

My Memories

Preface:

Since Ba passed away, back in July 2011, I get asked, often, about our past family history. I am asked to write down, what I remember. Writing is not my strong point. In my young days, I loved to write - but in Gujarati. I never mastered this art in English medium.

Now as I start to write this, in July 2014, I realize that I am nearly 72 years old. I can count number active years left on fingers of one hand - if lucky, 2 hands. It is going to be a toss-up between me going first or my memory going.

So I am hoping this is going to be therapeutic for me - trying to remember past events, buried deep inside my memory.

Before I start, I must express my sincere thanks to my young brother, Kamlesh, without his nudging I would not have started this project.

I guess this is going to be very clinical and boring chronological account.

It is surprising how little time I have spent with my parents and siblings.

To help me in working out how much time I have spent with parents and my siblings, I list some markers in my timeline.

So here goes.

Let me list, chronologically, my early years.

- First 10 years - 1942 to 1952 - Born in Mukalla. At some stage we moved to Aden.
- In late 1951 or early 1952, Bapuji ([Jatubapuji](#)) came to Aden as he got appointed as the Principal of the new Gujarati School. It was probably in 1952, the school got relocated in the new building.
- In 1952, Ba, Veenaben, Jyotika, Dinesh, Jayshree, Bapuji, Jitukaka, Kantakaki, Savita Faiba and I (except Bhai) went to Gondal, India, travelling in a smallish boat (900 tons), to attend the marriages of Jitukaka, Ushaben & Padmaben and Janoi for Rajubhai and me.
- 1952 - After the marriages, Bapuji, Motaba, Madhuben, Rajubhai and Pankajbhai, Jitukaka and Pushpakaki returned to Aden.
- 1953: Bapuji and Motaba returned to Gondal with a new baby, Raseshbhai. Ba returned to Aden with Bhai, Jyotika, Dinesh and Jayshree. I started local school in Bhojrajapura, in 3rd form.
- Bapuji got a teaching position at a boarding school, Choki, Sorath, near Junagadh. So I was enrolled in that school and Bapuji and I stayed in the staff accommodation for a while. Very soon after our move, Bapuji got himself a teaching position in Gondal, teaching in girls (Garasia boarding?) school. I was enrolled into the boarding school to finish my year in Choki Sorath, and Bapuji left for Gondal.

- In about 1955, Bhai and Ba were in Gondal, for their vacation. Bhai got himself a bike to get around. So I had a bike when Bhai returned to Aden. I was also given a fixed lens box camera.
- 1954 to 1957 was very confusing time for this growing-up teenager. Normal life became boring and in attempting to find my way, I got into all sorts of trouble - Bapuji decided he could not handle me
- In 1957, on Bhai's visit to Gondal, it was decided that Bapuji had enough of me and so I was enrolled in a boarding school, Rajkumar College (RKC) Rajkot, a public school.
- On Bhai's visit in 1958, When bhai left, he gave me his old Rolleiflex, twin lens, camera.
- I think my stay of 3 years' stay at RKC was traumatic. I was thrown into complete different culture. BUT it did change me and my thinking.
- 1960 was my defining year. decisions taken over the next 18 months would change the path my life was to take. It would not only affect my future but, probably, lives of my parents and my siblings. Based on a letter from our family friend, Shahkaka, I decided to quit RKC without completing my final year, in secondary school.
- 1960 was also the year that Veenaben and Madhuben got married in Gondal. After the marriage, I returned to Aden, after 8 years, with Bhai, Ba, Dinesh and Kamlesh. Jyotika and Jayshree went back to Gurukul in Porbandar.
- I got enrolled in Aden College, Aden to re-do the final year in Secondary school and prepare for GCE - (O' Level). As there was no further education after GCE O'level, I quite liked the idea of going to US for further studies.
- Then I met one of bhai's friends, Surendrabhai Palana. We discussed Studying in Europe and US. In one of our chats, he asked me how I was going to finance my studies. I must admit I had not thought about this. He then told me that one could study in UK, part-time by working and then doing day-release, evening classes. "If you do that", he said, "your parents will not have to fund your education. Would you like me to speak to Bhai?" That chat defined my future.
- So in August 1961, with 4 contact addresses and £25 in my pocket, I boarded a plane which took me and 6 other class / college mates, to Djibouti. From Djibouti, we boarded a ship which took us to Genova. A short walk, with our luggage, took us to the railway station. Here we boarded a train for Paris and then to Calais - a ferry to Dover and then train to Kings Cross. Taxi ride took me to Mahendrabhai and Vasantiben Palana's digs in Belsize Park..
- 2 days of sightseeing with Vasantiben's brother and then train to Keighley. My 2nd contact number for Mr and Mrs Duffey with whom I was hoping to board. A taxi ride brought me to a dilapidated wooden house. I was received warmly and reassured

that they were being rehoused, the next weekend. So the next weekend I settled in my room at 14, Woodhouse Walk.