High performance reconfigurable computing with cellular automata

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Al-hamdu Lillahi Rabbil 'Alamin, finally the day has arrived when I can talk about my proud PhD journey, a journey that started in the early months of 1992. Then 16, the aim was simply to keep myself safe from the on-going turmoil in Kashmir, India. Leaving my parents, friends, and hometown behind, I spent the following decade in Delhi - the control center for billion plus people. The new city embraced me and was kind enough to equip me with the right mix of skills to face the real world. I thoroughly enjoyed my Delhi days where I completed the last two years of my senior school and four years of engineering from Jamia Milia Islamia, worked for two years, made some good friends, and met my to-be life partner.

During my freshers jobs in Delhi, my interest in computing dawned upon me, and I decided to pursue a masters programme in information technology from the University of Nottingham, UK. Upon graduation, I was eyeing to work for a fortune 500 company. However, policies applicable to non-EU nationals meant—choose later start now, get going with the professional world right away. With an opportunity to work as a lecturer at the University of Akureyri in Iceland, I headed north in early 2003. Soon my interest in academia and research became apparent and I was collaborating with Prof. Peter Sloot’s research group here at the University of Amsterdam. In August 2006, I moved to Amsterdam and finally after two years of marriage, in December 2006, my wife and I started living together. This was the first time since the start of my journey back in 90’s that I finally felt at home. Yes, this has been quite a journey.

Through this journey, many people have played an important role. I would like to thank Mr. A.U. Tak, then in 2001 the District Manager for the State Bank of India, for helping me get a higher education loan for my masters in the UK. Special thanks to Prof. Mark O’Brien, then in 2003 Dean, Faculty of Computer Science at the University of Akureyri, for introducing me to academia, and a mentor during my next four years as a University Lecturer. Thanks to other colleagues at the University of Akureyri for their encouragement and help, especially Dr. Thorsteinn Gunnarsson, then rector, for all the funding and support.
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Syed Murtaza