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I am from centre of Kabul, Shor Bazaar. Majority of Hindus and Sikhs lived there. Now the people are dispersed in shahr naw, Taimani and Karte Parwan. In those days Muslims were also our neighbours. I studied in primary school there and later studied in Lycee Habibia.

Relations between Sikhs, Hindus, and Muslims who were real, really Kabulis, residents of Kabul, because from point of identity were from the same place, right and left they were neighbours on our streets. They studied with us. Relations were such that there was a majority and a minority. We had very good relations. They came to our weddings and we went to theirs. Relations were asalah because of the morality. Muslims had good relations with us we had a good relation. It was not only us, our ancestors had made and established this relations. I we didn't make any changes. And those Muslims used to know we are the older brothers of Muslims. They called us Lala, it means elder brother. In those days, respect and education were important, education in the sense of wisdom. They called us older brother and respected us. They also believed that of one time, they were our children.

Sikhs and Hindus lived all over Afghanistan. We have a very ancient history in Kandahar. There are dharamsal that are very historic, of 5000 years old. In Kandahar, Ghazni and Jalalabad. And in other places, too, though I have forgotten. Everywhere we had gurdwara. In Baghlan, in Kunduz, and in Kabul there were many because of the majority of us lived there. Also in the province of Kabul. For example, Shewaki comes from Shiva, the Hindu God. We had a mandi in Shewaki called Ram Shiva.

People who lived in Kandahar, Ghazni, Jalalabad, all were traders. Most of them were traders. They were shopkeepers. They were good traders. Good traders are people who believe in their work and don't zarar people and sell good products. This was the work of Sikhs of Afghanistan. They lived in those cities, had shops, had houses.

I am a British citizen. If I am from London, I say, I am from London. If from Scotland, I say I am Scottish. Same way we say I am from Kandahar. Personally, my whole family is from Kabul and I am proud to say I am from Kabul. I am an Afghan Sikh from Kabul.

The first high level of doctor, who was very well qualified, was Dr Mal Makmadas. He was professor of medicine at Kabul university. This is a source of pride for us. All the banks in Afghanistan eg Pashtun Tijorati Bank, the bankers are specialised, not everyone can do it. It was done by Sikhs and Hindus. The oldest money of Afghanistan was a coin, later it became a note. It was Sikhs and Hindus who played a role in designing notes. Its not an easy job to design banknotes. First banker was Rais Mir Chand. He did all the banking work. He was a trustworthy person who went to America and represented the banks of Afghanistan.

Initially, people used to travel on horses and donkeys. People used to go to Pakistan, at the time it was undivided India. People went to India, to Tajikistan, to Uzbekistan, near countries, they want to Iran and even to Turkey. Later when things changed and there were planes and cars, they used to take goods from Afghanistan (dried fruits), export them, they sued to export sheep skins, to Germany and America and England. And intestines. Intestines used to be exported to Europe. We used to do it. From there people used to bring cars. Most Sikhs dealt in cloth.

We did the work in lambskins but not in cow skins because that is not permissible for Sikhs and Hindus. But they did do the lamb skin trade, the export of it and intestines.

There were many Jews who were also very developed in trade. They were very good humans and trustworthy. I never heard a Jew lie or steal. They had good business. They were Afghans. They mostly lived in Shahr Naw, near cinema Zainab, most of them lived there. We had trading and friendships relations with them, we had everything with them. Jews are very moral people and good at trade; they were people who caused no problem. Everybody wants to make a profit from trade, everyone does it, and they also did it.

In Kabul Mandawai, Saray Shahzada and Saray Hazar Gul (small and big), wholesale trade. Hindu and Sikh and Muslim and Jews were all there. Saray Ahmad Shahi were also Sikh Hindu, Muslim and Jewish. Mandawi trade was mostly in the hands of Sikhs and Hindus. Above there were also spice sellers, they sold these things.

The people of Khost are very brave, clean intention, good at trade. There was no difference between us and then in terms of religion. They shaved, both of them. One group was Bharg, they were Sikh; the other group were Hindu, who had a temple. Khost are all Pashtuns. Those Hindus and Sikhs their wives and children spoke Pashto. They were Hindu or Sikh.

Sikhs everywhere apart from in Khost speak Punjabi in the house. Here in England we speak Punjabi and English. In Afghanistan, outside the house we spoke Farsi but at home Punjabi. In Kabul we had a Punjabi school. We did not have a Farsi school. We had a religious school. Our children went to two schools. For example, our school started at 12, but before then they went to Punjabi school.

We Sikhs and Hindus have two types of food. One type is Afghan. We used them, with interest and taste. We also had Punjabi or Indian food. We like both. Ashak, mantu, kebab, chalow. Muslims and Hindus ate it. We also had vegetables and dhall, and chicken, these were Indian foods. The two types of food. The Indian foods didn't have relationships with Afghanistan. They were not Afghani foods.

When we were small, it was the Muhammadzai state. When we were youth, it was a kingdom. It collapsed after the coup of Mohammad Daud. When he came, he was a modern person who wanted all Afghans to be educated and to be free, like in Europe. Because he had studied military and served as a Minister and he had been abroad many times, where he had cultural and political relations. He was a very open minded intellectual. After five years, it got quite open, freedom of speech. In the royal period you couldn't speak against the state. But in the Republican era you could. We are not opposed to anyone. Whoever took power we supported them. Because we were a minority. Because we weren't a majority, we understood that if we said anything against the government it wouldn't make any difference. After the killing of Daud by the communist government led by Taraki and his deputy Hafizullah Amin. Until then, we were free; indeed, people had become more open. Until Taraki the situation was good. No Sikh or Hindu had a problem. But Muslims had a problem. The communist state was run like NAZI Germany. It quickly introduced new laws. Muslims were distressed. They went to Pakistan and Iran. Iran and communism will never be acceptable to each other. Sikhs and Hindus had no problems. Indeed, it was free. We were not opposed, but Muslims were. Then Babrak Karmal came. He had a very good politics. He wanted people to calm. He wanted to reform the mistakes of the Taraki era. The mujahidin had grown because of the mistakes of the Taraki, with the support of the West, Pakistan and Iran. True Afghans from Kabul and Kandahar and Ghazni from all the provinces, they left. Muslims thought Islam has been destroyed. As a result they left. Pakistan and Iran did business with them. They got money to support refugees. From the day Dr Najib was killed and the Taliban came, the people of Afghanistan grew tired and were scared. Hindus and Sikhs scared a great deal. Before we had problems. Only problems from 20% people who did not like us. 80 percent people had no problem. We Sikhs and Hindus as Afghans served in the police and

the army. We had a colonel, Dr Sandhok Singh. He was in 419. He was a doctor, a military doctor. After Najib, Sikhs and Hindus left, they tried to leave.

I wanted to stay. I hoped a good government would come. A government kind to the people. I left in 1997. I left during the war. I left in a truck carrying cartons of pomegranates. If a Taliban found me he would have killed me or stolen from me. We gave the truck driver a lot of money to get us out. By that time were living in Taimani.

Today, most Hindus live in different cities of Germany. Most Sikhs who were not wealthy lived in India. Many came to the UK, Belgium, Holland. All Sikhs and Hindus if they can work they work. Mostly they do business. We have also studied. I should say that we gave many doctors and engineers to Afghanistan, as well as traditional medical people. We had a place in banks. We were bankers, top class. In trade, medicine, and engineering we had people. The first pilot Sikh was called Kuldeep Singh Kapoor. He was a pilot for Ariana. I think about forty years before. His father was a doctor and his father was a banker.

All people try to preserve their culture. We also try to protect our culture. Everything we do we try to do it in relation to our culture. We are grateful that England gave us a place and documents. They accepted us and supported us when we didn't have money or permission to work. Now I work. Everything you see is my work. Every year I get a certificate. They try to contribute to the country's wealth. Even if its small, we still make a contribution. We don't want to take to the government, but we want to give to the government. My children are all educated and we pay taxes.

We have friendships with Muslims we know from Afghanistan because trust is important. These days we don't know who is a friend. Before everyone was a friend. All Afghans were friend. Now there are terrorists. They might be ISIS, they might be ISI. Trusting them is difficult. Those we trust our friends. Those from Panjshir are good people. Those we don't know it's difficult to befriend until we trust. Look, here is an invitation of friends from Kabul to a wedding. We still have friendship with our Muslim friends. We go to fateha of people we know and they come to ours. We try to preserve our culture and relations.

If I say honestly, our youngsters are proud of being Afghan. But the environment has gone. Today's environment they study and work and their friendships are with English and with British Sikhs and Hindus. They have chosen a different road. My generation we also try to maintain relations with Muslim brother and keep the relations alive. These things are effecting everybody. Muslims also have friends from the Local society. These is a change with time.

I have never returned to Afghanistan. I closed my houses, shops, and warehouses. I don't know if I am safe there or not and nobody can guarantee. I thought about going, to see my houses and shops. Who is there? My wife and children said father whatever you have lost forget it, whatever you have look after it If you go and they kill you or kidnap you it won't be good. I believe this would happen. One Sikh went from London to his home in Kabul. A powerful family was living in his house. He knocked and was told to come back the next day. He went back and the commander said what do you want. He said I want to live in my house. The commander said you can have a room. If you sell it, give me the first chance to buy. The Sikh sold his house to the commander for 300,000 USD. He left the house. At night the commander killed him and took the money back. Maybe one day we will go as tourists and stay in a hotel, yes. If we go to claim our property, we will never go back. All our property was looted. The wealthy people who are powerful stole our properties. We can say nothing to them.

Our community are now worried about our religious institutions. There were attacks on our gurdwara. They were many people living in them. They lived because they could be together and look after each other. If they lived alone they could have been killed secretly. The temples were safe. But now I don't think they are safe. I would like you and the government to look after this history. Sikhs and Hindus have a history in Afghanistan. This history must not be lost. We had Buddhist for over 2000 years. The Taliban destroyed the Bamiyan Buddhas. Fr 1400 years, no Muslims had a problem with Bamiyan. The Taliban destroyed it in months, They have no rationality. They are irrational. 40 years we didn't have telephone, now we having everything on our telephone. This is civilisation and science. We should accept it. In Islam, most Muslims accept it. But Talibs don't accept. They even say TV in Afghanistan is haram.