


My Memories of August 15, 1947 in Delhi

Jayant S. Kalotra, a Sikh, now 67 years old, is a chartered and cost and management accountant. After working for nearly twenty years in India, he migrated to the U.S., where he founded an international strategic consulting firm located in a suburb of Washington, D.C. He is a survivor of six types of primary cancers, with the grace of Wahiguru Ji and as a result of excellent medical support.

 was a little more than seven years old on August 15th, 1947. At that time, my family lived in Daryaganj in Delhi. My memory of India's Independence Day is of sheer euphoria. I remember a feeling of great joy. Even at that age, I could sense that some very important event was taking place.

I remember walking with my family and neighbours to the grounds of *Lal Kila* (Red Fort), a fifteen minute walk just before midnight on 14th August to hear Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru address the nation. I found it difficult to keep pace with our group of eleven as they seemed to be floating not walking. All of us were talking and laughing at the same time. I remember hearing of freedom, Ram Raj and how ancient Indian glory will be restored. All around us I could feel sheer elation as our group was jostled by an increasingly larger numbers of almost raucous crowds. Our group sat down on grass nearly 1,000 yards from the rampart where we could see and hear Pandit Ji.

We were a group of free Indians, not Hindus and Sikhs. I remember Pandit Ji speaking with emotion and unfurling the Indian tricolour. I saw the last time the British Union Jack being lowered at *Lal Kila* with thousands of Indian citizens rejoicing all around me. Pandit Ji was cheered almost every two minutes with repeated slogans of *Hindustan Zindabad* (Long live Hindustan).

We all stood at attention on the rendering of Indian National Anthem. I shared with my family and friends the pride of being a free Indian as if I had single-handedly won freedom for all of us. Once the celebrations were over, I almost fell asleep on the walk back in spite of loud slogans ringing in my ears.

Just a few days later, our family began to suffer because we were Sikhs.

Editor's note: Read about this in My Memories of Delhi, 1947-48.

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