



## **Vidhyayana - ISSN 2454-8596**

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### **Transplanted Shrine of Dada Dayaldas: Khyber to Rajkot**

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Partition of India being a major historical phase with political, social, religious crisis can never be redeemed as past so easily and early. The mistrust among the nations particularly India, Pakistan and Bangladesh reflects in the six decades of uneasy bilateral relations and sentiments of the people to term each other as enemy nation. Partition doesn't mean Punjab Kashmir or Bengal nor is it Lahore, Delhi, or Bombay. Sindh province was a peculiar case where Hindus were in minorities. According to Khuhro:

There was however a very significant difference between Sindh and the rest of India. Sindh was the only province of the sub-continent which was overwhelmingly Muslim in population. In Sindh 75 per cent of the population was Muslim, whereas in the Punjab and Bengal, their majority provinces, little over 50 percent were Muslim (170)

Much needs to be learnt from the personal histories and reasons for the unfortunate communal divide continues to exist and looms always to spread fear, mistrust and terror. The problem remains to be addressed and discussed to sought the solution – particularly with India which is a multicultural, multiethnic a multilingual nation in the true sense with its inherited secular ethos. Partition might have been the result of ‘...global politics, Britain’s insecurity, and the errors of judgements of Indian leaders...’ (Sarila 416) but the people had to confront it at local/community level.

The attempt here is to study a process of process of rehabilitation not of individuals but the social group/community through their insulation to amnesia. The religion/cultural memories is used as insulator to reconstruct and keep intact the community identity. The study is pertaining the Brahmshtriya Sindhi Community (mainly with printing /tie and dye profession) that migrated from region of Sindh province (now southern Pakistan). The people were uprooted from their age-old homeland on the banks of Sindhu and scattered all around Saurashtra (Gujarat), Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. His/story of the struggle of this large scale migration is no different with the Lohana Sindhi community. Initially, survival was regarded a blessing and later a generation or two to settle down to call the new place their home with the memories of the lost ones, homes and the property. But the study tries to probe into how they kept intact the community identity in the course of seven decades if migration. The shrine of Dada Dayaldas in Rajkot can be seen as a symbol of the revival of the uprooted community that strives to root itself in Newfoundland. The story of the shrine is imprinted in the psyche of the people in the community. Before partition of India the shrine was in Nawabshah, Khebar, Sindh and the faint memory of the shrine is part of the memory of the few survivors. The two generations have built on these memories and constructed a shrine to make it a community pilgrim



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place in Rajkot where the community gets to gather, from all over the country, every year for three days to celebrate the birth anniversary of Saint Dada Dayaldas. This leads us to understand a method in which the people part and unite. Community life and ideals are the unifying a factor even in case of the forced political migration on the communal lines. This reminds us of Vivekananda who believed that, 'if you want to bring about any change in India it has to be through spiritual means.'

The paper is based on an interview of Shri Hotchand Kimatchand Vaarde, a partition migrant from Khebar, Sindh, Pakistan, conducted by me under the research project to collect the memories of Partition migrants in Rajkot to add to the stories and history of partition to understand an event so complex and affecting at such a large scale.

Hotchand Kimatchand Vaarde born on 7 Feb. 1935 is one among a few aged surviving who can tell about living through the epoch partition which uprooted their family and Brahmskhtriya Hindu community, which was in minority then, in Sindh which gives them the name to be called 'Sindhis'. He has nothing to or no one to complain about the victimized state due to partition or the life spent in dire poverty. Instead he has much more to tell cheerfully about his life long struggle after partition. A lorry puller today at the age of 80 is happy that he was able to reach India safe and carry on the physical labor even today. He accounts it as the grace of god. A person who of fifth generation of a saint Dayaldas whose seat/ shrine was in Khyber, Nawabshah, Sindh before Partition of India. He with pride and tears of joy introduces himself by linking himself to the lineage with pride as:

*My grandfather's mother was there, my father's name was Kimatrai Sataram, Satarams father was Gangaram and his father was Dayaldas whose temple this is.... She died in Sindh, I was very young but I remember, I was about six to seven years oldbut I remember a scene she was lean and thin, .... Father used to carry... how to let the daughter carry...*

*Parents gave us sanskara and that is the greatest wealth they have given, we are content...*

*Shri Hotchand Vaarde and his family that lives (in dire poverty) with his son and two grandsons in 273, RMC Hudco, Kotharia Road, Rajkot with his wife Ratandevi. Shri Hotchand Varde from Brahmskhatriya Sindhi Community was born on 7 Feb. 1935 in Matel ('pakistan'). Shri Hotchand Varde is the great grandson of Saint Dada Dayaldas whose temple, as already stated, is a community centre in Rajkot for the Sindhi Brahmskhatriya Community to come together from all over*



*Saurashtra and India.*

Hotchand Varde is sharp with the photographic memory of his childhood in Khybar as:

*Migrating here we did suffer but had a lot of experiences for two years and...we spent two years on Juvar Rotla and gud . The Government brought us from Karachi to Veraval in a steamer, then were taken to Batava, it was a three storied steamer with ten thousand people I remember all that. I had passed fifth in Sindhi, we were in Khebar, Khebar District, Hyderabad Sindh, Taluka Halanawab, I remember everything and there i had seen Karachi, Haidrabad, Nawabshah, Lucky and all I had been/seen all these places..... now I am seventy nine years old, in 1947 I was about thirteen my birth date is 07-02-1935 in the second month...*

*We came to know in 1945 that we will have to leave, the people used to talk. Nehru and Jinna also came there, it is the history of division of the nation into two, is there the name 'Pakistan' before '47? It was born in 1947 . yet the people were saying , the muslims in the village that you don't leave, do you understand? And infact the people came to send us off up to the street. The Muslim people were not bad there, we lived like brothers, and they gave grocery, they had more of sev and they gave sugar and other things. We Khatries had the profession of dyeing so we used to give chunri and all that for their daughters that was our give and take relations , it was the relation of love. When my grandfather's Ashram was made they gave some vighas of land to us. There were forty mango trees and forty palsa. Thre were rose plants ... it was a huge land given free. Grandfather was a Saint, we have the anniversary here on 21st ...*

*I am fifth generation of Dada Dayaldas, his deciple was Dayaram, a Lohana ,,Sindhi whose branch is in Khejdad near Alvar a big town. We go there it is hundred and one kilometers from here, from there we need to take a bus, they send a vehicle and if we call they would come to receive.*

*My father and they we two brothers, there we had dyeing business. We had a provision store. The elder brother had a provision store for one and a half year after we came here. The land was cheap there our house was in twelve hundred yards. It was a mud house not the brick one. My father and they were two brothers and father was the elder one, and after him were three aunties, uncle was younger, I had one sister and three aunties.*



The account of struggle that Hotchand Varde speaks of can be generalized to get the scope of their wandering place to place for survival as:

*We three brothers were born there, sister was three years old and the third brother was six months old and one sister was born here in Batva, we came here from Batva, went to Savarkundla to sell candies then to Veraval and I went to Ratlam in Madhya Pradesh, in M.P. I went to villages to sell biscuits. Have strived and struggled but now I feel that though going through all the difficulties it was the experience that shaped us. Here there was a temple and a Panditji who was our Guruji who taught us Hindi in the evening ka-kha- ga and that is how we learnt Hindi as well as Gujarati and with English we had a working knowledge ... our relatives are all over Hindustan and in the anniversary in Gujarat, M.P. , Rajasthan, U.P., ...*

When questioned about the state of the shrine in Khebar, Pakistan he travels back in time to say:

*I have heard about the Dada Dayads shrine there on the platform under a papal tree ... The news is that the sea washed it away. It was on the bank of Sindhu river, the sea took it away, the papal tree is big, it stands still as a sign, a well and a papal are the yet there as a mark the Hindus are there and...*

With regards to the rehabilitation and cash-dolls by the government agencies he recollected that:

*Yes, the refugees had to apply for claims but they used to give hundred – two hundred- two fifty rupees which was good for nothing. Two hundred to some and one fifty to some and that too with all proofs and all that. Our father and his elder brother had one single claim. We said what will we do with this money? No need to accept, we got some two fifty which was divided in to two, we lived jointly, there was an age difference between my father and uncle and my father used to treat my uncle as a son. The sister in-law and the brother in-law like mother and son, it was love, sanskaras which is not seen now and there was that respect. When the revered people walked in the village people used to stand up with regards... now it's not so.*

*In Batva there were vacant houses of Muslims and we were told that go and occupy. No one charged anything, also helped a lot and used to give ration for two three months. Potatoes, rice, wheat. Our Dada said lets start some business, so we started hand printing and it worked, used to print sarees. Here...there... and now we live peacefully. I was interested in vending so sold clothes for forty years.*



*Saw so many villages around, in Rajkot area, around Chita, M.P., Rajasthan ... Now its Gods grace, pull a lorry, who pulls- who knows! Pulling passes time and it takes care of health, and above all satisfaction... you are hungry... medicine is not good, you can eat well and sleep well, it passes time and there is clear income.. Pray God that children need not to do that till death. Its gods grace that sons are on their own and that's what we wish with the grace of Mother.*

*I believe in Mother, we have the grace of Mother. Jijiai is undying and She is eternal give her a call and She is there.*

*We vacated the houses, did not sell, unnecessary it might be a reason for animosity, we came here in 1950-1951, and stayed in that Refugee Colony, opened a vacant quarter and settled there in free. Then in 1960 we got a quarter in a draw, the rent was twelve rupees. We were three brothers staying together, so in 1996 because of lack of space we sold it. The younger brother to me lives in Jaipur, he has bought two houses. The youngest one stays in B type, we are really happy we are really enjoying. The younger one Jaipurwala is no more. Sister has also passed away.*

*The inherent cultural and spiritual are elaborately told by Hotchand Varde wherein he went back in to the times of Prabhat-feris (early morning processions singing bhajans/ devotional songs in the village ) in Khaibar. The aspect of singing bhajans is a matter of pride and continuity with the fifth generation of Dayaldas :*

*...I was little less than thirteen but I remember, sanskars from my parents, my grandfather used to sing bhajans of our bhairv and Dungarpur, my uncle used to sing, my father uncle used to sing, my father sang, my elder brother sang and I sang. We have inherited it.*

*One day I had sung: 'Kaun kahta hai Bhagvan hai...' all were pleased. We celebrate the anniversary at the temple... there is a shrine... grandfather built it I am the seventh generation. The shrine there was very big some remains have been brought here and installed here keeping with the state of the community and all the community programmers are organized there.*

*'...lal mere ghar ayo,*

*Ayo sajan mere ghar ayo'*



*This is raga jog as in the film Baiju Bavara: 'Mohe bhool gaye savaria'. They used to sing the raga in marriage, death and stories all narratives used it... then come and go and come... the lullabies and the sleep ... the house was there and there were eight big incidents in the village, do you follow? And it was a deceitful and was unbearable so told it in the morning and.... The door was to be shut for all, it was good but I am here he was very young then. We used to sing film songs: ' Mukabla...mukabla.'*

*His call was let out... to face it or to give a cry...*

*Then the song was ... it was as it was to mean... 'roko maat jane do...' that is the line 'roko maat jane do...' 'roko mat- jane do' ... there is double meaning. Thirty years have passed after marriage. There was just eleven hundred cash and the groom spent it. He was born in twelve months time and I paid it. If we have faith in Jijibai and have patience we get it. At present if we want to go by bus..... the times have changed. Have spent the life, no! Faith, patience to get darshan.*

And finally before we go beyond the interview of Hotchand Varde, to construct the frame of the shine in the minds of others one more artistic understanding of the very phenomenon of partition in his own words, words of a Hotchandji who lived through the troma:

*According to me, God knows the truth, there was a case before the judge, there were two women, it was a story taught at school: there was a boy and one woman said it was her son and the other said it was hers. The judge thought how to decide? After giving it a thought used his mind. The fake mother would say that chop it in to two and the real one would weep that the child would be cut in to two. The real mother said to give it to the other I do not want the part. The other one was happy. There it was a child being divided here it was the mother that was divided. Today it is sixtysix years and the Kashmir problem is going on. He was a saint. It was a mistake to divide and we will suffer yet.*

*Yes I have seen the mass killings in Karachi in my childhood, it was more of looting, less of killing, looting the shops and carrying away the women. There was a poet called Sagar who wrote a poem on this*

*' Soono soono e Hindustani, Sindhio ki dard kahani,*



*Sindh-Punjab-Balischistan or Koeta ko atyachar hua*

*Kasaione berehmise insanoka sans liya*

*Kiske bachhe mardiye or kiski gae gharvali*

*It's long...and it's what was the experienced.*

*Shah Abdul Rafiqe, we sing his great songs every year. He was a Sufi Saint who said God and Rama is one, Allah and Ishwar is the same. He was a bagging Saint whose Makabra we had seen, There, there was nothing like Hindu- Musalman, we used to write there that if we passed we shall offer ghee-sweets in Hindi, tell the story... There, there was nothing like Hindu- Musalman there was fraternity, ....*

*No that was never there, because it was a coastal area they eat all that fish and all to not to spend on vegetables. Ther was no untouchability like not shaking hands or greeting 'salamalekum'... 'la illa illah Mahamud Rasoola' we said every thing there was no enmity, sufi is all about that. They said Ram-ram and also joined in the 'Prabhat Feri'(morning prayers where the hindus go round the village singing devotional songs) In Manju we used to take out Prabhat Feri where my uncle used to play harmonium and the other uncle played dhol. There was a brahmin who used to sing devotional songs. There was no need of mikes we use to take the round of the village. All joined in the Prabhat Feri even the Muslims joined.*

*'Do ghadiyan Do ghadiyan karan ke bhogwale satsangam do ghadiya'*

*Thus singing and then chanted slokas.*

*Ek ghadi adhi ghadi, adhi ki puni adh, satsang...'*

*After a brief idea of the people born in this bhakti-sufi tradition, and to give birth to a saint Dada Dayaldas; worshipped by the community, could carry forward the same through devotional songs that are sung for three nights in the shrine to celebrate the anniversary of Dayaldas.*

Another aspect that people circulate in their telling is 'rotla and chtni' (bajra roti and red chili powder marinated in garlic) as Prasad. This has been a tradition kept alive even today since the times pre-partition. The wife of Hotchandji Smt. Ratandevi's elaborate account of a seemingly insignificant incident in her life





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reveals how people have lived by these ethos and sustained themselves in dire times to come back to their own. The incident was that: 'some four women came to her house from Junagadh, I was preparing bajara-rotla for the family. I had backed three and they were four. I thought they must be hungry, coming all the way from Junagadh. So I offerd them one fourth piece of rotla each with chatni. They were happy. And after years when they met again they remembered my rotala. They said they had not forgotten the taste!'. (so engrossed she was to tell with her eyes in tears)This story must have been repeated by her a hundreds of time and every time with such innocence and faith rather then despise for her state and not so rich food. It was Prasad at Khaibar and continues to be the first offering at every annual gathering.

The shrine in Rajkot has one more miraculous story to tell and that is of the papal tree that is believed be swayambhoo (to have grown on its own) and its is believed to be the branch of the same papal tree that stands at Khaibar shrine! It's a huge tree indeed keeping with the narrow lane where the shrine is located. It is said that they (Poojari) never have had to cut the branches when the neighborhood complained of its reaching their houses. 'The branches fall/ break down on its own, during the night, without harming anyone or damaging anything!' Whether one believes it or not, but it is certain that the shrine has taken root and in that sense the 'rotla-chatni' has travelled with people and like sphinx the Brahmakshtriya Sindhi community has once again transplanted itself in the new land and re-organised itself through their faith. Transplanting a tree and making it legendry is no miracle compared to the way the community today has taken roots and establishing on their own strengths.

It is a case study that bring to light that not only people were uprooted but institutions too suffered the same fate of which few found a place to survive to transplant and give life and bind the scattered and shattered communities.

Note: The portions from Shri Hotchand Varde's interview taken by me of on 14 October 2014 is quoted in italics instead of following MLA style, as they excessively used and is the primary source of the paper.



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