

JANUARY 2018

A JOURNEY WORTH 70 YEARS

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FOREWORD

2017 marked the 70th year of Pakistan's independence and the 70th year in which British Council has furthered the relationship between the UK and Pakistan through work in education, social development and the arts. It is a rich and complex relationship that would not be the same were it not for the active and positive contributions of British-Pakistanis in both the UK and in Pakistan.

Pakistanis have been travelling to the UK for a variety of reasons for centuries. One such example is, of course, Muhammad Ali Jinnah himself. Jinnah travelled to the UK in 1892, where he worked as an apprentice before studying law. While he was still only 19 years old, he became the youngest person from South Asia to be called to the bar. Many members of the Pakistani diaspora now work as lawyers, as well as the National Health Service (NHS) and cultural organisations. They represent their local communities in Parliament and serve in the British Army. They are full and active members of British society and as they navigate diverse cultural influences and expectations, they enrich British and Pakistani society alike.

It is impossible, of course, to truly recognise the 70th anniversary of Pakistani independence without considering the events of Partition which affected so many people's lives. Celebrating the achievements of Pakistan so far is only really possible when those achievements are contextualised. This project, therefore, aims to consider the journeys, achievements and contributions of British-Pakistanis and put them into perspective: often, the geographical journey from Pakistan

to the UK is only really one chapter in a family or individual's migration story, which is followed by decades of reconciling different historical and cultural perspectives. Migration is itself a life-long journey in search of one's history, identity and place in the world.

The three families featured in this documentary are all inspirational in their own ways. We thank them very much for sharing their experiences with us and with the wider public. As the UK and Pakistan continue their journey together, the British Council is proud that over 1.2 million members of the Pakistani diaspora now call UK home. We are grateful for the vibrant influence that Pakistani culture has instilled in multicultural Britain: through music, art, food and cultural exchange. We look forward to developing even closer cultural ties and friendly knowledge between Pakistan and the UK in the years to come.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rosemary Hilhorst'.

Rosemary Hilhorst
Country Director, Pakistan
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INTRODUCTION

There can be no doubt that events in 1947 changed the socio-political landscape in South Asia beyond recognition. Over the course of 1947 and 1948, 10-15 million people crossed the border between the newly independent countries of India and Pakistan in both directions: this was the single largest population movement in recent history (George, 2007). Before partition, almost half of the population of Amritsar (49 per cent) was Muslim. By 1951, Muslims accounted for just 0.52 per cent of the city - while 40 per cent of the houses had been reduced to rubble (Talbot, 2007). In Lahore, which was now in Pakistan, the Hindu and Sikh communities who had formed over a third of the population, departed and 6,000 houses were damaged; Lahore alone hosted one million refugees (ibid.). Quoting other writers, Kabir claims that 'a million people were left dead and at least seventy-five thousand women raped and abandoned; around twelve million people

Diaspora, by definition, is dispersion, which effectively compresses time and space such that it enables the experiences of many places at what would appear to be one moment' - Shukla, 2001

'The largest migration of the 20th century' - Talbot, 2007

were displaced, countless homes abandoned or destroyed, properties, families and cultures divided as new national borders were drawn over existing ethno linguistic identities, most obviously Bengali and Punjabi' (Kabir, 2004).

In 2017, 70 years after Partition, it is important to recognise these events and to ensure that their impact is understood. In order to do this, it is crucial to engage with those individuals and communities affected. Many projects in Pakistan and around the world, such as the Citizen's Archive project, are working towards this. For the British Council in Pakistan, one of the crucial groups to engage with is the Pakistani diaspora in the UK. Britain is home to approximately 1.2 million British citizens of Pakistani heritage; 8,000 people fly from Manchester to Pakistan every week (Akhtar, 2011). George refers to the 'triangular (British, Pakistani, Indian) national interests served by Partition' (George, 2007)- reflecting the way in which the events of 1947 are also a part of British history and heritage. More importantly, however, diaspora narratives of migration and identity offer a unique insight into the legacy of Partition.

Defining what the diaspora is in any given situation can be challenging and controversial

'For diaspora, it is neither public nor private but an alternative community space that is somewhere in between.'

-Kabir, 2004

– as Baser and Swain say 'there is no commonly accepted definition of what a diaspora is. Moreover, there is no doubt that diasporas are not alike and their different histories, generations of exit, their cultures and trajectories mark them out as somewhat unique.' (Baser & Swain, 2008) Quoting Vertovec, they intimate that 'belonging to a diaspora entails a consciousness of, or emotional attachment to, commonly claimed origins and cultural attributes associated with them.' (Vertovec in *Ibid.*). Anthias traces the re-emergence of the term 'diaspora' as an attempt, in the late 1990s, to move beyond paradigms of racial and ethnic minorities- to create space for 'hybrid' forms of identity in discussions that otherwise focused on 'static notions of culture and difference' (Anthias, 1998). Nevertheless, the term has struggled to overcome narratives of race and ethnicity, and remains inadequate due to its more general view and the lack of focus on gender, class, generation and other inter- group and intra-group divisions (*Ibid.*). Shukla, too, seems to echo this criticism writing that 'In the ways that South Asian diasporas are comprised of stories about culture, identity, and nation, they offer a misleading coherence or stability to categories that have real power in the lives of many peoples, but nonetheless that need considerable unravelling' (Shukla, 2001). Over the course of this project, therefore the individual and unique nature of each story has been emphasised: while there may be commonalities and shared experiences, deeply unhelpful and reductive to generalise

the experiences of the South Asian and Pakistani diaspora in the UK. Whilst respecting and valuing the diversity of identities and experiences encompassed in the Pakistani diaspora in the UK, it is nevertheless important to engage with the broad body of literature that discusses the process of identity formation at the cross section of different cultures. Shukla highlights post-colonialism, racial and ethnic formation and globalisation as three structuring narratives that shape South Asian diasporas and posits that these also 'address the transnational networks in which SA migrants are embedded' (Shukla, 2001). It is clear that dynamics in the 'host' or 'destination' country will affect identity formation for members of the diaspora: in a review of Papiya Ghosh's work, Sharma highlights Ghosh's point that Indian and Pakistani migrants in the UK mobilised behind a shared 'Asian' identity in response to racism and to aid their assimilation (Sharma, 2007). Equally, in a focused study looking at a community from Eastern Punjab settled in the North East of England, Taylor, Singh and Booth argue that 'diasporic identities are significantly shaped by dynamic social and cultural processes within South Asia as well as those within Britain' (Taylor, Singh, & Booth, 2007). Indeed, it seems that the influences of the UK and of Pakistan or South Asia are constantly in dialogue- the 'heightened sense of connection between kin states and diasporas is a result rather than a cause of conflict [in host states]' (King, 1999-2000).

When analysing the elements that contribute to identity formation in the Pakistani diaspora in the UK, it is also important to consider the role of Partition. Kabir, in a study focusing on the Punjabi diaspora, notes Stuart Hall's comments on the Caribbean diasporic experience and quotes Hall as saying that diasporic subjectivity is inevitably informed

'Diasporas are gradually becoming crucial links between immigrant receiving countries and political developments in countries of origin'
- *Baiser and Swain, 2008*

by 'a certain imaginary plenitude, recreating endless desire to return to lost origins, to be once again with the mother, to go back to the beginning' (Kabir, 2004). How then, Kabir asks, is 'this imaginative and emotional investment in the idea of a 'motherland' impacted by that 'motherland' having been territorially divided, demographically reorganised and scarred by extreme violence?' (Kabir, 2004). Kabir then argues that the post-Partition Punjabi diaspora function very differently in the communities' collective memory (Ibid.). The legacy of partition compounds that of British colonialism more generally- as Shukla states: 'the realities, memories and rebuttals to British colonialism have profoundly affected diasporic peoples and their cultures.' (Shukla, 2001). Shukla also highlights the role that partition played in embedding Islam as a crucial part of Pakistani diasporic identity that potentially sets them apart from other South Asian migrants. He suggests that the development of Pakistani nationalism as closely tied to the nationalisms of other Muslim-majority countries means that 'Pakistani migrant communities are articulated as much to the broader production of Islam, and to an imagined religious homeland of Meccas, as they are to any nation state.' (Ibid.)

The diaspora population are very important to both Pakistan and the UK. Sharma emphasises Ghosh's perspective that 'diasporic politics have not simply been moulded by events in South Asia, but rather the diaspora has often had a strategic, influential and, at times, crucial role in supporting and challenging how the

subcontinent has taken shape after Partition' (Sharma, 2007). Others have highlighted how remittances and consumption in 'kin' or 'home' countries allow the diaspora to continue to retain significant levels of influence (Taylor, Singh, & Booth, 2007). In Koinova's study of Lebanese and Albanian diasporas, it is noted that conflict-generated diasporas are considered more likely to maintain radical behaviours, but in fact adopt moderate positions (Koinova, 2011). Reflecting on a series of Royal Society of Arts (RSA) events that engaged specifically with Pakistan, Akhtar noted that 'many British Pakistanis have expressed their disgust at the misogyny and sectarianism of far-right organisations that use religion to spread hate and prejudice in Pakistan' (Akhtar, 2011). These attitudes do then have an impact in Pakistan. Despite the view that diaspora populations can stoke conflict in their homelands, a growing body of research demonstrates that diaspora populations contribute to peace-making endeavours and act as 'critical agents of social, political and cultural change' in their countries of origin (Baiser and Swain, 2008).

'From the 1947 Partition to the 60s migration of our parents, we are the product of mass movement - this is the story of Migration: Departure, Arrival, Adaptation, Fusion. From the anguish, turmoil and pain of our parents' history comes the responsibility to build our own dreams.'

- *From the sleeve notes of Nitin Sawhney's 1995 album 'Migration'*
As quoted in Kabir, 2004

Baiser and Swain even go so far as to caution against laws and regulations that have been imposed in recent years that 'limit diasporas' spheres of influence' (Ibid.), suggesting that 'host' countries can work with their willing diaspora populations to achieve their own international goals. Adamson also encourages states to view migration and diasporic communities as factors that enhance international security rather than challenge it, noting that 'state capacity is enhanced, rather than threatened, by increased cooperation with other states in areas such as the formulation and enforcement of migration policy.' (Adamson, 2006) The Pakistani diaspora arguably has a crucial role to play in allowing Britain to effectively manage its role in the global society of the 21st century.

As the British Council in Pakistan considered how to pay tribute to the immense contributions and achievements of British-Pakistanis since 1947, a recurring theme in the literature was the role of art and artistic output. Kabir and his co-author identify Bhangra music as a potential receptor of traumatic memories (Kabir 2004), George revisits the politics of gender during Partition through the lens of literature (George, 2007) and Parveen looks at how Hindi cinema has brought a variety of diasporic, South Asian communities together (Parveen, 2003). Indeed, some of the literature seemed to emphasise the Aristotelian power of art to facilitate complex and potentially cathartic discussions. Kabir discusses Grewal's description of the 'shattered mirror of Punjabi consciousness' and argues that 'from the evidence of memory-work produced by contemporary British Asian artists, musicians and writers, it is evident that, on the contrary, the 'shattered mirror' can be reassembled at least for some Punjabis living in diaspora; and in ways that remain difficult, in fact, for

Punjabis who continue to live within South Asia.' (Kabir, 2004). The British Council was keen to develop a research-based project that would be approachable and flexible: the outcome of this is a documentary exploring the family narratives of British-Pakistanis- celebrating their diversity and complexity.

FAMILY NARRATIVES

Rana Asim, Omer Hussain and Fakhia Omer

Rana Asim's story of migration started in 1947. Born into a family descended from Feudal lords in the Indian district of Shaalpur, Rana had just completed his education at the village school, when the process of Partition began. He was 12 years old and he had just finished sixth grade. His father had served in the British Army for 30 years, including during the Second World War his family were contributing to the UK long before Rana or his descendants ever set up home there.

Rana remembers being attacked by armed rioters on the day of Partition in 1947. His family lost their ancestral lands and began the 300 mile walk to Sahiwal, a city halfway between Lahore and Multan in Pakistan. Rana has vivid and precise memories of the violence that characterised this time of his life, and particularly reflects on the gender violence during Partition- noting that many women committed suicide and that 20 girls were taken from the group he was travelling with while they were on their way to the refugee camp. Their camp was set up at Do Sarka- there was one road that led to Jalandhar and one road that led to Amritsar. They had no food and the two wells were each a mile from the camp. In August, average temperatures in Punjab are over 30 degrees.

They stayed in the camp for 16 days, when the Muslim military came to escort them to Wagah in Pakistan. From there, they moved to Sahiwal where they had relatives who gave them food, but they had to work hard to pay their dues. Rana seems to have seen his ability to migrate to the UK as a real opportunity- as a chance to escape from the difficult situation that he and his family had experienced since Partition. He went to the UK in 1962- by that point he already had a wife and children. He left them behind for the chance to build a better life for them in the UK.

'There in Sahiwal, things weren't looking good for us' -Rana Asim

When Rana arrived in the UK, he first went to Yorkshire where he had a relative. There he worked in a furniture factory near Manchester, earning £6 a week after deductions. Of these £6, he sent £2 back to his family in Pakistan. He worked his way up- working in a foundry, a leather company and finally in textiles. By the time he left that job, he was making £150 a week.

Rana's first home in the UK was in a house owned by a man from Mirpur. Between 30 and 40 men lived in the house, with six or seven to a room. Eventually, he and one of his relatives were able to get their own house, which they shared with seven people. Finally, after six

and a half years, Rana was able to return to Pakistan and bring his wife and children to the UK. They then moved into their own house. However, this was not the end of the family's migration story. Eventually, with his nephew and cousin, the family relocated from England to Scotland. They pooled their resources and bought a shop in Glasgow, where Rana appreciated the diversity of the population.

All types of people lived in Glasgow. We created ties with good people and good families'
-Rana Asim

A few years later, however, as the environment in their neighbourhood became more unpredictable, Rana bought an Indian restaurant from a Sikh man. The family now own eight franchises of Subway.

Rana seems to be aware of the stereotypes that migrants can attract: he stresses that he has never lied, borrowed money or claimed welfare benefits. He emphasises his love for Pakistan, and his desire for his family to retain links with the country - at least during his lifetime. He accepts, however the fact that none of his descendants has any plans to return and thinks that life is better in Scotland. It seems possible that, while Rana retains a religious and traditional link to Pakistan, his real homes have been in Shaalpur and in the UK. Indeed, the role that religion plays in determining his loyalties is clear: he compares the unity of the Scottish with the divisions between Muslims, not between Pakistanis. Rana's experience also supports the literature that suggests that there is more space for reconciliation between different South Asian communities in the diaspora than there might be on the continent itself: though he remembers the animosity between

the Sikh and Muslim communities at the time of Partition, Rana then bought an Indian restaurant from a Sikh man.

Rana, his nephew and cousin now have 150 relatives in the UK. It is, as he says, a new dynasty. One of his grandsons is Omer Hussain. Omer is 32 years old and works for an engineering company. In 2015, Omer married Fakhia in Lahore, Pakistan. Omer's aunt arranged the marriage. The couple met at their engagement, and knew each other for less than two months before they were married.

It took time for Fakhia to be able to come to the UK. Omer returned to Scotland a week after the wedding, but her visa process took over ten months. The couple seem very happy and warm with each other, with Omer commenting that it feels like they have known each other for a long time. He attributes this to the fact that their marriage was arranged by their families. Arguably, this reflects the continued relevance of Pakistani culture in Omer's life- despite the fact that he was born and raised in the UK. The fact that they had an arranged marriage seems to emphasise the centrality of community and family in their lives. It has been an adjustment for the couple- language barriers and the weather in particular seem to have presented challenges- but again the role of the community has helped in the transition. Omer says that the large Asian community in Glasgow has made it easier for Fakhia.

'My "mehndi", all the men and everyone were dancing and it was good to have all my cousins and my family... It was a really happy occasion for everyone to be honest.'
- Omer Hussain

'He should never be ashamed to call himself Pakistani, or saying his mum is Pakistani'
-Fakhia Omer

Fakhia's move to the UK has continued the family's migratory tradition, and it is clear that Rana has given the younger generation advice on how to adjust and integrate. Omer is aware of his grandfather's experiences during partition, and knows that his grandfather's experience of coming to the UK was far more fraught and challenging than Fakhia's today. Fakhia says that she finds the people in Scotland very helpful, though she sometimes needs guidance from Omer about who she can trust. Her family too comments that she seems very happy and healthy.

Omer says that his grandfather has many non-Asian friends, and stresses that they are increasingly integrated, in part through school and cricket- Omer has played cricket for Scotland and travelled around the world. There still seem to be small ways in which they are slightly cut off in the UK (Omer ruefully comments that you cannot get halal McDonald's) but their focus is overwhelmingly on making a home in the UK whilst continuing to value and celebrate their Pakistani heritage.

The couple's son Eesa was born in November 2016. It is important to Omer that his son also develops a strong bond with Pakistan. Eesa's first trip to Pakistan was clearly an important occasion - Fakhia says that her family were far more excited about meeting Eesa for the first time than in seeing her and Omer again. They family are greeted by a crowd of excited relatives and Eesa is passed around. There are clear parallels between the family scenes in the UK with Rana Asim and Fakhia's parents' interactions with Eesa. Fakhia wants

Eesa to be able to call himself Pakistani, noting that some British Pakistanis will not. Though there appears to be some apprehensions about what Eesa should and will learn, the overwhelming sense is that the family is excited and that the dual cultural upbringing that he will enjoy will be advantageous. As Fakhia's father says: 'Good habits can be adopted from there [...] and the good habits from here should be adopted.'

Omer has a strong relationship with Pakistan: it's where his roots are, and he still has family there. As he says 'We can't forget where we are from'. However, he is also keenly aware of, and attached to, his family's pre-Partition heritage. His grandfather emphasises the family's Indian, Rajput heritage: 'We just know that we are a Rajput caste, my granddad is quite strong in that. He always talks about Rajput's and what village we are from in India.' This has clearly had an impact on Omer: Fakhia too is from a Rajput family. Omer clearly grew up with a strong connection to his Pakistani heritage - he used to go regularly to visit relatives. There is no tribalism, however, in his perceptions of India and Pakistan. Perhaps it is because of his awareness that his family originates from what is now India that Omer feels a kinship with the wider Asian community in Glasgow beyond the Pakistani diaspora.

Omer's grandfather's opinions and beliefs are clearly important to him. Reflecting on part of their wedding ceremony where none of Fakhia's family came to the reception because of a Rajput tradition, Omer notes that it didn't have an impact on him because of the respect that they have for their elders, particularly his grandfather Rana Asim: 'What he says

'I consider myself a bit of both, Pakistani and Scottish.'
-Omer Hussain

goes, it doesn't matter if he is right or wrong'. Meanwhile, Fakhia, who grew up in Pakistan, says 'I think such traditions are quite pointless. I don't see a point to them'. The couple clearly demonstrate the constant dialogue between host country, 'kin' country and the diaspora community itself. Their identity as individuals, as a couple and as a family is not static but is constantly in flux. Indeed, Rana, Omer and Fakhia all have different narratives of migration and they carry that legacy with them in different ways. How Eesa chooses to engage with that legacy will ultimately be up to him.

Bashir Maan and Mehrunissa Maan

Mehrunissa Maan is a software developer who lives in Glasgow with her husband and two children. Her family's ancestral village, where her grandfather Bashir Maan originates from, is in Gujranwala, Pakistan. Bashir was the first brown councillor in the UK. Mehrunissa and her grandfather are close, as she has lived with him since she was 15. During her adolescence, her grandfather was convenor of the Strathclyde joint police board, President of the Muslim Council of Britain and held numerous other important positions. They do not speak about Partition - she reflects that it is something he only talks about when it is required.

Bashir Maan grew up in Pakistan, where he says he was the only Muslim student in his area to complete Matric. His father was self-taught, and instilled in Bashir a strong respect for education. Before partition, Bashir

reflects that the Muslim majority population were landowners, whilst the Hindu and Sikh population were labourers and traders. At Partition, he says, the military came and took away the Hindu and Sikh families. He remembers that the Indian military came and those who were leaving tied bundles around themselves, and were told they could only take one bundle per person. After this, people started trying to steal some of the things left behind. Bashir coordinated a team who put everything left behind in bags and stored it in temples. When the immigrants from India arrived, these things were distributed to them; Bashir was involved in allocating houses to the refugees from India and in distributing supplies to them.

Bashir remembers going to Faisalabad, then called Lalipur, with his cousin. When they returned to his car, there were dead bodies in it and when the train arrived from India it was full of blood. Bashir was very emotional, and told his cousin he wanted to kill the Hindus in their village, but his cousin calmed him down. When he returned to his village, everyone was scared and hugged him- he promptly forgot his plan to kill them.

Bashir worked with the Muslim Students' League or the Muslim Student Union. When Jinnah came to visit, it was this organisation that hosted his reception. He also canvassed for the election, travelling to many different villages to encourage people to vote for the Muslim League. He credits the students with ensuring that the Muslim League won the vote.

His first job was in 1948 as a demographer supervisor. He persuaded his younger brother to enlist in the Pakistani Navy. His brother was then selected for training in the UK, and when he returned two or three year later he told Bashir that there were a lot of people 'like them' there doing different jobs- prompting Bashir's decision to move to the UK.

'We have never really spoken about Partition times...He only talks if it is needed.'

- Mehrunissa Maan

‘We didn’t feel in control or independent. We felt that we were being subjected by another nation, by foreigners who were ruling us.’ -

Bashir Maan

Bashir became a magistrate of the city of Glasgow 23 years after Partition. He remembered the feelings of being governed by the British and how he and others were intimidated by, and deferential to, British men in their uniforms. When he became a magistrate, he found people reacted to him in the same way, which made him feel proud of his achievements. He believes that at the time of Partition many people in villages were not aware of the situation, and did not realise that the foreigners were from a different nation and were looting Pakistan to enrich the UK. He thinks that things would perhaps have been different if more people had been truly aware of the situation.

When he came to England for the first time, he says that his primary focus was on establishing himself and making sure he was not dependent on anyone. Only after that could he consider doing things that were voluntary or community driven. He found that most Pakistanis in Glasgow at that time were illiterate - he therefore took responsibility for their well-being, building on his experience of helping Indian refugees to settle in Pakistan. In order to do this, he got to know local politicians. These friends and

acquaintances ultimately encouraged him to run for office- so that his community could achieve all its goals and defend its rights in the UK. He was apprehensive, but received support from people beyond his community and was ultimately successful - he notes that he very much admires the ability of Scottish people to support him despite their different backgrounds. Bashir later ran for Parliament but was unsuccessful. However, as one of his friends put it, he was the first drop of rain of the monsoon season - the first one to break what had previously appeared to be unbreakable barriers for Muslims in the UK.

Bashir highlights how his experience helping Indian refugees settle in Pakistan following

‘Time is the biggest healer, always is the biggest healer. The time has healed all those wounds which were so obvious and so painful at the time of Partition...Second generation might understand a little bit, but the third generation they don’t know anything about it.’

-Bashir Maan

partition made him well placed to help Pakistanis who arrived in the UK. Nevertheless, he is careful to highlight the differences between forced migration and migration by choice - those who came from India to Pakistan were less prepared, and came empty-handed. In Glasgow, there were very different

‘From Scottish culture what should we learn? I think their internationality, their regard for everyone whoever it is. Scottish identity is to be an honest and responsibility citizen in a society

-Bashir Maan

'I came to politics by helping my community.' -*Bashir Maan*

challenges. People had difficulty getting jobs as there was racial discrimination and they did not speak very much English. Bashir, like many others, took inspiration from a previous wave of migrants and became a door-to-door salesperson. By creating their own jobs, Bashir says that Pakistani migrants made enough money to pursue other ventures and became one of the most successful Pakistani communities in the UK. The community's unique history allowed them to make a significant contribution to the UK, and they continue to do so through Mehrunissa's generation.

Bashir Maan founded a girls' school in his old village - he says there are now thousands of girls completing Matric there. He wanted to give back to his village.

Mubeen Qureshi, Fahim Qureshi and Hira Syed

Fahim Qureshi, his wife Hira and their three children live in Luton where Fahim is the Head of Arts and Cultural Programmes at Luton Culture. He organised a number of events in Luton to commemorate the 70th year of Pakistani independence. His father, Mubeen, lives in Karachi. He migrated from India to Pakistan as a boy and moved to the UK at a later date. He recently returned to Karachi. Mubeen has worked as a journalist and a social worker.

In 1947, Mubeen Qureshi was a young man working as a Junior Clerk in a British Government Office in Delhi and participating in 'Quit India' protest. At the time of partition, his family left Delhi for Pakistan. He followed them soon after. In the late 1950s, just over a decade after the violence surrounding

Partition, he moved to the UK with his wife where their son, Fahim, was born.

Fahim grew up in Yorkshire and Luton. He remembers being the only non-white child in his primary school: his parents had arrived in the UK at a time when most Pakistani immigrants were single men who left their families behind. Growing up, he felt he led a double life: he was Pakistani at home, but he concealed his heritage at school and with friends. He felt that his teachers and his peers were unable to understand him. Fitting in was a priority.

Fahim recalls feeling a lot of animosity towards his family and himself at a young age - attitudes that affected his self-esteem and sense of worth as a child. Neighbours complained about the smell of the curry his parents cooked and he heard stories about the 'Paki-bashing' that skinhead gangs were renowned for in the 1970s. He developed an understanding of racism at a young age, and as a teenager was very active in anti-racist movements. He wondered why his family did not return to Pakistan where he felt they would be safer.

At the same time, Fahim was very much in touch with his Pakistani heritage. He recalls

'It's quite a complex legacy in that partition itself had a traumatising effect on our parents and their parents, and that has had an influence on us growing up in the UK. Our parents have brought their partition stories with them and have relayed them to us and it has had an impact.'

-Fahim Qureshi

‘Why don’t we go back to Pakistan?’ - Fahim Qureshi

events such as the war between East and West Pakistan, that led to the independence of Bangladesh, and the East Pakistan cyclone. He says that his main exposure to Pakistan, however, came through food and culture. Fahim grew up listening to his father’s music- he remembers listening to *Lal Shahbaz Qalandar*, and even now he can describe its distinctive green vinyl. It was from this continued exposure to Pakistani music that Fahim developed a love of Qawwali, a form of Sufi devotional music. Over the last 30 years, he has worked with a wide range of major Pakistani artists.

Fahim reflects that over the years, the numbers of Asians living in the UK has increased - and Qawwali music has played a central role in providing the Pakistani diaspora and the wider Asian diaspora a shared artistic space in which they can celebrate their culture and heritage. At the time, they were not referred to as British-Muslims, but as British Pakistanis. He feels that for all South Asian immigrants to the UK, culture provided an important tool for integrating and sharing ideas. Today, Fahim is saddened by the divisions that have been created between South Asian groups commenting that ‘there are more things that unite people than divide them... language, food, culture, style of dress, style of housing...’.

A more recent arrival in the UK is Fahim’s wife Hira. The couple’s marriage was arranged through family connections and they were

‘Maybe a new group of young people will find cultural reference points through music.’ - Fahim Qureshi

married during one of Fahim’s visits to Pakistan. She remembers her arrival in the UK as a difficult time - the weather was damp and cold. She describes it as ‘bitter and sweet at the same time’. She also struggled to adapt to the food. Overall, however, they feel that the larger Asian community and their ability to buy products from Pakistan means that they have not faced the same challenges as Fahim’s parents did when they arrived in the UK.

Hira also grew up hearing stories of Partition. Her grandfather’s family were closely connected to the local Maharajahs, and were warned that they would be attacked imminently. They had only half an hour to escape, and were very lucky that the train they took did not end up being stopped. Fahim notes that Partition had an important impact on the psyche and culture of Pakistan and members of the Pakistani diaspora- he feels

‘Happy, bitter and sweet... all at the same time.’ - Hira Syed

Pakistanis were separated from something and still feel a lack of permanence and stability. He describes how, growing up in the West, he feels he was exposed to a wider variety of perspectives, and therefore his views on Partition differ from those of his relatives who grew up in Pakistan. He is interested in travelling to India, visiting his ancestral home and learning more about Hindustani heritage. He feels that this would be a way to complete his cultural understanding and would provide him with a piece that has been missing. Hira, having grown up in Pakistan, does not share his desire to visit India - revealing that she prefers to spend their money returning to visit friends and family in Pakistan.

Fahim has some concerns about his children and the environment they are growing up in. Religious divisions have become more

‘Being British-Pakistani means drawing the best of both cultures’ - Fahim Qureshi

pronounced in recent years, which makes Fahim uneasy. The couple make a conscious effort to expose their children to Pakistani culture and traditions. Fahim notes that there is currently a revival in Qawwali music in the UK, and he is hopeful that this will in turn allow young people to reconnect with their heritage and increase their self-knowledge and understanding. Through his work, Fahim is also able to encourage a wider audience to attend and enjoy Pakistani cultural events.

Fahim and Hira’s story clearly illustrates the role that intangible cultural heritage can play in enabling an individual to develop a clear understanding of themselves and where they come from. Culture is a powerful tool that can break down the barriers between different diaspora groups, and between diaspora and host communities. The diverse audience at the Qawwali concert that Fahim hosts is testament to this; individuals from very different backgrounds coming together to listen and enjoy. Both the UK and Pakistan benefit from a collaborative and understanding relationship between the two countries- exposure to new ideas and art forms does not have to weaken the bond you feel with your own heritage - such experiences can even make these links stronger, deeper and more complex.

Fahim’s father Mubeen, now in his 80s, recently chose to move back to Karachi, although he still spends quite a lot of time in the UK. After Fahim’s mother passed away in 2006, he remarried and his new wife was unable to come to the UK. He also wanted to

be with his siblings who he had left behind in the 1950s. The process of migration is not a one-way journey, but an ongoing conversation with present, past and future generations.

‘It has come full circle.’
- Fahim Qureshi

CONCLUSION

The family narratives bring to life many of the dynamics and tensions discussed in the literature. Particularly through the narratives of Omer Hussain and Fahim Qureshi, the complex process of identity formation is clear- the sense of balancing different influences and incorporating aspects of two or more cultures. Their lives and their families' lives appear to have been enriched by this process- they have recognised the possible challenges in their unique circumstances and transformed these challenges into opportunities. The Hussain and Qureshi families also emphasise the shared Asian identity referenced in the literature, and the wider community that developed in the UK. Fahim describes how recent political and sociological shifts have challenged this shared identity. The girls' school that Bashir Maan has established in his hometown is also a clear example of the diaspora continuing to exert influence in Pakistan, and maintaining a positive social and political role. The impact of Partition is the common thread through all these narratives, though in each case it is expressed differently. What is clear is the complicated and multifaceted inheritance - and that Partition is a legacy that extends far beyond the borders of 1947. Geographical distance enabled some families to broach painful conversations, and in other cases has simply made it easier for families keep their silence on challenging topics. Nevertheless,

underpinning all of these narratives is a clear understanding of the struggles that family members and ancestors had to endure, and consequently a deep appreciation for the lives that they and their families have been able to build in the UK.

The value and extent of the contributions of diaspora communities to the UK is clear. From diaspora populations, the UK gains community activists and political representatives such as Bashir Maan, entrepreneurs such as Rana Asim, cultural leaders and innovators such as Fahim Qureshi and sportsmen such as Omer Hussein. The curry that the Qureshi family's neighbours once complained about is now, as Fahim points out, one of the most popular dishes in the UK, and Pakistani cultural events are attracting ever more diverse audiences. Multiculturalism enhances British society, and boosts economic growth. As the UK embarks on the complicated process of coming to terms with its history and legacy around the world, diaspora communities can put a human face on history and further our understanding of global dynamics and international relations.

The British Council is in a unique position to facilitate and encourage these difficult conversations. With offices in over 100 countries including many former British colonies, the British Council has broad

international networks and an opportunity to convene events that cultivate a space for open and transparent dialogue and encourage open-mindedness. Such events are arguably particularly beneficial and important in the UK, at a time when society is deeply divided. Through existing programmes that encourage social engagement, innovation, education and collaboration, the British Council can demonstrate the value of diversity and understanding. By developing and deepening relationships with diaspora communities, the British Council can encourage understanding and improve cultural relations. In the case of Pakistan, this is already underway through the Diaspora Leadership Training Programmes. In the pursuit of this goal, the Arts team also offer tantalising opportunities; the role that the arts can play in encouraging communication, collaboration and mutual understanding has been brought sharply into focus through the findings of this report. Given the cultural contributions of the South Asian diaspora to the UK, this is undoubtedly an area where further work could be considered and pursued.

It is also imperative that diaspora communities feel valued and supported- that their contributions are recognised. As well as engaging with the diaspora and their diverse experiences to encourage understanding and community development in the UK, there is an opportunity for the British Council to recognise the role that the diaspora can play in inspiring improved relationships overseas. The Pakistani diaspora exist at the nexus of the relationships between the UK and Pakistan, and they play an important role in Pakistan in a myriad of ways. Their nuanced understanding of the UK and continued relationship in Pakistan can play an invaluable role in improving friendly knowledge and understanding between the two countries.

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