

Syed Muhammad Anwar Shah

Interviewer: Mr. Anwar, we want to interview you, and this is all about the division of Hindustan. So are you permitting us to interview you?

Mr. Syed Muhammad Anwar Shah: Absolutely yes.

Interviewer: Kindly tell us, in 1947 era, when you were 11-year-old, what sort of environment you had seen about Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims?

Mr. Syed Muhammad Anwar Shah: Before 1947, they were all living together.

Interviewer: Were there Hindus and Sikhs living in your village?

Mr. Syed Muhammad Anwar Shah: Yeah all they were there in the village and they were all living together and are they were very cooperative and sympathetic to each other including Muslims as well.

Interviewer: So, how did you come to know that finally Hindustan gonna divide in two parts.

Mr. Syed Muhammad Anwar Shah: As we were younger, our father told us that now this region is gonna divide in two parts and Muslims and Hindus are no more at one place from now onwards. This sort of division was basically announced in Pakistan first, but later here in this region, when bunches of Pakhtoons entered in this region, they murdered Hindus from here. Hindus were actually forced to move away from here.

Interviewer: You mean to say, Hindus had occupied this area?

Mr. Syed Muhammad Anwar Shah: Absolutely yes, they were staying here, and the all of a sudden bunch Pakhtoons entered here and they forced to move away from this area.

Interviewer: So, how finally they moved away from your area?

Mr. Syed Muhammad Anwar Shah: They ran away.

Interviewer: You mean, they moved away via Chakothi.

Mr. Syed Muhammad Anwar Shah: Yes, they started moving away, either they were two of them, four of them or a bunch of those Hindus and Sikhs, they kept moving. As we were young kids at that time, standing and watching them running away. When the army arrived to Garhi Dupatta from Pakistan, the army side from this area pushed them away as well and we were watching this all. The Hindus were telling and advising each other not to stay here and just to run away, otherwise they will be killed.

Interviewer: Is there any memorable thing or point in your mind that you would like to share with us?

Mr. Syed Muhammad Anwar Shah: Well, the thing to remember only is that that finally they moved from this area away to Hindustan and the only Muslims left over here. Later on, a few of Hindus were arrested by the Muslims, and later after 10-15 days, Pakistan army cleared all of them and sent them out back to Hindustan and also helped bringing Muslims arrested from the Hindustan area to Pakistan as well, so this was interchanged.

Interviewer: So, due to this division, as you were already going to school at that time, so it was crucial for you people in this regard to face pause in your education?

Mr. Syed Muhammad Anwar Shah: Yes, absolutely, even it passes around four years since we never went to school. I was in 1st grade at that time. Then after four years duration, took admission in 2nd grade and then started learning again.

Interviewer: What do you say, what sort of medical facilities were at that time?

Mr. Syed Muhammad Anwar Shah: No, there were particular no medical facilities at that time. There was only one medical center at that time and it was a private sort of. There was only one primary school in this area and there was no school at all.

Interviewer: What do you think the time before division favorable, or the time now days?

Mr. Syed Muhammad Anwar Shah: Obviously this one. At that time, there was a difference, as the Muslims were always kicked back and the Hindus always wanted to come front. Hindus never ever wanted to Muslims to show their progress in any field or in education. The Muslims in subcontinent were basically pressed by the Hindus. Later, we got freedom, so the school and education get separated as well and we finally got relief.

Interviewer: So, do you think that this was a good decision to divide in two?

Mr. Syed Muhammad Anwar Shah: Yeah, this was the absolutely right decision.

Interviewer: Is there any other thing you want to share us.

Mr. Syed Muhammad Anwar Shah: Well, as it has been long long time ago, my memory is not as sharp as to recall anything in this stage of life now, so I have nothing more to share besides what I shared with you as I am 82-year-old.

Interviewer: Thank you so much Sir.