



## A BIBLIOPHILE'S ODYSSEY SANJAY JAIN

“We have only one life to live. Mother Nature or the Supreme Power has created this amazing universe, making it possible for us to enjoy and appreciate the finer things in life,” says Sanjay Jain, distinguished Senior Advocate and former Additional Solicitor General of India. These words perfectly encapsulate his approach to life — to collect the very best things in order to enhance his happiness, inner peace and satisfaction.

His prized possessions range from A-grade fountain pens to rare watches and exclusive neckties and scarves. However, his greatest passion is to collect valuable books as well as works of high art that speak to his personality traits.

### A COLLECTOR OF WORDS

His obsession with books began in his university days when as a student leader, he would frequent libraries around New Delhi to read and imbibe philosophies from around the world. As an award-winning debater, he was often gifted books as prizes, which sparked a love for books of all kinds — fiction and non-fiction, English and Hindi. However, it wasn't just about owning them. He also became an avid reader, sometimes reading up to four books simultaneously.

With the passage of time, he amassed an enviable collection sourced from India and his travels abroad. “I used to frequent Daryaganj book market in Delhi in my younger days and I've found some real gems there. Abroad, one of my favoured places for book buying is Cecil Court or The Booksellers Row in London,” he shares. Another aspect of

this hobby that he thoroughly enjoys is the experience of browsing and buying books. “When I set out to buy books, the entire day is dedicated solely to buying them!”

### A RARE OBSESSION

A love of books came at an early age, but a love of art grew on him slowly. As a student and young lawyer, he remembers frequenting the art galleries and museums of New Delhi. On these trips, he was fascinated by the art works on display and the stories behind them. This translated to a penchant for buying art that spoke to him and his sensibilities.

Some noteworthy works in his private collection include the paintings of Iranian artist Freydoon Rassouli, who is best known for his unique style of ‘Fusionart’, Sudip Roy’s *Charulata* collection, Arpana Caur’s thought-provoking depictions of societal issues and more. “What fascinates me about art is the underlying philosophy, symbolism and the message, captured either by my cognitive faculties or inner subconsciousness,” he shares.

Claiming that his collections of books and art have had a profound impact on his life and career, he explains, “My advocacy has become much more polished and sophisticated because of my exposure to books and art. I am able to quote and generate humour in the course of my arguments and that is highly appreciated in the courts of law. Further, books have enhanced my knowledge of literature, political science, history and poetry.” Similarly, he feels his art has enriched his life and helped him hone his analytical mind, which has strengthened his professional persona.

“Today I am a better person because of the exposure that books and art have given me,” he signs off.



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