 01:01:36.229

(S.R) it hasn't influenced me much as a professionally. But overall I mean there has a you know a couple of things is that

01:01:36.420 --> 01:01:40.979

(S.R) Silicon Valley is possibly the most color blind society in USA

01:01:41.560 --> 01:01:53.519

(S.R) You you can one can take a pride thing yeah, I'm Indian, you know I can to a pride. I mean, I can go to grocery store, I mean, you know...And nobody will look at me, question why I am like this,

01:01:53.660 --> 01:01:55.879

(S.R) you know. That kind of

01:01:55.970 --> 01:02:14.759

(S.R) upbringing freedom, my kids grew up in this, because my daughter when we came in, my son was four years old and my daughter was four weeks old, you know when we came to Silicon Valley. I can see I, I saw how others grew up in the Midwest and everything like that. But you know compared, and that differently gave kind of a

01:02:14.770 --> 01:02:29.539

(S.R) what should I say is a platform. That is is, you can you're proud to be Indian. You can go and have Indian food, and you know you can love Indian food, and you can partake in Indian culture or in you know cultural sayings.

01:02:29.820 --> 01:02:35.630

(S.R) And you still be okay, and it will be, I mean accepted very well by all your...

01:02:35.860 --> 01:02:42.420

(S.R) non-Indian friends. I mean, I mean just as an example I mean I can give is that

01:02:42.520 --> 01:02:43.859

(S.R) my daughter learns Odissi

01:02:44.410 --> 01:02:57.849

(S.R) actually she learned Odissi from the age of 4, and she continued till age of 22 or something like that. And she was to only participate occasionally, but you know. But when she performs whole lot of

01:02:58.260 --> 01:03:08.620

(S.R) her American friends come, came or came, come to see that. Yeah, I mean, you know, at even today, with the last performance with 4 or 5 people who showed up, you know. I mean, yeah, okay, it will go on soon.

01:03:08.760 --> 01:03:11.370

(S.R) The main reason is that that wouldn't have never happened,

01:03:11.460 --> 01:03:25.210

(S.R) and I I don't think that happens very often in a Midwest cities and all that thing. So that is, is a silicon power of Silicon Valley. It's that it has become, it is, not only it is made that Indian culture is okay, it made Indian culture fashionable

01:03:25.510 --> 01:03:27.479

(S.R) and that is the main thing. Indian food

01:03:27.870 --> 01:03:31.739

(S.R) I mean desirable. You know that's what this is happening I mean over here.

01:03:31.820 --> 01:03:38.210

(I) Of course, of course, okay thank you

(A.S) I agree with Shyamal Da. I don't have much to add

01:03:38.390 --> 01:03:40.429

(A.S) on this really. You know,

01:03:40.740 --> 01:03:44.570

(A.S) the fact of the mere fact that we live in Silicon Valley,

01:03:44.850 --> 01:03:50.299

(A.S) it definitely, positively influences our Desi identity. Because,

01:03:50.450 --> 01:03:52.160

(A.S) that acceptance is so high.

01:03:52.420 --> 01:03:54.739

(A.S) And not only it's a

01:03:54.890 --> 01:03:57.780

(A.S) it's acceptance as Shyamal Da very kindly pointed out,

01:03:58.040 --> 01:04:00.409

(A.S) it has even become a hook

01:04:00.560 --> 01:04:04.179

(A.S) right. From the culinary perspective, from the

01:04:04.950 --> 01:04:15.060

(A.S) you know, the the attire and dress sense, and from the cultural perspective, also, you know to some extent that the religious perspective. I have seen

01:04:15.150 --> 01:04:20.800

(A.S) you know the non-Indian communities in Silicon Valley, they are aware of the the Indian Hindu,

01:04:20.940 --> 01:04:32.730

(A.S) you know religious festivals. You know how many other places you will see that. And this all create a very good

01:04:33.090 --> 01:04:34.819

(A.S) positive sense of..

01:04:36.150 --> 01:04:43.669

(A.S) livelihood in the Silicon Valley, especially when you are growing a family. We all have a root in India

01:04:43.890 --> 01:04:50.529

(A.S) and we, we really now almost none of us really want that our next generation completely loses that root.

01:04:52.360 --> 01:04:55.890

(A.S) So Silicon Valley definitely helps

01:04:56.070 --> 01:04:58.959

(A.S) raising kids, raising the raising family

01:04:59.150 --> 01:05:01.959

(A.S) because the sense of acceptance and

01:05:02.150 --> 01:05:03.950

(A.S) you know the overall

01:05:04.290 --> 01:05:05.640

(A.S) positive sense of

01:05:05.800 --> 01:05:09.610

(A.S) acceptance is so high for the Desi community.

01:05:10.240 --> 01:05:18.790

(I) Sure. Thank you. And my technically last question is, how do you foresee your future or your family's future in Silicon Valley?

01:05:22.180 --> 01:05:24.279

(A.S) You know I personally,

01:05:24.350 --> 01:05:26.490

(A.S) very strongly...

01:05:26.940 --> 01:05:31.930

(A.S) you know, I know for sure that none of my family members would ever be interested in

01:05:32.080 --> 01:05:37.810

(A.S) moving out of Silicon Valley and living somewhere else. Of course, ultimately

01:05:38.020 --> 01:05:40.800

(A.S) as someone else decides

01:05:40.840 --> 01:05:49.530

(A.S) where you would eventually go and leave and and and kind of live the rest of your life. But given an upper, given an upper option, given a choice.

01:05:49.550 --> 01:06:06.870

(A.S) none of my family members would like to live anywhere else. I, I know the reasons. The reasons are exactly what we discussed... The availability of of different options, exposure to different culture, acceptance, a warm acceptance of our own identity

01:06:07.080 --> 01:06:18.449

(A.S) and, and the exposure to all forms of kind of cultural and other kind of outfits.

01:06:18.500 --> 01:06:19.729

(A.S) Right it, it just makes the place unbeatable.

01:06:20.290 --> 01:06:21.040

(I) Right.

01:06:21.220 --> 01:06:22.910

(I) Right, thank you.

01:06:23.110 --> 01:06:34.110

(S.R) And for me. I, I really I don't know. My, my future with Silicon Valley is kind of on question mark or uncertain. The main reason is that I'm not exactly part of Silicon Valley, and my

01:06:34.120 --> 01:06:45.940

(S.R) kids are also not part of Silicon Valley. Right you know, my son is a doctor in Boston. My daughter works in alternative energy in San Francisco. So they, you know, and they're pretty much of a kind of I would say

01:06:45.980 --> 01:06:50.770

(S.R) U.S citizen, not not the global citizen, because they would go anywhere,

01:06:50.840 --> 01:07:03.850

(S.R) you know, good opportunity comes up they will go, period. And for us I mean also, I mean, I don't know whether to stay here or whatever I mean it's not, I mean, you know I mean, this is this, this question is more my my personal

01:07:04.100 --> 01:07:07.209

(S.R) what should I say is

01:07:07.280 --> 01:07:24.529

(S.R) personal status. It does nothing to do with Silicon Valley or not it just who knows where I will be.

(I) So, so then let me frame the question a little differently for you. Because, you know, Alodeep has has a very young family, so they will grow up, so. So his perspective is different right than yours because you have grown up children. So,

01:07:25.400 --> 01:07:32.760

(I) how do you see the Desi community in Silicon Valley in the last, in the next 10, 15 years? Where do you think it will go?

01:07:34.360 --> 01:07:43.060

(S.R) I think, the way I look at it the Desi community in Silicon Valley, I mean I think they will grow. I mean they will tremendously grow, I mean, you know, and I, I think

01:07:43.090 --> 01:07:45.099

(S.R) what will happen is that...

01:07:45.500 --> 01:08:00.370

(S.R) I, I is that the way I, I was just talking to somebody else, is that the only problem I see in this way, the full political sense in...in US growing, I don't know what, if it will happen, you know, because people might, whether...

01:08:00.380 --> 01:08:09.750

(S.R) how much the non-Desi population will embrace this Desi culture, or they will become jealous and start pushing it out. You know, like you know what, I don't know.

01:08:09.890 --> 01:08:14.309

(S.R) and that is what that is my, what I'm kind of afraid of, fearful of is that

01:08:14.830 --> 01:08:16.500

(S.R) will there be a backlash?

01:08:16.870 --> 01:08:20.180

(S.R) I don't know. You know that's something that

01:08:20.330 --> 01:08:24.340

(S.R) kind of open question to answer right now. Five years ago, I mean you know, before...

01:08:24.350 --> 01:08:45.040

(S.R) I mean, you know, before 2016 I was very hopeful, you know this is the way it will go. But after 2016 and 2020, I don't know. I mean that's why, I thinking I mean. I'll tell you why my, my son, I mean you know as I said, both my son and daughter they said that yup they look for jobs they'll look for them, but they are not look for any

01:08:45.160 --> 01:08:47.069

(S.R) job, or whatever like where

01:08:47.330 --> 01:09:04.429

(S.R) abortion is becoming illegal, period. I mean it's it's become a political speak, but that's that's the way they decided. They're not going to go any of the red state, they're not going to go anywhere where it's abortion illegal. My my son is a doctor, so he's more adamant, I mean, you know. So he he give us the political situation I don't know what's going to happen. Let's put it this way.

01:09:04.439 --> 01:09:07.460

(A.S) The other aspect that we did not mention explicitly

01:09:07.770 --> 01:09:14.450

(A.S) is that the the financial aspect. Here, especially like I mean

01:09:14.550 --> 01:09:18.009

(A.S) people when they kind of come close to retirement.

01:09:18.200 --> 01:09:18.880

(A.S) Right.

01:09:18.910 --> 01:09:23.880

(A.S) Of course they have savings and everything, but they pretty much every first generation immigrant

01:09:23.920 --> 01:09:25.689

(A.S) becomes more conscious

01:09:25.830 --> 01:09:30.839

(A.S) about their spending and their overall kind of yearly expenses and all.

01:09:30.920 --> 01:09:34.280

(A.S) I don't think Silicon Valley is a very

01:09:34.450 --> 01:09:35.620

(A.S) good place.

01:09:35.939 --> 01:09:38.969

(A.S) Or, or financially

01:09:39.069 --> 01:09:41.679

(A.S) good place

01:09:41.740 --> 01:09:45.789

(A.S) to live for senior people, right. Especially when

01:09:45.859 --> 01:09:48.570

(A.S) retire and people plan their next

01:09:48.590 --> 01:09:50.730

(A.S) one third of the life, right.

01:09:50.790 --> 01:10:00.170

(A.S) That that is one problem, I mean. So we will always get the new blood, because people will be coming. New job, they will start their family,

01:10:00.330 --> 01:10:03.380

(A.S) and they will, you know, most of the time, raise their family.

01:10:03.430 --> 01:10:06.350

(A.S) and Shyamal Da mentioned about the political

01:10:06.400 --> 01:10:11.160

(A.S) aspect of it which you know most of the Desis we kind of have a

01:10:11.180 --> 01:10:17.420

(A.S) support toward this liberal, you know, or the scientific and the Democratic viewpoint.

01:10:18.040 --> 01:10:18.740

(A.S) But

01:10:18.760 --> 01:10:23.199

(A.S) as people age as people get to their retirement and and return life,

01:10:23.300 --> 01:10:30.249

(A.S) I think Silicon Valley has a downside there, because of the

01:10:31.130 --> 01:10:31.990

(A.S) financial burden.

01:10:32.410 --> 01:10:48.899

(I) Sure. Thank you yeah. So another thing that I mean, was that all of you, I mean, both of you in different ways, said that you know how, you know perfectionism, you know, at work and then that radiating into other creative forms, and you know we're doing very well.

01:10:49.150 --> 01:10:58.879

(I) Do you do you worry about the model minority perception that our community has developed in this country? That oh, Asian, or you know Asian Indian, so good at math,

01:10:58.930 --> 01:11:07.530

(I) good at this, always at the top of class. Do you see a problem with that? Or do you think that is actually a promising factor for otherwise a minority in the country?

01:11:07.900 --> 01:11:13.710

(S.R) I I don't see a problem with that. I think I think that will happen. That always will happen, because people

01:11:13.840 --> 01:11:20.060

(S.R) always generalize, people always, you know, super ties, and you know they always do that. You know

01:11:20.070 --> 01:11:37.390

(S.R) it, is the way I look at it. It'll it's when when we were there. It also happens this kind of things. Oh, yeah, Indians they are good at math or, or they can't speak English well. This will always happen, but you know things can change. As a result new things will involve and and slowly it the idea will and perception will change as simple as that.

01:11:37.770 --> 01:11:47.519

(S.R) If we get bogged down with the perception things we start, you know. Then things will start going apart. But if you don't have to get bogged then, we still go ahead and do whatever we want to do.

01:11:47.560 --> 01:11:50.020

(S.R) I think it's going to be. I mean, it will be okay.

01:11:50.070 --> 01:12:00.750

(A.S) I don't think it is a problem having this prototypical identification of certain skill sets, or or attitude, or mindset

01:12:00.990 --> 01:12:06.279

(A.S) kind of labeled towards this community. And I do. I also think

01:12:06.450 --> 01:12:12.509

(A.S) we, as the community, also have responsibility toward creating those perceptions that has been created

01:12:12.700 --> 01:12:28.519

(A.S) over several decades. That you know, I, I see that we didn't, you know we didn't, you know. You and I both have kind of up the same age. We have pretty much, we are in the same kind of part of our life. We, we even see that

01:12:28.560 --> 01:12:45.939

(A.S) a super ultra competitive mindset of most of the fellow parents, right. My, my son, goes to five things right. He does math, he he wants to, he goes to some Word Olympia, this that, is that another one is, you know, doing some piano and also going to a dance.

01:12:46.050 --> 01:12:53.280

(A.S) All this and the typical Caucasian mindset is not that. They don't push their kids

01:12:53.440 --> 01:13:08.650

(A.S) so hard into this kind of you know and they they don't grow kids in this competitive way. And I have seen, I have, you know, been part of this discussions. With the other non-Indian communities and and and people, that they will

01:13:08.820 --> 01:13:27.689

(A.S) they, when they're scared of living in a, in in the neighborhood where the Asian communities lives in specific parts of this Bay Area, they're even scared to even live there. They don't want to live there. They're like, oh if my kids go to the same public schools where these Asian, Chinese and Asian Indian kids go,

01:13:27.700 --> 01:13:29.010

(A.S) then you know.

01:13:29.280 --> 01:13:30.099

(A.S) So,

01:13:30.120 --> 01:13:33.420

(A.S) to many of them it creates a sense of mediocrity.

01:13:34.000 --> 01:13:38.569

(A.S) That your your kid has to go through X number of things.

01:13:38.800 --> 01:13:41.890

(A.S) and we will have to do wide number of things by a certain age

01:13:41.970 --> 01:13:43.210

(A.S) to accomplish

01:13:43.330 --> 01:13:50.180

(A.S) Z accomplishments. Right. Then the other communities don't typically see

01:13:50.240 --> 01:14:06.689

(A.S) that the raising a kid that way. And we, I think we have created that perception. And I really want to see that that perception gets washed out over time, because it is not a good perception that an Asian Indian or Asian Chinese kid means

01:14:06.700 --> 01:14:25.740

(A.S) that they will be so ultra competitive. They will be good in math. they will be not focusing on their soft skills as Shyamal Da pointed out. They will be cut out for only specific type of jobs as they grow. I don't think that is, that is a really a a good perception to to mobilize, and right.

01:14:25.750 --> 01:14:44.389

(S.R) I think I may add to Alodeep I mean I think I'm all this is right. I mean, you know there are people like, you know, like over here where I live, you know. The same thing with the...Diablo Valley, Diablo Valley High School is that, you know, is considered like that, Indian.

01:14:44.440 --> 01:15:01.290

(S.R) And Windermere this high school is there. All the Indian kids are there as a result. All I mean, they have. It has become a typical on their... what shall I say in, in the high school mentality. But I I mean, I think that is also this is where another thing where Indians have really

01:15:01.540 --> 01:15:14.810

(S.R) have not taken up Silicon Valley's attitude, but rather taking up their Indian attitude and imposed up on Silicon Valley things. You know, we know that. This again another one was, okay you know, when they heard that someone has been successful he did,

01:15:14.820 --> 01:15:32.610

(S.R) he or she did A, B, C, D, E and got into MIT, so my kid also has to do A, B, C, D, E and we'll get into MIT. I mean, you know, whether they really did A, B, C, D, E or not that is, that is kind of

more of a folklore rather than fact. And as a result, all the conclusion that drawing is more of a plot than right. So...

01:15:33.230 --> 01:15:43.349

(S.R) but anyway, that's...kind of you know what shall I say is, is that good and bad of Silicon Valley. The are people who will go beyond that, and you know something really good, I mean...

01:15:43.410 --> 01:15:57.779

(S.R) and as I say that you know, my my wife is involved in this college admission counseling, and and she says she sees there are people who are it goes beyond it and there are people that doesn't go for it, who fall into that and that's it. I mean, you know, so.

01:15:58.710 --> 01:16:00.260

(I) Right, yeah.

01:16:01.610 --> 01:16:08.910

(A.S) All the different aspects of of of living in Silicon Valley or in general, anywhere outside your, you know

01:16:08.940 --> 01:16:15.110

(A.S) your, your comfort zone, where you were born. I, I'm sure that you know other kind of

01:16:15.330 --> 01:16:25.009

(A.S) that communities living in other parts of the country and other countries will also have similar kind of observations. But Silicon Valley, having the the density

01:16:25.130 --> 01:16:30.100

(A.S) and a specific mindset, some things are specific as we discussed.

01:16:30.250 --> 01:16:30.929

(I) Right.

01:16:31.100 --> 01:16:31.800

(I) Right.

01:16:32.010 --> 01:16:43.380

(I) Okay well, thank you very much for this wonderful conversation. It was great listening to both of you.

01:16:43.540 --> 01:16:46.599

(A.S) Thank you Mantra for this unique opportunity. This is really not an opportunity that comes to us on a daily basis. We really appreciate it that

01:16:46.760 --> 01:16:48.929

(A.S) you thought of the two of us,

01:16:49.050 --> 01:17:01.710

(A.S) that we would be able to meaningfully contribute to you.

(I) Oh of course, of course. No, I'm I'm very glad that both of you could make time today. I'll stop the recording. Just one minute.

(S.R) Alright. Thank you Mantra, and I think it was a wonderful conversation.