

Vitasta Annual Number

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"SABHAS, SAMAJ AND SAMELLAN - A MANTRA FOR KASHMIRI PANDIT SOLIDARITY"



Sabha



Samaj



Samellan

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THEME : *Sabhias, Samaj and Samellan — A Mantra for Kashmiri Pandit Solidarity*

Editor-in-Chief : DR. B. K. MOZA

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PREFACE

(It is a great pleasure and privilege to present the XXXVII th, 2005-2006, Annual Number of the Vitasta.) It being the Golden Jubilee year of Kashmir Sabha, Calcutta this publication was intended to be brought out at the beginning of the celebrations around Navreh, 2006, as the Golden Jubilee Number. (The theme of this Number was, as such determined appropriately, as:)

"SABHAS, SAMAJ AND SAMELLAN – A MANTRA FOR KASHMIRI PANDIT SOLIDARITY"

(Accordingly, articles were invited and the preamble to the theme of this proposed publication got published, with thanks, in various community journals in our country and abroad to achieve a wide response in respect of the material that was to shape its contents. For unavoidable and unforeseen reasons this publication had to be postponed and the articles received were preserved for the opportunity to materialize for their publication at a later date. (The response also was not, to begin with, very encouraging and focused on the theme.) This was very disheartening; in a way a frustrating revelation. However, with the decision of Kashmir Sabha hosting the AIKS Samellan in Kolkata, on the 24th and 25th December 06, the urgency for releasing the Golden Jubilee Number on this occasion became a natural corollary and my involvement in bringing it out became inevitable though I had retired from this responsibility some years back. As a first step, it was necessary to send reminders about the theme-focused articles and also requesting those, who had already sent these, for updation as in between almost a year had passed by. It was great some authors did update the matter yet some did not and this time gap is apparent in some of the articles presented herein. Since most of the articles were earlier received through computer, there were inadvertent problems in retaining some of these over this period and despite requests, the copies did not become again available from all. My heartfelt apologies are due for having misplaced two valuable articles in the process. With all efforts and no stone, however, having been left unturned, in procuring the material, as desired, it was gratifying to receive, at the last stage, a reasonably good response. I wish the details of many more organizations had become available. Yet, the satisfaction is that this publication covers the historical accounts of the pillars of the structure of

our Kashmiri Pandit Organizations, in its widespread Diaspora. The objective was to draw the history of our social geography in our Diaspora and provide a bird's eye view of the role our Sabhas are playing, in preserving our identity of all sorts, in different corners of our country and abroad. The objective was also to reveal the Common Agenda being faced and followed by our Sabhas in different places. In the process what became evident and explicit is that there is a need felt commonly, for a federating organization, Samaj, to coordinate our Minimum Common Agenda for preserving our all forms of identities. Oxford dictionary explains "Mantra" as, instrument of thought. The misconception of it being, as if, a jargon for priestly deliberations had to be removed and the simple fact established, that for our survival and preservation of our Kashmiri Pandit identity, as the end, the viable means to achieving this objective is the solidarity of our Sabhas. And for this the instrument of thought is brainstorming of our issues, differences and dissensions in our collective Samellans.

It suffices to say that a good beginning has been made, in this publication in respect of these objectives. (It is not a complete document, yet it is a model effort at preserving our community identity at different centres in the Diaspora, through our Sabhas, and for documenting our strengths and weaknesses as these obtain from time to time. This has to be followed up, to achieve further improvements and fulfill the lacunas, for preserving our present histories for generations to come. Some of the earlier Vitasta Numbers have opened the vistas, in broad-basing our knowledge pool about our heritage and our background of excellence. This Number, hopefully, may further initiate this necessary trend for our future generations so that our traditions and traits of excellence get passed on from generation to generation. This is a great objective to be achieved and this publication is a small step in this direction. Still, miles have to be walked to achieve this objective.)

(Kashmir Sabha, Calcutta has been, right from the beginning, very thoughtful about its role as a local guardian for the welfare of its members and for preserving our cultural identity locally. Maintaining its links with the roots in Kashmir and with different Sabhas, set up at different places) with the same

objectives, emerged as an operational need for achieving the broader objectives mentioned above. It played a vital role in recognizing the concept of a federating organization for coordinating the common agenda facing the local organizations, call them by any name, herein referred to as, the Sabhas. In 1980, All India Kashmiri Samaj (AIKS) was formed in Allahabad, with the objective of forming the desired federating organization and in December 1980, the second meeting of AIKS was held in Calcutta to frame the Constitution of this federating organization. In Jodhpur Session, held in 1982, the role of Sabhas vis-a-vis the role of Samaj was duly discussed and the demarcating limits identified, as detailed in a paper, "Sabha, Samaj and Samellan" presented from Calcutta Sabha. This view point was well received and published then, besides in the Vitasta and other community journals, in the Martand of Srinagar, also.

Since then many more Sabhas have got formed. The unexpected and unfortunate distress caused by the internal displacement of Kashmiri Pandits and their exodus from their homeland and they being up-rooted from their ancestral hearths and homes in Kashmir have changed the scenario. Therefore the safety, rehabilitation and return of the displaced Kashmiri Pandits have become vital questions for the Sabhas. The need for a relationship, horizontal amongst the Sabhas, and vertical with the federating organization, AIKS, as the Samaj have become, therefore, more intense. This circumstance also caused a shift in the objectives of the Sabhas and those of their federating Samaj, from an absolutely socio-cultural to also a political one from 1990 and this was duly recognized by AIKS in 1991 Jaipur declaration. Kashmir Sabha has duly continued to provide the desired emphasis on this need over the intervening period and is ever alive to the changing roles of our organizations. With this in view it has once again hosted the Samellan of AIKS, to celebrate its Golden Jubilee, in brainstorming our present problems, their perspective and Common Agenda with a view to strengthen our AIKS in playing its leadership role, as an Apex Body.

In this publication, Kashmir Sabha, has made a solemn attempt at presenting the total subject in three sections mentioned below. It requires to be noted that all the articles detailed herein are valuable and their placement and positioning in a particular section is based on the proximity they have with the message each section is providing. A little overlapping is unavoidable in such a presentation but it requires to be emphasized that each article has a distinct message to convey. The Sections are as follows :

- I SAMAJ (AIKS) : For coördinating Sabhas for Minimum Common Programme with Apex Body leadership and No margins for error.
- II SABHAS : For Promoting Welfare, Preserving Identities and implementing Minimum Common Programme, at local levels In Global Diaspora.
- III SAMELLAN : For Brainstorming Minimum Common Programme, Performance and Emerging Agenda, At a Common Platform.

In Section I devoted to the development of AIKS the article by the present President, Shri M. K. Kaw, covers the performance of AIKS as achieved presently, with a historical backdrop. The article by Dr. N. L. Zutshi, a previous President, presents a "New Look" perception keeping the performance AIKS has made during its existence of twenty five years, giving various valuable suggestions, particularly "need based concept", to be brainstormed in the Samellan to be held in the coming session. It was considered necessary to include the previous Presidential addresses particularly by its first President Justice P. N. Bakshi to provide for ready reference the essential ingredients that went in to the making of AIKS at that time. Except the political objective that has now been added to AIKS, an in-depth analysis should reveal how much more has been achieved in respect of the basic perceptions. What was very striking in this address was the emphasis in not shying away our community interest, as communal. The address given by Mr. D. N. Munshi, explains the need of AIKS adopting the political agenda due to the en-masse, internal displacement of our community from its homeland and the need for the representation of Kashmiri Pandits in any dialogue that is to decide the future of Kashmir at any level. Besides, it covers the performance made by AIKS in its first decade of existence. The article by Dr. B. K. Moza, an ex-Vice President of AIKS, covers twenty years of AIKS' performance and lays emphasis on the amendments to the Constitution of AIKS that were felt necessary at that stage. Though changes have been made in the Constitution of AIKS still it is shying away from identifying AIKS in clear terms as the Organisation of Kashmiri Pandits and this dichotomy requires, being set right as is evident in AIKS

declaration on National Policy. It also refers to and emphasizes on the Sabhas, Samaj and Samellan perception which was discussed in 1982 at Jodhpur to determine the limits of a local Sabha from that of a federating Samaj which is still relevant keeping the overlapping attitudes of some Sabhas with the functions of Samaj or vice versa. This perception being still debated, therefore, forms the theme of this Vitasta Number. The article by Prof Sadhu is important as it points to the unresolved question of AIKS Trust which, as happens to be with all Trusts, is independent in approach, yet it belongs to AIKS and responsible for the execution of the objectives for which AIKS had formed it. The coordination between the two is to be perfected to ensure these are the two arms of the same organization. There was another article received, almost a year back, from Prof. Sadhu, exclusively on this topic. This, however, required to be updated to the present understanding of the changes made recently in AIKS Trust structure but these did not become available. Prof Shah's article provides a lot of thought on all these issues towards the formation of AIKS and its responsibilities. Though all the articles in this section are touching on the history of AIKS, it was considered necessary to request Mr Vijay Saqi to give a brief and comprehensive update on the history of AIKS, as compiled by Mr. L. C. Kaul, to detail the role AIKS has played in last few years.

The Section II (comprising twenty articles provides valuable information about the brief historical backgrounds and achievements of our twelve affiliates of AIKS which have been role models in many respects. These are the majestic "Chinars" which determine the important land marks in the landscape of Kashmiri Pandit diaspora. Eleven of these affiliates have their Kashmir Bhawans and their official organs. Kashmiri Over-Seas Association (KOA) organizes a Camp every year for three days to provide an opportunity for our brethren in USA to have a get-together with their families at one place, as if in a Kashmir Bhawan. It is an occasion for our ladies and particularly children in American Diaspora to get-together and be acquainted with our cultural traits and related issues. An annual "Hawan" is celebrated at all the centres besides observance of other festivals and common agenda to preserve our cultural identity. These descriptions reveal what role individuals have played in creating, selflessly, the structures of our togetherness thus providing the other side of the general belief that we are individualistic. It is a fact our distress has been too harsh and individuals are becoming impatient in

seeing results about our rehabilitation or other goals that are dear to them and thus disagreements emerge which result in forming other outfits, which is natural to an open society in a democratic set up; yet very much harmful to the basic cause. As often said there is a mushroom growth of Kashmiri Pandit organizations in Delhi and Jammu regions. If these have a specialized role and represent a sizable number at a particular location, these are welcome, but if these are parallel bodies then it is not in the interest of our community health and welfare. Kashmiri Samiti Delhi is one of the oldest, respected and well established organizations of our community. But, it is a nodal body for Delhi with enough opportunities to serve our suffering community in this state which has probably the largest population of Kashmiri Pandit youth. Being in the capital of the country it has a special role to play for the community at large but it has to perform, in tandem, with AIKS which is our Apex Body. The differences between the two have to be resolved and both have well-identified areas of action. In fact the two have to go together in achieving the community goals in the best interests of the community at large, keeping the Sabha-Samaj relationship as sacred as it is for other nodal affiliates in other states of the country.

The Section III is discussing the role of Samellans as a platform for our brainstorming the political, cultural and social agenda. Since our AIKS has filed a petition in the Supreme Court for our pending issues of not having been recognized as an internally displaced community in distress, this agenda is special to us from political point of view. It requires absolute solidarity from all the affiliates of AIKS from all angles. From cultural angle preserving our mother tongue is a paramount agenda. Very akin to this is preserving our Kashmiri literature. Streamlined, Devnagri script for Kashmiri language, as another script besides Nastalik, is now a welcome reality and in practice for our literary pursuits. Its recognition by the Government of India, to include it in the Constitution of India, is a very important agenda. That all journals and authors are not using this script uniformly is against the interest of our community welfare. Samellan has to discuss measures to ensure that all adopt this script uniformly and remove, if there is still any, difficulties in its computerized application and usage. Preservation of our Pilgrim centres (Asthapans), in Kashmir particularly in the rural areas and revival of Pilgrimage to Sharda shrine in POK do form our important agenda from Socio-Cultural point of view. Dowry and divorces at increasing rate require an in-depth analysis and this

has to be brainstormed as our Social agenda. (What is necessary is to ensure that what we resolve is duly implemented at the grass roots and at ground level.)

(Sabhas have been our ancient tradition even before, Christian era, started. These represented "Councils of Advisors" in different fields. It amounts to misconception that Kashmiri Pandits were originally priests; they are Brahmins no doubt. It is a long journey of six thousand years from Saraswats to Kashmiri Pandits and this requires to be considered when we wish to dwell on our social history and the related facts about ourselves.)

(The cover page is adorned with a photo, representing a symbolic Sabha, which is in reality the meeting, the great Swami Vivekananda had, with a Sabha of Kashmiri Pandits in Tullamulla in 1897. Sabhas have been very vital engines of our social change in our millennia old existence in Kashmir. All the relevant papers published in this Golden Jubilee (Number and the earlier Numbers) reveal that Shri Kashyap Bandhuji played a memorable leadership role in the recent history of Kashmiri Pandits. Earlier we have brought out a Kashyap Bandhu Number dedicated to his memory and to the reformation movements in Kashmir. A letter from Bandhuji addressed to Calcutta biradari is also reproduced in this issue. His photo is included on the cover page representing symbolically the leadership role of our Samaj, as an Apex Body, with one leader and one voice at a particular juncture. (The heritage preservation activities and brainstorms in a Kashmir Bhawan do provide a symbolic representation to our Samellans. All these three elements of our solidarity are, therefore, depicted on the cover page of this publication having this theme and objective to ensure preservation of our Kashmiri Pandit identities, political, social and cultural in our wide spread Diaspora.)

(Last but not the least, I express my profuse acknowledgements of gratitude, I owe personally to the authors of this publication. I have no words to express the cooperation I received from various Sabhas, though at a later stage, and am personally indebted to Shri Triloki Nath Khosa, Padam Shri, Pt. J. N. Kaul, Pt. Maharaj Krishen Kaw, Shri A. K. Kaul, Pt. Triloki Nath Dhar "Kundan", and others for the valuable advice and help they extended from time to time in making this dream realized. Prof. Pandita,

thankfully, communicated a valuable article when he was in the midst of mourning a family tragedy. (I am thankful to Kashmir Sabha, Calcutta for its encouragement and making finances available to bring out this publication and to my colleagues particularly Mr. Vinod Dhar and Mr. Jolly Mohan Kaul whose optimism was a tonic for my keeping the spirits up whilst preparing for this publication.) It requires to be mentioned that this publication is incomplete as it has not, very regretfully, the Sections on Hindi and Kashmiri. The serious health, break down of Mrs. Niva Kaul, was the primary reason and secondly the articles received were not up to the theme and also alone it would have been an uphill task, for me to bring out this composite publication with time-bound release. It is surprising that our stalwarts who are at the back of this Kolkata Samellan, as its Organising Committee, have not been able to take a joint photograph to be presented in this Publication. Nor have they given their individual photographs as has also been the case with our AIKS office bearers. I am hopeful, Kashmir Sabha will bring out the 2006-2007 publication of the Vitasta, by Navreh, as a supplement of this publication which will have the Devnagri material and the photographs of our Samellan, its organizers and those related to AIKS, to commemorate the Golden Jubilee Samellan of Kashmir Sabha and AIKS, being held on 24th-26th December, 2006. This lacuna has to be attended to and the publication brought out as a complete one, in this respect also.

(Whilst soliciting the indulgence for any omissions and commissions that might have, inadvertently, crept in whilst bringing out this publication, I emphasize that the views expressed herein are entirely those of the authors and the Vitasta or Kashmir Sabha, Calcutta does not hold any responsibility for the same.

With these words I wish the Kolkata Samellan a great success in achieving the important agenda it has before it. I also pray that this publication serves, as a Mantra for bringing about the solidarity of our Sabhas behind our Apex Body AIKS to preserve our all identities as Kashmiri Pandits. I wish Kashmir Sabha, Calcutta a memorable Golden Jubilee and many more Jubilees in future to come.

15th December, 2006

Dr. B. K. Moza

FROM THE DESK OF AIKS PRESIDENT

A LABOUR OF LOVE

I am delighted to see that this special number of Vitasta focuses on a critical organisational issue. It examines how best the Diaspora of Kashmiri Pandits should organise themselves in different parts of India and the world, and how they can collaborate with one another to foster unity, brotherhood, prosperity and maintenance of a distinct identity. Dr. B. K. Moza has embarked on this massive project in a spirit of dedication and is engaged in a labour of love. He and the entire organisational team of the Kolkata Sabha deserve our kudos for this effort.

This project comes at a critical juncture, when the community is facing an unprecedented crisis of identity and survival. The Seventh Exodus has led to ethnic cleansing of the Kashmir valley on a scale unparalleled in the history of the world. Barring some 5000 odd souls, the remaining 7 lakh Kashmiri Pandits now stand expelled from their motherland, with no early prospect of return.

At this point in time, it is of utmost importance that the community leadership stays united, speaks in one voice, creates a feeling of optimism among the masses and initiates programmes that lead to self-reliance and mutual help.

All India Kashmiri Samaj has been trying to carry out this task with the utmost sincerity of purpose. We have given a new direction to the community thinking by diverting attention from the past to the present and counseling the masses not to indulge in an orgy of wailing and breast-beating. Last February, we held a Corporate Conclave and our brethren in the business world have shown keen interest in helping every way they can. A National Placement Bureau has been set up in the AIKS and several affiliates and corporate leaders have extended concrete help by providing job opportunities.

The umbrella cover of AIKS has been extended to 61 affiliates and more application are in the pipeline. Consultations are on with all frontline organisations to observe community events together and collaborate on a common minimum agenda. A comprehensive writ petition has been filed by the AIKS in the Supreme Court of India. All the political parties have assured our draft Temple bill full support in the next session of the State Legislative Assembly.

This year AIKS celebrates the Silver Jubilee of its existence, while the Kolkatta Sabha observes its Golden Anniversary. Both are historic events and demonstrate that the community is capable of building stable, dynamic and enduring institutions. Our best wishes to these great organisations and all other Samities, Sabhas, Associations, clubs etc. of Kashmiri Pandits across the globe. May their tribe increase!

M. K. Kaw

From our President's Desk

It is a privilege and indeed an honour for me to have been elected, unanimously, for the second year, as the President of our Sabha which, in the past, has had great luminaries to uphold this responsibility. I, in the first place, take this opportunity to pay my obeisance to them for their contributions in laying a strong foundation of our Sabha.

The focus of our first term was essentially on local priorities. These included holding almost every month get-togethers on festival days to preserve our cultural identity, providing substantial medical help to a deserving Biradari member, provide for health check ups of members at Kashmir Bhawan, Kashmir Bhawan management and related activities. For larger community issues, we continued to provide educational help to a number of deserving students, as recommended by a local organisation in Jammu, providing our humble financial contribution to our AIKS, following its pertinent directives and implementing its programmes as far as possible.

Besides holding our monthly Executive meetings, for monitoring the activities and programmes of our Sabha, we held cultural get-togethers on Navreh/Navroz, Zangtrai, Swami Lakshmanji's birth day, Jesht Ashtami, Sharika Bhagwati Jayanti, Bhagwan Gopinath Jayanti, Janam-Ashtami, Sport's day for children, Gada-batta, Annual Hawan, Kushal Hom, and Shivratri. There was an overwhelming response from our members in sponsoring many of these functions; the remaining having been accomplished by our Sabha. We also had a remarkable musical evening on Navreh when our legendary artist from Jamshedpur, Mrs. Asha Kaul, enthralled us all with her Kashmiri songs, Gazals and Bhajans.

This year being the Golden Jubilee year of our Sabha, we have geared up our loins to host AIKS Samellan and share our joys with the community at large in providing for a meeting ground for the representatives of our Sabhas/Samities and Associations of Kashmiri Pandit diaspora, spread globally, to discuss and brain storm the vital issues that our community is confronted with for its survival in all respects. This is also to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of our Apex Body whose Constitution was adopted twenty five years back in its historical meeting held at Calcutta under the auspices of our Sabha. The Samellan will be held on the 24th and 25th December, 06 and we are looking forward to a great event of AIKS in respect of its meaningful and determining plans and strategies in the interest of our community at large.

On this occasion we are also making all efforts to release the Special Number of the Vitasta on the theme : "Sabhas, Samaj and Samellan – A Mantra for Kashmiri Pandit Solidarity" This publication will be brought out under the guidance of Dr. B. K. Moza, our veteran for this tradition. We are sure this publication will be a bench mark, for its focused and excellent contents, as have been our earlier publications.

We have not been bringing our Annual Numbers regularly, as it used to be some years back, nor have we been able to bring out our monthly/bimonthly Vitasta, the News and Views. Our score in this particular connection has continued to be weak. Our editor for the News and Views, Mrs. Prabha Tankha, has suffered a serious health break and so has our Devnagri expert Mrs. Niva Kaul. We pray to God for their early recovery and hope other stalwarts will volunteer their precious time for this noble community cause.

Ours is a problem of dwindling numbers so far as Sabha's active membership is concerned. Though Kolkata is once again reviving to its glorious past, this trend is not perceptible in respect of our Sabha membership. Two of our very potential Gen. Secretaries, Mr. Ashok Kaul and Mr. Sanjay Kaul, one after another got transferred from Kolkata during my term. We miss them a lot; their involvement and contributions. We, however, wish them all success in their advancing careers and thank them for their dedicated services.

Our Joint Secretary, Mr. Vinod Dhar, Treasurer, Mr. Vikesh Trisal and our ever-ready Rakesh Kaul are extending a yeoman's service along with our other members of the Executive and veterans of the Sabha in making its existence felt. Our Cultural team, with Mrs. Indu Kaul as the Convenor and our veteran Mr. B. M. Misri, as the leader are conspicuous by their excelling presentations. My heartfelt thanks to them, to members of Executive Committee, veterans of our Sabha and the Biradari for the support and encouragement I have received during my tenure. I feel proud of our team spirit and our Sabha.

After the Samellan, we will have our Annual Hawan in January when our new Executive will be in charge. I wish them, a great innings in advance, Good luck and God speed.

V. R. Moza

SECTION-I

SABHAS, SAMAJ AND SAMELLAN – A MANTRA FOR KASHMIRI PANDIT SOLIDARITY

**SAMAJ (AIKS) : FOR COORDINATING SABHAS
FOR MINIMUM COMMON
PROGRAMME, WITH APEX
BODY LEADERSHIP AND
NO MARGINS FOR ERROR**

ALL INDIA KASHMIRI SAMAJ : HUB OF A GLOBAL NETWORK

— By *Maharaj Krishen Kaw, President, AIKS*

This is a good time to take a fresh look at the All India Kashmiri Samaj. Set up around 1980, the organization has completed a quarter century and this is a convenient milestone for assessing its performance.

AIKS is not like India, which had a constitution created due to the historic necessity of providing a legal framework to a newly formed country. It is more like the United States of America, where the thirteen newly liberated territories *suo motu* decided to join together and form a new federation.

Many of the Kashmiri Sabhas are much older than AIKS. Some are even centenarians. It is some of these pre-existent Sabhas, which felt the need for an umbrella organization that would provide a direction to the entire community and an impetus to its various socio-cultural movements. Thus AIKS was not something foisted from above; it was a felt need of the affiliated units.

Initially, AIKS was a social organization. Its main activity was to hold an annual general meeting, which would also be the occasion for a get together for Pandits across the country. During the day, there were speeches. The evenings were spent in a convivial atmosphere and usually ended with a sumptuous dinner hosted by the local Sabha. Discussions generally revolved round the major problems of the Diasporas in those days, namely, the increasing difficulty of getting Kashmiri priests and cooks and the problems of arranging matches within the community.

The turning point came when the Seventh Exodus of the community took place in 1990 and almost 3.5 lakh Pandits fled overnight from the valley towards Jammu, Delhi, Chandigarh and other destinations around the country. Overnight the focus shifted and all KP organizations got involved in tackling this massive tragedy and in helping the community get back on its feet. In the process, many things changed.

First, the basic issue became one of survival. The themes of the conferences changed to when and how members of the community would return to the valley, what the conditions of the refugees were, both in and out of camps, what the Central and State Governments were doing for their relief and rehabilitation, what reservations and concessions members of the community and their wards should be given and so on.

Secondly, the number of refugee Pandits vastly overshadowed the numbers of the earlier Diasporas. Refugee Pandits dominated the scene. Wherever they

found that existing organizations did not fulfil their aspirations in full measure, they set up parallel organizations of their own. In some of the Sabhas they put up their own candidates for the various positions of office-bearers and managed to have several of them elected.

Thirdly, all KP organizations ceased to be merely sociocultural. Although none of them actually declared themselves to be political in character, all of them were forced to take up the issues of survival, which included the matters relating to their political existence too.

Fourthly, some of our local outfits and some of the overseas organizations took up cudgels on behalf of the community with international and United Nations organizations, as also with local Parliamentarians and political leadership. They kept the flag of the community flying in various fora, created Kashmir caucuses, countered disinformation campaigns launched by our enemies and so on.

Fifthly, organizations and individuals took up issues in national fora, with varying degrees of success. The National Commission of Human Rights declared that the Kashmiri Pandits had been subjected to conditions akin to genocide, but not genocide. The National Commission for Minorities recommended to the Central Government that Kashmiri Pandits should be declared as a regional minority in Jammu and Kashmir State, but with little effect. There were several judgments by the J&K High Court and Delhi High Court in favour of Kashmiri Pandits, but the State Government ignored most of these.

Sixthly, there was a wild scramble for creation of new organizations, some of them local, some claiming to represent the State of J&K, and some claiming an all India character. This was especially true of Jammu and Delhi, where scores of such outfits sprang up. This created the impression that the Kashmiri Pandits were a disunited lot and spoke in a dozen discordant voices.

Lastly, there was sporadic talk of floating a separate political party of Kashmiri Pandits, but no one was sure whether such a party would have any future.

As far as the AIKS is concerned, under the dynamic leadership of Brigadier Madan, D.N.Munshi and J.N.Kaul, it performed wonders in the task of relief and rehabilitation and providing leadership to the beleaguered community. There were well-orchestrated campaigns of protest, in which all affiliates around the country participated, delegations waited on the political masters of the moment and

memoranda were submitted. Many important concessions were wrested from the Government.

When we look towards the future, the initiatives that need to be taken by the AIKS can be summarized as follows :

- AIKS should provide an organizational framework that can accommodate different shades of opinion, with a common minimum agenda on which all are agreed. The new constitution on which all are agreed. The new constitution adopted last year has kept a provision for such framework. There can be strong affiliates and there can be weak affiliates. Some organizations can be loose affiliates, with a separate agenda of their own but subscribing to the common minimum agenda of the AIKS.
- We have already held several meetings with the major frontline organizations and there is near unanimity that the AIKS can be a Global Network of Kashmiri Pandit Organizations. Already, AIKS has 52 affiliates and more applications for affiliation are in the pipeline. All the frontline organizations have declared that they consider AIKS to be the apex organization and would follow its lead. Even within Panun Kashmir, there is a movement towards an understanding with AIKS and we are very hopeful about the outcome. Thus the longstanding criticism leveled against the community that it does not have a collective voice would at last be met.
- AIKS has already hammered out the Common Minimum Agenda for the community. This was unanimously adopted by the entire KP leadership in an IIC meeting held in July 2005. This can be further fleshed out as we go along, but the basic draft is already in place.
- As far as the political agenda of the community is concerned this was thrashed out in the Conference held at Bangalore in December 2004. The Bangalore Declaration is a comprehensive document detailing all our political demands and has been unanimously adopted by the community leadership.
- There is an agenda for Social Reform, which was among the earliest to be debated and adopted in our Jammu conclave held in June 2004.
- There is a National Policy on Kashmir, the draft of which was also adopted at the Jammu conclave of June 2004. This provides a comprehensive outline of what the Government policy on Kashmir should be.

- In our latest Conference at Chandigarh held in September 2005, we have outlined a Strategy for Self-reliance which gives a clarion call to the youth to learn to stand on their own feet.
- We have drafted a Bill for the take-over and management of Hindu shrines and properties appurtenant thereto in the valley. The National Conference has already tabled this Bill in the Assembly in its last session. We are optimistic about the outcome.
- We have created a National Placement Bureau in the AIKS, which is manfully trying to adjust unemployed youth in jobs.
- Our next initiative will be a Conclave for Corporate Leaders, so as to enlist their support to the various community programmes.
- We have outlined several new initiatives : a Global Directory of Kashmiri Pandits, living anywhere in the world, a Global Matrimonial Site with online matching of *teknis*, video-conferencing facilities etc to facilitate matrimonial tie-ups within the community and a Global Website hyper linking all KP websites in existence. These initiatives are already in progress at various stages of implementation as a natural process. What is required is a push from the AIKS to ensure that various local Directories are standardized and then collated into a single directory and so on in respect of each of the initiatives.

As we move forward in time, AIKS will become stronger and stronger as a single, united voice of the entire Kashmiri Pandit community. It will have multiple agenda, some for the short-term, some for the medium term and some for the long term. It will have something for everyone, those in the valley, those wanting to return, those not wanting to return, those already settled wherever they are in India and abroad and so on. It will have something to offer the old people, the youth and the children, and something for the womenfolk too.

But for all this to happen, we need a stronger participation from the community. The following points for action emerge, if our dream is to become a reality :

- ✓ We need to build an AIKS World Headquarters in a building of our own, possibly at New Delhi. For this we have to take a plot of land from the DDA and then construct a well-designed building.
- ✓ We need a good mouthpiece for the community. Naad has seen many improvements over the last two years, but it

needs fuller support in terms of subscriptions, articles, advertisements etc.

- ✓ We need funds. Affiliates need to collect funds and pass on a portion to AIKS. We also need fund collection drives directly for the AIKS.
- ✓ There is an AIKS Relief Fund. It should have an annual inflow of a least Rs 1 crore and a similar outflow.
- ✓ There should be possibilities of educational scholarships and medical relief to deserving cases.
- ✓ AIKS should be able to harness the potential for fundraising worldwide and route it through its local affiliates, and generally keep an unobtrusive eye on fund utilization.
- ✓ Above all, there is need for persons of integrity and commitment and total selflessness to man the various positions in the AIKS, so as to provide a cogent, rational and farsighted leadership to the community.

We, who currently look after the affairs in the AIKS, have a vision for the future. But this vision can only be realized if we all share the same vision, have faith in one another and pull together in the same direction. Let us hope that we have the blessing of the Divine in what we are attempting to do.

I call upon all the enlightened members of the community to help us in this noble endeavour.

ONE OBJECTIVE, MANY STRATEGIES

The struggle of our beleaguered community has entered a vital phase. The situation is so complex that there is need for an offensive on many fronts. All India Kashmiri Samaj has operationalised a multi-pronged strategy, the results of which will be visible in the next few weeks.

- ◆ The offensive was initiated with my open letter to the Prime Minister, which was publicised far and wide. The PMO has taken note of the strident tone of our attack on the Govt's policies.
- ◆ We carefully drafted eleven Parliament Questions about the various burning questions facing the community and sent these to fourteen Friends of Kashmir. All the questions were asked.
- ◆ Our draft Bill on takeover of management of Hindu temples in the valley has been tabled in the State Assembly. In written communications to me, both Shri Farooq Abdullah and Smt. Khem Lata Wakhloo

have pledged their support for the Bill during the next session.

- ◆ We have filed a comprehensive writ petition before the Supreme Court of India. This encompasses a wide range of issues facing the community, in matters where we have so far failed to obtain redress from the authorities. We hope that the Court will decisively intervene.

- ◆ We have requested our advocate to obtain a copy of the orders passed by the Court in Bitta Karatey's case, so that we can file a review petition as a supplementary plea in our writ petition.

- ◆ Taking note of the fact that the Indian nation is not sufficiently aware of the overall strategy of terrorists, we decided to start a campaign for national awakening on Martyrs' Day. In an unprecedented show of strength, more than 400 people participated in the rally at Jantar Mantar.

We have also decided to seek the support of sister groups in the country so as to broad base our struggle. Shiv Khara's group has already responded to our call.

- ◆ The next phase of the campaign will move to Kolkatta where we have decided to celebrate the silver jubilee of AIKS, along with the golden jubilee celebrations of Kashmir Sabha at Kolkatta. All affiliates are requested to participate in full strength in the EC/AGM meeting and the Conference on "Kashmiri Pandits : Towards A National Awakening".

- ◆ Shiban Dudha attended an International Conference at Stockholm and was able to bring the problems faced by Kashmiri Pandits to the forefront of the deliberations.

- ◆ The General Secretary also held a meeting at London with Smt. Krishna Bhan, the dynamic President of Indo-European Kashmir Forum and other members. The IEKF wants AIKS to assume its rightful place as a World Congress of Kashmiri Pandits.

- ◆ Nearer home, the Chief Minister of Haryana has positively responded to our suggestions and ordered that relief of Rs. 1000 be paid to each Kashmiri migrant family with effect from 1.4.2006. All officers have been asked to extend the benefit of Govt. schemes to them on the pattern of Punjab and Delhi.

AIKS continues on its onward march with the unstinted support of the entire community and unmindful of a few misguided souls who neither do anything themselves nor like others doing anything. May God show them the light!

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GIVE AIKS A NEW LOOK

— By *Dr. N. L. Zutshi, Ex-President AIKS and KPA, Bombay*

GIVE AIKS A NEW LOOK is appearing in the thirty seventh Annual **VITASTA** under an appropriate title "Sabha, Samaj & Sammelan—A Mantrà for Kashmiri Pandit Solidarity". This Annual coincides with the golden jubilee year of Kashmiri Sabha, Calcutta, an occasion which calls for felicitations, first to Calcutta Sabha, for its Golden Jubilee, second to **VITASTA**, for this Annual which coincides with the Golden Jubilee and third to Dr. Brij Krishen Moza, for editing the prestigious **VITASTA** for all these decades, year after year. Editor Moza has given us a treat — a well researched, thematic and objective publications — all in the service of Kashmiri Pandit (KP) cause. In this process two names have become synonymous, **VITASTA & MOZA**. Wish Moza Sahib to continue doing this good work for years to come.

A word for Calcutta Sabha. While joining the main stream rich Bangla culture, Sabha maintained the distinct purity and identity of KP-culture. Official Organ, **VITASTA**, speaks for itself. Their presentations of cultural events are true to the original; ethnic character is retained and maintained. Craving for ethnic music of one's home country is satisfying as their presentations are not shadowed by the local or filmy influence. Elsewhere presentations tend to become a fashionable six piece orchestra. Preference is given to poetry of Parmanand, Razdan, Zinda Kaul and Nadim among others.

Moza Sahib reminds me that theme of this year's **VITASTA** is based on what we discussed some years back. Was it way back in 80's, as long as I remember, I do not remember, what he said and what I said then, but what I say here, may be different, but then that is the crux of the matter.

Back home, confined as we were to seven bridges of "Kasheer", much of our socialising occurred within that geography. For purposes of collective religious celebrations, or giving vent to our feelings on political issues, or even to here a visiting leader or a dignitary, we would rally at i) Sanathan Dharam Yuvak Sabha at Sheetal Nath Bhavan ii) to respond to our community slogan 'jai-kara-har-har-mahadev' iii) to follow one leader, Pandit Shiv Narain Fotedar. Then it was almost a norm, one Sabha, one platform, one leader and one slogan.

Since we are now scattered all over the world, we have given ourselves scores of platforms, calling these by all sorts of names. In this outreaching process, we have thus created more number of such platforms than desired. Over the last few years their

growth has been faster than mushrooms. Some have since divided and sub-divided. Some have appeared, disappeared and then re-appeared. Some had a short span of life. Some represented not beyond their managing committee members. Process is a non-stop chain reaction. Instead of bringing in solidarity, community stands polarised and divided into various pressure groups, more often than not holding diagonally opposite view points. One wonders, all this effort for who and on whose behalf — Kashmiri Pandits—a miniscule community.

To many voices for too few of us, all divergent to each other. No wonder no one takes us seriously. Just to say that AIKS represents 50 or 100 units does not make a big difference as it does not make us more than our numbers, may be, on the contrary reflects that we are that much more divided. Useful objective these units could serve, is off-set by the lack of response to a central command, to 'SPEAK AND ACT AS ONE'. Result is discord. Community is fragmented more than ever before.

To preserve our identity and what all goes with it, is the precise role which a local organisation is designed for. For achieving this objective, each organisation is guided by its 'Aims and Objects' and obligation towards the law, in case of being a registered body. Recent AIKS directive says that we should have Sabhas and Samitis, all over, in villages, towns and cities. Good. This part is easy. No problem, we have perfected our skill at it. Directive further says "attempts should be made to federate these small units into state level bodies". Here a logical question arises, who does it? Make no mistake, this is precisely the role of AIKS. Fact happens to be, that barring at the most a dozen affiliates, most of the units have no worthwhile link with the Apex Body. Beyond paying one time affiliation fee, wonder how many are in good standing to vote, how many attend the meetings and how many even respond to a circular. In what way do these affiliates benefit by the affiliation, except to share a common appearance on the AIKS Affiliate's list, to make it impressive. If the link is as good as that, what kind of supervision the central body can exercise and for what. Units do not need guidance as to how these should or should not conduct their affairs, which are mostly socio-cultural in nature, barring a few which additionally are involved in some welfare activities. How can then centre exercise any sort of involvement, in units or federation of units? Yes, this is possible only if units

look up to Apex Body for something, which means units must feel the NEED for AIKS. This brings out, therefore, that AIKS HAS TO BECOME A NEED BASED ORGANISATION.

Ideally, we ought to have AIKS with its various branches, all over, say, AIKS — Bangalore, AIKS — Kashi, AIKS — Jhumri Tulayya, like of which we have Kashmiri Overseas Association (KOA), KOA—USA, KOA—Canada, KOA—Australia etc. For the country of size of USA, we have ten zones, each one is KOA—Zone 1, KOA—Zone 2 etc. Further by US law KOA shall limit its activities to welfare and socio-cultural activities only. For purposes of liaison with US Government and be active on the political front, KOA has a separate body called Indo-American Kashmir forum (IAKF). This is a formula for AIKS to affiliate units into zonal federates.

A case study : On going back to our home

My wife and I, went to have a cup of tea at a Jammu Dhaba, soon after migration. Two elderly Kp's already seated were engrossed in a conversation. Overheard : "No, never mind, on Haerat we could not go, at the most by Navreh, we will be back in our homes". This incident is now 16 years old. How sad. However, current scenario, on 'going back to our homes' is sadder still. This is somewhat as follows :

Let us go...we go now...not until they make it safe for us to return...we only go to a protected zone....no zones, whole Kashmir is ours...whoever likes to go can go....if we go, we go all together...we only go if our Muslim neighbors apologize...let them invite us and welcome us...we only go when government invites us...we have no faith in this or that government...we will never return to ghettos government wishes to provide...if Hurriyat, why not we being consulted...we will not settle on anything less than a homeland, not even an inch less...they cannot treat us as second class citizens...we must have constitutional guarantees...unless we are assured of our share of jobs, granted loans for rebuilding and starting businesses...reserve 10 MLA seats and 3 MP seats for us...at the minimum until last gun is fired.

The above is not a charter of demands, but a sample survey of divided opinions on a single issue of vital importance to us. Each opinion is owned, closely and dearly held by one or the other of our leaders. Each opinion is owned, closely and dearly held by one or the other of our leaders. Each one offers his solution as the only one and assures that he will not rest until

he delivers. Should they tell themselves, what they tell us to believe, their inner voice will tell them that what they believe is not going to happen. Based on above scenario, what shall we consider a common minimum program for AIKS to adopt. Probably none. Only logical option is NOT TO GO. Why not? Follow the example of *Puraney-Kashmiris*, Sindhis and Punjabis from Pakistan who all never looked back. AIKS at Chandigarh Conference, surmised very close to it, "that we are doomed to settle elsewhere rather than in our homeland". How true, but what happens to those in camps who are anxiously waiting for something to happen for the last 15 years. Wonder how many will draw comfort from the words "to be positive in outlook, philosophical about the past and optimistic about the future".

Government intentions in this regard, are clear. For first 15 years, it was one room tenement, and by the time, it will be time, one generation is gone, and there will be no one left to be provided for. Governor Saxena, is honest enough to say that a resourceful community such as Kashmiri Pandits should not depend too much on government help. Means on our own we have to learn to do something for ourselves. Sooner the better.

AIKS need not to volunteer to plan for Government of India, to help sort out Kashmir National Plan, foreign affairs plan or whatever. It does not interest any government to do what we wish them to do. A government of whichever hue, precisely does what suits it the most, always with an eye to be around in office in the present term and also the next. A case of a pro-Hindu organisation, BJP, is a typical example. When in power, what they did for us is too well known, and now in opposition they assure us to raise the question in the parliament!! However, it is Shiv Sena supremo, who almost appeared as an Avatar in what he did for our student's community. Other wise, for all our pleadings, we received a patient hearing, lip sympathy and broken promises.

Now, appropriate for our planners at AIKS, is to do instead, draw and keep in readiness, a Kashmiri Pandit Disaster Management Plan, to devise means and methods, the way we can meet the situation in case leftover 5,000 and odd KP's in the valley are suddenly evicted, and also how to handle the problem of those who are already in camps. Chandigarh resolve needs now to be translated into an action plan. Self help.

Essential motivation for which, Justice (Mr.) P. N. Bakshi, judge at Allahabad High Court, in 1980, founded All India Kashmiri Samaj (AIKS) was to help keep the ethnic peculiarities of Kashmiri Pandit community alive on an all India level. He strongly believed if ethnicity goes, the identity goes and if the

identity goes we must believe that we are dead. With a religious bent of mind and as a ritualist, he felt sad, that some of us did not care much about the rituals peculiar to us, which used to be celebrated with a distinct local fervor. He believed that there could be no two opinions, about the fact that we derive our inspiration from Kashmir and our motherland is the fountainhead of our culture. To keep our ethnic characteristic alive AIKS should limit itself as a non-political body wedded only to socio-cultural activities and general welfare of the community. He was afraid that should AIKS include the welfare of valley Pandits on its agenda, same will be detrimental to the safety and interests of our Biradari back home and it will be mis-construed that AIKS has been set up for a political agenda which J & K government at that time would not take kindly. Justice Bakshi suggested that any time in the future if need arises, we may have a separate all India organisation, exclusively meant for a political agenda. Despite opposition by many, he insisted that let AIKS remain as such without making any change in its basic characteristics. He also gave some guidelines : rotate the office of President, this will help the involvement of different regions, set up more Samajs' but do not encourage more than one in a single town, metropolis or city, which will indicate a division within the community (as a follow up of this Kashmiri Pandit Mandal Trust and Kashmiri Pandit Association, both functioning from Bombay were merged into one), holding of annual conferences by rotation at different places will help social integration of the community. Reflecting back, I believe the founder president had a Vision.

A well attended and an impressive function held at Allahabad witnessed the birth of AIKS in 1979. This move, first ever to set up an all India body of Kashmiri Pandits was well received. A number of organisation affiliated. Kashmiri Samiti Delhi (KSD) was reluctant to join. Without affiliating KSD, representing a largest conglomeration of Pandits outside the valley, AIKS felt itself incomplete. Persuasion mounted, till KSD finally agreed to join, which coincided soon after Anantnag Holocaust. Why this reluctance? With a mind set as the largest conglomerate of Pandits, KSD showed reluctance to join as it did not wish to be second in command to AIKS. They would rather settle it as a relationship in parallels. This manifested, time and again in surfacing up differences between KSD and AIKS, till a showdown occurred recently.

Historically, when Col. P. N. Kak (Retd.), wished to be relieved of the responsibility as the president of AIKS, there were no takers. At the persuasion of some AIKS well wishers at that time I took over as the president at this critical juncture in the history of AIKS, which, otherwise could have gone into oblivion. I wished to

have a term of two more years as president to enable me to do whatever I had planned to do but that was not to be. I was voted out, against a KSD sponsored, otherwise, an unknown candidate to AIKS circles. Manipulation appeared clever as the casting vote against me was the one from my own base unit, KPA Bombay. Why did it happen? The answer brings out that KSD did not wish for AIKS to continue to function from Bombay for two more years. It wished it to be seated Delhi as early as possible. They succeeded and since then AIKS is stuck at Delhi for last so many years.

Earlier while in office, something happened for which I owe the responsibility and consider it a case of poor judgment and as a historical error. With access to disturbing reports emanating from the valley, having heard emotionally charged members of the delegation to the 4th All India Conference at Bombay, and finally being impressed by the presentation of a high level delegation to AIKS-Anantnag-Holocaust 1986, I felt myself at cross-roads, being split up between my personal views and those as President AIKS, owing allegiance to AIKS founders vision. Other delegates to the holocaust conference were in favor of AIKS to take on as principal coordinator in all activities of KP organisations all over. Youth Wing of Kashmiri Pandit Association Bombay wanted AIKS to go a step further, to give a call for youth to take up arms to defend our biradari in the valley. In all humility, I accepted to endorse the first demand but refused to accept the Youth Wing demand. Explaining, I said, that history has that KP's never resorted to taking up arms in self-defense. We have always fought our way out with the help of a "kalam" and never by "talwaar". I call this demand of youth wing as misguided, for which they never again were kind to me.

After a debate with myself, I admit through the columns of VITASTA, that I feel sad to have accepted the 1986-course modification for AIKS, to take up political matters on its agenda against the wishes of its founder. Recent unpleasant events convinced me that original role of AIKS ought to have remained limited to socio-cultural objectives only. On the other hand, for political matters and liaison with government agencies, KSD, on its own, did reasonable good job, with an added advantage of being located in the vicinity of seat of power at Delhi. KSD could have done a better job, without carrying a burden of feeling that its work is overshadowed by the parallel efforts of AIKS. It is a mere coincidence that AIKS found itself around in Delhi for such a long time that it could afford to visit the corridors of power. If positioned elsewhere as it ought to be it would be difficult for AIKS to take this kind of assignment. With AIKS having given a call for Self Reliance, which as it is overdue, the respective roles of AIKS and KSD should become distinctly clear.

Before it is too late, let this be clear that this author does not claim a monopoly on wisdom (Dana) and there being no personal agenda, in suggesting what is being suggested through these columns. It is the question of what exact role suits AIKS the best. In other words this is to suggest precisely what is expected of it as an Apex Body. As a first assignment, it has to do whatever it takes to determine, HOW, to bring around a callous, indifferent and an individualistic KP to behave and act differently. This can be brought out well by a Leader, who can practice and perform a mass conversion phenomenon. Leaders are not born. They acquire the leadership qualities, which attracts the followers to a viewpoint. If we did not have one for the last 50 years, let us not leave the next 50 blank. AIKS can fill in this vacuum, with only one difference, it is collective leadership of an institution versus an individual. Programs put out by AIKS have to have a magnetic attraction and the power to penetrate the hard core barriers of individualistic resistance. Thus AIKS needs a motivated young cadre, to be trained and infused and indoctrinated with leadership qualities. This phenomenon is amply visible in overseas countries. Young motivated do a better job than seniors.

Our social problems are not new. These have persisted to exist for a long time now. If anything, these have run amuck with every passing day. By their appearance, ever since, on reams of paper as resolutions, these will not disappear. Magnitude of problems is deep rooted. It needs us to dig deeper to the root level to find an answer WHY DOES-IT-HAPPEN? If we do succeed to get at it, then the remedial measures will be HOW-TO-DO-IT? Here-under two examples are presented to illustrate :

Take the question of marriages, marriages out of community, and marriages out of religion and marriages out of country and so on. We felt handicapped soon after partition, 1947, due to loss of middle man's services. Thanks to Koshur Samachar and number of other community publications, now nearly 300 community matrimonial ads appear every month. Wide range of choices, careers, and jobs held, income, inheritance and social standing etc. for both boys and girls is available. Photos and videos are exchanged, meetings are held before a spouse is selected. Beyond this what else lures boys and girls to go out of fold? We have got to go under the skin to determine WHY. What exactly is it, dowry...parents being around...after marriage treatment or what? Will AIKS Matrimonial web site lure defaulters to change their mind. Unless a reason is found no solution is possible. Who can provide an answer other than AIKS Youth Wing.

Again on the question of languages. We have to learn to make a distinction between Kashmiri as mother

tongue and Kashmiri being taught like any other language. Former needs us to be next to the cradle. It is the parent's job to implant a mother tongue. If it does not happen we have to find WHY? Is it deliberate on the part of parents not to speak to an infant in Kashmiri. To learn a language is different. Learning can be imparted not before age 5 when the question of script arises by which time we have missed the bus. It is very difficult for a person to learn a language beyond this age and more often you end up with one-sided conversations where one party speaks in Kashmiri and you get the reply in Hindi or English. It is ridiculous for charitable institutions to conduct classes in teaching a language which otherwise is the basic duty of a parent(s) to give to a child. Whatever the reason, even the Muslims (as I have observed) in Kashmir feel it is "uncool" to teach Kashmiri to their younger generation. That is way it is no more a "valid passport" for entry into our motherland. Even the local press in Srinagar, was imploring its readers not to give up the language. Let us find and answer and then seek a solution otherwise for all practical purposes most of our 2nd and 3rd generation has already lost it as a mother tongue.

Similar studies need to be conducted on all other social evils. It might reveal that some of the measures AIKS has suggested, may fall in the category of personal and private. However to make a headway let us conduct a two step analysis to find out why these evils happen and how can they be solved. Let us not forget Sudhaar Samiti, under the patronage of Kashyap Bhandu was successful in one single reform that a "Pheran" became a Saree. Ever since, customs have increased manifold. A strong force of ladies wing and youth wing could offer some solutions or conclusions.

A NEW LOOK AIKS appeared first in Naad, June 2005 New look is presented here in the form of an Action Plan, to suggest the ways AIKS may be raised to a global level, assigning it a full agenda of its own and not just a compromise on a common minimum program. An apex body cannot afford to change its stance every now and then. It has to have a definite program of its own which in itself becomes the basis of a rallying point for willing units to affiliate with AIKS. Essential motivation behind the new look is to create Forum for Future, which takes care of socio-cultural and welfare needs of the community for future generations to come. The way it is presented here restores independence to AIKS, without any overlap. This should suit all concerned.

- 1) Since AIKS was founded in 1979, demographically a sea change has occurred. We are now here, there and everywhere. Whatever the circumstance, all need to be linked and inter-linked into a close knit community.

Recommended : AIKS may extend its scope to encompass and int-link those in the valley, those in camps, those in rest of India and abroad.

2) All these pockets of community are roped in as an International Forum.

Recommended : To make above operationally viable and effective, let AIKS become All World Kashmiri Samaj (AWKS)

3) For effective management and administration at grass roots level and to involve all concerned in an active participation.

Recommended : Divide the globe into 10 zones, based on geographical and demographical considerations. All units comprising a zone, will Elect a President, who in turn becomes Elected Vice-President of AWKS. Office of the zonal President, becomes a branch office of AWKS. In this manner a link within the zone and zone to President AWKS will be established. Holding of meetings and participation becomes manageable. Elected Vice-President will represent zone member units at the meetings. All zones shall have equal voting rights.

4) Head offices, President office and branch offices be set up to achieve maximum participation.

Recommended : Registered office of AWKS will be considered as Head Office which will be located in Delhi, India. President's office will be the one wherefrom the President presides. Zone offices are the Branch offices of AWKS, 10 in number.

5) For effective management, AWKS shall delegate some of its functions to Zones, which may already have necessary experience in handling such particular assignments.

Recommended : Kashmir Sabha, Calcutta be recognised as the Nodal Agency for all matters cultural. Kashmiri Samiti, Delhi, be recognised as Nodal Agency on political matters and liaison with government agencies, Kashmiri Pandit Association, Bombay be strengthened to take up the need for medical aid at their Kashyap Bhavan facility, Laleshwari Education Trust, Bombay be recognised to evolve a satisfactory script for Kashmiri, particularly for those who are not exposed to either Arabic or Hindi scripts, Indo-American Forum be recognised to deal with USA government on all political matters.

6) AWKS plans for the overall development of community.

Recommended : Plans be evolved for KP disaster management, KP-Project development as per the requirements at zonal levels.

7) AWKS takes up some projects in hand on priority basis.

Recommended : Hostel accommodation for boys and girls studying in Pune, Navi Mumbai and Bangalore. Upgrading of Kashmir Bhavan, Delhi to a level of Kashmir International Centre.

8) There is a need for young motivated cadre with acumen for leadership.

Recommended : AWKS imparts training to a dynamic youthful cadre willing to take up leadership of the community and implement its programs on a professional and scientific basis.

9) An organisation without FUNDS is as good as crippled. Measures are taken to raise the funds on a large scale basis.

Recommended : AWKS may adopt commercial and professional ways to raise the funds. Learning from successful NGO's, funds could be collected against viable schemes, to set up schools, colleges, medical centers, old age homes etc. Use professional skills, the way you make a success of a sick industrial unit. Feasibility of projects, transparency, and accountability will ensure general participation, and may be as well involve donor cum investment shy biradari members also.

10) On all matters, when opinion becomes conflicting and a way wide apart as a result when community is held as hostage to the confusion which also hampers the progress of implementation, AWKS, may resort to settling the matters on democratic principles of majority vote.

Recommended : AWKS appoints an Independent Agency to conduct an Opinion Poll and resolve the issue by a majority vote. This could be immediately applied on going back to our homes.

SUM-UP : Looking at Future with Hope. AIKS-call for Self Reliance, call for Pandits solidarity, are all taken care of in GIVE AIKS A NEW LOOK. Let it become a forum for future and provide leadership.

A.I.K.S., PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS — 1980

By

Mr. Justice P.N. Bakshi at The Second All India Kashmiri Samaj Conference Held in Calcutta on 27th & 28th December, 1980

Honoured Chief Guest, Lt. Col. Kak, President of the Local Kashmiri Samaj, Members on the dias, fellow delegates, Ladies & Gentlemen.

I am extremely happy to be present here this morning amidst my fellow brethren from all parts of the country. As you know we have been scattered all over during the last 50 years and even though we are now in the farthest corners of the country, I do feel that we are losing track of each other as a result of which there appears to be no cohesion, no harmony and no co-operation between each one of us. It was this idea which was mooted out by the Kashmiri Samaj of Allahabad and more strictly speaking which originated in Bombay through my revered late cousin Shri Sham Sunder Nath Sopori which we caught hold of and worked upon early this year in the month of March since we organised our first Conference in Allahabad. Before I speak to you about what we have done in the last nine months and what we wish to do in future, let me at the outset thank from the bottom of my heart the Kashmir Sabha Calcutta, Col. Kak, Mr. Dhar, Mr. Razdan and each and every member of the Managing Committee who have been so kind, so considerate as to make almost an unimaginable comfortable arrangement for me, as well as all the delegates that have come here. They have set up a standard which might be even difficult for the successors to emulate, but I am happy at the potentiality which this local Samaj has exhibited. When we called the first meeting of the Samaj in Allahabad it was just a haphazard affair, first we invited the provincial Samajs, the response was encouraging, and therefore we took the courage to invite other Samaj of whom we could get the addresses. Thirteen Samajs were represented at the last conference at Allahabad. During the span of last 9 months, I am really happy to inform you, that we have grown and today we have 22 Samajs affiliated with the All India Kashmiri Samaj. We have added 9 Samajs in 9 months. Five are absolutely new which have been born at Patiala, at Ahmedabad, at Hyderabad, at Moradabad and Jodhpur. The most recent addition is Moradabad about 15 days back and Jodhpur about 3 weeks back. The other four were

asleep, they were in slumber, they have been rejuvenated and asked to join us and actively participate. The position therefore is that today we have 22 active Samajs doing the work for our community who are represented in this meeting. We have also tried to expand the activities of the Samaj outside our country, because we do not want to limit our activities in any manner whatsoever and our objectives are ultimately to have an International Association of Kashmiris.

We have at present enrolled Mr. Ganjoo from London and Mr. Prabhat Hukku from Liberia and one more member from New York whose letter I was expecting but have not yet received but it might have reached Allahabad already. So on the roll we have two overseas members. Dr. K. N. Kaul and Mr. B. L. Razdan have promised me yesterday that in their numerous trips to foreign countries they will try to expand our activities and enrol more and more overseas members of the All India Kashmiri Samaj.

On the social side, we have taken up three projects. The first project was trying to help young men in getting employment. I have been receiving applications from Srinagar, from Jammu, from Delhi, the capital itself, and from Agra, wanting assistance in securing employment. These applications have been forwarded to the various centres with the request for help and I dare say that through our efforts some of the unemployed or unsatisfactorily employed have been employed during the course of the year. They are few in number, the start has been made and we shall try to develop this project.

The other aspect which we are trying to develop is the assistance given to various Samajs and individuals in setting marriages. We have opened a Marriage Bureau at Allahabad and I understand the same work is being done here at Calcutta also. We have been receiving numerous applications preparing a register and we shall co-ordinate our activities and then give the various references to the willing parties so that they can negotiate. In this manner we have also succeeded in settling a couple of marriages. This aspect will also be developed that I have no doubt that success will be with us.

The third aspect which we have taken up and in respect of which a resolution had also been passed in the last conference was, fight against the dowry system. This is a very pernicious evil which is very rampant and appears to grow with a greater speed than it can be suppressed. I had also the occasion of personally addressing few of our Samajs at different places in which this topic was touched and since yesterday, that I am here, we have been discussing this matter again and again with the various members we have come across and especially the member of the Calcutta Sabha. It is a very knotty problem but it has got to be tackled and we do hope that in times to come we will tackle this problem psychologically because I feel that a psychological approach is more important in this case than any other. However, we will take that matter up in our business session and we will discuss it further, and to devise ways and means to deal with this question.

Now, apart from this report which I have given regarding the progress of the association, I would like to mention one or two matters which have struck me because I feel it is necessary to exchange ideas on those topics. One of them is that there seems to be a very artificial distinction between the Kashmiri speaking Kashmiris coming from Kashmir and the non-Kashmiri speaking Kashmiris who have already migrated to this part of the country 300 years ago or may be 100 years ago. There appears to be an artificial barrier which does not permit assimilation of both these sections of our society. Numerous reasons have been given for this distinction. Some people say that when Kashmiri speaking Kashmiris come together they start speaking Kashmiri, with the result proceedings and mixup with them becomes difficult, because we do not know their language. Others say that certain sections are suffering from an inferiority complex. And the third opinion is that certain sections are suffering from superiority complex. In this way innumerable reasons are given. Whether we have migrated 100 years ago from Kashmir or 50 years ago or 10 years ago, or today, it makes no difference at all, because we are the sons of the same land. This artificial barrier which is trying to keep us away should be completely eradicated and there should be no such distinction. There should be a spirit of accommodation and tolerance. If somebody objects because he cannot understand the Kashmiri language, don't speak it. It is all right, we should learn the language, it's our own language. It's our mother tongue, and we are sorry we do not know it. I for one have volunteered to learn the Kashmiri language from any of my Kashmiri brethren who is living in Allahabad. I volunteered and told him to

come to me every Sunday, have his lunch with me and teach me the Kashmiri language. So we want to learn it and if facilities are provided there is no reason why we should not pick it up, but the position that I can't speak it today should not be a barrier between you and me. Make me learn it and if I can't understand you, then don't speak it for the time being, speak a language by which I can understand you. So from both sides it has got to be a spirit of give and take, so that we can really understand each other in the proper spirit. I am sure if that is the procedure and the method by which we try to understand each others difficulties, this artificial barrier will vanish and we will be able to come closer more and more.

The other question which has been agitating my mind and which I have felt, also requires mentioning is that we are ashamed of calling ourselves Kashmiris. I am very frank, I am very blunt, but I think bluntness and frankness is necessary. We are ashamed of saying we are going to attend a meeting of the Kashmiri Samaj. We are not ashamed of saying that we are going to attend a meeting of an International Association or a particular mission of a particular club. But we are ashamed of saying that we are going to attend a meeting of the Kashmiri Association. Why? Because there seems to be a misconception that if we say so, we will be called communalists, that we are communal minded; we don't think in the higher perspective, and therefore no communalism, no Kashmirism? And we must hide the fact that we are going to the meeting of the Kashmiri Samaj? When I am asked in my own city whether I organised or was I responsible for organizing a Kashmiri Sabha in quarters which were rather high, I had no hesitation in saying yes, I did for the benefit of my community and my country. We have got in London, Welsh Association, Scotch Associations, I have been to London three times. Nobody in Britain says that a Welsh Association or a Scot Association is communal Association. Nobody says that a Welshman or a Scot is not a Brithisher. Why should we think on narrow lines that because we are members of a Kashmiri Association we are not Indians? We are Indians. Indians first. We are Kashmiris cum Indians. There is no hostility, there is no conflict between the Kashmiri culture and the Indian culture. We have not formed this association to fight against Indian culture, we have not formed it to fight against our nationalistic activities. As a matter of fact, the object is to get the community which is scattered here and there together so that we can flow in a regular stream for

▲ Contd. Pg 19

ADDRESS BY PRESIDENT PT. DWARKANATH MUNSHI ON ASSUMING HIS OFFICE AT JAIPUR,* 27TH JULY, 1991

I am overwhelmed and at once awed and elevated by the signal honour you have bestowed on me by electing me to this high office of the President of All India Kashmiri Samaj.

I follow here some of the most eminent personalities of our community who have adorned this office from time to time, imparted their prestige and prudence to it and brought lustre to it and us all. I had the privilege of watching my immediate predecessor Brig. Ravi Madan at work and was fascinated and amazed at his blazing enthusiasm and tireless efforts in the service of the community.

In electing me, ladies and gentlemen, may I say that you have invested a small man with the greatness that goes with this august office and an ordinary person with extraordinary responsibility.

When I reflect on all this and much more that is awaiting me, I take heart and courage from the trust and confidence you have so magnanimously reposed in me, and the advice and support that would flow to me in abundant measure and inspire me and us all to steer our community out of our present troubles into a more brilliant and fragrant future for ourselves and our country. Here permit me a very personal observation to assure, in all humility, you who are assembled here and those of our Biradari who are watching us from afar, in our motherland as well as across the continents, that I shall spare no effort to render myself worthy of your generosity.

The remarkably smooth, sober and businesslike manner, yet with a touch of geniality and intimacy, with which the Annual General Meeting and the election was conducted is not only heartening and encouraging for me but is most gratifying otherwise.

Here we have exhibited a splendid spirit of solidarity and unity and efficiency to the joy and fulfilment of our friends and well wishers and to the utter dismay of our foes. It is a measure of the sagacity of the Biradari spread across the country, and the healthy consciousness of the perils facing our community that we have shown to the world that while we value individual opinions and beliefs most, we also know that it is only collective wisdom and coordinated action on our part that will lead us to victory over the adversities facing us today.

I will here refer briefly to just one startling development of recent days, which has brought the Kashmir problem to a politically critical and fateful stage. The air is thick with reports and suggestions that the time has come for a political solution to the insurrectional uprising in the valley. We do not dispute the desirability and need of the political process as such, but we do hold that the time and the milie are

not ripe yet. This, however, is a larger issue for a deeper debate. What we emphasise at the moment is that no political parleys and solutions drawn therefrom will be sound and durable unless the Kashmiri Pandit community is intimately and constantly associated with the deliberations and discussions, in their own right, whenever and at whatever level these are held. The nation and the Government can no longer ignore the community and its plight and except at the cost of its own doom. Further, we have a good measure of the Kashmiri mind and psyche and it would be only proper and fruitful for the Government to make full use of our knowledge and understanding of the problem in its various aspects/dimensions.

This is not the occasion for me to go into the details of those dimensions. Suffice it to say these relate to the flower of our community lost to the guns of the marauders and the risk that faces the living at every turn, our women dishonoured, our temples seized and desecrated, our property of incalculable worth taken over or rotting. They relate to the brutalising of our present and coming generations, of their wretched circumstances turning young boys and girls of great brilliance and promise into mindless violent, and bitter youth of tomorrow.

Above all it is our heritage and identity and culture and our motherland – the valley – which is fast disappearing and slipping out of our hands.

The first and the most urgent task for us is, therefore, to address ourselves to securing an honourable participation in any political process to come. And that has to be a combined and coordinated effort of all the federating units. An outline programme has got to be formulated forthwith which we hope to pursue aggressively with full vigour. The units have always been doing commendable, indeed inspiring work all along. And together we will all work and overcome.

I had earlier referred to the meticulous and efficient manner in which this convention has been organised and conducted. The credit for all this belongs primarily to the hosts – the Kashmiri Pandit Association of Jaipur. It has been a great experience of pleasure, bonhomie and business here.

Before, I had the slightest inkling of what was to happen here, the Association has put me in a heavy debt of gratitude a special invitation to me to this convention in this beautiful city of Jaipur rich in history and culture. It had further done me honour by asking me to speak before this distinguished assembly. But I was destined differently, I came and enjoyed and felt honoured. I now return with the sweetest memories. Thank you.

Jai Hind

*Reproduced from *Bahar-E-Kashmir 1991*, pg5

AIKS : A POTENTIAL MOVEMENT OF KASHMIRI PANDIT DIASPORA*

— Dr. B. K. Moza, Calcutta

Introduction

All India Kashmiri Samaj (AIKS) is a remarkable movement of Kashmiri Pandit diaspora of twentieth century. This movement has had its organisational birth exactly two decades back and has behind it a great potential of thoughtful objectives for the survival and advancement of the scattered Kashmiri Pandit (KP) community. This is an appropriate time to review the performance of this intrinsically potential movement. Often a question mark is generally raised as to whether AIKS has come up to the objectives for which this movement was started?

In this paper a perspective of this organization and its evolution are being discussed with a view to reviewing its achievements and short-comings and creating a brainstorm for making it more effective and purposeful in fulfilling the objectives for which it was originally set up.

Historically Kashmiri Pandit migrants settled in various parts of India, tried to live closer to each other for reasons of social contacts, participation in each other's moments of joy and sorrow, safety considerations, mother tongue and such commonalities, observance of festivals and festivities and for such reasons as matrimonial contacts and information thereof etc. Naturally it became necessary as also convenient for them to form a Society, Sabha, Association or call it by any other nomenclature to perform up to these expectations. The purpose also being to perpetuate community traditions and culture as far as possible and thus preserve the community identity.

Twentieth Century Diaspora

Initially, after the partition, the diaspora of Kashmiri Pandits (KPs) found its cause in entirely a different reason. In 1947 after the invasion of Kashmir by raiders across the border and subsequent accession of J & K State to India there was transfer of power from Maharaja to popular Government of National Conference led by Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah who was a leader of the masses which essentially comprised of the majority Muslim community. Since KPs were in a minority they had to bear the brunt of injustice, very unfortunately, despite their full involvement and glorious contribution to the freedom movement of Kashmir. With the purpose of

implementing Socialistic Pattern of Society, the measures of reservations for the so called downtrodden and the preferences for the majority became the guiding principles for the local Governments to achieve popularity and good will of the masses which comprised the vote bank. Unfortunately the Kashmiri Pandit community did not fall in this preferred criteria. Accordingly the merit became a secondary consideration and whether justified or not the Kashmiri Pandits became the victims of discrimination and such misrule of far reaching consequences. Despite their merit and capabilities they were deprived of their due rights on account of being a minority in the valley; they were denied their rightful share in the nominations for higher education, since at that time there were no professional colleges in Kashmir; they were also denied deserving jobs since the yardstick for employment was not essentially the merit or seniority but the community label one had tagged to one self. Land reforms, implemented for the first time anywhere in the country, enacting land to the tiller, added to this set back of KP community and therefore for all these collective reasons Kashmiri Pandits had to come out gradually in search of their livelihood, employment and opportunities for higher education. As a result an ongoing process of migration of KPs to places set in which they accepted as a fate accomplished. Large number of families came out of Kashmir and for one or the other reason they settled in the length and breadth of the country though Delhi and other metropolitan cities in the North became their first choice. These migrants had their home and hearth in Kashmir where they used to go whenever an occasion arose essentially on the occurrence of deaths of their kith and kin, generally elderly, who used to remain in Kashmir or on the occasion of the marriages and such festive occasions in the family. This diaspora was, therefore, different from the earlier ones which because of difficult conditions of communication, transportation and absolutely hostile atmosphere were irreversible migrations forcing almost absolute isolation from those relations left behind in the valley. Such an inevitable diaspora of this type continued on this pattern till 1989-90 when the militancy in Kashmir took a very violent shape and Kashmiri Pandits had to become displaced internally almost en-masse as refugees in their own country. In nutshell the

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twentieth century diaspora of Kashmiri Pandits from their motherland became the result of firstly they being discriminated and politically deprived as a minority and secondly towards the end decade of the millennium, they being terrorised to abandon their centuries' old hearths and homes in their motherland on account of Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism unleashed by the neighbouring Islamic country as a proxy war against India.

Formation of AIKS

Kashmiri Pandits settled outside the state or within it formed their community associations essentially for social as also for political reasons. This led to the formation of various Kashmiri Pandit organizations in various parts of the country and abroad, each having its own objectives and priorities. However, in general, there was no cohesion amongst such numerous organizations, no common approach to solve their common problems particularly on social front. All the representative Associations were feeling a vacuum in their relationship, a missing link in coordination with one another till the leadership role was taken by Kashmiri Samaj of Allahabad. They called, in the first stage, a get-together of U.P. Associations and then of All India organizations and in March 1980 the first All India Samaj meeting was held at Allahabad under the Presidentship of Mr. Justice P.N. Bakshi which led to the formation of this federal organization. Within nine months' time the second Conference of AIKS was held at Calcutta on 27th and 28th December 1980 where more than fifteen Sabhas/ Samities/Samaj of Kashmir Pandits had a historical Conference and the draft Constitution of the AIKS was adopted. Separately the Presidential Address delivered by Justice P.N. Bakshi is included in this publication for ready reference which appeared in the "Kashmir in 2000 A.D." Annual Number (1981) of the Vitasta, Calcutta of which I happened to be the editor. AIKS received at this stage the support of 22 KP organisations. Few members from Srinagar also participated in this historical Conference. The main emphasis was on creating a movement amongst Kashmiri Pandits for bringing about cohesiveness amongst themselves and breaking the barriers of distinction amongst the Kashmiri speaking and non-Kashmiri speaking Kashmiri Pandits on the premise that both were the sons of the same land. The objectives of the Samaj were essentially of coordinating amongst the affiliated units matters related to social aspects, to improving employment opportunities, matrimonial rapport, discouraging dowry curse which has been a serious issue, bringing out a news-letter/publication of relevant information for circulation amongst member units, providing relief and medical assistance propagating the Kashmiri

language and preserving the Kashmiri Pandit culture and heritage. Annual get-togethers were held for reviewing the activities of the Samaj and developing a closer connection with our roots in Kashmir. In fact AIKS was purported to become the Apex Body of Kashmiri Pandits. Soon it had four organizations from Kashmir affiliated to it and comprised of a total affiliation of 38 units of which there were few from overseas also. As regards its office it was initially decided to have a rotating one, it being the place of its elected President. It was assumed that this would as well bring in some variety and also motivate the improved results. After Justice Bakshi, respectively Col P.N. Kak, affectionately known as Papa (the then President of Calcutta Sabha), Dr. N.L. Zutshi (President of Bombay Pandit Sabha), Brig R.N. Madan, (President of Jaipur Sabha), became the Presidents after a tenure of two year's term each. Since Delhi is the main nerve centre of activities and because the complexion of KP problems took a different turn then, Delhi became the Head Quarter of AIKS as soon as Dr. Zutshi's tenure was over and respectively Brig. R.N. Madan, Shri, D.N. Munshi and Shri J.N. Kaul (President of Faridabad Samiti) operated from Delhi and performed commendably. Shri J.N. Kaul is presently the President of AIKS for the sixth year.

Sabhas, Samaj & Samellan

At the Jodhpur Conference in 1982 I had the opportunity of communicating a paper entitled, "Sabhas, Samaj and Samellan" which was subsequently published in the Vitasta Annual 1983, and reproduced in the Martand, Srinagar in three instalments on 2nd, 8th & 14th June 1983. A clear line of demarcation in responsibilities and objectives was drawn between a Sabha/Samiti and the Samaj. Whilst the Sabha/Samiti or similar local affiliate was assumed to play the pertinent role as the representative organisation of KPs at a particular location, looking after the interests of community locally at that location, it was clearly assumed in this paper, that the main objective of the AIKS was to coordinate the activities of the local affiliates, initiate a common plan of action for our roots or for preserving the tradition, culture and heritage of our community and playing the role of an Apex Body with full responsibility and authority to take care of the common objectives of the community and coordinating the same, through the affiliated units. The common community agenda could be generation of funds, establishment of Trusts, Endowments, awards and recognitions for our community individuals for their excellent performances, creating educational institutions which would have as their essential objectives the preservation of Kashmiri Pandit culture, literature, heritage and Kashmiri language. It was also assigned

to safe-guard community assets and interests particularly in Kashmir. It was also assumed to create Institutions for preserving our Vedic system of Karam-Kand and create awareness and respect and provide for prospective employment of our Gurujis. One of the important objectives considered for our Apex Body was to enable community windows to be opened to healthier trends and practices amongst other communities in India or abroad to encourage excellence, infuse newer trends, bring about social reforms and related enlightenments. To facilitate this coordination an Annual Get-together of all the affiliated units was considered necessary as the "Samellan" where all important matters which required general discussion and general approval of the affiliated units were discussed for implementation. In this proposal a clear demarcation was drawn between the objectives of a local unit and the Apex Body, AIKS, so that there was no overlapping of objectives. It extended further in detailing the role of AIKS as the Apex Body and the respect and authority it required so as to function appropriately up to its assigned objectives. Of the 10 objectives which AIKS was assigned the first and foremost objective read as follows. "To coordinate activities of all Sabhas for common programmes of community welfare and to bring them closer to one another."

KP Exodus & AIKS

The traumatic exodus of KPs from Kashmir in 1989-90 and their ethnic cleansing from the valley brought about an added responsibility on AIKS suddenly and therefore the priorities of its agenda shifted to the relief and rehabilitation of the uprooted brotheren from the valley. Though ten years have passed this problem is still as critical and serious and continues to remain unresolved because of its very difficult and chaotic prognosis. However, AIKS has emerged as a very important player to avert demoralisation of the suffering brotheren and in providing possible relief and help in refugee camps. In this connection the Jaipur Convention held in 1991 was a milestone in the history of AIKS. Pt. Dwarkanath Munshi was unanimously elected as the President of AIKS and a line of action was drawn. To bring awareness to Kashmiri Pandit problem an Advisory Committee of well known Kashmiri Pandit authorities was formed so that with their advice and help, Governmental, national and international assistance was received to solve the rehabilitation of uprooted KPs from the valley. AIKS Trust was formed as an independent arm of the AIKS and funds were collected for extending relief to the displaced victims and providing financial resource for various action plans that AIKS considered purposeful for mitigating the sufferings of

the victimised brotheren. To bring about unity amongst various frontal organizations at Jammu, a Migrant Action Committee was formed with (late) Mr. M.L. Aima as its President and this Committee worked very dedicatedly under the leadership of Mr. Munshi to create a joint front (AIKS-MAC) for solving the day to day problems that were being faced by the migrants in Camps at Jammu and Udhampur. A MAHASAMELLAN of all the units was proposed to be held which, however, could not be organized on the scale as originally conceived. Further with the assistance of Shri J.N. Kaul who was then the President of Faridabad Samiti and President of S.O.S., a Computer Training Centre was established at Faridabad which has been providing training to displaced youth from the camps free of cost and has also succeeded in providing employment to the trainees who have been trained at this centre. This has been one of the greatest achievements of AIKS and this activity is successfully being continued under the leadership of Shri J.N. Kaul. The publication of AIKS, Naad, was started and from a News Letter it has now developed into a recognised community journal : this is being edited by Shri Omkar Kachru. In 1994 Shri J. N. Kaul took over as the President of AIKS and with his personal recognitions and dedicated efforts, AIKS has further received impetus and financial strength to continue with the on-going projects of AIKS whether in camps or at Faridabad Computer Centre or at its Head Quarter at Delhi related to K.P. rehabilitation issues.

Present Objectives of AIKS

In order to discuss the present performance of AIKS and suggest improvements it is necessary to consider firstly the presently obtaining objectives of the AIKS which are as follows:

- (a) To provide relief, including educational, medical facilities to the poor and to carry on their activities of general public utility.
- (b) To promote educational, social activities and national integration cultural, preserve and promote economic and spiritual integration and welfare of the people.
- (c) To work for various public charitable objects.
- (d) To carry on other activities such as publication of journals etc. in furtherance of the activities of the Samaj.
- (e) To guide, coordinate & monitor the various activities of unit members.

(Reproduced, verbatim, from NAAD, Vol. 7, No. 10, 1997)

The above objectives of AIKS, which are currently obtaining, need a thorough examination and insight to

creat a brainstorm for the functioning of AIKS as the Apex Body of Kashmiri Pandit organizations. The fundamental questions which arise are as follows:

- (1) Why the objectives are generalised and not specifically attributed to Kashmiri Pandits and their unit organisations?
- (2) In Which respect these objectives are different from those of any other unit not responsible and accountable as the Apex Body of KP organizations? Some of the Affiliates may be performing in still more important objectives, pertaining to KPs.
- (3) The only differentiating function of AIKS is to coordinate the affiliated units and provide them guidance for community Action Plans. Why this objective is not the first priority of AIKS, the Apex Body?

Discussion

The objectives of an Organization are supposedly based on logic and one would not oversimplify the rationale of above objectives as assumed presently by our Apex Body. However, it is apparent that we still feel desirable to only imply Kashmiri Pandit connection and not to highlight it. In his Presidential Address (reproduced in this Annual) in the 1st., Annual meeting of AIKS held at Calcutta, Justice Bakshi pointed out this weakness of Kashmiri Pandits and preferred to be "blunt" about this. Objectives define, determine and direct the subsequent activities of an organization and therefore it is high time our AIKS restructures its objectives and prioritises these to suit those of an apex body of Kashmiri Pandits. Whatever AIKS is presently doing is more or less the same what an affiliated unit may be doing. But AIKS was formed as the Apex Body of KP organizations and therefore its prime role should be that of a co-ordinator or initiator of Action-plans of common interest of all the affiliated units. Whilst delegating the action on various agenda to its frontal or specialist units it should monitor the performance on common agenda and help in solving the difficulties which the units may be facing and create resources and infrastructure for member units to facilitate action on the common and priority agenda for the survival and advancement of the community as a whole. That such a performance is not an easy job, is being recognised whilst drawing attention to this, but functionally that is what is expected of an Apex Body. The functions of AIKS require to be divided in 1) Political, 2) Social, 3) Cultural, 4) Financial and 5) Miscellaneous Action

plans. There should not be many agenda under these heads; just one agendum of highest common interest and priority to the community in each should be taken up by AIKS for its implementation. The actions on these agenda will be carried out along with the help of concerned frontal affiliated units based in appropriate locations and having necessary capabilities to perform as Action Leaders. A procedure requires to be worked out so that involvement of all the affiliated units is achieved for the implementation of these few but essential agenda of AIKS which should be of common interest to the KP community. The Apex Body has to work out measures by which duplication of the same activity is minimised, as far as possible, and maximum attention is given to achieving quality of performance and effective implementation. How all this can be achieved requires involvement of all the affiliated units, no matter where it is situated. This requires a brain storm to enable such a thing practically happening. It is the function of Apex Body to organize the same, restricting its emphasis on only few issues. It is repeated that implementation of such action plans is an uphill task but that is what is expected of an Apex Body. Our community requires to change and develop leaders and that is the role which our Apex Body has to perform.

Conclusion

AIKS is the Apex Body of KP organizations spread over globally. There is a need for functional restructuring of AIKS for which its present objectives require to be looked into so that it performs up to the expectations for which this organization was formed. Its main role is that of a cohesive, coordinating monitor and up to this objective it has to work out and brain storm the action plans. First the organizational concept of the Apex Body is to be well identified and appropriately supported by strengths of authority and resources. Then only can AIKS succeed in solving our fundamental problems like rehabilitation of our uprooted brotheren, developing a working script for our mother tongue and preserving our identity. AIKS is a great movement of Kashmiri Pandit 20th century diaspora but it has still to gain momentum to perform up to the objectives it was formed and to the responsibilities it has acquired being the Apex Body of Kashmiri Pandits scattered globally. Action on this proposal will be befitting homage to Shri KASHYAP BANDHU to whom this paper is dedicated whilst observing his birth centenary.

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KASHMIRI PANDIT ORGANISATIONS : THEIR GENESIS AND PRESENT DAY RELEVANCE

— By *Prof. S. K. Shah, Jammu*

Historical Perspective :

Kashmiri Pandits (KPs) by nature are highly individualistic and do not have a penchant for collective organisation. This is understandable because by and large they are intellectually oriented and prefer not to be led. This may also be due to persecution they have suffered through generations and the resultant mistrust in others and a strong instinct of self-preservation. However, there may be an aversion for organisation but there is none for collective response. While most individuals would aver that they think in a different manner and do not agree with each other, the fact remains they all think, act and react alike. Probably the most classic example of the latter is the way they moved out of the valley following the terrorist turmoil, without any organisation, planning, consultation or even informing their near and dear ones, yet in an identical fashion. This background is essential in order to understand the genesis of K P Organisations.

Throughout the tumultuous periods of misrule during medieval times, KPs evolved an instinctive capacity of survival through personal ingenuity. A collective organisation during this period was unthinkable. It was only during the stable Dogra rule that they heaved a sigh of relief and looked upon themselves as a community and indulged in collective activity. However, this collective activity was restricted to groups celebrating various festivals and functions that were primarily localised. While there are records of KPs organising themselves for a collective cause in nineteenth century, it is surprising that the first formal Sabha was not formed in Kashmir but in Jammu. It was formed by a small group of Government employees who used to move to Jammu for six months during what used to be called as "Durbar Move". It was in 1913, following the death of one such employee in Jammu, when they were handicapped for performing funeral and other rituals, that they approached the then Maharaja for permission to form a Sabha. The Maharaja gave the permission and even granted them lease to a piece of land outside what were then the town limits of Jammu. Thus the first Kashmiri Pandit Sabha came into existence through an order from the Maharaja in 1914 with its headquarters at Ambphalla in Jammu. This Sabha had purely a social mandate as was

specified in the order, and it continued to have the same till the large scale exodus of KPs in early nineties of the last century.

In Kashmir, the first Sabha, named as Yuvak Sabha with its headquarters at Shitalnath in Srinagar, was formed following large scale Muslim political activity in early twentieth century which had primarily communal overtones. It was formed to protect the interests of the minuscule Pandit minority. The communal activity on the part of the majority community resulted in several riots, notably the one in 1931 when the community was targeted for no fault of theirs. Ever since its formation this Sabha remained active both socially and politically and even published a daily newspaper "The Martand" which found its way in every K.P. home. It has, however, to be admitted that the Sabha was not necessarily proactive but was generally reacting to the political processes and changes that were unfolding throughout the thirties and forties of the twentieth century. Perhaps the most proactive movement was the one led by Kashyapa Bandhu in bringing about a social reform and transformation that galvanised the entire community. All other proactive movements were rather subdued and had only a marginal effect. The change over of Muslim Conference, which was till then a communal party, to National Conference with a supposed secular policy brought about a schism in Yuvak Sabha on the issue whether to support it or not and as a result several senior leaders left the Sabha to join the newly formed party. It would be out of place to go into the ramifications that followed this development. However, it needs to be mentioned that the schism of whether to support the National Conference and after 1947 the ruling party or not, dogged the Sabha throughout its existence and resulted into several splits and formation of parallel outfits. Some of the more prominent ones included the Samaj Sudhar Samiti in fifties and All India Kashmiri Pandit Conference (AIKPC) in seventies and thereabout. In the meantime Yuvak Sabha itself had changed its name to All State Kashmiri Pandit Conference (ASKPC).

The various outfits that were floated from time to time were not necessarily on ideological bases but more on personality clashes. This process mushroomed into an epidemic of outfits after the

exodus, notably in Jammu, though other centres of KP concentration like Delhi did not lag far behind. M. J. Akbar was not far off the mark when while eulogising and appreciating the community added as a tailpiece that it had "a remarkable capacity of endless splitting".

Sabhas outside the State :

Kashmiri Pandits have a long history of exodus from the valley. During the periods of religious persecution, waves of K.Ps. left the valley to settle down in relatively peaceful conditions in other parts of the country. Being an intellectual community given to erudition, they preferred to settle in the cities and seek government and white collar jobs and vocations. Thus small concentrations of the community came into existence in cities like, Lahore, Delhi, Agra, Allahabad, Lucknow, Gwalior, Bhopal, Jaipur, Kolkata to name a few locations. What goes to the credit of these displaced families is that while involving themselves in the activities of their adopted regions, they retained their traditional culture and rituals in their pristine shape and thereby maintained their identity, in spite of losing all touch with the valley and Kashmiri language. Several centuries of displacement did bring about some changes in their psyche but the cultural strength held them together as a community. It was this strength that gave them a social discipline not to get absorbed by cross marriages and to insist on marriage within the community, however depleted it might be. They maintained their linkages through an intricate web of social grouping and family relations. There were thus nuclei of Sabhas in all these towns and they were in contact with each other on a social level.

After 1947 the exodus from the valley got accelerated due to covert and overt policy of discrimination against the community at all levels. Being academically oriented, the well educated and bright young men of the community found no future prospects in the state and preferred to look for green pastures in other parts of the country and abroad in an atmosphere free from prejudice and apathy. This process of exodus was a continuous phenomenon all through, eventually culminating into a mass exodus in early nineties when they were forcibly pushed out from their homes.)

The Sabhas that were active in various towns comprised the settled families from generations. Some of these, especially those of Lucknow, Allahabad, Agra and some other places were fairly well organised. The newly arrived members, generally students in the beginning, followed by

permanent settlers, got aligned with these Sabhas and found a cultural solace in them. There was, however, some amount of difference and in some cases diffidence during this association. Most of the earlier settlers had retained the customs and rituals in the same form as they existed when they had moved out of the valley. The new settlers had since revised and modified their customs adjusting them with times. Moreover, the earlier settlers had lost touch with the Kashmiri language except for names of specific functions and rituals and of course Kashmiri dishes. The earlier settlers referred to the new ones as Taza Kashmiris (new Kashmiris).

During sixties and seventies of the last century it was the community of earlier settlers who made first attempts to evolve a national association of the various Sabhas within and outside Kashmir. The initiative came from Allahabad Sabha through Justice Bakshi who approached the different organisations, especially those in Kashmir, to evolve a loose federation so that the Sabhas could coordinate with each other. As would be expected he only received a lukewarm response from organisations in Kashmir. But after the insecurity generated following Parmeshwari episode movement and its aftermath, the organisations were more receptive and thus the first seeds of what eventually became the All India Kashmiri Samaj (AIKS) were sown.

Developments after the mass exodus :

The mass exodus of KPs following the holocaust of 1989-90 took the community both within and outside the state totally by surprise. None of the organisations or Sabhas was prepared for such an eventuality even though the warning bells had been ringing for quite some time. That may have been true even of the government agencies. There was no planning or direction from any of the organisations and the exodus was surprisingly a mass effort on individual initiatives. In hindsight it was probably one of the most judicious and organised responses under the circumstances. It was only after the exodus that the different organisations started becoming proactive in Jammu, Delhi and elsewhere.)

In order to understand the functioning and role of the various organisations we have to make a distinction between the established Sabhas and the political groups or movements within the community. The failure to appreciate this difference creates the confusion and gives an impression of cacophony within the community which is only apparent and not a real picture. Most of the Sabhas are institutions that have a long history and tradition of service to the

community. They had only a regional or local mandate and functioned within a limited geographic framework at least up to the time of mass exodus. The major ones among them would be the ASKPC (in exile after the exodus, its main area of operation being Kashmir valley). Kashmiri Pandit Sabha Jammu, Kashmiri Samiti Delhi, Kashmiri Pandit Association Mumbai, Kashmir Sabha, Kolkata and Kashmir Overseas Association with operations in USA and Europe. In addition there were Sabhas and associations in almost every major town of the country. The AIKS, the national federating body, claims affiliation of 42 such Sabhas. AIKS itself got strengthened only after the exodus when it formed a trust and got headquartered in New Delhi and started functioning as a nodal federating agency of all Sabhas and Samitis.

Prior to exodus almost all Sabhas were non-political social organisations. But in a period of crisis like the one that the community faced after exodus, the social and political boundaries get obliterated and the two merge into a common mandate. Thus all the Sabhas became hubs of socio-political activities, although they were hardly equipped to handle the problems of such a huge mass of humanity and to provide them a rational leadership. In spite of that it goes to the credit of most of them that they responded to the situation in a positive manner and did their best under extremely trying circumstances.

One of the major political movements that followed the mass exodus of KPs was what came to be known as Panun Kashmir (PK). It was a reaction to a blatant injustice meted out to a peace-loving community for no fault of theirs except that it refused to be part of anti-national and seditious activities and belonged to a different religion. The movement caught the imagination of every KP and galvanized the youth in no small measure. It had its sway in almost every centre of KP concentration and for many years remained a driving force for the entire community. It was a befitting reply to the so called "Azadi" of a religious majority that in the real terms was a communal movement aimed at religious cleansing of the Hindu minority.

Because of the inability of the community to appreciate the difference between a political movement and the role of the Sabhas, by and large it was felt as if the different Sabhas were at loggerheads with this movement (which they were not), since they did not come out in the open in its support. A Sabha is an institution and it represents all shades of opinion. It can provide covert support to any political movement that is for the good of the community. But it need not take a stance since it is supposed to be apolitical. It should be in a position to respond to all situations and cannot afford to fall hopelessly in love with any slogan, however attractive it might be at any point of time, since it may have to change its stance in a different set of circumstances. But at the same time it can provide a forum for debating the issues and evolving a consensus and even use its clout to support any movement that may be the need of the hour. As against that a political movement has a particular goal and needs to pursue that relentlessly and cannot afford to change its stance or objective. There is no contradiction in this policy and the relationship between political movements and Sabhas is of a symbiotic nature. But since KPs did not have much experience of political maneuvering and running sustained movements, they wasted a lot of their time, energy, drive and initiative in fighting quixotic battles against imaginary windmills within the community itself.

Streamlining the organisations and future prospects :

A lot of outfits have sprung up during last few years that tend to portray some political opinion. Bulk of these are just outfits on paper and they become known only through press statements. Most of them do so in a bid to find their name in press. Even if a few might be outfits with some kind of a support, they represent only a shade of political opinion and need not be taken very seriously unless that opinion is debated in a wider forum. However, these divergent press statements give an impression as if the community is totally confused and split into factions, which is not the case. KPs after dislocation have evolved loud thinking through press as a hobby that misleads everybody, including sometimes the community members themselves.

**I am reminded of an event in 1986 which in hindsight indicates how complacent the community was at that point of time. Traveling in interior areas of Kashmir with an American professor and his wife during the course of professional work, I was reminded of the danger that was looming. The professor's wife was a social scientist who had worked in Algeria, Tunisia, Albania and Egypt. She used to meet villagers while we were busy in our work. At the end of the visit she warned me in no uncertain terms. She was apprehensive about the security of Hindu minority and she said that we were sitting on a "keg of gunpowder" and any day there could be an explosion. If a foreign woman who did not know the local language could gather as much in three weeks, how the residents could be so blind is beyond comprehension.*

That brings us to the core issues of how the Sabhas can operate, keeping the welfare of the community as their sole objective. While every Sabha is a geographic entity and is primarily a representative of the members of the community living in that area, it has necessarily to be a part of the whole, especially in the changed circumstances where the very bases of the KP cultural moorings are imperiled. Even otherwise the geographical barriers are rapidly becoming irrelevant in the modern world and happenings in any area become important for the entire globe. There is a great need to ensure that the Sabhas do not operate in isolation and for that purpose it is necessary to strengthen the federating body or the Samaj. AIKS is a federal organisation having various Sabhas as its affiliates. It has enormous service to its credit under the able stewardship of some outstanding members of the community. However, there has been some deficiency in its evolution as a federal body and at times it tends to get into competition with its own federal units. Likewise some Sabhas tend to outgrow their shoes and act as parallel bodies outside the gambit of the federation. These are negative trends that need to be

curbed. That is possible only if we have continuous debates and discussions among the various federating units to streamline the operational mechanism. It is also necessary to have periodic brain-storming sessions to evolve a strategy for the future welfare of the community on social, cultural and political fronts. That is what should constitute Samellan or regular periodic debates among the intellectuals, thinkers and well-wishers of the community.

In order to ensure that the Samaj operates in unison and takes all Sabhas in its stride there is a need to evolve an organised federal system with clearly marked objectives. It is necessary to debate as to how it can be achieved. It may need a review and modification of the Constitution of the Samaj. One of the options can be not to elect the President of the Samaj in the manner it is done now but choosing the President by rotation from presidents of the affiliate Sabhas and having nominees from various Sabhas on the executive. There can be many other options but these can only be evolved after a threadbare discussion. It is time that the community takes this issue in right earnest and organises a Samellan solely for this purpose.

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the purpose of doing national good. That is the object of combining the entire community together so that we may flow in the same stream and we could say that the Kashmiri Association has discharged its national duty. That is our object, and that is how we help the country. We are enrolling Overseas members. These Overseas members are sending us Dollars, they are sending us Pounds, we are earning foreign exchange. What is this for? That is for the country. Therefore, you are earning foreign exchange. You are a serviceful community; a community that is earning foreign exchange for the Government, for the State. So we are serving the State and not doing any disservice to the State. We don't eliminate or exclude from our membership our girls and boys who have married outside the community. We assimilate them. If the boy is a Kashmiri it does not matter to which community the other spouse belongs. We have them as our

members. We are assimilating them-cultural integration. How can one get an impression we are indulging in the anti-national activities? As a matter of fact, it is one of the most nationalistic activities to promote social and cultural integration. This is what we are doing. So, the objects with which our Samaj has been formed are wholly nationalistic and I cannot see any reason why we should be shy of saying that we are members of the Kashmiri Samaj. These being our laudable objects, we are here to form the association to serve ourselves, to consolidate ourselves, for the service of our country. I would now close my speech with just two lines quoted from a famous Kashmiri poet of Lucknow, Pandit Brij Narain Chakbast :

गुरुर और जहल को बस दूर से सलाम करो
कुछ अपने कौम के बच्चों का इन्तजाम करो
यह बात याद रहे जान रहे या न रहे
जमीन रहे न रहे, आसमान रहे न रहे।

Thank you

K. P. SANASTHAS FOR COMMUNITY SURVIVAL, CULTURAL PRESERVATION AND RESURGENCE

— By *Prof. C. L. Sadhu, Jammu*

Having had my long association with All State Kashmiri Pandit conference (ASKPC), Sanatan Dharam Yuvak Sabha Sheetalnath in the valley in sixtee's, as young activist and later as strong social activist and executive member under late Dr. S. N. Peshin in early eightee's, I recall many harrowing events in this very historical Sheetalnath ground which has been center of activities for me and many of my colleagues right after the partition. The K. P. community witnessed manifold aggression on political, social, economic, and religious fronts by the powers that were. Severe discrimination in admissions, in recruitment, in services religious encroachments, victimisation of K.P minority under Agrarian Reforms, abduction of some K.P girls – all was perpetrated on the K.P community. The Parmeshewri agitation and the 1986 riots in District Anantnag and around was fully addressed by ASKPC/ and AIKPC. There were always hectic moments at ASKPC, Sheetalnath, with stormy sessions, framing of the committees on various issues confronting the beleaguered community and presentation preparation of Memoranda's to the higher echelons both in the state & at the centre. Whereas both ASKPC & AIKPC were fighting for economic & political survival, Samaj Sudhar Samithi was functioning on the social front. In the unparalleled devastation, atrocity & genocide perpetrated by the Pan-Islamic fundamentalists, the community was uprooted and hounded out in mass migration in Jan. 1990 and yet another exodus and exile to this scholarly peace loving persecuted community. Udampur, Jammu, Himachal, Cities of Punjab, Delhi, Noida, Gurgaon, Ghaziabad and other places elsewhere in the country became quasi-permanent abodes of the displaced pandits. K.P Sabha Jammu bore the initial brunt of K.P's mass migration from the valley and extended its logistics whatever available to members of the displaced families.

A convention under the aegis of ASKPC was convened at Jammu soon after migration and many resolves were made with main slogan of providing

security and safer zones in the valley for return of K.P's. Our young and youth activists revolted, consolidated themselves, converged and declared separate Home land for 7 lakh displaced K.P's on right side of river Jhelum, with union territory status, through another convention Marg Darshan 1991 Resolution at Abhinav theater Jammu and a new forceful group sprouted called, Pannun Kashmir. This group it may be recorded displayed much needed determination and worked hard at the National & International levels, in scuttling the disinformation campaign let loose by Pak & ISI against the K.P community.

All India Kashmiri Samaj, AIKS, a confederating apex body of all K.P Sanasthas, Sabhas, Samitis, Associations, Forums all over the country and abroad/ overseas at UK & USA had to face a new challenge as its activities were earlier restricted to K.P's Social & Cultural domains only hither to before. It has its record of providing much needed succor in the rehabilitation of the displaced campers at Jammu & the Educational/Medical assistance to the most deserving cases of our displaced children/adolescents including the destitute's. A trust under the ambit of Samaj-AIKS Trust was set up with the sole objective of helping the displaced in the economic rehabilitation. Here it may be mentioned that there is a need for setting up an executive apparatus for the intense coordination between AIKS & AIKS Trust.

Many other K.P Organisations, Displaced K.P community in camps, groups & K.P alliance associations sprouted out at Jammu/Delhi with perhaps their local compulsions & needs or in many cases partly because of the inherent mechanisms of the powers that be instrumentalising them diluting the main issues of K.Ps return & rehabilitation. The main Organisations pleading vociferously the cause of displaced K.P's are Jammu Kashmir Vichar Manch, JKVM, All Kashmiri Pandit Solidarity Conference (AKPSC). Others are by & large camp oriented as, All Migrants Camp Coordination Committee, Kul Hind Nov Soan Kashmir Front, Kashmir Secular Alliance (KSA),

Youth wing AIKS; Kashmiri Hindu Conference, Kashmiri Hindu youth Forum, Vistapit Yuva Vikas Sangathan & the like.

In this dispensation of diaspora the K.P organisation & Sanasthas who stood already established & those sprouted out after exodus with most of the Sabhas having by now set up Kashmiri Bhawans, stand as symbols of our ethenic belongingness, recognition & K.P identity. Our growing generations who are alien to KOSHUR Language and devoid of any awareness about our rich socio-cultural traditions, customs, rituals, festivals, Kashmiri Food & cousins are acclimatised with our rich heritage by participating in Hawans, on important festivals & cultural Programmes & activities. Sabhas/Samati's are our strong community centers where from our deep-rooted grievances are highlighted and serve a platform for our intimate interpersonal, inter-social relationships. They are the strong catalysts for providing the placements to our educated unemployed and if properly planed serve as nerve centers for providing productive vocational courses, placement Bureaus, the latest & updated occupational futuristic trends and information of the entire world of work.

An analysis of the perspective and the objective of all Sabhas, Samitis, Associations arising out of displaced K.P Migrant Camps at Jammu/Udhampur Delhi vis-a-vis, All India Kashmiri Samaj concerning our Rehabilitation & future survival, our inalienable right to return to valley with dignity & honour with all our riders of Constitutional, political, economic social, religious, guarantees in contrast to the strong perspective & slogan of Pannun Kashmir of our Return entirely in a different Geophysical formation in separate Homeland in the valley with union territory status have been all along a differing perception that persists right from the historical Marg Darshan-91

Resolution. This controversy is eating the vitals of our displaced community particularly in camps who for their own compulsions are lured by the powers that be and their hirelings promising jobs to the unemployed youths, security & logistics with all fake & false mechanisms create all erosions to a well resolute determinations of these strong activists.

This controversy needs to be resolved once for all by according a fair representation to all groups among the camps, K.P Sanasthas, / Sabhas / Samiti's / Associations / Pannun Kashmir/ all the emerging K.P group & Forums and also representation from overseas organisations in UK/USA under the aegis of All India Kashmiri Samaj, and strongly chart out a common programme and fix perfectly agenda concerning our Return and Rehabilitation, Future Survival, Self-Reliant agendas, its layout & execution with utmost dedication & conviction with viable conceptual framework which has been thoroughly discussed & deliberated at EC/AGM, at Chandigarh Jammu & Bangalore. A follow-up action is already under way by organising a conclave of executives under the aegis of AIKS. The scope of this conclave can further be widened with setting up of All India K.P Council of personnel of eminence relating to Hi-Tech Information Technology, Management, Industry, Medicine, Agriculture, Engineering, Academics etc. A small beginning but calculated one be made and pushed forward after preparing the blue-prints phase-wise, targetwise in setting up the Institute (S) and selecting the appropriate occupational oriented courses in accordance with the latest occupational trends deliberating over the operational strategies in exploring & augmenting the resources within & outside the community in terms of Men, Material & Money & the overall executions. Let the AIKS provide lead & directions and leave the community project (S) to the Council to take care of it independently.

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ALL INDIA KASHMIRI SAMAJ, (AIKS) : A BRIEF HISTORY

— Edited by *Mr. Vijay Saqi, New Delhi*

AIKS was founded in March 1980 with Justice P. N. Bakshi as its founder President in Allahabad. The initial objective being to set up an all India body of Kashmiri Pandits with all the associations and Sabhas of the community, operating in different parts of the country. The Central Body had identified areas of work :

- i) Helping young men and women in securing employment.
- ii) Securing suitable matches for boys and girls of marriageable ages, within the community.
- iii) Taking measures and issuing instruction to deprecate evils of dowry system.
- iv) Co-ordinate with various Kashmiri Samities/Associations, based in various places in India and abroad, where Kashmiri families have migrated and exist in large numbers.
- v) Arrange annual meetings at All India level, where it would give opportunities to representatives of affiliate associations, to come together socially and understand each other's problems and remedial measures.
- vi) Get into contact with Kashmiris, living and employed in various parts of the world. Helping in securing admission for their children in Indian Colleges / Universities, as well as helping in making suggestion with regard to nuptial engagements. Residents of foreign countries would also prove helpful to local members of Kashmiri Community in various ways.

The affiliation of associations to All India Kashmiri Samaj was voluntary which continues till date and there would be no compulsion on any unit/affiliate, to join the Central Body.

The constitution was adopted at the IInd Conference of AIKS, held at Calcutta, on 27th/28th December, 1980. It was a historic conference where many decisions were taken in the interest of the community. Later overseas Kashmiri Pandits were made members. The Samaj later initiated move and was a catalyst in setting up Sabhas/Samities of Kashmiri Pandits, where they were in good numbers without an Association. This facilitated better representation of the Kashmiri Baradari in the AIKS.

Initially AIKS focused on social and cultural ventures, restricting its role to providing relief, educational and medical facilities and extended a helping hand to the deserving members of the community. In 1984 **Col. P. N. KAK took over as president of AIKS.** The Samaj widened its activities by playing greater attention to various issues affecting Kashmiris, within the J&K State. **Dr. N. L. ZUTSHI took over as**

president in 1987. A number of meetings of the Executive Committee of the AIKS were held, touching upon the problems and constraints facing AIKS the community. Short term and long term plans and targets were drawn and implemented. **Brig. R. N. MADDAN became president of the All India Body in 1990.** He emphasized the need for consolidation and interaction of all existing affiliated units, setting up units where they were not in existence, and reactivating the inactive units. Marriage Bureau Cells were also set up at Allahabad, Delhi, Bombay and Varanasi, with a view to ensuring marriages of Kashmiri boys and girls within the community.

Shri D. N. Munshi was elected president in July 1991. It was a period when in the aftermath of the forced exodus of 1990, a great calamity had befallen on the K. P. Community in Kashmir, on account of disastrous activities of terrorists, inspired and abetted by Pakistan, forcing them to leave their homes and hearths and take shelter in Jammu, Delhi and other states of India, as refugees in their own country. Realising that over 58000 K.P. families including over 3 lakh children, men and women, old sick and infirm, cultured, peace loving, had been uprooted by fierce fanatics from flourishing homes, languishing in desolate places, deprived of basic human rights, passing their days and nights in sub-human conditions, apathy of Central and State Governments, in taking appropriate steps for restoration of normalcy, crucial problems being faced by the displaced community, condemned to live without succour and hope, the AIKS and its affiliates, in India and abroad, took various steps in pooling resources, to rescue the peace-loving, educated and cultured community, fallen on adversity, to rise and stand on their own as creative proud human beings. The AIKS drew-up action plans, appointed several expert autonomous committees, to offer suggestion in fashioning a new and creative future for the beleaguered community.

For the first time, the AIKS had its regular office at D-90, Sarojini Nagar, New Delhi-110023. Earlier the office of AIKS functioned from Kashmir Bhawan, Amar Colony and thereafter, from a small premises in South Extension, New Delhi. AIKS was successful in getting established as a Nodal Cell, concentrating on extracting from the Govt. authorities promises for implementation of programmes of relief, rehabilitation and welfare. For publicising its activities, the AIKS made use of its own organ NAAD as well as KOSHUR SAMACHAR. The most important among these steps was the setting up of the high

profile AIKS Advisory Council, Comprising of eminent and experienced members of the Community, from different walks of life, intellectuals, administration, educationists, diplomats, legal luminaries, defence top-brass, writers and others of national stature.

One of the major tasks attempted was the establishment of the AIKS TRUST, as an important arm of the AIKS. A Trust Deed was drawn up and vetted by legal experts, for community requirements, eventually setting up the Trust as a registered deed, which came into operation w.e.f. February 26, 1993. In short, AIKS TRUST, sponsored by AIKS, is a TRUST for supporting approved programmes from AIKS and its affiliates. Programmes of the Trust include :

- a) Students support programmes (School education)
- b) Secretarial practices Training Centres.
- c) Craft Training-cum-production Centres.
- d) Assistance for technical and professional courses
- e) Assistance for pursuing college education
- f) Working Women's hostel at Noida
- g) Assistance in group marriages
- h) Assistance in group Yagnopavits
- i) Financial assistance on medical ground
- j) Financial assistance to helpless, indigent, widows, displaced persons

SHRI J. N. KAUL took over as president in April 1994. A doyen in the field of social service in India and abroad, continues to head a vast network of SOS Children's Villages in India, a voluntary international social service organisation, dedicated to the cause of deprived children. During the presidentship of Shri J. N. Kaul (Padmashri), a lot was achieved, especially in the area of assistance to the most needy in the community, reaching out to large number of displaced persons, residing in various camps in and around Jammu, who needed financial assistance in various forms, help extended to young men and women in carving out their careers for themselves, after intensive training and placement.

Financial help was also rendered in organising mass Yagnopavits and solemnising the marriages of grown up boys and girls.

Hosted by Kashmiri Sewak Samaj, Fardabad, the AIKS under the presidentship of Sh. J. N. Kaul, held a two days conference, in the first week of May, 1994 in which presidents and General secretaries of all affiliates and other special invitees, participated. The following resolutions were adopted :

We will return to Kashmir : Yes, but when it is fully integrated with India, where we can live without fear and with dignity and honour, where we can preserve our identity and culture.

Any attempt to manipulate us and to disrupt our unity by an individual or a group/agency, will be fought

with all our might. In this hour of crisis, we must stand united, if we have to survive.

In collaboration with Kashmiri Pandit Sabha Jammu, AIKS organised a K. P. Conclave at Jammu, on 9th & 10th September 1995. The issues concerning the community were discussed in detail.

AIKS and its various affiliates, organised a meeting on 20-03-1996, at Kashmir Bhawan, New Delhi where the proposal of the government to send back KP's to valley in security zones was rejected.

SH. M. K. KAW took over as president on 15th March, 2003. Consequent upon being elected as President, Shri M. K. Kaw, stated that Kashmiri Pandit, the victims of a genocidal mania were facing one of the most agonising periods in their history. The community had to be ever vigilant and alert, and respond proactively to the emerging situations, seeking support of all National Parties, to solve their problems and primarily look after the interests of the displaced community. He dwelt on the need for evolving a common strategy to work on a minimum agenda which could then be pursued with the Govt. and various political parties.

He announced the plan of action for the next three years :

1. Build up the office and infrastructure of the AIKS so as to give it a solid foundation.
2. Create a democratic system of functioning through Committees and panels, which report to each other.
3. Take all decisions by consensus.
4. Institute Constitutional reforms.
5. Build a sound financial base.
6. Implement a programme for the amelioration of the condition of Kashmiri Pandits in general and those in distress (in camps and non-camps) in particular.
7. Formulate and implement a programme for development of the community and social reforms, especially in the context of issues relating to women and children.
8. Formulate a realistic national policy on Kashmir and Create a political consensus for its adoption and implementation.
9. Convert the AIKS into the single moderate, mainstream voice of Kashmiri Pandits and try to forge a concensus in between the persons and parties, holding different shades of opinion.
10. Delegate functions and powers to zonal and unit levels, so as to ensure better monitoring and coordination among the associates and other units.

A two day National Executive Meet of AIKS, having delegates from various affiliates including Mumbai, Bangalore, Varanasi, Delhi, Chandigarh, Faridabad, Udhampur and Jammu, was held on 20th & 21st Sept.

profile AIKS Advisory Council, Comprising of eminent and experienced members of the Community, from different walks of life, intellectuals, administration, educationists, diplomats, legal luminaries, defence top-brass, writers and others of national stature.

One of the major tasks attempted was the establishment of the AIKS TRUST, as an important arm of the AIKS. A Trust Deed was drawn up and vetted by legal experts, for community requirements, eventually setting up the Trust as a registered deed, which came into operation w.e.f. February 26, 1993. In short, AIKS TRUST, sponsored by AIKS, is a TRUST for supporting approved programmes from AIKS and its affiliates. Programmes of the Trust include :

- a) Students support programmes (School education)
- b) Secretarial practices Training Centres.
- c) Craft Training-cum-production Centres.
- d) Assistance for technical and professional courses
- e) Assistance for pursuing college education
- f) Working Women's hostel at Noida
- g) Assistance in group marriages
- h) Assistance in group Yagnopavits
- i) Financial assistance on medical ground
- j) Financial assistance to helpless, indigent, widows, displaced persons

SHRI J. N. KAUL took over as president in April 1994. A doyen in the field of social service in India and abroad, continues to head a vast network of SOS Children's Villages in India, a voluntary international social service organisation, dedicated to the cause of deprived children. During the presidentship of Shri J. N. Kaul (Padmashri), a lot was achieved, especially in the area of assistance to the most needy in the community, reaching out to large number of displaced persons, residing in various camps in and around Jammu, who needed financial assistance in various forms, help extended to young men and women in carving out their careers for themselves, after intensive training and placement.

Financial help was also rendered in organising mass Yagnopavits and solemnising the marriages of grown up boys and girls.

Hosted by Kashmiri Sewak Samaj, Fardabad, the AIKS under the presidentship of Sh. J. N. Kaul, held a two days conference, in the first week of May, 1994 in which presidents and General secretaries of all affiliates and other special invitees, participated. The following resolutions were adopted :

We will return to Kashmir : Yes, but when it is fully integrated with India, where we can live without fear and with dignity and honour, where we can preserve our identity and culture.

Any attempt to manipulate us and to disrupt our unity by an individual or a group/agency, will be fought

with all our might. In this hour of crisis, we must stand united, if we have to survive.

In collaboration with Kashmiri Pandit Sabha Jammu, AIKS organised a K. P. Conclave at Jammu, on 9th & 10th September 1995. The issues concerning the community were discussed in detail.

AIKS and its various affiliates, organised a meeting on 20-03-1996, at Kashmir Bhawan, New Delhi where the proposal of the government to send back KP's to valley in security zones was rejected.

SH. M. K. KAW took over as president on 15th March, 2003. Consequent upon being elected as President, Shri M. K. Kaw, stated that Kashmiri Pandit, the victims of a genocidal mania were facing one of the most agonising periods in their history. The community had to be ever vigilant and alert, and respond proactively to the emerging situations, seeking support of all National Parties, to solve their problems and primarily look after the interests of the displaced community. He dwelt on the need for evolving a common strategy to work on a minimum agenda which could then be pursued with the Govt. and various political parties.

He announced the plan of action for the next three years :

1. Build up the office and infrastructure of the AIKS so as to give it a solid foundation.
2. Create a democratic system of functioning through Committees and panels, which report to each other.
3. Take all decisions by consensus.
4. Institute Constitutional reforms.
5. Build a sound financial base.
6. Implement a programme for the amelioration of the condition of Kashmiri Pandits in general and those in distress (in camps and non-camps) in particular.
7. Formulate and implement a programme for development of the community and social reforms, especially in the context of issues relating to women and children.
8. Formulate a realistic national policy on Kashmir and Create a political consensus for its adoption and implementation.
9. Convert the AIKS into the single moderate, mainstream voice of Kashmiri Pandits and try to forge a concensus in between the persons and parties, holding different shades of opinion.
10. Delegate functions and powers to zonal and unit levels, so as to ensure better monitoring and coordination among the associates and other units.

A two day National Executive Meet of AIKS, having delegates from various affiliates including Mumbai, Bangalore, Varanasi, Delhi, Chandigarh, Faridabad, Udhampur and Jammu, was held on 20th & 21st Sept.

2003, in which different facets of problems faced by Kashmiri Pandits, particularly by those living in camps, were deliberated upon. A delegation of the AIKS visited the migrant camps at Muthi and Nagrota, to have a first hand knowledge about the prevailing conditions in the camps. The delegation was headed by President of AIKS, Shri M. K. Kaw and took up the issues of concern with the authorities. Kaw held meetings with the President, Prime Minister, Home Minister, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister and other dignitaries and discussed the issues and problems facing the community with them. A national Policy on Kashmir was prepared. Some of its highlights are :

- a) The Kashmir problem is not about territory. It is not about Pakistan getting hold of the Kashmir Valley. It is about the Pakistan-dream of dismembering India and creating Nizam-e-Mustafa in the whole sub-continent.
- b) Pakistan will not stop bleeding India, even if Kashmir is handed over to it on a platter. They want the rest of India too.
- c) India's strategy should be to destroy the entire infrastructure of terror in the Valley and across the border if necessary, through, preemptive strikes, so that Pandits can return en-masse and be once again India's visible secular symbol in the Valley.
- d) Kashmir is an inseparable part of India. India has to reorient her perceptions, reinvent strategies and rediscover the will and courage to survive as a nation. If Kashmir goes, it will be the beginning of the end of India's sovereignty and integrity.

With the help of affiliates and well wishers of Kashmiri Pandits, International Community was also mobilised in favour of KP's.

Three American Senators Michal W. Honda, Sherrod Brown and Jim Mc Dermott joined Kashmiri Pandits in observing the Martyrs Day (2004). In their messages on the occasion Jim Mc Dermott said that he whole heartedly supports this solemn observance. Mr. Sherrod Brown says no people in South Asia have suffered more than Kashmiri Pandits. This community has been brutalised by the fundamentalists, disguised as freedom fighters, leading to mass exodus of the community. It is my sincere hope that the world community will not forget the Human Rights abuses suffered by Kashmiri Pandits and it must not fail to protect their thousands of year's old culture and ancestral heritage.

Led by President, Sh. M. K. Kaw, an AIKS delegation had a meeting with Dr. Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister, on 29-10-2004. The delegation appraised the P.M. of their perception regarding the ongoing dialogue process and role of Kashmiri Pandits. The P.M. assured the delegation that all their genuine demands including the employment package, the relief and rehabilitation problems, issues confronting Pandits still living in the Valley, would be looked into.

The two days global conference of K.P's held on 18th & 19th Dec. 2004 in Bangalore gave mandate to the AIKS to decide for an honorable and dignified return of Kashmiri Pandits, living in exile since 1990, with constitutional guarantees, ensuring their political, economic, social and cultural rights. The conference made it amply clear that the Pandits will return to the Valley in wholesale and not in piecemeal, when the conditions are conducive and entire infrastructure of terror is demolished. It also stressed the modernisation of all "madrasas" and "maqtabs" preaching religious disharmony.

The conference placed on record its gratitude and appreciation for the graciousness shown by the Karnataka Govt. headed by Sh. Dharam Singh, for announcing a grant of Rs. 25 lacs for the construction of Kashmiri Bhawan, housing a cultural and Research Centre and reservations in educational institutions. The two days conference was organised by the AIKS in collaboration with its Bangalore affiliate, Kashmiri Hindu Samiti, (Karnatak) Regd. It also resolved that the President of the AIKS, Shri M. K. Kaw should represent the community in the Parliament. It urged the Govt. to nominate Sh. Kaw to the Rajya Sabha, as promised by the P.M. and demanded changes in the constitution, to ensure representation to the Pandits in the Parliament, J&K legislature, Union Cabinet and J&K Council of Ministers.

Led by President AIKS Sh. M. K. Kaw, AIKS delegation held a series of meetings with senior diplomats in American Embassy and British High Commission in New Delhi. The delegation expressed serious concern over the silence of west on the human rights situation of Kashmiri Pandits, now living in 16th year of their exile, in their own country. It was the hard work and focus of the AIKS office bearers that Sushma Chowdhary committee accepted all the demands of the community put forth by AIKS.

18 Recommendations of the Sushma Chaudhary Committee Report on displaced Kashmiris were accepted by the Prime Minister.

AIKS official organ Naad was given a face lift in both content and presentation and by now it has emerged as the voice of the community. Several Special issues are the hall mark of this monthly magazine, now a house hold name. The subscription base of the magazine has increased manifold. The Samaj is now publishing the first Kashmir literary magazine VAAKH in Devnagri script. It was released at a largely attended impressive function in Pamposh Enclave School premises, on 29th october, 2005 by Sh. M. K. Kaw. Underlining the need of preserving Kashmiri language and its distinct culture, Shri Kaw cautioned that K. P's will lose their individuality if enough steps are not taken to pressurise and protest its identity. A poetry symposium in Kashmiri was organised on the Occasion.

Another impressive function was held in Jammu for release of VAAKH. Senior poet Shri Kashi Nath Bhagwan released it and vice president AIKS Sh. A. K. Deewani explained the aims and objectives of the magazine and assured that the Samaj will make all out efforts to make the magazine more attractive and presentable.

Friends of Kashmir

AIKS has formulated a forum of Friends of Kashmir. It Consists of Members of Parliament and other people of eminence besides members of Jammu and Kashmir legislature. In the first meeting held at India International Centre Annex, over 100 persons participated during the month of Feb, 2005, with Friends of Kashmir.

The AIKS has published the document on the National Policy on Kashmir and circulated the same, to all the affiliates, national political parties, State Governments and the central Govt.

The issue of deletion of names of K.P's from the electoral roles in J&K was taken up with the election commission in 2005. The E. C. assured the AIKS that it would extend the date upto 31-10-2005. The E. C. while identifying with the issues raised by the AIKS sought co-operation of the apex body (AIKS) to work as a nodal agency for revision of electoral rolls for K. P. migrants, over the length and breadth of the country.

The revised constitution of the AIKS has also been published and circulated to all the affiliates of AIKS in India and abroad, for their information and guidance.

AIKS also prepared and published 'An agenda for social reform' and circulated the same for guidance and follow-up. It focuses several pressing social issues facing the community.

AIKS National Placement Bureau

As a result of establishing AIKS National Placement Bureau, quite a number of qualified displaced youth, have been able to secure gainful employment. From time to time, lists of candidates, in need of jobs, indicating their qualifications, are published in NAAD. Besides information of vacancies in different offices, Govt. and private, is also published in the column of NAAD, to enable the job-seekers to apply for employment.

Draft of Temple Bill

On initiative from the AIKS, draft of a Temple Bill was adopted by the National Conference, which has been introduced as a private members' Bill in the last session of the legislative assembly of J&K state. There is growing support for the Bill and it is likely to become a law in near future.

AIKS petition seeking relief for the displaced community members has been admitted by the Supreme Court of India and State and the central government have been asked to file their replies in 40 days.

A two day conclave of the apex body was held in Chandigarh in collaboration with Kashmiri Sahayak Sabha Chandigarh where future streagy for the apex body was given a firm shape.

This year AIKS is celebrating its Silver Jubilee year; 24 stalwarts were honoured at a function in Delhi in October 2006. Many more are being honoured in Kolkata session on 24th and 25th of December. A "Musharra in Kashmiri was the highlight of the award ceremony which remains unparalleled in the history of the Capital.

AIKS – APEX Body – Upholder of vision of plurality

In brief, the AIKS is now an apex body of over 60 federating units of Kashmiris in India and abroad. It is a democratic, forward looking organisation, primarily devoted to resolving various problems, facing Kashmiris, living in camps and non-camp areas, in Delhi, Jammu and other places. Victims of a genocidal drive, the Kashmiri Pandits lay emphasis on dignified return to the Valley, as its central task. The AIKS and its affiliates are trying their best to resolve the complex issue in cooperation with the majority community in Kashmir, if possible. The AIKS considers that the major hurdle in the accomplishment of the desired objective, is the present mindset of a section of the majority community in the state, which is totally alien to the deeply humanitarian ethos of Kashmiri. The fundamentalist, divisive and regressive religious trend introduced by Jamat-i-Islami, has dealt a lethal blow to the centuries old unity and solidarity of Kashmiries. The fundamentalists are today the advanced guard of Pakistan's proxy war in Kashmir.

The AIKS also believes that without defeating Pakistan/POK based insurgency, both militarily and politically, a congenial atmosphere cannot be created for the return of Kashmiri Pandits to their homeland and to ensure their safety and rehabilitation. The survival of Kashmiri Pandits and their safety and rehabilitation in Kashmir, is a national problem.

The AIKS looks at the problem in the context of India's abiding faith in multilingual, multi-cultural and multi-religious character of the Republic of India. India survives when its plurality survives.

The apex body has a blue print of the plan of action ready for the next three years. Under the dynamic leadership of Sh. Kaw, AIKS will continue to scale new heights to ensure better future for the community in exile.

The author is the Editor of the NAAD, the official organ of A. I. K. S. This article is the edited version of the document drafted by Shri L. C. Kaul a founder member of A.I.K.S. & ex-secretary of A.I.K.S., Trust.

THE BOOK OF LIFE

— By *Hira Lal Wangnoo*, New Delhi

'When you read the book which is yourself, there is not the reader and the book separate from you. The book is you.'

Are you aware that the Autobiography of each one of us – our own book of life — is being written on the pages of time? Everyday is a page. Every year is a chapter.

Examine the chapters which have already been written. Do they reveal a person who has been so Kind, Serene, Humane, Secure, without fear, Cheerful, Generous, Helpful, Self-confident, Humble? Or a person who has been Unkind, Intolerant, Petty, Greedy, Egoistic, Jealous, Spiteful, Insecure, Fearful, always grouching and complaining?

Does your book of life satisfy you, or would you wish to suppress it? Read quietly, sensitively, the pages already written. Are you pleased with those pages? Or are you Ashamed? Have you known yourself by self observation or have you lived your life mechanically, selfishly, in a disorderly way, blind to your own habits and characteristics?

Will you improve the chapters that are to follow? Will you make the ending better than the beginning?

Visualise your thoughts being recorded in your book of life. See your words and deeds and relationships being inscribed on its pages. Moment by moment, the story of your life is being written. If you are quietly, objectively alert, you can observe your thoughts and actions. As skill in self-observation improves, self-knowledge increases. Self-observation and self-knowledge lead to a clear comprehension about the causes and consequences of one's actions. This makes us aware of which action is right one some time in the future. Thus, ultimately, preceptive insight itself results in the right action at the right moment.

You say kind words, Do helpful things, have courage, stand up for the right, keep your word. You care for people. You become a giver instead of a taker, A builder instead of a destroyer. You are calm and serene.

It is your own book of life. It is upto you to write it as you will. Day by day your book grows towards the completed volume of your life. You cannot do anything about what you have already written. But, look at those white pages ahead! They invite you to make the rest of the chapters deeply satisfying by acting rightly in the present. The potential 'is within you. Make it a fine piece of work'.

The author is the Vice President of AIKS.

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SECTION-II

SABHAS, SAMAJ AND SAMELLAN – A MANTRA FOR KASHMIRI PANDIT SOLIDARITY

SABHAS : FOR PROMOTING WELFARE,
PRESERVING IDENTITIES AND
IMPLEMENTING MINIMUM
COMMON PROGRAMME, AT
LOCAL LEVELS IN GLOBAL
DIASPORA

KASHMIRI PANDIT SABHA, AMBPHALLA, JAMMU

—By *Triloki Nath Khosa, Jammu*

The KP Sabha, Jammu has a meaningfully secular and consistently non-controversial history of nearly a century. It is, perhaps, the oldest registered organisation of Kashmiri Pandits; then mostly Government employees under the Dogra regime. The system of Darbar Move, introduced by the Dogra rulers, would bring sizable KPs to Jammu with the Darbar Move, for the winter months. The KP employees, generally moving without their families, would remain confined to Jammu for the six months of the winter; visits to valley were very difficult because of the treacherous road journey that would normally take two days to reach Srinagar from Jammu. Generally, because of heavy snow and frequent landslides, the Banihal Cart Road would remain blocked, at times, for months together, during the winter season. A subtle feeling of homesickness and isolation on the part of the KP employees, stationed in Jammu, was therefore a natural phenomenon. That must have been the basic cause for them to nurse an idea to form themselves into a socio-cultural organisation in Jammu. Thus, it was in 1913 AD that the Kashmiri Sahayak Sabha was formed and an office accommodation for it hired, at Rs. 3/- per month, at Shalimar Road Jammu. Soon thereafter, the Sabha under the slightly modified name of Kashmiri Pandit Sahayak Sabha, was formally registered under the Command Order No : 8489 dated 21.02.1914 of His Highness Maharaja Pratap Singh Ji. Subsequently, in 1916, the Sabha was renamed as Kashmiri Pandit Sabha, Jammu.

Serious riots broke out in the valley in July 1931 in which KPs became the worst target. They suddenly felt their vulnerability to communal frenzy. With the formation of Muslim Conference by Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah in 1932 and with the beginning of fermentation of communal politics by the die-hard zealots, discontent and exasperation of KPs got further intensified. That subsequently found expression in the form of an agitation/movement spearheaded by the young KP youths, mostly unemployed. Around the same time, need was also felt for enforcing social reforms within the community as a result of which the Women's Welfare Trust came into being in the valley. A clarion call was given for enforcing social reforms including a call for replacement of Pheran by Sari by the KP women to give them an emancipated look as also freedom from the shackles of misplaced conventions. Slogans for widow marriage and against dowry were also raised. Out of this upheaval of the community that had a little bit of churning effect too, Pt Kashyap Bandhu was allowed to emerge as a leader. The KP Sabha Jammu became an effective integral part of the movement. As a sequel to the formation of Women's Welfare Trust in the valley, the KP Women's League was

formed in Jammu, under the Presidentship of Mrs. Deviki Koul.

In November 1932, KP Sabha, Jammu purchased a piece of land measuring 64 Marlas, for Rs. 668/- from one Badr-u-din. In 1934, a community hall, named Kashyap Niwas, was built, under the Presidentship of Pt. Iqbal Krishen Dhar and supervision of Pt. Maheshwar Nath Koul, at a cost of Rs. 3500/- (which included Rs. 2500 collected as donation for the purposes). Almost all the KP employees along with their families had engaged themselves in Kar-Seva for raising this construction. Some of them had donated bricks and other building material that they would carry on their heads to the site. In 1944, Raja Upinder Krishen Koul, the then Governor of Jammu, donated Rs. 2100/- for construction of a boundary wall of the Sabha premises. The KP Sabha became a centre of socio-cultural activities of the KPs in Jammu. The Sharika Temple was constructed in the Sabha premises in July/August 1951 and magnificent idols of Lord Shiva and Lord Ganesha were installed therein, in 1954. With the construction of the temple, the activities of the Sabha got extended to fulfill the religious aspirations too of the KPs as also of other Hindus living in its vicinity. Subsequently, in 1960, the Maha Laxmi Temple was constructed and Murti of Shri Mata Ragnya was installed therein by the side of an improvised spring, to give it a look of a replica of Tullamulla Asthapan of the valley. Later on, a magnificent Ram Darbar was set up, on the other side of the main Sharika Temple. Bairaw Nath Temple was also shaped which exists in the outer complex of Sabha. This place is used for Hawans and Yegnopavit ceremonies too. Raising of these additional temples provided an added momentum to the religious activities of the Sabha. With all the important festivals like Hurra-Ashtami (as an important part of Maha Shivaratri Festival), Navareh, Zangatrai, Navratra as a whole, Bhairav Janam-Din-Puja, Raksha Bhandan, Janma Ashtami etc having come to be held/celebrated with all fervour and enthusiasm in the Sabha premises, number of visitors to the Sabha went on increasing quite appreciably. Simultaneously, the Sabha had also undertaken to provide Mrityu-Samagri to the people on no profit no loss basis. All these activities made KP Sabha a hub of socio-cultural and religious activities in Jammu, not only for the KPs but also for all the other sections of the Jammu populace.

The KP Sabha shared, substantially and very effectively, the burden of the community which it had to bear in tackling the abduction case of Parmeshori, in 1967, batches of volunteers had gone to Srinagar from Jammu to supplement the efforts of our brethren there, besides arranging rallies and

demonstrations in Jammu itself. The KP Sabha, Jammu again, jumped headlong into the fray in 1986 when our community virtually faced "Trial Exodus" as a preparatory machination on the part of the "enemy" to push through the "Final Exodus" of 1990.

The year 1990 threw KP Sabha Jammu in an unprecedentedly trying situation. The Exodus was unpredictably so fast, so sudden and so large that an all round confusion erupted on Jammu city streets and other towns. Tens of thousands of our brethren—men and women, young and old, newborn and toddlers, infirm and handicapped—hounded out of their homes and hearths, had to land suddenly in Jammu. Because of being virtually, then, the single sole organisation concerned with the welfare of the KPs, the KP Sabha Jammu had to bear the initial shock of the catastrophe and to plan and execute the immediate relief measures. The onus, therefore, fell directly on the then President of KP Sabha, Dr. Kaushalya Wali who with the help of her trusted associates like Pt. T N Khosa, Pt. B L Bhat, Prof. A N Sadhu, Pt. Ashok Kher, Pt. Kishenji Khosa and Pt. A K Mirza undertook the onerous job of arranging and distributing immediate relief to our distressed and displaced brethren. The influx was quite large; both in magnitude and frequency, and the Govt. assistance was quite inadequate. The KP Sabha volunteers, particularly Pt. T N Khosa and Pt. B L Bhat, pressed their personal vehicles in service for providing immediate succor to the destitute. The Sabha Hall was thrown open for the displaced to take refuge there.

The Sabha lost virtually no time in undertaking to meet the educational needs of the young displaced children, considering the fact that education has been the mainstay of our community. Pt. T N Khosa, immediately after taking over the reigns of the Sabha in 1994 launched a scheme in collaboration with KOA for providing scholarships for undergoing professional courses by the students and also for assistance to school going displaced children to the tune of Rs. 4 crores and 50 Lakhs (on both accounts), provided to hundreds of deserving students thus far. Under yet another programme, initiated by the KOA in collaboration with KP Sabha, the displaced camp children are provided with a financial assistance of Rs. 10,000/- per annum, per child, for prosecuting studies in schools up to and including their 12th class. Both the programmes are still in force.

Besides, a large number of widows are provided monthly pension by the Sabha, Medical-aid is provided to patients admitted in hospitals, and, otherwise also, financial assistance is provided to needy migrants to enable them to perform marriage ceremonies of their daughters. From the year 2004, the Sabha has initiated a new programme, in collaboration with a Non

Kashmiri NRI-NGO, named WIDE USA, under which vocational courses relating to computer learning, refrigeration, dress designing, electrification, beauty treatment etc. are conducted for school dropouts from the camps. These courses are run with the financial assistance of Jan Shiksha Sanasthan (Ministry of HRD) Jammu and Infosys Eyes, Muthi.

The KP Sabha complex is now sprawled over an area of seven Kanals with several building complexes standing thereon. The Kashyap Niwas initially built in 1935, has recently been completely renovated, reshaped, refurnished and wood panelled, during the tenure of the incumbent President, Pt. T N Khosa. It now serves as a beautiful auditorium for holding socio-cultural, religious and literary meets. A huge building complex was raised, during the Presidentship of Dr. Kaushalya Wali on the adjoining piece of land acquired earlier during the Presidentship of Pt. Jagan Nath Bhat. Later on, one more storey was added to it, again during the Presidentship of Pt. T N Khosa, to serve as community centre. The present fair value of the Sabha complex (land and buildings only) is estimated to be Rs. 10 to 15 crores. The current earning of the Sabha, on account of the rental of the shops and buildings, is about Rs. 5 lakhs per annum.

Last but not the least, the KP Sabha, Jammu has earned a name at the global level. Verily, the credit goes to all those who have rendered and continued to render selfless service dispassionately and with a sense of complete detachment, for its integrated development.

It may also need a special mention here that the KP Sabha enjoys uniqueness of having entertained Shrimati Indira Gandhi with tea in a Kashmiri-Pandit-Cup (KHOSU) on the occasion of her visit to the Sabha, in 1977.

The top it all, the KP Sabha, Jammu has also a distinction of having been headed, by the stalwarts and luminaries of our community as detailed below. Pt. Nand Lal Kaul (1914-18), Pt. R. K. Kitchloo (1918-23), Pt. Parmanand (1923-25), Pt. R. C. Pandita (1925-27), Pt. A. C. Dhar (1927-30), Pt. R. B. A. N. Purbi (1930-32), Pt. B. L. Nehru (1932-34), Pt. J. N. Koul (1934-35), Pt. I. K. Dhar (1935-37), Pt. R. L. Kak (1937-1941), Pt. Jia Lal Koul (1941-1945), Pt. S. L. Koul (1945-50), Pt. J. L. Koul (Jalali) (1950-57), Pt. J. L. Kilam (1957-58), Pt. Shiv Narain Fotedar (1963-64), Pt. Prem Nath Koul (1964-70), Pt. Jagar Nath Bhat (1970-81), Pt. Radha Krishen Bhat (1981-85), Pt. T. N. Peshin (1985-89), Pt. Koshalya Wali (Prof.) (1989-94), Pt. T. N. Khosa (1994-). The Sabha has the privilege of being headed currently (for the last more than twelve years) by Pt. T. N. Khosa, an untiringly effective social activist endowed with profound sensitivity and, above all, an unswerving faith in God.

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KASHMIRI PANDIT SABHA - JAMMU



Kashyap Niwas



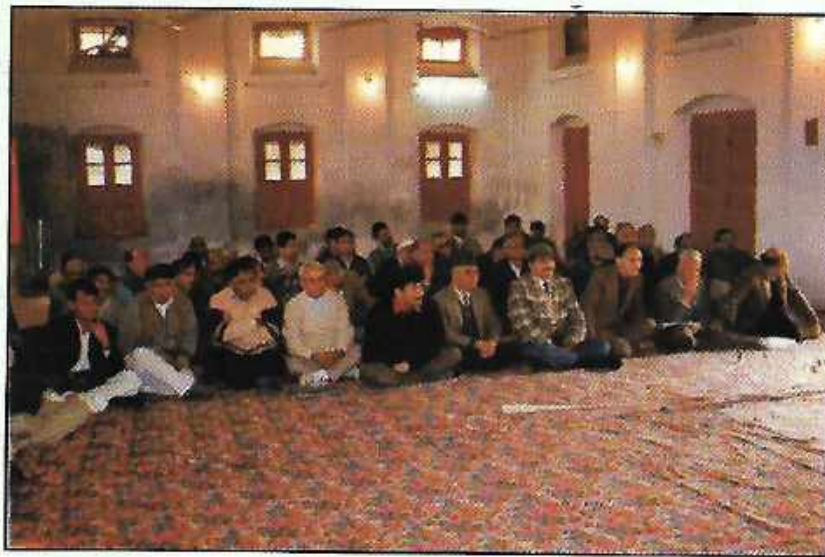
Temple Complex



KASHMIRI PANDIT SABHA - JAMMU



Ladies prayer meeting in Auditorium



General meeting in Auditorium



Working committee members and staffs

KASHMIRI PANDIT SABHA, AMRITSAR

— By Prof. O. N. Bhat, Amritsar

The oldest Kashmiri Pandit Organisation of any sort, Kashmiri Pandit Sabha, Amritsar was founded in 1908 by a group of well meaning and earnest Kashmiri Pandits living in Amritsar. This leading group was activated by one visionary, **Kashmiri Mal Mattoo**, a renowned advocate of his time, in Amritsar. Endowed with keen foresight and equally keen dedication to the cause of the community, he donated a precious plot of land in the hub of city, measuring around 1500 square yards, for building a focal point for the community, in the shape of a Dharmshala along with a **Shivala**. He wanted the community to have a place of interaction and at the same time provide a lodge to the Kashmiri Pandits, visiting Amritsar either on their way to Haridwar and other places or way back. It was in the same year that these visionaries formed themselves into a regular committee under the first **President, Sh. Manohar Lal Kitchloo with Pt. Bishember Nath Shivpuri, Pt. Kashmira Mal Mattoo and Pt. SHANKER Guru**, a pujari, as the members. They built a **Shivala** adjoining a **Dharmshala** with two utility rooms to begin with. These earnest Kashmiri Pandits continued on their untiring efforts and motivated other leading **Kashmiri Pandits, Sh. Ram Nath Tolal, Dr. Shiv Narain Razdan, Sh. Durga Parasd Razdan, Sh. Kailash Nath Tickoo and Sh. Bihari Lal Kitchloo**.

In the year 1916 **Sh. Manohar Lal Kitchloo S/o Sh. Bihari Lal Kitchloo** donated one three-storey building, Thakur Dwar, with two small shops to the **Kashmiri Pandit Sabha**. This building happens to be two kilometers away from the main dharmshala of the Sabha. Here too a **Shivala** was built initially and then whole building came under the control of the Sabha. The Sabha continued to progress under the aegis of the galaxy of far-seeing personalities, all Kashmiri Pandits, in essence. Personal donations, charat at the temple and the rent generated from a few shops, initially built on the road side of the building, helped in meeting the day to day expenses of the **Sabha** and in extending the complex.

The **Sabha** gave itself a working constitution in 1929. However, two amendments were brought about in the original constitution in 1960 and 1974.

The **Sabha** was registered under the name, **Kashmiri Pandit Sabha**, with the Registrar of Societies (No.15, 1956) India, Punjab.

Coming together of the eminent personalities of the town, like **Dr. Shiv Narain Razdan** a health officer of Amritsar, and more so, **Sh. Arjan Nath Mattoo** (an eminent scholar of Sanskrit and english) Principal, Hindu College, Amritsar, gave the **Sabha** a name and an honour. **Dr. Shiv Narain Razdan** got the shops at the main complex built while Principal **Arjan Nath**

Mattoo got yet one adjacent wing added to the complex. The shape and size of the complex was extended and so expanded the domain of the activities of the Sabha. The untiring single-minded mission of these committed people, who laid the edifice of the present complex, has continued to grow into a vibrant and dynamic Socio-cultural organisation.

We remember these far-sighted people reverentially and try to synchronise our **Annual Havan** with the **foundation day celebration**. A commemorative meeting in honor of these noble spirits is held on that day, to remind ourselves of their selfless service to the community and to apprise the younger generation of their stellar role.

The Sabha is at present the nodal center for Socio-Cultural interface of the community as a whole. For an active and fruitful interaction, we reach out to each and every member of community to participate in the affairs of the Sabha. For the intent, we have zealously continued to celebrate the community festivals in traditional style. **Pandit Shakar Guru** the founding member and pujari, had initiated this healthy practice of holding a **Havan**, to give the community a sense of belonging. And we hold the practice very dear to our heart.

"**Zangtrai**" is yet one more occasion to revive the cherished celebration of ages, when Sabha plays host, "**Maluin**", to the Kashmiri women. Every one old and young, gather at the Sabha on the day where the long last "**Cher Chot**" and "**Khewa**", "**Nadar Pakoda**", "**Atha Gath**", "**Zang**", "**Noon**" and other things are reinvented and relived. We are sensitive to our ethnic taste and identity.

The Sabha has been carefully looking after the affairs of the organisation in consonance with the vision of its founding fathers. The main complex consists of :-

1. A **Shivala** with the adjacent **Hanuman Mandir** and **Mata Mandir**.
2. A **Sat sang** hall housing on one of its sides 'moortis' of **Ram Drbar, Laxmi Narain and Radha Krishan**.
3. Nine rooms on the ground floor comprising of :- (1) the meeting hall of the sabha (2) the office (3) two rooms for pujaris (4) five utility rooms (mainly used for yatris)

Besides, there are combined bath rooms and toilets, provided for the ground floor.

1st Floor : we have

- ❖ One big community hall which accommodates about 500 people (dining & meeting).

- ❖ Adjacent the main hall, we have one community Kitchen.
- ❖ Two rooms with bath rooms.
- ❖ Another set of six rooms with attached kitchens and baths

At the second **Shivala** at Katra Dai Singh, we have :

1. At the ground floor a temple with a **Shivala, Durga Mata** and **Radha Krishan**
2. A Sat Sang hall

a) Two rooms with bath and kitchen for Pujari

The Sabha owns **37 shops** built around the complex which along with some rooms on the first floor of the main complex fetch us an amount of Rs. 25,000.00 per month as income and Rs. 20,000.00 as charat and donations.

We have regular staff consisting of one Caretaker/ Manager, One Clerk, Three Pujaris, a sweeper, one peon and sundry others for the smooth function of the trusts.

Our monthly expenses come to around Rs. 40,000.00. Our accounts are transparently maintained and regularly audited by a Chartered Accountant. Besides any member of the Sabha can do a random check of the accounts.

Aims and Objectives

The founding members gave the Sabha a constitution, which enshrines the aims and objectives of the **Sabha** in its preamble.

1. Uphold and perpetuate the culture and tradition of the **Kashmiri Pandit** community.
2. Provide succour to the members of the community in distress.
3. Frequent interaction of the community members over the celebration of the typical festivals like **Shivratri, Navreh, Zang Trai, Janam Ashtami** etc..
4. Guard the interests of the Sabha : social, cultural as well as financial with zeal.
5. Hold regular annual general elections to the posts of the office bearers of the Sabha, which shall comprise of a Governing Council and General Sabha. The Governing Council is a body of eleven trustees with :-
 1. President, 2. Vice President, 3. Secretary General, 4. General Secretary, 5. Cashier, 6. Caretaker/Store Keeper, 7. And five trustees.
8. The activities of the General Sabha are coordinated by the General Secretary of the Sabha, who works in tandem with the Trust

Secretary. Simultaneous with the annual election, the President in consultation with other office bearers forms different committees to look after the various activities of the Sabha, They are

1. Construction and repair work.
2. Help to the needy people.
3. Festival celebration.
4. Yatri welfare.
5. Tenants and legal matters.

Over the years, the Sabha has been doing its best, zealously, to live up to the dream of the founding fathers and work in every possible way to help our biradari members in need. At the present we have eleven trustees and thirty members of the **Sabha**, as migrants, which entitled them to Government help. We also helped them to find temporary means of earning. The **Sabha** has been a home to many aged, lonely and distressed men and women of the community. Even at present we have an old and a lonely lady, properly sheltered and cared for.

Our unit has been proactive in the causes that the community holds very dear and we spare no efforts in trying to mitigate the suffering of members of our community. Our Sabha allots a handsome sum of money in its annual budget to help :

- a) The Needy students in their studies.
- b) Reach out to the very poor families especially migrants and offer them token financial help
- c) arrange board and lodge of the community people who come to Amritsar for treatment of various ailments
- d) arrange medical help for deserving cases

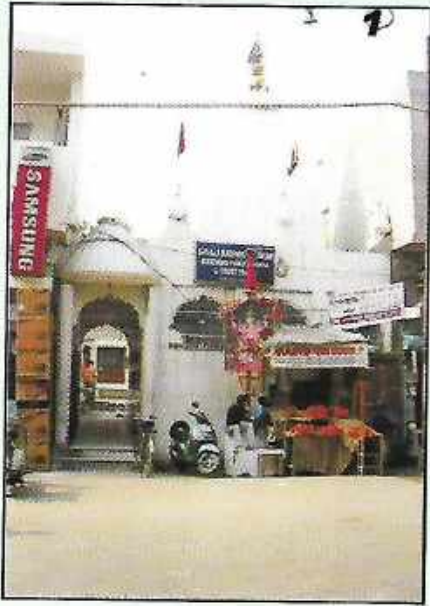
With the each passing year and with each increase in the revenues of the **Sabha** we increase allotment for help in the budget proportionately.

We have so far distributed lakhs of rupees in this noble endeavour and hope to continue increasingly doing so. We are fortunate enough to have amongst us **Shri Durga Nath Koul**, a young octogenarian as life patron. His association with the Sabha has been for more than six decades. His unbounded love and single minded dedication to the cause of the community in general and the interests of the Sabha in particular are phenomenal. Under his overseeing stewardship, the Sabha has grown and developed remarkably well. He reaches out to his well to do friends and collects huge donations for the welfare of the community. Words fail to express the saga of this crusader of the community causes and achievements. We wish him a long long life to be with us.

The author is the Secretary, Kashmiri Pandit Sabha Trust, Amritsar.

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KASHMIRI PANDIT SABHA - AMRITSAR





Sh. Kashmira Mal Mattoo



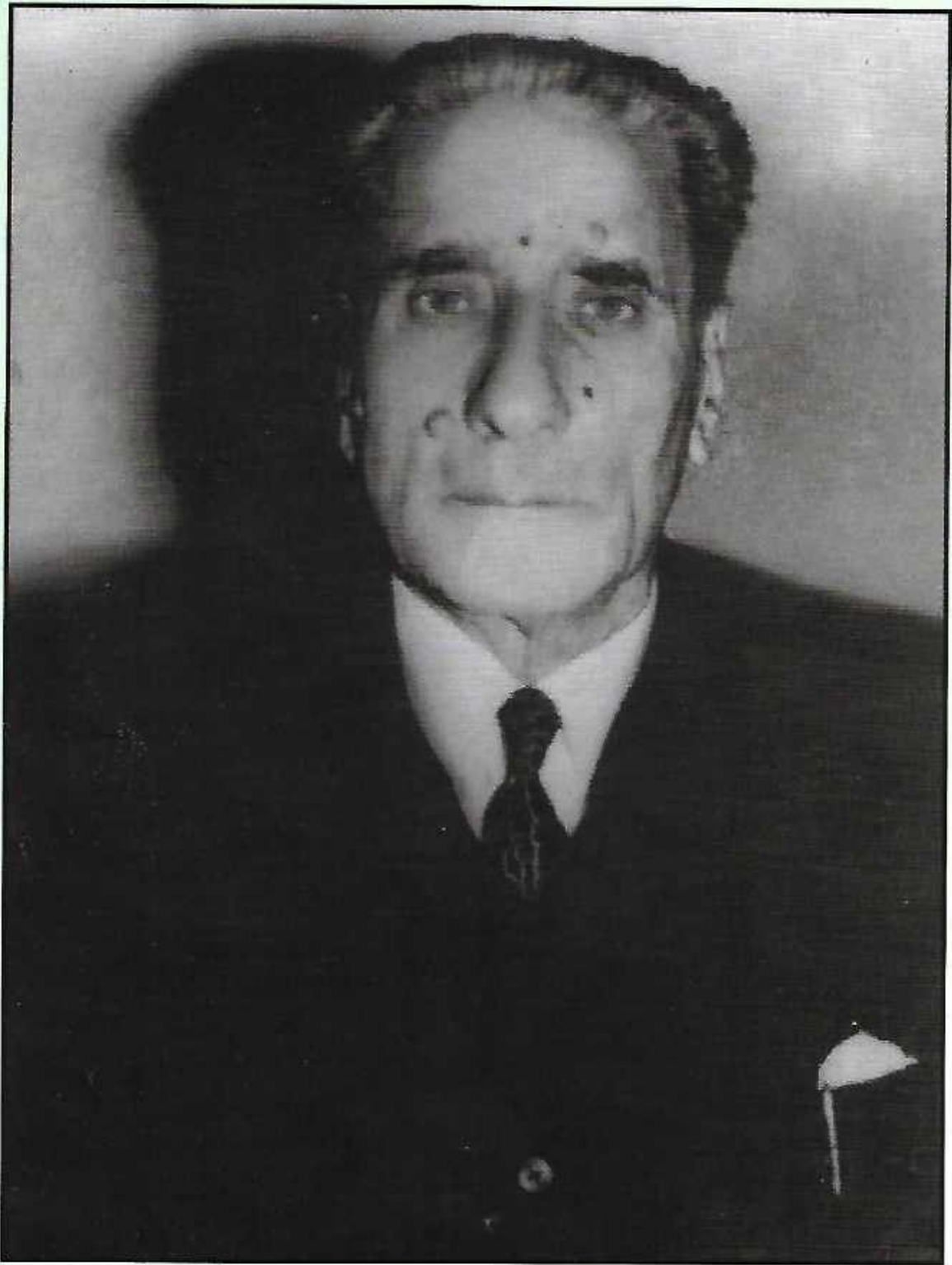
Sh. Arjan Nath Mattoo



Dr. Sh. Narain Razdan

KASHMIRI PANDIT SABHA - AMRITSAR





Shiv Naryan Fotedar

ALL STATE KASHMIRI PANDIT CONFERENCE-SANATAN DHARM YUVAK SABHA

— By J. N. Saproo, Jammu

Kashmiri Pandits are the aborigines of Kashmir for over 6000 years. These Saraswats were reportedly highly skilled and knowledgeable and were greatly interested in religious pursuits as per their own culture, civilisation and spiritualism. Their spiritual bent of mind had reportedly provided them with miraculous powers. The Islamic influence spread in Kashmir around 13th century and this took deep roots because of many reasons, one of these being the violent, fundamentalist and non-tolerant actions of Islamic rulers from time to time. This resulted in severe repercussions, murders, conversions, exodus and insecurity of these aborigines. Over a period of time their insecurity made them cautious about their religious identity. So an organisation namely Sanatan Dharm Sabha was formed to safeguard their interests.

In the year 1925, Sir Hari Singh was crowned as Maharaja of Jammu & Kashmir. These days Pt. Hargopal Koul, lawyer of repute, had taken over as president of S.D.S of Pandits. Sheikh Moh'd Abdulla had already floated Muslim Conference with Moulvi Moh'd Yousuf Shah in an attempt to mitigate the troubles faced by the Muslims and to look after their interests. The time demanded that dynamic steps be taken to ameliorate the lot of the people specially of Muslims. But the Sheikh realised that Muslims who were very backward could not flourish alone unless the doors of Muslim Conference were opened for Hindus as well. So he wanted to convert Muslim Conference into National conference. This too was not agreed upon by Moulvi and others. This made him to come out of Muslim Conference and float a separate body namely National conference, in the year 1931.

Soon an agitation was launched which unfortunately took a different direction, becoming unfavourable for Pandits, who immediately launched a movement and gave it the name 'BREAD MOVEMENT' alias "Roti Agitation". Pt. Kashyap Bandhu ji had already taken over the charge of the Sanatan Dharm Sabha as its president; as an effective writer he had nurtured Martand and as a capable organiser he roped in the youth.

The slogan "HUM KIYA CHAHE-ROTI, ROTI" became common. Bandhuji did understand that unless the mental reformation is brought among the community

members, things could not improve. And he introduced SOCIAL REFORM from the premises of Sheetal Nath the premises and office buildings, provided by Sathu people. This was thus given the name of Sharika Bhawan, Sheetal Nath. To make the social reform an effective movement, children of the age of six and above were organised localitywise, to rally in groups chanting the mantra "*pheran gaw kahre llayen bakh, dapaan dichnam kmeeza sharaak, ditim pyzaar yem samayan mubarak dhoti shilwaran*". Pheran got replaced by Dhoti, Kammez and Shilver. The author of this article, having been influenced by his elder brother, Shri R.K. Saproo, a senior teacher of mathematics, serving a noble cause of educating females through women welfare trust, got enrolled in Bal Vibag in 1931 when he was hardly 6-7 years of age. Bandhuji introduced Hari parbat as "Sharikawaer" and advised the pandits to visit Sharika Peeth Hari Parbat on each Sunday morning.

Time passed on, the pandit community attained Jagriti. This was their only organisation and Martand was the only paper coming out from Kashmir. The reputation and effectiveness of the Sabhas was felt far and wide; the political demand of the community turned into a political struggle. The Sabha was given the name of ALL STATE KASHMIRI PANDIT CONFERENCE SHRI SANATAN DHARM YUVAK SABHA (SDY), SHARIKA BHAWAN SHEETA NATH, SRINAGAR." The Sabha attained dynamic dimension and Sheikh Abdullah of National conference, took every opportunity to tempt Pandits to join his party (NC), though the fundamentalist group from among the majority community was hostile to them. However the Pandits were so united and strong that in each area they combated the attempts of aggression by such hostile elements.

The strength of the Sabha was resting on the unity of the community and every male and female was taken as a member of the S.D.Y. Sabha. The people, for obvious reasons, had established personal contact with this organisation and its leadership. The economic base was strengthened in as much as each family would monthly donate rupee one and "mochiful", some rice for the Sabha. The Martand press and the news paper Martand, also generated some revenue.

Some how personal temptations, changed the scenario. Besides, the future betterment of the Pandit community, warranted Bandhu ji to join National Conference and work with Sheikh. Accordingly he did so. At this stage the Sabha had a strong executive body comprising of Pt. Jialal Kilam, a very popular lawyer; Pt. Srikanth Chakku also a lawyer, P. N. Bakshi, D. N. Kotru, S. N. Daftari, V. L. Sumbly, M. N. Braru, P. N. Bakshi, Tarachand Dassi, Sukhdev Ganjoo, L. N. Dhar, N. N Dhar, Sheo Narayan Fotedar, Janki Nath Bhat, Janki Nath Bhan, both lawyers, and many others, After Bandhuhji's exit, others also preferred to go to national conference. So Pt. J. L. Kilam and P. N. Bazaz also followed the suit.

Now Pt. Sheo Narayan Fotedar was elected as President of the Sabha. He reorganised the youth and the Mahavir Dal, Somyar Dal, Alakshwari Dal, Rainawari Dal, Batyar Dal, Ganpatyar Dal etc. The youth coming from nook and corner of the valley joined different Dal's with different uniforms, and weapons like "Trishul, Gurza or Disk, Barchi" and so on. They watched the interests of the pandits within their localities. The author was heading the youth wing at that time.

In the year 1937 Durga Nag temple Shrine, which was controlled and effectively managed and governed by Shiv Rattan Giri Mahant, had turned into an asset. Rattan Giri fell ill. He formed a TRUST to control the Shrine after his death. When he passed away, the Govtt. came forward to transfer the shrine to Dharmarth Trust. Shri R. C. Kak was the Minister in waiting during Maharaja Hari Singh's time. He wanted to oblige Maharaja. But the Pandits, through S. D. Y Sabha, came forward and S. D. Y. Sabha launched an agitation from Sheetal Nath. The author was also involved as a Satyagrahi in Durga Nag along with Pt. Amarnath Kak, also Satyagrahi of Durga Nag movement. After a month's struggle, when the top leaders of the Pandit community were already under arrest, the case was taken to the court of law. The leaders were released and the Satyagraha ended. The court adjudging the situation, gave the decision in favour of the community and the Govt. lost the case.

By this time the National conference had attained a strong political status with the backing of Indian leaders like Pt. Nehru, Bapuji and others. By this time Shri R. C. Kak had taken over as the Prime Minister of the state. Maharaja had jailed the Sheikh and others, who had given a call for "Quit Kashmir". And in the year 1947 the country was divided and Pakistan had come into existence; Kashmir continued under Maharaja. Pakistan sent Quabalis to invade Kashmir. These invading elements reached nearby Shalteng and bullets pierced the premises of the people living

in Srinagar city. S. D. Y. Sabha stood firm and upheld the enthusiasm of the community.

Many Kashmiri Pandits, who were on duty in Baramulla, Muzaffarabad, Uri and others places where these Quabalis had invaded, lost their lives and some remained untraceable as shri Sarwanand Saheb etc. Pt. Kesho Nath Sodagar, serving in Excise Deptt. at Baramulla, somehow, remained in disguise. The author was at Mirpur/Kotli but some how escaped from there. The military potential of the Maharaja had finished with the death of Brigadier Rajinder Singh. It Seemed that the Quit Kashmir call of National Conference had achieved its results.

Maharaja planned to run away. He got Sheikh and his colleagues released from jail and asked him to forget everything of the past and form the Government and save Kashmir from Pakistan. He also called the president of S. D. Y. Sabha, Pt. Shiv Narayan Fotedar and advised him to save Pandits and equip them with guns for self defence. But here the S. D. Y. Sabha took a decision that they did not want guns, but they would live as they did till then, by virtue of their own ability. If they had taken up guns, their survival would have been hardly for an hour or so. This was a historical and a wise decision. Thus the Maharaja after appointing Sheikh as Emergency Care-taker of the Govt. left with its caravan for Jammu. As a first thing, that was essential, Sheikh approached, with the letter of Maharaja, the central Indian leaders, seeking help to withstand the aggression. So Kashmir was saved.

Then came the Economic Reforms like, "Land to Tillers"; Employment etc. This shattered the economic fibre of the Pandit community. The Pandit community had to face adverse economic, social and political aftermath with severe consequences and this storm could not be resisted. They faced the pinch of discrimination under Sheikh Sahib's leadership. Though National Conference was the ruling party of strength, the S. D. Y. Sabha with Pt. Fotedar as its president, stood firm that unless the NC. Govt. sorts out the problems of Pandits, it will not join National Conference. With the Bakhshi Saheb as a sympathiser, brought understanding between Fotedar and Sheikh. Fotedar was sent as member Parliament, retaining the leadership of the Sabha.

Sheikh Sahab fought for "HINDU MUSLIM SIKH ITIHAD" and organised people in each locality to guard the minorities. The S. D. Y. Sabha took a decision to cooperate with him at such a juncture and the slogans like. "Hamlaawar Khabardar, Hum Kashmiri Hain TAYYAR? Kadam Kadam Challengi Hum Mahaaz per ladeinge Hum, Hindu Muslim Sikh Itihad,

Zindabad, Zindabad" and so on. This was thus done jointly by Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus. But the value and unity of Pandit community had started declining and economic stringency and other related matters had started eating into the vitals of the Sabha. Yet Fotedar Sahab went on maintaining the Sabha. The Martand press got closed "Mochiful" was stopped, and the political affiliations brought division in rank and file of the community. The Sheikh inducted Fotedar as Chairman of the Legislative Council. Yet he remained the President of the Sabha. The author recollects when on Janam Ashtami Day, the function was presided over by Sheikh Saheb at Sheetal Nath, Fotedar replied to Sheikh that he served Hindus and Muslims equally and yet if any body would say that he is "phirkaparast", he is so. This was the occasion when a Historical Resolution was passed that the Pandits, through S.D.Y. Sabha, politically merge with National Conference retaining socio-economic affairs to itself. At this time the author of the article was the Secretary of the Sabha.

Dr. S. N. Peshin then was the Director health Services, being a member of National conference and Shyam Lal Saraf was the Health Minister. Peshin Sahab was sent to London for F. R. C. S. and on his return he was denied the post of Director Health services but was allowed to join as Supdt. of Hospital. This he declined and came out of the Govt. and also from the National Conference. He tried to find out a slot in the SDY Sabha. Somehow or the other he was inclined to be the President. So he could not stay in for long. On the other hand Pt. Gopi Kishen who was then serving in Education Deptt. as Supdt. in Direction office, was drawn toward these activities and he was able to take over Chota Bazar premises with the associated help of a teachers group. So Peshin Sahab joined hands with him to dislodge Fotedar and take over S.D.Y. Sabha, but they could not. Hence they formed parallel Sabha. Thus the rank and file of the Sabha got divided. The author of this article organised Sangathan Committee bringing all confrontatist on a common platform to remove any mutual difference. Unfortunately some events delayed the move and Moi-Muqadas episode came forth. This was a crucial time as the very existence of Pandits was threatened. Pt. Nehru, one evening, expressed that he was happy that at that crucial time also there was complete communal harmony in Kashmir.

The negotiations restarted, but soon Pt. Nehru passed away. S. D. Y. Sabha through its Secretary and organisor-the author of this article, mourned the death

of Nehruji befittingly. The entire job including immersion of ashes at Shadipur was entrusted to Sangathan Committee by the Govt.

Again the negotiations started and this time every body assured that they would fall in line with each-other and would work for unity, united planning and action. But this did not happen, as soon after this, the matter was again in pell-mell.

Pt. Fotedar was repaid in bad coins by the Pandit community at the fag end of his life and then Pt. Harjee Lal a retired Revenue officer took over as president of the Sabha. He was a strong person but self interested people around him frustrated him all the time. Soon Tatoo-ground episode took place. This was a confrontaiton of army at Tatoo ground and the people living nearby. The Sheikh was interested to get the vast area of Tatoo Ground vaccated by army. The S. D. Y. Sabha played its role. The author of this article on account of Shri Fotedar having been dislooged from the Sabha; had disassociated with the Sabha. But after its control went to Pt. Harjeelal Raina, the author was approached through M. L. Mian to rejoin the Sabha. So under compulsion, he did so as its General Secretary. Harjeelal soon decided to leave for America for a short period and handed over the Presidentship to the author of this article. The author in an attempt to rope in all disintegrated and divided elements together and reshape the Sabha, where in a meeting Dr. Peshin seemed to be very anxious to be the President, but he was frustrated. What happened afterwards is a sad story; the control of this Sabha, however, passed on to Shri A. N. Vaishnavi who is still the President.

The author of this article was kidnapped by militants on 9th march 1990 after taking part in the deliberations of all party parliamentary Delegation in Srinagar and was traced out after two day's captivity. He is gradually gaining the lost memory of important events of his life vis-a-vis Sanatan Dharam Yuvak Sabha All State Kashmiri Pandit. Conference. Though it is not possible to recollect all the events in this article, suffices to record that the said Sabha is an old and representative organisation and its official organ Martand was the oldest paper in Kashmir. The Sabha had gained popularity far and wide in the country as a role model. But alas! all that vigour, vitality, gal and dynamism is gone and the leadership calibre and enthusiasm is missing now. Our community after migration in 1990 is in distress, no body to care for them. Yet we are proud of ourselves.

The author is a stalwart of S.D. Yuvak Sabha, Srinagar, having been its Secretary & President prior to migration. Mailing address : 222, M. L. A Hostal (o), Jammu.

KASHMIR BHAWAN, DELHI

— By *A. K. Kaul, New Delhi*

Imagine the situation. Young educated KPs fresh from their schools and colleges with bleak prospects of employment locally, descended on Delhi in search of means of livelihood. Delhi, being the seat of the Central Government, offered many avenues of employment in government offices. Just armed with their certificates and a few clothes these youngmen dared to venture into the unknown zone. Each one was on his own. Lucky few had relatives here to whom they repaired but the overwhelming majority had to fend for themselves. They lodged themselves in dormitories, rickety barsatis, dharmashalas and serais. After taking a bread slice and a cup of tea as breakfast they would make rounds of various offices, quite a few crossed each other and often exchanged notes on their experiences. This led to frequent interactions. Madras Hotel in Connaught Place became the centre point of this process. Individual job seekers would exchange notes and plan their itinerary for the next day. This proved quite effective. Since they were generally short on money and resources they started planning their movements to save effort and resources. An unwritten and unstated bond developed between them. Somehow, they remained in touch. An urgent need for blood donation for a colleague in 1953 led the samaritans to converge themselves into an organisation which was then named as "Kashmiri Sahyak Sabha" the precursor of the present day Kashmiri Samiti, Delhi.

Having woven themselves into a Sabha, the pioneers then started thinking of having their own socio-cultural centre. Such stalwarts as S/Shri M. N. Kaul, S. L. Shakhder, K. L. Malla, Samsar Chand Kaul, Shamboo Nath Khachru, Dr. R. K. Bhan and many more worked in tandem to approach the government for allotting a suitable piece of land in New Delhi. The efforts bore fruit in 1966 when a piece of land in Amar Colony, Lajpat Nagar was allotted to the Sabha. Not content to rest on their laurels, the community leaders now planned to construct a building on the allotted piece of land. Appropriately they called it Kashmir Bhawan. Bhoomi Pujan was performed on February 11, 1967 by Shri Samsar Chand Kaul, the founder President of the Sabha/Samiti. The foundation stone was laid next day, February 12, 1967, by Dr. H. N. Kunzru, a great Kashmiri of national eminence. Kashmir Bhawan is a standing tribute to these pioneers who gave their blood and sweat to make it possible. Collecting funds, which was an arduous task, supervising the construction, arranging of manpower and material was all done with great honesty and sincerity. Some of the community members contributed in kind like cement, bricks, pipes and planks.

If Kashmir Bhawan, in the genre of Shital Nath, does not inspire you nothing will.

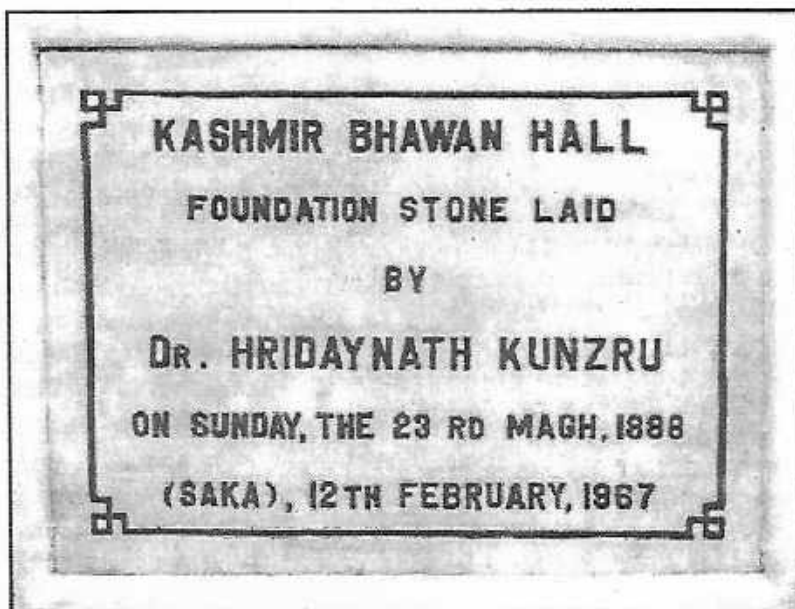
This contribution also appeared in the "Koshur Samachar", February, 2006 pgs. 3 and 6-9

RED LETTER DAY FOR BIRADARI

The foundation of Kashmir Bhawan was laid on February 11 and 12, 1967. On February 11, the auspicious Bhoomi Pujan was organised and on Feb 12, Dr. H. N. Kunzru laid the foundation stone. We are reproducing a write up on the subject as contained in February 1967 issue of Koshur Samachar. For this we are grateful to Shri Badri Narayan Bhatt who has meticulously maintained and indexed Koshur Samachar right from its earlier avtar, Samiti Samachar. He was on its first Editorial Board and later also served as its Editor. This 74 year old veteran's interest in the Samiti and Samachar is unabated. We bow to him in deep deference.

A. K. Kaul
Editor-In-Chief
Koshur Samachar

It was a red letter day in the annals of the Samiti when, on Saturday, the 11th February 1967, at the auspicious muhurat, **Shri M. N. Kaul, M. P.**, one of the distinguished members of the Biradari and an honoured patron of the Samiti, performed the auspicious puja in connection with the foundation stone laying ceremony of



the Kashmir Bhawan at the Samiti's plot at Amar Colony, New Delhi. The puja was initiated by **Pandit Samsar Chand Kaul**, the founder President of the Samiti. The Bhawan, it will be recalled, is a project of our dreams, to complete which the Samiti has been straining every nerve ever since its coming into existence a decade and a half ago, in order to provide to the Biradari in the Capital a centre for socio-cultural activities. At the end of the solemn function 'naveed was distributed to all those present on the occasion.

In a brief talk with the Samiti's workers, **Shri Kaul** praised the selfless service rendered by them and exhorted them to continue this service with the same zeal and fervor so that the Bhawan would soon become a reality.

This unique occasion was celebrated at an impressive social function held on the following day – Sunday, the 12th February – at the Bhawan site itself when a

large concourse of the members of the Biradari – men, women and children – assembled there in a festive mood to watch the laying of the foundation stone of the Bhawan by **Dr. H. N. Kunzru**, distinguished member of the Biradari and an elder statesman of the country. Besides **Dr. Kunzru** who

presided at the function, others who graced the Sunday festivities included **Raja Upendra Kishan Kaul** and **Shri Maharaj Kishan Dhar**, ex-Governor of Kashmir.

Welcoming the guests and the members of the Biradari on the auspicious occasion, the President of the Samiti, **Shri K. L. Malla**, dilated upon the circumstances that brought the Samiti into being and explained its aims, objectives and programmes. He also gave to the gathering an idea of the progress which the Samiti had made towards the collection of the Building Construction Fund which stood now at Rs. 40,000 though the actual amount required for the construction of the Bhawan was estimated at Rs. 2 lakhs or so. Shri Malla made fervent appeal to the Biradari to donate liberally to the Fund so that the long-cherished dream of the community to have a socio-cultural centre of their own in the capital came to be true. He also referred to the publication of the monthly journal **Kashur Samachar** and the

commendable work it was doing towards dissemination of information in regard to the affairs of the Biradari.

Shri Malla paid glowing tributes to the unostentatious and selfless service rendered to the Samiti by **Shri Shambhu Nath Khachroo** who, he said, was the real inspiration behind all that the samiti has been doing and standing for. It was **Shri Khachroo's** sincere and vigilant eye that was responsible for the progress for the Samiti in all directions, since its inception, he added.

After laying the foundation-stone of the Bhawan, **Dr. H. N. Kunzru** expressed the fervent hope that through the Bhawan the Samiti will amply fulfil its main objective which should be to inculcate and foster the spirit of friendship, sympathy and understanding among the members of the Biradari. He observed that since the cost of education was rapidly going up in the country, it should be one of the aims of the Samiti to render help to the needy though intelligent students of the community. Students needed help not only from the Government which was doing what ever it could in the matter, but also from the society. If the Samiti could, therefore, address itself to this problem, observed **Dr. Kunzru**, it would fulfil one of its laudable objectives. He had no doubt that the Bhawan would certainly come up in brick and mortar in course of time if the sincerity of purpose continued. He lauded the Samiti's efforts in rendering much-needed help to one another in the Biradari and said that if the community remained conscious of that purpose, one of the aims for which the Bhawan is needed, would be amply fulfilled.

Dr. Kunzru made a few heartening references to the changed climate in Kashmir itself and said that the spirit of unity and mutual help was permeating the entire society there. People had displayed not only the necessary alertness and vigilance but also steadfastness and remarkable unity in the face of very difficult situations and grave dangers. He expressed the hope that a similar harmony and spirit of cooperation would be displayed by the Biradari here as well so that the functioning of the Samiti would act as an example for similar other like-minded institutions.

Dr. Kunzru agreed with the views of the President and advised that the construction of the Bhawan should be started without delay because otherwise the building costs might go up with the passage of time. He was confident that the money would start coming in once the construction was actually started.

In his brief speech, **Dr. R. K. Bhan** observed that the occasion was one of rejoicing for the entire Biradari who deserved congratulations not only for the successful efforts of the Samiti towards the construction of the Bhawan but also for the achievements in other socio-cultural aspects. He also said that we should not rest content with the laying of the foundation stone but should see that the Bhawan comes up in brick and mortar too in the shortest possible time.

Pandit Samasar Chand Kaul, the founder-President of the Samiti, recalled the difficult days when the Samiti was in the formative stages and the hard labour which the members had to put in to collect money for the Building Fund. He expressed his sense of deep satisfaction over the fact that the idea that had been conceived in the earliest stages was beginning to take shape. He prayed for the day to come soon when the Biradari would be able to celebrate social events like these in the Bhawan itself.

Shri Prem Nath Dar, a former President of the Samiti, in his speech emphasized the need for maintaining and enriching our valuable cultural heritage, especially our mothertongue. He expressed that any tendency of neglecting our mothertongue in our homes would be unfortunate. He suggested that the Samiti should organise more and more cultural activities like dramas, mushairas etc. in Kashmiri in order to inculcate an interest in the mothertongue,

A variety entertainment programme of dance and music was also presented on the occasion. The highlight of this programme was "Chhakri" presented by Samiti's own workers. The song for the "Chhakri" had been specially composed for the occasion by **Shri T. N. Dar 'Kundan'** and was widely appreciated.

Light refreshments were served to the gathering before the function came to a close. ■

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KASHMIRI SAMITI - DELHI



Kashmir Bhawan, Delhi



Annual Hawan

KASHMIRI SAMITI - DELHI



Hawan

Naveed

Vitran

KASHMIR SABHA, CALCUTTA

— By Dr. B. K. Moza, Kolkata

It looks, as if yesterday, but the sands of time have, as if a mirage, the foot prints of Kashmir Sabha, Calcutta, ingrained for last fifty years. Seeing the contemporary scenario it is a matter of pride to recapitulate, replay and review the milestones which reveal the glorious march ahead, its existence and futuristic course of this Sabha. Though representing a small number of community members all along, the records reveal that its founding fathers had laid a firm structure of systems for this organization so that it withstood the onslaughts of time.

Kashmiri Pandits have a heritage of documenting chronologies and histories; Kalhan, Jonaraja, Srivara, Prajya Bhatta and so on and so forth showed to the world how to record histories and how important it is to do so, as they did in recording the history of Kings of Kashmir, "Rajatarangini" with inputs, from the prevailing history of Bharata, as it obtained then. Exactly in these foot steps, the history of Kashmir Sabha is recorded from time to time which provides a chronology of events; successes and failures. I look forward to Kashmir Sabha bringing out the published records of its history, as contributed by many, separately, over this period. Without any prejudice and only for my present purpose, it suffices to refer to few documents only which simplify my task in revealing what Kashmir Sabha is; rather than further documenting this chronology which has already been done. In this context, (late) Mr. S. S. Raina recorded, "Kashmir Sabha : Its Aims and Achievement—and Failures", in 1960. Dr. B. K. Moza, visualized "A Perspective of Kashmiri Pandits" in the same year and both appeared in the first Annual Number of Kashmir Sabha in 1960, respectively on page Nos. 21 and 29, revealing the systems that were laid at that time, based on the contemporary pressures of the community, as then obtained, to chalk out the road map that was necessary for its future growth. This covered first four years of Sabha. Mr. Mohan Krishen Ogra in 1981 (Vitasta Annual Number 1981 page 129) recorded further developments and covered thereby first twenty five years of our Sabha. Mr. Ashok Dhar, in his contribution (Vitasta Annual Number 2001-2002), summed up bench mark developments and these documents of earlier period and also expanded the horizon further, covering the first forty-five years of Kashmir Sabha. This paper is reproduced herewith in this Number, since it also provides, for ready reference, a consolidated version of the previously

documented papers ; Shri Udai Kaul has highlighted the achievements of the Sabha in this Annual Number (2005-2006, Volume No XXXVII) and that provides a literary view of its fifty years chronology.

Historical documentation has many purposes and one of these is to derive determining strengths, based on the experiences and events that have offered a distinguishable stature to our Kashmir Sabha. To do so, I would prefer resorting to reverse engineering in this paper rather than to repeating the fifty years old chronology. As happens with old Organisations, there are lean periods which have not been properly recorded. So here I am reviewing the eventful developments, as these are shaping now, with a view to those which carry us back to its fifty years old origin. This should bring out the determining features of its glorious existence in its Golden Jubilee year. And if these have meaningful purpose, the other Sabhas may take a hint from these.

Delegation to Youth : In the formation of Kashmir Sabha in 1956, essentially a group of young members, in twenties, was in the fore-front. Some of these members later on migrated to other places and/or passed away and the remaining ones, having by now added fifty years to their age, are still continuing to be at the helm of affairs in Kolkata. However, the present accent has been in delegating our second generation youth, in our Kolkata Diaspore, to bear the yoke and be prepared for the inevitable. Our Sabha has been traditionally a community joint family and as such the younger people would prefer to be at the back seat for a very reasonable reason that they are too busy with their official work and have got used to their elders, in looking after the affairs of joint family. Yet, they have grown in the tradition of being obedient to their elders, even if at the cost of some irritation, natural to age gap and are available to bear the yoke. I extend them my affectionate tribute for the sincere efforts they make as our bulwark. Many of them have grown with the Sabha, having started as the toddlers in our then observed Children functions, further got inducted, at an appropriate age as Executive Committee members and later on exposed to executive positions of Secretary, Treasurer and Vice President and then to the leadership position of the President. It is creditable that they are performing to the best of their possibilities and carrying the priorities of the Sabha

forward. What is distinguishing is their observing the Constitutional dream of Sabha, that, "organization is supreme and not the personalities." So our present leader rests on the steering, to carry the team and keep it in confidence with great respect, intimacy and feelings of involvement. What is visible is a team of youngsters with high spirits. They are carrying the day to day responsibilities conventionally, though now the emphasis is shifting from meetings, to laptop conferences. Even though they have not been brought up in Kashmir, they are observing our traditional monthly festivities and such practices in our Kashmir Bhawan. The convention of two years term is generally followed though, originally, to discourage the personality cult, the Executive was changed every year and the elections held, by secret ballot. Presently two years is its term, exceptions being certain emergencies and exigencies when the term of the Executive Body has been extended beyond two years, and the Executive is evolved unanimously. Though generally all along, yet, in recent times particularly, it is at great persuasion that a new candidate accepts the responsibility of the President or an office bearer of the Sabha. Our Mr. Piyaray Lal Saproo, with all his outstanding & consistent contributions to Sabha, has been exceptional in this respect, in not being the President of Sabha upto now. And, he is in the helm of Kashmir Sabha matters, all along, with dedication.

One can foresee some vacuum arising in future as our third generation youth are generally migrating to other places for studies or better opportunities or to abroad for the same reasons. But this futuristic apprehension has to be left to future and one can hope our youngsters will take care of their heritage in all circumstances and at all times. Yes, the Sabha has to give a serious thought to this emerging problem and ensure its continuity, in times, to come, keeping in view the objectives that our founding fathers have considered worth preserving. There is a need to make our Kashmir Bhawan as the focal point, as it has remained up till now and preserve its exclusive identity as the temple of our heritage and abode of our joint community family. For this to be achieved, time has to be found out to make it a hub for preserving our community priorities, be it Kashmiri language classes, Seminars, Interactive workshops, literary pursuits and researches using its rare library, sports, functions, besides other avenues it is opening for its survival. Perhaps it will not be out of place to mention that our children have been exposed to playing, "Kodian—Haaru" on Shivratri/Salaam occasions in our Bhawan and such practices have to be continued. It is again creditable that even though

very far off from Kashmir our youngsters still do talk in Kashmiri, whenever desirable. This agenda has to be carried further with conviction and given due importance to preserve our heritage. At this point I wish to sound a note of caution that preserving our identity and that of our Kashmir Bhawan, as already conceived earlier, has to be priority objective. Though very tempting, commercial ventures should be sifted thoughtfully, so that these do not dilute, in essential respects, the bench marks and fundamentals of identity preservation our Kashmir Bhawan is holding.

Observance of Priorities : Our Sabha continues to be the local guardian for the community; be it observing out monthly festivals or rituals, reacting to our concerns about our roots in Kashmir, helping the deserving members of Biradari in distress, being available to each other, with feelings of involvement on occasions of sorrow, or sickness and so on and so forth. These local issues continue to be priority and that is a very time consuming affair. Preserving Kashmiri culture, the cuisine and other relevant measures have been by now established as good practices to carry on. It is hoped that these practices will be carried forward.

Though, Sabha is still keeping up its tradition as a Socio-cultural organization, since 1990 it has as well as risen up to the political demands as and when required. This is in consonance with the trends that our Apex Body, A.I.K.S., is following. This extends the scope of responsibilities towards the objective of attending to our roots in Kashmir. Funds have been provided to the displaced in the camps, for meeting the educational expenses of the needy in places away from Kolkata, encouraging deserving individuals financially for, educational, intellectual, philanthropic and/or charitable purposes. Presently Kashmir Sabha is meeting the educational expenses of many needy students at Jammu as referred by the local organizations.

The Sabha has contributed to the concept that as a local unit it has to support the Apex Body, AIKS, for co-ordinating the minimum agenda of the community at large and implement the essentials of Sabha, Samaj and Samellan, "Mantra", for preserving community identity. Every year it is extending financial contribution to AIKS, to meet its expenses irrespective of whether other affiliates are following this requirement. In this context, it is also creditable that Sabha is hosting the Samellan of AIKS, this year, to mark its Golden Jubilee celebration. Here again the accent has been in prioritizing on a major community involvement at global level and share its feelings of achievement and satisfaction on a larger community base and in brain storming our minimum agenda,

rather than having a hoopla to celebrate its fifty years of existence as a fun fair. And the fact is that there is no infrastructure or required wherewithal to hold such Samellans; yet it is offering its might to this community cause, to bring about solidarity, as a means, to achieving preservation of our identity, as the noble end.

Self Reliance : Self reliance has been the hall mark of the Sabha from the beginning and this has been held up all along. Individual, "Mochifol," has been the source of income for a long time. The practice observed earlier was to extend this small token to a larger base which perhaps is even now meaningful. Even for constructing Kashmir Bhawan, the aim was to achieve the goal with our own efforts in one go, thanks to the leadership provided by its, the then, President, Shri Autar Krishen Dhar. Our Kashmir Bhawan comprises of three storeyed, building having a fully tiled ground floor hall about 1600 sq. feet in area, a first floor with another small hall about 800 square feet in area, three rooms, kitchen and a toilet block, a second floor with seven rooms and toilet block and a roof beautifully walled with dome shaped illumination points, crazy mosaic floor and over head tanks. The ground floor hall is generally used for our festive get-togethers and functions and as an auditorium. On the second floor is our "Baithakhana", where we have our monthly executive meetings and adjacent to this is our small, yet, prestigious library of resource-books, chronologies and epics; books on Kashmiri language, history, culture and politics etc., and is duly provided with copies of the major community journals that are brought out in our Kashmiri Pandit, diaspora. Besides the main building there is an attached macro kitchen provision for bigger functions and ceremonies. Kashmir Bhawan was built in 1992-93, in one go as an emergency to give shape to our decades old desires, to provide shelter to the displaced victims of Kashmiri Pandit exodus, reaching Calcutta for employment, education and medical treatment or such exigencies. This purpose it did serve at that time but inflow to Calcutta has been marginal as a trend. However, it continues as our identity, call it Kheer Bhawani or Parbat—the Reshwaer"; 'Maatamaal" or "Malyun" and "Thaka-paend" or "Yatri—Nivas", for guests visiting us from beyond Kolkata etc. But to us, in general, and during our relaxed get-togethers, it is a phenomenon of emotions to be seen and felt, to be believed. Even for helping the few, major cases of distress, Sabha has depended on individual contributions to tide over the expenses. Vitasta has been the essential source of income in earlier times. The seed money for constructing the Bhawan was from the income

generated by the Vitasta. In fact till then Vitasta was being brought out yearly, whenever possible, each volume bearing the calender year, suffix. It was at this time that we had to bring out three volumes, one after another, within two years which required introducing the financial year suffix; the practice continues since then. Presently, Kashmir Bhawan donations received for celebrating the marriages and such festivities continues to be a great help. The sponsorship of festivities and family get-togethers, boosted in 1997, continues even now, adding to the revenues of the Sabha. Our cultural functions involving the children, young and not so young, male and female members, have become an established agenda for the pertinent get-togethers throughout the year. Our veteran, Shri B. M. Misri in the forefront, a team of our talented members is contributing with interest and enthusiasm, to the success of our such programmes.

Keeping away narrow attitudes : As practiced by the founding fathers, there have never been any uncalled for feelings of 'Old' Kashmiris and 'New Kashmiris' or regional and caste barriers in running the affairs of the Sabha. In fact, two non-Kashmiri speaking Kashmiri ladies, Mrs. S. K. Handoo and Mrs. Subhadra Haksar, organized the Navroz function in March 1955, when the seed was sown for the need of a Sabha. Many meetings were held thereafter to crystallize the formation of the Sabha and its Constitution during the year. This was followed by a get together, held at the residence of Shri Jagan Nathji Munshi, in early 1956 and a Sub-Committee formed to give it a practical shape. On the 19th February, 1956, the red letter day for the community in Calcutta, the Sabha was formed; the inauguration, having been held in the Federation Hall with feelings of joy, commitment, pride and challenge, difficult to describe. However, this spirit is still continuing and there are no such barriers of language and caste. In running the affairs of the Sabha many Kashmiris, of our earlier diaspora, not habituated to speak in Kashmiri, attended Kashmiri language classes for almost three years voluntarily, to be at ease with this language. The first workshop on learning Kashmiri language, under the auspices of UGC, organized by Dr. Roop Krishen Bhat was held in our Kashmir Bhawan in 2001. It was reportedly a great success. One of our potential organizers of the forthcoming Samellian, is Mrs. Sushmita Jyotshi, a Bengali by birth and Kashmiri by marriage. She along with our young stalwarts M/s Vinodh Dhar, Vikesh Trisal, Rakesh Kaul, Ratan Moza and others, is making all efforts to ensure comfortable stay of the delegates to our AIKS

"Samellan" and its fulfilling proceedings. Another of our daughter-in-laws, of Bengali parentage admits, to note humorously, that in her next Janam also she must have a Kashmiri Panditani as the mother-in-law to have Rogan Josh and Kabargah, prepared by her. Whilst mentioning this, I would not say that all is ideal in our fast changing attitudes in Kolkata. But that is something relevant to the changes which our society, in general, is facing. The point that is being emphasized is that Kashmir Sabha today is still following the good practices laid by its founding fathers and this has to continue.

Role of women : Women have played a very important role in the functioning of our Sabha. Mrs. Subhadra Haksar has been the President of the Sabha for years and that also twice. Mrs. Niva Kaul has been the editor of the Vitasta, Devnagri section, for decades. So have been our young ladies at the fore front, in organizing our cultural functions, training for our Kashmiri cuisine, Children functions, in writing editorial columns of our Vitasta and so and so forth. The number is so large that I would not risk enumerating the same in haste and missing to mention by name any one. Whilst, extending my regards and love to them, what I wish to highlight is that this has been our achievement, and a successful motivation, to have their involvement and this has to be continued. The generation gap is being respected as natural reality and not any reason for allergic sensitivity; rather it has to be turned into an opportunity and advantage, so that this becomes our heritage for future generations in Kolkata. After all our sons, in yester years, have become the fathers in today's realities and the response they are getting from our grand children, should reveal the pinch of this natural phenomena, which the Society in general, has been facings all along.

Good Management : Managing the affairs of Kashmir Sabha, on good practices has been the concern from the beginning and it continues to be the great concern now also. There is no doubt that now the frontiers of management are fast advancing on corporate levels, to suit the requirements of time; vast problems and projects, competition, bottom line concepts, diversifications, macro-interests and globalization are pertinent perceptions. Our community having got uprooted from its, homeland, Kashmir, requires managerial skills and revolutionary perceptions for exploring solutions to our rehabilitation and return. Therefore, creative managers and innovative intellectuals have to be at the fore front in solving our community problems, with resources of thought and action. Kashmir Sabha

has, accordingly, to rise to the occasion and evolve necessary capabilities and strategies to be purposeful. Involvement, efficiency and accountability have been our heritage in running the affairs of Kashmir Sabha and this, very gratifyingly, is being continued and the message to convey is that it has to continue as our bench mark in years to come. Besides, creative projects have to be developed and managed to keep pace with changing times and its present pressures. Our Kashmir Bhawan modernization with computer facilities has taken a beating though significant amount of money was collected, as personal contribution, from abroad with this objective in mind.

Literary Pursuits : Our Kashmir Sabha has been eager right from its beginning to preserve our literary heritage and excel in the same. In the early years of its existence, funds were scarce, yet, in 1957 a booklet was brought out on "Rituals and Festival of Kashmir Pandits". The distinguishing point to note is that all efforts were made to look for the relevant knowledge, concerning these festivals. Therefore each festival/ritual description had an explanatory note about their origin, basis or significance. This was followed by bringing out a monthly News Letter in August 1959, circulated amongst Biradari members, free of cost, to update them about Biradari news and views and about matters concerning our Sabha. To finance this venture in future, it was considered necessary to bring out a Souvenir having commercial advertisements to provide for the Kashmir Sabha expenses. This led to the birth of the first Annual Number of the News and Views in 1960 with (late) Shri S. S. Raina and Mr. M. K. Ogra as the editors. In 1961 the Annual Number, edited by Shri C. N. Kashkari, now based on Ohio, USA, was brought out with the name, "Vitasta", and the official organ of the Sabha continues to be published under this name. From 1978 onwards the Vitasta Annuals are as a practice thematic, focused and research based. Though at times with hiccups and presently the monthly not being brought out, the Vitasta is flowing over the decades majestically. Its annual numbers have become our identity and a matter of our recognised achievement and pride. We have also created a great human resource in running this prestigious publication in all respects. But this resource is hesitant to come forward. I wished to ascertain that I was not the hurdle and so retired from this responsibility five years back. But that has not changed the scenario, rather it has become the worse; in between only one Number appeared, edited creditably by Mrs. Reena Dhar. I had to retrace presently to enable publication of the present Special

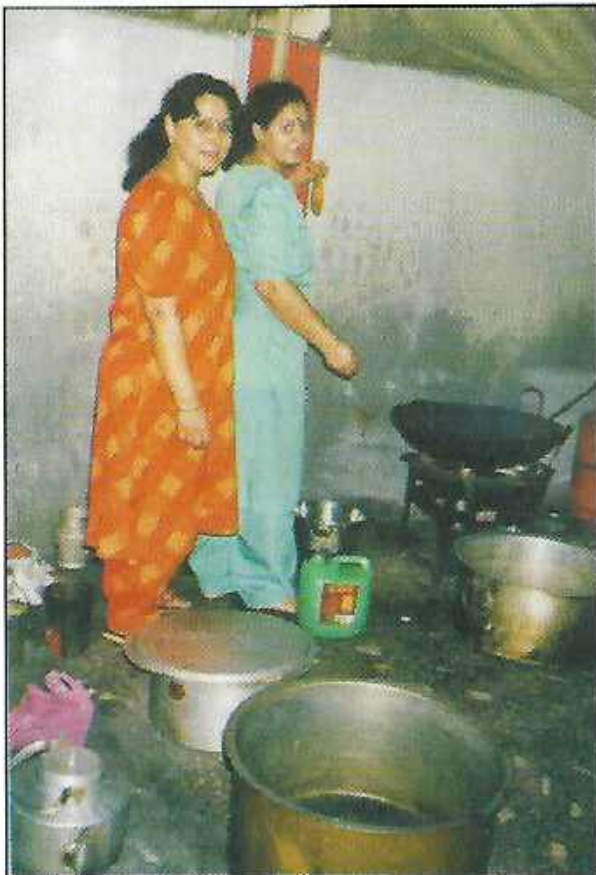
KASHMIRI SABHA - KOLKATA



Kashmir Bhawan Salt Lake, Kolkata



Mr. B.L. Raina addressing farewell



Our Shaktiji & Vijaya creating



Kashmir Bhawan audience

KASHMIRI BHAWAN - KOLKATA



Mrs. Subhadra Haskar



Mrs. Niva Kaul



Mr. P.L. Sapru



Mr. M.K. Ogra



Mr. A.K. Dhar



Mr. B.M. Misri

Number for Golden Jubilee. Circumstances have also been responsible for this adversity, as one after another two potential Secretaries of the Sabha, got transferred to other places in last one and half years and two of our dedicated editors, Mrs. Niva Kaul and Mrs. Prabha Tankha have been bed ridden seriously for almost one year. This pain is there and continues to be felt perceptibly, in the Sabha's activities and in the hearts of Biradari at Kolkata. I extend my prayers for the early recovery of our colleagues. I am also hopeful that my message will find response in motivating the pool of resources, we have, to ensure the health of the Vitasta, the river of knowledge, so that it is enabled to flow majestically in future and all times to come. I am becoming emotional at reviewing this sad reality. So, I conclude, this submission, that our Sabha has been something different, possessing great values, is reasonably free from petty squabbles, sensitivities and bizarre individualistic sentiments; that are eating our community vitals. Our outlook has been broad and concern about our larger issues have been our hall mark. It is gratifying to observe that this is being maintained and carried forward with conviction. I wish our younger stalwarts, Good luck and God speed in not only carrying this heritage

forward by themselves but also ensuring that our still younger generations carry it forward equally intensely. Their commitments are different, their attachments with Kashmir are historical and so is the reality in preserving our other tenets of heritage in the fast changing times. So, as great managers and scientists they have to find the ways and means so that this commitment is carried forward in space and time and on the sands of time, with foot-prints continuing to be ingrained with deeper impressions. Why? What? When? How? I leave to our younger stalwarts to ponder about.

In this article some few names of our stalwarts have been mentioned, in conveying a point under reference; the other articles which are supplementing this, have detailed list. Yet, any description about our Sabha is incomplete with paying respects, regards and love to all the Karam Yogis, whose self less efforts have created our Sabha and reached it to what it is today. A detailed list of these dedicated stalwarts will have to be compiled who served as the pivots of our Sabha and the key persons of a particular activity at a particular time. This will require separate efforts; the list of the Presidents is already documented and it is reproduced below :

Dr. G. L. Vaishnavi (1956);
 Mr. J. N. Kaul (1957)
 Mr. B. P. Wanchoo (1958);
 Mr. C. L. Watal (1959)
 Mr. J. N. Kaul (1960);
 Mr. P. N. Haksar (1961-62)
 Mr. M. L. Zutshi (1963-64);
 Mrs. Subhadra Haksar (1965-66)
 Mr. M. L. Zutshi (1967-68);
 Mr. M. K. Ogra (1968-69)
 Mr. M. L. Zutshi (1969-70);
 Mrs. Subhadra Haksar (1970-78)

Col. P. N. Kak (1978-81);
 Mr. P. L. Dhar (1981-83)
 Mr. B. L. Razdan (1983-1985)
 Mr. P. L. Dhar (1985-1987)
 Mr. B. L. Razdan (1987-88);
 Mr. P. K. Bhan (1988-90)
 Mr. A. K. Dhar (1990-97);
 Dr. B. K. Moza (1997-1999)
 Mr. Udai Kaul (1999-2001);
 Mr. B. M. Misri (2001-03)
 Mr. L. N. Kaul (2003-2005);
 Mr. V. R. Moza (2005-2007)

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A MEMORABLE LETTER FOR CALCUTTA BIRADARI

(WRITTEN BY LATE RESPECTED KASHYAP BANDHUJI WHILST ON DEATH-BED)

— Gairoo, Noorpore, Dec. 18, 1985

My dear Dr. Moza,

God bless you. I received your both letters one in the ending days of November and the other in the 1st week of December. I am on bed for 10 days and have asked my cousin to help me to take the composition of this letter. I regret I cannot accomplish the article you need within the time that you have prescribed. The reasons are as under :

On receiving your first letter I thought that in the 1st week of Dec. I shall complete my contribution and you will get it in the last week of Dec. But God willed otherwise; on 27th Nov. some friends from Srinagar visited me at my village. They requested me to go down to Srinagar on 1st of Dec. for a few hours and return by the evening. The task was pressing and I could not say "No". As on 1st Dec. they had called to Srinagar all their delegates from villages and towns and it was their request that I should address these delegates. I agreed and on 1st Dec. those friends came to my village and carried me to Srinagar. The place where they had arranged the *Samelan* is a newly-built building by Dharmarth and is known as "Ranbeer Bhavan". Its Hall is very grand and commodious, equipped with all necessary arrangements but unfortunately no heating arrangements are available there nor even *Engithe* or *Kangree*. I had to sit in this hall, speak to a large gathering for about two hours and these good people never thought that a man 87 years of age, needs something to warm himself. God bless them. They are all in their young age and possibly forgot that an old man in this Dec. needs something to keep himself warm besides his warm aprons. In the evening at 6 O'clock I returned to my house by a car and found myself shivering and indisposed.

In Oct. '85 some friends came to me with their assignment to be helped in their works. The assignment was "All those Kashmiri Pandits young and old who took leading part in those forgotten bitter communal days when Kashmir was invaded by outsiders, under the instructions of British government to be annihilated and wanted to do away with Hindu rule of Kashmir." These were black days when every Kashmiri Pandit was supposed to be younger brother of Maharaja Hari Singh and any slap, any stick or any stone was a stick or a stone directed to Maharaja; when administration was completely broken and communalism was rampant and ringing through the streets of Kashmir, all day and night. It

was something God's grace and the determination of those young men who, as if with their heads in their palms, were in the streets to help themselves and their community. Possibly there might be 5% of those young brave sons of Kashmir living now in their old age like me and the rest have vanished possibly to convey to their forefathers in heaven the story of 1931.

These friends contacted me on 1st Dec. It was rather shabby and insolent to tell these friends that I was not fit, because this date was fixed two months earlier. I got up and remained with those friends for 6 hours, completed $\frac{3}{4}$ th of the job, and $\frac{1}{4}$ th is yet to be completed. I requested them to come to this place again on 10th Dec. but I was flat on my bed with fever, cough and cold. I am still in that condition. Today my doctor, an efficient man, told me that I should go down to Srinagar for complete check up, possibly my heart is involved. My friend, when I write you these lines I feel ashamed but you can understand my plight.

There are some young men, thousands of miles away from their native land, living in Calcutta who want to know the paper MARTAND that jumped into that communal, simmering fire cauldron that Kashmir was in and how this great paper became one of the strong instruments to extinguish this fire. It is a shame for me that when these young men approach me with the request that I should throw some light on that episode, I say that I am ill or that I was ill and could not write anything about it. My friend, God knows how I feel really sorry that I am completely unable to send my contribution by the time you need it. My old age is a barrier for it and I am suffering so seriously that my doctor advised me to move to hospital for check up. My dear Doctor I have not the privilege of knowing you personally but as a spokesman of those friends of Calcutta kindly communicate my difficulty.

I solemnly promise that as soon as I am well, I will send my contribution whenever you will command, provided I am still in this world.

With my blessings and prayers for the long lives of you all.

My greetings to you all.

I am lovingly yours,
Sd. (Kashyap Bandhu)

Reproduced from the *Vitasta Annual "Martand Number"*, Vol. XXI, 1985, pg.iii. Band... passed away in the night on 18th December, 1985

KASHMIRI BHAWAN - KOLKATA



Our children Revealing Art in Kashmir Bhawan

KASHMIR SABHA - KOLKATA



Kashmiri Theatre in progress



Remembering Kashmir in a steamer Get-together

KASHMIR SABHA, CALCUTTA – IN RETROSPECT & PROSPECT

— By *Ashok Dhar, Calcutta*

It is now an acknowledged fact that the Kashmir Sabha, Calcutta has become a Socio-cultural Institution in its own right. What Bengal thinks today, India thinks tomorrow, perhaps aptly fits this Sabha as well. It has been amongst the first to bring out a Baradari Newsletter for almost forty five years; perhaps the first to construct a Kashmir Bhavan of its own; the first to start Kashmiri language classes; the first to start a community Hearth Watuk Pooja and develop a well stocked Library devoted to Kashmiri history, literature and culture; amongst the first to bring out annual issues of VITASTA (since 1960), a magazine so rich in literary content; conduct unanimous elections of office bearers for about five decades etc. the list of achievements can go on and on . . . The role played by the Sabha to help maintain Kashmiri heritage and provide a meeting ground for the Baradari to share joys and sorrows is indeed commendable by any standard of bench marking with comparable socio-cultural organisations.

My study and work assignments have taken me and my family to many locations – from Srinagar to Nainital, Kanpur, Delhi, Lucknow, Chandigarh, Jammu, Calcutta, Jeddah, Dubai and now back to Calcutta. Where next, I guess only God knows. Courtesy these re-locations in India and abroad, we have had interactions with many Kashmiris wherever we were stationed and often heard a word of praise for the Sabha in Calcutta and its activities. No wonder, VITASTA keeps receiving nostalgic letters from the Baradari members who leave Calcutta after a brief stay. One wonders, what has made this Sabha so different? Who have made it possible? Where is it heading now? I attempted to get some answers largely from the previous issues of VITASTA, which I guess in the era of knowledge and information sharing, can provide a road map for other Sabhas, if they so desire. I also hope that the next generation of Kashmiris in Eastern India (which this Sabha represents) will keep our community united preserving its unique secular identity, especially in the changed scenario of our forced migration from the valley for past ten years.

How Sabha Was Born

Calcutta has been a home to a limited numbers of Kashmiri Pandits for a long long time. Around partition of India, in little groups they often thought of forming a social and cultural association, which they could call their own. During Dr. Katjus's Governership of West Bengal, many of the Kashmiri Pandits had occasion to meet one another at his place, the Governor's House, on Navroz (Navreh) once every year, in which his daughter Smt. Subhadra Haksar used to play a leading role. Immediately after the Tribal raids in 1947-48, there was a gradual increase in numbers of Kashmiri Pandits from the valley and these youngmen felt uprooted from their well knit family bonds, lost in the multitudes of life in an alien land which was hubbling and bubbling with industrial activity handling half of India's total exports.

It was largely this group of uprooted youngmen who felt badly the need of a common meeting ground where they could revive something of their social cohesiveness, which gives meaning to life. Perhaps, after an initial period of uneasiness they would have also resigned to the inevitable, but for a significant development which proved to be a turning point. In March 1955, on the Navreh day, a gracious lady (Smt. S. K. Handoo, wife of Shri Handoo of Imperial Bank) took it upon herself to issue individual invitations for a New Year's get-together to all members of Baradari whose addresses she and some enthusiastic persons could gather. Most people saw one another for the first time. Everybody felt an urgent need for some form of an organisation.

To make it possible, a meeting was held at residence of Shri J. N. Munshi and a seven-member sub-committee was formed in February 1956 to give a practical shape to the idea. Thus Kashmir Sabha was formally inaugurated on February 19, 1956 at the Federation Hall when about fifty persons gathered together and after adopting the Constitution of the Sabha elected the first executive committee under the Presidentship of Dr. Govindjoo Vaishnavi with Shri S. S. Raina as the Secretary who was the pivot of the

Sabha at that time. Since then, the Sabha has strived unitedly to fulfill its aims and objectives, simple and noble, which can stand out as a model for all Sabhas. These are :

Aims & Objectives

- A) To foster and encourage social and cultural contacts and welfare activities among its members in particular and the Kashmiri Pandit Community in general.
- B) To meet at and observe together the social, cultural and other festivals in which Kashmiri Pandit Community is interested.
- C) To provide aid and relief, to the extent possible, to the authenticated and deserving cases of distress in the community.
- D) To discuss problems of common interest and take steps to represent, wherever necessary, the interests of its members in particular and the Kashmiri Pandit community in general
- E) To purchase, acquire and / or otherwise obtain property both movable and immovable, and receive donations etc, for furthering the aims and objects of the Sabha.
- F) Provided that the activities referred to in Sub-clause a,b,c & d above shall be construed to exclude subjects, activities etc. of political nature.

A United Sabha

Thanks to the far sightedness of the founding members of the Sabha, the Constitution has detailed the procedure for membership, sources and administration of funds, election of office bearers etc. to make sure that the Sabha served faithfully the interests of the Baradari without giving to anybody a chance to make it a personal show or to use it for ulterior or personal purposes. Hence, organisation has always remained supreme and personalities have remained in the background as far as possible. The Executive Committee elected each year by the general body of members has always been elected unanimously. To make sure that no person occupies a particular position for a number of years – a bone of contention in many places – the constitution provides that no executive post can be held by the same person for more than two years. The elected Executive Committee meets once a month to discuss issues of common interest to the community. Disagreements are not uncommon but never have these led to creation of dissenting groups, thanks to the commitment of the Baradari in Calcutta to the moral – "United we stand, Divided we Fall".

Blend of "New & Old"

"New" and "Old" are relative terms. It was common practice from the 50's to the late 80's of last century to refer to the Kashmiri speaking Pandit migrants from Kashmir after partition as the "New" Kashmiris by their brethren whose forefathers had migrated from the valley since the sixteenth century either to escape the fanaticism of foreign Muslim rulers or to seek greater heights in India. The "Old" Kashmiri Pandit families of Kauls, Nehrus, Saprus, Katjus, Bhans, Dhar, Haksars, Wanchoos are well remembered for their contribution in nation building. This group of "Old" Kashmiris by sheer dint of hard work and intelligence had achieved great heights. At the same time they had successfully maintained a good social network and retained most of the Kashmiri rituals with appropriate adjustments as dictated by the constraints in their new places of stay. This blend of "Old" and "New" still exists and it is a pleasure to see Atals, Haksars, Tikus, Tankhas and others sharing their moments of joy and community rituals with post-partition migrants in the Kashmir Bhavan at Salt Lake. I have reasons to believe that with passage of some more years, this distinction of "New" & "Old" will totally disappear.

Once the Kashmir Sabha, Calcutta took a formal shape in 1956, it was doubly blessed. The enthusiasm of "New" Kashmiris was ably supported whole heartedly by the "Old" members of the Baradari. Some of the early settlers even came forward to lead the Sabha from the front as office bearers of the Sabha like Shri P. N. Haksar, Smt. Subhadra Haksar, Shri K. N. Baqaya, Smt. Bilas Razdan, shri B. P. Wanchoo and others. From the "New" Kashmiris, the leadership provided was equally rich in talent who shared a common vision for the community irrespective of their social or economic status or Kashmiri language speaking capability. In the eyes of the Sabha, all members were treated with equal respect. Late Shri M. L. Zutshi, Lt. Col. P. N. Kak (Retd.), popularly known as Papa by most Calcuttans, Shri M. M. Dhar, Dr. M. K. Raina, Shri S. S. Raina, Shri C. L. Wattal, Shri M. K. Ogra, Late Shri S. N. Wali, Shri Udai Kaul, Dr. C. L. Kashkari, Shri P. L. Sapru, Dr. B. K. Moza, Shri B. L. Razdan, Shri B. L. Raina, Shri P. L. Dhar, Shri P. N. Tiku, Shri B. M. Misri, Late Shri J. L. Kaul, Shri A. K. Dhar, Shri B. L. Tickoo, Shri Pajan and many others dedicated stalwarts from the "New" Kashmiris provided a right blend to lead and conduct the affairs of the Sabha for many years.

While it is generally true that organisation has always been supreme and individuals have always been in

the background, I guess it will be not incorrect to say that at least on one occasion in recent years, the leadership provided by one man stood a shade above the rest. It was during the Presidentship of Shri Avtar Kishen Dhar, that the Sabha constructed the Kashmir Bhavan and saw a new direction in community social events. Few would disagree with his superb and exceptional performance as a leader with great commitment to the cause of preserving our identity. Wish he could spare his time to play a stellar role for our Baradari on an All India and Global level.

A Bhavan of their own was the dream of Baradari in Calcutta since 60's when a very big plot of land was procured at Sonarpur, near Jadavpur, which for unfortunate political unrest in West Bengal at that time had to be abandoned. A key role was played by Shri M. M. Dhar in purchase of the land at Sonarpur and by Shri M. K. Ogra in procuring a plot for constructing the Bhavan at Salt Lake.

Perhaps, it would be a fitting tribute to dedicate the Golden Jubilee Issue of VITASTA to such stalwarts in our community who have helped create such a Sabha and include therein a consolidated list of all office bearers for past fifty years with chronological record of events. Our future generations should know the causes that were so dear to their parents and grand parents and be motivated to contribute their best in years ahead to further preserve our distinct cultural identity.

Packed yearly Social Events' Calendar

In keeping with its aims and objectives, the Sabha organises a series of social events addressing the social and cultural yearning of most members and for all age groups. There is hardly any month when Baradari members don't get opportunity to meet one another. The events include an annual picnic, various competitions in games and sports for children, functions on Shivratri, Navreh, Roop Bhavani Day, Jestha Ashtami, Zangtra, Gazals Night, Dance and Music competitions for children and many others. Shri B. M. Misri has been playing a key role in these events. Smt. Shakti Kaul and Shri L. N. Kaul together with Shri Rakesh Kaul are conspicuous by the dedicated contributions they make towards the administration of Kashmir Bhavan and the hospitality that is provided over here.

It is common practice now to perform marriage, Yugnopavit and other social functions as per traditional Kashmiri rituals at the Kashmir Bhavan by most Baradari members.

VITASTA – keeps all in touch

Annual issue of VITASTA is one of the most sought after, literarily rich publication brought out by any KP

association. The annual numbers have in addition been able to raise significant revenue for the activities of the Sabha. Well focussed numbers like Bahar-i-Kashmir, Homage to Nehru, Homage to Indira Gandhi, Martand, Kashmir 2000, Kashmir Bhavan – Three Numbers, Preserving Kashmiri Pandit Identity, Contribution of Kashmiri Pandits to Indian Culture, and now Kashyap Bandhu Number are some of the Collector Numbers issued by the Sabha. These numbers have raised necessary finance for running the activities of Sabha and provide capital to part finance construction of the Kashmir Bhavan at Salt Lake.

While Shri S. S. Raina, Dr. Chaman Lal Kashkari, Dr. M. K. Raina, Smt. Mohini Raina and others played a key role in editing the annual numbers in early years, a noteworthy contribution has been that of Dr. B. K. Moza in editing the annual numbers consistently for decades and raising the level of this magazine to such heights of literary acclaim. In addition, he has inspired younger generation (M. K. Kaul), Anjali Rajdan, Anju Munshi, Vivek Kaul, Rajiv Sapru, Jyoti Sapru, Ashok Dhar and others) to undertake editing work or the magazine section comprising of Hindi and Kashmiri languages, a key role was played by Shri M. K. Ogra in early years which has been followed consistently for many many years by Smt. Niva Kaul with great finesse. The contribution of husband-wife editorial team of Smt. Jyoti and Shri Rajiv Sapru of Monthly Issues of VITASTA is remarkable. The Quiz competition run through this Monthly is a great hit with children.

Kashmir Sabha Trust to support the needy

With whatever resources that could have been raised, the Baradari has always stood ahead in helping the needy amongst us. Be it help for a kidney transplant or help in gaining employment or sending contributions to help the recent groups of migrants from Kashmir or activities of the All India Kashmir Samaj and its other affiliated units. All members have tried to make concern and solidarity for the welfare of the Baradari.

Looking ahead

It is a matter of great satisfaction that our Baradari today has formed similar organised groups at the places of their chosen stay all over the world. Many changes are inevitable with the changed world order and the speed with which we will observe, orient, decide and act to find ways of preserving our cultural heritage and identity will decide our existence as a distinct cultural group. These little groups can use

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ASSOCIATES MUMBAI – KASHMIRI PANDIT ASSOCIATION

— By *P. N. Wali, Mumbai*

One of the most discussed topics in any gathering of Kashmiri Pandits is unity in the community, which appears to elude us all the time. There is a feeling that we are not united. We do not allow any one to emerge as a leader. We are good as individuals and can not work as groups. We do not have a feeling for the community and are not ready to contribute to its cause.

I am not sure that all this is the real picture. Where ever we go, we seek each other. Even when we board a train we scan passenger list to see whether a community person is traveling in the compartment. The presence of DEJHORE, hanging from ladies ear is enough to make us offer greetings, whatever part of world we may be in. Then, of course, there is the presence of a large number of KP bodies, associations, samatis, sabhas, samajs, and what you have. Each town big or small has an association of their own. Some towns like Jammu or Delhi have distinction of having more than one such body. The number of these bodies may run into few hundreds. These associations are not only in India only but also in a number of foreign countries. Each body will have at least 10 to 15 active members and a larger number, participating in their activities. This is quite a number considering the over all size of the community. This is a proof that we are socially inclined as for our community is concerned.

Many of us are not happy with the way our associations are working or what they are achieving. Some go to the extent of saying that they are wasting their resources, of course, of which often not much are available. We are at critical best when it comes to finding fault with the working of our associations. Before passing any such judgment on the working of these bodies let us proceed to examine the basic purpose for which such bodies are set up. Forget what is written in their constitutions. Let us go to the basics. People have lot of expectations. Some expect them to work for the welfare of the community, what ever that means. Some want them to work for return of community back to the valley, when personally they have no inclination of returning even if conditions were all fine. Some even mention larger aim of throwing terrorism out of Kashmir. Some want preservation of culture. Some want preservation of Kashmiri language. Still others want a Kashmiri Guru ji at each center. There is no end to the list, the vaguer the better.

These are goals worthy of being attended to. But are the local associations to fight for all of them. Of course associations are doing their little bit towards many of them if not all these things. But the achievements, as the nature of things is, are not significant. I would like to think of at least one basic purpose all these bodies aim to achieve. It is, to my thinking, to give the KPs living in these places a sense of Identity.

After leaving Kashmir (whether before or after exodus) our first concern is to establish ourselves. Find descent means of livelihood. Next comes a place for living, preferably our own. Good education for our children. It is at this stage we feel the psychological need for identity. In the sea of humanity around us we look for our individuality — our identity. It is at this stage we look for 'associations'. It is this basic purpose all associations serve. Kashmiri Pandits Association (KPA) Mumbai, is no exception to this rule. It has for the last half a century been the symbol of identity for those who chose to make the metropolis of Mumbai as there home.

The Symbols

Most associations hold functions like Havans, Navreh, picnic, get to gethers, cultural events, etc. These are symbols of identity. They serve to enhance our sense of identity. Havan is usually the most well attended function. I learn that community Havans are being held even in USA and a Muslim country like Oman. Pune holds one every month. In Mumbai Havan is an annual event for more than forty years and usually attracts maximum participation. Earlier it was being held at a rented premise in the Khar suburb of Mumbai. After the Association acquired its own premise it is being held at its own place. For last few years New Mumbai has been tried as venue. In earlier days the association members used to go from home to home to make collections for the Havan. Later it was given up when collections on the day almost matched the expenditure. These days it leaves a good surplus.

The Beginning

Mumbai had some KPs even before 1947. Some came, consequent to situations in Kashmir. Persons coming from Kashmir got considerable support in settling down from persons like late Pt. Prithvi Nath Razdan and late Pt. Hriday Nath Bamzai. In early

fifties couple of attempts were made to form an Association, but what worked was a visit by Pt. Shivanarayan Fotedar in early fifties which culminated into the formation of Kashmiri Pandits Association. The question whether the Pandit word should be part of the name was resolved in favor of its inclusion. The Association was got registered as a charitable trust under the local laws. It has enjoyed exemption IT Act under Sec. 80G.

During these nearly fifty years the Association had its highs and lows. Many well intentioned people served the Association with dedication. The list of these people is long but I would like to mention one for particular reason. He held Association banner whenever it fell in low periods. It was Pt. Niranjana Nath Wanchoo whose name became almost synonymous with that of the Association itself.

Mumbai had one more Association called Kashmir Mandal Trust. It represented KPs of the older generations (old Kashmiris). It was, in late seventies, merged with KPA.

A House of Its Own

Like all associations KPA had from the very beginning nurtured a wish to have premises of its own. A home owned is a physical symbol of identity. It is piece of common ownership. For acquiring one in Mumbai you need lot of money. The Association went about it very systematically. It found holding fund raising shows in the Bollywood city as a reasonable way out. Money was collected from tickets and advertisements for the souvenir issued on such occasions. Shows of greats, like Vijayanti Mala, Kishore Kumar, Hemant Kumar, Sitara Devi were artists on such shows. The tradition of the annual show continues till date. Only, now it has become an all Kashmiri affair and no entry fee is charged.

With funds collected search for a suitable place started. The result was the Kashyap Bhavan hall and two flats adjoining the same in a housing cooperative. Not an entirely satisfactory solution but an optimum one for that. KPA was keen to provide some resting place in Mumbai for those who visited the place for medical treatment. This is the reason for acquiring the living accommodation with Kashyap Bhavan.

A New Place

With the increase in the number of KPs in Mumbai, this should be more than one thousand families (not all enrolled), KPA showed ambition for a bigger place and preferably on land of its own. It has now been allotted a piece of developed land admeasuring more than six hundred square meters in Kharghar, New

Mumbai. It is planning a cultural center at the place, that may cost one crore of rupees. It is systematically going ahead with it.

Reaction to Outside Events

No doubt the stated aim of the Association is to address itself to the needs of Mumbai Biradari but has not remained immune to the events affecting the community elsewhere. 1967 KP agitation was one such early event. It came together on the occasion. It collected funds and sent them to Kashmir.

Of course 1990 was too big a catastrophe to escape its attention. Immediate response was to come on streets to draw the attention of world to the emerging situation. The first such demonstration was held in Fort area on 24th March, 1990. A huge public meeting addressed among others by Shri Jagmohan was organised. The Association was concerned about the disinformation campaign then being unleashed. A number of press conferences were held. It went a step further and produced two documentaries one in English and one in Hindi – Sharnarathi Apne Desh Mein. These were screened throughout the world.

Relief was another area of activity. Money was collected for the purpose. Maharashtra C.M was approached who shelled out Rs. 5 lacs. It was one of the earliest to rush relief material to the camps. It helped to build a temporary school in one of the camps. Scholarships, school uniforms, text books, are distributed from time to time. Financial assistance to some families in Kashmir itself was also done.

Support to the students availing the benefit of special reservation offered by the government of Maharashtra has been another important activity. It includes liaison with the authorities and other associations. Accommodation is arranged in Mumbai for those coming to seek admissions.

Medical Relief

One of the objectives of the Association has been to help members of community in physical distress. Providing space at Mumbai to outside patients and their attendants has not been seen as enough. It has set up fund for medical assistance. It was earlier confined to those in Mumbai, but has been extended selectively to outsiders. An eye camp was held for general public.

Culture and Language

Besides the annual cultural event, functions like Navreh etc. are held to enhance cultural awareness. But a very serious attempt was made under the project Zaan, in collaboration with Lal Ded Trust. It

included publication of Information Digest and holding the Zaan Quiz.

Zaan project has also made its contribution in helping enhance reading and speaking capacity of Kashmiri language. A primer in Kashmiri language was produced.

Publication

Milchar has, for long time, served as the information link of the Mumbai Biradari. Long time back it was started as a news letter in Hindi. Later it became an English publication. For the last few years it has English, Hindi and Kashmiri sections. It has traveled a long way from news letter to emerge as a magazine.

Every two or three years, a community directory is published; business like attitude.

Mumbai Culture

It is not strange that whatever may be our own culture and inherited way of thinking, we are affected by the culture of the place we live in. Delhi over the

centuries has been center of power and therefore activities of its inhabitants are coloured by mechanisms of power and struggle to maintain it. Mumbai is business center and the thinking of its inhabitants is fashioned likewise. KPs of Mumbai have always shown a business like attitude. Whether it is collecting funds or managing them, it is the same way. It is almost a history that elections are regularly held to elect the board of trustees. Except for one year the trustees are unanimously elected without having to cast a vote. In Mumbai time is the most precious commodity. People are hard pressed for time. They can spare money but cannot spare time. They, therefore, appreciate anyone who dose spare some time for community affairs.

At The End

I have hinted at number of activities undertaken by KPA Mumbai; each with a specific purpose and an objective, yet the underling aim is to provide a super structure that can help in enhancing the feeling of identity. The road is long. Objective is luadable.

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Kashmiri Sabha, Calcutta – In Retrospect & Prospect

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their collective wisdom to decide best ways forward to preserve our identity in their chosen places of stay. Of course an umbrella organisation of all such Groups with their total support and active involvement can be a great support and active involvement can be a great cohesive force. Fortunately, despite being dispersed in far-flung areas in India and abroad, the Baradari has displayed a unique resilience to face calamities with all its might.

There is no community without its share of doubting Thomases and our community cannot claim to be any exception to the rule. A culture of applause for whoever makes any token contribution can in such predicaments help us all. We should have reasons to believe that our community will have a bright future ahead, be it in social, cultural or economic fronts. We need to put on Yellow Hats of optimism and work to help needy ones amongst us.

Sabhas have come to stay and transform the inner urges and cumulative beliefs of our community gathered through six thousand years of history. They should provide a link between the present generation with the generations gone by. If we want that the view we hold of our culture should be understood and appreciated by others, we have got to establish some kind of harmony between it and the outside expression in our actual living and that is what I guess is being so successfully done by the Sabha in Calcutta. I am confident that the next generation of Kashmiris in Eastern India (which the Sabha represents) will keep our community united, preserving its unique homogeneous identity, especially in Eastern India (which this Sabha represents) will keep our community united, preserving its unique homogeneous identity, especially in the changed scenario of our forced migration from the valley for past ten years. Looking ahead, I have full hope that Kashmir Sabha, Calcutta will prosper with the blessings of Mata Kshir Bhavani along with other Sabhas of our Baradari elsewhere.

The author is a life member of Kashmir Sabha, presently settled in Mumbai. He has been not only a remarkable activist of Calcutta Sabha but also its Editor of the Vitasta.

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KASHMIRI PANDIT ASSOCIATION - MUMBAI



**Kashmir Bhavan Bhoomi puja
(Khargar, New Mumbai)**



Cultural Program



KASHMIRI PANDIT ASSOCIATION - MUMBAI



Project ZAN function



DAWN OF THE 'ZAAAN'—MUMBAI

— By *J. L. Manwati, Mumbai*

History stands witness that Kashmiri Pandits – the original inhabitants of Kashmir, have had to flee Kashmir a number of times under the tyrannical rule of various Muslim rulers. However, the resilient and adoptable character of Pandits brought them back time and again, and they flourished in the Valley. But, the pre-planned ethno-cleansing of the Pandits towards the fag end of 1989 culminated in the mass exodus of the Pandits and created a fear psychosis of such a dimension in the years that followed, that Kashmiri Pandits could not think of returning to their native land thereafter. Depressed and dejected, they got scattered all over the country—mostly living a life of perdition in Jammu. Scattered and disintegrated thus, the community started getting disillusioned and losing touch with their ethnical and cultural roots. In the hostile lands, our language became the biggest casualty.

In the darkness which had enveloped us in mid-nineties, notwithstanding the political affronts taken by our leaders, we, at Lalla Ded Educational and Welfare Trust, felt that if we had to resurrect our dwindling identity, we shall have to preserve our language which could be the only cementing force, with which we could bind our community together. Thus 'Zaan' was conceived, and launched as 'Project Zaan' in collaboration with Kashmiri Pandits' Association, Mumbai.

A group of dedicated persons got together in 1998, under the guidance of Shri J. N. Kachroo – ex-Principal of National High School, Karan Nagar, Srinagar, and a programme for young and not-so-young biradari members, with a view to inculcate interest in our mother tongue, was envisaged and named 'Zaan'. The underlying idea of Project Zaan was contemplated to acquaint our biradari members and make them cognizant; aware about the various facets of Kashmir – its historical facts and truths, its customs and culture, its rites and rituals etc. with an emphasis on the Kashmiri language.

The perplex question was how to approach a youngster, who had been away from his native land, who was deprived of the benefits of joint family mother tongue conversation, who had, wittingly or unwittingly, been drawn into a syndrome of relating with a language either for academic or day-to-day conversational purposes, other than that of his mother tongue.

After debating the pros and cons of the dilemma, the core group of the Project Zaan decided to publish small 'Information Digests' dealing with history, geography, rites, rituals, religion, language, literature, customs etc. and other related subjects on Kashmir. This simple introduction on the various facet of the Valley, it was felt, would widen the 'Zaan' (knowledge) amongst the young members of our biradari about their motherland. This effort, of dissemination of information, was well received by the community. But how would one gauge the extent of assimilation of this Zaan Information Digest? Project Zaan, therefore came up with the idea of holding of a Quiz Contest – a game show popular with youngsters, on the basis of the information furnished through Information Digest.

The basic instinct of trial of skill to outshine in competition and the recognition in the community forum became a propelling force for the youngsters to seriously study the information contained in the Digest and prepare themselves for the competitive event. The enthusiasm and the spirit with which the prospective competitors lined up for the professionally organised First Quiz Contest of the Zaan held in April 2000, and the keen interest demonstrated by the parents and other members of the community by their presence in numbers, was a signal for the organisers that Project Zaan was the answer to bridge the missing link with the motherland.

Encouraged by the tremendous response, the Project worked relentlessly and came out with Volume 2 of the Information Digest, which covered the various topics on Kashmir in more detail and depth. While compilation work on Volume 2 was in progress, the duo of Shri M. K. Raina and Smt. Neelam Trakru of Project Zaan were giving finishing touches to 'Basic Reader for Kashmiri Language' in Devanagari-Kashmiri script as adopted by the Script Standardisation Committee in 1995. This was the first ever attempt by any Kashmiri organisation to come out with a basic reader in Devanagari-Kashmiri. This book was released in March 2001 as Volume 3 under the series of Information Digests under the Project. Based on the computed information of these 3 volumes a 'Question Bank' of 300 questions was devised for the future and subsequent annual quiz contests, which were held in 2001 and 2002 with great aplomb. In order to make the 'Quiz Contests',

by now eagerly looked forward to by young and not-so-young biradari participants, more memorable and eventful, trophies for the winners and participants were instituted in the name of the sponsors of specific contests.

The excitement created by the publication of the 'Reader', it was felt, would not serve the purpose of making members conversant with the language as such, therefore, it was decided to hold intermittently Kashmiri language classes and workshops, wherein the basics of the language would be taught and explained. Such workshops assumed role of influential tools to further create the desired interest in the language.

At this stage Project Zaan interacted with some prominent overseas Kashmiri Pandit organisations for the benefit of our youngsters who lived in the foreign lands. On his visit to India, Dr. S. N. Ganju of Kashmir Bhawan Centre, UK was highly impressed by the work of Project Zaan in preserving the cultural identity of Kashmir and its language. The Organisation placed an order for 50 sets of all the three volumes of Information Digest in the first instalment. This kind gesture of recognition of the work of Project Zaan made us to think of going global. In the process we came across a selfless and dedicated person in Shri Sunil Fotedar of USA, who had created various websites, which he was feeding with whatever data he would get on Kashmir. Shri Fotedar was kind enough to create an exclusive website www.zaan.net for entire Zaan programme. Who says there is dearth of Samaritans in the community? Zaan thus crossed the geographical barriers and spread aroma world over. A good number of Kashmiri Pandits, who have visited the site since its inception, have flooded us with their comments/e-mails, appreciating the laudable efforts of Project Zaan in preserving the ethnicity of Kashmir in its true perspective. That the message of the Zaan has not crossed the geographical boundaries, but the purposeful zest of the Project, for preservation of Kashmiri language has an emotional appeal for any

Kashmiri as such, can be sampled by this message dated 6 December 2003 from a UK based Kashmiri Muslim boy Aatif Ahmad Mahjoor.

"Excellent site. Superb layout and info. Keep up the good work. At least you have not forgotten the Kashmiri language. The attitude of Kashmiris in Kashmir to their own language is appalling. Best wishes for your efforts and God bless".

In April 2003, Zaan as per the projected programme came out with Volume 4 of the Information Digest. Based on the information compiled in this volume together with the information in the earlier volumes, it conducted the 4th Quiz Contest on 19th October 2003.

Meanwhile, Project Zaan published the Revised edition of the 'Basic Reader for Kashmiri Language' in Devanagari-Kashmiri, using the script now streamlined by the expert linguists. A novel feature of the 'Reader' is that alongside the Devanagari-Kashmiri version, Indo-Roman version has been given for the benefit of such readers who may not be conversant with their own language and the Devanagari script. They shall find it easy to read and comprehend Kashmiri through Indo-Roman version.

The spirit of Zaan has, no doubt soared, but the organisers feel that time has come to enrich the contents of its future Information Digests in consonance with the set objectives of Zaan and widen its reach. For this purpose, the Project is considering to enlist cooperation of some writers who have shown their willingness to contribute their might in this regard. Simultaneously, the Project has on its anvil nominating Regional Centres at the places where Kashmiri Pandits have settled in large numbers in the post exodus era, in the country and in the foreign lands. Such Centres will provide necessary platforms to spread the message of Zaan and thus help the community in keeping alive the spirit of Kashmiri Pandits, bounded with ethnic roots of its motherland.

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PANUN KASHMIR — SOME THOUGHTS

— BY *Prof. K. N. Pandita, Jammu*

Not too surprising, many stories were invented and many canards floated to malign the first ever solid political movement of Kashmiri Pandits. The Parmeshwari movement of 1968 could be called the precursor of the simmering discontent of the Pandit community towards neo-communal policies of the State government. But the Parmeshwari movement had too narrow a base and too limited objectives to be classified as anything near a political movement.

On the other hand, PK movement was broad — based encompassing not only the exiled community and its components within the country but also its chapter outside the country. It had an infinitely solid political cause to make it credible in the eyes of international humanitarian organisation including the UN Human Rights Commission.

Several factors lent it tremendous support apart from making it popular down to the grassroots level. Firstly, the movement was launched by the people in exile. They had lost their homes and hearths, their jobs and their means of sustenance. Their plans for their future were shattered and the world seemed a big deluge to them. This common denominator was the great cementing force for all sections of our community. Common adversity breeds commonality of action and reaction. Camp dwelling, a phenomenon hitherto unknown to us, became an icon that spoke of our adversity and beckoned us to a unified line of action.

Marg Darshan resolution of 1991 was passed at Jammu by nearly three thousand delegates of the community in exile. They had travelled from far and wide in the country to lend their support to a political forum that had visionary programme unprecedented in the history of the community. Thus this historic resolution had the mass support and remains a landmark in our history for all times to come.

There are irresponsible critics and commentators who say that Marg Darshan resolution was a reaction out of haste and anger. Others characterised it a wild dream that would never be fulfilled. There was no dearth of pessimists among the moribund sections of our community. But the force of events paid not a tuppence to these canards : the swift movement of events generated widespread acclamation for the movement and its leadership.

The fact is that community leaders deliberated over the entire issue for weeks and months before the

final stage of tabling the resolution arrived. There were brain — storming meetings and corner meetings, debates and discussions so much so that one may say true bean-splitting took place. Interestingly even some among those who formed the highest echelons of the movement later on, were sceptical of its success in the beginning when the debate heated up. But notwithstanding all doubts and misgivings, pessimistic and ultra-cautious approaches, nobody could stop the tide sweeping the community with full force.

Again some were brazen faced, enough to link us up to the Indian intelligence agencies and categorised us as their handiwork. One wished they had an iota of understanding of the policy of Indian authorities towards the Pandits in exile. I can say with a fair amount of conviction that if the Indian intelligence agencies had the level of capability and originality so as to float this movement of the exiled community, Kashmir question would never have become an albatross round their necks.

The truth was the reverse of it. Indian intelligence agencies were at a loss to understand the invisible hand shaping the movement. It was an enigma to them that the Pandit youth even in the remotest corner of India, were enthusiastically supportive of PK. They were prepared to make full contribution towards its success. The intelligence sleuths were probing all vulnerable sources to ascertain that no foreign country, particularly, the Maoists were extending overt or covert support to us. Its deep concern was to see that the exiled community did not mend its fences with the militants because, as we came to know later, they had a vested interest in Kashmir militancy. If we were not unwittingly ultra nationalists, limelight would have turned on us long before. Only history will say whether we had faulted in our tactics.

That PK leadership came essentially from RSS cadres is true to a large extent. As already hinted the Parmeshwari episode of 1968 was an eye opener and a dormant catalyst to the resurgence of the Pandit factor. It should be remembered that the Parmeshwari episode happened when the government of the State was in the hands of "progressive" leadership, which had threatened to shut down the Radio Kashmir if it continued to tell the

truth about the events shaping in Kashmir. This was an indirect indictment of the Government of India by a leadership that feigned to swear by secularism and democracy. How were the Pandits to size up Indian "secular democracy"?

Blatant anti-Pandit policy of the State government was reflected in its very ugly form when the Congress leadership of the valley instigated communal frenzy resulting in the attack on the Pandits and their shrines in some places of Anantnag district in 1986. Apart from this type of direct intimidation, the Pandits had been closely watching the rising crescendo of Islamism in the valley from the times of the execution of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto of Pakistan. The widespread loot and arson inflicted by the NC goons on Jama'at-e Islami cadres in Anantnag district in the aftermath of that execution and later on frugal show of Islamic fraternity with the Jama'at at the behest of Saudi intermediaries, could not escape the eyes of the Pandits. They were witness to the re-assembling of Pan-Islamism forces and "Double Farooq" legend testified to it. Re-vitalisation of Plebiscite Front and its muscular wing namely Al Fath posed undeclared threat to the Pandit minority community in the valley. When Farooq came to power in 1986-7 elections, he promised to close down the Jamaat-i-Islami seminaries throughout the valley. But it all ended up in the endorsement of autonomous status of the *madrasah* usually called the breeding places of Islamic fanaticism. Thousands of its teachers were absorbed in State service thus legitimizing their religious agenda.

The agenda of the *madrasah* seriously jeopardised communal atmosphere in far flung villages with thinnest possible Hindu population which almost had to beg its survival. Undeclared non-cooperation of the majority community with the small and insignificant rural Hindu population adversely affected latter's agrarian pursuits and landed them in economic straits. With no vote bank leverage to manipulate political apparatus, with job opportunities severely restricted and petty trade shorn of social goodwill, the Pandits had begun to sense their economic and political strangulation.

The pandits very clearly understood the writing on the wall. The Indian government closed its eyes to harsh realities. Sheikh's second tenure beginning in 1975 and lasting for nearly a decade laid the foundation for communalisation or Islamisation of Kashmir. During this period the Saudi and Pakistani intelligence agencies made deep inroads in the valley and to their satisfaction they found that the ruling structure was more than just permissive.

New Delhi's inability to make proper assessment of anti-India undercurrent sweeping through the length and breadth of the valley during the second stint of the Sheikh and its cowardly handling of the enforcement team episode made the Pandits very insecure. In late 80s, Governor Jagmohan's repetitive entreaties to the centre to react to the worsening political atmosphere in the State yielded no result. The situation was becoming alarming day after day.

New Delhi miserably failed to size up the political importance of Marg Darshan resolution. Lop sided segments of Congress party left no stone unturned to label PK as a separatist and communally oriented group. The charges of Balkanizing the country were levelled against us. The irony was that these charges coming from responsible official circles were levelled without even once talking to us and trying to understand what we said. Home Ministry relied on the reports of its intelligence sources who seldom work against the broad features of government's policy.

The worse was yet to come. Indian print media, by and large, never hesitated to show us its hostility. Making a fetish of secularism and harping on Kashmir as the secular symbol of India, they hurled full throated invective on the Pandits. How the history was being distorted is unbelievable. But of course here and there a beacon of light did try to ward off disbelief. For example late H. V. Kamath stands out in this context.

The fallacy of India's Kashmir policy is that it always tried to project Kashmir as the hallmark of India's secular tradition. Nothing could be far from truth. The story of atrocities perpetrated on the Hindus of Kashmir valley by the locals during the 1947 raid of the tribesmen and Pakistani militias has never been told in part or in full. Those who harp on secular harmony in Kashmir are abysmally ignorant of Kashmir's true history. What they have read is blatant distortion and understating of bitter truths. Ground reality had been much different from the accounts and commentaries of biased historians. By projecting Kashmir as India's symbol of secularism, New Delhi was inadvertently exposing the minuscule Pandit minority to gravest danger. And the perceived danger ultimately struck them in 1990 and with vengeance.

We, who launched a struggle for Homeland, were more than convinced that this demand was a viable solution of Kashmir problem. The question of dividing the country did not arise. India had been partitioned on communal basis. Congress party, that resisted partition for half a decade, had no qualms of conscience to concede the demand of the Muslim

League. How then does Kashmir enjoy special sanctity that it should not be partitioned? And in fact, we never wanted partition : all that we demanded was a Homeland within the territory of Indian Union. If this led to the same demand in Muslim minority provinces in India, then one can say that India was all the time presenting a false and fabricated Utopia of a "democratic secular state" to the international community. In that sense India's secularism is a sham and her democracy only a matter of convenience and not of conviction.

Secondly, if the Kashmir Muslims wanted liberation (*najat*) from the Indians, we the Pandits wanted *najat* from the Muslim domination in Kashmir. It was that simple. But no less a person than Farooq Abdullah said in a public rally in R. S. Pora that Pandit Homeland would be formed on his dead body alone. This was repetition of the pledge Mahatma Gandhi had made regarding the partition of India. And lo and behold both things happened.

The UN Human Rights Commission charter elaborates the rights of indigenous people. We the Pandits come under the purview of that charter. We have been fighting our case at the UN bodies besides at other non-UN platforms.

In regard to the Pandits, the Government of India has always been adopting a totally non-serious and unconcerned attitude. To the Commission of International Jurists (CIJ), a highly credible NGO with the UN HRC, where top world bureaucrats come together, the Indian government handed over a written formal statement on Kashmir insurgency in which it categorically said that two thousand and five hundred Pandit families were forced to leave their home and hearth at the point of gun in Kashmir and it was tantamount to ethnic cleansing of a minority community. But to the world community at international fora Indian official delegations never talked of atrocities committed by the majority community against the minority community in Kashmir. The double – speak is self-explanatory.

The Panun Kashmir brought two cases before the National Human Rights Commission. In one they sought to be declared Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) — a nomenclature formally approved and frequently used by various bodies of the UN Commission (now Council) on Human Rights. It has to be stated that the precise name of the UN Human Rights Commission or Council is "Human Rights Commission (non Council) for Minorities". It is a recognised fact that those whose human rights are frequently violated belong to silent minorities.

The J&K Government coined many words for the extirpated Pandits. "*mohajir, mafrur, mukhbir, la pata*

etc. The sobriquet depended on the situation and conditions in which it had to be brought into action. For the ruling Kashmiri Muslim majority, the Pandits were all but Kashmiris. The Sheikh had labelled them as 'Indian spies'. Officially in revenue documents of the State we have been mentioned as "*mafrur*" meaning absconding persons. However, the State government calls us "Migrants". In appeasement, the Government of India follows suit, and the Indian press, which has fallen in line, never raised any question on the feasibility of application of the term to the Pandits. Did we migrate out of free will and would we return out of our free will?

Let me go into some detail. There are more than 3.5 million people in the world who have been extirpated from their native places but who did not leave the international borders of their country like the Pandits. The United Nations coined the term 'Internally Displaced Persons' (IDPs) for them. The standardized term is used by all UN bodies both formally and informally in their documentation system. The UN Secretary General appointed a reputed scholar of international law, namely Francis Deng, — an ethnic African — as Secretary General's Special Rapporteur on Internally Displaced Person. In a briefing at the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva in April 2002, Francis Deng's response to the question of this writer was reported by the *Kashmir Herald* as follows :

Geneva, April 15 : The decade-long struggle waged by the representatives of 350,000 internally displaced Kashmiri Pandits at the sessions of the UN Human Rights Commission and the Sub-Commission in Geneva has, at last, drawn the attention of the Commission towards their plight, and now stands properly documented in the annals of the United Nations history. In the face of opposition from many quarters including the Indian Home Ministry over the years, the Pandit representatives persevered with their unrelenting struggle of lobbying with members, NGOs, special rapporteurs, delegates and the correspondents at the headquarter of the world forum of Human Rights. On 11 April 2002, Mr. Francis Deng, UNHRC Special Rapporteur on Internally Displaced Persons held a briefing at the UN in Geneva to present the contours of his latest report on the IDPs world over and to respond to the queries of the delegates. In his two-hour long briefing, at the UN in Geneva to present the contours of his latest report on the IDPs world over and to respond to the queries of the delegates. In his two-hour long briefing, Mr. Deng gave a broad description of the existing situation of nearly three and a half million IDPs all over the globe and the measures taken or not taken by the local governments and the UN Human Rights Commission to bring some relief to them. The exposition dealt

with various aspects of internal displacement from nature to man-made calamities such as xenophobia, ethnic-religious cleansing, discrimination, communal hatred and economic strangulation. In reply to a question from Dr. K. N. Pandita, the accredited delegate of the African Commission for Health and Human Rights Promoters (an NGO with ECOSOC Status), who has been leading the decade-long struggle at Geneva, as to how the Special Rapporteur reacted to a situation in which the local governments insisted on calling them "migrants" despite their fulfilling all the stipulated conditions of IDPs definition, Mr. Deng said that no doubt member countries were sovereign in making their decisions but being signatories to the Human Rights Covenant, they agree to go by the resolutions of the UN bodies. Elaborating on the issue, Mr. Deng informed Dr. Pandita that his (Special Rapporteur's) office had taken a note of the internal displacement in Kashmir and this had been properly and formally recorded. The following relevant portion from the text of the report was formally conveyed to him :

"Displacement from Kashmir : As many as 350,000 Kashmiris, mostly Hindu Pandits, have been displaced since 1990 as a result of long-standing conflict in Kashmir between the Indian armed forces and separatists among the majority Muslim community. According to the Indian authorities, continuing violence in Kashmir led to the deaths of 762 civilians in 2000. Some 250,000 displaced Kashmiris are living in or near the city of Jammu, both in camps for the displaced and in their homes. An estimated 100,000 Kashmiris are displaced elsewhere in India, primarily in the New Delhi area".

Talking to the newsmen in Geneva, Dr. Pandita said that this documentation in the UN records was authentication of the history of the Pandit mass exodus from their homeland in 1990, which the Union and the State governments were obliged to reverse keeping in mind that the relevant bodies of the UN Human Rights Commission strongly recommended the return of the IDPs in a concentrated form for secured restitution in Pandit homeland. He said it was a breakthrough in a long stalemate over the issue, which he had been pursuing for last twelve years.

This statement throws up several aspects of the issue. Firstly, the Government of India being a signatory to the Human Rights Covenant, had the obligation to declare the exiled Pandits as IDPs. But it failed to do so meaning thereby that the issue was politicised. Secondly, the Pandits had not left the borders of their State and as such fulfilled all the conditions laid down in the UN Human Rights Covenant. Thirdly, the United Nations recognised them as IDPs and this has gone into its documents.

Fourthly, according to the UN procedures, the Pandit IDPs are entitled to all the rights and privileges as are granted to international refugees including the right to seek asylum in foreign countries. The Pandits are free and entitled to benefit from this provision.

By denying the proper nomenclature to the displaced Pandits, the National Human Rights Commission of India has created a grave situation in which its credentials with the UN Human Rights Commission are under question.

The second issue which Panun Kashmir took up with the NHRC was of genocide of the Pandits. This issue was hotly debated and the PK provided all necessary evidence and documents supporting its stand that genocide had been affected in their case. Unfortunately, once again politics was inducted by the august body against the terms of reference that give direction to its deliberations.

I would strongly ask those of our detractors that had the Panun Kashmir been a show piece of the Indian agencies, we would not have met unjust and illegal treatment at the hands of the top agencies of the government. I shall not refer to the tone and tenor of the National Human Rights Commission when it conducted sessions of discussing Panun Kashmir's requests.

It will be pertinent to mention at this place that when the Godhra tragedy happened, the same National Human Rights Commission of India dispatched its observer team within 48 hours to report on the situation. It proceeded with its act of condemnation of the massacre of innocent human beings and also issued a verdict against the government of Gujarat. On the other hand when it sent its delegation to conduct an independent inquiry into the Wandhama killing of 30 defenceless Pandits, neither a word of condemnation of the killings was uttered nor was the delegation's report made public all these years. From these instances, the impartiality of the National Human Rights Commission becomes suspect. At least the Pandit religious minority community expects no justice from it.

I will not mention the cold apathy of the Union Government towards the displaced Pandits here. But I shall certainly make a pointed reference to the Indian print media. A sizeable section of Indian print media not only failed to highlight the tragedy that had befallen the Hindu minority community of Kashmir, but also had, unfortunately, distorted and brutalised the facts of history to the maligning of the Pandits. Their tirade against the Pandits has not stopped even today. This is obviously part of disinformation campaign of our adversaries, in which sections of media and officialdom, too, has a role. Panun Kashmir took upon itself to counter this disinformation

campaign and galvanised its national and overseas chapters into action. Many American Congressmen have a far more clear picture of the Pandit case today than what they knew of it during the early days of their extirpation.

The 1996 Anandpur Sahib march of Panun Kashmir activists was the high watermark of our extended struggle for creating awareness of our case in broader Indian masses. This had become necessary in view of apathy of the Indian political and ruling class. The response shown by the Punjab Sikh community was superb. Our message spread from closed religious circles to broad Sikh community and the Punjab ruling segment. Chandigarh-based dailies, and *The Tribune* in particular, gave coverage to the event and Panun Kashmir message spread to the entire State of Punjab.

In other states, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal Pandit Associations under one name or the other, conveyed their affiliation to the main body and our delegations established liaison with them to dovetail their programmes to the basic philosophy of Panun Kashmir. The highly satisfying development was that the demand of Pandit Homeland was fully endorsed by one and all.

The Homeland demand was not only aimed at finding a way of return of the Pandits to their birth place. It catered to wider issues of the minority community. It rightly tried to dispel the myth of 'communal harmony' in Kashmir, a mask behind which great political and economic injustice was inflicted on the small religious community. Those who orchestrated the Kashmiriyat charade did so for their political aggrandisement, and they certainly extracted mileage out of it. The foremost among such stalwarts was a biased section of Indian print and electronic media.

Homeland demand of Panun Kashmir was essentially based not on the immediate happenings of 1990 but on a long and tortuous period of Kashmir history going back to the beginning of the 14th century. While during following seven centuries the Pandits as a community bore atrocities and oppression under the fiercest religious persecution, it was ironically under a "democratic and secular" dispensation that they were extirpated *en masse* from their place of birth. Ethnic cleansing of Hindu minority in the only Muslim dominated State of the Indian Union, and criminal inability of the "democratic and secular" regimes of the Indian Union, forced the Pandits to think beyond

the on-going crisis. In a world of today where identities had become the basis of national independence, he, by the same token, wanted freedom from Muslim majoritarianism and domination. Logic was on his side. This line of thought was intensely and relentlessly pursued by the Panun Kashmir delegates at the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva with the result that its official Minority and IDP Group debated the entire spectrum of the issue and then came out with a new formula of "reverse minority" citing Kashmir Pandits as an example. Alas, the National Human Rights Commission of India failed to appreciate the understanding of the UN Human Rights Commission on the issue and chose to turn blind eye towards it, obviously under political pressures or government directives.

From the very beginning Panun Kashmir was fully aware of its weaknesses. The biggest weakness was that the Pandits were not a vote bank, a fatal drawback of a minority community in the context of Indian politics of democracy. Our second weakness was the lack of a strong media of our own. We had not a paper or a journal that would voice our grievances or suggestions. India's large dailies were loath to carry news and commentaries on Pandit case just because they were not a vote bank. The local government in the State, traditionally hostile to the Pandits, considered their Homeland demand tantamount to wrecking the Kashmir Muslim community through an "unnatural" division of the valley. While this was what they thought of Pandit Homeland, they were satisfied and comfortable with the division of India and the creation of a homeland for the Indian Muslims. Panun Kashmir could not help the Indian State come out of its slavish mentality.

With the passage of time, Panun Kashmir suffered a split. The reason is that the community was impatient with the agenda of the organisation. However, it became difficult to make the suffering community understand that their demand of Pandit Homeland was neither simplistic nor without far reaching consequences. It meant changing the entire geo-political strategy and structure of Asia. The pygmies of Indian political platform had neither the vision nor the will nor ability to understand what the implications of the Pandit demand were. The Hindu mind scarcely opens to ground realities and seldom pre-empts impending crisis. Nevertheless, even after the split, support to Homeland demand remains intact with all cadres of Panun Kashmir.

(The write is the former Director of the Centre of Central Asian Studies, Kashmir University and a senior member of Panun Kashmir).

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KASHMIRI SEWAK SAMAJ, FARIDABAD

—By *Puran Patwari & Arvind Shah, Faridabad*

Kashmiri Sewak Samaj, Faridabad represents the social, cultural and religious aspirations of the 1000 families of Kashmiries, 90% of whom have settled in this township after their displacement from the Valley in the early 90's.

Kashmiri Sewak Samaj was founded in the early 80's; the founding fathers created and inculcated a spirit of brotherhood, discipline and service among its members.

Shri D N Kaul, a teacher by profession, founded the Samaj in Faridabad. As the story goes, a Punjabi transporter in Faridabad had a KP employee, who had a sudden death. The Punjabi gentleman went around the town to locate a KP family so that the deceased KP could have his last rites as per Kashmiri tradition. The responsibility of collecting KPs in Faridabad for the last rites of the deceased fell on late D N Kaul Sahib.

After the event, Shri D N Kaul tirelessly worked to keep the community well knit and socially together.

In the mid eighties, Shri Shibanji Raina as the President and Shri K L Bakshi gave KSS a simple and workable Constitution, which created the foundation of the KSS body as a cohesive and disciplined team.

Shri M N Pandita, an entrepreneur by profession, led KSS as the President till 1993. His tenure was marked by spirit of selfless service and immediate help to the needy in a silent and obedient way. Besides addressing to the socio-cultural needs of its local community, KSS flung into action to help the distressed Kashmiri Pandits who had been displaced from Kashmir in 1990. The Faridabad Biradari approached Shri J N Kaul in 1993 to lead the Community keeping in view the turbulence that the Community was undergoing due to the trauma of Kashmiri Pandit exodus, resulting in their losing the hearth & home and homeland. Shri Kaul accepted the responsibility with missionary zeal. The first couple of years were very challenging as our boys and girls in the camps were facing a future without hope. Given the abysmal living conditions in one-room tenements, the boys and girls were growing into unemployed adults. Here Shri J N Kaul conceived the first bold step of social entrepreneurship. As a visionary, he propounded that, "Giving doles and showing pity and weeping is not going to help, instead it will make the community weak. We have to stand up, work hard

and improve ourselves by acquiring strengths & skills so that we are useful for the society at large. Our way of working must be dignified so that we become the most sought after community, all over this world." All India Kashmiri Samaj (of which he was also the President) Kashmiri Sewak Samaj and the SOS Children's Village of India, forged an alliance to recruit boys and girls from the camps and impart one years training to them in Computer Applications. Special Hostels were created for these boys and girls in Faridabad and well-equipped Computer Lab was built in the Hermann Gmeiner Institute of Vocational Studies in Faridabad. Undertaking an effort like this was not easy as the skeptics were at each stage offering counsel to follow the easy way out and "cut corners for convenience"! They wanted this education to be imparted to these boys and girls close to their homes in Nagrota and similar camps, in and around Jammu. But Shri J N Kaul would think further as a visionary. He wanted the boys and girls to be far from a life of virtual hell in these one-room tenements. When the program came to close, nearly 300 boys and girls became bread-earners for their families. The boys and girls would undergo a metamorphosis in their personalities after a first class boarding, provided with amenities. Most of these boys and girls are employed today in Companies of repute. *"Give a man a fish; you have fed him for today. Teach a man to fish; and you have fed him for a lifetime"*. Our Social organizations may use their energies, resources and the thought to emulate the example given here.

The last decade has been a decade of great accomplishment for the Samaj. The decade has given the Community two great Institutions: Sharika Bhawan and Hari Parbat in the Village Anangpur, thanks to the vision and leadership provided by Shri J.N. Kaul. Besides, the following were also achieved :

* The institutions of, training in Stenography, English speaking courses and Cutting and tailoring centers for ladies were set up in the vicinity of migrant camps to enhance the skills of our young people. Community centers at various migrants camps have been established : Geeta Bhawan at Muthi, Community center at Nagrota and local organizations are also supported to make community facilities. Computer training is arranged at H.K.V.T.C Faridabad for migrant, youth, free of charges. Youth: boys and girls

KASHMIRI SEWAK SAMAJ - FARIDABAD



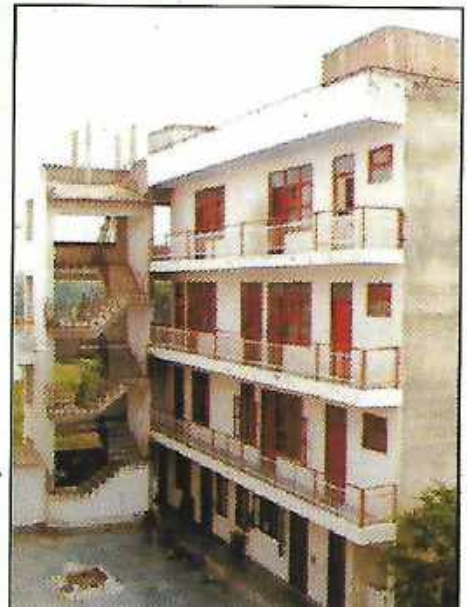
Sharika Bhawan(Front view)



Sharika Bhawan(Side view)



President K.S.S. Honouring the dignitaries



KASHMIRI SEWAK SAMAJ-FARIDABAD



GAYATRI Housing Society



LALLESHURI Housing Society



SABZAR Housing Society

facilities have been set up where deserving migrant students reading in various instructions are given free boarding and lodging.

* K S S, with the support of many friends and SOS Children's Villages of India, has been giving yearly scholarships to needy students of Jammu province on merit cum means basis. The children study in government schools and their parents live in migrant camps. This year 300 children have been identified for a support of 1500/-

* KSS has formulated a group of workers to identify the people who are in difficult situations and need a helping hand. A helping hand is extended to women led families, where the bread earner is dead or the person is incapacitated due to ill health. General financial assistance is also provided to the helpless by cash as well as kind as the situation may demand.

The contribution of KSS is remarkable for being instrumental in creating :

- a. Three Housing Societies at different places in Faridabad, which house more than 200 families in a serene atmosphere to help them groom and grow well.
- b. SHARIKA BHAWAN at Sector 17 Faridabad is a complex spread over 1600 sq. meters in the heart of the city of Faridabad. The lay out and the planning of the complex is perfect to address the different social needs. It is a building complex comprising a three storey building having a Basement, Ground Floor and a Prayer Hall, housing the image of Maa Sharika and other Incarnations of the Lord. There are appropriate utility rooms in the building for every social purpose. The complex also has a four storey hostel building for the needy students and others. We call it a cultural mall of Kashmiri Pandits in Faridabad.
- c. HARIPARBAT at Annangpur, Faridabad. It is stupendous, an unparalleled shrine created in recent times. Smt. Indra Kaul, wife of Shree J N Kaul once looking at the hillock of Annangpur got the visualization of Maa Sharika, as at Hari Parvat, Srinagar. Her visualization was put to practical shape to give rise to the most picturesque

structure, most beautiful landscape and most vibrant religious place of Kashmiri Pandits. It will not be incorrect to say the Hariparbat, Annangpur is the socio-spiritual center of the community outside the valley. Whole hillock has been developed lush green. A smooth stone staircase from one side reaches to **Gyan Peeth – Lord Ganesh's** temple, after some more steps is the **Shivala** and further some steps it is the grand temple of **Maa Sharika : the Chakrishwari**. On the round turn of the parikrama there is a memorial to **Lalishaweri** on one side and then the big garden for the excursion. HARIPARBAT at Annangpur, Faridabad is becoming the focal point of the community for the celebrations of **Navreh** – The New Year of Kashmiri Pandits. When we visited the place for the first time we could mark that, to distant distances all around in the whole city, nothing so green and lively existed. It is an environmental marvel. It is a spiritual place. It is the place for social integration. It is simple splendor in shape, for which the whole community shall be indebted to Smt. Indira Kaul, Shree J N Kaul, KSS and all other organisations and individuals who made it possible to fight the exodus with courage; not to collapse helplessly but to strive, stand up and win.

The major donors for SHARIKA BHAWAN have been :

Smt. Jaya and Dr. Maharaj Krishan Razdan; Smt. Pratibha & Shri Shiban Kishan Bhan; Shri J N Parimoo; Smt. Jaikishori & Shri Makhn Lal Bhat; Smt. Ratna & Shri Kanhaya Lal Raina; Smt. Leelawati And Shri Ram Chand Ganjoo; Smt. Indira and Shri J N Kaul.

Having completed 3 landmark projects, what next? KSS is working on plans to build a GOLDEN AGE home for our lonely elderly brethren and for institutionalizing the concept of "Mochifali-saet Athroat" a campaign to help the needy and the meritorious children of our Community. It is worthwhile to mention that for past many years KSS has been able, in collaboration with SOS Children's Villages of India, to reach out to our meritorious children in the camps by giving Scholarships. This effort needs to be strengthened many fold and here is where KSS intends to focus its energy in coming days ahead.

Mr. Puran Patwari is General Secretary of KSS, and Shri Arvind Shah is a columnist, writing under "Independent Impressions".

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KASHMIRI OVERSEAS ASSOCIATION (KOA), CAMP



KASHMIRI OVERSEAS ASSOCIATION (KOA), CAMP



DISILLUSIONMENT AND FAITH THE FUTURE OF KASHMIRI PANDITS

— By *Maharaj Kaul, New York*

When a man is robbed of his belongings, kicked out of his home, and forced to leave his land where his ancestors had lived for thousands of years, it is very hard to imagine that he will continue to have faith in the human values of his tormentors and destroyers — even of his neighbors and countrymen at large, and even that of the people around the world.

Human life is a fragile phenomenon, where the support of the physical environment and the faith in the fellow human beings is a requisite for meaningful existence.

Kashmiri Pandits, the original inhabitants of Kashmir, have been kicked and destroyed before, but never have they been so grossly brutalised, victimised, and dehumanised as this time. This destruction of Kashmiri Pandits is the most profound in their history and it will have a significant impact on their survival and happiness.

The annihilation of Pandits happened while the central government of India was watching and well aware of the dimensions of the tragedy taking place but chose to play soft with its perpetrators, Muslims, in the hope of winning the civil war in Kashmir one day. Cries of help to the people of India and beyond evoked little effective sympathy and help. Ambushed in daylight, Pandits left Kashmir Valley in pain, misery, and utter revulsion toward Muslims and disgust toward their central government — but invisibly, deep beneath their day to day consciousness, many of them harbored hopes of justice and human treatment. It took many years after being kicked out of the valley before most of them started losing faith in the mankind's mythologised human values and civilisation's much vaunted democratic institutions.

Most of the KP's pass time in the dreary, pigeon-holed, futureless existence in Jammu. Thousands of men in mid-30's to mid-50's never go to work, as they have chosen to survive on government handouts given in lieu of the salary they would have earned, if they had proper conditions to work in Kashmir. This psychological-self-annihilation is the worst price KP community is paying at the hands of

the civil war. The lack of zeal, ambition, and a sense of honor to work has had devastating effect on the family happiness and the proper psychological health of KP children. Many young, professionally educated KP's have chosen to fight the mental illness and the consequent physical illness than attempt to carve a new future in places distant from Kashmir.) This long immersion in slothfulness and hopelessness will cast a dark shadow on the development of the future Kashmiri culture. It will take generations before Kashmiri Pandits of Jammu and Kashmir will regain purposefulness, confidence, and cheerfulness in their lives. One has only to look at the volume of anti-depression, ulcer, and blood-pressure medications consumed by KP's in this region. Some time back there was a report that the average birth-weight of KP babies in the region was significantly deteriorating. The young KP boys and girls do not harbor big and many dreams.

One thing is clear in the present Kashmiri Pandit catastrophe, that they will never reoccupy Kashmir Valley in the same fervor, legitimacy, and bond as before. Although Kashmir will continue to remain under India, its past social and cultural atmosphere will never reemerge, as it has been badly shattered. It is as if the spine of a human being has been broken in a violent collision and thereafter he can never reclaim his old poise, gait, and grace.) Kashmiri Pandit's have to accept the *fait accompli* of the situation the events have thrown them into. Bleeding our hearts on the mammoth loss will not make us recover it.) All the diplomacy, the political jostling and posturing going on in the world on Kashmir problem does not touch the plight of KP's. They are the side-show of the side-show in this insane and ancient drama played between Muslims and Hindus. All the intense and prolonged efforts by KP's, round the world, to draw attention to their injustice and pain have not produced any significant results. KP efforts have by now reached an apex, any further intensification and revision of strategy to win people to their cause will not be helpful. No energy should be expended to influence Govt. of India, as it has its own strategy and agenda, in

which KP's have a marginal weight. (In such a situation KP's should give up on the hope of reclaiming Kashmir in the way it occupied it before.) Kashmir can not become their home in the same way as it was before. The recent catastrophic experiences in Kashmir have alienated the dominant majority of Kashmiri, Muslims, and the Hindus for a long time to come. How can a KP return to a place where his fellow KP's have been murdered, many of their houses have been burnt, by a majority community who hates them. It would not be possible to have a normal emotional and psychological life there. And an attempt to raise KP children there would be a leap into insanity. Even though Kashmir will continue to remain a part of India, it is no longer a home of KP's.)

(With the above perspective, it would make a lot of sense for KP organisations like Panun Kashmir and KOA to withdraw from the cause of returning KP's to Kashmir and rechannelise their energies and financial resources to the placement of young KP's in jobs, helping in the education of the destitute children, and the creation of international networking for the sustenance of KP identity and ambition. KP's should be helped to run for local elections. They should stop beating their chests and look to future for the betterment of their children and community. There hang myths about Kashmiris that they have a sharp sense of survival and a keen mind. Although they are not accurate but Kashmiris do have some sense of survivability and some measure of mental keenness — both greatly needed in their present circumstances.)

Future ↑ If KP's follow two things — and it seems that they eventually will — they will do quite well in future. One is to work hard and the other to not to tamper with their identity. KP's are into all kinds of technological and scientific fields. One area they are not good at is private entrepreneurship, no wonder not many KP's are in that. Working hard, though not natural for Kashmiris, is accommodated by them when circumstances demand. We have to see how KP's work when they are outside Kashmir. They being *permanently* exiled from Kashmir Valley is in a way a boon for them, as their mental keenness coupled with diligence may take them to hitherto unrealised achievements. Kashmiris are very comparing, that is before embarking on important things they see whether fellow Kashmiris are also doing the same. In the universal climate of hard

work, engendered by cutthroat competition, KP's will follow the tide.

Identity is one of the basic structures of human psychology, any attempt to modify it is risking a lot. KP's have to keep nourishing their identity (but not necessarily continue with some bad things of the old culture). This should take form of the community cultural clubs, international gatherings on history, art, and literature of Kashmir, etc. The internet revolution is obviously a bonanza to the uprooted communities like KP's. (As long as KP's consider themselves first as Kashmiris and then as Indians, they have a better chance of retaining their Kashmiri identity. Having been rendered refugees in the country of their citizenship, they can not do any better.) Like Jews we have been rendered rootless and like them we will become cosmopolitan and mixable with other communities. But without losing our identity. Like them our history will become our destiny. Our greatest pitfall will be if we try to become Americans or British or French, etc. (We have to live through our Kashmiri identity to live in peace, dignity, and happiness.)

Contrary to popular opinion there will be people living in the world a hundred years from now, who will not only call themselves KP's but be KP's — though different from us, to account for the passage of time and the change of circumstances. They may not be speaking Kashmiri, same way as many Europeans in U.S.A. do not speak their ancestral languages. The whole world is changing in that the ethnicity of its groups is diluting as global village metaphor is hitting the ground. We will be a colored element in a vast kaleidoscope. From the high pedestal of Kashmiri Brahmin we have to descend gracefully to become a mere flower in a widespread garden. History has taught us that ethnicity does not disappear, though it may change its appearance. Also, Kashmiris, in spite of complex relationships they often have with each other, do not mix well with other ethnic groups. Networking will remain the backbone of the Kashmiri psychological survival. They are vastly more inclined to the psychological condition of "being", rather than of "becoming". Kashmiris seek their kind, even the one's they would have reservations about mixing with back home, outside Kashmir, in foreign lands, wherever they are spread thin. Kashmiris, history has shown us, have resistance to change.

SURVIVE

(Kashmiris will survive ethnically as Italians, Irish, Spanish, and other groups have, Identity and survival are in their genes.)

Moving out of Jammu and Kashmir as refugees and restarting their lives has been traumatic for more than one reason. A refugee's resettlement is expectedly fraught with anguish and perspiration, but in a KP's case the added dimension of heart-break came from our central government's apathy and neglect — which has been so bad that it seems it was calculatedly done. Add to it the lack of sympathy and help from the non-Kashmiri Indian (the significant help from Bal Thackeray and others has only been a drop in the ocean), which has hurt the KP pride very badly. There are only about 800,000 KP's round the world, but they have a high estimation of their legacy, character, and personality, and therefore, they are understandably a proud people. Indian people are battling a universe of problems, the plight of KP's is only a small air current in a hurricane they live in. KP's can not find proper sympathy, help, and opportunity to transplant themselves in India outside Jammu and Kashmir after their destruction and desecration in land of their ancestors. They have to seek refuge outside India, if possible.

United States is a special place in the world at this time in history. It is not only the biggest nation of the immigrants but also a champion of democracy and is economically the strongest engine in the world. No wonder it has been a magnet to the world's disaffected, disfranchised, and deprived, KP's have a logical place to attempt to emigrate to in their circumstances. There are some one thousand KP families in U.S. eager to help them.

Given the ethnic multiplicity and tolerance in the country, U.S. is the most suitable place for KP diaspora to land at. Even though it is far from Kashmir, it is the most suitable garden in which the fragile KP plant has the best chance of transplantation. We can try, at a larger scale, to influence U.S. Govt. to give us refugee treatment in giving us land and financial support. This simple idea has unfortunately not been given a chance. Better than living in India, U.S.A. would best serve the long-time goals of many KP's.

(Disillusionment is the present state of mind of the KP refugee, we could not expect any different from his circumstances. For thousands of years he clung to his mother Kashmir but now time has come for him to take a radical step, a step to make a clean break from the past illusions, and at last tread on the ground leading to liberation. We have been a target of religious hatred, a political bargaining chip, and a peripherally insignificant minority for a long time but now fate gives us a chance to escape the turmoil and a torture of hundreds of years — a chance we can not lose, an opportunity we can not spoil. Future beckons us. Faith has been simplistically described as belief without reason. But we need not abandon reason in having faith that KP's will transcend the present impasse and emerge as a more successful and happier community than before. All we have to do is work hard, retain our identity, and try to leave India. (The subconscious religiosity of KP's, their non-conformist inclinations, their strong love for nature, and their disindination toward a personal god are all ingredients for a people who can transplant themselves to different places and cultures in the world.)

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KASHMIRI HINDU SAMITHI KARNATAKA

— By R. K. Mattoo, Bangalore

During mass exodus of Kashmiri Pandits in 1990s, a small chunk of this community migrated to Bangalore. The majority was from HMT and ITI, Srinagar which had to be shut down for some time owing to kidnapping and death of its General Manager Mr. Khera and other community members. A few of them were from nationalised banks, AG's office, telecommunications and Central Silk Board, mainly because their spouses were working either for ITI or HMT.

These employees were adjusted in various subsidiary units of HMT, most of them in Bangalore and Tumkur. Similarly ITI, had to be closed in Srinagar for some time and some employees adjusted in Bangalore. Accordingly, their spouses working in Banks and other Central Government Offices also got themselves adjusted in Bangalore and Tumkur.

After landing in Bangalore with their families, these employees were left in the lurch and many of them had to stay in Dharam-shallas and even open grounds without any shelter. The post migration brought a lot of problems. Initially these problems were looked after individually but later taken over by the Kashmiri Hindu Samithi Karnataka which took birth in 1990.

Like in many other states, Bangalore too had a registered association called Kashmiri Association in early 1980s. It had members from both the communities, i.e. Muslims and Pandits. The Association could not run on secular basis as it was dominated by the Muslim biradari. All the Kashmiri Pandits stopped attending the meetings convened by them. The Association still exists on paper and is being used by some old Muslims who have settled in Bangalore prior to 1990, in connection with their handicrafts business.

Meanwhile, the Pandits formed a separate group and had frequent get togethers on festival days. The activities were only restricted to meetings on happy occasions without any concrete agenda. The same group took initiative in drafting the byelaws and getting it registered in 1990. Among the prominent Kashmiris who have taken pains in giving the Samithi a formal shape and stamp are : Mr. S. Dharmarathi, a leading advocate in Srinagar, Mr. M. L. Kaul, Mr. G. L. Sapru, Dr. R. K. Kaw, Mr. P. N. Mattoo, Col. P. N. Kak and many more.

Emergence of Samithi

I will not hesitate to say that the Samithi gained momentum under my leadership after I took over the reins as President in 1993, after serving as the Vice President for over a year. The Samithi geared up its activities in the service of community, looked after many problems and succeeded in achieving the results.

Getting a ration card or admission in a school were biggest problems then, leave alone generating employment for the jobless. Moving from pillar to post, the managing committee members worked day and night to mitigate the problems of the community.

Achievements And Activities of Samithi

School admissions, issue of ration cards, gas connections, priority travel tickets, professional guidance, medical and other support systems were organised and provided.

Salary issues, transfers, forced VRS in HMT and ITI were averted through bureaucratic interventions.

Reservations for the wards of Kashmiri Pandits in professional and non — professional colleges were got ensured through timely follow up and attention. At present, 116 seats in Engineering, seven in Medical & Dental and 2 in Management streams are allotted to KPs every year.

Migrant Identity cards have been issued by the Commissioner of Bangalore to all migrants who live in Bangalore, Tumkur and other districts of Karnataka.

Events like Hur Ashtami, Zang Trai, and Navreh are performed every year in the Bhavan.

Panchang, tele directories, bhajan cassettes, table calenders are being distributed to Beradari members.

Navratra Havan is undertaken in Bhavan every year during Navmi days.

A minimum of Rs. 5000 provided as medical assistance to needy Kashmiri Pandits, residing anywhere in the country.

Annual General Body Meetings are held annually. Monthly meetings are held to take stock of activities, their progress and accomplishments.

Aalav magazine in English/Hindi/Kashmiri was launched during January 2003 which has gained a wide publicity throughout the globe owing to its rich material text.

Construction of Bhavan, a kind of monument for KPs to preserve, protect identity and culture is under completion. Two phases have already been completed. Total land area of this Bhavan in the prime location is 16,200 sq. ft. and the built up area of approximately 15,000 sq feet will comprise of :

Ground Floor : A dining hall, community kitchen, yoga and meditation hall, Samithi Office and washing areas

KASHMIRI HINDU SAMITI - KARNATAKA



All India Kashmiri Samaj, Bangalore Samellan



Kashmir Bhavan under construction



KASHMIRI HINDU SAMITI - KARNATAKA



First Floor : 17 Living rooms with bath attached and all ultra modern facilities like cable, internet, library, museum, Research room and a mini hall.

Second Floor : A multipurpose Auditorium with seating capacity of 500-800 people.

Provision has been kept for a temple—Neelakentashwara Temple – in front of the proposed Bhavan on a 1200 Sq ft of land.

The present market value of the land is Rs. 2.5 crore given by the Bangalore Development Authority through a special order of the then Chief Minister S M Krishna, now the Governor of Maharashtra. The cost of the project (construction alone) has been estimated at Rs. one crore. The project is halfway now and is expected to be completed by early 2008.

Future plans of the Samithi :

- a) to establish an old age accommodation on time sharing basis with all modern amenities, on the lines of guest house accommodation.

This is necessary in view of thousands of software engineers employed in Bangalore who have to go globe trotting leaving their parents alone back in Bangalore. Such people who have no dearth of money but need company will be largely benefited by this project.

- b) To start an education institution to cross subsidise the education of those who live in migrant camps and can not afford higher education for their children.
- c) To start a free dispensary at the Kashmir Bhavan for the benefit of the local people in the area. Doctors from the community will come for consultation on turns.
- d) To start a free kitchen for poor at the temple premises.

To achieve the above, we seek the entire community's support and encouragement without which nothing can be realised.

[The author is President, Kashmiri Hindu Samithi (Karnataka) Regd., President and managing Trustee of Kashmiri Hindu Cultural Welfare Trust, Chief Editor, "Aalav" and Vice President, All India Kashmiri Samaj, New Delhi.

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KASHMIRI SAMITI, BANGALORE

— By **T. N. Dhar "Kundan"**, Bangalore

I had visited Bangalore earlier also but only for a short period to attend some seminars or participate in some function. It was in 1999 that my son was posted here and I came to live here. The first thing that I did was to get in touch with Shri R. K. Mattoo, the President of the Bangalore Samiti, who in turn guided me to meet other office bearers. The first thing that struck me and pleased me was to find that Shri Sapru, a well-known transporter had made his office premises available to the Samiti to run its activities. The second thing was the unity and cohesiveness among the members of the executive committee. The third important thing that I came to know was the care and compassion shown by them towards any member of the community in need, difficulty or suffering.

The Samiti had been in existence for a decade and had always stood by the community whether living

permanently in Karnataka or forced to migrate from Kashmir due to the turmoil of 1989-90. A plot of land had been earmarked to build the Kashmir House for the activities of the community living in and around Bangalore. During my seven-months stay then, I observed that whenever unfortunately any Kashmiri was hospitalised the members of the Samiti were at hand to serve, help, and use their good offices to get sizeable cut in the hospital bill. Whatever the members of the Samiti needed, be it accommodation, a gas connection or admission in the schools, the Samiti was there to help. Apart from festivals like Navreh, Zangtrai etc. the Samiti observed the Martyr's Day and the Holocaust Day in a big way. They performed annual Havan and invited prominent people from other cities for interaction and deliberations on the problems caused by the forced migration. They also invited artists from Jammu and

other places and together with the local talent organised cultural programmes. I was honoured when a function was organised in a spacious hall where I recited my Kashmiri poems in the presence of nearly three hundred people. During my interaction with the executive I floated an idea that the Samiti could start bringing out a journal, which was well received. I was pleasantly surprised one fine morning when I received a telephone call from Shri Mattoo at Delhi to inform me that a monthly magazine had been started and that it was proposed to include my name as a Consulting Editor, which I gladly consented.

I have again come to live here in this city and have been here for more than a year now. It was fascinating to see the progress made by this Samiti in all the areas of its activities. Affiliated to the All India Kashmiri Samaj, as it is, it has served as a hub of activities and an important center in the southern part of the country. The Samiti has achieved tremendous success on many fronts. To describe a few of these let me start with the most important of them all. A piece of land has been obtained from the government of Karnataka in the heart of the city. Facing all odds and the litigation forced on the Samiti, an ambitious plan of constructing the Bhawan has been drawn. A building comprising a community hall, a library, some guesthouses, an auditorium and the office of the Samiti encompassing three massive storeys is at the moment at an advanced stage of construction. This is going to be a prestigious project and an achievement worthy of all praise.

Every year the Samiti has been using its good offices and the influence with the Government of the State and has been successful in getting a number of seats reserved for the wards of the displaced community in all technical and professional courses, medical, engineering etc. At the time of the interview, the parents of these prospective trainees are provided with all assistance needed by them. This is yet another significant achievement. Samiti is very thoughtful and practical in its working. It has maintained a close liaison not only with the government but also with the local population. This has been giving it a great advantage in times of need in seeking various facilities for the needy members of the community. It has been successful in creating a general awareness about the turmoil faced by us and has aroused a lot of sympathy among the authorities as also common masses.

Last year the world conference of the All India Kashmiri Samaj was organised by the Samiti at

Bangalore with a great success. The Chief Minister of the state, some other prominent Ministers and political bigwigs participated and promised all help for the cause of the displaced community. The Samiti deserves all credit for the sense of responsibility with which it has been conducting itself, carrying everyone along with it and maintaining close connection with the All India Kashmiri Samaj and its activities. The monthly journal 'Aalav' that the Samiti has been publishing in three languages, English, Hindi and Kashmiri has come of age. It is financially self-supporting, rich in content and quality and its circulation has increased leaps and bounds. Credit goes to Shri R. K. Mattoo, himself a senior journalist working as a Bureau Chief in the New Indian Express, for the English section and Shri M. K. Raina for the Kashmiri and Hindi section; Shri Raina edits and manages this section from Bombay, which is commendable to say the least.

The Samiti has been working in a very democratic manner. There are different Vice-Presidents with the responsibility for different aspects of the functions of the Samiti. Fund raising, Cultural functions, Liaison with others agencies, Construction work, Printing and Distribution of the magazine and obtaining advertisements for the 'Aalav' are the main activities shared by these selfless workers. Pending the completion of the Kashmir Bhawan, the entire office work of the Samiti and the magazine is being carried out from the office of Shri Sapru. Shri Zutshi has been the general Secretary of the Samiti for a long time and has been untiringly executing the duties. Lately there has been a healthy tie up with the organisation of Shri Shri Ravi Shankar Ji, who has adopted 32 Kashmiri children from the Purkhu camp of Jammu. These children are getting free education and board and lodging there and the Samiti has taken upon itself the responsibility of keeping in touch with them so that they do not miss the Kashmiri family atmosphere and Kashmiri dishes, which they are used to. There is an attempt to make this Samiti the southern headquarters of the Kashmiris and links have been maintained with the Kashmiris living in Chennai and other places.

The Samiti has ambitious programmes for the future including establishing a research center, a free medical assistance unit, a Kashmir centric library and organising Language courses in Kashmiri. We wish the Samiti, God speed in its noble task of serving the community as there is a sizeable presence of Kashmiris at HMT, ITI, at Tumkur, Mysore and other places.

The author is the consulting Editor of the official organ of Bangalore Samithi — the Aalav.

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KASHMIRI SAHAYAK SABHA, CHANDIGARH

—*Sqn. Ldr. B. L. Sadhu*

(Inputs by *Sh. G. L. Kaul, President K.S.S., Chd.*)

Formation

Kashmiri Sahayak Sabha, Chandigarh, like any other organisation of its ilk, has a chequered history of its own. It has gone through and thankfully survived the vicissitudes of time. After the partition of the erstwhile Punjab in 1947, the Kashmiri Pandits serving in the state, opted for Indian Punjab with its capital at Shimla. It was in the year 1953 that, The City Beautiful of Chandigarh, was built and the capital of Punjab moved from Shimla to Chandigarh and with it moved the whole flock of serving Hindus of Kashmiri origin.

The year 1957-58 saw the stalwarts like late Dewan Somer Nath Madan, S/Shri N. N. Dhar, Arjan Nath Trakru, Brijender Kaul and the living legends like Shri Pyare Lal Kaul (Founder Editor – Sundervani) and Shri G. L. Kaul Former Secretary, Vidhan Sabha, Punjab, to name only a few, join together and form a Sabha named as "Northern India Kashmiri Pandit Sabha". Dewan Somer Nath Madan had the distinction of becoming the first President of the Sabha. In mid 60s, a controversy arose regarding the change of its name as the title suggested a parochial bias. So to make it more broad based & secular the name of the Sabha was later changed to Kashmiri Sahayak Sabha, Chandigarh, and was registered as such in the year 1964.

In the early years of its formation there was only a small number of K. P. families residing in Chandigarh. But with the passage of time the number of families kept on swelling and the community members slowly and steadily started inhabiting the contiguous areas of Chandigarh like Panchkula (Haryana) & Mohali (Punjab). Till 1989-90 the number of the families was about 200 but post-exodus, there was a sudden influx of the Kashmiri displaced Hindus who mainly comprised the serving employees of banks, Insurance, HMT, AG Branch and a few persons of business class. They got themselves settled nearer to their places of work all over Chandigarh, Panchkula, Mohali and its surrounding areas like Parwanoo, Pinjore, Zirakpur, Kharar, Ropar etc. And today the number of families including the floating population is estimated to be around one thousand.

When the number of Biradari members increased to large proportions at Panchkula and its surrounding areas, it became difficult for them to come all the way

to Chandigarh to participate in the functions of the Sabha. Moreover, during 90s, after the migration, when relief was granted by the Chandigarh Administration, they refused to entertain the applications from those who were residing in Panchkula and adjoining areas because these were falling in the state of Haryana. So a separate Sabha titled "Kashmiri Pandit Sabha, Panchkula" was formed in 1993 which, of course, is an off-shoot of the K.S.S. Chandigarh. Here one pertinent thing to note is that the relation between the two Sabhas is very amiable and many members of Panchkula Sabha are the Life Members of Chandigarh Sabha. We partake in each other's functions and whenever any rally or demonstrations are held, they are held together.

Social Activities

The activities of the Sabha like any other Sabha in the country are mainly confined to the social and cultural aspects. Annual Havan on Durga Ashtami started by the *ab initio* group and carried on year after year till today and the Navreh celebrations are two most important events taking place in the Sabha in which there is optimum participation of the Biradari members. Again, besides frequent Executive meetings and minimum two general body meetings in the year, the Biradari members meet on occasions like Shivratri, Janam Ashtami, Hur Ashtami, Holocaust day etc. Blood Donation camps are held almost every year.

Not lagging behind in Sports, we have a cricket team titled Shehjar Cultural and Recreational Club, Chandigarh with Sh. Sanjay Kaul (Pinku) as its President, Shri Surinder Kaul as General Secretary and Ramesh Raina and Rajinder Kaul as Executive Committee members. There are about 20 players in the team who regularly practice on every Sunday and arrange tournaments and league matches with other teams in Chandigarh.

The Sabha has hosted one Executive committee and one general body meeting of All India Kashmiri Samaj in 1998 and another meeting this year in May.

Sabha Constitution

Ever Since the formation of the Sabha & the Trust, the constitution of the Sabha was revised and modified on three occasions & the Trust Deed on one occasion. With the increase in the Sabha activities and the changing times, it was felt that frequent

amendments to the Constitution and the Trust Deed, for frivolous reasons, was not desirable. Therefore, on 2nd May 2004, the General body of the Sabha formed a Sub-committee of seven members namely S/Shri M. J. Zarabi, K. N. Dhar, I. K. Kaul, H. N. Raina, Rajinder Kaul, C. L. Raina headed by Dr. R. P. Sapru to revise the Constitution of the Sabha as well as the Trust Deed. This committee did a commendable job and gave us a revised draft constitution on 27th Feb. 2005. This was thoroughly debated and deliberated upon and ultimately adopted by the General body on 8th May, 2005 with some minor changes.

Sundervani

An official organ and mouth piece of Kashmiri Sahayak Sabha, Chandigarh, Sundervani was first published in late 60s and its first editor was Sh. Pyare Lal Kaul. Like Chandigarh Sabha, Sundervani too had some hiccups. Between the date of its first publication and to-date, it was out of print during early 70s and mid 90s for a period of 3 to 4 years each but was revived each time for the benefit of the members of the Biradari for keeping them abreast of the happenings around. The editors who changed hands during the entire period were late Major P. N. Walie, Dr. J. L. Handoo & Sh. Subash Sapru. The present editor is Sh. Shibani Kachru and the co-editor is Sh. B. L. Dhar. Dr. J. L. Handoo is one of the members of the Advisory Board. The journal was previously being printed quarterly but has of late been made bi-monthly. It compares with any other prestigious journals of the community.

Kashmir Bhawan

Way back in 1983, an article of mine appeared in the Sundervani under the caption "Kashmir Bhawan—A Dream". At that time, it certainly looked like a dream, because the coffers of the Sabha were empty, avenues for raising funds were very limited and the capacity and will to build the Bhawan, from voluntary donations collected from the Biradari, was something like asking for the moon.

All the same, a team of dedicated members of the Biradari like Late Mrs. Hem Madan, S/Shri R. K. Zutshi, H. K. Kaul, Late P. N. Kaul (Jan), S. N. Moti, Late Sh. B. L. Razdan, Late Maj. P. N. Walie, to name only a few, vowed to give a concrete shape to my slogan of 1978, of building the Kashmir Bhawan, which till then had remained only a pious wish.

Allotment of Land & Fund Raising Campaign

It was due to the persistent effort of Sh. R. K. Zutshi that land for the Bhawan was allotted in 1985 and from then onwards the one-point aim of building the

Bhawan, goaded us ahead. By then we had raised a measly sum of Rs. 14000/- which went towards the cost of the land. Thus we overcame the first and the most vital hurdle in the achievement of our goal. It was, however, a moment of great rejoicing for all of us to see the land allotted. The Sabha took many a forward stride under the leadership of late Mrs. Hem Madan and she was always at the forefront of any activity related to the progress of the Sabha. At that time I happened to be the General Secretary of the Sabha, a post I held for many years.

We launched a door-to-door campaign for raising more funds, and by the time the Sabha changed its leadership, we had collected another modest sum of Rs. 30,000/- which, in those days, was considered substantial. The reins of the Sabha were taken over by Shri R. K. Bhan in 1985. It was he, who hit upon a novel idea of holding a star — night for collecting funds for the Bhawan. After deliberating on various propositions, it was decided to invite some of the leading stars of the then very popular T. V. Serial, 'Hum-log'.

Organising such kind of a programme was a new experience for us which called for dedication and discipline of a very high order. As far as I can remember, a team of workers was chosen which consisted of late Mrs. Hem Madan, S/Shri R. K. Bhan, Bansi Lal Dhar, M. L. Ambardar, A. K. Kak, Prof. K. B. Raina, myself and several others. This team worked hard day and night, to make "Hum-log night" a success. The programme was ultimately held on 23 March 86, which fetched us a respectable sum of Rs. 70,000/- I must acknowledge without hesitation the exemplary work done by this core group & other Sabha members in bringing this venture of "Hum-Log night" to resounding success. It will go down in the annals of KSS Chandigarh history as a marvelous feat in raising the funds. After this, there was no looking back.

Foundation Stone Laid

Eventually, the foundation stone of the Bhawan was laid by Shri R. K. Bhan in October 1986, and the occasion was celebrated with enthusiasm and gaiety. One could see the jubilation & pride in the faces of the members of the Biradari who congratulated one another at the landmark achievement. The laying of the foundation stone sounded yet another challenge for the Biradari in general and the members of executive in particular and it seemed that every body had vowed to himself to work whole — heartedly for the construction of the Bhawan. The collection of funds and simultaneously the construction of the

Bhawan gained momentum and the ground floor was completed in 1988 under the able guidance of late B. L. Razdan, late M. L. Zutshi, Major H. N. Kaul, K. N. Bhatt and others.

Construction of 1st and 2nd Floor

For the next 4 to 5 years, there was virtually a lull in the construction work because of some inexplicable reasons. The work, however, was resumed with great urgency by the new executive body headed by Shri P. N. Ambardar in 1996. This team worked with great zeal and enthusiasm to achieve the aim of completing the project of constructing two more storeys of the Bhawan. Again a door to door campaign was launched & Biradari members were exhorted to donate Rs. 1000 per family. It was heartening to note that the members of the Biradari responded with equal "josh" and zeal and together we went ahead in achieving the desired goal. In this exercise while appreciating and acknowledging the selfless and hard work put in by Shri P. N. Ambardar, Nancy Ganjoo, Phoola Mirza, K. L. Bhat, C. L. Pandita, Ramesh Madan and others the Chandigarh Biradari is particularly impressed and at the same time grateful to Sh. K. L. Bhat for his honest, upright and whole-hearted involvement in collecting the funds and maintaining the accounts thereof upto the last penny. It was not only within the Biradari that the funds were collected but hefty sums were also collected from outside the Biradari from non-Kashmiri brethren by this group. Thus it took almost four years to complete the 1st and 2nd floor of the Bhawan.

Moorti Sthapna

It was the ardent desire of late Shri B. L. Razdan, who had started the Sankirtan Group of the Sabha in eighties, to install an idol of Ma Durga in the Bhawan. Therefore, when the construction of the third floor was half way through, arrangements were made by the executive body to install the Moorti. Shri Ambardar made a dash to Jaipur and took pains to select the Moorti and bring it to Chandigarh. Ultimately, the Moorti "sthapna" was done on 28th March 1999 by Smt. Uma Devi Ambardar and Smt. Mohini Razdan amidst Havan celebrations where the joy and excitement among the biradari members reigned supreme. The occasion was solemnised by Swami Ved Swaroopanand Saraswati who had come from Faridabad along with Shri J. N. Kaul, the then President AIKS and other dignitaries from there. The temple is also adored by the idols of Maha Ganesh and Lord Shivji offered by Shri Mohan Lal Kaul (Sector 6.1) and installed in the year 2004.

Bhawan Facilities

Today Kashmir Bhawan stands majestically tall among the one thousand displaced Pandit families, dispersed

over Chandigarh, Mohali, Panchkula and its surrounding areas fulfilling their aspirations and catering to their multi-faceted needs. It houses a retail outlet of Kashmiri Masala and a *Nanwai's* Shop. All the traditional celebration, on the occasions like Navreh, Shivratri and Annual Havan, take place in the precincts of the Bhawan in which almost the entire Biradari participates. It is boon to the members of the Biradari who have to pay a minimal rent when they perform marriages, Yagnopavit ceremony or any other "Bod-Doh" in Kashmir Bhawan.

More importantly, it is a God-send facility to the bereaved families coming from outside Chandigarh whose kith and kin are lost while undergoing treatment in P.G.I. and other medical institutions.

Above all, the all pervading deities of Ma Durga, Maha Ganesh and Lord Shiva installed in the top floor of the Bhawan oversees and at the same time bless the members of this fragmented but undaunted community who live in the fond hope of returning one day to their roots. In this temple the Biradari members assemble on every Shukla Paksh Ashtami or sometimes twice a month to sing Bhajan/Kirtan in praise of the lord and to satisfy their spiritual urge. In short, all these Kashmir-Bhawan-centric activities positively and ultimately subscribe to the unity, brotherhood, cohesion and solidarity among the members of the community which is an imperative need of the hour and so vital to keep the Biradari together.

K.S.S. Charitable Trust

The General body of the Sabha created the K.S.S. Charitable Trust, Chandigarh on 10th Nov. 1985 to promote Public Charitable activities in consonance with the aims and objects of the Sabha. Six Trustees namely, Sqn. Ldr. B. L. Sadhu, Prof. K. B. Raina, Late Dr. C. M. Kaul, Late Smt. Hema Madan and Late Major P. N. Walie were manning the trust initially with Shri R. K. Zutshi as the Chairman, the post he held till June 2006 when he resigned due to the reasons of his indifferent health. This trust was registered with the competent authority on 21st March 1986 and with the approval of the Estate Officer, Chandigarh the property of Kashmir Bhawan was transferred to the Trust for proper administration and upkeep.

In 1995 S/Shi S. N. Kaul, B. L. Ganjoo, C. L. Kaul, O. N. Batt and Late Sh. S. N. Pandita were inducted in the trust as replacement for those who were either deceased or had left Chandigarh.

Towards the end of 1998, there was a general feeling in the Sabha that the trust should function in more democratic style rather than being a body of static members. An amendment to the trust deed was

brought out, which stipulated that every year two members of trust should retire yielding place to the other members to be on the trust. Accordingly Sh. Kuldeep Kaul, Sh. Vinod Bhan & Sh. P. N. Ambardar had a stint in the trust and later on resigned from the trust for their own reasons.

On resignation of Sh. R. K. Zutshi due to his ill health Sh. T. K. Magazine took over as an interim Chairman of the trust with the present trustees as Sqn. Ldr. B. L. Sadhu, Smt. Nancy Ganju, S/Shri D. N. Pandit, A. K. Kak, B. L. Dhar & C. L. Pandita.

Charitable Activities

The Trust has been rendering services, though in a limited manner, to the extremely needy patients who come to P.G.I. or other Medical institutions for treatment from outside Chandigarh. Nevertheless, the trust has made it a regular feature for the last two years to finance about 20 poor young boys & girls residing in Muthi Camp at Jammu solely to meet their educational requirement. For this purpose we send out the request to our philanthropist brothers and sisters in and outside Chandigarh and I am happy to report that there has been a positive response from the worthy persons with a human heart and that is how this project is financed.

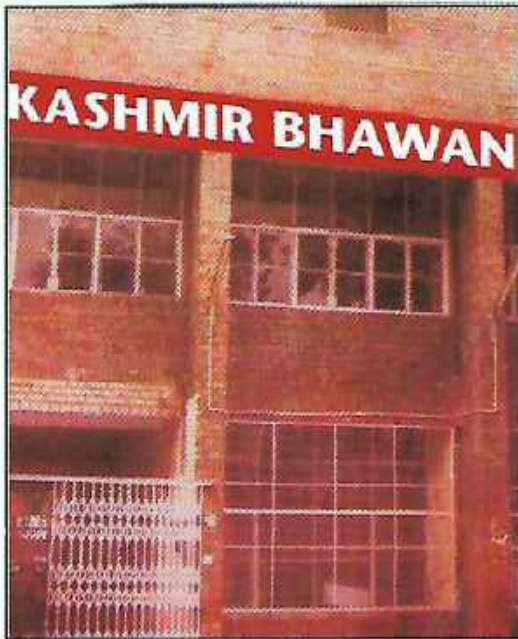
The writer is the former President of KSS, Chandigarh and Vice President (North Zone) All India Kashmiri Samaj.

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KASHMIRI SAHAYAK SABHA - CHANDIGARH



Kashmir Bhavan



Hawan Celebration



KASHMIRI SAHAYAK SABHA - CHANDIGARH



AIKS Samellan



Holocaust day



KASHMIRI HINDU SABHA – PUNE

— By C. L. Razdan, Pune

The history of Kashmiri Hindu Sabha in Pune dates back to early 1950, when many Kashmiris were transferred from Dehradun, along with the National Defence Academy. That time the total number of Kashmiris in Pune was not much. Because of close proximity, most of them knew each other well. Outside this academy; there were not many Kashmiri Hindus. With the result even the Muslims settlers from Kashmir in Pune would involve themselves with this Sabha. That time, as a common activity, they would go to picnic etc but there was no organisation as such.

It was some time in mid 1960 when many more Pandits shifted to Pune (because of transfer of many Kashmiri Hindus in Air Force to Pune) and need of forming a Sabha was felt. Many elders of the community like Mr. P. N. Kaul (Bujju), Mr. M. L. Ganju, Mr. B. K. Kotru, Mr. Sumbali Prof. T. N. Raina etc. took the lead and the working on the same started. That time many picnics and cinema shows were organised, and that is how our belongingness to each other was expressed.

Parmeshwari Handoo case in Kashmir created flutter all over the country and Pune could not remain unaffected, and we started assembling more often. However, after few months the activity remained at a low level only.

It was after the exodus of Kashmiri Hindus from the valley, the present shape of Sabha was germinated. This exodus of Kashmiri Hindus from the valley, though worst experience of our community, has proved to be a boon for us in many ways. It motivated most of those members of the community who had come out of the valley earlier, to come closer and work for the community cause. In the process many new Sabhas were formed all over the world, and many old Sabhas got rejuvenated. Pune Kashmiri Sabha is one of them. Mr. Jogesh Wali, Mr. Pran Nath Tikoo Mr. M. L. Ganju and many others got motivated to work for the Sabha.

Education of children is most important thing for our community, and Pune is the den of many professional colleges. To take care of the education of the childrens it was but natural that many community members would visit this city during this upheaval but they needed support from local community brothers in a big way. At this moment of time, Kashmiri Hindu Sabha – Pune rose to the occasion and did all that was possible for them. They helped these visitors by

accommodating them as best as they could and whenever required, accompanied them to the colleges for the admission of children, and most important, within a short span of time **arranged a special quota for these children in professional colleges of Maharashtra.**

While doing so, the need of a place where these visitors could be accommodated during the season of admission was felt. Accordingly a suitable "Bhavan" was built to meet this need as well. In short, to solve this problem, all that was possible and required was done by the Sabha.

However there were still many problems, which remained unsolved. Details of the same are well known to all of us and need not be elaborated.

On 26.01.2005 the new executive body of our Kashmiri Hindu Sabha – Pune was elected.

Because of the changed environment by this time, a need in change of agenda for the organisation was felt. After lot of deliberations, it was decided that the Sabha should work to make the community prosperous and flourishing one. In our community whenever a person takes the permission of elder to start any new job, the elders bless him with "Ad Sah Gachh Bajah. Chéfolun T Navun". Meaning 'May you be successful, May you always flourish'.

Considering these as the wishes and the blessing of our elders, the Sabha decided to work on these very lines. Accordingly it was decided to **Work on making our community prosperous and flourishing one,** and the same was made a goal for the organisation.

To make it effective and lasting the executive body tried to make their programs, system oriented rather than individual based.

To achieve this goal the executive decided on following three measures :

A) To make a community :

The new body believed that the communication among the members is the most important aspect in making the community a cohesive group. Accordingly they collected the addresses, telephone/mobile numbers, and e-mail I.D. of all the known Kashmiri families staying in Pune. Further, requested these members to inform the Sabha details of any new Kashmiri family known to them, and

A.1) Started writing letter to the community members every month, apprising them of

the various activities the executive body plans to have and sought their comments on the same. This was an **attempt to involve most of the members in decision-making.**

- A.2) Have **created a web site and an email. I.D** for the community and informed the password of the same to complete Pune Baradai. This way an individual can go through the correspondence going on in the Sabha, and also communicate with their executive body and others. This is an attempt to make the Sabha activity transparent.

e-mail I.D of Sabha is kppune@gmail.com, website name is http://www.kppune.com

- A.3) Have prepared a **directory of Kashmiri Hindus families staying in Pune** and loaded the same on the above stated web site which in being updated easily.

- A.4) Have **distributed locality wise addresses of Kashmiris to our members.** It is an attempt to introduce the Kashmiri neighbors to each other to enable immediate contacts for obvious reasons of creating a closely knit community in Pune and a group of volunteers.

- A.5) Sabha wishes to utilise the services of these volunteers for many other activities as well.

- A.6) We intend to load many additional information about the original family background of our members on this web site.

B) To make the community prosperous.

Most of our community members, who are in service, are doing well, and are prospering. However there are many, who are unemployed, and need our assistance. To cater to this requirement :

- B.1) Sabha has **created a placement cell** for our young children. This activity is divided in two groups.
- a) For those children who can not go for higher education.
 - b) For those children who can go for higher education.

The children who could not go for higher education are mainly from Jammu migration camps. We bring these children in small manageable batches; **take care of their each and every requirement right**

from the time they land at Pune railway station till they get jobs and are in a position to take care of themselves. This includes Lodging, Boarding, Training, Travel, Medical Treatment, etc. This being the need of the hour, many community members from Pune got involved in the same. This has not only served the desired cause, **but also motivated them to come closer and work for the welfare of community.**

The children who could go for higher education are from all over the country. We collect their resumes through Internet and **approach those members of our community, who we feel can help them.**

- B.2) To make this **activity system oriented** and automatic, we plan to load this information on our web site about which we have mentioned above (A.3.3)

- B.3) There are quite a few Kashmiri children studying in Pune. It was observed that because of the oppressive condition prevailing in Kashmir, quite a few children have lost their self-confidence. With the result at the time of interview they don't always succeed. We have created a **cell that trains these children in developing skills, personality development, and in art of appearing in interview etc.** Few very senior Kashmiri Management Consultants, from Pune are independently handling this activity.

- B.4) We **offer our services to the children who come to Pune for their admission** in colleges here in term of guidance as well as lodging in Bhavan.

C) To make the community flourishing :

We believe, the right way to flourish is by helping each other. Luckily most of our seniors, who are in service, are doing very well in their professional lives. To enable them to help our those members of the community, who are not so well placed, the following is the action plan :

- C.1) On our web we plan to put the details of our community members who are in services, (A.3.4) to enable **better jobs to potential employers** from our community.
- C.2) With the help of this list our community members can **take advantage of each other's position in his office.**

- C.3) We apprise every child during selection of their duty to help other children of our community when he attains a position to do so. This is an attempt to **develop an attitude of helping each other among our community members.**

In addition to it, we have following activities in Pune

- 1) **Havan on every first Sunday of the month.**
- 2) **Discussion for Involving Community members in Sabha activities.**
- 3) **Free medical check up** for our community members after the Havan is over.
- 4) **Library** with about 300 books in our bhavan of Kashmiri literature.
- 5) Collection of monthly contributions from members through Bank.
- 6) We have persuaded one of our members to hold his Child's **wedding in a way that all our traditional customs are followed, and at the same time no unnecessary expenditure is made.** In the process what ever is saved and the 'gulyimyuth' collected, **is donated to social cause.**
- 7) **We celebrate various important functions** of our community in Bhavan.
- 8) We try to **revive our old culture** during these celebrations by serving typical Kashmiri cuisine, having Kashmiri Music, having Antakhshari on Kashmiri items, playing old Kashmiri games, etc.

Future Plans :

- 1) To give the **ultimate shape to the Bhavan,** which is incomplete at present
- 2) **To buy the land** adjacent to the Bhavan
- 3) In order to preserve our language, we wish to cut few **C.Ds on Kashmiri lullaby, morning prayers, and nursery rhymes,** and distribute them among the members for them to play in front of their children. It will teach the language to the parent as well.
- 4) To have **Guru Ji and a Kashmiri Baker** in the town.

- 5) **Create a trust that will work as a share holder of professional business house** and take care of financial help needed by our community members.

There are many business opportunities in Jammu itself.

- A) As per the Director, Tourist Deptt, J&K, last year 75 lakh visitors visited Jammu as pilgrims and tourists. Considering expenses made by an individual just Rs. 4000/- the total turn over under this activity works out Rs. 3000/- crores. By offering a service that is desired by these visitors, and is not available in Jammu, like locker rooms facility, dormitory, wash rooms etc, quite a sizable portion of this business can be achieved by us.
- B) In each migrant camp there are about 1000 families. Considering each family spends just Rs. 4000/- per month on their daily needs, the yearly turn over works out to be Rs. 5 Crores. Multiplication of this figure with the number of migration camp should give the idea of business potential there. By giving a service like that of malls, where goods are sold at a discounted rate, we can harness most of this business. If we apprise the community of our intentions of offering this service, conducting the business will be still easier.
- C) We can take advantage of our real strength, i.e. being a service class community. Our employed as well unemployed youth can work out to be a big source of income for the community. If we create a placement agency and offer the services of these children to potential employers through this agency, big money can be generated. **In the process our whole community will flourish day after day.**

For this **Kashmiri Hindu Sabha – Pune has already worked out an understanding with a B.P.O. company.** Project is in progress.

The author is the President of Kashmiri Hindu Sabha, Pune.

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KASHIR SABHA, AMBALA

— By A. K. Wattal, Ambala

It is well said, "Necessity is the mother of invention". It was in 1990 that about 3.50 lakh Kashmiri Pandit souls had to migrate from the beautiful valley of Kashmir, not for pleasure, not for livelihood, not for an organised tour, not for economic rehabilitation, not for educational prospects; but to preserve their nationality and protect this minuscule minority from extinction on account of the persecution of the antinational elements, brought out within the valley and across the border.

The sudden, and unexpected displacement was chaotic, frustrating and devastating. However the KP community being vibrant, tolerant, flexible and alert, somehow survived the impacts, stresses and strains caused by this displacement. They are now spread over, across the length and breadth of the country and the globe.

Wherever they are, they have formed community organisations like **Sabhas** and **Samities** to preserve their community ethos, cultural identity and age old traditions. No doubt the external forces do have an impact on our social and cultural vibrance, yet these Sabhas and Samities are doing their bit to negate the same.

It was in the same context that **Kashir Sabha Ambala** has also got its birth.

What Kashir Sabha Ambala is for?

The Sabha was founded on 28-03-2001 and first election of the office bearers and executive committee was held on 15-08-2001. The Kashir Sabha Ambala has been registered as a society (under societies registration Act 1880) with registration No : 3227 of 2001-02. The main aims and objects of the Sabha are :-

- (a) To organise and unite the residents/members, to regulate their friendly relations and to create cordial atmosphere with one another.
- (b) To redress the grievances & to settle disputes, if any, with one another amicably.
- (c) To cooperate with other organisations, having similar objects in India or abroad.
- (d) To arrange educational seminars, debates and cultural programmes for the Biradari members in particular and with other like minded organisations in general.
- (e) To arrange cultural tours, havans, and religious programmes like Tzangtrei, Janam Ashtami etc.
- (f) To provide financial aid as relief to the poor & deserving students of the Biradari for higher education, without any consideration of caste, creed & colour.
- (g) To operate the Accounts in Banks or to deal with the Banks in any manner what so ever for achieving the objects of the Sabha.
- (h) The management of the affairs of the Sabha has been entrusted to the duly constituted

Executive Committee as provided in the rules & regulations of the Sabha.

The Sabha during its period of existence has the following achievements to its credit :-

- (1) A plot of land admeasuring 1200 Sq Yards was purchased in the name of "KASHIR SABHA AMBALA" for construction of a community centre and an educational institution.
- (2) A one room dwelling unit with a kitchen and toilet has been constructed for Community Guru Ji.
- (3) One "Havan Kund" with a shed has been constructed, where Havans, Yagnas and Mekhlas could be organised.
- (4) The Sabha brings out a bimonthly cultural magazine, titled 'Parbatuk Thazar'.
- (5) A Directory of all the members living at Ambala has been published, four times so far.
- (6) The Sabha organises annual Mahayagna at Ambala, which is attended by almost all the biradari members.
- (7) Kashmiri cultural programmes are organised at intervals, for cultural benefit of the members.

Our Future Plans :-

- (a) To form a co-operative Group Housing Society and make the dream of formation of "KASHUR ENCLAVE" come true.
- (b) To set up an "Educational Institution" on the pattern of minority educational institutions like Alameen Trust, Banasthali, SGPC, Muslim Auqaf Trust etc., with the active involvement of NRI Kashmiris.
- (c) To develop healthcare institutions for welfare of the masses.
- (d) To organise seminars/Symposia, throwing light on the present plight of Internally displaced Kashmiris and their future course of action.
- (e) To give scholarships to needy and deserving students as the financial health improves.
- (f) To work as an active affiliate of the All India Kashmiri Samaj (AIKS).

United we stand, divided we fall :-

A population of 3.50 lakh people can not exist as a single community, if there is no federating organisation like the All India Kashmiri Samaj. The unitary Sabhas and Samities may be able to cater to their local issues and problems, but for our total and overall survival, the need of the hour is to amalgamate all our organisations under one banner, to make our voice more vibrant, meaningful, forceful and logical. We have to keep in mind that we shall be crying hoarse, if we still do not federate, leaving all our egos and hang overs.

The author is the President of Kashmir Sabha, Ambala, 202 B, Durga Niwas, Prabha Press Puram, Ambala Cantt-133006

KASHMIRI SABHA - AMBALA



A view of Havan Kund and Guru Jis Kasksh



Janamasthami Puja



New Kashmir Bhavansite

KASHMIRI SABHA - AMBALA



Janamasthami Puja



Lady members participating in, Tzang Trai Celebration



Cultural Program by the children

MIGRANTS

—By J. L. Langoo, Jammu

Migrants, Kay Pees, became due to reign of terror and blood bath let loose by the militants
Kay Pees, never deserved to have this state label as our main identification & mark of features
We migrants curse our bad fate, mourn and hate existence while living like exiles
Huddled like sheep in some dirty and dingy small migrant camps.

Militancy brought death, destruction and doom of all sorts at our doorsteps
Forced us to fled our homes in the form of mass exodus
Militants deprived and dispossessed us of all the assets and well set homes.
Memory of motherland of our roots, culture, history, heritage haunts and lures us.

Most of us left empty-handed in naked and semi naked conditions
Our home of hopes, ancestors, pleasing land of fore fathers
Paradise of nature on this earth and universe
Ran helter and skelter to save our honour and lives.

Insignificant is our life, living style and standards
Service and sacrifice for the nation and importance of nationalistic characteristics
In our great ancient county of composite culture and many faiths
We are treated not at par with refugees but as aliens.

In hell like cell of one room set, our whole shocked family lives and languishes
Using the same room in different positions on different occasions
Like lobby, store, study, prayer, drawing and guest room for guests
No privacy, feel suffocated in the congested space under all the circumstances.

In our country of feel good factor and India shining
Our future is bleak, full of doubts, darkness and repenting
We are microscopic minority community of few lakhs
Remembered only at the time of elections for vote bank politics.

Guns of the militants kill and killed our near and dear ones before our eyes
Of it is/was an unforgettable horrible and haunting experience of our lives.
We have/had done no harm, but always taught and helped others
Our policy was love thy neighbour, live and let live all others.

Government usually harps on rehabilitating us
Draws funds, plans, schemes for resettling us
Declares that Kashmir is incomplete without the presence of original aborigines
Pleases and befools us merely with lip sympathy since past seventeen years.

General healing touch policy is for surrendering militants
It is heating touch policy for us, migrants
For we feel peeved with prickly heat of irritating sensation
Unable to bear hot and humid climate of sizzling summer of acute perspiration.

Rarely history reminds that sons of soil became strangers in their own environs
Rented accommodation has taken a heavy toll of our meagre finances and resources
Ration and relief is like a drop in ocean to suffice our both ends meet and daily needs
Riches to rags, is now our story of strife, hardships and many miseries.

Right to live with peace and honour is now a hallow slogan for us
Right activists never thought of our community carnage and sufferings
Racialism of the militants resulted in ethnic cleansing which reduced our numbers
Round the clock, we eagerly look forward to return to our hearths and homes.

Right to equality and employment is since forgotten and forsaken by us
Risky is our life like that of the running insurgents
Reality is this, that we have lost rest of days and sleep of nights
Respect and love for all, co-existence, cardinal principles, we practiced since ages.

All our temples, other religious places and houses
Have been encroached, burnt, looted and desecrated
Idols broken, stolen and denigrated
Most of us sold properties under duress and distress sales.

Always greenery of lush green gardens
Scenery of snow clad lofty mountains
Fragrance of flowers, orchards and farms
Refreshes us but now mostly dreams.

All our past and present great leaders
Cheated and stabbed us in the name of our unity
Built palatial bungalows and filled their coffers
Floated money factions and fractured our shining society.

None of our cries, shrieks and voices
Nor inhuman cruelties of foreign militants
Have moved or touched hearts and ears of our politicians
Neither reached parameters of the parliament and its members.

Now that, our homes are out of sight
Out of sight is out of mind
We should pray for divine miracle and light
Lord alone can listen our prayers redeem our plight.

Nevertheless, let us hope, that sustains life
Leave not its base and sight, for it takes time to bloom and ripe
Hope that harsh winter will go, cold snow will melt
Green spring and pleasant summer will come and bring us past glory and delight.

Terrorists have no ism, religion and sympathy
They are brain washed with this ideology
That to torture and kill one is an act of piety
Terrorism is a black blot on our humanity.

Tens of thousands of our brethren were uprooted from their houses
Many expired in prime of their youth of play and emotions
Innocents became victims and scapegoats of militant's bullets
For none of their faults, beloved and loved ones.

Torrent of rain during past summer seasons, on our tin and wooden house roofs
Created a sweet tone and tune of rainy musical notes
Which we enjoyed and children welcomed while dancing in balconies and courtyards
Valley bathed and appeared refreshing with rainbow colours after rains.

Sometimes we seem losing our senses
Feel overwhelmed with profound passions
Nostalgia ever teases us to tell, that sweet home, there is no place like our homes
Brings tears and sighs in our eyes and on lips

Sickness, sadness and sorry state of crises
Is now saga of our tragic tale of tales
Its narration is beyond expression and words
Defies ones mind imaginations and writing abilities

Salute, we salute forever all those beings
Who expired and sacrificed their lives
At the alter or militancy and the militants
Pray Lord to bless peace to their departed souls.

SECTION-III

SABHAS, SAMAJ AND SAMELLAN – A MANTRA FOR KASHMIRI PANDIT SOLIDARITY

**SAMELLAN : FOR BRAINSTORMING MINIMUM
COMMON PROGRAMME,
PERFORMANCE AND EMERGING
AGENDA, AT A COMMON
PLATFORM**

KASHMIRI LANGUAGE AND DEVANAGARI-KASHMIRI SCRIPT

— By *T. N. Dhar 'Kundan', Bangalore*

Our mother tongue, Kashmiri needs an additional script. The sooner this need is realized, recognized and accepted by the authorities, the better it is. I have deliberately used the word additional and not alternative. Alternative would give an impression that we want the second script in preference to the first. That is not the case. The fact of the matter is that we want a second script in addition to the one already recognized by the authorities. I would even suggest that as Kashmiris it is our duty, in fact an obligation, to learn the official Persio-Arabic script, or else we will remain deprived of the rich literature brought out in that script. Originally our language used a typically Kashmiri Sharada script, which has in course of time gone in disuse for obvious reasons. The great Mahjoor once told a group of young students including me, who called on him, that it was unfortunate that we have given up this script, born in Kashmir and designed by our forefathers. That fact is now beside the point and out of discussion.

The present officially recognized script has been devised by a group of well meaning scholars and teachers after great deliberations and has been in use now for a few decades. Although the Kashmiri language has not been taught at lower levels, there is a department of Kashmiri in our university. The Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages has brought out a number of publications of Kashmiri language in this script only. Many of our contemporary poets and writers have published their works in this script. Even a collection of my poems captioned 'Swapna to Sonch' has been brought out in this script only. The advantage is obvious. These publications reach a large section of Kashmiri population, in and outside valley, who are familiar with this script or at least the Persian script. However defective this script may be, because of a large number of vowel sounds and shades of sounds present in our language, which cannot be denoted adequately in this script, it has come to stay. It is our duty to preserve it, propagate it and enrich it by publishing our works in this script also.

This recognized script pre-supposes the knowledge of the Urdu language and the Persian script in which it is written, as also the modifiers introduced by the experts who have devised it. A large number of

Kashmiris have not read Urdu language, a still larger number is not reading it at present and there is scant possibility of these people studying it in future. For obvious reasons they are obliged to study Hindi, being the national language of our country and are, therefore, fully conversant with the Devanagari script in which it is written. A group of language experts have devised minimum number of modifiers to this script to cater to the needs of our language. With the help of some IT experts they have made the script computer-friendly as well. Writing in Kashmiri in this script has become so very convenient, both for day to day use as also for publication. The script with just a few additional signs is best suited to the nuances and peculiar sounds of our language. Besides, there is no need to learn an additional script. Only less than half a dozen modifiers are to be learnt in order to use the script, which takes only a couple of day times'. I have been writing for various journals and I can say with confidence that this script is very easy to learn and can be used with ease. The peculiar vowel sounds of our language can be very easily and distinctly written in this script and there is no room for confusion. I have myself downloaded the software from the internet and am writing prose and poetry on my notebook without any problem or difficulty. I transmit my articles written in this script to the editor of 'aalav' through e-mail and this has worked well all these months. This obviates the necessity of proof reading, rewriting or type-setting.

There was a time when some writers deliberately avoided using those words of Kashmiri language, which have their origin in Sanskrit or Hindi. These days it is heartening to observe that most of our Muslim friends are also using more and more of such words and phrases to suit the context and the situation in their writing. Switch on the T.V. and hear the correspondents from the valley, local lads, using beautiful and suitable Hindi words with ease. If you read the literature in Urdu brought out by Pakistani writers, you will be amazed to observe the number of words drawn from languages other than Persian and Arabic. Even our own contemporary Urdu writers like Nida Fazli, Bashir Badr and Javed Akhtar use common Hindi words freely. I cannot forget the day when a Kashmiri poem of mine was included by the Academy

in Kashmir in one of its anthologies and the word 'Shabda' was replaced by the word 'Lafz' only because it has Sanskrit origin, and thereby spoiling the entire connotation of the verse. When I talked to the editor, a respected senior poet, he admitted that the change was not proper. All this I am citing only to bring home the point that in the matter of development of our language and literature, shortsighted and biased approaches are injurious and should be shunned. We are inheritors of the great ancient thinkers who have said, '*Aano bhadra kratavo yantu vishvatah* – Let the noble thoughts come to us from all sides'. We should, therefore, entertain use of suitable and meaningful vocabulary of other languages in order to make our language more broad based.

Similarly we should welcome use of additional 'Devanagari' script for our language in order to reach wider reading public, while simultaneously encouraging our people to learn the present Persio-Arabic script. We should encourage writers to bring out their publications in both the scripts and create facilities for transliteration of the published works. Prakash Pandit did a great service to Urdu literature by bringing out selected works of Urdu in Devanagari script. Prominent Urdu writers including Munshi Prem Chand reached millions of readers only after their works were brought out in this additional script. If we love our language and want to enrich it there is no alternative to accepting the need for this additional script.

Government of India did at one time recognize this need. They were about to issue a notification to this effect. In fact they did issue an interim order to the effect that the books written in Kashmiri language in Devanagari script would also be considered for prizes and financial help by the academies. Unfortunately this progress in right direction was thwarted by the State Government, which in its wisdom opposed the move. This reminds of a similar opposition voiced by the then state Government against making film documentaries in Kashmiri, when the late B. V. Keskar was the Information and Broadcasting Minister. It is the irony of the century that Pakistan adopted Urdu as its official language, when this is not spoken in any of its provinces, Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan or NWFP. It is a greater irony that Kashmir state also has Urdu as its official language when Ladakhi, Dogri and Kashmiri are the three prominent languages spoken there. For God's sake let us not cut the roots of our beloved mother tongue and sacrifice it at the altar of false notion that Urdu belongs to the majority Muslims. Urdu belongs as much to Prem Chand, Chakbast,

Krishna Chandra as it belongs to Jaffri, Josh, Mantoo and other writers. When will our government realize this and rise above petty political bias and see the justification of this suggestion? Let us also clarify that this will not be the first case of its kind in our country. Two scripts are already recognized for languages like Sindhi. Ages ago the men folk in Punjab used to write Punjabi in Persian script and women in Devanagari script. In Tamilnadu even Sanskrit was written in Tamil script in spite of the fact it does not have a number of alphabets like kh, g, gh, th, ph, bh, dh etc. Hundreds of Kashmiri families have migrated from Kashmir over the centuries. They have not been able to retain their language although they have religiously retained their Kashmiri tradition, rituals, and culture. Let us ask ourselves the question, why? The answer is simple because of the absence of practical script. Let us not repeat the same mistake and create conditions in which our new generation loses touch with this beloved mother tongue. Already the forced exodus of lakhs of Kashmiri Pandits has played havoc with this unfortunate language. For fifty-seven years we have not taught Kashmiri to our toddlers at school; Kashmir is unique in this regard in the entire country. While others fight for a place for their language we fight among ourselves and shut the avenues of development of our tongue. What a pity?

I am sanguine that the authorities will see reason and one day accept this demand for an additional Devanagari script for Kashmiri. In the meantime let us all adopt this script, learn it, teach it and bring out publications in it. After all we do not write for prizes. We write for our readers and if our readers are available, why should we bother about the official recognition? However, let us also continue to use the approved script so that we reach to those in the valley who know that script only. The base has to be as broad as possible. '*Mera paigham muhabbat hai jahan tak pahunche*' – My message is the message of love. Let it reach all corners'. It is a pity that we look to government only for recognizing this additional script and forget our own duty and responsibility in making it popular. We have many journals and periodicals published in various cities of the country, which have Kashmiri sections, yet only a few have been consistently using the script devised with such care and devotion by the experts. This shows that we are doing only a lip service to our mother tongue. Let us make a pledge to use this script in our writings and in our personal correspondence. I appeal to the esteemed editors of all our journals to kindly adopt

this script in their publications. I appeal to all my fellow writers to learn this script as soon as possible so as to start using this script in their writings. I appeal to all our Samities and social organizations to make adequate arrangements to teach the new script to young and old in their areas. If these suggestions are translated into action, a time will come that the Government will be obliged to give recognition to this Devanagari as an additional official script for our mother tongue.

In this connection it would be pertinent to point out that 'Project Zaan' is a storehouse for all that is needed to learn the Devanagari script and the fundamentals of the Kashmiri language. It is available both in print and on inter net. In these days of technological development when computers and laptops are freely used and everyone of us has free access to the internet, our Kashmiri Sabhas can conveniently draw upon the material available in Project Zaan so thoughtfully devised by our friends in Mumbai and make arrangements to popularize both our mother tongue and the Devanagari script. Valuable time has already been lost yet it is not too late even now to take necessary steps in this direction. Our younger generation is very receptive and in fact keen and eager to learn their mother tongue. It is the elders who have to rise from the slumber, shun their inertia and play a positive role in safeguarding this basic item of our identity as Kashmiri Pandits.

The use of Devanagari script for Kashmiri language is not something new or startling. This script has been widely used in the past as well. The only point is that earlier it was not standardized and now it has been devised and formulated with due deliberation. This script was used in College and School magazines in the Kashmiri section. Many Kashmiri writers have published their works in this script and that includes Master Zinda Kaul's collection of verses 'Sumaran' in two volumes and Pt. Sarwanand Charagi's

compilation of the Vakhs of Lal Ded. The problem those days was that every publication used its own modifiers to cater to the peculiar needs of our language and included a small guide at the beginning or at the end to help the readers to read the text. There was thus a need to standardize these modifiers. Initiative was taken by Dr. Roop Krishen Bhatt and a committee comprising of language and computer experts deliberated on the issue at Patiala and Delhi. The new set of modifiers was devised so that the language can be written, type-written and composed for printing without any difficulty. The phonetic nuances of the language and its typical pronunciation was taken into account and it was ensured that it becomes computer friendly. We have today Arnimall, Yemberzal and other software available, which can be learnt in just a couple of days and used without any difficulty. It is heartening to note that our journals like Aalav, Vitasta, Milchar, Vaakh and Khir Bhawani Times have been using this new standardized script. Naad does not have a Kashmiri section but in one of its issues it did contain Kashmiri section, which was printed in this script only. However, it is very sad that the oldest of our all journals, 'The Koshur Samachar' has still not switched over to this script. In fact in its Hindi section, different set of modifiers are being taught in a serialized 'learn Kashmiri' lesson. This is creating confusion and must stop so that a united struggle is launched for the recognition of this newly standardized popular computer friendly, Devanagari based and modified script. Periodical publications like 'Prakash Gopinath' brought out by Bhagawaan Gopinath Charitable Foundation should also adopt this script forthwith. In advocating this script the good of our mother tongue is at our heart. There is no other motive except that we want to popularize our mother tongue and make it possible for a larger population to use it in their personal correspondence and create a larger readership for our esteemed poets and writers.

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PRESERVATION OF CULTURE, IDENTITY AND HERITAGE : THE ONUS IS ON THE ELDERS OF THE COMMUNITY

— Prof. *Raj Nath Bhat*, Banaras Hindu University

Kashmiri Pandits are spread almost across the globe, though their numerical strength is low outside India. Within India the largest segment resides in Jammu; a good number of them also live in Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, and Chandigarh. Kashmiri Pandit Sabhas/Forums have come up in almost all the cities of the country, except in Chennai, Patna, Trivandrum, etc. There are a couple of International Forums in Europe, US, etc. Besides economic and political issues, all the Sabhas/Forums have been dominated by the vital issue of the preservation of our language and culture. But this issue has an unusual edge of complexity to it because of the various displacements that our community had to face during the past seven hundred years. So the problem and the issues related to it have to be understood in a perspective that is broader than one might assume.

The Displacements of Kashmiri pandits have created four different kinds of groups whose perceptions, needs, and outlooks vary. The first group comprises of Pandits who left the valley between the 14th and 19th centuries. They still retain surnames like Raina, Koul, Nehru, Kathjoo etc. and a few cultural and ritualistic traditions, too. As for instance, the wearing of ornaments, aTh and Dejhor by married women. Since they moved out of the valley when communication links were quite primitive, they could hardly maintain a link with the community back home. After the major displacement of the community in 1990, they found it difficult to come to terms with the new situation. Initially they were not sure of whether to reestablish the bond with the parent culture and tradition or keep aloof. With the passage of time, a large majority has realized that identifying with the parent community is the only reasonable move.

The other group comprises those who moved out of the valley between 1930 and 1989 for finding suitable employment because employment opportunities for them had shrunk considerably, especially after India became independent! Disillusioned, with the state of affairs that prevailed in the valley, particularly because of discrimination, meritorious persons were forced to leave it along with their families. These had most of their siblings/kinspersons in the valley. The displacement of 1990 anguished them a great deal

for a large segment was nearing retirement and had plans to go back and settle in their ancestral towns/villages in the valley. Their dreams were shattered and the pathetic condition of their displaced kinspersons added to their pain. They are a part of the displaced community, emotionally, and psychologically.

The third group constitutes the displaced pandits of the 1990 catastrophe. They have endured hell all these 16 years. Their agony is difficult to put in words.

The fourth group consists of a few thousand pandits who continue to live inside the valley. Their negligible numerical strength and spatial distribution may make it difficult for them to retain their faith for long, I fear.

The last two sections are the storehouse of our culture, language and traditions. The numerically strong third section (those displaced in 1990 and later) is in a difficult situation economically, socially and psychologically. They have to make a new beginning somewhere, somehow. It is this segment and their progeny that can continue to live our heritage and pass it on to the future generations. But due to the trauma they have suffered, they are unaware of what they are about to lose. The wards of the first two sections are comparatively secure. But they have little or no exposure to our heritage. All the three groups of our young generation, in displacement, need to be persuaded to come together and plan out strategies for preservation and refinement (if that were needed) of our traditions and culture. This is an intelligent generation, ambitious, adventurous and enlightened. But as far as the significance of one's identity is concerned, their understanding of its importance is minimal if not zilch. The community elders need to zero-in on this generation. They can be guided and persuaded to play a pivotal role by getting together frequently, breaking communication/psychological barriers, to create awareness about the preservation of our identity. They could be motivated to arrange language teaching/learning classes, compere competitions on our revered scholars-both Buddhist and Shaiva/Vaishnava-history, religious festivals, social customs,

rituals and rites and so on and so forth. This will enthuse them and a fraternal bond can thus be built among them.

We, as parents, need to give a profound thought to what our progeny can be just twenty five years into the future when the anguish of displacement would have faded out, if not completely effaced, from our minds. And the whole generation will surely be multilingual, proficient in Hindi, English and a couple of other Indian/foreign languages, but with no knowledge or understanding of Kashmiri, which they will claim to be as a mark of their identity.

Kashmiri is a label we shall continue to have whether you like it or not. The significance of such a label is rarely realized when one is young and struggling/enjoying. It assumes importance when one grows to realize that s/he needs to know about her/his predecessors, pedigree-their achievements, follies, aspirations and dreams, failures and successes, their day to day life, food habits, customs, festivals and festivities, rituals and rites, ceremonies and externals, attire and etiquette, beliefs and superstitions, myths, legends and history. One's 'pahchan' as a member of 'biradari' begins with the knowledge of one's mother tongue- the first link to one's identity. This fact cannot be realized in one's teens or adolescence when all is either going goody-goody or sorrowful with a person. It is at the stage of adulthood that the crisis of identity begins to strain your nerves. And if you get to be spiritually inclined, the lack of the knowledge of your mother tongue anguishes you a great deal. The knowledge of one's mother tongue has the potential to bathe you in spiritual quests.

Kashmiri is studded with poets whose spirituality and knowledge makes one ecstatic. Laleshwari, Zinda Koul, Bhagwan Gopi Nath, Parmanand and many more awaken you to the realization of the supreme Soul, the Shiva and Shakti. Translations would help but if you have a command over the renderings in original Kashmiri, your depth of understanding turns out to be profound.

A lack of command over the mother tongue turns you into an alien among your own kith and kin. You imagine being a member of your community without understanding the subtleties and nuances of any of the festivals and ceremonies, rituals and rites you participate in. With the passage of time you are forced to recreate yourself as a member of some other group but your heart wails for the loss that you have suffered -the knowledge of your mother tongue and the history and myth that make you a being of a

particular community. You wish to be in your imagined home and to live that imagined culture but you are ill informed or not informed at all. There is a constant churning going on inside you but there is no visible light that could deliver you. You begin to seek memberships of cultural bodies and forums where you believe you would find yourself, know yourself. Your urge to belong intensifies. You are anguished.

This happens because your parents were possibly less awakened. They provided for your education, your welfare but they cared little about your adult aspirations and cravings. They were unaware of the fact that a respectable command over one's mother tongue is the entrance to your home. You can imagine realistically about your ancestral home in your adopted home only if you are proficient in the mother tongue.

I believe that no matter what, there comes a stage in one's life when you yearn to know yourself. This yearning is nothing but an urge to know one's past, history, culture and beliefs. It is here that the 'seeker' finds her/himself handicapped. S/he may not speak out openly, but in the heart of hearts, s/he feels sad about this limitation. One must remember that it is the recognition that your community extends you, which makes or unmakes you as an actor in history!!

A tight-jacket module for the preservation of one's mother tongue cannot be spelled out for a community which is scattered all over the country and beyond and whose numbers vary from place to place. Another significant point that needs to be spelled out is the material gain that a young mind accrues to the learning of Kashmiri. Learning of Kashmiri does not guarantee one a decent job or something related, so why trouble one's mind! The psychological gain that one obtains with the knowledge of one's mother tongue is difficult to appreciate at a young age. We have to realize that if we don't wish our progeny to suffer from a sense of lack of belongingness, we need to speak to our children in Kashmiri at home. It may not be possible to provide them special courses in Kashmiri, but mere use of it at home will work wonders. We live in an age of electronics where computers, audio-video gadgets are available all over. There is a need to develop audio-video materials on festivals, ceremonies, rituals, and rites and so on to allow our young to have a view of the celebrations that accompany them.

Families scattered in various nooks and corners across the globe need to know about Shivratri celebrations, Navreh and birthday rituals, birth and

death rituals and rites, marriage and childbirth rituals. This can be made available through the medium of audio-video gadgets.

How many parents do not want their kids to perform their last rites according to our tradition? It is our duty to let them learn what this tradition is all about. It is our duty to let them have a broader understanding of our culture and language. A child has the genetic potential to master several languages simultaneously. We should not deprive her/him of the mother tongue. Let it be her/his language of intimate discourse with you and your kinsmen. We will thus be performing the duty of a responsible parent. We cannot blame them if they do not share our beliefs and traditions.

We have the resources to provide for such inputs. The project Zaan has done a commendable job with their Kashmiri-Devnagri script and language teaching materials. Many more efforts are being made across the country. There is a need to create awareness about the fact that you cease to be a rightful heir to your heritage and legacy if you shun your history, culture, beliefs and language.

It is possible for our community elders to arrange weekly (Sunday) classes in community centers where Kashmiri could be taught. We are now adequately equipped with a standard Kashmiri-Devnagri script in which scores of books have been published and many more are in the offing. This script is easy to teach and it provides characters for all the vowels and consonants of the language. The training in the pronunciation of vowels and consonants, special to Kashmiri, can be given by using audio-video recordings. The project Zaan and many other centers across the country need to come together to develop programmes based upon real life conversations between participants in different situations. This should be followed by a question answer session with the participants to the programme. Kashmiri employs a huge chunk of words that are similar or partially similar to Hindi words. A corpus of such vocabulary items is available in print that every Sabha ought to procure. We can persuade our young that learning to speak Kashmiri has other advantages: you can learn so called difficult sounds of languages like Chinese and German with much more ease. Kashmiri, German and Chinese, and many other languages, use the consonant sound "ts" very frequently. Similarly, the central vowels E, I have a high frequency of occurrence in Kashmiri which again puts a Kashmiri knowing person at advantage while learning languages with these vowels.

Several cultural organizations across the country have been organizing contests where school/college-

going students are made to make presentations in Kashmiri. This is an emulative practice through which the best of contestants from different regions could be brought together for a final round of presentations. This will bring about a sense of cohesiveness among our young minds and their urge to contribute will enhance. There is a need to think collectively and inculcate a sense of togetherness amongst the young. They need to know each other and to realize that they have a mission to accomplish. The role of parents is of paramount importance at every step. Those parents who are themselves less proficient in Kashmiri ought to attend weekly classes along with their sons and daughters. This will create an atmosphere of competitiveness at home between the parent and the child. Since children have the natural/biological potential to learn a language faster, they will get an opportunity to correct their parents. This, you can imagine, will boost the child's morale and his/her performance will show a tremendous growth.

There is ample literature on Kashmiri available in print/electronic form. 'Naad' has been bringing out conversational lessons every month; 'Project Zaan' provides materials in electronic as well as print forms. There are many books exclusively on teaching of Kashmiri published by Mysore based Central institute of Indian languages. What is required is the will to use it at city, colony, sector, mohalla level depending upon the size and space of the community. And the onus is on the elders of the families. No outside agency can do anything in this regard if we lack the right motivation?

The inter-caste/inter-regional marriages are on the rise with our young sons and daughters. A marriage between a Kashmiri girl and a non-Kashmiri boy brings to an end the girl's identity as a member of Kashmiri pandit community. Her kids can in no way belong to our community. They will assume a different surname and belong to their father's community. A Kashmiri boy taking a non-Kashmiri wife gives his Kashmiri surname to his kids but knowledge and exposure to traditions and culture is negligible. We can see the instance of Pandit Nehru's daughter. Her illustrious sons had no links/bonds with Kashmiri culture.

Frequent get-togethers may bring about a decline in such extra-community marital alliances. Weekly/ fortnightly/ monthly meetings, festivities/ hawans will serve a twin purpose: bring community members together to share their experiences and enable our young to know one another and possibly find suitable life partners.

In 1990, we were forced to flee the valley, to sever our ties with our ancestral land where our pedigree had lived for over five thousand years. Shaiva Kashmiri was there even before Kashmiri knew any Buddhists, Sikhs or Muslims. The land was known not only for her bountiful rivers and mountains but also for the scholarship that it cultivated for over three thousand years. It is recorded that when Patanjali completed his commentary 'Mahabhashya' on Panini's Ashtadhyaya, he went over to Kashmir to consult and seek the approval of the pundits in Kashmir before 'releasing' it to the world of scholarship at large. A Buddhist scholar, Kumar Jeev who was trained in Kashmir, is a legend in Chinese history. He, it is believed, translated over a hundred Pali texts into Chinese, which saw Buddhism flourish in China. The Pandits have been a peace loving ethnic group, fond of good food, fruits and flowers, and above all scholarship. You may recall that after the displacement of 1990, the uprooted community was extremely concerned about the education of their wards, food and shelter was accorded a second priority. A friend of mine from Jammu expressed his astonishment at seeing young kids appearing from nowhere early in the morning and their parents escorting them their way to some nearby school, in most cases, a tent school. This has been and may continue to be the basic desire of our biradari-pursuit of education, knowledge and "gyan" and understanding. Sanskrit has been the language of intellectuality of our ancestors. This fact must not be ignored. It is an august duty of our generation to inspire and persuade our young minds to study Sanskrit and master it. Our ancestors mastered many languages simultaneously and Sanskrit occupied a pride of place there. In the present materialistic world, parents assume that

engineering, medicine, and management are the only worthy areas that their wards ought to opt for. It is an ill-conceived thought whose consequences can be fatal for our progeny. The areas of knowledge are many. We should aim at excelling in all areas including the study of Shastras and Vedas. This will ensure glory to our future generation and those that follow them.

There are many communities in our own country that have suffered the trauma of displacement but they ensure that their kids learn the mother tongue at home. Can we emulate their example? Instances are many, but I bring forward just two: Bengalis who had to run away from what is now Bangladesh and Sindhis who fled Sindh in Pakistan. Bengalis are scattered in various states, so are Sindhis, yet they speak their respective mother tongues at home. There are many other communities that deserve to be emulated in this respect. Instances are : Malayalis, Tamils, Punjabis, Gujaratis to name a few.

I was amazed to find that just four Gujarati families in Asmara, North East Africa and successfully preserved their mother tongue after nearly a hundred years of migration there! And their kids spoke chaste Hindi too just because, as they put it, they were amply exposed to Hindi Films right through their childhood and youth. The families sought brides for their sons and grooms for their daughters from Gujarat. There was not a single case of inter-community marriage reported.

May this Samellan make it happen across the country and abroad, that our progeny does not suffer the pangs of a lack of identity, as do many communities in several countries across Europe and the Americas. Let us be rightful heirs to our legacy, and history and culture!

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FOCUSING KP MAGAZINES AND NEWSLETTERS

— By *Vijay Saqi Mahanoori, New Delhi*

(The magazines and newsletters brought out by various Kashmiri Pandit Organizations have been playing an important role in preserving and protecting the rich Kashmiri culture and heritage since independence.) They will have to continue this campaign with vigor in a bid to create the big painting of Kashmiri culture and heritage on the canvas.) The history of magazines dates back to pre-partition times when Pandits in Lahore brought out first Kashmiri journal, "*Bahare-Kashmir*". Several issues of this historical magazine came out in the Eighties of the last decade. Many newsletters and magazine came out in the Eighties of the last decade. (Many newsletters and magazines by Kashmiri Pandits came out after the forced exodus from Kashmir in 1990. Their importance and relevance had increased manifold. Because, they were the only source of information for the displaced community struggling hard to survive in difficult and unforeseen times in the early days of displacement.) Koshur Samachar played an important role in this period as a main link between the diaspora. Infact the magazine's history is very rich and has many memorable volumes to its credit in the pre 1990 era. The other magazines that gained momentum and popularity in the later period include AIKS-Naad and Aalav. NAAD though an old publication made its presence felt in the last 4-5 years maintaining its regularity, focus and brevity. Several special issues of the magazine caught the imagination of readers and thus NAAD carved a niche with its circulation increasing every day to newer heights. Aalav, another magazine of repute brought out by Kashmiri Hindu Sabha-Karnataka has also emerged as an important voice of the community. It has improved both in content and circulation. Special issues of Vitasta, Sundervani, Harmukh, Khirbhavanai Times have also their place of importance.

The fundamental question is impartiality and intellectual honesty of writers in a bid to create a holistic vision for our future generations., as Kahlil Gibran says :

The fundamental question is impartiality and intellectual honesty of writers in a bid to create a holistic vision for our future generations., as Kahlil Gibran says :

Your children are not your children.

They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.

They came through you but not from you,

And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.
You may give them your love but not your thoughts,
For they have their own thoughts.

You may house their bodies but not their souls,
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,
Which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.
You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make
them like you.

For life goes not backward not tarries with yesterday.

But when we look at the present scenario there is much scope for improvement. It seems that there is race among a particular section of writers both in Kashmir and outside it to prove their points and personal theories. This has resulted in a great loss to the culture and heritage of Kashmir as attempts to divide it in segments has so far met with little resistance. From the Government owned publications like Sheraza to the periodicals brought out by NGO's in Kashmir, a particular point of view is being projected by a large. This is bound to create a blurred vision among the future generations. The view is mostly sentimental and self-destructive. Certainly the mindset behind this is more dangerous than the view itself. That is why the prime need of the hour is that our understanding of the knowledge, history, scholarship, personalities, must be compatible with and affected by the knowledge of our time. And when that is there that we will find healing answers to our problems. When our share of human knowledge is greater, we will better understand the concepts of humanism, Kashmiryat, our personalities and so forth. If we understand the teachings of our saints like Sheikh-ul-Alam, Lal Ded, Rasul Mir, Mahmood Gami, Habba Khatoon, Arini Maal, Wahab Khar *et al* it will teach people to think for themselves. It shall help youngsters to develop an independent and critical faculty that will allow them to look beneath the surface and to argue logically instead of emotionally. These teachings will put a damper on the baser emotions of the mob by separating the mob into individuals who can think.

Our problem has been always that many of us possess a mob mentality. If all Kashmiries ponder upon the role of Kashmiri Scholars in our literature, language, preserving culture, communications to mention just a few, they will be proud of the common and mutual heritage. But the million-dollar question is if they think, putting off many hats they wear at times.

Keeping the blinkers on a beast of burden is fine, but with humans it is never successful for long. Instinctive common sense will make humans lift the blinkers and look beyond them. Were this not so, we would still be in cave, but what about those in mental caves whose sole purpose is not the salvation of humanity but their firm hold and grip on power?

This being said, There is no denying the fact that 'Democracy is about free debates on all issues relating to public interest'. Anyone can critically evaluate any work. It is the supermarket of ideas, to which all members of society contribute and benefit from available intellectual products. Is this good or bad? Too early or too late? Too fast or too slow? Those are valid questions for the debaters to address. But it is vital for society to continue its roundtable, round-the-hour dialogue. The exercise is good for our mental health. We got mentally fat with all the junk thoughts we had been fed for ages. It is about time we slimmed down and muscled up with a healthier diet, better digestion and a good workout.

(Culture gives life meaning and makes us aware that our existence is part of a long human heritage.) In reading something that others have written we are transported from our limited life to an infinite world.

(Culture is everyone's heritage.) Even those people who may not have attained a high level of formal education can remedy that deficiency by setting their sights on a cultural agenda that expands their minds—they will never look back. Schools may educate but they cannot give a person culture. With the best universities and the toughest curriculums, those who excel cannot be compared to those who remain confined in their studies to a set curriculum and who limit themselves to their field of study. It would not be an exaggeration to call the latter ignorant; in fact, their ignorance can make them more dangerous than the illiterate. Their false pride can have serious consequences, as their opinions may have a direct effect on society and consequently worsen the already pitiful situation of the common culture.

Given the rise in the potential for conflict-fostering and genocidal "creative" endeavors, the time has come to develop, refine, and institutionalize information-based responses to what I call "incendiary communications." Hatred is a deadly poison, because it so often springs from fury at shortcomings within the hater himself. One man hating alone develops psychotic responses. A group of men who channel their hatreds together into a single cause rapidly feed each other's bigotry and

malevolence. The cause is incidental to their own sickness. What really matters is the opportunity it gives them to share their intolerance. Together they pass into a world of utterly distorted reality, where they will actually congratulate themselves on the general revulsion and loathing that their deeds inspire.

Intellectualism is not an individual prejudice or personal attitude; rather, I see it as a "structural constant" that "pushes some opportunists turned self styled intellectuals periodically to impute errors to intellectuals or to initiate debates that will mobilize other people, and frequently often exist only to give these paper intellectuals their media existence."

I am aware that my words may carry some threat for those who are bent upon to create a blurred vision to the younger generation.

In this century, we have witnessed the emergence of two great ethical philosophies, which converge on the same essential idea. The first was Gandhi's ethic of nonviolence, which calls on each of us to break the self-perpetuating cycle of violence and revenge—of action and reaction—by recognizing the common humanity we share with those we consider our enemies. Gandhi put this philosophy into practice by developing a technique of militant nonviolence that was intended to force the British to see the humanity of those they oppressed, and the inhumanity of their own actions. He recognized that what he was doing was an effort to get at truth, and that the truth he was trying to get at—and get others to see—wasn't an abstract or disinterested or scientific truth. Instead, it was an essential truth about the moral grounding of human identity, which has the power to free those who recognize it.

The second advance was Freud's discovery that we are enslaved by illusion—that we misperceive the events of adult life in terms of the fears and desires of childhood; and that we torture ourselves for nonexistent crimes and see enemies and dangers where they don't exist. For Freud, it was the ability to see this truth that had the power to free us from illusion. Some of those who came after Freud brought his ideas closer to Gandhi's by saying that we have to break the cycle of conscious and unconscious deception, and of symbolic (and physical) violence, that is inflicted on each generation by the one before, which results in the distortions of neurosis.

The rule of life is constant development, and we must remain alive to that truth in a manner that allows us to maintain our individuality. It is not a matter of

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PRESERVATION OF KASHMIRI : LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE IN DIASPORA

— By *Ravinder Ravi*, New Delhi

Recently, Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh, while releasing the special editions of two of Premchand's novels "Sevasadan" and "Rangbhumi", said, "Any literature that captures the beauty and finer aspects of life in the midst of gloom and despondency is a great literature."

It is indeed heartening to know that native and aboriginal Kashmiri's could not only succeed in preserving their language and literature in diaspora but also finest contemporary literature is being created with great zeal. There was a time when a Kashmiri writer with his or her sensitivity would capture the pains of migration and write profusely and continuously, illustrating the wordy pictures of their birth place the valley of dreams. A Kashmiri writer in diaspora has got a rare act of courage to pen his thoughts against the crushing of the human spirit. This diaspora writer is as brave as British Playwright and Nobel Prize winner for Literature, Harold Pinter, who speaks his mind irrespective of consequences, while campaigning for human-rights. After leaving Kashmir, every migrant still yearns for his valley, wondering what he had done and why he is being punished for no fault of his own. The pangs of separation pervade in his writing and he becomes nostalgic, no sooner he thinks about his happy times of the past. Be that as it may, exile provided us not only means of living but also meaning in life. No doubt, we have been fast dying ourselves in non Kashmiri culture but at the same time, we are coming closer to our overt and covert Kashmiri culture. Only naïve can believe, that culture can be eliminated with migration. We may have read and absorbed non Kashmiri ideas but that doesn't mean we are embracing alien culture. I have seen women imparting pre-nursery education to the toddlers in their mother tongue, 'Kashmiri'. This will not only ensure progress and prosperity of Kashmiri Language and Literature, it will also help in keeping our great culture flourishing. Language and culture never die. You can easily recognise a person by his facial impressions, whether he is a Kashmiri or Sindhi. There is a sizeable chunk of Kashmiris living in different parts of north India for more than a century. They are known as Kashmiris and have not forgotten their language of ancestors. They are still following the rich cultural traditions. Although, there was a lull for a small period after migration in 90 with regard to

literature, never the less the transitional period passed off smoothly, setting about a new era of Kashmiri Language and literature. Nineties saw a boom in literature. Nostalgia coupled with home richness mostly dominated on prose and poetry. Whosoever, got pen and paper, inked his/her thoughts, thus giving vent to his/her emotions. It may be recalled that we as a community have succeeded in preserving our Language and Literature in diaspora. The feeling of being a proud Kashmiri is gaining momentum day by day. Women writers too are breaking the path in the field of Kashmiri Literature. There are several women writers who have carved out a niche in Kashmiri literature after migration. Their books in prose and poetry are selling like hotcakes. I am sanguine that attempts are being made to resurrect the old Kashmiri traditions, giving these the new heights. To develop Kashmiri as a potential language and to give it a due place, efforts are also on. 13th and 14th century poet Amir Khusro called himself a poet of Hindi, though he wrote in Persian also. Legendary Urdu poet of the 18th century Mir Taqi Mir had created a couplet, in which he referred to himself as Hindi. Ghalib too identified his prose as Hindi. We may have resorted into new experiments but the real Kashmiri flavour will remain there within us. Today's Kashmiri writers, far from their mother land, write with courage, candour and honesty. Script, is nowhere a stumbling block in creating good literature. Nagri, Nasq and Roman are hand in hand trudging ahead. We see in so many languages, where several scripts are being practised and followed religiously. Standardised Nagri Script is talk of the town now and more and more writers embrace it. Nasq has been their and it must remain in place. Even if Sharda Script is unearthed and uncovered, definitely it will be a shot in the arm to enrich our Language and Literature, so the lost glory is regained. Printing and Publishing of Kashmiri books is indeed an area of great concern. The writers have to print and publish their own books. In comparison with Bangla, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Gujarati, Marathi, Kannada and Punjabi the state of Kashmiri is still not quite satisfactory. Now at least more people are interested in reading Kashmiri books. Globalisation is fast casting its impact on cultures and identities. Its rapid proliferation knocks down values, ethos and traditions, no doubt it has merits also. All

through human history, individual talent and will power have done wonders. It is an historical fact that Renaissance movement in Europe was a collective effort of intelligentsia in their respective fields. The great works of great people bear this fact out that individual will power and work matter a lot. In this back drop, when I see my great intellectual mass in diaspora my hopes soar high. It is high time, we rise to the occasion and collectively do more and more to preserve and enrich our great Kashmiri Language and Literature. Post-modernist French Thinker *Jean-Francois Lyotard* has said, "No knowledge will survive that can not be translated into computer language."

Nowadays computers play a vital role in preserving and promoting not only knowledge but also helps propagate it. Experts, Linguists, Litterateurs and writers in diaspora are putting more knowledge about Kashmiri Language and Literature into net, so that rest of the world is acquainted with it. Noted poet Gulzar says, "The roots of our language and literature are vital aspects of our culture. Languages are part of our cultural heritage." To keep our identity and existence intact, we therefore have to nurture our language and literature at any cost, because literature plays a pivotal role in *strengthening cultural identity* of a community.

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Focusing KP Magazines and Newsletters

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limiting ourselves. On the contrary, an open mind is vital. Extremism no longer has a foundation to stand on, and no one is easily tricked by ringing phrases or false claims.

It is time for constructive dialogues in our society. It is time for the dialogues to be heard and not only heard but evaluated carefully and intelligently before being acted upon. For too long we have been known as talkers rather than doers. We have to change before it is too late. There is no alternative.

It is in this backdrop I feel much needs to be done to focus the magazines and publications being brought

out by Kashmiri Sabhas and Samities. We have not done any thing concrete on the personalities who were lost in the 17 years of exile including T. N. Kaul, P. N. Haksar in Civil Service, Moti Lal Saqi, Chaman Lal Chaman, Dr. Brij Premi, Naryan Koul Yarbash, in literature, art, culture and so on. It is high time that we record events of history in a dispassionate manner and project personalities who made history and are no more with us. Lets us take the lead and not look towards the other side for the sake of future generations. That is why it is important and timely to focus the magazines and newsletters so as to contribute for constructive dialogues in the society. It is time for dialogues not only to be heard but also evaluated intelligently before being acted upon. We have to prove we are doers not just talkers. I on behalf of NAAD invite you all to join the campaign.

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KASHMIRI PANDITS' CONTRIBUTION TO URDU JOURNALISM

— By S. N. Gurkha, Jammu

Perhaps no other community, particularly in terms of its numbers, has contributed so much to the cause of Journalism as Kashmiri Pandits. This community, being the traditional literati of Kashmir, has produced outstanding people who have excelled in Urdu and English Journalism, besides in broadcasting. This profession continues to interest Pandit community's younger generation also. The rapid increase in the number of community journals/magazines, of late has also provided enough opportunity to the amateur writers to contribute to the cause of journalism.

Pioneers :

Pandit Mukand Ram Gurtoo the founder of 'Akhbar-i-Am', published from Lahore, Poet Ratan Nath Dhar Sarshar, editor *Avadh Akhbar*, Pt. Hargopal Kaul Khasta, founder editor of *Ravi Benazir*, published from Lahore, Pt. Saligram Kaul Salio founder editor *Khairkhwa-e-Kashmir*, Lahore, pioneered Urdu Journalism among Kashmir Pandits.

Pre-partition Lahore was the hub of Urdu Journalism and political movements. Pt. Laxmi Narain Kaul, father-in-law of late PN Pushp, a scholar of repute, used to edit '**Bahar-e-Kashmir**', published from Lahore. Pt. Tarachand Bulbul, who later earned the name and fame as Kashyap Bandhu, was an Arya Samajit activist in Lahore. He was on the editorial staff of a widely read Urdu daily '*Vir Bharat*'. The editor and proprietor of this daily was Lala Lajpat Rai, Sher-i-Punjab and a veteran Congress leader. With the unfolding of Cataclysmic events back home in Kashmir, Bandhuji returned to Valley. He assumed the charge of Pandit community's prestigious Urdu daily 'Martand'. His journalistic abilities made this paper extremely popular in the community. Later, due to difference with the management, Kashyap Bandhu left 'Martand' and floated his own Urdu weakly '*Kesari*'. It ran only some issues before it

closed down. Subsequently, Bandhuji started another Urdu Weekly 'Desh'. This weekly too became quite popular like Martand. Kashyap Bandhu excelled as a critic and a satirist. In his columns "Challant", *Pagal Ki Diary*, *Man-Ki-Mouj* etc. Bandhu Ji attacked feudalism, corruption, red-tapism and nepotism. After joining National Conference, Bandhu Ji was given charge of running the daily *Khidmat*, the official organ of National Conference.

Pt. Prem Nath Bazaz's Urdu weelky '*Vitasta*' did not survive for long. Later, he launched "Hamdard", first as a weekly and subsequently, as a daily, in collaboration with Sheikh Mohammad Abdulah. After 1947, when PN Bazaz had to shift to Delhi, he contributed mainly to English journalism.

The family legacy of journalism in Hargopal Kaul Khasta-Saligram Kaul Saliq clan was carried forward by their nephew Pt. Shamboo Nath Kaul Vakil. He started Urdu Weekly *Vakil* after the demise of his illustrious uncle. This was turned into daily by his son Poshkar Nath Kaul Vakil. Late PN Kaul wanted to launch an English daily '*Samachar Post*' and a weekly *Koshur Gazette*.

Pt. Dina Nath Chikan was founder-editor of '*Rahbar*', an Urdu weekly. Late Nand Lal Wattal, after his graduation from Punjab University, joined on the editorial staff of *Hamdard*. After the closure of *Hamdard*, Shri Wattal had a brief stint as editor of an Urdu daily *Navyug*, owned by Shri Lambodar Nath Tickoo. This paper too did not last long. Shri Wattal later joined as editor of the Urdu daily '*Khidmat*', an assignment he continued to hold with distinction till 1990, when he had to bid good bye to the land of his fore-fathers due to terrorist threats.

PN Bazaz's "Hamdard" served as an institution, where young apprentices learned intricacies in art of Urdu Journalism from Shri PN Bazaz. Among these young people were Jagar Nath Sathu,

Makhan Lal Kaul **Mahav** and Prem Nath Kaul Bamchuntoo. Shri JN Sathu later served as an accredited representative of BBC, Deccan Herald and other reputed national and international papers. PN Kaul Bamchuntoo left Hamdard to join Americal embassy. Shri Makhan Lal Mahav continued to work with the daily Khidmat till 2003.

Shri Gwasha Lal Kaul BA, holds the distinction of being the first editor of Martand. Later, he launched English weeklies **Kashmir Chronicle** and **Kashmir Times**. Subsequently, he joined Radio Kashmir and the State Information Department. Shri SL Sadhu, MA in English, served as sub-editor of Kashmir Chronicle for sometime. He was awarded a Gold Medal for one of the articles he had published in this periodical. Mr Sadhu left journalism afterwards to join teaching at SP College, Srinagar.

Daily Martand became the vehicle of social reform among Kashmiri Pandits. Its Shivratri, Janam Ashtami, Diwali and Navreh special issues carried short stories, articles and poems advocating change in the moribund societal traditions. Distinguished writers like Dina Nath Warikoo '**Shahid**', Kashmiri, Shyam Lal Wali '**Tirath**', Kashmiri, Prem Nath Sadhu '**Pardesi**', Pitamber Nath Dhar '**Fani**', Kashmiri, Nand Lal Dhar '**Baygarz**', Kashmiri, Dina Nath '**Dilgir**', Tara Chand Trisal '**Saliq**', Kashmiri, Dina Nath '**Nadim**', Vir Visheshwar, Jalal Bharti and Sarvanand Kaul "**Premi**" contributed articles on social reform. Martand, Khidmat and Hamdard were the top three vernacular papers during Maharaja's regime and all the three were run by members of Pandit community.

Shri Ganga Dhar Bhat '**Dehati**' and Shri BN Kaul worked as editors for **Desh** for quite good time. Dwarka Nath Bhat, nephew of Kashyap Bandhu, worked with **Desh** for soemetime. His brilliant career as journalist was cut short due to his death in the summer of his life.

Pt. Jagar Nath Khaibri was an outstanding poet, who composed Urdu and Kashmiri poetry. His command over Urdu, Persian, Hindi and even English was matched by few. His journalism was

distinguished by superb humour and acidic criticism. His '**Ladi Shah**' endeared him to an average Kashmiri. He edited **Martand**, **Navjeevan**, **Morning Times**, **Srinagar News**, **Jahan-i-Nau**, **Vakil**, **Bahar-i-Kashmir** and **Janat-i-Kashmir**, suring the span of his journalistic career.

Pt. Shambh Nath Kaul succeeded Sh. Gwash Lal Kaul as editor of Martand. Kaul was a workholic, honest and capable journalist. After developing differences with the management, he left the world of journalism to join business and served as General Manager of a leading Transport Company, M/s Agya Ram Atma Ram of Pathankote.

After Pt. SN Kaul's resignation, the mantle of editorship of Martand passed on to Prem Nath Kanawa. He remained its editor for a long time. While working with Martand, Kanawa launched his own Urdu Weekly '**Kukroon Koon**', devoted to comic and humour. Mr Kanawa was an upright journalist and never compromised his integrity and editorial freedom. He opposed Naya Kashmir resolution and rapped the government of Maharaja Hari Singh, for not proceeding with investigation in cases relating to serious financial irregularities, pertaining to K.G. Saiydain, the then Director Education. In protest Shri Kannaw kept the editorial column black, carrying the lead '**Director Education Aur Ham**', **Khamoshi Gupt Goo Hai**, **Bezaban Hai Zaban Meri** for more than 150 issues. This strong protest by an upright editor with few parallels, forced the government to take action against Kh. G. Saiydain. Later on, PN Kannaw shifted to Delhi and joined daily **Milap**.

Pt. Lamboodar Kaul Kadalbujoo served for sometime as editor of Martand and was succeeded by Shri BN Matto. He earned disfavour of the management during 1967 Parmeshwari agitation. At a gathering of Pandit Biradari, during agitation, he displayed a document, which he claimed was signed between Shri YB Chavan, the then Home Minister and the Pandit leadership. This was strongly resented by the management, which described the document as fake. Later Shri Matto shifted to Jammu and set up his own business.

Shri Ramchand Kaul Abhay of Motiyar, Rainawari used to edit *Jyoti*, an Urdu daily and the official organ of Samaj Sudhar Samiti, Chota Baza, Srinagar, Sri Kanth Raina worked as representative of the Globe news agency and was associated with the labour wing of National. Conference. During Bakshi Regime, he was appointed Transport Commissioner.

Prithvi Nath Raina (Gosain) served as the city reporter of *Martand* and *Aftab*. Later, he started his Urdu news service *KNS*. He was the first Kashmiri to have this distinction. Late PN Raina had also launched Urdu daily '*Madri Kashmir*' in Srinagar and continued to edit it.

Late TN Handoo had his tryst with journalism through weekly *Desh*. He also served as sub-editor of *Martand* after the resignation of Shri BN Matto from editorship. Shri Handoo edited *Navjeevan* for sometime and started a new agency in collaboration with late Maqbool Hussain titled '*WFK*' from Srinagar. After exodus in 1990, Shri Handoo used to edit daily '*India Times*'.

Pt. Omkar Nath Bhat *Mugloo* began his journalistic career as sub-editor of Urdu weekly *Rahnuma*, owned by Mubarak Shah Qadri. Late, Mr. Mugloo took over as Editor-in-Chief '*Desh*'. This daily was run by Pt. Sham Lal (Shastri) Shalla of Rainawari, when Shri Bandhu Ji joined the Government as Director Dehat Sudhar. Subsequently, Shri Mugloo joined Radio Kashmir as a script writer, He earned popularity for his script '*Charkh Choon*', as humourous criticism directed against China during 1962 war.

Shri Prithvi Nath Thaploo of Anantnag had his training in journalism as correspondent of weekly *Desh* and daily *Martand*. After Bandhu Ji joined the government, Shri Thaploo assumed editorship of '*Dehati Duniya*' published by the Rural Development department of J&K government. He resigned from '*Dehati Duniya*' and joined as correspondent of *Daily Khidmat*, an assignment he

continued to hold till 1990. Shri Pran Nath Tufchi worked as city reporter of the *Daily Khidmat*.

Shri Amar Nath Kak, elder brother of Pt. RC Kak, launched an Urdu weekly '*Vichar*'. Sh. Shamboo Nath Ogra a well-known social reformer was its editor. After two months, its publication came to an end. Shri Shiv Narain Fotedhar, former President of SD Yuvak Sabha founded an Urdu Weekly '*Young Kashmir*'. Its Publication was suspended after he joined State Legislative Council.

During the time of Maharaja, Radha Krishan Purbi launched an Urdu weekly *Sudhar*, the official organ of Bohra Biradari of Kashmir valley. Subsequently, he shifted to Moradabad, where he set up his own printing press and started an Urdu daily '*Naya Sansar*'.

Pt. Shyam Lal Razdan, resident of Budhgair, Aali Kadal, Srinagar migrated to Jammu in 1948 and started an Urdu weekly, *Sharda*. Later it was changed into daily. It continues to publish under the editorship of Shyam Lal Razdan.

Bansi Nirdosh started his career as sub-editor of *Naya Zamana*, an official organ of CPI, Punjab unit. Later, he shifted to Kashmir and took up an assignment as sub-editor of the daily '*Khidmat*'. Subsequently, he joined the State Information Department. A prolific writer, Bansi Nirdosh also excelled as a play-wright. He wrote regularly for Radio Kashmir.

During Sadiq's regime, restrictions on press were lifted. Many dailies and weeklies came into existence. Pt. Dwarka Nath Kaul Naaz launched an Urdu Weekly '*Vitasta*'.

Shri Triloki Nath Kaul's *Zamanat*, launched from Jammu after 1990, ran for nearly a decade, while Pt. Badri Nath Bhan *Nissar* continues to edit his *Kashyapwani* with great zeal and fervour. Shri Mohan Charagi has served on the editorial staff of many leading Urdu publications in Kashmir. After 1990 he shifted to Delhi and continues to edit *Qwami Awaz*, an Urdu daily.

The author is a senior journalist and is presently Editor-in-Chief of "Janat-e-Kashmir".

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REVIVAL OF ANCIENT SHARDA PILGRIMAGE

— By *Jawaharkaul Ganhar, Jammu*

Religion helps the man in realising divinity in him and self realisation. Since antiquity, visit to shrines and pilgrimages have always been considered a powerful aid towards this end.

The Moj-Kasheer (Mother Kashmir) to which we belong is a land of shrines and pilgrimages. Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Buddhists had places of worship here.

As far as Kashmiri Pandits (KP's) are considered they

have been associated with their religious shrines since very ancient times spread throughout length and breadth of the valley which include Holy cave shrine of Shri Amarnath Ji (Pahalgam) Sharika Devi (Hari-Parbat), Mata Khirbhawani (Tulla-Mulla), Jawala Devi



(Khrew), Uma Devi (Anantnag), Shailputri (Baramulla), Badar-Kali (Handwara) and last but not the least centuries old temple of Goddess 'Sharda Devi' at Village Shardi in district Muzaffarabad of Pakistan Administrated Kashmir. This place is just across the LoC at the confluence of river Krishen Ganga and river Madhumati, and was a centre of learning, meditation and prayer during ancient times.

The temple is dedicated to Goddess Saraswati, the goddess of learning and as such Kashmiri Pandits since ages have always considered it as one of their most revered and religious sites. This Shrine is very important and holy for Hindus in general and of Kashmiri Pandits in particular.

In earlier times Kashmir used to be referred as, "Sharda Desh" and was famous even in far off regions of the country. The famous celebrated Muslim Scholar, Abu Raihan Alberuni and historian Abul-Fazil have not only mentioned the importance of this Holy Shrine in their works but have also visited this shrine. Besides them the beloved King of Kashmir 'Badshah', Zain-ul-abdin is said to have visited the temple and

prayed for the welfare of his state. Noted historian Jonaraja, Bilhan and others have mentioned about their pilgrimage to Sharda and have spoken highly of it. The great antiquary Sir, Mark Aurel Stein who spent many years in Kashmir, has also visited the holy shrine in September 1892. The famous Sanskrit scholar of Germany, Max Muller has also spoken high of the Sharda Shrine, in his works, where six systems of Indian philosophy were taught. Muslim seers and

saints have also visited this place in good number before partition of the country.

Famous saints of the country, in by gone days, from various parts of the un-divided India have been visiting here. It is known that Jagat Guru Adi Shankaracharya (788-810 AD) too visited this sacred

shrine. Besides him the famous Vedic philosopher of the 12th century Swami Ramanuj Acharaya have also come here and studied Hindu scriptures, as the place was very famous centre of Hindu philosophy. A hymn in praise of the Divine Mother is :

"SHARDA VARDA DEVI MOKSHIDATA
SARASWATI, SHARNEYE TRAMBIKE
GAURI, NARAYANI NAMOSTUTE
NAMASTASYEY, NAMASTASYEY
NAMASTASYEY, NAMMO, NAMAHA".

An annual mela along with the 'Hawan' and puja used to be held in the month of August/September on 'Ganga-Ashtami' day corresponding to Hindu calender on the Ashtami of lunar fortnight of Bahadun. The day is also celebrated as the birthday of Goddess Sharda. People from far off places of the valley used to come via Liderwan a small village in Kupwara district and also from Uri, Baramulla. It is said that KP's had shops etc. in the vicinity of shrine. Dogra Maharaj's Gulab Singh and Pratap Singh had constructed Dharamshala for the yatries and also had appointed priests to perform daily puja etc. The famous yogni

of Kashmir in 20th century 'Mata Mathradevi' has spent a couple of years here in meditation. She passed away at the age of 106 on January 5, 1985. Before partition Samaj Sudhar Samiti, Kashmir, was looking after the holy shrine and one Shri Late, Shridhar Joo Dhar, then conservator of forests, was looking for its up-keep. The other important places associated with the Shrine, that are worth to visit are Narda peak, Ganesh Ghati, Sharda peak etc. There are other small temples of Sharda Devi found at Tikker and Trihgam (Guchii) in Kupwara district and Bandipur in Baramulla district.

In addition to it there is a spring called 'Shardabar' dedicated to goddess 'Sharda in Nagaberan' meadow near Dachigam valley a famous game reserve in Kashmir about 25 Kms from Srinagar city. It is also said that on the advice of Ranjhi seer the then Dogra Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir, had constructed a temple of Maa Sharda at Nimach in Madhya Pradesh. According to gazetteer of Kashmir and Ladakh on Page 609, Muzza-arabad was known by the name of Shikri in olden days. The earliest script used for a Kashmiri language was Sharda script, and developed to its full during 10th and 11th century. Even today some Kashmiri Pandit's still use this script for writing of horoscope etc.

Now, with the improvement in the relations between India and Pakistan and opening of Rail, Road and Air routes and especially with the opening of Srinagar - Muzza-arabad road a cross section of people of the state especially exiled Hindus and Kashmiri Pandits are demanding the opening of this temple at the earliest. Kashmiri Pandits since centuries have been associated with the shrine and are eagerly waiting for the permission both from Government of India and Pakistan to undertake the pilgrimage to the holy shrine which has great religious significance.

Since 1947, this temple is in a dilapidated condition and as such needs immediate repairs so that temple can once again regain its former splendour and glory. Beside, it will boost-up bilateral ties between the two neighbouring countries and also open new avenues for development of tourism in the area.

A number of prominent persons of the state including famous Sanskrit Scholar, Dr. Ved Kumari Ghai, renowned scholar, Shri Ramnath Shastri, Dr. Agni Shekhar of Panun Kashmir have desired that the devotees from this side of Kashmir be allowed to

make a pilgrimage to the Sharda Peeth after a gap of about 58 long years. It was in October 2004 a memorandum in this regard was presented to the Journalist of Pakistan by the president of Panun Kashmir Movement, Ashwani Chhangoo. These journalist visited the state under the South Asian Free Media Association (SAFMA) and interacted with migrant Kashmiri Pandits at Muthi Camps near Jammu. A letter has also been addressed to the President of Pakistan, Gen. Parvez Musharraf for opening of the sacred shrine by Kashmiri Samiti, Delhi by its the then President Sunil Shakdar. Recently when the state Governor Lt. Gen. (Retd.) S. K. Sinha was on tour to Tenggdar a border area, in Kupwara district people of the area led by Qazi Maqbool a local advocate urged the Governor Sinha that the arrangements should be made for Hindu pilgrims who intend to go to sacred shrine from here as the shrine is at a short distance from this place.

Peace loving Kashmiri Pandits are eagerly waiting for the day when they will be able to pray at the temple. They demand that, like the launching of restoration work at another famous Katasraj Temple at Lahore, same parameters should be applied to this temple also. They are against any form of hostility; only believe in hospitality and welfare for all. Last year (2004) there were reports in newspapers that Pakistan Administrated Kashmir has allocated one Million for the renovation of the temple. This announcement has created more interest among the people here and are eagerly waiting for the Day to pay obeisances at the holy shrine.

Pilgrims who want to visit this temple are demanding that the same type of facilities should be provided to them as to those who visit their religious places in Pakistan and also those given to pilgrims of Pakistan who visits Ajmeer-Shrief and Hazrat, Nizam-u-Din Dargah at Delhi etc. places in India. Sikhs of the state who resided in Muzza-arabad before 1947 also are very eager to visit the Guruwara Chatti-Padshahi situated on the bank of Krishna Ganga and to pray there.

The statement of the State Chief Minister, Mufti Mohammad Syeed in a press conference at New Delhi on 27th May 2005 that the talks are in progress to send a delegation to Sharda temple soon, have raised the high hopes among the pilgrims and people. But, more than an year and half have passed in between, yet the results are still awaited.

SOLIDARITY IN KASHMIRI PANDIT COMMUNITY

— By T. N. Dhar 'Kundan', Bangalore

There is a Veda Mantra which says, '*Sangachhadvam samvadadvam samvo manansi janatam* – Together let us move forward, together let us speak in one voice and let us have the same resolve in our minds'. This holy saying has perhaps never before been as meaningful and relevant for our community as it is today. We had been living in Kashmir in our own way, a modest God-fearing life and facing all odds bravely but silently. We have weathered many an upheaval and storm without a murmur, which amply exhibited our doggedness, resilience and tolerance. Sometimes our children would be ridiculed by nicknames 'Dalibatta – Batta consuming dal' or 'Daligaedva – A pot full of dal' and sometimes our womenfolk would be rebuked by shouting at them, '*Batini batini dodyay mas, yi kihe kortham daligaedvas*' – O battini, may your hair get burnt, what have you done to this pot full of dal? All sorts of hindrances and obstacles would be there in our peaceful performance of religious rituals, for example stones would be pelted on the plates full of burning lamps being carried to the riverbank by our womenfolk. There has been a flagrant discrimination in the matter of admissions in professional courses and in employment right through in past – 1947 period. The community has been sidelined socially and politically and many a time our religious places, temples, shrines and even cremation grounds have been desecrated, encroached upon and damaged. All this we have withstood, endured and tolerated silently but bravely and perhaps our solidarity has helped us in our resolve, fortitude and perseverance.

While the Sanatana Dharma Yuvak Sabha, with its headquarters at Sheetalnath, Sathoo Barbarshah was the hub of community's activities, there were other centers, which played a prominent role in ensuring the solidarity. Prominent among these were Shivala campus at Kani Kadal, Brahman Maha Mandal at Ganpatyar and together with Mohalla associations at every important temple and shrine, these helped a lot in maintaining togetherness among the biradari members. Alakheshwari Sahiba Trust at Safa Kadal, Reshi Peer organization at Alikadal, small associations at Bhokhatakeswar Bhairav, Vitala Bhairav, Durganag temple, Raghunath Mandir, Shri Rama Chandra temple in the city of Srinagar, Nagabal at Anantanag, Shrines at Mattan, Baramula, Sumbal, Vasakur gave meaning to our collective life and direction to our cultural evolution. One cannot forget the Bhajan sessions at Chakreshware, Pokhribal,

Tulamula, Shankaracharya, Zeethyaer, and Jwala ji. These sacred places gave fillip to our spiritual advancement and uplift. There are trusts and Samitis in the name of our sages, both past and living that have brought together their devotees and provided cementing bonds among the ardent followers of these saints. The disciples of Ishwar Swaroop Laxman Joo, Jagat Guru Bhagavaan Gopi Nath Ji, Nanda Bab, Swami Nanda Lal Ji, etc. have come together and formed a large family of devotees of the respective saints, thereby ensuring close-knit bonds in worldly as also spiritual activities. The Daily Martand published from Sheetal Nath was the mouthpiece of Kashmiri Pandits and this prestigious daily paper was instrumental in ensuring solidarity of the community against all odds.

Processions like 'Veeda Bagawaan' on the occasion of Janmaashtami were a treat to watch and enhanced the religious fervour in one and all. And then there were periodical Samuhik yajnas at different shrines and pilgrimage centres, which brought together people of different status and gave a sense of fellow feeling and belonging to all those who gathered on these occasions. The post 1990 era has changed the scenario completely. Pandits got scattered in all corners of the country and abroad. Naturally, therefore, a new programme and a different plan of action were needed to reinforce the solidarity that had got shattered because of the diaspora. It was the serious illness of a gentleman, who had none of his kins available at Delhi that brought a band of young men together to attend on him and thus was born the Kashmiri Samiti Delhi long before the tragedy of mass exodus struck the community. In course of time, with the hard work and interlligence of different well-meaning persons the Kashmir Bhawan at Lajpat Nagar got established. Along with it came the most popular mouthpiece 'The Koshur Samachar'. The Delhi model was replicated at many other places and Sabhas, Samitis, Associations and Societies were started, some for social services, some for cultural activities, some for religious rituals. At some places House building Cooperative Societies also were formed and all these institutions provided platforms to bring back solidarity in the community.

Today the solidarity of the Kashmiri Pandit community has become axiomatic, in spite of some minor aberrations here and there. Kashmir Bhawans, some

sprawling and some modest have come up in various cities, including Calcutta, Delhi, Pune etc. At some places like Bangalore ambitious projects of constructing Bhawans, community halls, temples and other buildings are under way. At still other places like Bombay land has been acquired and construction plans are being drawn up. The replicas of Tulamula at Bhawani Nagar, Jammu and of Hari Parbat at Faridabad together with Bhagavaan Gopinath Ashram at Jammu and Delhi, Swami Laxman ji Ashram at Delhi and Gurgaon and Shri Alaksheshwari Asthapan at Jammu have cemented the bonds of solidarity among the community members. Organizations and individuals are at work to procure admissions for young and budding students in professional institutions and colleges of higher studies year after year. Arrangements have been made at various places like Faridabad for providing training in IT and other sectors to boys and girls. Wherever possible our friends are only too eager to help young aspirants to secure jobs in the private sector. All this has been made possible thanks to the instinctive sense of oneness, fellow feeling and solidarity among the community members.

Solidarity has taken new shape and form in many ways. Some rituals, which were celebrated privately and individually back home, are now being organized collectively. Collective celebration of festivals like 'Zanga Trai', 'Navreh' is a common feature in every big city where there is presence of our community in sizeable numbers. At many places even children of different families are brought together for the holy thread ceremony called 'Yoni'. Thus in a way the solidarity has been institutionalized. In the past there were organizations like Samaj Sudhar Samiti wedded to the eradication of social evils. They did a good job in educating the community about the ills of ostentatious dowry system. I have myself been witness to many sittings of the members of the Kashmiri Samiti Delhi where domestic discords and family feuds of different dimensions were settled to the satisfaction of the parties concerned. The community has demonstrated solidarity during Dogra rule when the shrine at Durga Nag was being taken over and many times in post 1947 period including the infamous Parameshwari episode.

The biggest fight that the community is engaged in at the moment is on the political front. For this purpose also a number of organizations have been formed over the years. While the existence of each one of them is justified as they raise the issues concerning different groups like teachers, pensioners, traders, government employees, camp-dwellers etc ; it is of paramount importance that the common issues like the return of the displaced persons with safety and dignity, payment of adequate compensation, restoration of houses, shops and other properties, representation in the legislature, renovation of shrines and temples etc be taken up with the authorities concerned from one platform, under one banner and in one voice. Any differences in these matters, that may be there, must be sorted out in camera by mutual discussion and dialogue. These differences should not be discussed in public through press, media or public statements. Let us not impute motives or doubt the integrity of those who devote their valuable time and energy for the common cause of the community. They are men of integrity and honesty and their divergent views on the important matters relating to the community are borne out of their sincerity. They must be requested to put their heads together in order to formulate a unified view so that nobody is allowed to exploit us and benefit from these apparent fissures.

Solidarity is our need and necessity. If I use the phrase of a famous French philosopher I would say that we are doomed to remain united and maintain solidarity. There is no room for any laxity in this regard. We have to maintain solidarity to achieve our political goal. We have to ensure solidarity in eradicating social evils so that cases of divorce and discord, out of caste marriages and ostentatious celebrations are checked, controlled and minimized. We have to demonstrate solidarity in retaining our roots while entertaining all good things of the modernity, in promoting our mother tongue and in maintaining our distinct identity in its pristine glory. We have to pass on a legacy of rich culture, forward looking and pragmatic viewpoints and an intellectual community environment to our young-ones so that they grow in a healthy atmosphere as the inheritors of a proud past.

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SOLIDARITY OF KASHMIRI PANDIT SABHAS

— By *Udainath Kaul, Kolkata*

The theme of this Golden Jubilee Annual of the "VITASTA" was accepted with alacrity by the Sabha essentially on the suggestion of Dr. B. K. Moza who, I am sure, would have given all the thoughts a person of his calibre and dedication could have given.

And the theme couldn't have come at a better time.

A caveat here. At a macrocosmic (overall level), the theme may be timely but at microcosmic (miniature level), shouldn't we address ourselves first as to why in general almost all the Kashmiri Pandit Sabhas have dissensions within, at uncomfortable levels? Doesn't one get a feeling that our Sabhas, like the Kashmir Sabha, Calcutta are an exception rather than a rule. I recall that in early nineties — it was 1992 if my memory doesn't trick me — we had an Annual of the Vitasta entitled "KASHMIR BHAWANS TOWARDS PRESERVING THE KASHMIR PANDIT IDENTITY", where the emphasis was about the advisability of having Kashmir Bhawans all over the country and abroad so that they became focal points of get-togethers to preserve our identities as Kashmiri Pandits.

The theme of the 2006 Vitasta Annual is in a way, a renewed effort to pursue further what rankled the Kashmir Sabha, Calcutta in 1992 and what continues to rankle it in 2006.

It may be the timely step to analyse things and put knowledgeable and expert heads together and evolve a code and find a way out of the malaise that affects us as community. Let us do away with blinkers we seem to have put on and feel that, "With God in the Heaven all is right with the world and us". Even if there aren't any problems within us and the Sabhas, isn't it worthwhile for us to address ourselves to seeing as to how things could be made better.

Sometimes hard knocks give birth to opportunities. Look at Israel. The State was created in 1948 only and this State in spite of extraordinary odds they are facing, is one of the richest and powerful countries of the world. Communist Party of China under Mao Tse Tung was formed when, in the Peace Conference of Versailles in May 1919, Germany had to lease out a small port (of Psingtao) to Japan. Kashmir Sabha, Calcutta to be "born", it needed a hard knock, the death of the wife of late Srikanth Khar when we couldn't muster a few Kashmiris to take the deceased body to the Shumshan.

We used to have our monthly meetings, which tradition we continue till date, at each other's places,

have the Annual Hawans at Dr. Mazumdar's place in Ballygunge or elsewhere, which again we continue till today and finally gave to ourselves the Kashmir Bhawan in Salt Lake, Calcutta which cannot but make us feel happy and keep our heads, as a community, high. We used to bring out our Sabha's, monthly News Letter and its Annual Numbers, named as the Vitasta. The practice is still on with our Vitasta Numbers, the pleasure being these are well received as, thematic, research based, enlightening, collectable and valuable trend setters, touching water mark of excellence. And look how Kashmir Sabha, Calcutta is keeping us together, have our monthly get-togethers almost regularly, some of which are sponsored by members and some by the Sabha. Financially we are comfortable and do contribute our mite financially wherever required. True we have a lot to improve, but we are at a level today where the progress in our overall objective does get accelerated.

It is worthwhile recalling here the misfortune and the irony that Kashmir may rank one of the worst cases in history where, with all the good intentions that the Powers that were, had passed on the advantages they had to the enemy on a platter, so to say. A telling account from one who should know - Jagmohan — talks of the mess the Central Govt. leadership made of the Kashmir issue. In his book "Frozen turbulence in Kashmir" Jagmohan refers to his open letter to Rajiv Gandhi in which he writes to him that if Bharat Mata at all would pardon him for what he did in Kashmir, the Mata above never would. Poor Rajiv, he was but only pursuing the path of his grandfather, Jawharlal Nehru, who did the suicidal act of stopping the victorious Indian Army in chasing out the defeated Pakistani Army in January 1948 and took the Kashmir issue to the U.N.O. Notwithstanding all the mess Kashmir has been put to, are we doomed like Lady Macbeth who wails in a Shakespeare's play?

"Will all great Neptune's ocean, wash this blood clean from my hand?"

No it would not.

"Will all the water of the Jhellum wash the blood from the hands of all those who messed up with Kashmir?"

No it would not.

We cannot undo history. Whatever the causes, we as K.Ps are in a fairly bad position, are on our way to extinction, unless we stem the rot. Nonetheless we

don't have to feel that the situation is so bad as to make one feel that we are doomed as Bhattas - Kashmiri Pandits — and feel like a character in a Shakespeare's play who laments in agony :

"Whoever wins, on that side shall I lose,
Assured loss before the match is played"

The following parody of the above lines may be apt

"Whoever wins, on that side shall I win,
Assured gain before the match is played"

Let us be clear and determined that we have to survive not for merely ourselves but for the world at large.

I am tempted to quote that doyen of Indian journalism, Girilal Jain who, among other distinctions he had achieved, was acknowledged as the best, if not one of the best Editors the Times of India, ever had. Said he about the Kashmiri Pandits, and I quote:

"Kashmiri Pandits are a remarkable specimen of Indian humanity. Their role as builders and preservers of great traditions from the Vedic to the Tantric with Buddhism in between cannot be exaggerated"

It is difficult to think of any other Indian community of similar distinction who has suffered so much.

Isn't the world, and Kashmiri Pandits in particular, owe it to generations to come and see to it that this maligned race of Kashmiri Pandits isn't wiped out.

What is the best way to go about to preserve ourselves — it has to be, among other ways, through, as the theme of this Annual is, "SABHAS, SAMAJ AND SAMELLANS A MANTRA FOR KASHMIRI PANDIT SOLIDARITY", But Solidarity is not an end itself — it is a means to an end — that of preserving our identity as Kashmiri Pandits and see how best to encash those inherited or acquired talents of K.Ps which tells them apart, as Girilal Jain and his ilk feel. The next logical step after publication of this annual may be to bring together some of our accomplished minds — media person, judges, lawyers, sociologists, students, administrators, industrialists and businessmen etc. — from our community, for say a 2 or 3-day workshop. The task of the workshop would be not only to cult out relevant themes, but also and essentially to draw up time-bound steps to achieve the goals in various fields, the themes will set the community to.

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KASHMIRI PANDIT SOLIDARITY

The Critical Problem of Priestly Crabs

— By Prof. Surendra Munshi, Kolkata

Way back in the early 1970s when I went to Germany as a faculty member of Bielefeld University I encountered an experience that has remained fresh in my memory. A reputed German engineer invited me home and introduced me to his colleagues. This was the time when Indians were still a rarity in Germany. They were asked questions about cows, sadhus, and maharajas. India was seen as a strange land of poverty and opulence. Some Germans thought of India as a land of wisdom which had fallen from its ancient high standing. Most German grandmothers were concerned about one thing. I knew the question well and expected it to be asked sooner or later whenever I was introduced to one. Do you get potatoes in India? Knowing the German weakness for potatoes, it was understandable that the question was asked. Once I said that in India too one could get potatoes they were reassured. The land could not be all that strange. In this party at the German engineer's home there was a different issue though that came up for discussion. In introducing me to his friends, he said in a grand manner that I came from a land that had good engineers. Indeed, he went so far as to say that one Indian engineer was as good as five German engineers. I felt proud, for this was the time when German excellence in technology was universally acknowledged. Japan had not yet appeared on the scene. As I reached out to my glass of beer to take a sip in satisfaction on this comment, he looked at me and said rather sternly that this was not the full picture. Drawing from his vast experience with India, he said that the sad truth was that five Indian engineers were not as good as one German engineer.

Over the years I have come to realise the wisdom of this comment. Indians are good individually but not so in a group. It is often the case that we take long to arrive at a decision in a meeting, if a decision is made at all. The quality of decision is generally not such that one can feel that it is superior to the decision that any single member of the group could have taken in much shorter time. Indeed, the decision taken after long hours of talking is often worse. The price of the collective effort then turns out to be both time and the quality of decision. This is just the opposite of the Japanese practice. The Japanese try consciously to achieve synergy in their action. This means they try in a group activity to achieve an effect which is greater than the sum of their individual effects.

If this is true, then it becomes important to know why it is so. A popular theory can be called the crab effect. To understand this theory we need to hear a story. It is said a Japanese ship brought crabs to

Japan from all over the world. All the crabs were transported in barrels which were secured with lids. Some barrels were without lids. When a Japanese supervisor saw these barrels he was angry at this carelessness. He thought all the crabs must have run away from the barrels. But when he examined these barrels he found this had not happened. Not even a single crab had escaped. He did not know how to explain it. Then he was briefed by a man on the ship who had handled the import of crabs to Japan for many years. 'These are Indian crabs', he said. 'As soon as one of these crabs tries to climb up others pull the crab down. This ensures that all of them remain in the barrel'.

The crab effect applies to all Indians, perhaps more to Kashmiri Pandits than to others. I have often thought about this matter. A Kashmiri pandit, an engineer by profession, whom I have known since I was young and for whom my respect has grown over the years, once explained the point to me. 'You have no reason to be puzzled by this fact that Kashmiri pandits are not good at collective effort', he said to me once. 'Listen, we are basically priests. And no priest tolerates other priests. The fear is that one may lose the clientele. As a result as soon as another priest appears in the neighbourhood all effort is made to run him down. He does not know his mantras. This is of course the standard line that is taken. But the matter may go as far as his cow (who eats too much grass) or his wife (who is somewhat wayward) depending on the perception of the threat'.

This was another lesson that I learnt, and this time too from an engineer. Are we priestly crabs? I have often asked myself. We speak, we do not listen; we want to lead, not follow; we do not tolerate others. Each one of us is like a general who has no army at his command. As a result we do well individually but not collectively. Kashmiri pandits have done excellently in different spheres of life in India and abroad. We have not brought the same level of achievement in our collective efforts. We lack synergy of effort.

True, there are sabhas, samaj, and sammelans. They perform useful roles at different levels. But the critical problem in our achieving solidarity is our priestly crab mentality. This is the mentality that makes each one of us believe in the superiority over others and gets expressed in pulling down others. An important task for us is to ask ourselves honestly how we can overcome this flaw in our collective mentality. It is important that we should move collectively without becoming communal and losing sight of our connections with others.

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LALITA KAUL SAHIB MEMORIAL AWARD

— By A. N. Kaul (Sahib), Ghaziabad

Our mother tongue, Kashmiri, is terminally ill. Its slow death does not appear to be a matter of serious concern to our community. Despite a good deal of literature published in many of our journals, the interest in the language is waning.

We do not realize that the extinction, God forbid, of our mother tongue, will totally wipe off our identity as Kashmiris. While lamenting, day in and day out, about the loss of our hearths and homes in Kashmir, our yearning for the mountains and the forests, the salubrious climate, flora and fauna, the Dal and the Manasbal, Kheerbhawani and Hari Prabat, we are completely overlooking the fact that we are ourselves guilty of axing our own moorings by making our children alien to their mother tongue, which is the bedrock of our survival as a community. What to speak of children, even adults in our homes—fathers and sons, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters—prefer to speak among themselves in Hindi or English, rather than Kashmiri. We have no right to clamour for regaining our homeland if we continue to neglect our mother tongue and thus lose our identity. What right have we to call Kashmir as our home if we or our children do not speak Kashmiri?

While a good number of precious years have already been lost, particularly after our forced exodus from our native land, we can still arrest the drift, if we awaken to the imminent danger of losing our identity. Let us resolve from now on to speak, in our homes and outside, amongst ourselves and with our children, only in our own mother tongue. Let us expose our children to sweet Kashmiri music and melodies and folklore and encourage them to participate in variety of competitions. Rest assured, our children shall, in due course, turn out to be good conversationalists and excellent orators in their own mother tongue and become role models for emulation by others. At the same time, they will continue to

excel in every other field as they have been doing all through.

"Lalita Kaul Sahib Award for best speaker in Kashmiri Language, is a modest attempt to encourage young boys and girls, born after the 1990 exodus, to learn and speak in their mother tongue. The Award has been instituted by Shri. A. N. Kaul Sahib, former Editor-in-Chief of *Koshur Samachar*, in sacred memory of his wife, Lalita Ji, who left for her heavenly above in April 2005. Lalita Ji was a graceful, yet simple and typical Kashmiri Pandit housewife, who was deeply concerned about our community gradually losing their moorings, particularly the preservation of the mother tongue.

The Award, to be administered by Jammu Kashmir Vichar Manch, will consist of three prizes : **First Prize – Rs. 5,000/-, Second Prize – Rs. 2,500/- and Third Prize – Rs. 1,500/-;** each prize shall be accompanied by a Shield and Citation, While the 2006 recipients of the Award were chosen from among the competitors from NCR, an all India competition will be organised by Jammu Kashmir Vichar Manch from among the competitors from NCR, and all India competition will be organised by Jammu Kashmir Vichar Manch from next year onwards with nominations being invited from all the KP organizations in different parts of the country. Selection of the Award winners will be done more among the finalists by a Jury of experts to be constituted for this purpose. It is hoped that year after year, this Award will inspire our young boys and girls in making serious attempts to learn and speak fluently in their own mother tongue and enthusiastically compete to bag this coveted recognition. The institution of the Award is a modest attempt to herald a movement to create interest in our younger generation and inspire them to speak in and preserve the Kashmiri language."

— J. K. Vichar Manch

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UNTOLD STORY OF KASHMIRI PANDITS

— By *Chaman Lal Gadoo, New Delhi*

Kashmir — a Rishi Bhoomi — has had distinguished past history and rich culture that has been established in the chronicles of great ancient historian-poet Kalhana who wrote "Rajatarangni" (River of Kings) in 12th century. It is most important extant history of Kashmir written in Sanskrit, 7,844 verses in 1148AD and completed in 1150AD, based on extensive research. Pandit Kalhana has built dynastic lists of 54 reigns, covering an aggregate period. The Nilmata Purana gives 'Kasmira' as the name of the valley, which is worldwide known as 'Kashmir' and to locals 'Kashir' even today. Jammu and Kashmir state is situated in north of India 72-30'E longitude and 32-37 degree N latitude approximately. The total area of the state is 2,22,236 sq.kms., 78,114 sq.kms are under occupation of Pakistan, 5,180 km. Pakistan gifted to China and 37,555 sq. kms. are under occupation of China. Kashmiri Pandits have a rich cultural heritage. They possessed numerous religious endowments and shrines. Many Hindu monarchs built numerous elegant temples, some of these still exist. There are many famous centers of religious pilgrimage like the holy Amarnath, the Maharagnya shrine, the Sun temple at Martand, Maa Sharika temple on the Hari Parbat hillock and the high Gangabal lake as sacred as the Ganga. The Shiv-Shakti cult, the Mahayana Buddhism and even the Kamasutra originated from Kashmir. There is lot of literature on religion, history, philosophy and lovelore on Kashmir available all over the world. As much as 35 percent of Sanskrit literature came from Kashmir. The Shiva philosophy got new dimensions in the folklore. In the Lalla Vakh of saint Lalleshwari (1335-1376), we can perceive Kashmir Shaivism in depth which interprets Bhakti as a quest for knowledge. History has it that Buddhism, Vaisnavism and Shaivism flourished side by side in Kashmir. Emperor Ashoka (2632BC) brought Buddhism to the valley. Three centuries later Emperor Kanishka convened the Fourth Buddhist Council in Kashmir at a place called Kundalvara which led to the founding of its Mahayana sect. Buddhist missionaries from Kashmir carried it to Central Asia and China. Lalitaditya Muktapida (701-737AD) was the greatest Hindu emperor Kashmir has ever produced. He built a number of new towns with temples of great archaeological importance. "There was not a township, no village, no river, no field where this king did not lay down a sacred foundation". Says Kalhana.

Ever since Islam made inroads into Kashmir, the Hindu influence was forced to wane. Islam spread

quickly because there was large-scale persecution of Hindus and their forcible conversion during the Muslim rule. During the reign of Sultan Sikander (1389-1413), nicknamed 'Butshikan', only 11 Hindu families survived conversion and first mass migration of Kashmiri Pandits to plains took place. He destroyed hundreds of temples and built mosques in their place and with their material. With the collapse of the Mughal empire in 1752. Kashmir was taken over by the Afghans. This was perhaps the worst period in the annals of Kashmir unheard of in human history. Maharaja Ranjit Singh conquered Kashmir from Afghan's in 1819. Within four months of Sikh rule census was conducted in Kashmir. The population stood at 6 Lakhs and out of that only 28,000 were Kashmiri Pandits! Sikhs ruled Kashmir till 1846. The Dogras ruled the state from 1846 to 1947 till India got independence from the British rule. The last Dogra ruler, Maharaja Hari Singh, acceded the state to the Indian Union. Soon after, tribals and regulars from Pakistan invaded the State but the Indian security forces repulsed the attack and pushed the invaders out. In January 1949, a ceasefire agreement was concluded between India and Pakistan with one-third of the state territories still remaining under the illegal occupation of Pakistan. India accorded special status to Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370 of the Constitution.

The creation of Pakistan in 1947 was a landmark in the struggle for the unification of the Muslim Ummah. Ever since Pakistan was created, it has followed a sustained policy of thrust for expansion towards the east, as a major strategy to spread across Jammu & Kashmir and take the Muslim power to the predominantly Muslim regions of Central Asia, Mongolia and Sinkiang. The terrorist violence in the state is the continuation of the consolidation of the pan-Islamic unity of which the creation of Pakistan was a part. Pakistan claims the state on the basis of the Muslim majority of its population. While terrorism rages in Kashmir, it demands that India be divided again to carry the partition to its logical conclusion by ceding the state to Pakistan.

India has thus been Pakistan's main target and has been turned by it into its killing field. Apart from three wars and the continuing proxy war raging in the state, we have been witnessing a bomb blast engineered by Pakistani agents in one part of the

country or the other virtually every day. Young Muslims, the world over are recruited, brainwashed, trained in insurgency, terrorist strategy and tactics. 'Jehad', becomes their battle cry.

Kashmiri Pandits have lived in the last five decades of Indian freedom and are perhaps the only witnesses of what has been wrought in the state by Muslim secessionist forces and the successive state governments, with the passive acquiescence of the Government of India. Kashmiri Pandits, in the interest of nation and in the interest of history, accept lies and falsehoods as the truth, for that may not only harm the community but also the country and earn us the calumny of having failed in our duty unto our country. Perhaps, more harm has been done to us, by our inability to tell the truth of what has been happening in Kashmir and to our community. There must be no misunderstanding about the fact that the Muslim secessionist forces have been fighting a war against the Pandits in Kashmir. The Hindu community which has consistently supported India in Jammu & Kashmir and in fact has the only support base of India in the state, naturally has always been considered by Muslim secessionist forces, as their main enemy in the state. The Pandits have been treated as hostages in Kashmir and have always paid heavily not only for their patriotism but for their commitment to their own faith.

(Kashmiri Pandits are historically and traditionally a community of scholars, intellectuals, efficient professionals, administrative workforce and have passion for education, — a community which is almost cent percent educated in varied disciplines) It was thus an unbearable oppression for them when the state authorities worked assiduously and strictly towards restricting their admissions to higher educational courses and institutions. Simultaneously, their opportunities to enter state government employment were slashed and their landed properties were taken over under cover of laws which were unconstitutional, unfair and unequal. State government changed the names of 684 villages, which had Hindu names by a government order No. REV/S/340 of 1981 dated 13-10-1981. The Muslimisation of the various political and economic processes had begun earlier and the minorities in Kashmir were at the receiving end.

A lot of crap is being peddled out about Kashmiri Pandits having a dominant position in Kashmir whereas facts speak a different story. The basic fact is that the Muslims are ruling elite in Kashmir. They dominate the entire economic organization and enjoy communal precedence in social forums. Islam is virtually the official religion of the state. They have three-fourth share in legislative bodies, administrative organizations and all the local government

institutions. In the Kashmir province, Hindus have no elected representation in local bodies. They constitute less than 5 percent of the administrative services of the state and have less than 1 percent share in higher cadres of the state administration. Muslim monopolize 94 percent of the state services in Kashmir. More than 90 percent of the admissions to professional, technical and other educational institutions are reserved for Muslims in one form or the other. In financial sphere, the Muslims own 96 percent of agricultural lands, orchards and other urban landed estates. They enjoy monopoly over the entire industrial organizations, trade and commerce, financial resources and exports from the province of Kashmir. The pressure tactics and persecution that the Pandits faced in Kashmir drove almost half their number out of their homes during the four decades of the Indian independence, in search of their livelihood. The rest of them were flushed out in 1990, when Islamic terrorist struck the valley and a large number of minority community members were murdered in cold blood, tortured, raped, temples desecrated, their property looted and burnt.

The rumblings of the storm which engulfed Hindus were heard long before it swept the valley. Right from the beginning of 1989, the Hindus, other than the Pandits in Kashmir, professionally a trading community, were served threats to quit Kashmir because they were Indian Hindus and had acquired interests which impinged upon the rights of Muslims in the valley. The ultimate and devastating blow came on January 19, 1990, late in the night, when hundreds of thousands of Muslims came out in streets and the loudspeakers fitted on the mosques started blaring and yelling 'Kashmiri Pandits, leave Kashmir, without your womenfolk, or else face death!' Then hell was let loose. Hundreds of innocent Kashmiri Pandits—men, women and children — were killed. Among those picked for killing were the people from all sections of Hindu society — teachers, lawyers, doctors, nurses, political activists, media persons, intellectuals and men of small means. The worst victims were women. Torture deaths were resorted. Inhuman practices like strangulation by using steel wires, public hanging, impaling, branding with hot iron rods, torching alive, lynching, gorging of eyes before assassination, slicing, dismemberment of limbs, drowning, dragging to death, draining of blood and slaughter in the open were adopted. During 1989-90 terrorist killings were accompanied by rape, torture and atrocities unheard of in the annals of human history. 24,000 residential houses and 14,430 business houses were destroyed. About 12,500 orchards of Hindus were grabbed by Muslims. The widespread killing, assault on women, the fear of conversions and the shocking experience of being

forced to join the militancy campaign against India were main reasons that drove out Hindus from Kashmir. The traumatic experiences of Kashmiri Pandits were so acute that they found themselves left along to their fate, face to face with death and dishonour. The total breakdown of the law and order machinery spread a sense of insecurity, which was so severe that the most of the Pandits, more than 400,000, fled the valley and migrated to Jammu and Delhi in the dark hours of the night without any belongings. There by the ethnic cleansing of the Pandits was completed. Kashmiri Pandits became Refugees in their own Country! In Jammu, where refugees poured in thousands, the state government failed to rise to the occasion and provide temporary shelter and relief to the hundreds of thousands of Pandits sprawling the streets of the temple city. Were it not for the yeoman's service of the voluntary work force of displaced community, which immediately swung into action to organize relief for the refugees, hunger and disease would have taken a heavy toll of the grief-stricken people, who had suddenly been thrown into wilderness. All state Kashmiri Pandit Conference, Srinagar, Kashmiri Pandit Sabha, Jammu and many other Kashmiri Pandit organizations swung into action. No help came from any other quarter. The silence of death fell on the liberals, the protagonists of secularism, the radicals and the rest. Gita Bhawan, a temple complex situated in the heart of city, was converted into a reception-cum-transit camp, where the refugees fleeing from Kashmir disembarked. Kashmiri Pandit Sabha, Jammu also opened their office complex at Ambphalla to receive the refugee influx.

In Delhi, the other main place of refuge, the Kashmiri Samiti, Delhi, took up the work of relief and rehabilitation. A transit camp was set up at Kashmir Bhawan (headquarters of the Samiti) itself for the displaced persons who were later shifted to 14 other camps in Delhi. A band of selfless and dedicated workers of the Samiti worked day in and day out for the displaced brethren. Koshur Samachar—the monthly tri-lingual mouthpiece of Samiti woke up for its new role and responsibility. It exposed the disinformation campaign carried against Kashmiri Pandits and half-truths about happenings in Kashmir. A true and patriotic picture was given out to Nation. The Samiti organized seminars, demonstrations, public rallies and raised their voice against human rights violations, genocide and ethnic cleansing of Kashmiri Pandits. Apart from 'Teh-Bazari' and seeking employment for educated un-employed teachers Samiti played an extremely pivotal role in getting admission in technical and non-technical institutions for the wards of displaced community.

The exodus of the Hindus from Kashmir was followed by wide-spread depredation of their places of worship. The minister of state for home, government of India, stated in Lok Sabha on 12th March 1993 that 28 temples and Hindu shrines were demolished and desecrated in Kashmir during the year 1989 to 1991. Actual number of the temples demolished and damaged was much higher. 68 temples and Hindu shrines located in remote villages were burnt, damaged and demolished, about which reports were never collected by state government. In the aftermath of the demolition of Babri structure, erupted into widespread attack on the Hindu temples and places of worship. "As many as 97 temples were burnt or damaged in the incidents of terrorist violence in Jammu and Kashmir from 1992 till July (1995) this year and 1747 civilians lost their lives in the last 19 months." The Lok Sabha was informed on August, 9, 1995. On the same day the minister of state in the prime minister's office Mr. Bhuvanesh Chaturvedi said in a written reply, '31 temples were damaged only this year (1995) and added that security arrangements have been made in vulnerable areas including regular patrolling by security forces for the protection against possible attacks by militants.' The destruction of the temples and religious institutions was evidently aimed to destroy the Hindu religious traditions and culture, thereby to pave the way for the total Islamisation of Kashmir.

In 1947 the population of the Kashmiri Pandits was 15 percent in the valley, it came down to 5 percent in 1981 and was reduced to mere 0.1 percent in 1991 after forced exodus of Kashmiri Pandits by terrorist organizations. According to 2001 census Kashmiri Hindus were totaling 1,00,962, out of which 90,870, have been recorded as males and 10,020 as female! Secondly, 240,03 vacant census houses were recorded in the state. The factual position is that most of the damaged vacant census houses belong to Kashmiri Pandits. This fact was not reported anywhere else in the country. In other words, large number of Kashmiri Pandits were hounded out of their ancestral homes.

There has been a continuous disinformation campaign about terrorist violence in Kashmir that the Muslims were subjected to economic deprivations which resulted in wide spread poverty among them. Kashmiri youth felt disgruntled and sick. According to their leadership, this was basis of their gun culture. If this were the whole truth, why did not the youth other than the Muslims in Kashmir, especially of other two divisions namely Jammu and Ladakh take guns like their counterpart in the valley? A close analysis of the facts would bear out that the valley enjoyed a more hectic economic development than did the other two

divisions of Jammu and Ladakh. That is why different commissions, like Sikri Commission in 1979 and Gajender commission in 1967 had to be appointed to look into the lopsided development in Jammu and Ladakh regions.

The Jammu and Kashmir is a prosperous state which in terms of per capital income is placed third among the Indian states. Again, according to National Sample Survey, Kashmir has the lowest poverty ratio as compared to any state in India. Only 3.5 percent of Kashmir's population was below poverty line in 1999-2000. The national average was as high as 26.1 percent. Maharashtra is the second richest state in India, but its poverty ratio is 25 percent where as Orissa has highest poverty ratio at 47.2 percent! According to Average Revenue Per User (ARPU), on an average a Kashmiri gets 8 times more money from the center than his fellow citizen else where in the country! In another recent study by Transparency International and the Center for Media Studies ranked Jammu and Kashmir as the second most corrupt state in India, after Bihar!

The terrorist violence raging in Jammu and Kashmir is another 'Direct Action' that Pakistan and Muslim secessionists inside the state have launched to force a second partition on India. The campaign of terror spread in Jammu and Kashmir follows the same pattern which the 'Direct Action' followed in 1946; genocide of Hindus, their ethnic cleansing by forced exodus from the Muslim majority provinces of India and the destruction of their religious identity. Genocide of Kashmiri Pandits is violation of not only Human Rights but also its Constitutional Rights. In a report on Kashmir by Amnesty International released in December 1993, it said, "Armed opposition groups in Jammu and Kashmir have been responsible for numerous and grave Human Rights abuses, including hostage taking, assassination of politicians and their families, deliberate killing of civilians including journalists, torture and rape.... It urged all such groups to release all hostages and respect Human Rights and humanitarian standards". The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in ruling on the 11th June, 1999 stated that, "The commission is constrained to observe that acts akin to genocide have occurred with respect to Kashmiri Pandits' UN Secretary General at the 60th session of the commission on Human Rights in Geneva on 7th April, 2004 observed, "When civilians are deliberately targeted because they belong to a particular community, we are in the presence of potential, if not actual genocide". It is a pity, that in spite of repeated requests by Kashmiri Pandits no enquiry commission has been constituted by state or central government so far to bring culprits to book who are responsible

for their genocide and ethnic cleansing, nor the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India has acted so far.

Kashmiri Pandits have suffered enough oppression, economic deprivation and religious persecution during last five decades in the state. The Muslimisation of the state ensured by Article 370 has ravaged them beyond repair. They lost their roots, spiritual philosophy, culture, ancient heritage, tradition, history and over all their identity. They lost every thing overnight. A person displaced under force and oppression is rightfully a claimant of adequate relief and compensation. All of us are aware that when huge chunks of population in a country get displaced to facilitate construction of a big dam or a development project, the people displaced are given substantial compensation and even much better conditions of life than they were having at the original place, that is exactly how earth-quake victims are being looked after. What have the Kashmiri Pandits got instead?

Kashmir problem for anyone in the world may be a political problem. For us, it is an ideological one. It is a clandestine struggle between the forces of liberty, democracy, freedom of conscience versus the forces of bigotry and thought control. We have to be with the forces of progress, new world, a world of scientific understanding and not to be part of blinding faith, intolerance, medieval darkness. Kashmir for us is a choice—a history of nearly 6000 years, which produced great poets, historians, litterateurs, sages and saints much before the Muslim rulers came on the scene. There is no option but save Kashmir and its great culture & heritage from terrorism.

Of late, the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service and opening of different points on LOC for meeting point of divided families and relief supply after the devastating earth-quake, will bring the people living on either side of LOC closer. They in turn will access each other's democratic freedoms, self-governance, land reforms and development of respective regions. It is unfortunate that people living on other side of LOC have not tasted much of these realities. Sardar Shaukat Ali Kashmiri, Chairman, United Kashmir People's National Party and Secretary General, International Kashmir Alliance, while quoting the July, 2004, report of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan said, "fundamental rights such as freedom of movement, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and freedom of association are often fringed. There is limited tolerance of divergent views. There are seven or eight political parties in Azad Kashmir but the State's constitution and election laws debar those who do not subscribe to the so-called accession of Azad Kashmir to Pakistan, from participating in election. Handpicked nominees of the

military regime in Islamabad are thrust upon the people as the head of the government, disregarding people's wishes". Comparatively, Indian side of Kashmir is much better off politically and economically. The only fear is that once people realise this fact, the terrorists will become panicky. Secondly, bus service is primarily aimed at uniting divided families on the either side of LOC. There is hardly any valley-based, Kashmiri speaking divided family. So the cross-border bon-homie may become cross-border terrorism.

The Indian people and the government of India have to realise the danger which is posed by Muslim communalism and the militarisation of fundamentalists in the state. Even as the present spurt in terrorist violence, which comes as a severe rebuff to congress chief minister's Kashmir policy and opening of boarders along LOC, is further pushing Jammu & Kashmir deep into chaos. Today again, leaders are refusing to learn anything from the past. Politicians recognise no limits to their greed to hold on to power and ensure votes at the next hustings even they fail miserably in their gimmicks.

The demand for 'greater Autonomy' after 30 years of the 'Kashmir Accord' between Late Smt. 'Indira Gandhi and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah on February 24, 1975 has once again brought into sharp focus the machination and double talk of National Conference. It is unfortunate the Peoples Democratic Party leaders have also raised this bogey. They have gone a step further by demanding Pre-1953 status and arguing that this will be ultimate Confidence Building Measure (CBM) for the people (Muslims) of Kashmir. The Hindus and Buddhists of the state, who put together, constitute about 55 percent of the population, expressed sharp disapproval of any compromise on the issue of autonomy. The Pandits of Kashmir, smouldering in exile, denounced the demand for the restoration of 1953 status, as a tactical manoeuvre to prepare the ground for the separation of the Kashmir valley and Muslim majority regions of the Jammu province from India for which the inspiration came from several western powers. The years that flowed 'Kashmir Accord', the secessionist movement gathered greater strength. A whole generation of the Muslim youth was socialised to the Muslim quest for freedom from India and the unification of the state with Pakistan. The autonomy of the state, envisaged by 'Article 370' provided the political context, in which

Muslim separatism was recognised as a legitimate expression of Muslim aspirations to freedom. Interestingly, the Muslim secessionist forces and terrorist organisation expressed subdued disapproval of the demand of 'greater autonomy' reiterating their claim for self-determination, expressing doubts about the ultimate advantage, the autonomy of the state would provide them. It is unfortunate that the Prime Minister concluded his round table conference with the remarks there is a need to evolve a common understanding on autonomy and self rule in J&K'.

The government of India should deal firmly with all religious and ideological separatism which have impeded the integration of the political culture of India. If Indian government does not, right now, reverse its policies of accepting religious separatism, as a gradient of its secular organisation, it will not be after long, that it will have to face the prospect of a second partition. The cry for the second partition of India has already been raised in Jammu and Kashmir.

Kashmiri Pandits, therefore, demand that they must have a say in the determination of the future of the state and assert that no political settlement to which they are not party shall be acceptable to them. Article 370 must be abrogated. Full political, constitutional and other guarantees against any further injustices and oppression against them must be assured. Peace in Kashmir cannot be restored if they are left smouldering in their exile. The community in its exile, for last 16 years, is faced by problems of rehabilitation, unemployment, poverty and the crisis of their identity. Lastly, terrorist violence should be dealt firmly to prepare appropriate conditions for the return of Pandits to their ancestral home.

Kashmiri Pandits despite of having suffered untold miseries, in the past, have maintained distinct community features. Kashmiri Pandit is a classless society of Brahmans without any further caste and creed. A farmer, a trader, a teacher, a doctor, an advocate, an employee, everyone is of same class of Kashmiri Pandit. Perhaps this is the greatest strength of its survival!

Let us join our hands to improve quality of life of our community members. Let us co-ordinate and raise our voice and speak truth about Kashmir. Let us work together for economic and political rehabilitation of our community.

The author is the former President of Kashmiri Samiti, Delhi.

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SIMPLE STEPS TO TAKE CARE OF HEART

— By Dr. Ajay Kaul, Kolkata

It has given me pleasure to learn that our Kashmir Sabha Calcutta is going to celebrate its Golden Jubilee Year, along with the Global Samellan of All India Kashmir Samaj at Kashmir Bhawan, in Salt Lake, Kolkata-91.

I wish the AIKS Samellan and Kashmir Sabha Calcutta Golden Jubilee a grand success for the better future of our Kashmiri Pandit Community and its leaders and stalwarts

Every leader of our organisations, Sabhas/Samitis, as well as our community brothers, sisters, elders & children require to take great care of their health to fight for their survival and returning back to their mother land with great honour, respect and dignity.

Our all organisation plans should suggest long term projects of survival and rehabilitation of our Kashmiri Pandit Community.

Being heart Specialist. I suggest how to keep fit and take care of your heart which is an important organ of our body.

One of the reasons that some people may ignore the possibility of developing heart disease is, that it is a gradual, lifelong process that people can't see or feel.

Because of advances in medicine and technology, people with heart disease are living longer, more productive lives than ever before. But prevention is still the best weapon in the fight against heart disease. As with anything in life, there are no guarantees. You could do all the right things and still develop heart disease because there are so many factors involved. But by living a healthier life, you could delay heart disease for years or minimize its damage.

Are you at risk?

Risk factors for heart disease are typically labeled "uncontrollable" or "controllable". The main uncontrollable risk factors are age, gender, and a family history of heart disease, especially at an early age.

The risk of heart disease rises as people age, and men tend to develop it earlier. Specifically, men aged 45 and older are at increased risk of heart disease, while women 55 and older are at increased risk. A woman's natural hormones give some level of protection from heart disease before menopause.

A father or brother who had heart disease before 55, or a mother or sister who had heart disease before 65; be sure to tell your doctor if any of your family members have had heart disease.

Exercise is inexpensive and the best medicine.

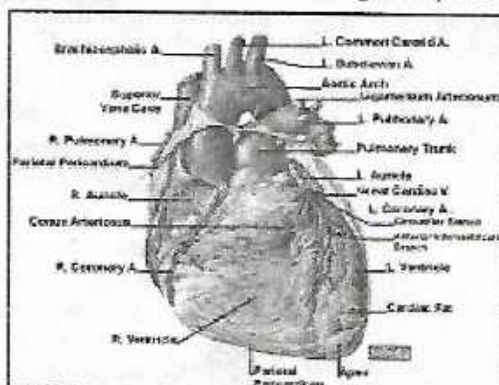
Maintain a healthy weight. Exercise improves heart function, lowers blood pressure and blood

cholesterol, and lowers blood sugar, and being overweight forces the heart to work harder.

The general recommendation is to get at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most, and preferably all, days of the week. And you don't need to run a marathon or buy an expensive gym club membership to do it. The 30 minutes also don't have to be done all at once, but can be broken up into 10-minute intervals throughout your day.

For example, parking farther away when you go to the grocery store or to your office to create a longer walk, taking the stairs, walking all the way around a mall the next time you go shopping, and walking around your neighborhood. Our children are exercising their thumbs with computers and video games, and obesity in childhood is epidemic".

Teach your children early that exercise is fun and good for them. Families can walk together, ride bikes, and chase after balls in a park.



Blood Pressure

Control your blood pressure. The top number of a blood pressure reading, called the systolic pressure, represents the force of blood in the arteries as the heart beats. The bottom number, called diastolic pressure, is the force of blood in the arteries as the heart relaxes between beats. High blood pressure makes the heart work extra hard and hardens artery walls, increasing the risk of heart disease and stroke.

A blood pressure level of 140 over 90 mm Hg (millimeter of mercury) or higher is considered high. Any reading above 120 over 80 mm Hg is prehypertension.

Poor eating habits and physical inactivity both contribute to high blood pressure. Table salt increases average levels of blood pressure, and this effect is greater in some people than in others. Diet rich in fruits vegetables, and low-fat dairy foods, and low in total and saturated fat. Also reduces red meat, sweets, and sugary drinks.

It's important to keep on top of your blood pressure levels through regular doctor visits. The condition is known as a silent killer because there are no symptoms. If lifestyle changes, alone don't bring your blood pressure within the normal range, medications may also be needed.

Cholesterol

Control blood cholesterol. Cholesterol is a fat-like substance in the blood. High levels of triglycerides, another form of fat in the blood, can also indicate heart disease risk.

As with blood pressure, eating a low-fat, low-cholesterol diet and engaging in physical activity can lower cholesterol levels. Your body turns saturated fats into cholesterol. And the higher your cholesterol level, the more likely it is that the substance will build up and stick to artery walls.

The only way to find out your cholesterol levels is to go to a doctor and have a blood test after fasting for nine to 12 hours. A lipoprotein profile will reveal your total cholesterol per deciliter (dL) of blood. Total cholesterol less than 200 mg/dL is desirable, 200-239 mg/dL is borderline high, and 240 mg/dL or more is high. Low-density lipoprotein (LDL), also known as "bad cholesterol", should be less than 100 mg/dL. A level of 100-129 mg/dL is near optimal/above optimal, 130-159 mg/dL is borderline high, 160-189 mg/dL is high, and 190 mg/dL and above is very high.

High density lipoprotein (HDL), also known as "good cholesterol", protects the arteries from bad cholesterol buildup, so the higher the HDL, the better. HDL levels of 60 mg/dL or more help in lowering heart disease risks, and an HDL level of less than 40 mg/dL is considered low.

People aged 20 and older should have cholesterol measured at least once every five years. If lifestyle changes alone don't adequately budge cholesterol levels, medications may be needed.

Experts say the drug class known as "statins" marks a significant advance in preventing heart disease. Even with drug treatment, a cholesterol-lowering diet and exercise are still recommended.

Diabetes

Prevent and manage diabetes; 2 out of 3 people with diabetes die from heart disease or stroke.

Diabetes is a disease in which the body does not properly produce or use insulin. Insulin is a hormone needed to convert sugar, starches, and other nutrients into energy. Genetics and lifestyle factors such as obesity and physical inactivity can lead to diabetes. One in three people who have diabetes don't know they have it. See a doctor if you have any diabetes symptoms, which include frequent urination, excessive thirst, extreme hunger, unusual weight loss, increased fatigue, irritability, and blurry vision.

Quit smoking and you'll dramatically lower your heart attack risk. The mixture of tar, nicotine, and carbon monoxide in tobacco smoke increases the risk that your arteries will harden, which restricts blood flow to the heart.

In the first year that you stop smoking, your risk of coronary heart disease drops sharply. And overtime, your risk will gradually return to that of someone who has never smoked.

Minimize stress

The link between stress and heart disease isn't completely clear, but what's known for sure is that stress speeds up the heart rate. And people with heart disease are more likely to have a heart attack during times of stress.

Heart Attack Symptoms

Symptoms of heart attack include chest discomfort or pain, discomfort in the arm(s), back, neck, jaw, or stomach, shortness of breath, breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea, and lightheadedness. Most heart attacks don't involve someone clutching the chest and dropping to the floor like you might see on TV. It's also important to know that heart attack symptoms for men can be different than symptoms for women.

"The classic sign is when someone comes into the emergency room, puts their fist on their chest, and says it feels like a squeezing pressure. But it's not always like that. For women, it may present as back pain, flu-like symptoms, or a sense of impending doom".

Treating Heart Disease

Once someone has the above symptoms, follow few simple steps

- 1) Just lie down
- 2) Ask your friend to call up a doctor
- 3) Contact the nearest nursing home
- 4) Chew a tablet of disprin

Once doctors determine that you have clogged coronary arteries, the treatment plan typically involves a combination of drugs, lifestyle changes, and procedures that open up the arteries. Angioplasty or coronary bypass surgery.

The author is Director, Dept. of Cardio Vascular Surgery & Sr. Consultant Cardiothoracic Vascular Surgeon, B. M. Birla Heart Research Centre, Kolkata

"SANSKAR" FOR MORAL EDUCATION

— By H. N. Tiku, Jammu

The great crisis all over the world is due to lack of moral values of the life. This has harmed the countries to the extent that for materialistic ends one can go to the level of deceiving his parents & not to speak of the nation/country. This has damaged the basic principles of life resulting in acquiring all the vices in the world. We have squarely forgotten what is right and what is wrong. This has mostly reflected on the adolescents who have picked up all the adverse things in their day to day affairs. The net result where of is that most of them have turned immoral, drug addicts & acquired number of dreaded diseases like H.I.V/AIDS ignoring the immoral sex indulgence. Over & above this, they have taken to arms, which has resulted in militancy & terrorism. This has infected almost all the the countries of the globe. All the powers of the world have been engulfed by terrorism and are desperate in checking this menace. The root cause of all this is lack of moral education amongst youth and even to the politicians who are running the countries. This has also infected the bureaucracy. Unless and until a campaign is launched on war footing at parental, school/college and university levels this menace cannot be checked. Even the politicians, who occupy the benches in the Parliament, legislatures making rules for running the administration at state & central level, should have moral values of the highest order their reflection is squarely on the society. It is therefore most essential that the men/women of noble character with human approach are given tickets to fight elections. The central/ state govts and election commission has a great role to play in reforming the society. Over all character of the nation has gone down to the level of no return. Therefore immediate steps like introduction of moral education in schools & colleges through curriculum is made compulsory with immediate steps. Parents have to play great role by tackling their children. Over & above it should be mandatory that only people of established values of life are allowed to fight the elections.

The "SANSKAR" organization has taken up this challenge and has been campaigning in this field for the last so many years. It has found quite positive response at society and education institutional levels.

Recently a one-day workshop on moral education was organized by the "SANSKAR" organization in collaboration with Jammu University, wherein the heads of Educational Institutions of colleges, university, scholars and social activists participated. It had great response. About 80 scholars took part in the discussion and made their recommendations as to how the campaign needs to be accelerated in

ensuring the attention of parents, teachers and administration, so that the programme is carried on a war footing.

In common parlance education is the process of receiving/imparting knowledge, skill or training for a particular purpose. It is also a means of providing moral, social and spiritual instruction. Accordingly education can be religious and secular, scientific and spiritual. But true education as opposed to indoctrination, is the process of establishing the faculty of critical and independent appraisal of information for the purpose of intellectual development. This leads to reasoned and rational thought, to the renunciation of superstition and bigotry of all kinds, to the elimination of ignorance and the establishment of personality, sound in body and mind, intellect and spirit.

Whereas bookish knowledge and academic qualifications can pave way for a job and achieve for us the gratification that comes from the pursuit of material comforts, lasting joy may still elude us. We have the example of the most materially advanced countries lost in material pursuits and pleasures but divorced of real happiness. Why does peace and contentment elude the richest while the poor seem much happier in spite of the denial of the luxuries of life? Money can buy material comforts but not lasting joy. The consumer culture of over-consumption and sense-gratification beyond limits leads to an addiction with ever-increasing demands not unlike addiction to a drug. The votaries of this culture tend to forget their basic duty towards their parents and loved ones and towards neighbours, fellow men and their country. Children are neglected, the old are abandoned, the sick and dying are left to fend on their own and insensitivity, greed, callousness rule the roost. Dissipation and breakdown are the natural corollaries of living such a life. Therefore education has to go beyond the academic degrees and qualifications in the pursuit of that bliss of life which we all crave. How can that be achieved?

Joy and peace can only come from within a person. Man cannot live in isolation. Whatever he does, impacts not only on his own life but also on others with whom he is immediately connected, and those who may be remotely connected or may seem unconnected. Accordingly our actions have consequences at far greater distances than we imagine. True education is that process, which seeks to build the personality and develop a character that can only come from learning to live a life of discipline with a healthy concern for others needs, in the

understanding of this 'interconnectedness' of life. True education has to teach the importance of virtue and wisdom, of concern for others as much as for your own.

Indoctrination is also a type of education or instruction where an individual or a group of people is taught systematically for a long period to uncritically accept ideas and doctrines, especially partisan and tendentious. You have the example of thousands of 'madrasas', the schools for so called religious education, churning out hordes of graduates armed with militant and fundamentalist ideas to wage the so called righteous war against nonbelievers in their religion or against their co-religionist renegades. That does not imply that all religious education is indoctrination. But we know that under the garb of religious education these institutions have converted into centers of religious hatred and intolerance and of ignorance and bigotry through a misinterpretation of religion.

That is why real education has to be value-based. What then is value-based education?

Values are one's principles and standards, one's judgment of what is valuable or important in life. And education that aims to inculcate these values is value based. Different people may have different values in life but it cannot be denied from the experience of philosophers, scientists and sages that there is a set of values that have guided humanity.

In my opinion value based education should lead one to the attainment of knowledge that will allow one to discriminate what is real from the unreal, in other words education that leads to the path of truth, for real knowledge is the pursuit of truth, and truth is knowledge.

How can truth be pursued or established? It has to be inculcated in the young minds from their infancy, at the nursery level and instituted as a way of life in the schools and at homes. PIAGET considered morality a developmental process while KOHELBERG described the evolution of moral training through five stages.

In Stage I the thinking of young children is characterized by ego-centrism and the inability to consider the perspective of others.

While in stage 2 there is early emergence of moral reciprocity—you scratch my back and I scratch yours, you hit me and I hit you back. Every body has his/her own interest to pursue and since they clash with others' interests, what we call right is relative.

At stage 3 individuals graduate to a stage of awareness of shared feelings, agreements and expectations which take primacy over personal interests. People define what is right in terms of what is expected by people close to one's self and in terms

of the stereotyped roles that define being good— like a good brother, a good friend etc.

Being good means keeping mutual relationships like trust, loyalty, respect, gratitude. At this stage it applies to relationships within the family and

Stage 4 is translating this in the context of the larger society, bringing the 'member of society' perspective to be the dominating one and defining social responsibilities. This trains one to obey the laws for it is necessary to maintain a system of laws that protect every one.

The last level of moral judgement entails reasoning rooted in the ethical fairness principles from which moral laws would be devised. Laws are evaluated in terms of their coherence with the basic principles of fairness rather than upheld simply on the basis of their place within an existing social order. The ability to act from a sense of reciprocity and mutual respect is associated with a shift in the child's cognitive structure from egocentrism to perspective taking.

To translate these theories into practice schools should encourage cooperative decision making and problem solving and nurturing moral development by requiring students to work out common rules, based on fairness. The educator must provide students the opportunities for personal discovery through problem solving rather than indoctrinate the students through norms. Children form ways of thinking through their experiences which include understanding of moral concepts such as equality, justice, human rights and human welfare etc. The main intention of this workshop is to derive the opinion of scholars, teachers and social activists for the ways and means to be adopted to ensure that moral education is introduced in schools and colleges on top priority basis and this message conveyed to the society for action at parental level too.

The main purpose is to associate the law-abiding personalities of the country who would campaign at all levels of the society of ensure revival of "SANSKAR" at all the stages of the life. Once the children & adolescents are covered under this programme the results would start pouring in by way of reforms in youth which would make them to maintain distance from all the bad actions. This will have great check on drug addiction, militancy, terrorism and H.I.V/AIDS. Thus over all character of the society will start developing and so-called generation gap in the society will die down.

I would beg to the society to work for this noble cause so that we revert back to that period of glory, respect for elders and distinguish between right & wrong. Kindly mail your comments/suggestions.

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HISTORIANS AND HISTORIOGAPHY OF KASHMIR (Earliest Times to 1752 A.D.)

— By *Dr. Satish Ganjoo, Phagware*

Kashmir had a strong tradition of historical writing from very early times. This was because of the persistence of Buddhism in the Valley with its greater historical sense than Brahmanism. Buddhism, with a sense of history, influenced the Kashmiri mind. Kashmir's historical ties with a number of non-Indian cultures, the Greek, the Chinese and the Central Asian, all of which had strong historical traditions; developed the sense of historical writings in the people of the Valley. With the establishment of Sultanate in Kashmir in 1320, many learned men from Persia and Turkistan began to penetrate into the Valley. They brought with them the Persian and Central Asian traditions of historiography.

Ksemendra was the ornament of the Sanskrit poets of Kashmir, whose literary career continued from 1037 A.D. to 1066 A.D. He is reputed to be the author of many books, of which thirty four, believed to be obtainable, have mostly been printed at the Nimayasagara Press, Bombay. However, Kalhana has criticized his *Nrpavali* for his classic error. Bilhana, senior to Kalhana in point of age, is the author of *Vikramankadevacharita*, *Karna-Sundari Mala* & *Chaurapanchasika*. But Bilhana is not good at history. He is a poet whose language is simple and clear. He gives a beautiful glimpse of the Srinagar of his days in the "slokas" of the eighth chapter of his *Vikramankadevacharita* of the adventures of Vikrama.

Kalhana's *Rajtarangini*¹ written in the pre-Muslim period in Kashmir, is a long narrative of occurrences taking place in the Valley from the earliest times to 1150 A.D. Written in verses, it is based on traditions, legends and inscriptions. However, *Rajtarangini* is unique as the only attempt at true history in the whole of surviving Sanskrit literature. It comprises eight cantos. Each canto is called a "Taranga" or wave. The number of verses in each canto is— i) 373, ii) 171, iii) 530, iv) 720, v) 483, vi) 368, vii) 1732, viii) 3449. The first translation of a portion of the *Rajtarangini* was in Persian, made by order of Sultan Zainul Abidin who named the version *Bahr-ul-Asmar* or "The Sea of Tales". Akbar ordered Mulla Abdul Qadir Badauni to revise this version and to complete the translation. An Abridged edition of the *Rajtarangini*, in Persian, was brought out by Haidar Malik Chadura during the reign of Jahangir.

Two hundred years later, Jonaraja continued the narration down to the reign of Sultan Zainul Abidin and called it, like Kalhana, *Rajtarangini* (*Rajavali*). After the death of Jonaraja in 1459, his pupil Srivara continued the history of Kashmir, called it *Jaina-Rajtarangini* and brought it down from 1459 to 1486 A.D. When Srivara died, Prajyabhatta composed his *Rajavalipataka*, which covered the period from 1486 to 1512 A.D. But being defective in topography and chronology, Prajyabhatta's work is of very little importance. Suka Pandit, a pupil of Prajyabhatta, wrote *Rajtarangini* after the name of Kalhana's work, dealing with the history of the period from 1517 to 1596 A.D. But like Prajyabhatta, his topography is defective and chronology incomplete. An important Sanskrit work of the medieval Kashmir is *Lokaprakasa*. It seems to be the product of a number of learned persons including Ksemendra. But it does not rank with history, though it supplies many a useful information for the social history of medieval Kashmir.

Sayyid Ali's *Ratikh-I-Kashmir*² (*Tarikh-I-Kashmir*) is the only extant Persian source written in Kashmir before the Mughal occupation in 1586 A.D. Sayyid Ali's treatment to his subject is that of a chronicler rather than of a historian. He is deficient both in chronology and topography. However, his work is essentially important for the activities of Mir Sayyid Ali and his disciples; the iconoclastic activities of Sultan Sikandar and Mir Muhammad Hamdani's influence on the religious thought of the Sultan; Zainul Abidin's enlightened religious policy and his encouragement to arts and crafts; the struggle for power between Muhammad Shah and Fateh Shah; and, the brief biographical notices of Sufis and Rishis flourishing in the Sultanate period. Sayyid Ali furnishes an eye-witness account of Mirza Haidar Daghlata's rule in Kashmir, his policy towards the Shias and the circumstances leading to his downfall.

The *Tarikh-I-Kashmir* of an anonymous author written in 1590 A.D. is one of the earliest Persian sources. Based on the Sanskrit chronicles and some earlier non-existent Persian accounts, it is a narrative of events from ancient times to 1537-38. Though incomplete in many important details, it is a useful source for it describes those events in detail which

have been omitted by the Baharistan-I-Shahi, Haider Malik's Tarikh-I-Kashmir and other Persian chronicles.

Nothing is known about the author of Baharistan-I-Shahi beyond the popular belief that he was a Shia and that his great grandfather, Mulla Husan-ud-Din, was an immigrant from Ghazni. The Baharistan-I-Shahi describes the history of Kashmir from the earliest times to 1615 A.D. Though the pre-Islamic period has been dismissed in a few pages, the events taking place in Kashmir from the accession of Rinchana to 1614 have been narrated fully. The historical value of the Baharistan is further enhanced by its full description of the activities of Mir Shams-ud-Din Iraqi. No other chronicler has given so much importance to the role of the founder of the Nurbakshiya Order in Kashmir. The author also narrates in detail the events leading to the Mughal conquests of Kashmir in 1586. The work is composed in an ornamental language.

Haidar Malik's Tarikh-I-Kashmir, written in a simple and lucid style, supplies valuable information for the period 1586 to 1621 A.D. His purpose in writing history was to preserve the memory of his own ancestors who, according to author, played an important role in shaping the course of events in Kashmir. The part played by the supernatural forces in determining the course of events; so omnipresent in Kashmiri literature, poetry and folklore; is sometimes found as a determining factor in Haidar Malik's chronicle. But occasionally the author is also concerned with historical causation.

The Tarikh-I-Kashmir by Hasan-bin-Ali Kashmiri furnishes a short account of Kashmir's past from the earliest times to 1616 A.D. Not only are the sources Hasan's Tarikh and Baharistan the same, but both works seem to suffer from the same lacuna. There is a complete omission of the events taking place in the reign of the later Shah Mirs and the Chaks, though there is a casual mention of Yaqub Shah's submission to Akbar. However, the importance of the work lies in its treatment of the history of the Sultanate period up to the end of Hasan Shah's reign (1472-84), for which period it is very useful.

Narayan Kaul was a Kashmiri Brahman who wrote Tarikh-I-Kashmir (Muntakhabut-Tawarikh) from the earliest times to 1710 A.D. Rafi-ud-din Ahmad was a Kashmiri by birth, who completed his Nawadir-ul-Akhbar at Shahjahanbad in 1723 A.D. It contains useful information regarding the civil wars which took place after Sultan Hasan Shah's reign. However, this work needs to be read with caution as it

overemphasizes the religious factors in these wars. Waqiat-I-Kashmir (Tarikhi-Azami) by Muhammad Azam was written in 1747 A.D. The work is written in simple Persian. It describes not only the political history, but also throws light on the life and achievements of various Sayyids, Sufies, Ulema and Poets. There are useful references to the prevalence of Begar (forced labour) in Kashmir. The migration of Kashmiries to the Punjab and Delhi is referred to on account of the political disturbances and economic instability in the time of the later Mughals.

The Persian chroniclers of Kashmir seem to have copied the traditions of historical writing in Hindustan and Persia. They were also influenced by Kalhana. But they could not rise to the height of Kalhana. Unlike Kalhana, their treatment of history as a narrative of occurrences does not suggest any inter-relationship among the events in a broad historical perspective. Whenever they try to explain anything, the stress is more or less in explaining historical causation in personal terms. The Kashmiri writers were also ignorant of the histories of Central Asia, Persia and Hindustan. They also depended on common sources and lacked the power of critical analysis. Muhammad Azam alone has applied the critical historical method in his Waqiat-I-Kashmir. The religious zeal shown by the medieval Indian historians like Zia-ud-Din Barani and Mulla Abdul Qadir Badauni seems to be present in the Persian works of Kashmir also; but the Kashmiri writers do not show any fanaticism in their writings. The spirit of religious toleration guided the writings of Kashmiri writers. The author of Baharistan-I-Shahi, though supposed to be a Shia, condemns the policy of Yaqub Shah towards the Sunnis.

The influence of local environment on the chroniclers has let an imaginative or rather poetic touch to their writings. The natural surroundings of rivers, springs, lakes, mountains and the legendary tales connected with them have also found a prominent place in the Sanskrit and Persian chronicles. Almost all medieval works, with a few exceptions, begin with the legendary description of land. While all histories of Hindustan written during the Sultanate and Mughal period ignore the pre-Islamic period of Indian history; and, while many begin their narratives with the description of the general history of Islam; the Kashmiri chroniclers do not show their extra-territorial links with the lands of Islam. Perhaps, the geographical isolation of Kashmir fostered a stronger sense of regional bias in their writings.

7. Gauhar-I-Alam

Folios 91

Written in 1774 A.D.

One copy by Badi-Ud-Din in 1774 A.D. and another copy by Abul Qasim Aslam Munimi in 1850 A.D.

(Wladimir Ivanow's Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in the collection of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal) (No.189, p.59) calls it Gauhar-nama-I-Alam, and says that the copy in question is a history of Kashmir up to 1786 A.D. or thereafter. The work is dedicated to Shah Alam (1759-1806 A.D.) and was originally composed in 1747 A.D., but subsequently completed about 1786 A.D. It is divided into a maqadama (containing a general description of Kashmir), six tabaqas and khatima; but the khatima is missing in the copy.

8. Hishmat-I-Kashmir

Folios 20

Written in 1829 A.D.

by Abdul Qudir Khan bin Wasil Ali Khan

(A copy of this manuscript is in the Curzon Collection of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, No 42, p.21)

9. Lubb-ut-Tawarikh

Folios 123

written in 1845 A.D.

(The name of the author is not given)

THESE HISTORICAL WORKS NEED A THOROUGH AND DETAILED STUDY.

NOTES :

1. Sir Mark Aurel Stein's English Translation of Kalhana's Rajtarangini, Vols. I and II, 1990.
Rajtarangini-The Saga of the Kings of Kashmir, Translation from the original Sanskrit by Ranjit Sita Ram Pandit, 1934.
2. Dr. GMD Sufi (Kashmir, I, Lahore, 19480-49, P.xi) says that the work was written in Muhammad Shah's reign (1530-37). But Prof. Mohibbul Hasan (Kashmir Under The Sultans, P. 5n) Says that it was completed in 1579 during Yusuf Shah's reign. The latter view appears to be correct because of the names of Sayyid Mubarak and Lohar Shah in the chronicle.
3. The author of Baharistan-I-Shahi is supposed to be Sayyid Muhammad Mahdi, a Shia writer, on account of the special exposition of Shia tenets and the exploits of Shia heroes. My teacher and friend, Dr. K. N. Pandita has exclusively worked on this monumental work.

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SATYUM-SHIVAM-SUNDARAM

— *By Dr. Roshan Saraf, Jammu*

Shiv-ratri is the Crux of a Culture, the philosophic legislation of "Shiv",
He is as radiant as hundreds of Sun's but as cool as the morning dew,
He is the origin of life, He is the ultimate, He is the commander of trinity crew,

He is the Lord of Lords, He is God of Gods, He is "Mahadev",
He is immortal, eternal, a spring breeze, a blissful wave,
Sages and saints worship Him in frenzy with rave.

He is the salvage saviour, He is "Shree Kanth" – he is "Neel Kanth",
He is in everything, everything is in Him, he is omnipotent,
He is everywhere like air, sky, land and water—he is omni present.

He is absolute truth – he is "Satyum", he is joy and prosperity – he is "Shivam",
He is graciously glorious and beautiful he is "Sundaram",
He is sweet and spiritual Concentration of heart and mind – he is "Suhum".

He is trieyed majestic marvel he is "Treyumbkum" – he is "Trelochan",
He is magnanimous, fathomless, flawless he is "Niranjana",
He is peace and prosperity, He is supreme doctor he is "Dukhbanjan".

"Sdhashiv" as incarnated hermaphrodite created "Aard Nareshwar",
made His abode in snowclad glaciers as "Maheshwar"
and in deep meditation wandered thick and thin within His devotees as "Yogeshwar".

On such an auspicious night bless the mankind with rare righteousness,
bestow peace and tranquility in the human process
and kindle love fluorescence to bash illiteracy and arrogant darkness.

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SECTION-IV

NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF PERMANENT MEMBERS RESIDING IN EASTERN INDIA

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02. Atal, Vivek
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Kolkata-700 019
Phone : (R) 2475 5545
03. Bhan, C. P
34C, Satyam Shivam Sundaram Complex
1530 Garia Main Road ✓
Kolkata-700 084
Phone : 3253 8895
04. Bhan, ^{Late} (Smt.) Kanta
14/1 Burdwan Road, ✓
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Phone : (R) 2479 9977
05. Bhan, Kapil
Nicco, Athpur Residential Qtrs.
Shyamnagar ✓
24 Parganas (North)
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06. Bhan, P. K.
162/A/157 Lake Gardens ✓
Kolkata-700 045
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07. Bhan, Ratan
Mrinalini Apt., Block A,
46, New Ballygunge ✓
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08. Bhat, Manoj
C/o. A. P. Mazumdar
17, Prantik Sarani, Subhasnagar X
Kolkata-700 065
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09. Biswas, Pammi
CJ-146, Salt Lake City ✓
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(M) 09835182493
11. Chaku, Dr. (Smt.) Usha
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Shankar Bose Road, Chetla
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12. Chowdhury, (Smt) Bharti
Udayan, The Condoville, UD
UD 020105 (2) 1050 X
1 Survey Park
Kolkata-700 015
Phone : 2418 8038
13. Col. Raina, Vikram
21/6, Clyde Row, Hastings
Kolkata-700 022
Phone : 2223 4439
14. Dar, R. N.
385-B Block 'G', New Alipore X
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15. Dhar, Anil
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16. Dhar, Avtar Krishen
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17. Dhar, B. N (Late)
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18. Dhar, (Smt) Kiran
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19. Dhar Rajat
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Laha Colony, Nagar Bazar
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20. Dhar, (Smt) Reena
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22. Ganju, R. N
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26. Haksar, (Smt.) Subhadra *late*
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31. Kachroo, Dr. Rajinder
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33. Kak, Ashok
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36. Kaul, Anand
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37. Kaul, GL
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38. Kaul, Jolly Mohan
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39. Kaul, J. N
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40. Kaul, L. N
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41. Kaul, Lalit
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Phone : (R) 2471 8443</p> <p>58. Kaul, Sudesh
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ITE Hotel

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70. Moza, Ratan
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75. Nadir, Amit
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76. Ogra, M K
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49B Govindpur Road, Lake Gardens
Kolkata-700 045
Phone : (R) 24175004

78. Pandita, Bikram
Anamika Apartments
51/5/3 Rabindra Sarani, Liluah,
Howrah-711 204
Phone : (R) 2645 4213

79. Raina, (Smt) Roopa
672, "O" Block, New Alipore
Kolkata-700 053
Phone : (R) 2400 3215

80. Raina Lal Roshan
12 Tube Colony Nildih, Jamshedpur
Phone : (R) (0657)272206

81. Raina V. K
BNR House, SE Railway Officers Colony
Garden Reach, Kolkata-700 043

82. Raina, Deepak Kumar
Silver Arch Residency
2C, 2nd Floor, Near Loknath Temple
Rajarhat Road, Kolkata-700 054

83. Raina, Nath Jee
Golmuri House P.O. Golmuri
Jamshedpur-831003
Phone : (R) 0657-281937

84. Raina, B. L
Golmuri House, P.O. Golmuri
Jamshedpur-831 003
Phone : (R) (0657) 281937

85. Raina, P. L
19/5 Arcadia Extn. Behala
Kolkata-700 034

86. Razdan, Ranjit
17/6 Sunny Park Apartments, 6 Sunny Park
Kolkata-700 019
Phone : (R) 24615894, (M) 9331842159

87. Razdan, Sumant
Flat 1A Siddharth Apartments
159/12 N. S. C. Bose Road
Kolkata-700 040
Phone : (R) 2471 4693, (M) 9830335731

88. Roy (Smt) Sunita Kaul
86C Harish Chatterjee Street
Kolkata-700 025
Phone : 2455 8052, (R) 32058256

89. Roy, (Dr.) Phool Kumari
5/1A Govinda Roy Lane, Kolkata-700 029
Phone : (R) 2455 3089, (O) 22474053

90. Sapru, J. N
Flat No. 2A Sunflower Court 7
Love Lock Place, Ballygunge
Kolkata-700 019
Phone : (R) 2288 4016 / 2486 6546

91. Sapru, P. L
Flat 77, Kusum Appartments
11 Gurusaday Road, Kolkata-700 019
Phone : (R) 2287 4415, 3252 5544
(O) 2287 2497

(M) 9903038691
(R) 24292491 → 10-gadges
Court Rd
Flat = 12
No.

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92. Sapru, Rajiv ✓
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Phone : (R) 2287 4415, 3252 5544
(M)9831108572
93. Seth, Mrs. Reena Nee Mattoo ✓
157 Jodhpur Park, 4th Floor
Kolkata-700 068
Phone : 24739821
94. Shangloo, Ramesh ✓
166/C/491 Lake Gardens
Kolkata-700 045
Phone : 24221425
95. Sharma, Smt. Krishna ✓
6 Amar Basu Sarani (Near Ram Mandir)
Kolkata-700 007
Phone : (R) 2241 6515
96. Shivpuri, Atul ✓
673 Block O, New Alipore
Kolkata-700 053
97. Shipuri, P ✓
3 Dilkhusha Street Park Circus
Kolkata-700 017
Phone : (R) 2287 9331, (M) 9831010637
98. Shunglu, Anil ✓
155/Block G New Alipore, Kolkata-700 053
Phone : (R) 2478 9608
99. Sumbally, B. N ✓
54 Rishi Aurobindo Sarani
Kolkata-700 090
Phone : (R) 2531 2629, (O) 2218 6195
100. Tankha, (Smt.) Prabha ✓
1A Sujata Appartments
45C/1K Moore Avenue, Kolkata-700 040
Phone : (R) 2471 2077, (M) 9830021515
101. Tankha, V. K ✓
5 Wellesly Mansions
44A Rafi Ahmed Kidwai Road
Kolkata-700 016
Phone : (R) 2229 3623/7989, (O) 2247 7725
102. Tickoo, Rajesh ✓
Flat 203, Block A/1, V.I.P. Enclave, Baguihati
Kolkata-700 059
Phone : (R) 32964958, (O) 32946711
103. Tickoo, Ravinder ✓
Flat 203, Block A/1, V.I.P. Enclave, Baguihati
Kolkata-700 059
Phone : (R) 3296 4958, (O) 32946711
104. Tickoo, Ashok ✓
3rd Floor, Ratnagiri
152 Dum Dum Park
Kolkata-700 055
Phone : (R) 25493500
105. Trisal Vikesh ✓
CL-142, CNCI Housing Complex
Flat 26, Salt Lake
Kolkata-700 091
Phone : (R) 2321 5645, (O) 4001 6655
(M) 9831851606
106. Wanchoo, Dr. R. N ✓
Radhika Appartments Flat 12412
Motilal Gupta Road
Kolkata-700 082
Phone : (R) 2402 9448
107. Zutshi, M ✓
4/2 Leonard Roa Hastings
Kolkata-700 022
Phone : (R) 2223 0697
108. Zutshi, N. K ✓
CK 190 Salt Lake
Kolkata-700 091

Flat G-20 Block-D
No. SOUTH CITY
KOL-

Shaymal
9903647
443

SECTION-V

NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF PERMANENT MEMBERS RESIDING OUTSIDE EASTERN INDIA

01. Bhan, J. S
H-3, Jhoomar Ghat, Near Hotel Mashal RAU
Dist. Indore, Madhya Pradesh-453331
Phone : (M) 09826249514, 09229193500
02. Cherwoo, Sharda
Emst & Young
Brigade Software Park, 14th Floor
42, 27th Cross
Banashankari 2nd Stage
Bangalore-560 070
Phone : 91-80671-4825
sharda.cherwoo@ey.com
03. Dhar, A. K
42, Sector VI
Panchkula, Haryana-134109
Phone : 2586500/2586118 - *code 0172*
04. Dhar, (Dr.) Aparna
Deptt. of Mathematics, I.I.T
Kanpur-208016
05. Dhar, Ashok
Flat No. 602, Orbit Tower
Salcon Housing Co-operative Society
Senapati, Bapat Marg, Lower Parel
Mumbai-400 013
Phone : (022)-32900324/24324039
Cell : 09322215400
06. Dhar, M. M
56 Kailash Apartments
Lala Lajpat Rai Road
New Delhi-110 048
Phone : (R) (011)-29233696
(M) 09810356111
manmohandhar@vsnl.net
07. Dhar, P. L
A-37, 2nd Floor
East of Kailash,
New Delhi-110 065
Phone : (R) 41623553, (M) 981088453
08. Dhar, Raman
Flat No. 7, 2nd Floor, Anukool Bldg.
7 Bunglow, Varsova, Andheri (W)
Mumbai-400 061
09. Dhar, Sanjay
42, Sector VI, Panchkula
Haryana-134 109
Phone : 2586500/118
10. Dhar, Utpal
B-9, New Delhi South Extension II
New Delhi-110 049
Phone : (R) 5569 7071, (O) 5530 6375
(M) 09818649612
11. Hangloo, T. N
"Lasun Basun"
23 Chatur Singh Gardens
Govindpura
Jammu Cantt.-180 003
Phone : 2262108
12. Kak, Ashok
66, Siddharth Enclave
Ashram Chawk Ring Road
Delhi-110 014
Phone : 6844719
13. Kak, Col. P. N. (Retd.)
Villa 44, Palm Meadows
Ramagondanhalli, Whitefield Road
Bangalore-560066
Phone : 2852 5599
14. Kaul, Bhavnesh
2219 Vasant D II Kunj
New Delhi-110 070
15. Kaul, C. L
574, Shankwan
415, Sector 48A
Chandigarh-160047
Phone : (M) 09316035801
16. Kaul, Jogindra/Mohit
M. F. 21/12, Canara Bank Appts.
B. T. M. Layout
Mamnerghara Road, Bangalore-560 076
Phone : (R) (080) 678 6965
17. Kaul, M. L
Flat No. 303, 3rd Floor, National Park, View-II
Wing-A, Raheja Estate, Borivili (E)-66
Mumbai-400 066
Phone : (R) (022) 884 4625
18. Kaul, M. N
A-18, Pamposh Enclave, New Delhi-110 048
Phone : 623 1084/641 4975
19. Kaul, M. N
138, Model Colony, Arhagarh
Dehradun-24800
Phone : (M) 01352671879

20. Kaul, Makhan Lal
House No. 100 Sector 21-C
Faridabad, Haryana
Phone : 222 3443
21. Kaul, Maj. Gen. Rattan
DCCI, ASC Centre & College, Bangalore-560 007
rattan-kaul@rediffmail.com
22. Kaul, Ravi
398, Phase III A
Mohali-160059, Panjab
Phone : 0172-270940, (M) 9417259899
23. Kaul, S. N
SOHOM, F2, Raj Kunj Society
Chembur, Mumbai-400 074
24. Kaul Sanjay
Flat No. 505, Montreal Towers
Shantinagar, Lokhandwala
Andheri West Mumbai-400 053
Phone : 09967065546
25. Kaul, (Mrs.) T. N
A-18 Pamosh Enclave, New Delhi-110 048
Phone : (R) 623 1084/641 4975
26. Labroo WG. CDR. M. K
P-531, Sector-21, Noida-201 301
27. Majboor, Arjan Dev
R. K. Vihar, Lane-1, Udainwala, P.O. Akalpora
Talab Tillu, Jammu
Phone : (0191)-250 6149
28. Madan, A. K
78 Modern Complex
Bhuwana, N.H.8, Udaipur-313004
Phone : (R) (0294)224 0269
(M) 09828426
29. Mattoo, V. J
920, Sec. 9, Panchkula
Phone : (R) 584600, (O) 709678
30. Monga, K. N
Sagar Cooperative Housing
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Vashi, Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra
31. Munshi, J. N
8/2-589/10 Road, Banjara Hills
Hyderabad-34
32. Moza, K. L
B-14, Sector-19, Noida-201 301
Phone : (0120)-432 4506
33. Nagu Prabhakar
C-58, Sector E
Aliganj, Lucknow-226024
34. Ogra, Dr. G. L
House No. 46 Sector IV
Pamposh Colony, Janipura, Jammu
Phone : (R) (0191)-2531193
35. Raina, (Mrs.) Bimla
11-B/B Gandhi Nagar, Jammu-180 003
Phone : 243 2306
36. Raina, M. K
101-A, Pushp Vihar, Shastri Nagar
Vasai Road, Thane-401 202, Maharashtra
Phone : (0250)-234 0110/234 2777
(M) 09422473459
rainamk1@yahoo.co.in
37. Raina, P. K
D3, Casa Lavelle-6
12/7, Lavelle Road, Bangalore-560 001
Phone : (R) 080 299 7632, 212 2873
38. Raina, Dr. M. K
S 525, G.K-11, New Delhi-110 048
Phone : (011)-292 12576
39. Raina, Sanjay
403 (S) City Height, South City
Gurgaon-122 001, Haryana
Phone : (0124) 898 0106
40. Raina, Upendera
D3, Casa Lavelle-6
12/7, Lavelle Road, Bangalore-560 001
Phone : (R) 080 299 7632
(M) 9845182599, 9845200422
41. Razdan, B. L
G-114, Jal Vayu Towers, Sector-56
Gurgaon-122 001
42. Razdan, J. L
GH-13/119 Paschim Vihar, New Delhi-110 087
Phone : (R) 2568 4685
43. Santoshi Maharaj Krishen
98/2, Shivanagar Talab Tiloo, Jammu Tavi-180 05
Phone : 255 4033
44. Saraf, B. K
71 A/D, Gandhi Nagar, Jammu-18004
45. Sharga, Dr. B. N
Manohar Nivas, Kashmiri Mohalla
Lucknow-22266003
Phone : (0522) 226 7146
46. Tankha, Smt. Mala
48A Muir Road, Rajapur, Allahabad-211 002
Phone : (R) 260 2870
47. Tickoo, P. N
Block C/1, House No. 1487, Vasant Kunj
New Delhi-110 307
Phone : (011)-2612 4718
48. Tickoo, Dr. V. K
Plot No. 45-46, Kavi Kuil Street
Avvai Nagar, Lawspet, Pondicherry-605 008
Phone : (R) 04132 253145, (M) 09994961696
49. Wattal, Smt. Rajrani
Chuni Niwas B-25, Pamposh Enclave
Greater Kailash-1, New Delhi-110 048
Phone : (R) (011)-26417577

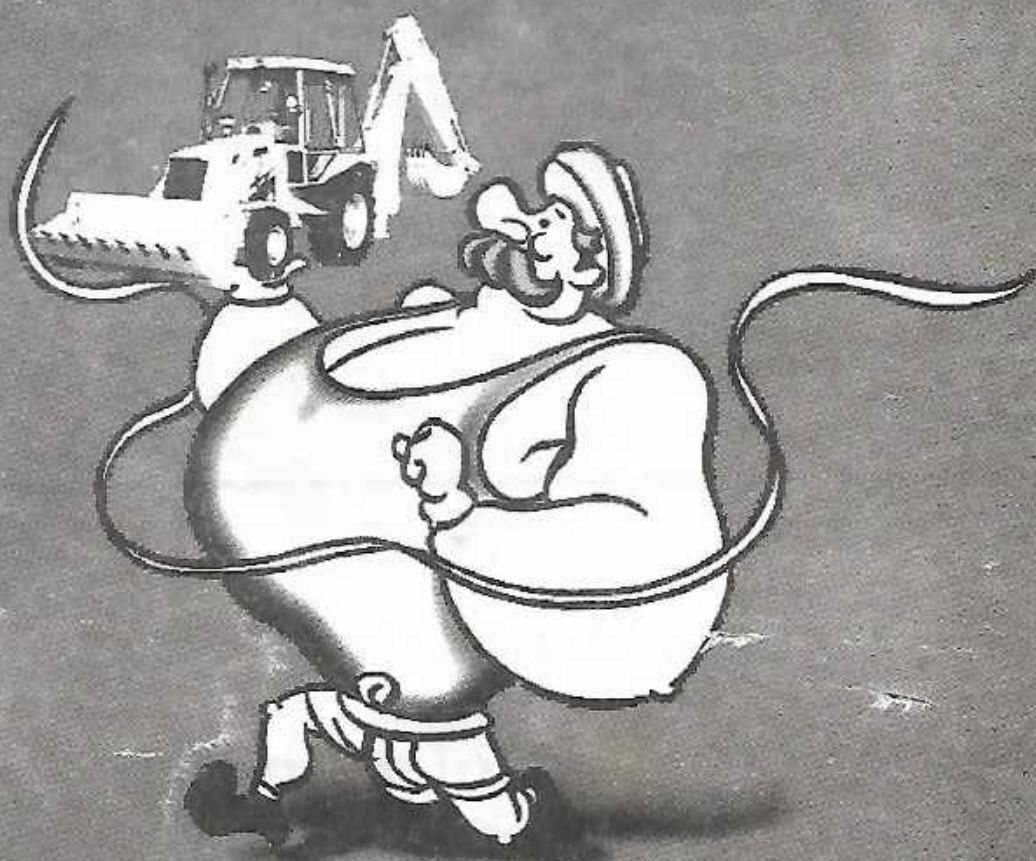
SECTION-VI

NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF MEMBERS RESIDING ABROAD

01. Daftary (Dr.) Inder
229 Pintail Place, Davis
California-915616, USA
Phone : (001) 530 756 4875
02. Dhar, Ajay
Eastern Mansion
Meyer Road, Singapore
Phone : (R) 2440 6641
03. Dhar, Omkar Nath
17, Lockhern Drive
Livingstone, N. J. 07039, U.S.A
Phone : 973 9928820
04. Fotedar, (Dr.) Akhilesh
526, River Hill Blvd.,
Niskayauna, N.Y. 12309
Phone : (001) 518 393 5744
05. Gharyali, Veena
321 Thompson Shore Road
Man Hassat
New York-11030, USA
06. Kachroo, Braj B
Pl. D. 2016 Cureton Drive
Urbana, Illinois-61801, USA
07. Kachroo Girdhari Lal
17 Pleasant Village Drive
Succasuna, N. J. 07876, USA
08. Kashkari, (Dr.) Chaman
1358 Berkshire Road
Stow, Ohio-4422, USA
09. Khashu, (Dr.) Bhushan L
3 Sherwood Gate
Oyester, N. Y. 11771-3805, USA
10. Raina, (Ms.) Supriya
3679 Cabernet
Vine Yard Circle
San Jose
Cal. 95117, USA
11. Mattoo, (Dr.) Nirmal K
25 Hill House L N
Old Brooke Ville, N. Y.-11545, USA
12. Mattoo, Sunil
20 Rolling Hill Road, Ridgefield
CJ-06877, USA
13. Mitra, (Dr.) Nirmala
120 New York Avenue
Hutington, N. Y. 11753, USA
14. Munshi, Meena
13504 Gum Spring Drive
Rockville, M. D
USA-20850
Phone : 301 294 8718
15. Raina, Lalit
7366, Mont Calm Drive
Mc Clean V A-22102, USA
16. Saraf, Brij Krishen
9 Fairfields Crescent
Kingsberry
London NW 9 OPR
17. Sultan, Ashok
11 Fass Court
West Orange, N J 07052, USA
18. Tankha, Anil
11 Trevilyan Court
Windsor Street 4-3SE, UK
Phone : (0044) 175 3622368
(M) 0044727 0364691
19. Tankha, Sunil
Amsterdam, Holland
Mobile : 0031646623168
20. Wali, (Dr.) Avtar K
1206 Miramar Drive
Fullerton, CA 92831, USA
21. Wali, Neelam
505 Middlese TPKE No. 8
Billerica, MA 01821, USA
22. Wali, Vijay
2050E, Pioneer Blvd
Fullerton, C A 92831, USA
23. Zulshi, Surendra
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N.J.-08820, USA

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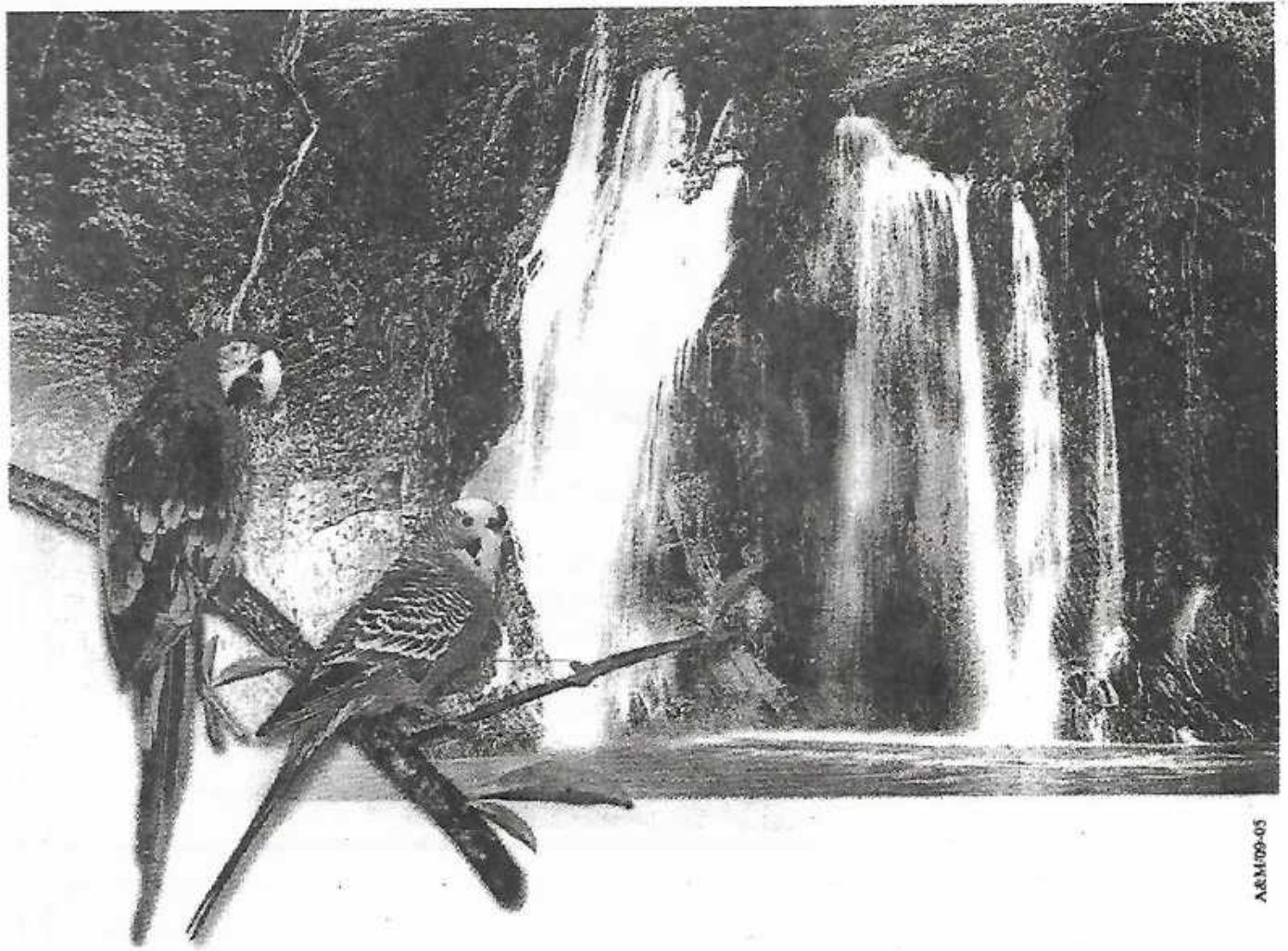
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Phone : 2337 5883

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EACH JOY AND EACH PANG,
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EACH ASPIRATION OF THY SOUL...
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7, KALA BHAWAN, 3, MATHEW ROAD, MUMBAI-400004, INDIA

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