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Life before partition was very simple. It had only been 2 to 4 years since we got electricity, before that we use to use lanterns. We didn't have cars and had to drive horses to travel.

Life before partition was great; I still catch myself reminiscing about it that time was far better than the current time we live in. We lived in Pathankot and life was great. Everything was so less expensive than it is nowadays. In my opinion if it wasn't for the politics of the British then we would have been fine, would have been able to stay where we were, there would have been no partition. I remember our neighbourhood; we all lived together, Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. We co-existed peacefully for a long time. We all, regardless of religion, use to partake in each other's festivals.

Everyone use to talk about how the country was going to be divided into two parts. However, the actual division of the country, which areas would go to Pakistan which would go to India, we only found that out a few days before partition. No one knew East Pakistan was going to be made. We didn't even know till day of partition that our area and Gurdaspur wouldn't be part of Pakistan.

I lived in Pathankot and it was around 13th or 14th August that we decided to leave. We initially heard that the area, Pathankot and Gurdaspur was going to be included in Pakistan. Thus, everyone calmed down. However, it was suddenly announced that those areas were not going to be a part of Pakistan. Due the danger the Hindus posed to us we decided to leave immediately.

I was seven at the time of migration, but I still remember everything. If I think about it, I can still see all those houses and that neighbourhood in my mind.

We left Pathankot and reached Gurdaspur. In Gurdaspur there was a Muslim contractor who knew my grandfather, all the Muslims stayed at his house there. It was a big house. One day during our stay, news reached us that some Hindus nearby were going to attack the house tonight. The situation was quite difficult, and we were at a loss at what to do.

Two Hindu horse car drivers lived in the neighbourhood; it was during such a difficult time that they came across the contractor as he was walking around the neighbourhood. They reassured the contractor and told him not to worry, that they had been neighbours for quite a while, and that they would handle the Hindus who wanted to attack the house and they would get the Muslims out.

They both came in the morning, at around 4am and asked everyone to get ready. They had two horse carts which could fit about 7 to 8 people in total. They asked the women not to cover their heads, so they could be mistaken for Hindu women. Our journey was to be concluded when we reached river Ravi, about 15 miles away from Gurdaspur. We came upon Sikhs during

our journey; they had weapons, knives and spears, which they used to kill the Muslims who came their way. We saw corpses of those Muslims on the road as we travelled.

The horse cart driver told the Sikhs to let us through, he reassured them that we were from their side and he was just helping us reach our house which was at the bank of the river. They listened to the driver and like that we continued our journey. We reached the bank of River Ravi and from there we had to go on a boat and try to go to Shakargahr. We loaded some of our belongings on the boat and just like before the women sat in the boat without covering their heads. Even on the River they had killed some people, who they suspected of being Muslims, who were riding in boats. Somehow, we survived.

On the other side of the River, which was towards Pakistan, we couldn't immediately reach Shakargahr. There was a village that came before Shakargahr and we had to stay there for the night. We left that village early in the morning on foot. We had no guide and had to rely on ourselves, however, there were some people in our group who knew the way to Shakargahr, and we made our way there through shortcuts.

To reach Shakargahr we had to somehow climb up the steep riverbank. Thankfully, there were people there who sent ropes down to us and that is how we were able to set foot in Pakistan. Our group consisted of 8 to 10 people who were able to escape on the horse cart and the few people who were rescued from the river. Then we all stayed at the railway station master's house.

The Muslim landowners of the area had suggested that our group occupy the empty school nearby and that food can be sent to us there. We had to wait for the train for 4 to 5 days as during those days its schedule was not regulated. We kept getting foods from the locals who gave all the migrants food and eventually an empty train from Lahore came. We all boarded it and came to Lahore. After getting off the train and reaching Lahore, we came a problem regarding where we should go. Then my grandfather remembered that his cousin lived in Misri Shah in Lahore and thus we went to his house.

On our way we saw a lot of dead people, cut down and murdered, the Muslims here killing Sikhs. People on this side of the border had killed a lot as well, just as people on the other side of the border were murdering Muslims; Muslims here were killing Hindus and Sikhs.

We had great difficulty in finding the house in Misri Shah but eventually we did, and we stayed there for a few days. One of my uncles, who had been doing FA in Gurdaspur previously, borrowed a cycle from someone and set out to find somewhere permanent to stay, as a lot of residences were empty due to Hindus abandoning them. He came upon an empty house in Sant Nagar; we decided to occupy that house. After asking for some beds from people, we were able to settle in.

During those days these teams sent by the government use to allot residencies to people who needed them. Whoever settled down in an empty house, those teams use to come in and allot

that house to the people living there. We too got a visit and allotment letter from them after we started living in that house in Sant Nagar.

Two of my mother's brothers use to own some land in Riyasat Rampur, which was in UP, India. Leaving that area for them was very difficult as they were targeted by the Hindus there. Somehow, my uncles saved themselves and in ox carts stowed themselves as well as their families away and reached the Rampur railway station. The trains at the station were very irregular and you never knew when the train would come, so they had to wait for one. They saw a lot of dead bodies on the trains which were coming and going. When someone asked about them, my uncles said that they were Hindus and were going to Muradabad. Thus, they boarded the Muradabad train, but they stopped at Delhi, where they changed their train and went to Amritsar. From there, they went to the Wagah Border, as migrants use to go from Amritsar to the border via buses almost daily. It was very dangerous, people were killed on the way, but some managed to survive. My uncles saw a lot of bloodshed during their migration.

We saw so many people put into such difficult situations due to all this bloodshed and the need to migrate. People dropping everything and just running with their child, eager to escape. Men who had to choose between their wife or their mother as both needed help to run and they could only carry one.

A few people of our family couldn't migrate and stayed in India. My grandfather and two of my mother's brother went to visit them; in I think 1954 or 1955. Amritsar, Gurdaspur and Pathankot, they went to these three places to visit our relatives. At the time they went the old Hindus with which they use to socialize were still alive. They all greeted one another very happily and invited them to stay, saying it's your home. However, my grandfather declined and jokingly said, you're going to kill us in our sleep, how can we stay.

At the time of partition and for a while afterwards, till about 1950, because of refugee camps there was a slight spread of diseases like malaria, typhoid and some diseases which had to do with the stomach, I can't quite remember the names right now.

I started my schooling in Pathankot but after we settled in Lahore, when the subject of my schooling came up my uncle suggested that my age be written down as less than it was, for the purpose of education. He had thought that I could stand to repeat a year or two and as we had none of our documents, we had to make new ones. Thus, on all our new documents my age went from seven, to five years old. Moreover, it would be hard to get me into my previous grade, because we didn't have any school documents, that meant either I start my schooling again or give tests and such to be put into the right grade.

My grandfather was a doctor; prior to partition and even after migration he stayed steadfast in his career. He moved to Rawalpindi and started a private practice there. My other grandfather was an overseer in the irrigation department in India. In Pakistan, he got a similar job. Before my grandfathers and the other people in my family started earning, when we needed money, our relatives helped us and gave us what we needed. The only thing the government did was

give us an allotment letter and told us that the house we were currently staying in was ours and the stuff inside, clothes, furniture, was now ours to use.

The police were helpful and understanding towards us at the time of partition, nothing like they are now. However, during our journey to reach Pakistan, despite the amount of bloodshed we saw, we never saw the police or military. As far as I know they didn't try to stop the killings.

I was telling my kids a few days ago that, even though the British had announced their decision to divide India, they were still in the country at the time of partition. The Viceroy, Mountbatten, was still present at the time of partition, and he did nothing to try and stop the violence. He didn't give any order or take any action to try and stop the bloodshed.

It took us a while to truly get settled in Pakistan. In India we had a house and my family had jobs and everyone was stable. Here it took a while for everyone to get jobs and settle in. When my grandfather and uncle started earning, they immediately wanted to throw out the things left behind by the Hindu family who use to live there. Their prejudice didn't let them use furniture, or dishes, or clothes, used by a Hindu or Sikh before them.

I look at the speeches given by Quaid e Azam, and I understand that the Partition was a good thing. We were a minority in India and thus life would have been very hard for us there, we wouldn't have been able to get good jobs and would be marginalized members of society. However, I still feel like everyone was well-adjusted prior to partition. As I said, things were going well before partition. If there wasn't a fear of what the Hindus would do to us if we stayed, we would have probably stayed. So many Muslims couldn't migrate and had to stay in India, and they survived, they're fine there right now.