**WEDDING SPEECH**

**FOR**

**DINESH PATEL**

Hello everyone! (**If you are married, you can say**) My wife, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I welcome all of you to this joyous occasion. For all of you... friends, family... visitors from near or far, today we are **ALL** family... related in one large, beautiful sense.... as we celebrate the joy that radiates from our bride and groom... tonight our beautiful daughter, Seema, marries Akshay. It is clearly true that love brings all of us closer and I want to extend a special welcome and lots of gratitude to all of you, and of course especially those that have taken the time and effort and traveled from far and wide to share in this moment. Come to think of it, with the traffic in Seattle, we **ALL** invested time and effort to get here!! (**Wait for the laugh**). I am truly happy to share this moment with so many friends and family, colleagues and neighbors. Having seen you two years ago when we celebrated our son Samir’s wedding to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in Lublin, Poland, we are reminded of **THAT** joyous occasion as we meet again... I can safely say, we are truly blessed.

(**Please acknowledge Akshay’s family here**). To \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (**mention your wife**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I extend our most hearty congratulations as our families combine to form one extended family, and of course, Akshay, we are thrilled to officially accept you as our son. Thank you for recognizing and honoring the light and the joy that is Seema and makes her who she is, and thank you for loving her and caring for her as you do... you bring out the best in our daughter... even in this traffic!!! (**Wait for the laugh**)..... you know, with all of the visitors and “international dignitaries” present here tonight, I thought it might be helpful to point out some of this city’s main “attractions...” of course there’s the Space Needle.... Pike’s Place Market... all of that delicious coffee... and yes... fun fact... this is a TOP TEN U.S. city... on the Worst Traffic in America List!! Well, at least you all look beautiful, you got here safe and sound, and for the next few hours, all we have to do is enjoy the moment!!

Tonight we celebrate Seema and Akshay... It has been both a privilege and the joy of a lifetime to have the honor of being Seema’s father. She’s beautiful and bright... I’d like to think she gets that from me (**Wait for the laugh**).... she’s smart and inquisitive... I think that’s from me too.. (**Wait for the laugh**). She’s modern and stylish.. okay... maybe **NOT** from me (**Wait for the laugh**) and since the day she was born, I smile when I think of her and the joy she shares so freely.

It must not have been easy for her, growing up, both as the only girl and as the middle child, with Samir, our oldest son and Sanik, our youngest son. I suppose that in a way, we lived what one might call a “majority rules” household, especially when it came to activities. It wasn’t strange to Seema... she grew up as a tomboy and from what I can recall, she had a happy, active childhood. Akshay... keep this in mind... because of her brothers’ involvement, Seema also practiced Tae Kwon Do .... and she’s a **BLACK BELT**... heads up, my son... if you know what I mean!! (**Wait for the laugh**).

Yes... Seema is a joy to be around.... she’s outgoing and bubbly and is fully engaged in living life and sharing with those around her, but she has her introspective moments as well... when she looks inward... searching... digging... questioning...

I will **NEVER** forget **THAT** time... we were living in London, and Seema and her brother Sanik had an idea.... they started to dig a hole in the backyard, trying to reach the center of the earth.... I have to say, it was a rather ambitious goal... Seema was no more than **EIGHT** years old at the time, and of course Sanik was even younger. It took some convincing for them to “step back from the shovel..” and of course, I had to go out there and put back all of the mud to fill in the hole... yes... it started raining as I got to complete my part of the experiment... and Seema and Sanik watched through the window... staying nice and dry.

Seema didn’t make it to the center of the earth that day, but her wonderful curiosity about life has been an inspiration for this very proud father to witness. And even though I got soaking wet on that occasion, in London, in our backyard, it was clearly one of those moments... a snapshot of my children... that I hold very dear. I am so blessed to have had so many of those moments and memories that I keep close to my heart, and this beautiful wedding will take its place as one of the greatest... it’s at times like this... momentous life events that remind us how quickly time goes by. And it is such a blessing to be able to witness Seema and Akshay’s happiness while sharing all of this with all of you. I will truly treasure all of this experience for the rest of my life.

Akshay, you are now part of the family. I am very happy for the both of you and for this union. I know the two of you will “dig deep” as you explore life together and as you build a home and a life for your family and the future. You two demonstrate that “love is light” and this room is filled with your mutual glow. I am proud to give you my blessing and we look forward to sharing continued joy and all good things with both of you. Congratulations Seema and Akshay!! Thank you all!!