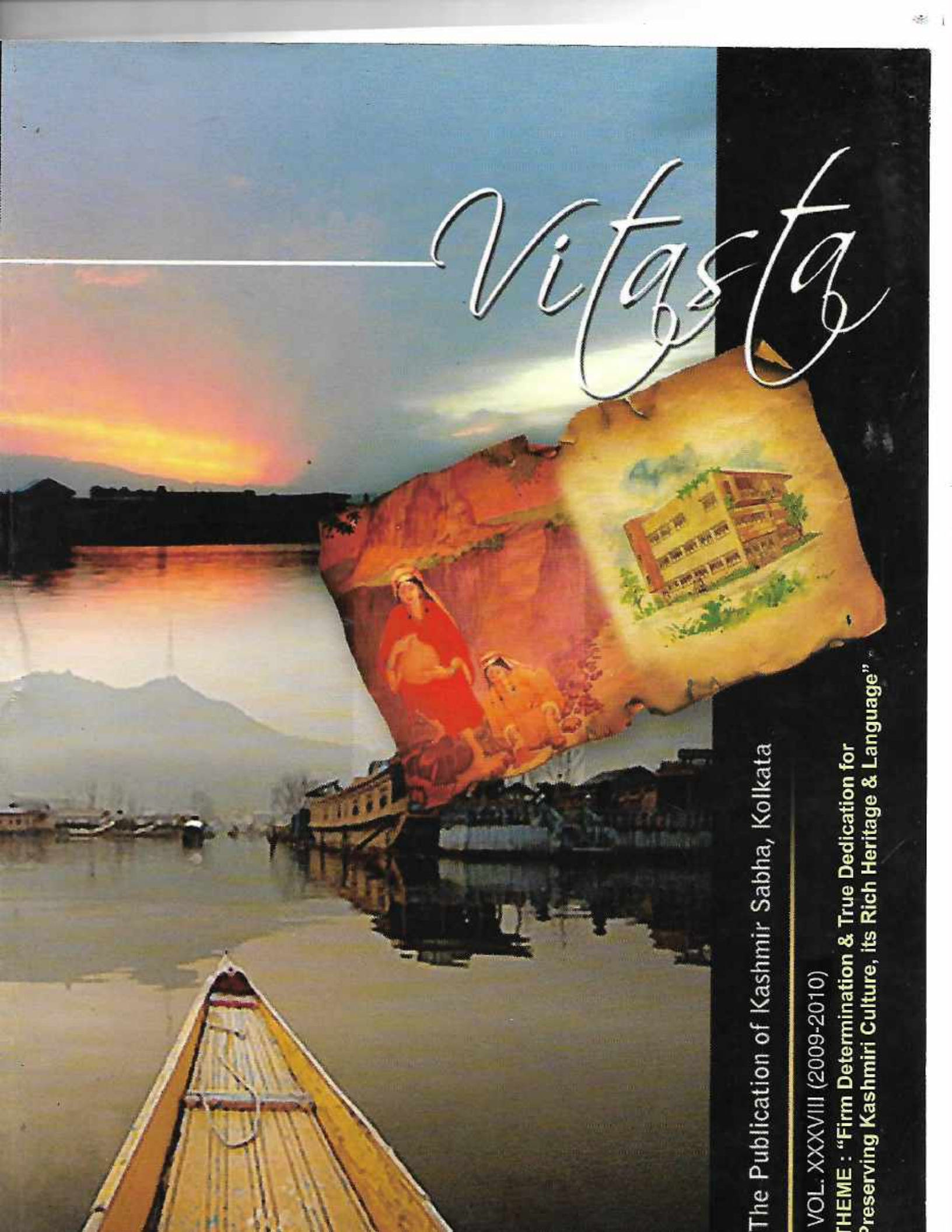


Vitasta



The Publication of Kashmir Sabha, Kolkata

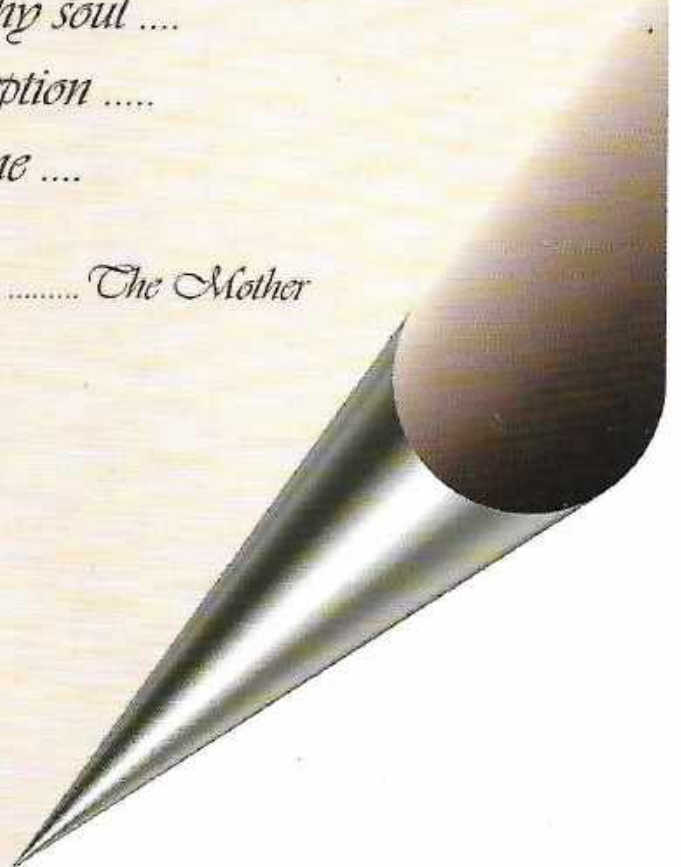
VOL. XXXVIII (2009-2010)

THEME : "Firm Determination & True Dedication for Preserving Kashmiri Culture, its Rich Heritage & Language"



..... Remember that I am present in thee
and lose not hope,
each effort, each grief,
each joy and each pang,
each call of thy heart,
each aspiration of thy soul
all, all without exception
lead thee towards me

..... The Mother



Vitasta

2009-2010

THEME:

*Firm Determination & True Dedication for Preserving
Kashmiri Culture, its Rich Heritage & Language*

KASHMIR SABHA – KOLKATA

CK-35, Salt Lake City, Karunamoyee, Kolkata-700 091
Phone : 2358 3932

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[April, 2009 to March, 2011]

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**KASHMIR SABHA 2010-2011 CALENDER
REGARDING IMPORTANT
KASHMIRI PANDIT FESTIVALS CUM FUNCTIONS
TO BE CELEBRATED AT
KASHMIR SABHA BHAVAN,
CK-35, SALT LAKE, KOLKATA 700 091, PHONE 23583932**

Sl. No.	Month	Year	Date	Day	Festival	Sponsored By
1.	March	2010	14th	Sunday	Navreh & Zangtra	Kashmir Sabha
2.	April	2010	11th	Sunday	Swami Lakshman Joo Jayanti	Mr. & Mrs. B. M. Misri
3.	June	2010	19th	Saturday	Zeasht Ashtami	Mr. & Mrs. Rajaysh Tikoo
4.	July	2010	19th	Monday	Har Navmi Sharika Jayanti	Mrs. Niva Kaul
5.	July	2010	22nd	Thursday	Bhagwan Gopinath Jayanti	Mr. & Mrs. P. L. Saproo
6.	Sept.	2010	5th	Sunday	Janmashtami	Kashmir Sabha
7.	Oct.	2010	17th	Sunday	Dashera	Kashmir Sabha
8.	Nov.	2010	7th	Sunday	Sports Day	Kashmir Sabha
9.	Dec.	2010	26th	Sunday	Cultural Programme	Kashmir Sabha
10.	Jan.	2011	8th 9th	Saturday Sunday	} Annual Hawan	Kashmir Sabha
11.	Jan	2011	15th	Saturday			Koshal Home	Kashmir Sabha
12.	Jan	2011	23rd	Sunday	Picnic Programme	Kashmir Sabha
13.	March	2011	6th	Sunday	(Shivratri) Salam	Kashmir Sabha
14.	April	2011	3rd	Sunday	Navreh & Zangtra	Kashmir Sabha



VITASTA ANNUAL NUMBER—VOL. XXXVIII (2009-2010)

THEME : *Firm Determination & True Dedication for Preserving Kashmiri Culture,
its Rich Heritage & Language*

Editor-in-Chief : MRS. BINA MISRI

CONTENTS

Dedicated to	—		Rituals & Ceremonies of Kashmiri Pandits	— Prof. G. M. Ganjoo	81
Sharika's Photograph	—		The Life of Lal Ded	— Dr. B. L. Bradoo	83
Preface	— Mrs. Bina Misri	vii	Cross Connection	— Dr. Roshan Saraf	87
Editor's Message	— Mrs. Bina Misri	ix	New Year Of My Dreams	— Dr. Roshan Saraf	89
From the President's Desk	— Sri Sanjay Kaul	xv	Vitasta	— Dr. Roshan Saraf	90
			Bhand Pather : A Famous Folk Theatre of Kashmir	— M. L. Kemmu	91
			Secretary's Report—2009-10	— S. Kaul	97
			Dina Nath Nadim—A Poet of Creative Genius	— B. Sanyasi	99
			Balkrishan Sanyasi	— Translated from Kashmiri by Arvind Gigoo	105
Section I : ARTICLES PERTAINING TO RELEVANT THEME					
Kashmir	— Ashok Sawhny	1	Section II : SOME OF THE ARTICLES REPRODUCED FULL OF WORTHY CONTENT REQUIRED TO GO THROUGH ONCE AGAIN FOR NECESSARY ACTION AND IMPLE- MENTATION ETC.		
Cultural Identity of Kashmiri Pandits Retrospect & Prospect	— Prof. S. K. Shah	3	The Kashmiri Pandits, Migration and the Threat to Our Identity	— Lt. Col. S. K. Dhar	107
Our Mother Tongue & its Music—Mahayaan Mantra, In Exile	— Dr. B. K. Moza	11	On Preserving Kashmiri Pandit Identity	— Dr. B. K. Moza	110
Kashmiri Pandits, The Road Ahead	— Prof. T. N. Madan	15	On Following Customs & Traditions	— Late U. Kaul	117
The Pandits of Kashmir : Culture & Future	— K. N. Pandit	21	Section III : ARTICLES DEALING WITH TOPICS OF GENERAL NATURE AND IMPORTANT SUBJECTS ETC.		
Current Challenges to Kashmiri Pandit Identity	— Prof. S. L. Pandit	27	Purpose of Bhagwad Gita	— His Holiness Swami Lakshman Joo Maharaj	119
Cultural Aspect of Kashmir	— Mohan Kishen Tiku	31	Shiva Ratri in Kashmir Shaivism	— Swami Lakshman Joo Maharaj	126
On Preserving Kashmiri Cultural Heritage	— Prof. S. Munshi	33	Presentation of Vivekananda Medal, 2009	— Secy. R. K. Mission	127
We Are Seventy Lakh, Not Seven	— Prof. C. L. Sapru	35	Welcome Address	— Swami Sarvabhutanandaji Maharaj	128
Earliest Settlers of Kashmir	— R. N. Kaw	37	Address by the Chief Guest	— Swami Prabhanandaji Maharaj	129
Birth of All India Kashmiri Samaj (AIKS)	— C. L. Kaul	43			
Emerging Political Scenario & Kashmir	— Prof. A. N. Sadhu	45			
Sharika\Haer	— Ghulam Rasool Santosh	47			
The Famous Spring of Trehgam	— Ab. Gani Baig Athar	51			
Musings of an Advaitin	— Prof. B. N. Kaul	53			
Revive the lost Generation	— Reena Koul	57			
Navreh	— Sri A. K. Trisal	59			
Protect Roots in Kashmir	— H. N. Tiku	61			
Our Rituals	— Prof. A. N. Raina	65			
The Story of the Vitasta	— J. N. Ganhar	67			
Morality Vanishing Alarming	— H. N. Tiku	69			
Influence of Advaita on Muslim Rishis of Kashmir	— T. N. Kundan	73			

Speech by Prof. Brij Nath Kaul	— Prof. B. N. Kaul	131
Address by the President	— Sri Gopal Krishna Gandhi—(Governor of West Bengal)	134
Vote of Thanks	— Swami Bodhasarananda Maharaj	136
Kashmiris in a New Dictionary	— Adarsh Ajit	138
Virtue—Happiness & Tranquility	— M. L. Koul	141
Self-Realisation	— B. M. Misri	144
A Legal Person with Spiritual Mind	— Dr. B. N. Sharga	149
An Ideal Daughter of Thakur Shri Ramkrishna & Maa Saradmoni	— D. Sengupta	156
Benevolent — She is	— Dr. Roshan Saraf	160
Kashmir : Kashmiriat	— S. Kaul	161
Letter to Kashmiri Muslims	— A. Gigoo	162
In Search of Better World	— J. M. Kaul	163
Krishna's Banisi	— B. L. Bhan	166
Divine Meeting of Bhagavan Gopi Nath Ji & Swami Vivekananda	— B. L. Bhan	168
Mortal Frame — A Rented Accommodation	— B. L. Bhan	169
Significance of Praying at the Feet of Lord	— B. L. Bhan	171
The World of Naked Truth	— M. Saraf	172
To Be Or Not To Be	— S. Kaul	175
English Creative Writing in Exile	— A. Gigoo	176
Kaluchak to Kolkata	— M. L. Kemmu	177
The Valley Where Snow Stopped Falling	— P. Qazi	181

Section IV : HINDI & KASHMIRI

कश्मीरी पंडित और कुंभ का महात्म्य	— डा० बैकुण्ठ नाथ शर्मा	185
भारतीय संस्कृति के ज्योतिष्मान नक्षत्र	— पं० प्रेम नाथ शास्त्री	189

कश्मीरी आशाओं की सदाबहार कली है	— श्यामलाल वली	193
संघर्ष मय जीवन	— श्रीमती कान्ता सपरू	197
गीत	— प्यारे हताश	198
बेटी हो तो ऐसी	— निभा रानी कौल	199
सफलता की आधारशिला	— श्रीमति बीना मिसरी	202
कश्मीरी संस्कृति —		
डूबता सूर्य	— डॉ. फूल चन्द्रा	203
वह भूली-बिसरी थादे	— कृष्णा घोष	207
संतयोगिनी लल्लेश्वरी	— पं. त्रिलोकीनाथ बंचू	209
खानु बुजारी	— मकखन लाल सराफ	213
कॉशुर पॅरिव लीखिव यिथु पॉठय्	— पृथ्वीनाथ कौल 'सयिल'	214
ॐ नमः शिवाये	— डा. बी. के. मोजा	215
चारु रॅस्य कॉशिर्य	— डा. बी. के. मोजा	216
म्योन स्वंदर वतन	— डा. बी. के. मोजा	217
यादि कश्मीर एवं नव बहारो कौतू गोख	— डा. बी. के. मोजा	218
पोकुस स्योदुय्	— डा. बी. के. मोजा	219
सौनु मॉलिये	— डा. बी. के. मोजा	220
सौतुच गाह त्राव	— डा. बी. के. मोजा	221
बुजनाव सोन आज़ाद वतन	— डा. बी. के. मोजा	222

Section V : NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF PERMANENT MEMBERS RESIDING IN EASTERN INDIA 223

Section VI : NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF PERMANENT MEMBERS RESIDING OUTSIDE EASTERN INDIA 227

Section VII : NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF MEMBERS RESIDING ABROAD 229

Based on the available material the contents have been divided in several sections, as follows:

Section I

Articles pertaining and relevant to the Theme:

**Firm Determination & True Dedication for
Preserving Kashmiri Culture, its Rich Heritage & Language**

Section II

Articles reproduced full of worthy content.

Required to go through once again for necessary action and implementation etc.

Section III

Articles dealing with topics of general nature and important subjects.

Section IV

Hindi and Kashmiri.

Section V

Names and Addresses of Permanent Members residing in Eastern India.

Section VI

Names and Addresses of Permanent Members residing outside Eastern India.

Section VII

Names and Addresses of Permanent Members residing Abroad.



Kashmir Bhavan Building
Kashmir Sabha, Kolkata
CK-35, Salt Lake City, Karunamoyee, Kolkata-700 091



Dedicated To

The Mother tongue and its enchanting music accompanying lyrics resonating in minds and vibrating in hearts of our hearts thus producing spell bound, everlasting, sensational, sustained effects, the great lull and healing touch in our distant diasporas in every nook and corner of the world.

The Kashmir Migrants languishing in the out-skirts and remote places of their state in absolute despair and dejection, distressed and depressed, huddled up awkwardly in chaos and confusion, looking forward to the day of their safe return to their Homeland with dignity and honour.

To youngsters, the youth, the new growing generations, to unleash that hidden and dormant potential in themselves, to create a new world and a new Vision, India the Great and strong country, dynamic and vibrant, ever changing from bright to brilliance.



Sharika Bhagwati, artistic version, in Kashmiri Panditani attire, Kashmir Sabha, Kolkata Contribution.

Preface

Kashmiri Pandits have already a number of publications being processed from various centres. Most probably the first and foremost was from Lukhnow over hundred years back – 'Bahare Kashmir'. In Kashmir we were satisfied with 'Martand' for decades together, thereafter with 'Jyoti'. Immediately after independence and tribal raid, shifting of Kashmiris to the plains down took place which resulted in places of new sources Jammu, Delhi, Mumbai etc etc after having times advanced much further the forced community members felt the necessity of communicating with each other and be in constant and regular touch with their own native land of birth and origin thus giving rise to different journals such as Milchar from Bombay, Koshur Samachar from Delhi, Vitasta from Kolkata, Kashmiri Times from Jammu. After mass exodus the no. of journals got multiplied. The places from which these came into being and were issued are Viz Chandigarh, Faridabad, and Bangalore etc.

The first annual number of Vitasta was first published on 15th of August, 1960. Since then it continued to be in circulation amongst our community members unabated. Lot of thanks to the able and apt editors who kept it going non-stop with full zeal and zest. We owe ample and umpteen number of thanks to our Dr. B K Moza Sahib who with his extraordinary caliber and command on his pen and over his feelings, skills, grit and passion has nurtured and nourished this unparalleled magazine from its infancy to this present glorious stage.

The Vitasta publication has all along been sincerely endeavouring to keep the ethos of Pandit legacy alive even in this odd and hostile atmosphere is very well evident from the articles compiled in this journal. The theme of this year's annual number as suggested and finally decided by the Management Committee runs as '**Firm determination and true dedication for preserving Kashmiri Pandits cultural Identity, its rich heritage and language**'.

The cultural heritage of Jammu & Kashmir cuts across all the so called barriers. The state has acquired so much in common through age old association amongst the people concerned. The chief main rivers of the state the Sindh, Chenab and Jhelum have been flowing through, though they originate from different sources, the ages together thus resulting in tight bonds and close cultural amalgamation. The common cultural heritage of the state reflected and revealed in literature, language, religion, arts, crafts, music and pilgrimage centres lending strong support and genuine credence and solid evidence to this hard fact. Today the greatest need of the hour is to give a jolt thus create awareness and awakening in large measure, amongst the youngsters, in particular to rise to the occasion and play in important role in maintaining and preserving our national integration and cultural heritage, to finally emerge stronger in future. This pledge is required to be taken with firm determination and true dedication.

No man ever lived who did feel at times that he was condemned to go through life hand cuffed to a stranger. That stranger is himself, the mysterious and predictable companion with whom he must share every thought, every emotion, every experience clearly, then if this inevitable partnership is to succeed a man must know how to live on good terms with himself– how to manage, and control and sometime improve himself. "Make it thy business to know thyself, said Cervantes, "which ", he added "is the most difficult lesson in the world".

Liberty isn't a thing you have been given as a present. You can be a free man under a dictatorship if you struggle against it. He who thinks with his own head is a free man. He who struggles for what he believes to be right is a free man. Even if you live in the freest country in the world and are lazy, callous, apathetic, irresolute, you are not free but a slave, though there be no coercion and no opposition. "Liberty is something you have to take for yourself. There is no use begging it from others. So said, Ignazio Silone.

WHAT IS LIFE



<i>Life is a challenge</i>	.....	<i>Meet it.</i>
<i>Life is a gift</i>	.....	<i>Accept it.</i>
<i>Life is an adventure</i>	.....	<i>Dare it.</i>
<i>Life is a sorrow</i>	.....	<i>Overcome it.</i>
<i>Life is a tragedy</i>	.....	<i>Face it.</i>
<i>Life is a duty</i>	.....	<i>Perform it.</i>
<i>Life is a game</i>	.....	<i>Play it.</i>
<i>Life is a mystery</i>	.....	<i>Unfold it.</i>
<i>Life is a song</i>	.....	<i>Sing it.</i>
<i>Life is an opportunity</i>	.....	<i>Take it.</i>
<i>Life is a journey</i>	.....	<i>Complete it.</i>
<i>Life is a promise</i>	.....	<i>Fulfil it.</i>
<i>Life is love</i>	.....	<i>Enjoy it.</i>
<i>Life is a beauty</i>	.....	<i>Praise it.</i>
<i>Life is a spirit</i>	.....	<i>Realise it.</i>
<i>Life is a struggle</i>	.....	<i>Fight it.</i>
<i>Life is a puzzle</i>	.....	<i>Solve it.</i>
<i>Life is a goal</i>	.....	<i>Achieve it.</i>

..... *Swami Vivekananda*

Editor's Message

It gives me great pleasure and a sense of pride to present - The Vitasta Annual Vol. XXXVIII (2009-10). The Vitasta Annual needs no preliminary introduction. It appears in explicit and extensive form, elaborate and exhaustive in details, vivid in descriptions, research oriented based authentic informations and has thus endeared itself as one of the prestigious and popular publications of the Baradari and community members in general, as a whole. It has already been apprising our younger generations of our rich cultural heritage and its great traditions which they always ought to uphold with pride that sustains one and all through the times of absolute despair and dejection. We the elders should snatch away some time to impart broad basis aspects and prospects of our cultural mythology and history to the younger generation at home with a view to create in them a sense of belonging to this great heritage and rich culture.



Mrs. Bina Misri, Editor,
Vitasta Annual, Kashmir
Sabha, Kolkata.

Continued, constant preaching and exposure will provide sustained and everlasting effect and would prove ultimately beneficial. Kashmiri our mother tongue is fast getting eroded among our youths. So something solid and tangible is to be done in this connection. They should be let known in clear terms the importance and significance of the same. We the elders at home should ourselves talk to them in Kashmiri alone and alone, then only they will realize the necessity of this language to be talked in and to in actual practice. This will also give them the regular habit to practice and thereby the curiosity to learn it sincerely well. Lot of efforts has been put in this direction.

Finally, we must all resolve to use our mother tongue for private, cultural and social communication. Let us not feel shy when speaking Kashmiri at all. Let us put in a conscious effort to familiarize all in the family with the language and setting aside particular time when everyone talks in Kashmiri alone. The best way will be to choose meal times when everybody sits in a group to ensure that whatsoever talk and discussion that takes place at such a time are absolutely in Kashmiri only. This helps youngsters in the family to develop an aspiration and special taste for the language.

A number of dedicated artistes and individuals have made a tremendous contribution to the development and popularisation of Kashmiri folk music, Leelas and Bajans. Thanks to the strenuous and painstaking efforts of many of these enterprising people within the community, Kashmiri music today is available on cassettes as well as CDs and can be listened and heard on the internet. There is a need to popularize Kashmiri music and lyrics to a wider global audience so that universal interest and appeal in Kashmiri music and culture grows among the young and old of all communities. Brisk marketing and selling activities must take place in this direction throughout the world.

Since the recent past the internet has and is fast becoming a preferred means of communication. It isn't at all difficult to use the roman script for sending email or even chatting in Kashmiri when chatting with known acquaintances or even strangers who know Kashmiri. The results can be really remarkable using little bit of twists and turns in spoken Kashmiri as Bengali in Bangla, Gujrati's in Gujrat and Punjabis in Punjab and so on making the language all the more sweet to talk to and listen to.

In the internet age if youngsters use Kashmiri to communicate, the force of cohesion will grow, more and more, closer and tight, beyond any shadow of doubt. The KOA a purely cultural organization of the Kashmiri Pandits settled in the USA has been actively involved in the internet and worldwide web, for

creating a repository and disseminating information related to our culture, history, religion and tourism. Over and above this web site carries Kashmiri music in real audio format, Bhajans, pujas for several KP festivals and further carries a lot more relevant to our communities' interest. Actual conversations in Kashmiri have been recorded in "Real Audio" format, just as Kashmiri music on the KOA web site. The URL address of these sites are: www.Ko2US2.org./spoken Kashmiri or www.Koshur.org or www.kachru.com.

In addition KOA offers a KPnet, private email based information exchange for Kashmiri Pandits, as an open forum to share news and views on social, religious, cultural, political issues with other KP subscribers. This is a free email service to any KP worldwide but one has to register with the KOA's KPnet Administrator for this service.

In this global era we the Kashmiri Pandits across the world need to be connected with one another. Physically we may not be in the valley of Kashmir itself but still then we can connect with one another to create just called the "Virtual Valley" which duly represents our collective ideas, desires, and common aspirations. The networking becomes all the more easier and effective through the internet system. Apart from linking and connecting ourselves closely well to individuals and organizations committed to preserving our rich Kashmiri heritage we shall ensure that our community thrives and excels right into the future.

Messrs Wakhlu and family and Mr. Sunil Fotedar and others have struck and served an emphatic note regarding the positive outcome of their further development work pertaining to internet and related information technology. Hats off to them! We the Kashmiris must remain ever indebted to them for their creative contributions of putting full-fledged information on Kashmiri Pandit culture and heritage and downloading Kashmiri literature and language Manual having worked for consecutive five years, non-stop, devoting the best possible time and maximum efforts towards a noble cause.

Worried over an alarming trend of many a good number of Panjabi, Sindhi and Marathi youths moving away from their culture, prominent personalities from the communities will encourage them to converse among themselves in their mother tongue. In an initiative to promote their language they have taken on the mantle of safeguarding their culture. Their respective forums have organized special events and are taking the help of celebrities and important personalities and VIPs to inspire a sense of pride in traditions and culture. Kulwant Singh, General Secretary, Shree Guru Singh Saheb, initiated conducting classes in Gurmukhi. Well, if such different communities are out to take such solid steps and concrete decisions why not we who have suffered all the more worst at the hands of some misguided youths forming militant ferocious groups out to create havoc and let loose terror by massacring and killing youths, innocent people around at random operating indiscriminately all over and all through. Having been thrown out of our homes and hearths, our unique homeland, the land of our ancestors and forefathers, we very much need to rejuvenate and resurge ourselves owing to the compelling and unforeseen circumstances our identity got much eroded. It is after decades minds churning that we have come to appreciate the value of our rich heritage and culture. Every apprehension of annihilation of our identity if our mother tongue which binds us to centuries old history and culture is not preserved. Our children and grand children are likely to surrender their pride and ethnic distinction under the present scenario of fast changing times. Every Kashmiri Pandit is a real Kashmiri in the truest sense of the term for having preserved best of the race for not having yielded to conquerors pressure of conversions over the centuries. Hence our genius in being Kashmiri Pandit is first, the rest all comes last. It becomes therefore binding on everybody to converse in mother tongue with each other in their homes and households just to give due importance and seriousness to the language promotion amongst our youth-children and grand children. Then alone you can motivate them to speak in their mother tongue that

will generate necessary interest. The sense of urgency in reviving ourselves is to be kept constantly fuelling. We are much thankful to KOA USA who were doing tremendous job and inspiring love and interest among our Baradari members and community non-stop all over the globe for our language, culture and heritage: very much heartening indeed. Almost all communities who are well advanced in every respect are giving due importance to their own culture and language and heritage. All Bengalis whether within the country or abroad speak or converse with each other in their mother tongue. Similarly, Madrasis (South Indians) Panjabis, Gugratis, Biharis in their own respective mother tongue. They most probably communicate too in their own mother language mostly which brings them more intimacy and much closeness with one another. Thus the community thrives and so on, which speaks of their pride of their respective places they belong to.

Many learned and prominent Kashmiris across the country and even overseas started conducting classes in Kashmiri. Our Dr. B K Moza Saheb and Shrimati Niva Koul undertook the task of teaching Kashmiri to non-Kashmiri speaking Kashmiris with a keen and good initiative for quite sometime which proved every success. In no time many a number of students picked up the language and started speaking with much ease. Dr. Moza Saheb has a good grasping power as a result could explain the nuances of the language to the language learners in a much better way.

Dr. Moza Saheb a person of sharp intellect, high IQ, witty, strong will power, diligent, studious infact all in one is a strong personality full of humour and life. He is out to do anything for his community and their interests all through. In spite of all his personal problems and unforeseen circumstances he has kept himself always available at the services of the Kashmiri Sabha and Brethren. A gentleman of par-excellence indeed. He came forward after putting in lot of labour and efforts and a good amount of hard work in picking up the language himself thoroughly well to undertake steadfastly the pioneering work of teaching like trained teachers the Kashmiri language to non-Kashmiri speaking Kashmiris. What a strong urge, firm determination and true dedication in the real sense of the term. We are fortunate enough in having him, a staunch, solid, smart and highly veteran, as a special founding member of the Sabha. His tremendous contribution by way of literary excellence through Vitasta annuals, printed matter and materials, his active participation in almost all the deliberations of the Kashmiris Sabhas interested avenues and assemblies and reputed organizations advocating the cause of Kashmiri brethren and in various cultural, social and religious activities. His eloquence penetrating and research oriented mind and capacity to work, no denial and no doubt bring him to main limelight. Above all he is all polished and polite, full of courtesy and etiquette, love and affection, sincere and social, helpful to everyone and everybody. May God bless him all round and keep him hale and hearty! Amen!

Kashmiri is Kashmiri only till he speaks Kashmiri and keeps on realising himself with full force. If owing to compelling circumstances, he was forced to abandon it but now he must take every attempt to learn it seriously well to keep their genius fully alive. It becomes a must to converse among themselves in Kashmiri, that shall be the only mark of distinction with them otherwise the rest remaining the same.

As per changed scenario and different situations having come into play our community has come into interaction with wider Indian society whether willingly or unwillingly, it is not advisable to segregate our youth from them, but instead devote some time to bring in necessary awareness of our vast culture and rich heritage and history, to the younger generation, just to create in them the sense of belonging to a specific culture and thus arouse thereby the necessary feelings required. Constantly preaching on this issue from time to time will also do.

Owing to constant aggression and continued invasion by foreign rulers and vested interests and our adversaries our community remained totally suppressed for about eight hundred years. We are the

people given mainly to intellectual exercise so we could not take to any lucrative profession owing to lack of necessary prerequisites merely, having remained trampled. So it will take some time to come to other avenues in due course.

Having come out of the vicious circle of retarding factors such as discrimination, suppression and degradation etc we feel free to fly into the skies higher and higher. This is a rare and unique opportunity for our future generations. Our present generation in order to recover from and survive the onslaught faced suddenly we had to carry on as usual. The next generation will march forward both intellectually and professionally. Most of our genius and high caliber youths will switch over to high profile jobs of excellence and innovation etc. Some of our top intellectual segments could move to the corridors of power by joining Indian Administrative service and so on. Some bestowed with the nature of leadership quality and skill and motivation capacity should be able to take to active politics. Most of them could find due space in the financial organizations, mass media managements of the country and many would be entrepreneurs will become components of its commercial and economic standing and standard. Thus by next decade and a half our community will have overcome the horrible experience of discrimination and suppression.

Once the inherent potential of dynamism is fully utilized and its maximum advantage is availed of in toto, I mean free of anymore restraint whatsoever; the community will look beyond the shores and climes. We need to create an urge and a burning desire in our youth to transcend all barriers or the constraints. No land is foreign to us, no territory is forbidden to us, particularly the developed world. On the other hand we may have hurdles in maintaining our identity on the Indian soil, but on a foreign soil all necessary conditions are available to create our own perpetual true identity. This is all because we have all the requisite qualifications to make us the true citizens of the world! We are definitely the globalised community in an era of globalization.

One more important thing to take into notice is the hard fact that we cannot move forward if we keep our women folk deprived of their share in new thinking. They are the foremost who need to be educated into a new process of thought and action. We need to engage them mentally in search for new vision and movement. They have to come out of their usual notion and the customary mindset and men folk need to play their honest part in that exercise.

Secondly women folk have to break the shackles that make them the slaves of the kitchen. It means they have to introduce and then implement the changed agenda of food habits of the community members. The kitchen should invariably close at 8 pm in the evening to permit time for our women folk to walk, read discuss medicine and introspect. More time has to be allotted to outdoor activity, physical exercise, community life and social engagements.

Dear brothers and sisters we are not the only group to have suffered the loss of home and homeland. Human history is stuffed with this saga. Ours is not an exceptional case. Remember displacement is also a great boon, a virtue if we are really able to make out of it. It gives a new life, it brings new blood into veins, it excites and refreshes. Remember refugees and migrants have created great civilizations in history. Only weak and battered people cry for the lost land and climes. To us where we set our foot is our homeland whether it is within the shores of the seas or beyond.

"Life, we learn too late, is in the living, in the tissue of every day and hour". The child's thought changes from his initial start to final stage realizing the ultimate truth. John Ruskin had on his desk a simple piece of stone on which was carved one word: Today. And while I haven't a piece of stone on my desk I do have a poem pasted on my mirror where I can see it when I shave every morning – a poem that Sir William Osler always kept on his desk – written by the Indian dramatist Kalidasa:

Salutation to the Dawn

Look to this day!
For it is life, the very life of life.
In its brief course
Lie all the verities and realities of your existence
The bliss of growth
The glory of action
The Splendor of beauty,
For yesterday is but a dream
And tomorrow is only a vision,
But today well lived makes every yesterday
A dream of happiness
And every tomorrow a vision of hope
Look well therefore to this day!
Such is the salutation to the dawn.

So if you want to keep worry out of your life, do what Sir William Osler did and shut the iron doors on the past and future. Live in day tight compartments.

Moment by moment.

There is only one world, the world pressing against you at this minute. There is only one minute in which you are alive, this minute here and now. The only way to live is by accepting each minute as an unrepeatabe miracle. Which is exactly what it is – a miracle and unrepeatabe ——— Storm Frmeson.

In our Hindu tradition Time is given a very great importance in each and every field and frontier. So everything has and is to move strictly well as per the Timing laid down. As it is a well established fact, much proved beyond any shadow of doubt that this entire cosmos is constantly in motion. It represents Kinetic Universe we term as Kal-chakra as per our Holy Scriptures and Vedanta. So we must pay due importance to this Time – Factor which is, of course, very very precious in one's life. So we must remain determined to value time at any cost. Time and tide waits for none. So do not put off till tomorrow what you can do today.

Now coming back to our own native land Kashmir, the place of joy, beauty and repose as Shri Rabindra Nath Tagore (fondly called Gurudev) describes it famous for its rare natural beauty as well as for its remarkable cultural heritage, harmonious mix of Hindus, Buddhists, and Islamic philosophies, composite culture based on age old compassion, tolerance and universalism.

It will not be out of place to quote Lawrence here who says, "Kashmir is known as Heaven on Earth. Its distinct seasons and changing environment result in its rare natural products such as saffron, almonds, and world famous Pashmina wool amongst a vast number of things. The changing moods of nature instill feeling of renunciation of not the world but of worldliness, not of action but desires, so aptly observed by the saintly poets of Kashmir. Throughout history, Kashmir, Jammu, Gilgit and Ladakh have had harmonious intercourse across its borders with Russia and Turkistan in the North and China and Tibet in the East.

Keeping with the Kashmiri culture and our own customs this year we celebrated two important festivals till date with pomp and show at the Kashmir Sabha, Kolkata Bhavan, Salt Lake, and Kashmiri New Year day which was due on Sunday the 16th of March 2010 was celebrated on 14th of March 2010, two days in advance in a very befitting manner. Apart from large gathering and different pleasant programmes

witnessed through the Video tapes and CDs arranged by the good offices of Shree Krishen Langoo and Shree Sunil Tikku, of Jammu, projected on 10' x 8' wide screen in full size dimension, giving it a life size effect, viewing all the while. Badamvari-Phoolai-Picnic Parties, outing-groups, variety of scenes, lots of beautiful gardens of the valley and sightseeing scenes, murmuring brooks, dancing rivulets, falling cascades, beautiful mountains, lofty cliffs, lakes and springs, mouth watering juicy fruits, and what not thus giving an idea of full-fledged idea of Nature in nakedness as our Kashmir originally is all along. Thus derived maximum possible enjoyment all along and although, fair like atmosphere and arrangement of serving stalls with different tasty preparations including NADIR MUNJE and GARAM GARAM LUCHIES and so on, all this well on display as if live in fancy. All arrangements were made by cultural committee convenor Shri. B M Misri in close co-operation with President Sri Sanjay Koul and secretary Sri Sunil Koul & others. Very very sumptuous lunch was served inbetween. Everybody enjoyed it to heart's content.

On 11th of April, 2010, Sunday, Swami Laxmanji's Maharaji's, the great exponent and adherent of Kashmiri Shaviasm, [103rd Janam Divas], Jayanti ceremony celebrated on a large scale. Yagna with purne-Aahooti was duly performed. The function was attended in large numbers and met every success. It was sponsored, as usual by Mrs. and Mr. B M Misri. Thaher mixed with Red Alloo and Paneer as well. Vegetarian lunch was served in full measure to every ones taste, concluded with Kheer in the form of Prasadam.

I have no words to express my gratitude to all the authors who have contributed to this publication. I am grateful to Kashmir Sabha, Kolkata for necessary encouragement and support. I am thankful to all the advertisers who continue to shower their generous patronage year after year, to our printer Shreemati Mitra Labonya Kar who shares my sense of working to schedule. 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 of Kashmir Sabha, Kolkata does not hold any responsibility for the same.

I do hope this annual number will fetch positive response from all concerned, more so from youngsters in particular.

"OM SHANTI".

With warm regards and best wishes,

Bina Misri



Photographs on Navreh and Zang-Trai
function at Kashmir Sabha Bhavan, Kolkata



Shrimati Anju Koul (middle) Shrimati jyoti Saproo (left)
Shrimati Sumita Koul (right) singing course song on
Navreh & Zang-Trai fuction at Kashmir Sabha Bhavan, Kolkata



Esha Koul
(Daughter of our president, Sri Sanjay Koul) busy in her
performance on Navreh function.



Audience enjoying the Navreh Zang - Trai programme



Our daughters (Kashmiri) busy in their action on
stage on Navreh function at Bhavan



Sri Ratan Moza, ex-president of
Kashmir Sabha, Kolkata

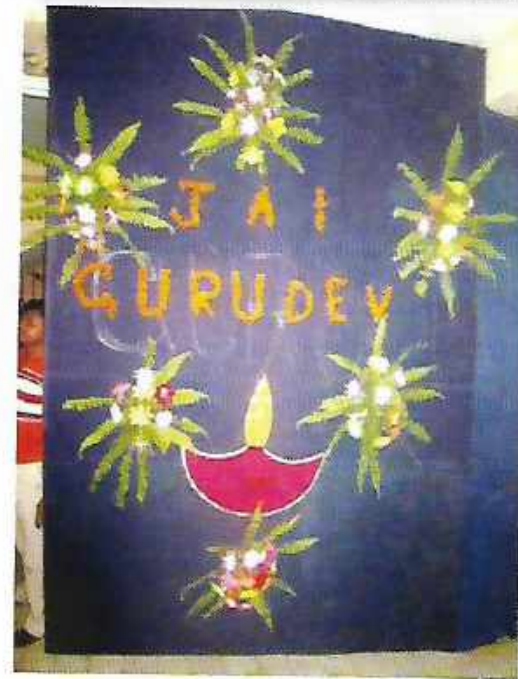


Sri B.M. Misri, ex-president of Kashmir Sabha, Kolkata going
through welcome address at Sabha's Bhavan

**Ishwarswaroop
Swami Lakshmanjoo's
103 - Janam Divas Jayanti
Celebration at
Kashmir Sabha Bhavan,
Salt Lake, Kolkata**



Devotees during Puja at Bhavan

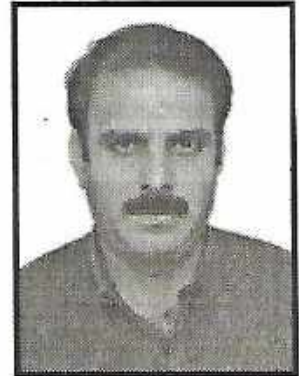


PURNAHUTI



Shri B.M. Misri Presiding over Puja.

From The President's Desk



Vitasta, Kashmir Sabha Kolkata's annual number, widely acclaimed over the years for its rich content is finally coming out after a gap of three years. Kolkata biradari is a closely knitted Kashmiri Hindu Diaspora. Kashmir Sabha formed way back in 1957 has a modest membership of active families numbering less than hundred.

Our Sabha stands firm on the values built by our elders who worked with great passion to give us a home in Kolkata. This home has played a pivotal role in keeping our culture alive among our younger generations. This Sabha has had great luminaries and with their vision, dedication we have a sprawling Bhavan in Salt Lake. This Bhavan is not just a home to us but a temple where our cultural heritage keeps growing.



'Culture is the sum of all the forms of art, of love, and of thought, which, in the course of centuries, have enabled man to be less enslaved'. Our cultural heritage is a legacy not only of buildings, monuments or artifacts but also intangible attributes like social values and traditions, aesthetic and spiritual beliefs and artistic expression and language. It is inherited from the past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of the future generations. Sabha has been trying hard to find how younger generation call actively indulge in carrying forward our rich cultural heritage.

Migration coupled with the fast paced life and imitating glittering life styles has forced us and in particular youngsters in leaving behind our rich and famous culture. Our younger generation is becoming more global and not getting to know the basic need of any culture - "language".

"Language is the blood of the soul into which thoughts run and out of which they grow" - Oliver Wendell Holmes".

Where every community feels proud to talk in their mother tongue, Kashmiri youngsters have to be more conversant in Hindi or English instead of Kashmiri. This has been plaguing our culture for decades and with invasion of militancy Kashmiri Language in particular has got badly affected. Script is a very potent way of keeping language growing but unfortunately usage of Sharda Lipi is almost non existent. The language which is the product of Sanskrit and Persian, one of the most ancient languages, is simply losing its existence and it is an evident fact that to the forth coming generations it will sound like Greek!

Rig Vedas says that "One should respect his motherland, his culture and his mother tongue because they are enablers of happiness."

How we inculcate Kashmiri language in our Children? How we make them enthusiastic about Kashmiri culture? We as a community need to find answers to them. We cannot change it through magic, what is needed is effort. No doubt life has become hectic but we still have time to imbibe these little drops of our culture in young minds so that it becomes a full vessel when they grow up and sprinkle on coming

generations too. It is not only needed but it is our duty too "As the soil, however rich it may be cannot be productive without cultivation, so the mind without culture can never produce good fruit." Guarding the values and culture and at the same time planting them is what should be started as earliest as possible. There is so much in our culture which we need to preserve gladly and with heart. Every step leads to another and it goes on.

Sabha activity calendar is mostly devoted to perform cultural programmes and do social service. We ensure celebration of all major festivals. Our cultural committee headed by very passionate Mr. B.M Misri has been doing a commendable job year after year. His artistic abilities keep us close to Kashmir. We get to see performances from some eminent artists of Kashmir. This year we had pleasure of listening to Mrs. Neerja Pandit. Sincere thanks to her for coming all the way from Mumbai for the Biradari. Our own talents keep giving enthralling stage performances.

This year we had privilege of honoring Prof B.N.Kaul for receiving Viveknanda award. Many thanks to him and Swami Arvind Maharaj ji for visiting our Sabha.

This volume of Vitasta has a theme "Firm determination & true dedication for preserving Kashmiri Pandit Cultural identity, its rich heritage & Language". We have new editor Mrs. Bina Misri who has done a brilliant work in this volume. She had a challenging task as she had to continue great work of our legendary Dr. B.K. Moza. Vitasta in its present avatar is a result of passion, zeal & high intellect of Dr. B.K.Moza. I on behalf of Sabha thank him for putting Vitasta on global map. I would also like to thank Mr. Sunil Fotedar for uploading Vitasta on net.

I take this opportunity to thank all past & present members for their contribution in building this Sabha: My Salute to people who could dream & actually build our own home in Kolkata. My sincere gratitude to them, for their selfless service towards their extended family.

We have a youthful and a dedicated team to run this Sabha which is ably guided by elders. I would like to thank them all for their dedication and good work. I want to thank my team Rakesh Kaul (Vice President) for his ever helping attitude, Mr. Sunil Kaul (Secretary)- who has played a major role in raising funds for this volume. Thanks to Mr. Ratan Moza, L.N. Kaul, Susheel Raina, and Rajesh Tikoo for their selfless support. My best regards & thanks to Mr. M.K. Ogra, Dr.B.K.Moza, Mr.P.L.Sapru, Mr. B.M.Misri and other elders for guiding us in running this Sabha.

Best wishes & Warm Regards

Sanjay Kaul

President



SECTION-I

**ARTICLES PERTAINING
TO RELEVANT TO THE THEME :**

**"Firm Determination & True Dedication for
Preserving Kashmiri Culture,
its Rich Heritage & Language"**



Selected Vaakh of Lal Ded

*" Aami pana sodras naavi chhas lamaan,
Kati bozi myon dai meti diya taar,
Aamaen taakaen pony zan Shamaan,
Zuv chhum bramaan ghare gatsahaa"*

Meaning :-

With a rope of loose-spun thread
I am towing my boat upon the sea.
Would that God heard my prayer
and brought me safely across!
Like water in cups of unbaked clay
I run to waste
Would God I were to reach my house.

KASHMIR

Ashok Sawhny (New-Delhi)

O Kashmir, home of mine
Valley of Gods land divine,
What is tearing you apart
What rents thy sacred heart.

The lovely fabric that you wore
The jamas and shawls galore,
Woven by those of the land
There was then no foreign hand.

People lived in total peace
Holiday makers came from Greece,
Gulmarg was the Paradise,
Heaven looking down through its eyes.

Shikaras were a fatal attraction
That was my only reaction,
I never wanted to leave the Lake
Not for heaven, nor for its sake.

Snow clad mountains and their peaks
Kashmiri is what the local speaks,
No hindus, muslims or any others,
No pandit, mullahs only brothers.

How can things take such ugly shape
Mindless looting, plunder and rape,
Of the Firdaus of the East
What has turned Man to beast.

Is this what religion is meant for
Hatred, intolerance and so much more,
The fair name of the fairest land
Tainted now by whose hand.

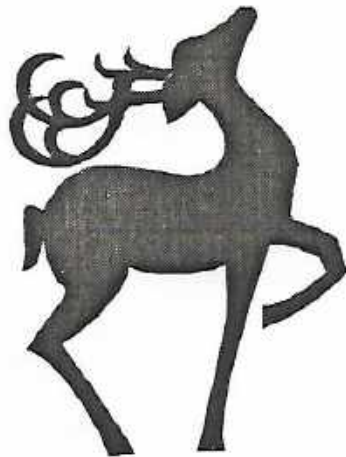
The villains were those who split the nation
And walked away leaving conflagration,
The global empire reduced to insignificant state,
Having practiced the politics of creating hate.

Let us rise above those machinations
Of powers limited by their own limitations,
Let not the leaders of today
Thru artful design lose, their way.

If history does itself repeat
Then let it show pre-'47,
Not beyond human feat
Let us get back our Heaven Kashmir.

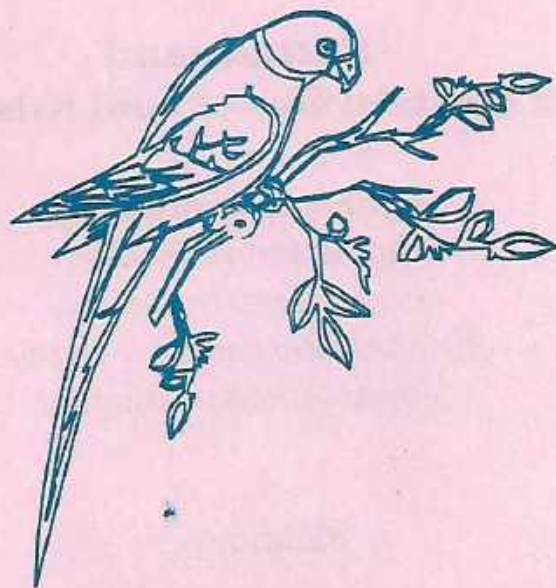
Amen.

With Best Compliments From :-



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With Best Compliments From :-



Mohan Singh Chauhan

(Canteen Contractor)
G-101, Sector-22
Noida (U. P.)



Parmanand
a great devotee of Lord Krishna

Aaras manz atsavaey
Vigini zan natsavaey
Laagos posh poozey
Krishna joo nendari vuzey
Voparas kas patsavaey

Meaning :-

We shall enter the ring and dance with Lord Krishna
like nymphs with gusto.

We will worship Him by offering various kinds of
flowers so that He may wake up from sleep.

We have got faith only in Krishna not in any stanger.

CULTURAL IDENTITY OF KASHMIRI PANDITS – RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT

Kashmiri Pandit Identity – A Historical Perspective

Within the Hindu fraternity, Kashmiri Pandits (KPs) occupy a distinct and unique position because of a tumultuous history and consequent evolution, including several aberrations and distortions. At one point of time Kashmir was a great seat of learning and Kashmiri Hindus produced intellectuals of all hues like philosophers, writers, poets, therapists and historians. It would be out of place to list the achievements and contributions that Kashmiri Brahmins made during some glorious periods of Hindu rule and even during some phases of Muslim rule. On the spiritual side it witnessed the onslaught of Buddhist wave together with rest of south and south-east Asia, and eventually countered it through philosophic movement of a distinct kind of Shaivism. However, all this was achieved through debates and discussions as has been the normal practice in all oriental religions.



Prof. S. K. Shah
(Jammu)

There is a common mistaken notion that among Kashmiri Hindus there was no caste system and all Hindus are Brahmins. That may be the situation as of now but historically Kashmir shared with rest of India the same kind of caste system with its grotesque customs and practices. This was the reason that most of the non-Brahmins initially opted for Buddhism during its heyday and Kashmir at one point of time, before the start of Christian era, was an important centre of Buddhist society. However, as in rest of India, Brahmin revivalism brought an end to Buddhist sway over the populace in general.

Brahmins dominated the religious scenario including the ruling hierarchy in the valley for several centuries. While on the positive side they made considerable contribution to the intellectual, philosophical and spiritual aspects of the society, on the negative side they strictly enforced hereditary caste discrimination and a narrow-minded exclusivism. This was one of the main reasons that made it easy for Islam to enter the valley in the first instance and take over the administration and eventually to convert the populace to that faith. Added to that an aggressive proselytization by Muslim missionaries with strong support of ruling community and several periods of forced conversion, almost the entire lot of non-Brahmins embraced the Islamic faith. Even some of the Brahmins were also forcibly converted, after their temples were desecrated and mosques built in their place. However, such was the strong hold of the caste system that even after conversion the Muslims retained the caste distinctions almost up to the present day and usually intermarriages and social contacts across the caste lines were a taboo. Thus the so called "Khandani" upper caste converts from Brahmins (Kauls, Rainas Bhats, Choudhrys, Sheikhs) and Rajputs (Dars, Mirs, Rathurs, Maliks, Loans) would look down upon lower castes like Vaishis (Wanis) and Shudras comprising a host of menial surnames.

What was left of Brahmins after these conversions and waves of migration outside the valley, constituted a hard core community of Pandits who managed to resist all the allurements, deprivation, pressures, intimidation, harassment and even death threats. Understandably they developed certain traits, both positive and negative, because of a persistent fear and threat to dignity, property, honour and life. It is these traits that have become a hallmark of their identity as distinct from that of Kashmiri Muslims. Probably the only similarity was a common language and idiom. Language is undoubtedly a strong binding force and constitutes the only factor that could be classed as the so called "Kashmiriat" that has been branded as a political slogan in recent years to be used and misused as the occasion demands. But even in language, thanks to the imposition of an unnatural and inappropriate Nastaliq script, a schism has developed between the two communities. Other than the language, there is hardly anything common

between the two communities, except for nostalgia of dependence on each other and to some extent tolerating each other. While personal equations and close man to man contacts have always been there, but none of them were on the basis of any cultural identity.

Kashmiri Pandits had a relatively peaceful and secure time during the brief Sikh rule and about a century of Dogra rule. This period generated a sense of euphoria in them that made them complacent, though there were occasions when they should have been vary and watchful. Communal riots of 1931 that is nowadays projected as a freedom struggle should have been one such occasion. The complacency was gradually broken when successive governments after independence started the process of discrimination and the community was forced to seek avenues outside the state. The process of migration that started as a trickle gradually became rapid and culminated in a mass exodus as a result of planned intimidation at gun point.

Evolution of customs and rituals

A common belief among most KPs is that rituals and customs that were prevalent in the valley before mass exodus constitute the KP culture and need to be preserved in totality to sustain a cultural identity. This belief is primarily because of nostalgia following the trauma of displacement and an attempt to snatch at straws to replicate a situation as existed before the exodus. However, rituals and customs do not constitute cultural identity since they keep on changing and evolving from time to time. Culture is like a flowing river that receives input from different directions through various tributaries including dirty drains. As long as it keeps on flowing and receiving these inputs, it remains vibrant and fresh. When it becomes static, it stagnates into a marsh. Kashmiri Pandit culture has never stagnated in spite of various pressures, trials and tribulations. It has always adjusted and accommodated according to the circumstances and situations. That has been the secret of its survival.

Those who believe that rituals must be retained in their entirety in order to sustain cultural identity would do well to examine them in a historical perspective. There can be no better example than the rituals associated with one of the main festivals of KP identity, the Shivratri. These rituals and customs have undergone a total transformation during last few centuries. At one point of time the celebrations, puja and rituals for this festival extended for forty days commencing from Shiv Chaturdashi (fourteenth day of the dark fortnight of Magh) to Phagum Ashtami (Tila Ashtami). In the course of time it got reduced to twenty days and eventually to a few days. During the Afghan rule, a stupid governor (there was a series of them) was told that Pandits invoked their secret powers through puja during Shivratri and fasting and refraining from non-vegetarian food. He ordered that they should be forced to gambol during this period and to partake of non-vegetarian meals. Accordingly the Pandits had to gambol with shells (hara), that was the prevalent currency, and this became a part of the ritual that continues up to the present day in the valley. The Muslims were asked to spy on their Pandit neighbours to ensure that they partook of non-vegetarian food on the day following Shivratri and they made a point to visit them and thus the name Salaam was given to that day. The name Shivratri itself continues to be called Herath (derived from Persian word Hairat, meaning surprise), following the infamous order of Jabbar Khan (Jabbar Jendha) to celebrate the festival in summer when a snow storm hit the valley. When Sikhs invaded the valley on the invitation of KPs and drove out the Afghans, the Pandits included Waghuru (Wahi Guru) puja one day prior to Shivratri as a mark of thanksgiving. Following Dogra rule they included Ram Gud as one of deities in the puja since Ram was the Kul Devta of Dogra rulers. The rituals associated with this festival have changed continuously depending on the exigencies of the situation and the political climate. But Shivratri constitutes a basic festival of our cultural identity. Most people may be aware that different families adopted varying riti (customs) for every festival meaning thereby that these riti hardly constitute a part of cultural identity.

The elderly generation who suffered the pangs of displacement is nostalgic about most of the rituals that were prevalent before the exodus. That accounts for their anxiety to hold on to them. The younger generation, especially those born just before or after exodus, have no such nostalgia and are generally confused about the fascination that the elders have for something that appears silly to them. No doubt, as time passes, most of these redundant rituals will die their natural death, as has happened to several such customs in the past. If somebody wants to have a peep into what our customs were a few centuries ago, he would do well to observe them in Kashmiri Pandit families who migrated into various other parts of India centuries before and have retained many of those traditions as they existed at that point of time.

What constitutes Kashmiri Pandit cultural identity

If rituals are not essential features of cultural identity, then it is necessary to identify what constitutes a KP identity. For that it is important to understand what has sustained them through centuries of turmoil, torture, discrimination and intimidation. That alone should constitute the foundation of a true identity. Culture is a combination of several factors that have accumulated historically and become part of identity. It may not be possible to list all these here but the more essential features are briefly mentioned below:

Hindu Ethos: KPs have a distinct identity primarily because they are a repository of Hindu ethos. Hinduism is a philosophical doctrine and not a religion in the strict sense of that word. A religion is dogmatic and has well defined and enforceable dos and don'ts. Hinduism allows free scope for speculation and an open invitation to discover divinity in whichever manner a person chooses. In this regard it is closer to scientific ethos that allows an open mind to discover laws of nature. The two have also a symbiotic relationship. While one aims at the ultimate in the spiritual domain the focus of the other is the material plane. One sustains the other and that is the reason there is no contradiction and confrontation between science and religion in the Hindu context unlike religions of Middle Eastern origin. KPs have a remarkable capacity for rationalization of any situation and absorbing all contradictory opinions. This stems from their strong roots in Hindu ethos. That also dissuades them from becoming dogmatic or fundamentalist. They have resisted conversion primarily because they have an in born tendency to reject a dogmatic belief. Talking about the Hindu ethos Beatrice Lamb, the British author, has made the following telling comment: "Indeed, one characteristic that all Hindus claim for Hinduism is an all-embracing tolerance, its ability to encompass every path, finding a niche for each in the vast scheme of things. From the point of view of certain minority religions, this is precisely the difficulty. Any religion that does not want to be encompassed, embraced and indeed absorbed and perhaps ultimately transformed by Hinduism finds Hindu tolerance somewhat too demanding since it is conditioned upon a basic acceptance of a Hindu view of life and Hinduism's peculiar genius for absorption." While it may not be possible to agree with him in all details, but basically he has made the point that is characteristic of Hinduism in general and KPs in particular.

Shiva-Shakti cult: While Kashmir was the fountainhead of a distinct philosophy of Shaivism, it is also a fact that majority of KPs is unaware of its tenets and significance. However, it has given birth to a special brand of deity worship that is distinct from most Hindus. Shivratri or Watak Puja is distinct for KPs and is observed in a specific manner quite unlike other Shaivite Hindus. Its significance has various interpretations but they are primarily derived from special Shiva-Shakti cult that is peculiar to KPs.

Shakti worship has also generated identification of Ishat Devis (Kul Devis) whereby Goddess Durga has been personified in various forms, only partly corresponding to the Nav Durga concept. There are primarily three Ishat Devis namely the eighteen armed Sharika, personifying protection, the four armed Raghinia personifying bounties and eight armed Jwala depicting energy. All KPs have either one of them as their Kul Devi that determines their mode of worship and eating habits. The seats of the three are Chakreshwar (Hari Parbat), Tullamula (Kshir Bhawani) and Khrew (Jwaleshwari) respectively. Apart

from these, there are a large number of other shrines spread over the length and breadth of the valley representing these Devis. These three seats have a special significance in the spiritual life of every Kashmiri Pandit. That is why immediately after exodus KPs replicated these seats in Jammu, Delhi and elsewhere as they are the primary symbols of their cultural identity.

Language: Language is always a strong binding force for any community and constitutes an important element of cultural identity. Kashmiri language, though rich in idiom, has suffered a checkered history, mainly because of the political turmoil and suppression of the rulers. Primarily derived from Sanskrit and Prakrit and retaining its grammatical nuances, it is flooded with words derived from other sources, notably Persian. In this respect it has suffered the same fate as that of Saxon English following Norman invasion. While the verbs are mostly derived from Sanskrit, since the working class comprised local residents, most nouns and adjectives are derived from Persian that was the language of the rulers. However, there is one major difference between what happened to English language through Norman influence and Kashmiri language after Persian domination. Since the script of English and French was the same, the language got enriched with words of French derivation without altering the scriptural nuances. In case of Kashmiri its original script namely Sharda vanished since the rulers refrained from using it and the Persian (Nastaliq) script did not suit the large number of vowel sounds and even some consonants that are characteristic of Kashmiri. In the process Kashmiri language lost its script and remained only a spoken language. The Sharda script got relegated to writing of horoscopes and almanacs by practicing Brahmins (who were referred to as Bhashya Bhats meaning language knowing Pandits as against others who resorted to the study of Persian and were referred to as karkuns), in a traditional style not in Kashmiri but in classical Sanskrit. Because of this Kashmiri language hardly acquired any written literature. Whatever literature in Kashmiri existed up to the beginning of twentieth century comprised no prose but only poetry carried through word of mouth.

While Kashmiri Muslims and Pandits speak the same language, there is a difference in a large number of nouns and pronunciation of some alphabets of Sanskrit origin. Muslims use nouns of Persian origin while Pandits use those of Sanskrit origin. Words like 'water' would be aab for a Muslim and poni or woni (derived from Sanskrit warini) for a Pandit. Likewise 'sun' would be aftar and sirya and 'dream' would be khwab and swapun respectively. Many Sanskrit derived sounds cannot be properly pronounced by Muslims. The half sounds following a consonant that is common in Sanskrit constitute some of them. For example the half 'r' sound as in bror (cat) or praran (waiting) would be pronounced as bior and piaran respectively. Likewise there is a remarkable variation in the speech that can be easily detected.

The imposition of Nastaliq script after 1947 by the government alienated Pandits from Kashmiri language as a result of which they taught their children to speak in Hindi. A large number of Pandit children had stopped considering Kashmiri language as their mother tongue long before the mass exodus. This process was accentuated by the increase of anti-national activity by some Muslim outfits in Kashmir and Pandits identified Kashmiri language with them and Hindi as a symbol of Indianness. Since medium of instruction was Hindi, Urdu or English, Kashmiri did not fit anywhere in the educational system. The imposition of Kashmiri as a compulsory language of study in Nastaliq script up to the 5th standard was a stillborn exercise and even Muslims did not take it seriously since they felt that it was of no value.

Poetry and Music: Kashmiri poetry, as has been mentioned earlier, was carried through word of mouth up to the early part of twentieth century. The most popular among Muslims as well as Hindus were the wakhs of Lal Ded and Sahajanand alias Sheikh Nur-ud-Din. Both of them had a common idiom and message of universal brotherhood and spirituality constituting an amalgam of Shaivism and Sufism. While the former was known to be a Hindu, the latter was supposedly born of converted Muslim parents though he never practiced that religion and is being disowned by present day fundamentalist Muslims¹.

The wakhs constitute an important cultural heritage of Kashmiri Pandits, especially those of Lal Ded as they encompass the essence of Kashmir Shaivism in simple common man's language.

Another aspect of poetry that constitutes the cultural identity of Kashmiri Pandits is the leela that is sung in a lilting tune or to the beats of a tumbaknari. A leela is always in praise of a deity depicting various attributes, or narrating events from Bhagwat and tales from Puranas.

Perhaps one distinct cultural symbol of KPs has been the wanwun that is collectively sung on the occasion of various festivals notably yageopavit and marriage. Most KPs are not aware that wanwun in its original form was derived from classical music using three swars only. Muslims converted wanwun into a folk song that they sing on festive occasions. Unfortunately the classical form of wanwun has been gradually dying down and even KPs have lately taken to the popular form sung by Muslims. The former has a socio-religious significance that cannot be ignored.

Cuisine: One of the aspects of Kashmiri Pandit culture that has found a national acceptance and liking constitutes the special cuisine. The variety of dishes cooked using different spices and the techniques employed have become so popular that they constitute special menu of most five-star hotels of the country. KP cuisine is totally different from that of Muslims. While the non-vegetarian dishes are limited to five or six only, there is a wide variety in vegetarian dishes. Of the former rogan josh and latter dum aloo (listed usually in hotel menus as aloo dum) are the most popular all over the country and abroad.

In the valley there was a tradition of drying vegetables during summer months and using the same during winter. This was primarily because no fresh vegetables were available in snow-clad winter. KPs, notably ladies, have developed a special taste for these dried vegetables, especially brinjals and gourds (lauki), cooked in a specific manner. Nowadays due to better means of communication fresh vegetables are available throughout winter months and Muslims in the valley (especially in the cities) have generally discontinued this practice of drying vegetables. What is however interesting is that the practice of drying continues for commercial reasons as there is a demand for these dried products from KPs living outside the valley following exodus.

A discussion on cuisine would be incomplete without mention of an essential component of KP table, haak, which is like a tanpura in a musical concert. It has to be always there whether one cooks vegetarian or non-vegetarian meals. In recent years it has become very popular with non-Kashmiris as well, especially in Jammu.

Apparel: The KP dress and jewelry have suffered several historical vicissitudes as a result of which most of the erstwhile apparel has become redundant. While at one point of time turban tied in a particular fashion was the hallmark headgear of adult male Pandit and taranga of a female, both have all but vanished. They are only used on the occasion of marriage and that too in a highly modified form. The more common phiran as a kind of a gown has survived among men in some cases especially those who still live in the valley or Jammu, where it is cold in winter. The female phiran was almost abandoned following the reform movement led by Kashyapa Bandhu in the thirties of the last century.

KP phiran is different from that of Muslims and it is believed that this differentiation was imposed during the rule of Zain-ul-abudin (Budshah). Though he was known to be a just ruler and he imposed this order in good faith, it reduced the Hindu population to a very small minority. The story goes that during the rule of his predecessor, the infamous Sikandar (Butshikan), there was a mass forcible conversion of Hindus. Many were murdered, and some migrated but those who stayed back had perforce to accept Islam and change their name. However, they were Hindus by heart and retained their Hindu practices and identity. Thus everybody had two names, the Muslim name to be used for public consumption and Hindu name at home. Since the dress was the same, it was not possible to know whether one was a Hindu or a Muslim and the name was the only identity. Budshah ordered that there would be no forcible

conversions and in order to ensure that he insisted that they dress differently. As a result all those who were still Hindus at heart had perforce to adopt Muslim attire and in due course of time became Muslims.

One of the important elements of the attire of KP ladies that has not only survived but also become popular with non-Kashmiris is the golden jewelry called ath, dejihoru and ataharu. These are marital symbols comparable to mangal sutra worn by Hindu ladies elsewhere in the country. They are the essential elements of jewelry of a married lady.

Socio-religious customs: There is a wide range of socio-religious customs and festivals that are observed by KPs in a variety of ways. It is not possible to list them but some of them have a religious connotation while there are several others that have a historical or environmental relationship. Traditional festivals like navreh, zang trai, pann and other similar festivals belong to the former category, while shishur, gaad bata, khetchi amawasya, nav sheen and the like belong to the latter category. Most of these festivals fall during winter months which may be due to climatic conditions in the valley. In addition there are traditional customs related to marriages, child-births, deaths and other social events. Many of them also have a religious rigmarole associated with them. Hardly anybody has an inkling of the purpose behind many of these customs and even the supposed religious linkage is dubious in most cases since there is no known source of the authority. Some of these customs were not observed much before the mass exodus as they had become redundant. After the exodus hardly anybody remembers them. But there are quite a few that were religiously observed and continue to be observed even after exodus.

Are KPs losing their identity?

After the mass exodus the one apprehension that is haunting the mind of every Kashmiri Pandit is about the danger of losing his cultural identity. Surprisingly this apprehension was not there when KPs were continuously being eased out from the mainstream in Kashmir for nearly half a century after 1947 and made almost insignificant and irrelevant. There was a continuous trickle of migration of younger generation for want of employment avenues and the population was already reducing at a rapid rate. It is also a fact that KPs living in Kashmir during that period had almost accepted their second class citizen status as a fait accompli. In most of the families the children had stopped speaking in Kashmiri and they were afraid of donning a tilak on the forehead or displaying any overt cultural identity. The lollipop of Kashmiriat was projected before them to remind them that they were a part of a fraternity that was covertly Islamic. It would be necessary to analyze why they were not anxious about the loss of their cultural identity at that point of time.

Cultural identity is more a state of mind than any tangible reality. Every human being has an emotional need to identify himself first as an individual distinct from others and then as member of a community or religion or country. This stems from the animal instinct of living in a herd from which human beings evolved into a tribal culture. The social evolution is proceeding at a rapid rate towards globalization whereby the barriers of caste, creed, colour, race and geography are rapidly disintegrating. Cultural identities are likely to get eroded in all communities irrespective of geographical location or dislocation. But that would be a futuristic scenario and some people who cannot reconcile with such a rapid change would even label it as an improbable philosophical doctrine. Until the day we head towards that status there is a strong instinctive need to have an identity, since it provides a sense of security. In spite of all threats to KP identity before exodus, they refused to acknowledge it since all symbols of cultural identity were in place. The only time when they became slightly apprehensive was in 1986 when several temples were desecrated. But after the trauma of dislocation they suddenly found that they had lost all the symbols of their identity, including their homes and hearths, and were practically like straws in a wind.

Cultural identity is sustained through symbolism with which people identify themselves. Since all these symbols were in the valley the KPs suffered traumatic crisis of confidence following exodus. Forced migration always generates a sense of rootless existence and consequently an alarming fear of losing identity and getting lost in the mayhem of an alien society. As a reaction KPs started building replicas of

shrines at a frantic pace almost everywhere, where they moved in sizable numbers. Moreover, they started making noises as they had never done before through media. Such has been the cacophony of these press statements coming from various kinds of outfits and individuals that it gives an impression that the community is totally confused and divided. This is far from truth for at no point of time have the KPs been thinking differently, including when they left Kashmir en masse without any planning, though they would not admit it.

While exodus has caused immense physical, emotional, economic and psychic damage to KPs, there has been a silver lining. The fear of losing the identity has galvanized the society as never before. In fact at no point of time was the danger of losing identity more acute than when they were living in Kashmir between 1947 and 1989. They were practically being eased out without a whimper. They were losing their cultural symbols and identity was getting rapidly eroded. The younger generation was gradually migrating. Those who were left behind had lost confidence and were acquiring a psyche of servility. If the mass exodus had not taken place the cultural identity would have been lost within a few decades without anybody in the country or elsewhere becoming wiser about it.

The exodus has brought about two positive fall outs. While on the one hand it has triggered a renaissance in the community, on the other the country and the world at large has come to know about this highly cultured and sophisticated community and the injustice meted out to it. The renaissance has been in various forms and fields and has seeped down to the grassroots. Those Kashmiri Pandit boys and girls who lived in backwaters of far flung villages of the valley donned some of the premier educational institutes in the country and abroad. The number of books, magazines, journals and articles published in last twenty years by KPs is phenomenal. The linkage of Kashmiri Pandit groups and organizations spread throughout the world is such that each one knows exactly of what is happening and where. This is no doubt also a result of boom in communication network that has fortunately happened precisely at the same time and KPs have taken maximum benefit from it. Above all the renaissance has generated a serious introspection and brain-storming among KPs, a faculty that they had totally forgotten when they were in the valley.

There appears to be no danger about the loss of cultural identity of KPs following dislocation. Apprehension of the loss itself generates a consciousness of what we are likely to lose and we tend to protect it. With that consciousness almost half the battle is won. When we are confronted with an alien culture we feel insecure and generate a tendency to look deep into our roots. That is what happened to those who migrated to western countries and attempted to teach their children to stick to certain cultural symbols and practices including learning Kashmiri when back home in Kashmir our children had stopped all these practices and even speaking that language.

How can KPs sustain a cultural identity

While it would be a cynical attitude to presume that KPs are in danger of losing their cultural identity, there is at the same time no scope for complacency. The community needs to put their heads together to see what can be done to ensure that we uphold the positive and distinctive elements of our culture. It has also to be understood that some of the aspects of our traditions have become redundant either due to passage of time and changed circumstances or because of being away from the valley. There are also several negative elements of our culture that we have acquired through exigencies of history which need to be expunged. While a lot needs to be done to protect and expand the scope of our cultural traditions, only some of the more urgent requirements are suggested below:

Building Institutions: KPs were very prompt in building shrines and ashrams of prominent saints of Kashmir immediately after exodus. As mentioned earlier, this was a reaction to the loss of symbols of cultural identity and was probably important at that point of time to generate confidence and sense of

security. However, there has been a laxity in building institutions of learning and research in aspects of culture and civilization of the community. For example Kashmir Shaivism, that constitutes a flagship of Kashmiri Pandit culture, has been relegated to the oblivion of obscurantism. Following Swami Lakshman Joo and a few other scholars, there has been no institutional follow up. While many non-Kashmiri, including foreign scholars, have published treatises on this subject, there has been hardly any concerted contribution from scholars of Kashmir. When we talk of preserving our cultural heritage, anybody can ask a question what we mean by it. Is there an institution or authority that can answer this question? Is there an institution that can interpret our traditions in a historical perspective and give meaning to what our culture is all about? While there is a lot of breast beating about our youngsters not upholding the cultural traditions, do we have any reasoning to tell them why they should follow some practices dogmatically? Nostalgia alone cannot sustain traditions and culture. They need to be interpreted in the idiom of modern times. This can be done only by an institution of higher learning specialized in these areas. For years we have been dreaming about resurrecting Sharda University, but it continues to be a dream only.

Preserving Kashmiri language: Preserving Kashmiri language is probably the greatest challenge before the community because there are basic hurdles in it. A language is primarily a medium of communication. Any language that provides scope for communication with the widest coverage is bound to expand and proliferate and a language that has a limited canvas is bound to languish. In this context it would be pertinent to remember the Indian experience. Following independence there was a concerted effort to promote Hindi as the national language. When it met with difficulties because of large number of regional languages that were not ready to accept Hindi, there was a view that unless English was replaced, Hindi could not become lingua franca. This view was expressed as the infamous remark of Ram Manohar Lohia, "Let Hindi go to hell, abolish English", that raised a lot of furor. Naturally (and fortunately) the nation did not listen to him. At present it is only because of the knowledge of English that India has become a software and IT hub.

Kashmiri language is plodding with basic disabilities in the absence of well established script and lack of literature in prose. Editors of some community journals are doing a commendable job by publishing Kashmiri section in Devnagari script with some diacritical marks that is tending to become a suitable script for Kashmiri language. But that alone is not enough. There is need to use other methods to popularize the language. The written word is not as popular and powerful nowadays as the verbal communication and there is a need to make maximum use of IT to proliferate the language through circulation of CDs and opening websites bearing interesting material in Kashmiri. It is only possible to do so in an organized fashion and our numerous outfits would do well to pool their resources in this direction.

Conclusion

The apprehension about the loss of cultural identity may help us to be cautious and pool our resources to rejuvenate the community. However, there is very little likelihood of KPs losing their identity. It is a myth that dislocation causes loss of identity. Historical evidence goes to prove that all dislocated communities are more conscious of their identity than settled communities. The examples of Jews and Parsees, who retained their identities for centuries in exile, are there to indicate that it is not the geography but the cultural strength and determination of the community that sustains an identity. There is no reason to believe that KPs do not fall in that category.

¹ His shrine was burnt down by fundamentalist Muslims from Pakistan during nineties of the last century.

OUR MOTHER TONGUE & ITS MUSIC -MAHAYAAN MANTRA, IN EXILE

The Vitasta Annual 2009-2010 is a special publication brought out by Kashmir Sabha, Calcutta. Exactly, two decades back we, Kashmiri Pandits, were uprooted from our ancient homeland, Kashmir. As such, this Number stands as a memorial to our two decades' exile and internal displacement. It is also a reminder as to how we can preserve our heritage and cultural identity; therefore a special event. Kashmir problem is continuing to be grim because of the terrorism that has been unleashed in this paradise on earth for last two decades; its aborigines, Kashmiri Pandits, are passing through a difficult phase of agony and anguish. Besides being internally displaced and dispersed they have become susceptible to losing their cultural identity. They have lost their natural habitat, which is an essential requirement for cultural preservation and, therefore, this predisposition. Their return to their homes and hearths is a topic talked on many political forums. But, unless they are granted the 'reverse minority rights, their return does not become feasible practically. Credit goes to this community and its resilience that despite being ignored and dispossessed because of being infinitesimally small in numbers, it is still striving hard to preserve its cultural identity. Bringing out such publications as the Vitasta Numbers, is an effort towards achieving this goal. Thanks to our Mrs. Bina Ji Misri, who volunteered to bring out the present Vitasta Number, with this objective in view and, thus, uphold the mission that Kashmir Sabha has been carrying on, for decades. Preserving the mother tongue is an essential requisite of any cultural preservation process. In the recent AIKS enclave held at Delhi, I communicated my views on this topic and these have appeared in the November 2009, issue of the Naad. In my opinion, this topic is by itself a theme, which requires to be considered by our Sabhas/Samitis and Samaj. The question is how to preserve our mother tongue. I am taking this opportunity to reproduce this presentation in the present issue of the Vitasta also; hoping that this will form the theme for a future Vitasta Number and achieve the purpose that is enshrined in this theme. Courtesy Naad, this article is being reproduced as follows:



Dr. B. K. Moza
Kolkata

"Almost two decades back, we were subjected to conditions amounting to genocide in our ancient motherland, which caused our exodus from our homes and hearths. Since then we, as Kashmiri Pandit community, are internally displaced. A generation of ours has suffered physically, mentally, economically and culturally a severe loss. Large number of this generation have passed away in depression, pain and agony and the rest have got displaced, dispersed and scattered in far and wide corners of the globe from dilapidated camps in Udhampur and Jammu to far away Diaspora from Netherlands to New York, or New Zealand and beyond. From a small, well knit reverse minority of our country, we have got dispersed, left to ourselves as individuals, too insignificant to be heard any where as a community. We do not have the value of a vote bank or that of creating nuisance, which, in present day conditions of political hegemony, are determining tools for receiving importance. Two decades have passed and we have yet to receive the justice, which we deserve.

As suited to the convenience of the politicians, canards have been thrown about our exodus and distortions have become galore about our displacement. Never was a high level enquiry held to bring out truth behind the cause of our exodus and we have been left to distortions as victims of circumstances. There is sympathy but no palpable urge to realize our pain of displacement to resolve our problems. As such this Conclave is special one for it is purported to reveal to the authorities that matter and to the civil society and opinion cum policy makers the indifference and callousness that we have received in our exile.

This Conclave is also timely in view of the personal initiatives that our Prime Minister has recently taken, as a unique gesture, to find a solution to our problems, as a displaced Kashmiri Pandit community. Two decades are reasonable in time to reveal the ground realities in our homeland where we have lived along with others as Kashmiris as the aboriginals. Our displacement is, apparently, receiving a belated consideration. Whether it would fetch any positive outcome is any body's guess. Though the conditions are entirely different from the times of Bad-Shah when this ruler resolved successfully and after a careful consideration, a similar situation to bring our ancestors back from their exile, caused by a still worse genocide inflicted by his grand father, Sikander-but Shikan. I agree with the editorial that appeared sometime back in a popular daily of Srinagar, that Kashmiri Pandits are greatly missed in the valley and are welcome back though they are not now indispensable as they were at the time of Bad-Shah, The concerned leaders of our community who are aware of the ground realities prevailing in the valley, should deliberate as to whether the present time is appropriate for Kashmiri Pandits to return and, if so, under what safe guards, conditions and pre-requisites for a safe, secure and rightful existence as a reverse minority of our country in our motherland.

Many experts in our community will dwell on this political topic confronting our community presently so that our AIKS can formulate a policy on this important political agenda. A way has to be found out and a road map laid for future for our return to Kashmir. So will, it address to our concerns of commercial expansion, employment and empowerment in our motherland.

I take this opportunity to high light a very important aspect of our cultural identity in the wide spread Diaspora. Indeed! a silver-lining of our otherwise devastating black clouds, is that our youngsters are resiliently preserving our ingrained values for excellence as a means to survival. They are also making efforts to bring about awakening, awareness and resurgence for preserving our cultural identity. Our Sabhas, Samitis and Kashmir Bhawans in our Diaspora are making a note worthy effort at preserving our identity in possible respects at a particular location in our Diaspora. These are the beacon lights of our cultural preservation and community institutions for inspiring excellence. Our Sabhas have created our Samaj, AIKS, to coordinate us for implementing our Common Minimum Agenda. Kolkata Samellan of AIKS was designed, three years back, to develop the Mantra, necessary for our solidarity. It is high time that the miracle of this Mantra gets revealed now, as deliberated then, and the' local organizations achieve solidarity amongst them selves and stand as a rock in strengthening AIKS to provide leadership to our scattered community for implementation of our Common Minimum Agenda- Finally, it will be we and we alone, who will solve our problems.

Preservation of our mother tongue is a Common Minimum Agenda of us all It is our identity but there are no academic, commercial or lucrative bindings to preserve our mother tongue. A language perishes to death howsoever rich it may be, if it is not in practice and daily use. For us in Diaspora, our mother tongue is in a melting pot. There are apprehensions that it will perish and die because, we are small in numbers wherever we are and there is no need for our youngsters to use the mother tongue in daily routine. As such, it is not being practiced, as is required for its preservation. A special effort has to be made to preserve it. AIKS has to take a special interest in energizing this agenda and analyzing the values and ways that will enable it. A significant effort has been made in bringing out publications to emphasize on the preservation of our cultural identity by our community journals and publications. Many, Vitasta Annual Numbers have been brought out on this subject; its Volume XXXIV, 2000-2001 did receive appreciation and recognition for in depth study of our mother tongue: its background, threats and thrusts Our experts have made a remarkable effort in streamlining and systematizing its script, which had shortcomings, as it was never a language of administration and academics in our motherland. As such there was no uniformity in the application of its script. Besides Nastalik, the script used in Kashmir presently, its original Devnagri script has now received enough attention to make it an additional script for our mother tongue. It is convenient, appropriate and perfect, practically, as an

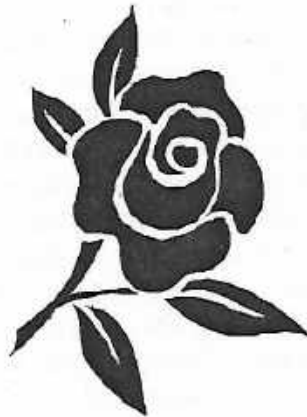
additional script for our mother tongue. The streamlined Devnagri script has a phonetic and computer friendly font and is easy to pick up since Hindi, in Devnagri script, is the national language taught in schools throughout the country and is internationally recognized for its web application. A creditable effort has been made to reproduce a considerable literature of our mother tongue through this streamlined font. We have community journals in print and electronic media, which have special Kashmiri sections to bring out further advances of our mother tongue and its literature in this font. AIKS is patronizing a journal, Vaakh, in Devnagri script, which is dedicated to advancing the frontiers of our mother tongue and its literature. AIKS did approach the concerned authorities and Ministries to get recognition to our Devnagri script for Kashmiri as an additional script for our mother tongue in our national Constitution. This objective has unfortunately remained to be achieved due to some resistance from Government authorities on political grounds. AIKS is, therefore, required to follow up this resolution with the Government authorities till the objective is achieved. It will be for the good of this language and for its wider propagation of the literature that is pouring from Kashmir, where Nastalik script for this language is in practice, that the same is reproduced in streamlined Devnagri, for wider readership in our Diaspora. These healthy developments require to be followed with purpose. What is disturbing as a threat to our mother tongue is that there are only small numbers who practice it routinely within the limits of our motherland and beyond. A special effort is necessary to popularize our mother tongue and bring about a feeling of belongingness with this language. Scholarships and awards have to be institutionalized for its propagation.

Mother tongue and its music go hand in glove. Our lyrical music is appealing; awareness of this is required to be brought out as an objective. The "Bambro, Bambro" music has become popular not only amongst ourselves as Kashmiris but also amongst those who have no connection with Kashmir. So, music of our language has to find an application in popularizing our mother tongue amongst ourselves particularly our youngsters. One can feel the synergy that exists between the mother tongue and its music. Together these teach us, in imagination from far off locations, as if by a mythological Mahayaan, to our motherland and connect us with our roots, its scenic beauty and its enchanting environs over there. So music and mother tongue provide us a unique connectivity with our motherland and an understanding of its nuances and bounties which Nature has blessed it with. It, as a miraculous mantra, provides a great relief from the pangs of our separation from our motherland. Such nostalgic feelings and emotions find a vent and a healing touch, if expressed in our mother tongue and its music. Reciting the lyrics, "leelas" and "bhajans" sung in unison in our camps and in far away Didiasspora, reach us to our motherland as if by a "Mahayaan". This, so phrased "Mahayaan Mantra", provides us a unique connectivity, understanding and space in our motherland. Not only that. It has revolutionized resurgence of our talent in the music of our mother tongue. With the limitations and constraints in our Diaspora, particularly in the camps, the entertainment available to us was to get together and sing, in our mother tongue, to vent our feelings and pent up emotions and this has resulted in the resurgence of our talent in our Kashmiri music. Today we have reasons to feel proud in having a galaxy of outstanding musicians and singers of our community popularizing our mother tongue and its lyrical depths. A revolution has thus taken place in this field, which requires to be recognized. It is a matter of pride that presently we have many of our talented experts heading the Music faculties in colleges and Universities within our country and abroad. Even in music industry of our country we find our members occupying prestigious positions as play back singers, actors and artists. They require to be recognized, for the excellence they have achieved in their fields of specialization. Similarly, our talented experts have done us proud by reaching to the top niches in Institutions of languages and linguistics from Jammu, Chandigarh, Patiala, Delhi, Varanasi, Mysore etc and in such far away temples of learning as that in Urbana, Illinois, where there are schools of Kashmiri linguistics, propagating our mother tongue and researching its syntax, grammar and the treasures of knowledge pertaining to such topics of our pride. I am specially drawing attention to this, as our excellence in academics, science and commerce is well known and what is of

interest in present context is the expansion of our horizon in other fields also. Since resurgence of excellence is our agenda of discussion, I wish to extend and recognize the proud, which our Suresh Raina has done to us by excelling in the field of sports, in cricket. Excellence in any field has to be recognized and that will pave way for over all excellence that our community youngsters are capable of achieving.

It requires to be emphasized that our Kashmiri mother tongue and its music are the common denominator of Kashmiris and their culture whether in our motherland or beyond. Time is not far away when we may again find conditions compatible for our return. Our mother tongue and music provide commonality between all the communities who live in our motherland. Our mother tongue provides us a common space and platform for our cultural adjustment, communication and resurgence in our motherland. Our mother tongue and its music provide a window to our future existence and survival. This Mahayaan Mantra perception has to prove miraculous for our connectivity and reach to our motherland and a prospect of our rightful space over there in times to come"

It is intended that our Sabhas take all steps to popularize our mother tongue and AIKS follows this Mahayaan Mantra as A Minimum Common Agenda. The purpose of reproducing this presentation is to, also, give a reminder to AIKS whether they have taken any concrete steps in achieving this MCA. The community is awaiting the results of our Apex Body in respect of getting recognition to our streamlined Devnagri script as an additional script for our mother tongue to be constitutionally recognized by our Central Government. I hope my this humble appeal to all to popularize our mother tongue amongst our youngsters and find ways and means for the same receives due attention The above Mahayaan Mantra is one of the approaches, which should receive attention of those who are implementing our such CMA.



Kashmiri Pandits The Road Ahead

Prof. T. N. Madan

Clichés are perhaps best avoided but occasionally they are useful. Let me then begin by recalling that we, the Pandits, suddenly found ourselves on the crossroads of history in 1989-90. The straws had been in the wind for some years but when they appeared in view, we looked elsewhere. And then the curtain lifted ominously; we could no longer pretend not to see and not to hear the real life drama on the political stage. Some of us are still at the crossroads unsure which way to turn, but most of us have come down a kind of Exit Highway with our backs turned towards Kashmir even when our hearts beckon us to look back. There is a Kashmiri proverb, as you know, that cautions us not to respond to a *pot-alav*.

Even so, among those of us who have become geographically detached from the Valley, from our homes and hearths, there are many who have taken the painful rupture in their stride, but the ties of history, culture and language and of personal memories bind us to the place of our birth. That is what is literally and metaphorically behind us, our lived past and a cultural heritage. Ahead of us lies the great challenge of spreading out into the world of opportunities, which is literally worldwide. The past, the heritage, must not be forgotten; the future, the opportunities, must not be denied. So that it may be cherished, the heritage should be seen as a valuable asset, not as deadweight. That is the only way we can be responsible to the past, not by romanticizing about it, or by mindlessly criticizing it. One has to pick and choose from the heritage, from the past, preserving a sense of cultural identity, but unafraid to broaden and liberalize it where it is narrow and conservative or exclusive.

When does that past begin? Where is it located in time? Surely can go back to, say, the legends of the *Nilamata Purana* or the history—such as it is of the *Rajatarangini*. Doing so, although interesting in itself as an academic pursuit, will not, I am afraid, take common people like you and me anywhere today in practical terms. Nor will the justly famous Kashmiri Shaiva Siddhanta deliver a new future to us as a community, just as it did not help us overcome the adversities that became our lot during much of the medieval period. Kindly do not misunderstand me. Kashmir Shaivism is of course a profound philosophical system with legitimate goals and refined Yogic practices, but, as such it concerns the cognoscenti everywhere, not among the Pandits alone; these will always be a small minority, however. The Pandit religious heritage cannot provide us with the design of a secular, worldly endeavour today. Nor will recourse to the legendary and ancient past of the *Nilamata Purana* (7th century AD) or the *Rajatarangini* (1148-49 AD) inspire us much. The religious world of the former text, at once pluralist and syncretist, bears little resemblance to the beliefs and practices of the recent past. To give but two examples, the new year's day of those times was observed on the first day of Margashirsha and commemorated Kashyapa's lifting of the land of Kashmir out of water. Shivaratri apparently did not involve the worship of Vatuka Bhairava; it was the Shivalinga that was the object of adoration on the fourteenth and fifteenth day of Phalguna. The widespread socio-economic decay of a feudal social order, described by Kalhana, and the court intrigues in which the Brahmans did not play particularly edifying roles, and which characterized Kashmiri society just before the advent of Muslim rule, do not reveal what could exactly be called a glorious past that one could be proud of without any qualification.

Lal Dyad is different, almost unique, for she still inspires common Kashmiris, Pandits as well as Muslims, and she does so more by the serene sensibility of her vakh, by the gentle wisdom that shines in them, rather than by her metaphysical meditations on the nature of the true self. Again, let me clarify, these meditations are important in themselves, but they are a subject for the specialist. There are two Lal Dyads, as it were, the adept's and the people's. It is this latter Lal Dyad who alongside Sheikh Nooruddin or Nund Rishi, belongs to a composite Kashmiri cultural heritage, and remains relevant but not as the exemplar of a complete design of worldly life in our times. Incidentally, there was no love lost between her and the Kashmiri Brahmans of her day.

She despised them for their chicanery and ritualism aghast at the audacity of her thought and the unconventionality of her behaviour, they chose to marginalize her as a deviant, and even unhinged person. She is a rare luminary of the cultural heritage of Kashmir and will remain so. But I am looking for something more specific in the story of the Kashmiri Pandits.

For this we must turn to medieval history, and the ironies of history abound.

The first irony: the consolidation of Muslim domination in the Kashmir Valley, the historians tell us, occurred during the relatively short, 24-year rule of Sultan Sikandar (1389-1411). He appears to have targeted the Brahmans in particular and their temples. In doing so, according to Professor Rattan Lal Hangloo (of Hyderabad University), he merely continued a century-old tradition in Kashmir, begun by Hindu rulers. It is, therefore, hardly surprising. (Hangloo adds) that in pursuit of these goals (Sikandar) was ably aided by his prime minister, Suhabhata, a Brahman, who was later to become a Muslim himself' (Medieval Kashmir, Manohar, New Delhi, 2000, p.57). Legend has it that, following persecution, including even murder and conversion and the resultant migrations, only eleven Brahman families survived in Kashmir.

This number is of course apocryphal. All the other Hindu castes were there no more, excluded one way or another. This, then, was the first irony Brahman turning against the Brahmans.

The second irony. It was again a Muslim, the very same Sikandar's younger son, Zain-ul Abidin (ruled 1420-70), who brought some of the Brahman families back to Kashmir, whatever the motivations that led him to do so, whether personal gratitude to a physician, a broad, liberal, humanist outlook, or political sagacity. What matters in terms of our present concern is the significance and consequences of this happening. The Brahmans, the twice-born varna par excellence, took a second birth in Kashmir: born again, mind you, by a Muslim king's decision to call them back.

A choice was made by those who came back, and they paid a price for it in the form of internal differentiation. Not very significant socially was the calendrical division between the bhanamasis (those who went out and came back) and the malamasis (those who stayed back despite the heavy odds).

More significant was the emergence of the two endogamous subcastes of the Karkun, who took to the study of Persian, the new court language, and the pursuit of secular occupations, and the Gor, who remained within the Sanskrit-based Brahmanical tradition of ritual specialists. This brings me to the third irony. In course of time the majority group of 'opportunists', if you allow me to call them that, came to look down upon the minority group of 'preservationists' who helped by their liturgical services all the Brahmaris to retain their ritual status. So much so indeed that, as late as in the 1950s, I discovered in the villages of Kashmir that seeing a Gor at the commencement of a journey, or the first thing in the morning, was considered highly inauspicious by the Karkun.

Going back to the years following the 'return' in the time of Zain-ul Abidin, who was acclaimed as Badshah or, Jialal Kilam recalls, even Bhatta Shah (Bhatta being the self-designation of Kashmiri Brahmans), the new opportunities offered were matched by the new skills acquired. The Brahmans excelled as civil servants from the lowest to the highest grades. In this respect they were like, say, the Amils of Sindh and the Kayasthas of the Gangetic plains. Some of them let their ambitions soar. Gifted individuals, sometimes with their families, traveled to various north Indian cities, and even to Kabul, to explore new opportunities whenever the working and living conditions, as for instance under the Mughan rule, became harsh. In Punjab they acted, dressed, and tried to look like the ruling Sikh and Hindu elite. In Avadh, Agra, Allahabad and Lucknow, they likewise imitated the lifestyles of the Muslim aristocracy. As the numbers of these migrant families, concentrate in so-called Kashmiri mohallas, increased, and

their fortunes and social prestige rose high, they distanced themselves from their co-religionists, including the proverbial poor cousins, back in the valley. Another social differentiation had emerged between the so-called 'upstairs' and 'downstairs' Pandits.

Now, the most successful ones were those who made it to high office at the royal courts. One such successful émigré was Jai Narain Bhan who was elevated to the status and title of a Raja by the Mughal emperor Muhammad Shah (1719-49). It was he who reportedly prayed that Kashmiri Brahmans be addressed as Pandits, and not by such honorifics as 'Khuajah' which was the prevailing practice. This is the fourth and the last of the ironies I am going to mention here today. The Bhattas of Kashmir were renamed the Pandits by a royal proclamation issued from the Mughal court in Delhi.

You will have, I am sure, noted the moral of this story of ironies, to wit, the Kashmiri Pandits exist, only in association with their significant others, namely, the Kashmiri Muslims. That is how it has been since the advent of Islam in Kashmir. And that is how it shall be in the future for those who wish to return to the Valley whenever the circumstances permit. Kashmiri society will always be plural; no exclusive enclave will be viable even if it is wistfully called 'one's own' (panun). That, at any rate, is how the future looks to me to be like.

Forgive me for taking so long to answer the question I had posed, namely, how far back do we go in time to fix a milepost beyond which one could of course go, but doing which perhaps leads us only into the mists of an irretrievable past, interesting but remote. I suggest that the time of birth of the Pandits was the exodus in Sultan Sikandar's time. What the Pandits are today is largely a result of what has happened since then. Kashmiri Pandit domestic architecture, sartorial styles, cuisine, music, speech, literary skills, etiquette, occasionally even personal names, all bear the imprint of West Asian and Central Asian cultures and languages. There are plenty of lessons to learn from this long period of six hundred years lessons of, among other significant experiences, the Diaspora of leaving the Valley, making compromises, altering lifestyles, getting on in the world and yet retaining the identity of Kashmiri Pandits, not wholly but in good measure.

The makings of yet another exodus were on the cards with the end of Dogra rule in 1947. But we failed to read the cards right. The early 1930s had seen the first recorded anti-Pandit violence in Kashmir and the emergence of the Muslim Conference on the political scene. Those Pandits who were born in the 1930s, my generation, reached full adulthood in the 1950s after the inauguration of a people's party's in National Conference's rule. The trickle of emigration of Pandit youth, not only young men but for the first time in their history, of young women too, began then. The numbers were small, but the trends were unmistakable. Gradually, by the 1970s, the destinations extended beyond India. Identity concerns how to remain Pandits away from home in Kashmir-began to appear fuzzy and somewhat inconsequential to some, but pressing to others. Even before these contrary trends had settled down to anything like a stable pattern, the late 1980s were upon us.

In a couple of cataclysmic years, 1989 and 1990, the Pandits as a community were no longer geographically Kashmiri, Kashmiri by domicile. They were compelled by the galloping, militant, pro-secession Muslim elements to flee from their homes and hearths, to seek shelter with relatives or friends, or in rented accommodation when a family had the necessary means, or in those sore spots of contemporary times in many parts of the world known as 'refugee camps'. Even now, about 5,000 Pandit families are believed to be living in one-room tenements spread over seven such camps in Jammu in conditions of unbelievable physical congestion and psychological depression without any sense whatsoever of comfort or well-being.

As many as 33,984 families are currently registered with the J&K Government as migrants. According to the US State Department Human Rights Report for 2000, 95 per cent of the Pandits had been

compelled to leave the Valley. This means less than 10,000 were still living there. Two years later, this number must be lower today. In March 2002, Rehabilitation Minister Abdul Qayoom of the state government put the number of resident Pandit families at 1,735. At 5 persons per family, we get a total of 8,675 persons. These figures are significant more in relative than absolute terms. Let me clarify. According to the 1981 official census, the total population of Hindus in the six districts comprising the Valley was 124,078. Virtually all of them may be presumed to have been Pandits. Allowing for an annual rate of growth of 2.5 per cent, the total population of the Pandits of the Valley in 1990, when the exodus began, would have been about 160,000. Pandit organizations have put forward higher estimates, arguing that under-enumeration has been a chronic problem in Kashmir. If this possibility is granted, we may add at the most another 20 per cent to the population, obtaining a total figure of 192,000, or let us say, two lakhs.

Of these, if 25,000 are in the camps in Jammu, and twice or times that number is living elsewhere in that city, and another 25,000 are in Delhi and the nearby towns, we are left with about a lakh of Pandits scattered in other cities of India and abroad. Let me emphasize, these are approximate estimates, not confirmed figures. In short, the crucial point is that there are no viable communities of Pandits anywhere except in Jammu and in the Delhi area. The big question is, how does a widely scattered community, small in numbers preserve its cultural heritage?

What did the Pandits who moved out of the valley in earlier centuries do in this regard? Most importantly, they remained an endogamous community (but marriages between the valley-based Pandits and those living in the plains were very rare), and this enabled them to preserve assorted elements of their Kashmiri culture, including notably Pandit cuisine and also many rites and ceremonies, but lacking very significantly the Kashmiri speech. The preservation of culinary habits and customary behaviour was made possible by the identical family backgrounds of married couples. Except for a handful of words, the speech was lost, not out of any dereliction of duty on the part of the migrants, but because Kashmiri has never been a written language. The great literary tradition of the old Kashmiri Brahmans, both religious and secular, was in Sanskrit. The Pandits added Persian to it. Future developments of the spoken language and its literature following the development of a Persian alphabet-based script for it will now be primarily in the hands of the Muslims. Pandit Kashmiri might become extinct if we are not watchful. In the conditions prevailing today, with the Pandits scattered allover the country (not to mention those living abroad), and with the increasing incidence of inter-community marriages among urban, middle and upper class families of all communities, it is not going to be easy to replicate whatever the earlier migrants did in terms of cultural preservation. The Pandits now resident in Jammu and the Delhi area are bound to play a crucial role in this regard. It is they, I think, who hold the future of Bhattil as a way of life in their hands.

It is often suggested that, in such a situation of cultural crisis, the preservative role and agency of women becomes crucial. This too could be an unrealistic assumption or expectation. Today's women are not home-bound creatures as they were earlier, and the numbers of those who take up full-time work is on the increase, as indeed it should be. The gender divide, and the undoubtedly closer emotional bonds between mothers and children, may no longer be employed by men to pass on the responsibility for cultural reproduction to the women. Whatever has to be done has to be done together. Women, self-conscious as they are today even if not fully empowered, can play catalytic roles of far-reaching significance.

The Kashmiri Pandit way of life has been so very intimately tied to Kashmir. The notion of the valley as the Sharada Peeth is an old one. Without the ancient Shakta and Shaiva sacred centres, notably those of Hari Parbat and Amarnath, and the relatively recent Vaishnava places of worship (such as Khir Bhavani's at Tulamul), there is a kind of hollowness at the very heart of the Pandit way of life in exile.

Not all Pandits have always been equally religious. In a most ingenious manner, the Pandits had added Badam-vari picnics and doonga trips to Hari Parbat and Tulamul respectively, and thus involved large numbers of believers and non-believers alike in a common way of life. If one ever saw and sensed the existence of the Pandits as a community, it was at the Zetha and Hara atham congregations at Tulamul.

The efforts of some thoughtful individuals and groups to recreate such special spaces or places in Jammu, Faridabad and presumably elsewhere, with attached social service programmes, deserves appreciation. Obviously, these new sacred spots can only be symbolic recreations, the result of human invention or endeavour, rather than discovery reminders of the hierophantic centres, not truly so themselves. Nevertheless, they could play a preservative role. (I am reminded of the sculpted representation of the legend of the descent of Ganga at Mamallapuram, near Chennai, an event that has its location in the Himalayas, too far away for the South Indian devotee). However, such ventures are possible only in the presence of considerable numbers, as are found in Jammu and in and around Delhi. Who knows when regular visits to the many places of pilgrimage in Kashmir would be possible again, not necessarily for religious purposes, but if the religious sentiment is weak, more generally for historical, cultural and even recreational purposes? Meanwhile, the strategy of recreating the symbolic centres is, perhaps, worthwhile. In this regard, one wishes the Kashmiri Pandit associations that exist in many cities, big and small, were better organized with better resources: and more purposeful. They could be centres for storing and disseminating knowledge about the Pandit heritage, and for organizing community events, even yatras and cultural tours.

Then there is, of course, the Pandit home, where efforts could be made to preserve the observance of such occasions as Navreh, Herath, and Pan, and the lore attached to each. After all not all those families the world over, who observe Christmas or Hannukah, are practising Christians or Jews respectively. The socially remarkable thing about Herath and Pan was the reiteration of social bonds among kith and kin and among neighbours, and this may not be easy to preserve among decentred communities. But one could try. Why should not a Pandit family's Tamil or Oriya, Sikh or Muslim neighbours receive the walnuts or the roth just as our Christian friends distribute Christmas cake among us? Let these become secularized observances, if you wish. Such home-based reproduction of cultural activities will of course be easier where only Kashmiri members are present, but should not be impossible in culturally composite homes. Talking of secularization, which is bound to increasingly affect educated modernizing families, life-cycle rituals, particularly mekhal and marriage, may have to be abridged and simplified (this is in fact happening already), and their social and cultural aspects emphasized more than the religious to preserve them. Adaptability is the essence of the matter.

I could expand the list of possible culture reproducing initiatives, mentioning the obvious such as Pandit cuisine, emphasizing the difficult such as the preservation of Pandit speech, and even admitting helplessness such as in respect of inter-community marriages, but neither do I have the time for that, nor is it at all necessary at present.

I will therefore conclude by reiterating that the task of the preservation of Kashmiri Pandit identity and cultural heritage is an onerous one, and should not be divided into genderized compartments. That is part of the old baggage that must be discarded as worn out. Today we, women and men, are equally responsible for our future as a cultural community that is now territorially dispersed, to be lived self-consciously, not in inward-looking cultural enclaves, but in productive interaction with other cultural communities. Our identity as citizens of India (or of other countries) takes care of a great deal of our secular concerns and welfare, but there is more to living than secular interests and goals. The cultural dimension of our being is no less important and no less legitimate. Without it we are just unidimensional beings.

The foregoing are the long-term goals. There are immediate pressing tasks too, above all ending the misery and frustrations of the displaced women, men and children who still live in camps, who still depend upon doles. As usually happens in our male-and-adult dominated society, it is the women and the children who suffer the most. We do not even know the exact dimensions of this vast human tragedy. We need to know before we may act and we need to do this now, tomorrow is too far off. Even the luckier, less adversely affected, members of a displaced community work only under severe limitations, but it is not true that they cannot do anything. The state must be held to account, but civil society organizations can at least act as pressure groups. It is not a question of what Pandit women or Pandit men may do, but what we all should do together. I have no doubt that it is the appropriate time to illiminate the cultural life of the Pandits as has been lived in the remembered past, and, secondly; point to the; present commitments we need to make so that future possibilities my be realized.

Before I conclude let me share with you a conversation I had with an old and wise Australian community leader, Albert Burunga, in 1976. I asked him how much it hurt him and his people to recall the inhuman treatment to which they, the so-called 'aborigines', had been subjected to by the white colonizers. He replies quietly, indeed with solemnity: 'God has given us eyes in the front, so that we can look ahead, not in the back of our heads'.

So, let us look ahead!



THE PANDITS OF KASHMIR: CULTURE AND FUTURE

K. N. Pandit

It is somewhat painful to write on this subject. We are in exile; we have little to say and much to lament. No culture can survive if it is uprooted from its place of origin. There is eternal link between people and their land.

Our cultural heritage is an integral part of vast Indian Hindu cultural fund as a whole. But our land, Kashmir Mandala, has been an independent kingdom for thousands of years. The Mughals annexed it in 1588 but then Maharaja Gulab Singh created the present State of Jammu and Kashmir in 1846. Since 1947 our land has become part of the Indian Union.

Despite the fact that our cultural heritage is part of Indian civilization, our ancestors did not fail to add and induct new aspects and ideas into Indian pantheon. Shaivism or the Shaivite philosophy is a unique contribution of our sages and savants to the rich fund of Indian philosophy. If Hinduism became our faith Shaivism became our religion. Extensive reach of Shaivite trinity, meaning Shiva as the creator, preserver and destroyer became the watchword of Kashmiri Pandit thought process. Imagine the dedication of the Pandits to Shiva and his powers in their prose and poetic writings, and you will find it a golden chapter in Sanskrit literature. Abhinav Gupta remains the celebrated exponent of Shaivite philosophy. If we are to believe some enthusiastic scholars and historians, we may imagine that Kalidasa, the celebrated poet-dramatist and Pannini, the great Sanskrit grammarian, also had their roots in Kashmir.

Conscious of geographical constraints of their land, the ancient Kashmiri Pandits brought in all famous shrines from all over India, to Kashmir so as to make it a replica of the vast Indian cultural matrix. We have the holy river of Vitasta about which Kalhana tells us that it contains the qualities of all well-known rivers of India, namely the Ganga, Yamuna, Saraswati, Sindhu Godavari, Kaveri, Krishna and others. In our hymns and ritualistic literature we regularly take the names of these rivers and many shrines. We have Sangam, the replica of Prayaga at Shadipur, the confluence of Vitasta and Sindhu. We have Koti-tirtha at Varahmulla (Baramulla) the corpus of a thousand shrines in the vast Bharatvarsha... We have Gangbal shrine at a height of more than twelve thousand feet consecrated to the origin of Ganga, the holiest of holy rivers, and we adduced all such traits to Gangabal as are assigned to a visitation to Haridwar and Prayag. Pilgrims considered it a rare divine blessing if they succeeded in making a pilgrimage to Gangbal.

Likewise, we assigned a site to Shiva atop a Himalayan peak at Amreshwara or Amarnath, the counterfoil of Mount Kailasha. The story of Amarnath and the linga-shrine of the cave are well known to beggar any description. Pilgrimage to Amarnath Cave is what the devout cherish. Not only that, even the halting stations enroute, too, received sanctimony and these were assigned to deities. Some of these stations like Vicharnag, Ambarher, Bihama, and Wangat etc. received great importance.

Our indigenous cultural heritage has had its specificities. For example most of our shrines, temples and worshipping places are located close to water bodies like a river, stream, spring, lake or pond. It is not only because water bodies are frequently found in Kashmir but mostly because of the great and deep sense of purity and cleanliness which our ancestors obstinately maintained as part of our cultural life. Watering plants and trees is integral part of our cultural ethos. It brings us close to another aspect of our culture and that is our respect and care for Mother Nature.

Our ancestors gave names to many glaciers and lakes atop mountains all around Kashmir. A pilgrimage to these water bodies was always considered a blessing. Worshipping at these places and bathing in their waters was considered washing off sins and impurities and ultimate purification of mind. Kashmir was called the land of saints and savants, the land of rishis or hermits. Kashmir Mandala was a big hermitage.

Beautiful natural setting and richness and variety of Kashmir flora and fauna must have immensely impressed our ancient sages and that is the reason why nature is worshipped so intensely by the Pandits. Water, flowers, milk, green leaves called bell petar, grains of rice, barley, oilseed (tel), milk, honey, sugar, incense (made from a wild herb called dhoop of pyrethrum) are the commodities invariably needed in our ritualistic system. Planting saplings and watering them at proper intervals has been a custom with our ancient village folks. We have more than 500 year old chinar trees to stand testimony to our love for nature. At the confluence Sindhu and Vitasta at Sangam, remains planted a huge chinar tree almost half submerged in water. Chinar has been the symbol of Pandit respect for nature and it is a travesty that the indigenous name of this tree from boen has been changed to Farsi equivalent namely chinar and then the spurious claim that the tree was imported from Iran.

Agriculture-related customs and traditions among the Kashmiri Pandits were mostly preserved by the Pandit peasantry for millennia after millennia. If one traces the entire history of agrarian pursuit strictly within the Pandit cultural parameters, we find that a Pandit peasant has been emotionally and culturally closer to Mother Nature. At every step in his agrarian activity, he begins with invocation to God and deities supplicating for their blessings and requesting for plenteousness of the harvest. On specific occasions during the year the peasant held small festivals in the field itself sitting with his family members by a furrow, making a puja and invoking the blessings of the supreme for bountiful harvest.

Kashmiri Pandits are the only ethnic group in India who celebrate the new year of ancient fire-worshippers called Navroz It is the day of vernal equinox when day and night are equal and days begin to lengthen, viz. 21 March. This tradition in Pandit culture reminds one of the Zoroastrian culture in which Navroz is the most important feast being the New Years day. Outside Iran of the days of Zoroaster, it is only the Kashmiri Pandits who observe this feast in identical manner. A platter is filled with a variety of things like rice, grains, sugar cubes, a cup of milk, new years calendar called jantari, a pen and inkpot, image of goddess sarswati (goddess of knowledge), a blade of sanctified grass called darab, few walnuts and a coin. Early in the morning members of the household have a look at it taking it an auspicious occasion and praying that the New Year brings happiness to the family. This is precisely what used to be called in Zoroastrian Iran as haft seen meaning collecting together seven things each name beginning with sound s. All these are put together on a platter for the members to keep in home for a long time of the year as an omen of prosperity.

Being the descendents of Aryan race, the Kashmiri Pandits have always held the sun and fire in great reverence. A deity called agni devta has been assigned to it. None of our rituals is complete without lighting fire. The importance of fire remains with us as a symbol of light and warmth that we inherited from our Aryan ancestors. We have assigned elements of nature to gods or deities, air, ocean, water, light, fire, thunder etc. Our closeness to elements and nature has been an important links between us, our spiritual life and our concept of cosmos.

Despite our individuality framed mostly by geographical conditions, our ancestors identified themselves with vast Indian Hindu ethos. Rama and Krishna, Sita, Tara, Mandodari, Dropadi and others, remain our socio-religious icons for worship and benediction. The spiritual and mystic poetry of our saints like Laleshwari, Ropbhavani, Parmanand, Krishnajo Razdan, Zinda Kaul and others has give content to our socio-religious existence. Their songs of eternal love and purity, of wisdom and truth remain with us our indestructible communal property.

In the field of architecture, especially temple architecture in stone, the ruins at Martand, Avantiora, Pandrethan, Parihasapora, Tapar, Bonyar or Wangat show the highly developed architectural expertise of our ancestors who produced finest specimens of that genre next only to that of the ancient Greeks.

I will not go into the remarkable corpus of Sanskrit literature, secular as well as liturgical produced by our eminent scholars and intellectuals in ancient times because it is well documented in the works of Indian historiographers. Suffice to say that Kalhana Pandit, the great historian and author of Rajatarangini is regarded by one and all as the first real historiographer of India. Interestingly, Kalhana tells us in the introduction to Rajatarangini that six historians all eminent in their field preceded him and he acknowledges having borrowed much from them.

A study of Rajatarangini reveals that Kalhana collected good deal of historical material from writings carved in stone slabs and put up as frontispiece on the temples throughout the valley. This shows that ancient Kashmiris were adepts in the science of epigraphy. Most of these tableaux were destroyed during the cataclysmic period of transformation of Kashmirian society to Islamic ethos in 14-15th centuries. Even today sporadic excavations throw up such slabs at now unknown sites or the ruins in different parts of the valley.

Tolerance towards other faiths and traditions and their accommodation within the Hindu fold has been the hallmark of ancient Kashmirian culture. In particular mention may be made of Buddhism, which rose to flourish in Kashmir when Emperor Ashoka made it the official religion of India. Advent of Buddhist bhikshus into Kashmir around 2500 BC did not give rise to any conflict of creeds... Kashmir Hindu royalty not only showed respect to the Buddhist missionaries but even showed personal appreciation and inclination towards that faith. The viharas for the Buddhists were raised side by side with Shaivite temples. Peaceful co-existence of Brahmans, Buddhists, Shaivites, Vishnuites, fire worshippers and others in Kashmir is an exemplary phenomenon of ancient Kashmiri Hindu civilization. If a king ordered consecration of a temple to Shiva, his queen or prince regent ordered consecration of another temple to Vishnu. Name places in the valley ending with sound "haar" are actually "vihara" which changed severally into "yaar" or "haar" like Ganpatyaar or Chandrahaar.

Mohsin Fani, a brilliant Farsi scholar contemporaneous with Emperor Shah Jahan tells us in his interesting work titled Dabistanu'l-Mazahib (The School of Religions) that besides Brahmans, Buddhists, Jews, Zoroastrians and Christians also inhabited Kashmir and they coexisted peacefully. Such was the level of tolerance that a Buddhist vihara or a Christian church could be easily raised at any convenient place.

The sweep of Buddhism in Kashmir has been large and forceful. It eclipsed Hinduism for some time till Shankaracharya, traveling to Kashmir all the way from South India brought revival of Brahmanism. Nevertheless, Kashmirian Buddhist monks and missionaries became catalyst to the spread of Buddha's teachings in Central Asia, Ladakh, Tibet and China. At Bamiyan in western Afghanistan, then known as Tukharistan, stood the more than 350 feet high Buddha statue carved in the top of a rocky hill. Fanatical Taliban destroyed it in 1999 through gunfire. Likewise the largest stucco statue of the Buddha was found at a site in Panjikent in the Zarafshan Valley of Samarkand region in present day Uzbekistan. The Texila Museum and also the Kabul Museum preserved rare artifacts of Buddhist period in the region. Kashmirian Buddhist monks are reported to have played crucial role for the spread of Buddha's message in those vast regions. Kamalshree the Kashmirian Buddhist's name has come down to us as one who brought Buddha's teachings to Tibet.

Over those rugged terrains and unending sand dunes Kashmirian cavalymen once marched triumphantly raising high the banner of the Kings and Queens of Kashmir. They also carried with them the finer aspects of Kashmirian cultural heritage.

Kashmirian Hindu culture came under great strain with the arrival of Muslim missionaries from Central Asian and Iranian regions about the third decade of 14th century. Transformation from indigenously established cultural structure and philosophy of life to a culture and life style alien in their essence was painfully cruel. But such was the depth and tenacity of indigenous culture that for many centuries and down to present day, many of its manifestations remained impressed on the minds and behaviour of the proselytized community.

When I turn the pages of Kashmir medieval history, the one question which I have been persistently putting to myself is: "How did the few Pandits survive all those cataclysms and tyrannies hurled on them in the course of their history?" I fail to find any convincing answer to this question. But I do find the origin of some traits of our character traceable to those long years of suppression and oppression, and how the Pandits were locked in a grim battle for survival.

For any serious and thoughtful student of history, mediaeval Kashmir presents a huge fund for understanding the vagaries of human nature and the onslaughts of time. The Pandit struggle for survival during seven centuries of medieval period is the primary factor in shaping the broad contours of their character, which we so often and so brazenly discredit.

To be fair, the era of decay of our rich and colourful culture had set in with the rise of the Mongols in mid-13th century from the Great Steppes of Central Asia. Their incursions into the Central Asia, Iran and later on beyond the Hindu Kush cut off the Silk Route trade and commerce. That dealt a heavy blow to the economy of Kashmir, a state to the north of India whose boundaries ran up to Qandahar to the west and Kashghar to the east. Enfeebled economy could not sustain the state's defense establishment for too long a time. Rebellious chiefs and Damras unmindful of the consequences of economic recession and depleting resources wrecked the solidarity of the state by trying to grab political power through whatever device possible.

Kashmir Hindu culture has always drawn inspiration from the royal court and the religious policy of Hindu kings. It is the royalty which in ancient times took the lead in building temples and shrines and then dedicated them to gods and deities, Shiva, Vishnu, Ganesh, or bhairavas and goddesses. These temples were generally provided with endowments called *agrahara* to make them economically independent. The same *agraharas* became the shrines (*astanah*) during Muslim period. Visitation by the Kashmiri Hindus to most of these shrines continued for some time after the new social order spread in the valley but these became few and far between. With the passage of time and social cleavage widening and deepening, a day came when the relevance of these shrines got restricted to the Muslims only. As these shrines remained a great cementing force for the local population, their social importance in historical perspective was quite notable. A few shrines were left unmolested for their original stakeholders and the Pandits having lost their social and political authority, now clung to these shrines to indirectly maintain whatever social cohesion was left intact.

The exiled community has tried to introduce manifestations of its cultural contours in and around Jammu city which has witnessed their large concentration after their exodus from the valley. In exile, too, we find that many among our dedicated members are trying to recreate shrines consecrated to deities and spiritual personalities. Ashrams have been built and made functional at a few places. These are called crude replicas of original shrines or *devasthanas*. Obviously, the purpose is two-fold: to maintain semblance of social cohesion as far as possible, and to perpetuate cultural heritage. These temples and shrines may sustain our saga behind us. Visitors will get acquainted with the background of the shrine and that would naturally give solace to the supplicants. Beyond that no substantial role appears to be waiting in wings.

Therefore all this activity looks somewhat out of tune. We do understand how we have stuck like a leech to our age old mythological fund and how tenaciously we want to hold it even in environs totally unsuitable... The serious question is how long can these replicas serve the purpose for which these have been created? After all we should understand that the community is widely dispersed all over the country and being a service class, its thousands of years old immobility syndrome has now after its exile, under force of circumstances, given place to great mobility and consequential non-sedentary conditions.

Protection and preservation of its cultural heritage is a big question with many corollaries. We are talking of cohesive cultural fund or heritage only in terms of past history. That is not going to help any more in the present situation. The youth is always the backbone of a society. Our youth is dispersed and dispersal is its strength and source of survival. What does that mean? Perpetuation and progress of culture is commensurate with the sedentary phenomena of a given group. Our youth, floating in a vast ocean of Indian social structure will find it increasingly difficult either to continue or sustain its cultural heritage. To their ears it will sound music or something like a tell-tale of some people in far off times with whom we had only emotional relationship.

The first and most serious casualty in this scenario is Kashmiri language or our mother tongue. I have often heard observers and commentators lamenting the gradual loss of our mother tongue Kashmiri. I do not personally subscribe to this for a variety of reasons. Let us be pragmatic. Kashmiri language lost, its shine and its future the day it was divorced from its scientific script namely *sharada*. Arabic script now adopted is just out of sentimentality. It cannot represent broken vowel sounds of Kashmiri. As such, its propagators have been inventing cumbersome vowel sounds which they themselves fail to read properly. Language without a scientific script remains a dialect at the best. Its sources of development are choked

once it is without scientific script. Hindi script is somewhat better than Arabic script but that is not acceptable to the Muslim majority community of the valley.

The strength of a language lays in its prose works especially historical works. We have no prose literature in Kashmir worth the name. The poetic compilations are a crude imitation of Farsi or Urdu poetry. These are insipid and unimpressive, dismally lacking originality and innovation.

Our youngsters are now born and brought up in non-Kashmiri environment. They have grown in wide Indian social surroundings and will naturally imbibe the entire gamut of Indian ethos including language. The use of Kashmiri in homes is dwindling fast and the day is not far away when nobody would be speaking it. I do not find any sense in harping on Kashmiri as our mother tongue. Why not tell our youngsters to learn French, German, Russian and especially Arabic. Anybody equipped with any of these languages besides English as the medium of instructions is in a far better situation to make an excellent career than the one struggling to learn Kashmiri. I do not see any big loss to our community if our youngsters miss Kashmiri.

We would certainly like that our young boys and girls of marriageable age find their mates within the fold of the community. First preference should be given to that option. But as we see, the area of this option is fast narrowing down. Marriages outside the community fold can neither be stopped nor encouraged. In a new situation in which the community is placed, there are many constraints and we need to be pragmatic to adjust ourselves with the life as it comes. When a Kashmiri Pandit boy or girl marries outside the community fold, he or she naturally loses much of cultural cover. This is what they do understand and need not be alarmed about it.

In this essay I have tried to highlight just some aspects of our cultural fund created and preserved during long years of our existence in the valley in a somewhat concentrated fashion. The purpose is to give our readers, especially the younger generation an idea of our rich heritage. But at the same time, we need to be realistic towards the situation in which destiny has placed us. We have become a victim of unrealistic dreams and fantasies of Indian leadership on the one hand and communal propensity of the valley leadership on the other. Instead of treating our minuscule community on equal footing with other communities of the country for our rights and privileges, we were labeled either as amanaat meaning custodial property or "the symbol of Kashmiri secularism". The amanat and the symbol of secularism of 1947 are now languishing in refugee camps or on the roadside.

There is much talk of return of the Pandits to their homes or homeland. This is an idle talk. We cannot be hypocrites all the time. We may have lost our homes and heaths, our properties and our heritage back in Kashmir, but we are face to face with new opportunities of wide scope, of progress and improvement. The wide world is open to us. Let us open our wings and seek new lands and new climes. Let us forget the dark and dismal past, the life of oppression and suppression and breathe in an atmosphere of freedom, respect and result-oriented action.

Diasporas have made great civilizations. If our community produces just one hundred IAS and IFS rank officers, the destiny of this country will change. Our youth should seek opportunities in defense, police and legal services. Our capable youth with strong linguistic skills should take to law and politics. We need diversification of our career selection. Once we are able to produce these cadres, we shall succeed in preserving, nay enriching broad contours of our culture and heritage. Diversification is very essential and this is the time when we should impress it upon our youth. We have to accept and adapt contours of contemporary culture, which sometimes is called universal culture or globalization of culture. How can we escape its impact? Ours is not a moribund community; we have the most precious inheritance, viz. education which will never fail us. But we need its proper diversification and utilization for the benefit of broader Indian society. We are the best patriots because we belong to no one part or region of the country; the entire country is our home. We work for the country and we serve the nation. That is a matter of pride for us.

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CURRENT CHALLENGES TO KASHMIRI PANDIT IDENTITY

Prof. S. L. Pandit

In view of the upheavals that erupted and came to a head in the Valley of Kashmir towards the close of 1989 and early 1990, unprecedented in their magnitude and devastation in the past five centuries and driving out the vast majority of Kashmiri Pandits from their ancient regional habitat, it is time for us to take stock of the damage thus inflicted on our social and cultural identity and to wonder whether it is still possible for us to revive and retain that identity in the foreseeable future. But before we consider this problem, let us try to sum up the main features of our social identity that enabled a small Brahman community to project its contributions towards the wider cultural pattern of Kashmir and the variegated developments during the past two or three centuries by our much smaller migrant population in several regions of India, extending from pre-1947 Punjab to Uttar Pradesh and Rajputana. I believe it is not pertinent now to hark back to the remote past when our small Brahman community, though geographically comparatively isolated from the rest of India, kept alive from generation to generation the deep spiritual values enshrined in the Rig Veda and the Upanishads and played a vital role in extending the peaceful message of Gautam Buddha to large areas of South-East Asia extending to the islands of Indonesia. In fact, I wonder sometimes how Guna Varman, born of a Brahman family in Kashmir, travelled over these vast regions over some of the highest mountain barriers in the world in order to carry the peaceful message of the Lord of compassion to these distant lands.

The emergence of Kashmiri Brahmans as a distinct social entity and sole representatives of the Hindu faith in Kashmir may be dated from the first phase of Muslim rule in Kashmir. It may be recalled that the first Muslim ruler Rinchen, a Tibetan adventurer who migrated to Kashmir from Ladakh, taking advantage of the then degenerate state of Hindu rule, first became a leading figure in the administration and then captured the throne and became a convert to Islam when the Kashmiri Brahmans refused to admit him into the Hindu religious fold. His reign lasted just three years (1320-23 A.D.) and on his demise was followed by a weak and precarious Hindu rule under Udyandeva. Then Shahmir, a capable Muslim adventurer from Swat, succeeded in capturing power and proclaimed himself as the first Muslim Sultan (1339-1342 A.D.) under the title of shamas-ud-Din. According to recorded authentic accounts, the first phase of Muslim rule was partly tolerant towards Hindus and, in fact, retained for some time the use of Sanskrit as an alternate medium of official business till it was completely replaced by Persian. Then came the rule of Sultan Sikander, alias Butshikan or Idol Breaker. During his reign (1389-1413 A.D.) hell was let loose against the Hindus, with large-scale forced conversions and killings, wide-ranging destruction of centuries old places of worship and driving out large numbers of Hindus mainly into neighbouring subordinate Hindu principalities of Kishtwar, Jammu and Rajouri. No dependable statistics of this holocaust have come down to us. It is, however, popularly believed that this massive persecution of Hindus was largely pursued under the directions of the Sultan's Brahman convert Prime Minister, Suha Bhal (later Silif-ud-Din). As a result some of these Saraswat Brahman refugees it is known moved as far South as the Konkan coast of Maharashtra where even till now some of them claim that their remote ancestors migrated from Kashmir. As we know, there is a tradition in Kashmir that as a result of this persecution just seven families of Kashmiri Brahmans escaped this relentless pogrom by taking shelter in remote hide-outs in the mountains.

Let us note, however, that the muse of history, though a relentless deity, occasionally presents us with surprising episodes in the record of human affairs. This was witnessed in Kashmir when Sultan Sikandar's gifted, learned and widely travelled second son, Shahi Khan, ascended the throne in 1420 A.D. and then ruled the state till 1470 A.D. under his better known title of Zain-ul-Abidin. He took serious steps to recall thousands of uprooted Kashmir Brahman and settled them on important projects of national development/ both in the towns and the countryside. He was like Emperor Akbar not only tolerant

towards all religious faiths but was also himself well-versed in Arabic, Persian and Turkish languages and patronised translations into Persian of the ancient Sanskrit religious lore of Hindus.

One need not go over the subsequent history of Kashmir in detail as it involved the lives of these Kashmiri Brahmans. As we know, the rule of Shahmiri dynasty came to an end by the early sixteenth century and was for some decades replaced by the rule of the Chak dynasty. Then, in the larger strategic interests of his vast empire and prompted by the repeated infighting among Chak claimants, Akbar's forces invaded and annexed Kashmir as a province in 1586. Akbar was not interested in offering any kind of Azadi to his Kashmiri subjects. But he tried his best to give them peace and prosperity. It is interesting to note that during this last phase of his rule he visited Kashmir three times and tried his utmost to relieve famine and to revive the traditional special industries of Kashmir. Mughal rule was, on the whole, beneficial for Kashmiri Brahmans because of the proficiency acquired by them in the official Persian language and its literature and their traditional experience of running a stable administration. This sort of comparative peace and stability continued right up to the last declining phase of Mughal rule, till in 1739, Nadir Shah's rule administered the final blow to the power and prestige of the Mughal Empire. This was followed in Kashmir by the comparatively short episode of the very harsh Pathan rule from 1767-1819 A.D. This came to an end by the successful invasion in 1819 of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's army and was followed by the rule of Dogra Maharajas from 1846 to 1947. From 1948 to 1989 there was moderate peace in the Valley and the vast majority of Kashmiri Brahmans along with Pajabi Hindu settlers and small Sikh minority continued to stick to the Valley. It is not intended here to dwell on the forces, both internal and external, that led to the recent large scale eruptions of violence in the Valley and subsequent exodus of a vast number of our non-violent and unarmed people to what they regarded as safer stations outside the Valley. In the context of the subject of this paper, it would appear more pertinent to pinpoint the social and cultural factors that held us together, during the past five centuries, as a distinct ethnic, caste and cultural entity right from the reign of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin to our own present times.

It is relevant to mention here that, following the consolidation of Mughal rule, quite a number of Kashmiri Brahman families migrated to other Indian regions and settled mainly in the urban centres of Delhi-Agra, United Provinces (now called U.P.), Rajputana and in Lahore-Amritsar during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, while a few of them went as far as Orissa, Bengal and the Central Provinces. Kashmir however continued to remain the main cultural regional centre of this peculiarly distinct ethnical and social entity. It may be of interest now to consider what were the factors that held them together, thus and what new factors political social and cultural threaten this integrity at the present stage.

First, following the spasmodic and intermittent migration of Kashmiri Brahmans during the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries to regions outside Kashmir, mainly to seek better opportunities of scholarly or official work, the community was divided into two sections — those who stayed back in the Valley and those who migrated to other regions off India. Even so, they 'held together in many matter which may be detailed now.

Second, there was the vital question of language. Those who stayed back in the Valley cultivate Sanskrit for their religious lore and numero ceremonials covering a Brahman's progress from birth to death. With the establishment and consolidation of Muslim rule in the fourteenth century they cultivated the study of Persian and with the extension of British rule over North India, of English later. But, so far as their mother tongue was concerned, people in the Valley stuck to Kashmir down to the present times while the migrants adopted Urdu or Hindi for use at home or in everyday life. In spite of this divergence however, the migrant community stuck fast together socially and continued to observe all the traditional Kashmiri type festivals like Sont (or Basant), Pun (on Ganesh Chaturdashi in Chaitra) and Shivratri (in Phalgun) as these were observed back in the Valley. Moreover they continued following their traditional

rituals as relating to birth, Kahnehtar (namkaran), Yagnopavit weddings, deaths and the year-long rituals of Shradhs as observed for their dead ones in Kashmir. Also many of them retained or revived their contacts with their ancestral purohits (family priests) back in Kashmir.

Moreover, till recent times, Kashmiri Brahmans in the Valley or outside were very rigid in established wedding relations of their sons and daughters only with the members of their exclusive Kashmiri Brahman community. During my student days, Lucknow (1928-30) there was quite a large community of Kashmiri Brahmans dwelling in this town, probably the largest such exclusive community anywhere outside Kashmir; and they at some time during the earlier century established a residential centre of their own which is still known as "Kashmiri Mohalla". Through my close contacts with some of these gentlemen of my extended biradari, I came to know that right from their settlement in the Nawabi centre of Lucknow, they were very rigid in fixing marriage relationships among their own small community, though they were not averse to accepting from Kashmir, any young men of presentable qualifications and prospects who were available.

Before I proceed further on this topic let me maintain that there was at one stage a marked distinction between the two Kashmiri communities based in the Valley and those settled in the towns outside Kashmir. The latter were generally better placed, economically and culturally, while their racial blood brothers in Kashmir could be divided into three distinct categories well-placed state officials or landlords, members of the lower middle class working usually as clerks or school teachers, and a smaller categories of have-nots seeking their livelihood in private service or petty business ventures. But till even the early twenties of the present century, practically all Kashmiri Brahman males in Kashmir were literate, as they had been for centuries past, while only a very small number of girls living in the towns of Kashmir went regularly to any schools, for girls. As against this, the womenfolk of the Kashmiri Brahman families outside Kashmir were educated in Hindi and even in basic English. In this regard the situation is vastly transformed in present times. A large number of our womenfolk from Kashmir are now highly qualified, both in the general and the technical lines, and are working in India and abroad holding prestigious posts. As regards the Valley, by 1980s, it would be hard to come across any illiterate Pandit girl in the towns or the countryside. Also during the past fifty years or so, a large number of our young men have come out of Kashmir and are working on challenging jobs in India and abroad. If I am not wrong, these new migrants have largely overtaken in numbers the K. P. migrants of the past two centuries. Most of these migrants are doing very well outside Kashmir, and in foreign countries as well.

Since 1990, a new problem collectively faces the community. Most of them have been uprooted from the Valley, and the vast majority of these migrants are living in subhuman conditions in camps provided by the State and the Central Governments at Udampur, Nagrota, Jammu, Delhi and oilier towns. Many of the older migrants are dying under pressure of their present living conditions. Among the rest there are petty landowning families, small scale business owners, and a few thousand J & K Government employees who have still several years to go before they reach superannuation. Apart from these, some of the worst sufferers through this tragic holocaust are our young students whose educational careers and ambitions have been cruelly disrupted. In the face of this disaster it is difficult to understand how we can retain our age-old social and ethnic identity.

Another unprecedented development facing our identity is the result of an overwhelming growth in the number of our educated and job-seeking young women. As a consequence of the growth of these job-seeking young people dispersed over India and foreign lands, it appears difficult to imagine how we can now restrict our marriage relations within the limited fold of our community. Similarly, as regards the problem of a common mother tongue, the position now is almost beyond remedy. Most of our children now born and raised in different regions of India or abroad don't speak Kashmiri or sometimes even Hindi.

Possibly around some time in the fourteenth century when the lower Hindu castes disappeared, from the population of the Valley, the male members of the residual Brahman community, were apparently well-versed in the traditional orthodox ceremonials through, the medium of Sanskrit; governing a Brahman's progress from birth to death. Later, probably around the reign of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin, following their recall and rehabilitation, many of them got so absorbed in government jobs, business and agriculture that they did not have the leisure to attend to these rituals. So, according to traditions, it was decided that each married couple should accept their son-in-law and his succeeding progeny as Kula gurus or family priests. In course of time the Brahmans thus came to be divided into two sections, Karkuns and Purohits.

Quite till recent times marriages between these two sections were very rare, if 'not forbidden. Now, with the tremendous advance in education generally scientific and technological during the past fifty years, most aspiring young persons from the purohit class have given up their traditional priestly functions and taken up varied jobs elsewhere. So the number of remnants of the older priestly profession is getting exhausted from year to year; and in a short while no such experts in arranging our lengthy ceremonial performances like the Yagnopavit will be available anywhere round the world. This too will lead to a sort of partial erosion of our special identity as Sarswat Brahmans. So, in the light of this scenario, how are Kashmiri Brahmans to maintain their traditional identity? It might help to advance some possibilities in this regard.

Obviously, in the context of the overall situation now prevailing, Kashmiri Brahmans must discard their traditional diverse and lengthy schedules of all ceremonies from birth to death and adopt the simpler practices now followed by Arya Samajists and other reformed Hindu sects all over the world. Then there is a beacon of hope provided by the various social organisations set up by Kashmiri

Brahmans in various foreign countries, like Europe and North America, and various regions of India owning affiliation to the apex organisation, the All India Kashmiri Samaj, some of these bodies issue regular news sheets and New Delhi Periodicals, the more important of these being Naad New Delhi, and Koshur Samachar, New Delhi. It so happens that the writer of this article has been associated with the latter from its very inception. During the last two or three years both its quality and presentation have improved considerably. Only I should like to tell them that in the contributions relating to our experiences in Kashmir during the last six to seventy years the factual material might be scrutinized in a more effective manner.

Then there is the last and still lingering hope resting on the keen desire of lots of our uprooted people to return to Kashmir and get rehabilitated in peace and honour. If such a possibility is within realisation in a reasonably near future, the main essential demands we could reasonably make are a firm establishment of the rule of law, and some protective safeguards for us in the constitution corresponding to the generous measures incorporated in the Indian Constitution for a very small minority community like the Anglo-Indians. When such a situation dawns on our sacred ancestral homeland, some of us could even try to participate in the efforts of our Kashmir Muslim brethren to revive our active interest in the growth and development of Kashmiri language and literature. At my very advanced years may not live long enough to witness that possible development. Even so I still dream sometimes of such a glorious dawn breaking over Kashmir.



Cultural Aspect of Kashmir

Kashmir situated as it is happy isolation from the dusty plains, its people have taken vigorously down the centuries to intellectual pursuits. It was thus that Kashmir produced many intellectual luminaries through out the ages, who contributed to the fund of Indian literature and thought this land can boast of a galaxy of talents that it has given to the rest of India. Who can deny the outstanding merit of Mirza Mohan Lal, Dr. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Bharat Ratna Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru? Who can forget the names of "Nasim (Pandit Daya Shankar), "Sarashar" (Rattan Nath Dhar) "Chakbast Brij Narain, Dr. Mohammad Iqbal, Agha Hashar, Gani Kashmiri, Maulana Anwar Shah, and Mulla Farouqi?



Mohan Kishen Tiku
(Jammu)

Late Dr. K.M. Panikkar, statesman and scholar, has observed thus; "Walled off by high mountain and endowed with unequalled natural beauty, Kshmir remained an inviolate sanctuary of Indian culture. Till at least the 14th century, Buddhism, Saivism, and Sanskrit learning flourished in the Valley and produced a remarkable rich culture. The integration of Kashmir life was so complete, that in one of his most remarkable books Kshemendra, who was himself a saivaite, produced was on the Adivadanans of the Buddha, a classic in literature.

Medicine

The origin of Indian medicine is based upon the works of charak, Kashmir born renowned physician and author of Charaka Snmihita. This great work is divided into eight volumes. First and foremost work on the science of Sex is "Ratirahasya" (KokShastra) which was written by Koka Pandit, one time Prime Minister of Kashmir. Another book on this Science written earlier by Vatasayana, also a Kashmiri, is called "Kamasutra".

Philosophy and Literature

In the literary field Kashmir contributed many famous classics. Most of them were written between 8th and 13th century A.D. Kashmir's Trika Philosophy (Called Shaivism) rests on the conception of absolute monism. Vasu Gupta, Somanand, Utpalacharyan and Abhinava Gupta are among other well-known exponents of this creed. Indian Brahmins used to complete their lore at the feet of these learned sages of Kashmir.

Bhim Bhat's Ravan Arjuniya, Damodar Gupta's Kuttini Mata, Vallabh Dev's commentaries of Kali Das' works, and Som Dev's Katha Saritasagara rank with greatest emanations from Kashmir in Indian literature. Among the important Sanskrit works may be mentioned Jagadhar Bhat's Shivkusumanjali which is noted for its literary merit. Bahari-i-Tavil in Persian poetry written Munshi. Bhavani Das Kachroo is also rated highly. Patahjali who was a Kashmiri, is considered to be the greatest Sanskrit grammarian. Pundit Ralnivjera wrote 14 books on Buddhism and Mulla Muhsin Fani wrote a book on the religions of the world, called Dabistan-i-Mazahab. Lalla Vakyan and Rishinama of Nund Rishi, which both have been rendered into English are recognised as treasures of abstruse philosophy. Among drama mention may be made of Som Panti's Zaina Charita and Yodh Bhat, Zaina Vilas (which are outstanding for their style. It is worth mentioning that in the rest of India, a scholars education was deemed incomplete unless he had undertaken a scholastic pilgrimage to Sharda University in Kashmir, which produced India's great scholars of that time. Hieun-Tsang, famed chinese traveller, who came to Kashmir in 631 A.D., was impressed by the remarkable advancement of Sanskrit lore in Kashmir. Arthur W. Ryder, translator of Panchtantra in a translator's introduction writes, "Dr. Hertal, the learned and painstaking editor of the text, used by the present translator, believes that the original work was composed in Kashmir about 200 BC. This book was written by Vishnu Sharma.

History

Kashmiri, living in the mountain locked recess possess an inborn historical sense. "Rajatarangini" of Kalhana Pandit is based on the works of historians who were living even much before this monumental work was undertaken in the 11th century A.D. No, historical work of India can compare with this great book. The late R.S. Pandit compared Kalhana to Homer and Aeschylus for, a poet of veracity. Kalhana was the first rate Sanskrit historian of Middle ages. But for his work the ancient culture and history of Kashmir would have been shrouded in oblivion. Bana, a Kashmiri, wrote, Harsh Charitran, Hemchanda (1088-1172 A. D.) wrote Kamara Palcharitam. A rich source of Kashmir's earlier history is Nilamatpurana, Kalhana consulted this work. Bilhana Pandit of Kashmir was the court historian of king Vikramaditya. He wrote Vikramankadeva Charitam, which is a great scholastic contribution to Indian History.

Engineering and Astrology

Ratna Kantha, Bhaskar Acharya and Aryabhata are well-known for the great labour put in by them in the field of Indian astrology.

Many scholars from outside used to come to Kashmir for learning this science. Ruins of temples and monuments which are scattered all over Kashmir testify to the fact that ancient Kashmiris had mastered and perfected the great arts of engineering and sculpture, The bronze works of the Hindu-Period represents the high grade of skill and manipulation attained by the Kashmiris.

"The architectural remains of Kashmir are perhaps the most remarkable of the existing monuments in India". remarks Sir Alexander Cunningham, Mulony in his "History of Kashmir" writes: "As a whole", I think that the Kashmirian architecture with its noble fluted pillars, its vast colonnades, its lofty pediments and its elegant trifolied arches is fully entitled to be classed as a distinct style.

Music

Sharang Deva, a Kashmiri, who lived in the Vale in the first half of the 13th century, was the author of Sanget Ratnakara. This book is considered to be an authoritative work on the Indian music. Technical details regarding instruments and rages are found in this book. Some commentaries have been written on it in some Indian languages such as Telugu, Sanskrit and Hindi.

Mr. Grierson in Linguistic Survey Part-II has observed thus : "No one values the contributions of Kashmiri Pandit to Sanskrit literature more highly than I. For upwards of two thousands years Kashmir has been home of Sanskrit learning and from this small Valley are issued master pieces of history, poetry, romance, fable and philosophy. Kashmiris are proud and justly proud of the literary glories of their land. For centuries it (Kashmir) was the home of the greatest Sanskrit scholars and at least one great Indian religion, Shaivism has found some of its most eloquent teachers on the banks of the Vitasta".

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ON PRESERVING KASHMIRI CULTURAL HERITAGE

The issue of preserving the cultural heritage of Kashmiri Pandits assumes importance as the community has been forced to live in exile. The community is dispersed in different parts of the country and indeed in different parts of the world. How is the cultural heritage of the community to be preserved under these circumstances? This question is being raised in different places.

In order to address this question, it is important to make a distinction. While culture refers to higher attainments of a community, it also refers to its way of life. Just as one cultivates a garden, a community may refine its thought and wish to preserve it. As far as these attainments are concerned, Kashmiri Pandits have reasons to be proud. Kashmiri Shaivism in particular has attracted international attention with significant contributions made by different scholars from Abhinava Gupt (10th century) to Swami Laxman Joo of the present time. Abhinava Gupt was not only a scholar of Shaivism but also a major philosopher whose contributions in the field of aesthetic appreciation are highly relevant. In the field of literature, Kashmiri can boast of such distinguished persons as Lalleshwari or Lal Ded (14 century), Habba Khotun (16 century), and Arnimal (18 century), among others. This heritage which includes other distinguished names needs to be preserved. We need to make sure that all the important texts are collected, catalogued, and made available. A good beginning may be made by setting up an ambitious academy of Kashmiri culture with national and international support that could be entrusted with this task and with the task of encouraging research and publication. Such an academy could act as a central agency for promoting interest in different parts of the world. Not only philosophical and literary texts but also other aspects of our cultural heritage, such as music, need to be preserved and promoted. Sufiana Kalam and a musical instrument such as Santoor deserve to be mentioned in this context. We need to keep in mind that Shaivism as well as Sufism have contributed to the idea of Kashmiriyat that is characterised by a belief in harmony between different religions. It is this belief that has been undermined by Islamic fundamentalism. The best way to counter it is to preserve in our cultural heritage all those elements that confirm our common humanity.

With respect to the way of life of Kashmiri Pandits, the greatest fear is that the younger generation is losing the Kashmiri language. It is here that the proposed academy of Kashmiri culture can make an important contribution, especially by popularising language courses developed on modern lines. Sabhas and Samitis can play their part by adopting these courses. We should not overlook that language teaching has to be done in a professional manner. There are notable advances that have been made in this area as can be seen, for example, in the manner in which Max Mueller Bhavans in this country teach German. We need to learn from these advances and assign the task of developing suitable courses in Kashmiri to competent persons. A major challenge in this respect will be to further develop devanagari script in a manner that is both simple and suitable for phonetic nuances of the Kashmiri language.

Sabhas and Samitis have yet another task in the preservation of our cultural heritage. By organising functions and festivals, they can keep the community together within their respective areas. Not just Kashmiri cuisine but also other aspects of our culture need to be served so that the younger generation develops a taste for them.

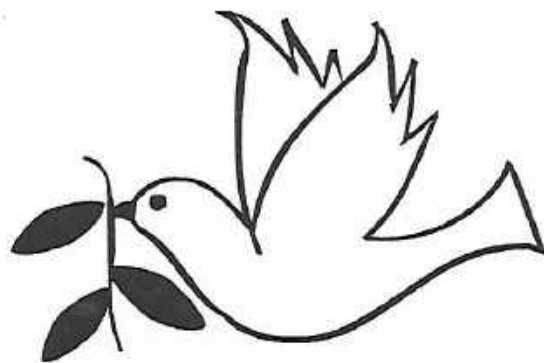
While these efforts are made, we cannot escape from recognising that a long-lasting solution to the issue of our cultural heritage as indeed of our existence as a community lies in our finding a place, sthan, where we can live in security and dignity. If we carry on in a dispersed manner, we may prosper as individuals and families but we shall not be able to retain our distinct identity for long. We need a vision of our collective future where our cultural concerns are not divorced from political solutions. Away forward may be to have some of the best minds of the community meet in a workshop and have serious discussions in the form of brainstorming to find answers to pressing problems. I have often been told that the answers are known but they cannot be implemented. A solution that cannot be carried out is no solution, nor is a solution acceptable if it carries with it a heavy liability or loss. We need to have answers that satisfy the demands of analysis as well as practice. We need answers that are logical and practical.



Prof. Surendra Munshi
(Kolkata)



With Best Compliments From :-



SPEEDWAY

WE ARE SEVENTY LAKH, NOT SEVEN

No census has ever been conducted on scientific and proper lines of the Kashmiri Pandits community. It is believed that about four lakh Kashmiri Pandits (Hindus) left Kashmir Valley in 1990 after the inhuman atrocities perpetrated on this peaceful community by the Pak sponsored "Mujahids". It is also believed that after 1947, the number of Kashmiri Pandits who left their place of birth in search of livelihood because of step-motherly treatment meted out by the so called "Awami-Hukumat" (the popular regime) must be about three lakhs. So the total population of Kashmiri Pandits having left since 1947 must be about seven lakhs today.



Prof. C. L. Sapru

In fact the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from Kashmir started from the time of Sikandar. But shikan, the iconoclast. Before him, Zulqadar Khan alias Dutch (a descendent of Changez Khan) came from Turkistan with seventy thousand soldiers on horses and invaded Kashmir.

He continued extracting valuable possessions from Kashmiri Hindus and committed undescrible torture on them for eight long months, and forced them to get converted to Islam. After that he made fifty thousand Hindus his captives and slaves and took them along. Above Kulgam, near Devsar, while crossing the Pirpanchal range of mountains, all of them including his army, perished due to heavy snow avalanches. This place is even now called Rata Gajan, the furnace of Batas. Such atrocities continued and remained unending.

Due to the atrocities committed under Aurangzeb's rule, the Kashmiri Pandits met the ninth Guru of sikhs and requested him to save the community from forcibly being converted to Islam. For the sake of protecting Tilak and Janeu, the Shield of India, famed as Hind di Chadar, Guru Teg Bahadur, made the supreme sacrifice.

I have conducted a survey and discovered that most of the Kashmiri Hindus who left their place of birth during the Muslim rule, settled in different parts of India. Due to geographical reasons they forgot their mother tongue, Kashmiri, and mixed with the local Hindus and this way were cut off from their roots. The places they chose for permanent settlement are from nearby Kishtwar, Kangra, (H.P.) to far off east like Gaur Desh (Bengal). Kashmiri Pandits as well as Vaniks' (business clan) Hindus settled even in deep South, Konkan and Karnataka to save their religion and traditions.

The Bhatt Acharya (Bhattacharyas of Bengal, Upadhyayas (Jhas) of Bihar, Bhattas of Gujrat and Maharashtra, Joshis (Jyotishis or Zutshis) of Maharashtra and of Utrakhand and then Saraswats of Maharashtra and Karnataka, are also of Kashmiri Pandit origin.

During the British period, people renamed Saprus as Sapre, Khar as Kher, Handoo as Handa, etc. Those who were doing business of Kesar (saffron) were called Kesarwanis.

Some families are also known by the names of their villages like Kunzroo (of Kunzar village near Tangmarg), Shri Vaastav which means belonging to Srinagar like Gorakhpuri, Lahori, Qandhari, Allahabadi. In Garhwal (Uttarakhand), climatically suiting the then Kashmiri migrants, they established a new township called Shrinagar.

This way I want to emphasize that by merging with the larger Hindu society, we have to make them aware of the fact that their roots are in Kashmir. A relation of mine married his son in a Tamil Brahmin family. He gave me full information about the rituals performed at the Lagan ceremony which prove that (Shaivites) and Ayangars (Vaishnavites) are all of Kashmir origin.

Kashmir is known as Satisar as it was a big lake in the beginning. As per Pandit Ramchandra Kaul "Abhay", Kasheer (Kashmir in local language) is ksheer sagar where Lord Vishnu whose footprint Vishnu pad (Lake in the shape of Vishnu's foot in Kulgam area) lying on Sheshnag, is the origin of mankind. So the "Srishti" started from Kashmir and was established by sage Kashtapa, the origin of the above mentioned people in Kashmir.

JEW'S SHOULD BE OUR ROLE MODEL.

Now like Jews who carved out Israel and settled their came from Russia, Germany, America etc. Jews revived their original mother tongue Hebrew which is now the official language of Israel. They had forgotten it when they settled in Europe etc. All those who have roots in Kashmir have to rise and settle in Kashmir. The Human Rights activists, with the help of United Nations, must help in establishing Home Land by getting the transitory Article 370 of Indian Constitution abolished, paving way for revival of the age-old traditions-cultural, historical, educational, social and political. This will happen when All India Kashmiri Samaj starts a move to unite and bring together all these Indians, with Kashmiri roots, whose number would, without exaggeration, total to nearly 70 lakhs now. Where there is a will there is a way. Maharaja Ranjeet Singh ruled Kashmir for 27 yrs (1819-1846) and settled his army and other Sikhs who are about one lakh now in the Kashmir Valley. वीर भोग्या वसुधरा (This world is ruled by strong and brave people)

The author retired principal Govt. College Baramulla H.O.D. Hindu Camp College (University of Kashmir, Jammu is author of two Kashmiri, one Urdu, one English and fifteen Hindi books. Got several national awards. He edited Kashyap, Neelaja and Satisar journals from Kashmir. After the exodus from Kashmir he edited Kushur Samachar (Hindi) for fifteen years. Presently he is member, editorial board of AIKS NAAD. He is recipient of Senior Fellowship of Dept. of Culture, Govt. of India. He is secretary of J&K Rashtrabhasha Prachar Samiti and a founder of Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Srinagar. Was advisor of KASHMIR FILE a weekly T.V. programme which telecast 25 episodes.

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EARLIEST SETTLERS OF KASHMIR

Kashmir is a saucer-shaped vale with a length of 134 km. a breadth of 38 km. at its broadest point and a mean height of 1800 m. above sea level. It has a temperate climate and during winters the valley is covered with snow. Besides its magnificent woods, enchanting lakes, rivers and meadows and glorious snow clad mountains, it has a remarkable wealth of archaeological sites and monuments ranging from prehistoric times to the Moghul period.

The tradition says that Kashmir was once a lake known as sati-saras, the Lake of sati. The lacustrine deposits locally known as karewas, which are dotted all over the valley, substantiate it. Neolithic man settled on these karewas.

De Terra and Paterson carried out the first exploration in Kashmir during the year 1935. They could not find any remains of the Paleolithic man but later on in 1969-70 Prof. sankalia and a team of the Archaeological Survey of India discovered the first Paleolithic tool from Kashmir. In fact Prof. sankalia claims that these are the earliest Paleolithic remains in the whole of Asia.

De Terra and Paterson first made the discovery of Burzahom during their expedition in 1935. They noticed menhirs at the site. A limited excavation near the menhirs was conducted by them which yielded some black polished ware with incised designs besides some bone and stone tools, the excavated remains were taken to be belonging to 'either a late or an early phase of the Indus Culture.

The Archaeological Survey of India under the directions of shri T.N. Khazanchi undertook the systematic excavations at Burzahom from 1960 to 1971.

The site of Burzahom (34° 10' N. Lat., 73° 54' E. Long, in District srinagar is situated 16 km. north-east of srinagar by the shortest route via Nasim and 24 km. via famous shalimar Gardens of Jahangir. The site is located on the ancient lake bed, locally called Karewa, and commands a panoramic view of the lush green fields of the valley and the shimmering waters of the Dal Lake which is hardly 2 km. away.

With forests abounding in the hills around and with the lakes and the swampy areas lying at a stone's throw, the area is ideal for fishing, fowling and hunting, which is exactly what the earliest settlers did about 4500 years back.

Burzahom in Kashmiri means the place of birch. That birch was available during Neolithic times is proved by burnt birch found during the excavations at Burzahom. The excavations have brought to light four cultural phases. Of these Periods I and II belong to the Neolithic, Period III to the megalithic and Period IV to the early historical period (Post-megalithic).

Period I

The main feature of earliest settlers (Period I) was dwelling pits cut below ground level into the natural soil, which is mostly loess. The pits are well-like structures. The pits were dug out with long stone Celts



R. N. Kaw



and traces of the cuts made are still visible. The pits are circular or oval in plan, narrow at the top and wide at the base. The diameter varied according to the needs of the people. The largest of these pits measures 2.74 m. at the top 4.57-m. at the base and 3.95 m. in depth.

The presence of postholes on the periphery suggests a birch cover supported on wooden posts as protection against the inclemencies of weather. Though a few steps were provided in the deeper pits, these do not reach the bottom and probably would have narrowed down the living space and some other methods must have been used to reach the bottom. Descent into the smaller pits could be made directly from the ground level and as such no landing steps were provided. Presence of ash, charcoal and potsherds within these pits clearly indicate human occupation. From the evidence of stone hearths near the mouths of some of these pits, it can be inferred that the settlers led also an open-air life. Presence of shallow storage-pits, in close proximity also suggests that the pit dwellers used to shift to the ground level on sunny days or during summer months.

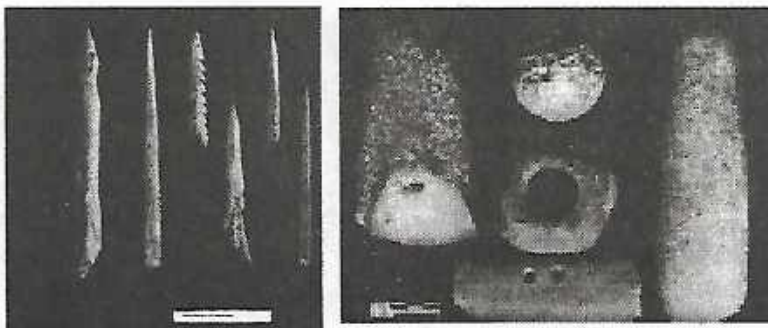
The dwelling pits were thus the devices made by early Neolithic man to fight the severe winters of Kashmir. Besides the circular pits, pit chambers that are rectangular or sometimes squarish have also been found. These are also below the ground level. The size of these square/rectangular chambers varies. The recorded evidence of size of one of the rectangular chamber is 6.40 x 7.00 m. These chambers were also cut into the ground level up to a depth of roughly one metre. Some of these pit chambers had depressions on all the four sides, deep post-holes on the Four Corners for the superstructure to cover the chambers perhaps with a sloping roof, storage pits and hearths in the centre. Some of the chambers had stone hearths while the others had clay hearths, which indicates human occupation.

Both circular dwelling pits and pit chambers were used for dwelling purposes. It is rather interesting that the pit chambers abound in the central portion of the mound and the dwelling circular pits are mostly on the periphery. It is quite likely that pit chambers were preferred since more members could be accommodated and could be more comfortable for residential purposes.

The earliest settlers at the site used hand made earthen pots. Many types then in use continue to be used in the villages of Kashmir even now. The pottery is mostly crude hand made ware, the colour being chiefly steel grey, shades of dull red, brown and buff. They are coarse in fabric and finish and are represented by bowls, vases and stem. Mat impressions are a recurrent feature on many types especially on pots having a flat base which indicates that they were made on mats. Wheel made pottery is however, absent in this period.

No evidence has come across during excavations regarding the disposal of the dead in Neolithic Period I. The total absence of any burials of this period may indicate that the people may have adopted some other practice for disposal of the dead.

Apart from the unique structural sequences, bone and stone tools are characteristic. Bone tools as an organized industry is most developed here. The types are prolific and the manufacturing techniques provide an interesting insight into the level of development.



The main types are harpoons for fishing, needles with or without eyes and awls used probably for stitching skins, spear points, arrow-heads and

daggers for hunting game, scrapers for treating skins. Tools have also been fashioned out of antler horns.

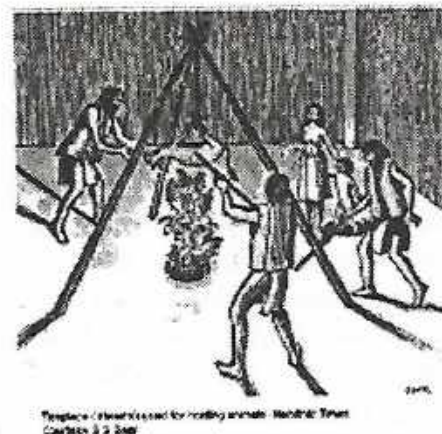
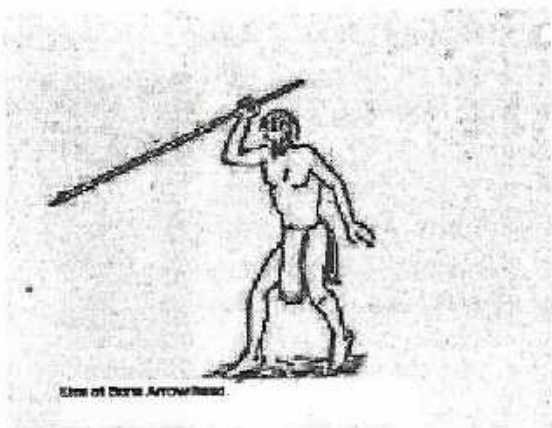
The main types in stone are axes, chisels, adzes, pounders, mace-heads, points and picks.

There is no positive evidence for cultivation of cereals but a stone quern has been found during excavations in one of the pit chambers.

Period II

In the next stage are structures in mud or mud bricks with regular floors made of rammed karewa soil. Extensive timber structures are also indicated from the numerous postholes found at the site. These extensive structures suggest some sort of a community living. The subterranean pits and chambers used in the earlier period were no longer used, some of these were filled up and plastered with mud and covered with a thin coat of red ochre

to serve as a floor. The use of red-ochre during this period was noticed in a major portion of the site excavated. Superimposition of floors has also been noticed in this period. In one of the trenches, as many as forty-five well arranged post-holes were



noticed. Covering an area of 3.96 m. x 1.21 m. Associated with another floor was a hearth and a oval pit with a mean diameter of 1.04 m. A few mud platforms were also found with partitions walls on them. A few copper arrowheads were, however, found in Period II which may have been due to commercial contacts.

Pottery is generally hand made. A burnished black ware of medium fabric made its appearance in this period. It included such shapes as the dish with a hollow stand, globular pot, jar, stem with triangular perforations and a funnel-shaped vase. A distinctive type in the black burnished ware was a high-necked jar with a flaring rim, globular body and flat base. On the lower part of the neck were incised oblique notches. The deluxe ware of the period is the black burnished ware. There were, however, a few painted pots, which may have been imported. Towards the close of the Neolithic levels a wheel made red ware pot containing 950 beads was found. The beads are one of agate and carnelian and show an excellent workmanship. A red ware wheel made painted pot with horned figure from the early levels of Period II has also been found.



This period indicates peculiar burials, which were found mostly within the settlement. Human beings were buried in oval pits, mostly dug

into the house floors or in the compounds with the inner side of the pits plastered with lime. A noteworthy feature of the human burials of this period was the use of red ochre on the bones. Four of the human skeletons found were buried in a crouching position.

The burials showed both primary and secondary interments, the former containing extended articulated skeletons and the latter only selected bones. Excepting in a few cases, no grave furniture was noticed. On the other hand whole animals or their bones were sometimes deposited with the human skeletal material. Evidence of trepanning showing seven finished and four unfinished circular wholes on the skull was present in one of the burials. The animals represented in the burials are dog, wolf and ibex. The most interesting amongst these was a burial showing skeletal remains belonging to five wild dogs and antler's horn. It appears that pet animals particularly dogs, were sacrificed and buried along with the human body.

The objects both in stone and bone of this period are similar to those of the earlier one but are more in number and better finished. Interesting are the rectangular harvesters with a curved cutting edge and two or more holes on either side and double edged picks in stone and long sized needles with or without eye in bone. However, a unique composite tool has been found in this period. It is a borer on a long hollow bone like the cobbler's poker.

Period III

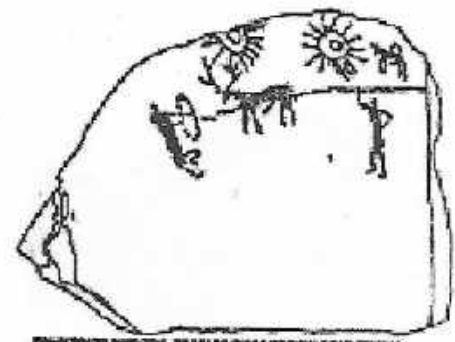
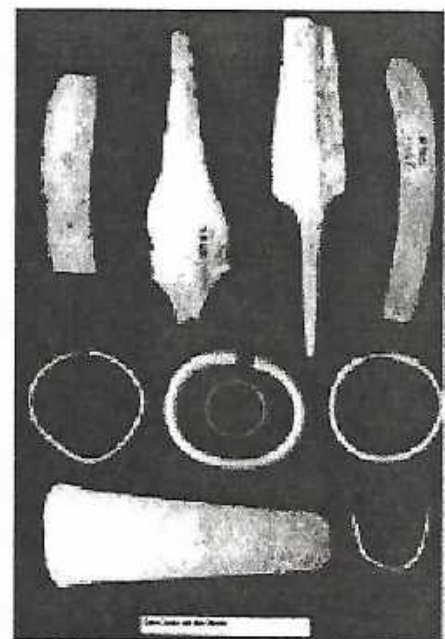
The Neolithic period is followed by megalithic culture associated with the erection of massive stones or menhirs, most probably commemorative. The material culture of the megalithic people is characterized by the use of a gritty red ware pottery. Bone and stone tools continue to be in use but the incidence is pretty less. The only marked difference is the use of wheel-made pottery. A few metallic objects have also been found. Besides, the menhirs, rubble structures have also been found.

Period IV

The last activity at the site is early historical period and it can be dated a little earlier than the Buddhist site of Harwan ascribable to the 3rd-4th century A.D. Mud brick structures have been found. The pottery was predominantly a wheel made red ware. A few metallic objects have been found.

Neolithic Art

The earliest attempt at art in the Neolithic period is evidenced in Period II by the discovery of an engraved stone slab found, fixed in a rectangular structure forming some sort of a tank. The engraved face was placed upside down, making it non-functional in the place in which it has been found. The stone slab (base width 70 cm.) is flat on both faces the engraved side being smooth compared to the un-engraved one. Towards the top it is partially damaged, as a result the uppermost part of the scene is slightly lost. The engraving depicts a hunting scene showing an antler being pierced from behind with a long spear by a hunter and an arrow being discharged by another hunter from the front. The topmost portion shows two suns and a dog. Showing two suns



may probably have some symbolic value and perhaps may indicate hunting in daylight. If the presumption is correct then one sun may be depicting the rising sun and another the setting sun. Another stone slab showing an incomplete pattern has also been found from the same structure.

Chronology

Following are some of the select list of radiocarbon dates from the Neolithic levels of Burzahom based on half-life value of 5730 years.

TF-15 1530 + 110 B.C.

TF-1291825 + 110 B.C.

TF-131850 + 125 B.C.

TF-14 2025 + 350 B.C.

TF-127 2100 + 115 B.C.

TF-123 2225 + 115 B.C.

TF-128 2375 + 120 B.C.

Conclusions

The Neolithic culture of Kashmir Valley has its own distinctive traits not shared by its counterparts from elsewhere in India. Its wide range of bone and stone tools, dwelling pits, perforated knife or blade, burials of animals with human skeletons and purposeful burial of only animals mark it as something unique. Dwelling pits, application of red ochre on the dead, burials of animals with their masters perforated knives of stone or harvesters and the characteristic bone tools link the Neolithic of Kashmir with north China, Central Asia, some sites in Russia, as also in Afghanistan and Iran.

Sh. R.N. Kaw retired as Chief Photographer from Archaeological Survey of India. He was associated in Excavations at Burzahom- Kashmir from 1963 to 1970. Due to his association in this excavation he wrote the article "Earliest Settlers of Kashmir". and it is also published in "Essays in Indian Proto History", edited by D.P. Agrawal and Dilip Chakraborty, and published in 1978.

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BIRTH OF ALL INDIA KASHMIRI SAMAJ (AIKS)

In February 2009, AIKS published, in the form of a book-let, 'A brief history of All India Kashmiri Samaj - 1980- 2009'. In the preface to the book-let, the then President of AIKS Shri M.K.Kaw indicated that the history of AIKS had been kept brief and to the point with the hope that further editions of the first book-let would be more detailed and analytical.

In a communication dated May 9, 2009, addressed to the writer of this brief report, Dr. B.N.Sharga, senior vice-president of AIKS informed as under :

"Actually the idea of forming an all India umbrella organisation of Kashmiri Pandits took its shape in a routine meeting of Allahabad Kashmiri Samaj which was held in 1980 at the residence of Prof. Uma.Shankar Kochak who was Dean of Faculty of Music & Fine Arts of Allahabad University, under the chairmanship of Justice Pratap Narain Bakshi. The important K.P's Present in this meeting were Pt. Omkar Nath Sharga, Justice Pratap Narain Harkauli, Lt. Col. Atul Narain Shivpuri, Pt. Raj Kisher. Shangloo, Pt. Prakash Narain Hanga, Pt. Prabhat Hukku, Pt. Jyoti Mushran, Mrs. Mala Tankha, Mrs. Jyoti Hangal and few others. As Justice P. N. Bakshi and Pt. Omkar Math Sharga were the President and Secretary of Allahabad Kashmiri Samaj at that time who floated that idea, so they were made the Founder President and Founder General Secretary, to carry forward the idea and to nurse this newly born baby with proper care and caution".



L.C.Kaul

In another communication dated October 15, 2009 to this writer, Dr. B.N.Sharga wrote :

"I have traced some information regarding the formation of AIKS which I want to share with you as you are interested in academics. Sometime in September 1979, just four people Justice P.N.Bakshi, Prof. U.S.Kochak, Pt. O.N.Sharga and Pt. Pt. Prabhat Hukku, over a cup of tea, at the residence of Prof. Kochak floated the idea of forming an all India organisation for cultural unification of Kashmiri Pandits. The whole idea took its concrete shape when All India Kashmiri Samaj (AIKS) was formally launched on 8th March, 1980 and Justice P.N.Bakshi became its Founder President, Pt. O.N.Sharaga Founder General Secretary and Pt.Jyoti Mushran its Founder Treasurer. I am sending you a copy of the rare photograph which was taken to mark that historic moment for your record".

From 1980 to 2009, the following were elected as Presidents of A.I.E.S. :

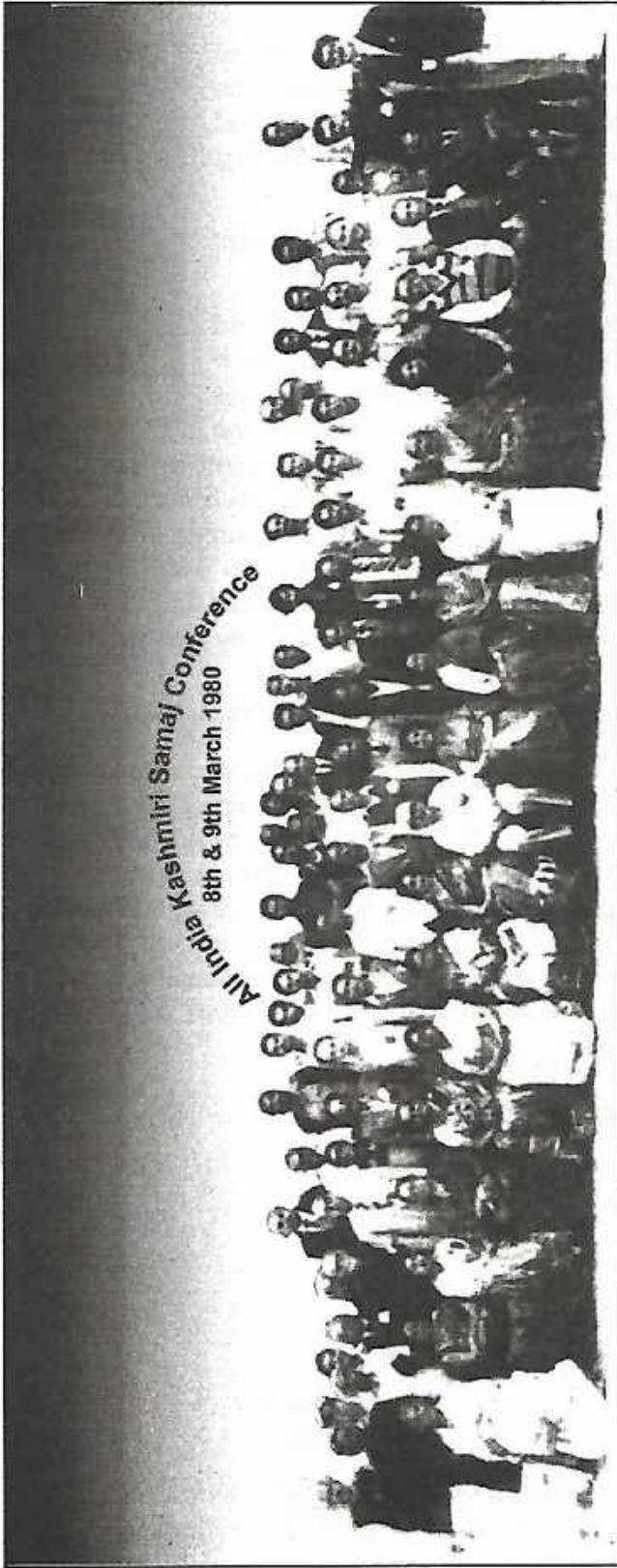
(i) Justice P.N.Bakshi	Founder President	1980-1983
(ii) Col. P.N.Kak(Rtd.)	2nd President	1984-1985
(iii) Dr. Nandlal Zutshi	3rd President	1986-1987
(iv) Brig. R.N.Madan	4th President	1988-1991
(v) Pt. D.N.Munshi	5th President	1991-1994
(vi) Pt. J.N.Kaul	6th President	1994-2002
(vii) Pt. M.K.Kaw	7th President	2003-2008
(viii) Pt. Moti Kaul	8th President	2009 till date

(L. C Kaul)
1.1.2010

(Pt. L.C.Kaul is a former Education Officer of Municipal Corporation Delhi; ex-Gen Secretary, ex-Vice President of AIKS, ex-Secretary and current Chairman of AIKS TRUST)



All India Kashmiri Samaj Conference
8th & 9th March 1980



On Chairs : - Mrs. Savitri Wattal, Mrs. Sheila Zutshi, Miss Nalini Chak, Mrs. Sarla Madan, Mrs. Savitri Wanchoo, Mrs. Kamla Chak, Mrs. P. N. Kaula, Mrs. Kamla Sapru, Justice, P. N. Bakshi, (President), Mrs Rita Bakshi, Mrs. Rati Dar, Mrs. Malini Kaul, Mrs. B. N. Tikoo, Mrs. Rati Xatju, Miss Anita Dar, Mr. M. L. Raina, Mr. T. N. Bhatt, Mr. P. K. Raina.

Standing: 1st Row :- N. Dhar, Mr. A. N. Kaul, Justice B. N. Karju, Dr. N. L. Zutshi, Mr. S. P. Kachroo, Prof. K. N. Dhar, H. L. Wattal, Justice B. N. Sapru, Dr. H. N. Shivpuri, Mr. P. N. Kaula, Maj. B. K. Kaul, Col. D. N. Bakaya, Mr. Kuldip Razdan, Mr. A. N. Ganjoo, Mr. V. N. Channa, Mr. D. K. Batu, Mr. P. N. Dhar, Mr. U.S. Kochak, Mr. P. N. Kilapi, Mr. S. L. Raina, Mr. R. P. Mattoo, Mr. B. Kachroo, Mr. P. N. Dhar, Mr. P. N. Tikoo, Mr. P. L. Dhan, Mr. P. L. Sapru, Mr. P. L. Dhar, Mr. O.N. Sharga, Mr. P. L. Razdan, Mr. P. N. Kaul, Mr. M. K. Pajan.

Standing: 2nd Row : -Messers J. Mushran, R. N. Wanchoo, J. Michu, J. Dhar, G. N. Peshin, A. Khushu, M. N. Hukku, S. K. Takru, A. K. Kaul, P. M. N. Shivpuri, G. N. Sharga, Y. Tikoo, P. N. Paul, R. K. Shangloo, L. N. Sharma, P. N. Hangal, A. N. Sapru, V. V. Kachroo, B. L. Mattoo, B. L. Peer, A. Dar, B. N. Kaul, M. K. Shangloo, B. L. Wantoo, C. P. Dhar, T. N. Dhar.

EMERGING POLITICAL SCENARIO AND KASHMIR

The State of Jammu and Kashmir has been witnessing perceptible changes on social, political and economic front during the last two decades. The twenty years of turmoil have witnessed upheavals, revivals and reversals on all fronts. The terrorist activities have become the order of the day. 5 lac Kashmiri Pandits faced exodus from their homes and hearth. Thousands of people including a large number of Kashmiri Pandits lost their lives. The vails and travails of people would touch anybody's heart and every one lamented on the lost glory of Kashmir.



Prof. A.N. Sadhu

Kashmiri Pandits have a history of 5000 years. They have witnessed the transformation of Kashmir to its present status. They have richly contributed to the growth and glory of Kashmir through all phases of its evolution. The exodus of Kashmiri Pandit in the last decade of the 20th century is a sad commentary on humanity of which we should have been singing the songs of glory.

Till 1990, it was known that Art. 370 of Indian constitution has provided a special status to the state of Jammu and Kashmir and state legislature would ratify all the central laws and regulations, applied to the state of Jammu and Kashmir. It was unambiguously stated by everyone within the State and outside, that the State is an integral part of the Indian Union. The elected legislatures had absolutely no problem in ratifying all the Central laws and welcomingly making the same operational in the State to the advantage of the state subjects. Every thing looked settled and processes, political and administrative were in place and the entire system of State functioning was stable and forward moving. The state was witnessing socio-economic development in a reasonable measure and was aspiring for being a prosperous and peaceful region by the turn of the century. Unfortunately, our enemies were equally active to halt this march towards growth and glory and hatched a conspiracy under which the state witnessed unprecedented violence in the last decade of the previous century and it continued unabated in the first decade of the present century as well. This brought the state of Jammu and Kashmir under international focus again and settled questions of the state's relationship with Indian Union were revisited. In this complex and turbulent situation, new groups emerged raising slogans of independence, separatism, greater autonomy, self-rule, achievable independence and many others.

These new turns and twists cause immense concern to ethnic minorities including Kashmiri Pandits. I have always been making it clear that the so called Kashmir issue cannot be solved without reference to its 5000 years old history, without reference to ethnic-religious groups and without reference to the emerging world order where peace is on premium and not the conflict. Kashmiri Pandits are particularly on cross roads. Having lost their homes and hearth, they are faced with formidable problems of preserving their identity, checking unmanageable dispersal, securing gainful employment for their youth and getting their due share in the state economy, polity and society besides securing better living conditions for the displaced persons living in very harsh conditions in migrant camps and rented accommodations.

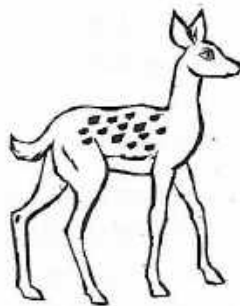
There has been no dearth of good words spoken for Kashmiri Pandits during these twenty years but no change occurred in the ground situation. The community remained neglected and its problems unaddressed. Kashmiri Pandits have no representation in the state cabinet, they stand marginalized in the government jobs, their properties are encroached and usurped and their shrines and temples desecrated. The whole community stands in disarray and finds no caretaker of its interests.

In spite of the hardships, the community has undergone, it kept its march on. No member of the community has ever asked for doles, each one asks for his rights to which he is constitutionally entitled to in a democratic polity. Kashmiri Pandits have clearly shown their intrinsic worth and strength and even in these hard circumstances, our young boys and girls have done us proud.

While we have the strength to fight for political and economic empowerment, we have also a rich heritage at our back. The community has made rich contributions to religion, philosophy, spiritualism and knowledge. The community has produced several outstanding persons in the field of education, administration and governance. The need of the hour is that we remain united, remain attached to our culture and heritage and maintain peace with fast changing world on technological front. We will get our due and we are bold enough to achieve our goals. The day will dawn when we all breathe in the fresh air of our surroundings left back in the valley for the last twenty years. I wish all my brethren growth and glory, where-ever they are, however they are.



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SHARIKA \ HAER

Ghulam Rasool Santosh (Kashmir)

With an evocation to the devine Mother, I shall venture to give what may, at best, be an over-view of the most exalted Shri-Yantra enshrined in the lap of the Hari-Parvat. This yantra, the fountain of all knowledge, is vertically rock-carved on one flank of the Hari-Parvat hill, known as Chakreshwari in local parlance.

The name Chakreshwari in itself is a composite sound, when scanned it reveals number of revelations. "Cha" is pronounced as "tse" in Kashmiri language. Thus "Tsekr-i-shawar" reveals that the chakra has six twists. "Tsek-i-resh-wear", basically it is the abode of Rishis. The name, "Kashir", their motherland, is same as Sharika. "Sha" meaning six, "aer" the basic triangle forming the letter "ka" in Sharda script. Another form would be, "Ka-sha-ira" six "ka's afloat, which is a clear reference to the Sati-Sara, the Kashmir. The yantra hexagon, star in itself is created by three "ka's" which is Treka, Kashmir's Shiva philosophy. Same three "ka's" are six "ka's" in motion which is "Shaka". This hexagon is the core of Shri-yantra comprising nine triangles. Five pointing downwards represent Shakti and five vowels four triangles pointing upwards represent Siva and four consonants.

Since ages, the knowledge supreme has been, and shall ever continue to be ensconced in the rock of Sharika for time indeterminate. But, to our chargin, the universal truth it embodies have remained shrouded in the veil of ignorance and mystery; revealed only to the cultivated and the enlightened. Whatever the reason the Chakreshwari has remained a place of worship for the devout and the laity. But the secrets of yantra have got diffused in course of time.

I have been studying the cosmic dance of the line of this yantra. These lines create different geometrical configurations in the moonlit nights throughout the year. The legendary bird Har'r, Sharika, is also at the spot where the lines of yantra create an image of a pot, called "vae'r" (container) in Kashmiri.

According to the legend, sage Kashypa performed "tapa" as a result of which Devi appeared in the form of Hae'r, with a pebble in her beak. The pebble in Kashmiri is called Kan-i-phol, which also means "that which bloomed on the rock". She threw this pebble in the lake, Sati Sar, the present Kashmir, this killing demon, Jaludbhava and enabling the release of water. The name Jaludbhava, if read in the context of Kashmiri language will be, Zal-vud-bah-av," meaning that from the water was seen the steam. "Bah" also means numerical twelve, which in a reference to cosmic sound. Anahatta chakra in Kundalini. Vani is cosmic sound and vane'y is water in kashmiri. Akash-vani appeared as "roopa" light in the cosomos," and "Zala, volcano, as fire in the lake of Sati. If it is hexagon yantra at Chakreshwari so is the cube formation rock at Zalamukhi on a distant hill at Khrew. Which is initial roopa of mother Sharika. The devine mother has preserved all her roopas at various places in the hills of Kashmir. Her "sara" lake form is at Gangabal at the foot hill of Harmukh. The snow form is at Amarnath where snow linga is formed on its own. The "nag", spring roopa, is at Uma Nagri. The Mooldhara chakra roopa at Khir-Bhavani at Tula-Moola, which has a seven sided form of spring, as combination of triangle and square in its oneness.

As started above, that the yantra is conceived in the form of letter "ka" in motion, thus revealing the fundamental form of life, informing the entire universe the stars, planets, plants, insects and human beings. It recalls Siva's damroo out of which the entire Varnamala, the elephant was produced. It also symbolizes the combined articulation of first swara with the first Vinjana vowel and consonant.

It is held that entire universal is nothing but vibration. It is a state when shakti - energy, is equally distributed in cosmos, thus there is no light, the seed of "Prakriti", nature. The primordial vibration or pulsation, has inherent seed of expansion in terms of movement, which becomes visible as light, when it gets spanda, the motion and churns itself. In other words, there is in it the initial desire to manifest

"Bindu" and "Nada", -two points of "visarga", suggesting creation, amenation and projection. This original intention and cognition and its phenomenalisation as Bindu is the concept of "kama-kala", Kama the initial desire and kala is, its creative expression. The visualization of the same concept has given birth to the "moola-trikona" the basic triangle. This very triangle is defined "space in space" and to encircle the whole cosmos, it results in two Interlocked triangles - hexagon yantra. The three lines of a triangle also result in a hexagon. The same very triangle as activated energy results in pentagon and becomes visible as light. It is third chakra of Kundalini which is visualized as two pentagons in motion, where shakti is perceived as light by yogis.



To know the emergence of sound through our human system, it becomes obvious that when we part our lips and create sound the result is "ma". The more we sustain this sound, it becomes nazel "an" and when we close our mouth, it becomes mantra "AUM". The blowing of the nose results in the seed mantra "iem" the initial Nada. The same is the "ni" swara in Sargam when, reversed. The guttural hushing sound through "ha" becomes "gha" which finally becomes "ka", the first consonant. The process of emerging sound is "Iaya", the rhythm, represented by letter "la". Thus we have the seed formula of Kama-Kala and Kah.

"Kah" beside being the sound "ka-ka" is numerical eleven in kashmiri. There are mantras based on these "ka" and "ha" which are called Hadi and Kadi, and are employed for the worship of Shri-yantra. The formation of letter "ka" as two triangles is the yantra form and "ha" is Prana-shakti, the vital breath which is warm and aswell as cold by nature, when one lets out the breath against ones palm.

Kah, numerical eleven in Kashmiri has deep significance in its cultural ethos. Just to say a few, will reveal the deep rooted concept. Kah-nether; is a ritual performed on eleventh day of newly born to give him or her the name. Kha-Nov, that which has eleven names, also means that concept of kha flourished: Kah-kah-pal, the stone of "kah". This stone is there at Mat tan at the foot hill of Martand temple, when touched by eleven, Kha, persons by their fingers and uttering "kah-kah", is lifted in the air: Gada-Kah, falls on eleventh, a preparatory day for thirteenth on which falls "Siva-ratri". It reveals its secret when read as: ga-ad-ka-ha, which means that ga is hald of ka, as well as ha. When two gats or ha's are joined the result will be the letter ka. The preparation of eleventh and twelfth is for vatak pooja which is a ritual performed on siva-ratri. Vatauk is an assemblage of various objects and elements. The word itself means assemble and when read as vataka; and Scanned as vat-ka, means enclosed ka. There is a proverb in Kashmiri: sha-te-tre-te-nav-te-kah, which means that six, three; nine and eleven. This

expression is used for a person who talks of impossible things which he can never fulfil. In this proverb is the concept of basic triangle, as three, its twine quality as hexagon and its three fold nature nine, which also is a yantra know as nav-yoni-mandala or bramha-yoni, the cosmic womb. Kah, numerical eleven, as two lines, vertical and horizontal, bisecting each other at 900 angle encircles the whole cosmos in terms of four dishas- directions. The movement of the same is multiple sign, cross indicating the 450° movement in space. It is these two lines which enfolds the secret knowledge of yantra. The invisible point at the, bisection is the key to revelation. The revelation is incomplete without sound. Thus we have the mantra: the composite sound and its corresponding image yantra. Yantra also is visualized image of movement in space and mantra, the sound formula; the initial causation in the cosmos. It is because of this concept the seed mantras are employed to awake the Kundalini shalti concealed in human body.



There is another proverb; akh-te-akh-gav-ze-te-kah, which means that one and one two as well as eleven.

It is interesting to note that the assemblage of vatuk on Sivaratri reveals the ancient concept of Tantra a long with its historical background. In vataka first is made, ae'r" a triangle shape made of grass: over it is put an earthen pitcher, called naot, which also means that "na-oat" na is enclosed. "Na-oat" in sharda is simple projected line against a vertical line and when enclosed becomes the "Aer" triangle "or na in Nagri. The pitcher is filled with water "vane"y, which is a reference to satisara cake. It also indicates the vani of na, which by enclosing becomes ka. In it is put kah, eleven walnuts; doney. Doney sound' is the same as dhavni in Snaskrit-Dhavni of "ka-ha". The pitcher is then covered by an octagonal lid woven with willow, called ka-ni. Ni when reversed becomes seed mantra "iem". Octagon itself is enfoldment of Prakriti, and when taken in its two fold becomes sixteen, four squares in motion, the fifth chakra of Kundalini which represents ether. It is customary to play with sea shells on Siva-ratri which in Kashmiri is called Hara. This shell has the shape of bird Sharika. Same way there is another sea shell of triangle shape, when opened becomes two triangular as leter "ka" formulation. It is called "Kaw-Shup". The sound is very near to Kashyapa. This sea shell is found in rivers along with wooden pieces called hak. The Sound is "HA-KA" and in reverse "KAH".

Siva-atre is called Haerat in Kashmir. This name has three combinations in it. Trahi an expression when something horrifying happens. To my understanding, it recalls volcanic activity in early times. Tahaer is yellow rice, which is a must on every ritual and occasion. The yellow rice is put in a terracotta plate called toke in Kashmir, on a crossing early morning. A red chilly is put on top of yellow rice. It is a clear reference to zala- volcano. Tahaer also is taken to Chakreshwari on Saturdays which is mixed with fried liver of a lamb. Chervan: liver and "tahaer" yellow rice when scanned, will be tsar-van-te-hauer", which means realize van-haer which is sharika. Same when reversed is "Harvan" which is located at the foot hill Harmukh. This place is very significant historically. It was in this area that the terracotta tiles were recovered which to my understanding are pre Buddha era bearing the early wisdom of Sri yantra of Mother-Sharika. Pit dwellers also where dug out in the same area. There is a famous place called Indra-home. Where Kah, eleven stones, are stuck in the ground.

The monolith rock of Mother Sharika, smeared with redoxide sendher in Kashmiri, is a remembrance of her initial volcanic form. When this word sendher is scanned it reads as send-i-hae'r, the sharika of sind. River Sindh emerges from Gangabal Lake.

Mother's rock and other rock formations around Hari-parvat of Ganesa, Kali, Sat-resh, Sheetla and Laxmi are phonamena unrevealed up till now to the people. The images concealed in Mother's besides original Shri-yantra, reveals the early history. The images are mantras, composite sound. Even the step going up to the hill are calculated, which are one hundred eleven: the three lines which create the basic triangle.

Tantra is a concept of realization of the totality of life along a well defined and strictly disciplined path. During evolution, at various stages, higher and higher states of awareness dawned on the individual consciousness which brought forth the realization that the whole is one and within. This oneness and wholeness demands expression pure conceptual geometry portraying Shada-sound, which in essence is sunyd void.

As a painter, I am concerned with the image and colour, to create the halo of realization. My images are combinations of yantra and my own experiences. The whole canvas is symbolic, including the black frame, indicating the limited field of activity within lit frame.

In this area the point Bindu, takes birth, unfolding itself in a Yantra, and seeking expression in an iconic form which is essentially of the universal Mother-Shakti (Sharika) who is the cause and embodiment of Creation.

[By courtesy of Kashmir-Insight]



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THE FAMOUS SPRING OF TREHGAM

Ab. Gani Baig Athar

Kupwara is known as "The Crown of Kashmir" due to its enchanting natural beauty, charming geographical surroundings pollution free atmosphere, historical background, pleasant atmosphere. Its attractive meadows, scented atmosphere, green and flowers pastures, charming hill sides, historical mountains and passes, serpentine rivers, blooming fields and human prettiness are all unique and matchless.

In the district we come across a town, known as TREHGAM, 9 Kms in the West of Kupwara town, situated across the National Highway, leading to Tangdhar. Trehgam is an old town which formally comprised of 30 habitations. Later on Langar Chak migrated from Dardu Barshal to reside in the town. It is said that he was having very stout and strong body because his father was a ghost (jin) and mother a Dard Lady. While giving birth to him, his mother passed away so he was drawn out of his mother womb by operating it. Lashker Chak, one of his off-springs, later on made his permanent residence in the town. Pando Chak, Hussain Chak and Kaji Chak were sons of Lashker Chak, who adopted Shiaism.

A second group of Chaks had migrated from Gilgit and resided in Kupwara out of whom Halmat Chak and Shams Chak are famous. Chaks of Kupwara were at draggers drawn with Chaks of Trehgam. Shams Chak was a famous and powerful employee of Sayid Mohd Baihaqi. This group of Chaks did not adopt Shiaism and continued to be Hanfees. On the other side one of the Chaks of Trehgam had got employment in the services of Sardar Azeem Khan. The Chaks of Kupwara poisoned the ears of Sultan Zainul Abideen Budshah about the troublesomeness and treachery of Trehgam Chaks, who arranged to keep a close watch on Trehgam Chaks and imposed restrictions on their movement. The Chaks in retaliation put the king's house of Zainageer on fire which caused great loss to the kings property and locals. The king, in reverse, appraisal put the whole town of Chaks Trehgam on fire with help of Ibraheem Magray and Mousa Raina. This conflict destroyed this Town of 30 habitations badly. In the same town of Trehgam, lies the famous spring, known as Trehgam Nag. In revenue records the name of the spring has been recorded as Chitra Nag where as it has been named as Shiva Nag, in the history of Hassan Shah Khohihami.

The spring is presently spread over an areas of 200 ft. x 15 ft. and is well maintained by concrete walls and iron messes around. It is situated in the heart of Trehgam town, on the side of National Highway and is full of local fish, treated sacred by Hindus and Muslims. So these are neither allowed to be caught nor eaten or sold.

To keep the main spring neat and clean, a portion of it has been separately fenced from its northern side for washing and bathing purposes in such a way that the dirty water does not fall in the main spring. Same way a portion of it has been fenced from its western side where Hindus have a sacred bath and where from the polluted water is drained out side the main spring. There are huge Chinar trees at the corners of the spring and there is a grand public park cum iddgah towards east of it, one side of which has been cut into pathway to reach the mosque and shrine.

There are many other historical and sacred springs in. the district like Shumbo Nag of Shum Nag village, Lov Nag of Lalpora, Buber Nag of Hatmulla, Saida Ganga of Kandi, Sita Sari of Meeliyal, Ram Kund, Sita Kund, Lachman Kund and Hunuman Kund springs of Harie area, Gashi Nag and Lachman Nag of Gushi, Sunder Nath Nag of Pazipora, Macha Bhawan Nag of Jagerpora, Durga Nath Nag of Anderhama, Goutum Rishi Nag of Gazriyal, Baba Abdulla Nag of Gazriyal, Mir Nag of Haihama, Tsien

Tsien Nag of Gugloosa, Satkohl Nag of Shamsbari mountain, Kaji Nag of Bangns, Khir Bawani Nag of Tikker, Lader Nag of Laderwan, Rishi Baba Nag of Gulgam, Reda Nag of Lolab, Nanga Baji Nag of Machil lug Rishi Nag of Rishi Gund, Nata Rishi Nag of Trehgam etc in addition to the Spring of Trehgam but the Trehgam spring has a special importance among the same.

The description of Trehgam spring is duly recorded in so many early and modern histories of the state like in Tareekhi Kashmir by Hassan Shah, Tareekhi Kashmir by Mohammad Din Fouq, "The Valley" of Kashmir by Lawrence etc. with an importance that this spring is a unique symbol of Hindu Muslim Unity which is quite true. One gets highly fascinated on seeing a Shive Temple, Shrine of Hindu Saint Sawami Ram Chand, Shrine of a Muslim saint Sayid Ibraheem Bukhari, Shrine of a local saint Kharullah Mir and a Spelended Jamia Masjid, located together on the banks of the spring. One can hear the Shunkhs and holey bells from one end and melodious Azan from the other, bayan from the one and Awaradh from the other end, the muslims making wuzoo in one corner and hindus having an ashnan at the other.

The source of the spring is not visible but the water oozes out at 3 places in its west, one at its north west corner, called the Saied Nag, 2nd beneath one corner of the mosque and third near the Shrine of swami ji. There is a spring at the top of the hill near village Gugloosa, 3 kms away from the place, known as Tsien Tsien Nag. This is very deep spring does not ooz out water from its banks. Even its water source is not visible. An elderly person of the town stated that once some body threw rice husk in Tsien Tsien Nag which after sometime appeared in this Trehgram spring. May be the spring is be one of the sources of this spring. One more elderly person said that the water to this spring comes from the famous and pious spring of Baba Abdulla Gazi of Gazriyal, about 10kms away from the place. However the water is treated Sacred, both by Hindus and Muslims. The water is pure, fresh and cool, which is transmitted through pipes, both directly and by lifting it to nearly hill reservoirs, to army camp, total population of the Town and nearby village for drinking purposes. It also provides a great deal of water to about seven villages for the irrigation purposes. The total outlet of water from the spring is not less than 9 ft. Continuously. So the spring is a great source of irrigation and drinking water to so many villages.

The elderly people of the town said that once there was a glass house, constructed quite between the spring, just like Zaina Lunk in the Oal Lake and there was a big library in the house. This used to add the glory and beauty of the spring.

The Shiv temple on the bank of the spring has now been reconstructed. But the new construction has lost its original dignity of it because of ill-engineering. The Shrine of Swami Ji stands as it was where as the Jamia Masjid is under reconstruction in a well styled order. The location needs to be brought on the Tourist map as it is really worth seeing.



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Selected Vaakh of Lal Ded

*"Aayas vatey gayas na vatey,
Suma sothe mang loosum doh.
Chandas vuchhum haar na athey
yath naava-taaras dima kyaa bo"*

Meaning :-

By the highway I came,
but by the highway I return not.
So I find me still on the embankment,
not having gone even half the way,
and the day is done, the light has failed.
I search my pocket, but not a cowrie find
What shall I pay for the ferry fee?

MUSINGS OF AN ADVAITIN

Prof. B. N. Kaul
(Ramkrishna Mission, Srinagar, Kashmir)

The following observations are by a student practising the Advaita way of life. They are related to happenings in the valley of Kashmir in general and the Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Srinagar, in particular during the years 1989 to 2007. It was August 1989. Srimat Swami Bhuteshanandaji Maharaj, then President, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, was scheduled to tour the valley early that month. The Srinagar ashrama was hosting and conducting the visit. Preparations were proceeding apace; and spiritual aspirants and devotees connected with the ashrama were eagerly awaiting Maharaj's presence. Right then, as if out of the blue, terror descended; bombs were thrown, bullets fired, and chaos and confusion reigned all over Srinagar. The local people were left bewildered.

Belur Math authorities were naturally concerned, and wanted Maharaj's visit to be cancelled. But the Srinagar ashrama, after carefully studying the situation, stuck to its earlier decision and requested Swami Bhuteshanandaji to continue with the planned programme. Swami Bhuteshanandaji also endorsed our decision and undertook the visit, despite contrary advice from several quarters. This visit proved to be a great success. To have the president of the Ramakrishna Order in the midst of devotees while an ambience of terror and confusion prevailed in the valley was remarkable. Swami Bhuteshanandaji addressed many gatherings, initiated devotees, and instilled hope and courage in the minds of people.

Soon it was time for the Navaratri celebrations. The observance went on in spite of the terror and destruction unleashed all around by misguided youths. The atmosphere was so fearsome that people were scared to hear the sound of conches and the ringing of puja bells. The usual immersion ceremony of Mother Durga in the Vitasta (River Jhelum) was cancelled. Instead, the ceremony was conducted in the sylvan setting of the ashrama lawns. The devotional spirit triumphed and puja concluded peacefully. This was followed by Sri Sarada Devi's tithi-puja (birthday) celebrations.

The nights of 19 and 20 January 1990 proved to be turning points in the recent history of Kashmir. Throughout the valley, mosques suddenly became abuzz with public address systems blurting out anti-national, anti-minority; and anti-sanity propaganda spewing venom and threatening the safety and honour of the saner and gentler sections of the population. A new culture of intolerance and hatred gripped the people's imagination. This soon became the worst period in the living memory of the people of the valley.

A mass exodus of Kashmiri Pandits (Bhattas), the original inhabitants of Kashmir, ensued. Lakhs of them left the valley, seeking safer havens in other parts of the country. The ashrama, which used to teem with devotees and workers, turned desolate. The tithi-pujas of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Ramakrishna were observed with a much reduced participation. By March 1990, very few families and institutions of the Pandits remained in Srinagar and the ashrama's service activities were virtually paralyzed. The few remaining inmates somehow managed the ashrama routine. It was the Advaitic spirit that now permeated the ashrama and inspired these inmates to adjust and conduct themselves in accordance with that ambience.

The days that followed were very uncertain and frightful; none knew their future or security. The houses of Pandits all around the ashrama were ransacked, looted and burnt down. Shooting down one bird in a flock is enough to scare the rest away. The situation was similar here. Thousands and thousands of frightened people were leaving behind their hearths, houses, sweet memories and the rich heritage of ancient Kashmiri culture, and heading towards unknown and uncertain places. It was only through the grace of the Divine that in this pall of gloom and darkness the Srinagar ashrama (popularly called Shivalaya Ashrama) could carry on the temple services and keep the lamp of devotion kindled in the midst of the rough and turbulent atmosphere. Devotees, friends, and the kith and kin of the ashram

inmates, now living in the free and relaxed settings of the plains were urging the inmates to leave the valley and escape from the jaws of death, but Divine Providence and the Advaita spirit made us stay and carry on the day-to-day services. Medical and educational service activities had to be suspended, but the temple services continued.

In order to rally popular support and mobilize the masses against the nationalist spirit, the perpetrators of destruction and terror organized a huge march of vehicles loaded with thousands of supporters to Char-e-Sharif a town in Budgam district immortalized by the sacred memory of the great a sufi sage Sheikh Nlir-ud-Din Nurani, popularly known as Nunda Rishi. Nunda Rishi expounded and practiced the Rishi school of thought a beautiful and sweet blend of Sufi Islam and Advaita Shaiva thought. However, severe rain and snow aborted this march and many participants lost their lives on the way. The misguided passion for azadi (freedom) which had gripped the innocent common masses suffered a severe blow. and the situation calmed down. The catholic and compassionate Advaitic face of Kashmiri Sufi culture emerged from the black clouds. This spirit of Advaita also injected new life and hope in the sagging morale to of the few remaining ashrama inmates.

Killing of innocent and prominent people continued. Dozens of Pandits were killed in the vicinity of the Shivalaya Ashrama. Armed bands of young killers were roaming about freely, but they did not enter the ashrama premises.

The security agencies approached the ashrama management and offered security cover, but this was politely refused for fear of provoking terrorist ire. This resolve of the ashrama was appreciated by the local people; thus we became insulated from the terrorist rage.

In October 1992, another noteworthy incident took place. One of the inmates of the ashrama premises, who happened to be sleeping in the main hall, was suddenly awakened by a heavy thud. In the midnight darkness a masked young man, pistol in hand, approached this inmate's bed and ordered him to get up, refrain from putting the lights on and follow his dictates in toto. The youth charged the inmate of being a security-force informer and wanted to search the ashrama for the wireless or related equipment that he thought was being used for this purpose. The inmate had by this time recovered from the state of shock and disbelief and regained his normal composure. It was the Advaitic approach permeating him that gave him back his self confidence, and he could follow the militant's dictates unhesitatingly.

On reaching the main door of the hall, the militant spotted a locked steel almirah and ordered that it be unlocked. Even as the inmate started searching for the keys to the almirah, the militant dropped his demand and wanted to search the temple instead. But astonishingly, this very command brought forth a complete change in the militant's demeanour; lament and regret seized him; and he started expressing his sorrow and regret at his strange decision to visit the ashrama at that unearthly hour. He put his pistol back in his jacket, sat down on a chair, and began to apologize and to curse himself. The inmate, who was observing this strange drama being enacted in his presence, was soon able to sense the presence of another militant on the veranda outside, which put him in a state of greater anxiety and alertness; a few more militants could well have been standing outside the building. All the same, he expressed his thanks and gratitude to the militant for his changed perception and offered him a cup of tea. This the militant refused. He then left the building with his companion; both of them jumped over the ashrama wall and disappeared into the darkness. Whether the pistol was genuine or a mere toy, and whether the chances of death were real or imaginary; could not be ascertained; but the situation was soon normal, and the inmate went back to sleep, musing over the whole drama and the Advaitic spirit that inhered in it. Years went rolling by, and by 1995-96 the situation had eased a little. Sri Amarnath yatra through the Srinagar route was resumed, and sadhus and guests undertaking this yatra started visiting the ashrama again. But the situation was still far from normal, all the ashrama gates had to be closed by dusk. As a matter of fact, by dusk, all shops and establishments were routinely closed, and movement of people would also come to a standstill; the silence of the graveyard reigned.

One night, during the yatra season, there was a knock at the main gate of the ashrama. On opening the gate, we found an innocent-looking lady standing there all alone. Having had the darshan of Sri Amarnath, she had come down to Srinagar via Baltal. A kind and courteous autorickshaw driver had dropped her at the ashrama gate. The lady explained that she was from Kolkata and was close to our Sangha, and expressed her wish to spend the night at the ashrama. Her faith and devotion made us agree to her request. This strange, fearless shraddha provided a new perspective to our Advaitic perceptions, even in the midst of the contradictions that pervaded life in these parts in general.

Some days later a sadhu not previously known to us visited us at night. He gave us detailed information about the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission and its well-known sadhus. This generated trust in our minds, and we permitted him to stay in the ashrama for a few days. He would leave early in the morning and return by evening.

One day we found him returning during the day and exchanging signs with a very low-flying helicopter. When we questioned him about this he revealed his identity as an Intelligence Bureau informer, and also his ways and means of collecting information about militants and their plans. He expressed his regrets for disguising his real identity. This unfortunate incident made us very cautious, and henceforth we had to become firm in refusing to allow even genuine and sincere sadhus to stay at the ashrama.

In 1995, the famous and most revered shrine of Hazrat Nur-ud-Din at Charle-Sharif was seized by militants. After several days of confrontation with the security forces, the militants consigned the shrine to the flames, thus reducing this most loved and popular place of worship to ashes. There was general resentment and anger, a feeling which remains deeply buried in the hearts of common Kashmiris. This incident alienated the people from the ways of terror and intolerance, and the militants lost whatever little sympathy they had among the masses. People began to redraw sustenance and hope from their pristine, catholic Sufi culture and Kashmiri identity. The incident and its aftermath also had an impact on the thinking of the minority population.

The inmates of the ashrama could also now feel the positive and hopeful wave sweeping the valley, though miscreants tried to provoke horror and despair by burning down the Maha-Ganesha Temple and the Maha-Kali Temple at Hari Parbat. Our hopes and constant prayers steeled our determination. Repair and renovations of the ashrama buildings were undertaken, and we began to think of the future once again. A recall of Swami Vivekananda's exhortations and expressions about Kashmir and its potential contribution to the Indian ethos and culture provided us a new orientation and inspired fresh thinking. Sadhus, devotees, and ashrama friends began to revisit the valley and its principal pilgrim centres; the main attractions being Sri Amarnath and Mother Kheer Bhavani.

The devotees of the Srinagar ashrama who had been displaced from the valley and were now settled in Jammu found a new haven in the Sri Ramakrishna Advaita Ashram, Udhowala, Jammu, managed by Srimat Shakti Chaitanya. Their constant pleadings and persuasions induced Shakti Chaitanyaji to think of the future of the Jammu ashrama and the general spiritual welfare of the devotees. He finally approached Belur Math and requested the authorities to take over the Jammu ashrama. The Srinagar ashrama, which had made a prior request for affiliation to the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, lost out because of the abnormal situation in the valley. Belur Math agreed to take over the property and management of the Jammu ashrama. So the Kashmir upheaval resulted in the emergence of the beautiful and well-planned Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Jammu.

Meanwhile, at the earnest request of The Srinagar ashrama devotees and admirers, the Samaj Sudhar Samiti Trust, which had Justice J N Bhat as president, transferred the Shivalaya land on which the Srinagar ashrama stands to the Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Srinagar, by executing a deed of transfer. The responsibility of owning, running, and managing the Shivalaya along with the ashrama and its activities now rested with the Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Srinagar.

Swami Smarananandaji, then general secretary of the Ramakrishna Order, visited the ashrama in 2002. The assistant secretaries also visited the ashrama in 2003-04. Srimat Swami Gahananandaji Maharaj, then vice president of the Order, visited the ashrama on his way to Sri Amarnath and addressed devotees. These visits and contacts rekindled our desire to get the Srinagar ashrama affiliated to Belur Math. Our constant and continuing requests finally bore fruit: Belur Math decided in a principle to take over the Srinagar ashrama in June 2007.

Swami Vivekananda wished to have a centre of the Ramakrishna Order in Srinagar in 1897. It took a long hundred and ten years for his wish to reach fruition. It would be interesting to view the march of evens through the timeless frame of Advaita and see how the vision or dream that arose in Swamiji's mind had to pass through the tumults of history. The Maharaja of Kashmir had decided to allot land for Swamiji to start a centre in Srinagar, but his decision was vetoed by the British resident. The following years saw the unleashing of terrible communal forces and the partitioning of the Indian subcontinent. The years 1989-90 witnessed the near total destruction of Hindu etos and culture in the valley. This was followed by the re-emergence of the beautiful face of the ancient and composite culture of Kashmir. We are sure that with this resurgence, Jammu and Kashmir will play its natural role in the overall spiritual and cultural eminence of the great country that is Bharat.



Revive the Lost Generation

Agar firdaus e zameen asto hameen asto hameen asto hameen asto
which means, if there is a heaven anywhere it is here it is here it is here.

Who does not know what Iqbal was referring to when this saying is narrated. Historically Kashmir has always been a symbol of true love, pious beauty and rich cultural heritage which attracted people from all over the world to this place. Kashmir's beauty is unparalleled by the great Mughal gardens Nishat and Shalimar Bagh, Chasme Shahi, Dal Lake or religious places such as Kheer Bhavani, Parbat, Shankracharya, Hazratbal. Kashmir was an epitome of tolerance and brotherhood amongst Hindus, Muslims and other religions. There was immense respect shown by each community towards one another. Diwali, Eid, Baisakhi and Christmas were all celebrated with equal fervor by people across communities. Kashmiri pandits were known for their intellectual and spiritual knowledge and they represented a group that enlightened the minds of the people.



Reena Koul
(Pune)

It is a matter of immense pain that a place considered as heaven and known for its multicultural heritage on earth has slowly lost its glory. Almost an entire generation of the KP community no longer has its roots in the place of their forefathers. It is a high time that we revive this cultural heritage or else it will be lost forever. Due to migration, KP's have spread across the globe although this has made the community an affluent one but at the same time has contributed to the lack of bonding amongst the group. The feeling of being a closed knit community has gradually receded and it does not seem long before the community becomes an endangered one.

In order to permanently and justly settle the issue of Kashmir abrogation of article 370 should be immediately followed by re organization of the state into four distinct entities Jammu, Ladakh, Panun Kashmir and Kashmir. Panun Kashmir as noted in the homeland resolution of 1991 would comprise regions of the valley to the east and north of Jhelum river and would allow the return of 700,000 Kashmiri pandits to their rightful homeland, the territory would also be converted into an economic zone attracting the best of Indian industrial talent especially high technology, Kashmiri language, culture and tradition would be preserved within the territory which would integrate with the rest of secular India at a much faster pace than the remaining portion of the valley, it would be the only effective means for India to regain the foot hold it lost decades ago in the valley.

I myself Mrs Reena Kaul (buju) residing at Pune happened to attend a cultural programme at Kolkata organized by Kashmir Sabha, where I was staying with Mrs. and Mr. B. M. Misri. There I came to know about the magazine "Vitasta." So I also wanted to share my views about how to preserve the Kashmiri heritage and culture. My belief is that we all should make it happen collectively by visiting Kashmir often. We also perform Havan at Zeestha Devi Mandir (Zethiyar) and people from all over India should come and attend the Havan and another things. I don't know how people will take it if we can have old age homes for our elders who are willing to stay there, should have medical facilities, doctors attending to them 24/7. Recently we were at Srinagar Dr. Omar Abdullah was very much into sending and posting doctors everywhere in remote areas mostly. I doubt, if younger generation will move to the valley as they have already taken jobs outside Kashmir and their children are also studying in different professional colleges. In fact the muslim community not all but some groups miss the knowledge they used to get from Kashmiri Pandit professionals in their respective colleges and universities back twenty years now.

In fact the people were interviewed on TV and they were expressing their views about what kind of education their children will get when day in and day out there is a bandh call from anyone of the party leaders. Now the thing is to implement these ideas is not that easy as the fear has been deeply created in the minds of Kashmiri pandits by few elements. To take all these decisions masses should initiate with togetherness.

With best wishes and regards from Reena Kaul Buju Raj Bhavan 8 Shankar Seth Rd, Pune, Pin Code 411042 Contact No. 020 26443397 mobile NO 9764160030 THANKS VERY MUCH.

To end the topic it would be nice of you all to give a feedback on this article on my mail id kaulreena@yahoo.com



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NAVREH

(The New Year day of Kashmiri Pandits)

Autar Krishan Trisal (Kathua J&K State)

The first day of Chetr shukla Paksha is celebrated as the start of Chetr Navratra throughout the country by the Hindus in different socio religious nature as adopted by these communities.

Among all these Hindu communities of the country one of the community known as Kashmiri Pandits, who are now in exile in different parts of the country use to celebrate this day as their New year's day, commonly known in their local dialect as NAVREH; because they believe in Sapt Rishi Calendar which will be 01-01-5086 on this day this year corresponding to 03-11-2067 Bilkrimi Which starts on 12th,13th of April every year and 16-03-2010 AD which starts on 1st January every year.

The calendar year of Sapt Rishi itself reveal that how old is the Kashmiri Pandit's existence.

This write up is simply to remind my community brothers/sisters and as well as to new generation of my brotherhood that how we used to celebrate our festivals in the valley before we were forced to leave our homes and hearths due to the Islamic fundamentalism.

The preparations for this event (Navreh start with previous night with a preparation known as "THAL BARUN"

Thal Barun

A Thali (Metal Plate preferably of Bronze) is filled to top with rice on which is placed new Panchang (ALMANC), Lump of cooked rice, curd in a small bowls, bread, salt, a pen with inkpot, fresh flowers, a coin, a mirror, a photograph of chosen diety and some walnuts. **Wye** a herb also was placed but now it is not available. All this is covered with a cloth or another Thali for the night.

On the morning of Navreh (1st day of Chetr Shukal Paksha) an unmarried daughter of the family or in her absence any lady of the house carries this Thali to all members, even to their beds to enable them to have a look at it as the first object in the morning, which is considered very auspicious. The girl/lady who carries it, is given blessings and presents in cash or kind.

It is a tradition which symbolizes prosperity for the coming year.

In Kashmir, the male members used to go to the river bank early in the morning to have a bath. They would carry the walnuts placed over the Thali and offer them to Gods in the river, which were being picked by the waiting boatmen. The rice kept in the Thali was used for making **Th'hr** which is later eaten by family members.

Th'hr

It is a tradition among Kashmiri Pandits to prepare **Th'hr** on festivals which is offered as Naveed (PRASHAD). It is prepared by adding turmeric powder to rice while boiling. Later on salt and melted ghee is mixed with it.

Further if weather permitted people used to go for a round of Hari Parbhat to offer Pooja at various temples and also have a picnic there as there used to be almand trees in their early blossom in pink colours at this time of the year. Now the trees of "BADAMWARI" have gone and only the remembrance associated with the festival is there.

It is considered auspicious to wear new or freshly washed cloths on the eve. A new born baby or a new bride in the family is an object of attention, who is showered all the blessing by the elders of the family.

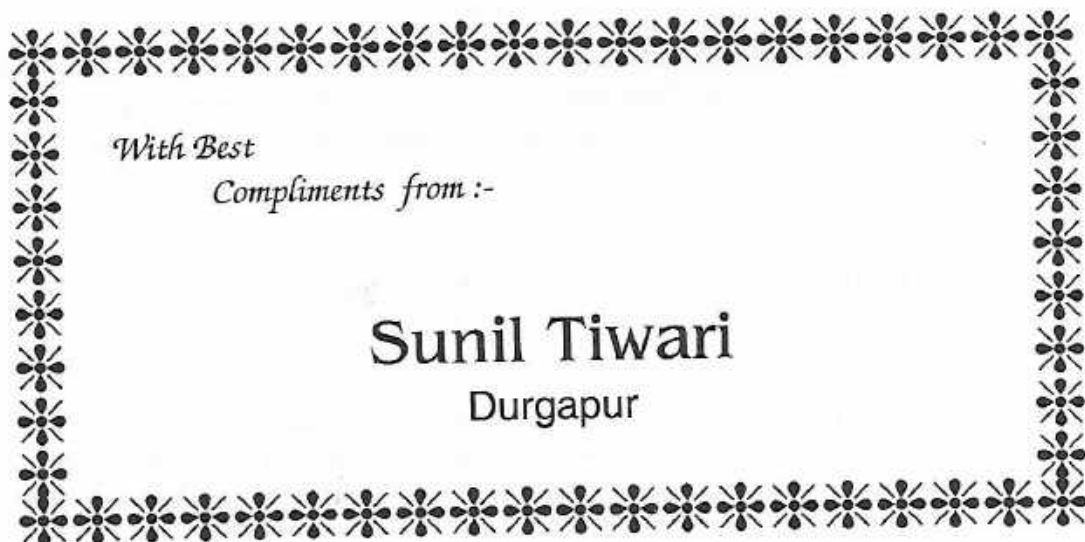
For newly married girls it is tradition to go to their parent's house before the day and return back to in-laws in time to join the festivities. She may carry some curd and cash from her parent's house as a good Omen (Shagun).

Third day of these Navratras is celebrated as **ZANG TRAI**. On this day Ladies of the families go to visit their parents or brothers and return same day back. If weather permits one may go for a picnic to some garden on even a temple along with all the family members. The festival brings joy and happiness after a long chilling winter.

While concluding, I am of the opinion that now all these traditions of Kashmir have died but if our community has to survive all these traditions have to be revived according to the place where the family is in exiles by organizing get together, monthly meetings and personal contacts with beradari members.

Dated: 28-02-2010

Avtar Krishan Trisal, Shiva Nagar, Kathua



PROTECT ROOTS IN KASHMIR

The Kashmiri Hindus, have 5000 years of history in Kashmir. Shavism was at its peak and from all world saints and seers would visit the valley to have all types of education; Spiritual and religious. This place was abode of devis, and devtas, named as Sed-Peeth'. The only university of learning was functioning in Kashmir, imparting education in Sanskrit and Hindu philosophy. Whenever Vedic (puranik) ceremonies were performed at any part of the Bharat Varsh Kashmir was first to be remembered and reverence paid as auspicious sed-peeth.

It is from 14th century that Muslims captured the valley, which resulted in Demolishing Hinduism by destruction and conversion. As and when Hindus got a little space to reconsolidate, they were tortured which resulted in eight times exodus of Hindus during Muslim period including the present one.



H. N. Tiku
Jammu

Now the fundamentalists have put heads together to ensure that the roots of Hindus are destroyed forever especially in the valley, so that there is no scope of their return and not to speak of coming generations. There is therefore need to safeguard our ancestral homeland for which there is need to fight for our rights. A few of these are discussed here under:-

I. Voter List of Kashmir Valley

The displaced Kashmiri Pandits, living in Jammu and else where in the country, have virtually lost their democratic rights, which include their right to vote and elect their representatives. The voter list of 1988 stood duly revised and updated, in which the rural and urban/Kandi areas of the valley of Kashmir were clearly indicated and incorporated. It was an authentic document, prepared with due care, in which no community or creed was discriminated against. Subsequent to our exodus in early 1990 and onwards, a drastic reduction in the number of the pandits is conspicuous in the lists compiled for electoral purposes. In fact, the number of Hindu voters dwindled by a big margin of more than 30,000 voters in the 2008 voter list. All this has been detrimental to the interest of our community, something that could have been prevented had the powers that be, not been negligent or willfully malevolent.

The displaced pandits miscalled "Migrants" did not remain confined to Jammu; a sizeable number took refuge in Delhi and the others fled for shelter to different parts of the country. That explains why the voter list of the community compiled after our exodus, based mostly on the displaced members registered as 'Migrant' at Jammu by the concerned cell of the Revenue department is far short of the actual number. The fact remains that a large section of the displaced population, roaming about in the country in search of food and shelter, some desperately looking for jobs or somehow seeking out their living, were not registered as 'Migrant' and as such not brought on the voter list compiled at Jammu or Delhi. The problem was aggravated further when the Govt. stopped registration in 1991 without any cogent reasons. In consequence, numerous jobless displaced pandits, who did not get registered as 'Migrant' were not only deprived of relief but also of the democratic right to vote guaranteed to an Indian in our constitution.

As an offshoot of not figuring in the voter list, the displaced Pandits have to suffer the serious consequence of failing to obtain and produce their state subject certificates and thereby they forfeit the advantages enjoyed by the natives of the J&K State processing such certificates. Thus disadvantaged, a displaced Pandit has not only to bear the pain of being uprooted from the Valley but also the, embarrassment of

not laying his claim to be a Kashmiri. This is because of the fact that any person applying for State Subject Certificate should be able to produce the electoral copy of the place of origin in which his name exists. Obviously, we can point our finger at the fundamentalist elements in the majority community as being responsible for the hurdles, the displaced pandits have to face to claim that they are bonafide state subject.

In order to forestall the difficulties and hurdles mentioned above, our old and youngsters who have attained adult-hood should ensure that their names figure in the revised voter lists of Kashmir and not remain complacent or indifferent on any score which in the long run fore feet their claim of being Kashmiri for want of State subject of J&K State having special status due to article 370 of Indian Constitution.

It is heartening to note that a group of selfless and conscious young men from our community have got together and taken up the issue in question, under the leadership of J & K National Movement, with the Chief Election Commissioner of India. They have been assured that the displaced Pandits will be registered properly on line at the original place to which they belonged but for their forced dislocation, no matter in what part of India an individual or a family is based. Of course, the matter has to be pursued in all seriousness and there should be no slackening of the effort. I hope the readers will lend their helping hand in disseminating this appeal of mine among the numbers of the KP baradari members living in the country or abroad.

II. Reverse Minority

As a Kashmiri Pandit, rooted in the valley of Kashmir both emotionally and spiritually, I am hardly aware of the class or community I belong to. I feel identified with the valley I love as my homeland. Nevertheless, it is a hard fact that the Kashmiri Pandits constitute a microscopic minority as a community, taking into account the overall population of the valley. The fact is widely acknowledged at all the national and regional forums in the country. But the benefits and concessions earmarked for the minority are not, in actual fact, provided to the displaced community. It has virtually been deprived of all legitimate benefits and advantages during the past two decades or so. On the other hand, the minority communities elsewhere in the country are entitled to, and very much enjoy, concessions such as reservations in employment, representation in the Parliament and the State Legislatures. Thus education has been made easy for the Muslims in the country through free admissions to educational institutions, and through monthly scholarships and other facilities given to the student. An educational fund providing 20,000 scholarships for the Muslims pursuing higher studies has been sanctioned by the concerned ministry.

What constitutes a minority at the national level is determined by the Central Govt. The benefits including job opportunities provided to the Muslims in the country as a minority also flow to the Muslims that constitute the majority in the J&K State. For the Kashmiri Pandits, now largely displaced, the situation is very depressing and precarious. Identified as the liability of the Centre they are deprived of their rightful benefits by the J&K State Administration.

Keeping in view the factual position stated above, the experts concerned need to review the concepts of 'majority' and 'minority' in the Indian context, taking into account the state-wise population of the various communities in India. Such communities as Muslim, Sikhs, Anglo-Indians and Jains have been declared as minorities by the Central Govt without taking into account their being in majority in one State or the other where they rule the roost.

If the problems of the Kashmiri Pandits as a displaced community are not immediately addressed; their plight is bound to worsen with the passage of time. The immediate solution to the basic problem is to treat and declare them as a 'reverse' minority, as recommended by the previous Central Minister for minorities, Govt. of India and supported by the Human Rights Commission.

III. P. M.'s LOLLIPOP

The PM's commitment to rehabilitating the Kashmiri Hindus hounded out of the Valley of Kashmir has turned out to be a lollipop given to a crying child to keep it in good humour. How long would the central Govt, Keep us hanging when two decades have already passed! There is not a ray of hope emanating from the Banihal tunnel for the sincere Pandits who have been thoroughly secular in as much as they upheld the composite culture of the Valley for many centuries. In spite of many onslaughts on us, involving religious persecution, we owned the invaders as history bears out, and merged them in our society, As believers in democracy, we welcomed the accession of the J&K State to India without any reservation, in return, we did not get a fair deal from the majority that wielded political power.

We were not tolerated and were hounded out under the garb of militancy. In spite of having been secular and believers in composite culture, we became refugees in our own country. Uprooted from the native Valley, we do not find any real sympathizers around. We have, in, fact, been the worst victims of politics!

Dr. Manmohan Singh's package announced in 2008 is yet to become a reality, though some construction work is no doubt being executed. This does not solve our problem substantially. Bricks and cement would not fill our stomachs. Our young men need livelihood. This calls for an immediate solution to the unemployment problem of our youth, some of whom have now turned over age.

The package announced by the Central Board of Secretaries constituted by the PM's office about five years back had provided for the creation of 6000 Jobs with immediate effect in order to absorb the first batch of the unemployed migrants, To this date the State and Central Government have been dragging their feet which indicate that the intentions about the Kashmiri Hindus have not been sincere. Could not a beginning be made by offering a few jobs to our unemployed youth as a symbolic gesture ?

The whole drama of announcing the package creates doubts in our minds that neither the State Govt. nor the Central Govt. is worried about us. Secularism seems a mere drama especially in the J&K State, that has the blessings of the Centre too, which does not seem to be serious about implementing the package offered. The displaced pandits have reason to feel totally disillusioned.



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OUR RITUALS

Prof. A. N. Raina (New Delhi)

Rituals have a significance of their own. Right from the time when gregarious nature of man resulted in the formation of social groups, a sense of unity and appreciation of collective living emerged to form what is termed as society. Essentially civil, the life of a community shared common experience and faced problems of elementary nature with a will that had a considerable shade of consensus. One of the attributes of this social aptitude exhibited itself in the form of rituals.

Rituals are to a great degree frozen traditions.

It is to be accepted that rituals took time to stick to man. His awareness assured him the utility of performing rituals and in all fairness his sense of devotion imparted a sacred touch to the Performance of these rituals. Steadily, these Performances assumed the shape of Prayer. To the intellectuals, such Performances connoted philosophic excellence and to those who were religious it became a vehicle for the attainment of good in its wide sense.

Environment played important part in the shaping of rituals. To those who lived in the seclusion of the Himalayas, away from any disturbance, saintliness and deep thinking enabled a rich crop of literature. Nothing was accepted in haste. Every thought was put to test and its application examined critically. Steady nerves and an alert mind contained the quest of truth in Kashmir. Deviation from the accepted faith of others was inevitable under these circumstances. Hence a good deal of variation from other rituals could be an interesting study. Not to digress further let us consider our rituals and their social, moral and Intellectual significance for us.

The Indo-Aryan ethnic settlers with their migratory need got a considerable experience of newness and freshness through the heart of Central Asia. The study of the Vedas is believed to reveal the movement of these tall, well built and fair complexioned people. Travel was their educator and adaptability a compulsion of circumstances. This sense shaped their angularities imparting dexterity, swiftness and a sense of learning from experience. These characteristics went a long way in shaping these stalwarts into a civilized society. Past experience entered into their living Present and rituals kept the tradition alive. It formed, the basis even the beginning, of our history of historical the first luminary is Kalhana. His keen sense of historical search enabled him to scan through the earliest writings available from mouth to the written word of Suvrata, Kshemendra, Nilmatya, Halaraja and Chavilakara. The Nilmatpurana is full of rituals with learnings on legends and tradition.

In Kalhanas time when the Rajtsrangini was being written, the influence of Gautama's teachings was fairly deep. Primarily a code of moral conduct, the Buddhist faith moved shoulder to shoulder with the Shaiva cult. It establishes how the essence of the Vedic faith contained in the Upanishads had imparted an emancipated outlook to the people who valued the doctrine of nirvana based on the Eight Fold Path.

In Shivratri, the technique of performance varies, though not in the basic sense where Lord Shiva is the Protector and the Universe as the manifestation of Shiva and Shakti. To an average person, it is not easy to get a clear idea of thought and wisdom contained in the Shaiva philosophy. For such persons, rituals summarise the purpose in a graphic form. In a beautiful environment where flora and fauna, is charming, to senses, negation of Vedanta thought, was bound to be disregarded. The words: "being an expansion of Shakti not different from Shiva" The scope of importance this festival has had, can be realized only if the components of the ritual are examined in some detail.

The hills, springs and rivers became objects of worship. It was not only the scenic charm but economic importance for the satisfaction of elementary wants. Particularly in Kashmir, cut off from the rest of the country, Prajapati Kashyap invited all the Tirthas to this sacred land where these representative shrines

evolved a calendar of their own. The water of the Vitasta was imparted a sanctity that covered the Vedas, Puranas and other religious texts which govern religious and philosophic attainments of our glorious past.

It is to be remembered that these rituals whatever their significance, observe a strict code of discipline besides moral and social attributes. One often reminded of Gautam and Gandhi who in every activity kept alive a strong moral fibre. Apparently free, the Sangha and the Sabarmati Ashram are examples of such an approach. The two Hindu-Aryan Rituals, the Initiation and Wedding provides a great heritage of good sense and aesthetic beauty inherited from Vedic Aryandom.

True it is that much rust has accumulated on the understanding and appreciation of our rituals but our effort should be to keep these rituals alive and honour these in observance. Simplification of these, socio-religious functions is necessary as these make an appeal to our intellect and to Reason (and not merely to magic and pietistic obscurantism).

It is time that Scholars should clear these and unnecessary writings obscuring the main theme. Thus can be retained the lustre of beauty and reason that these rituals originally had.

Bengal has attended to this problem from the time when Maharshi Devendra Tagore stressed the need of retaining the original and discarding the unnecessary. Maharashtra too in its own manner and other Southern States too realized the need in the course of changing times.

Our rituals too need not reform thought stress on retaining the true spirit of these timed functions.

In Kashmir suffering enabled people to pass through a Common crucible of suffering, cementing thereby rich heritage that stood the test of time. A look into our history reveals how these rituals became secular in character in keeping with our tradition of cultural mingling. In this respect mystic order of saints from the time of Nund Rishi, Hamdan, Kralwari, Mahmud Grami, Aziz Darvesh, Sochhkral and others followed Yogeshwari Lalla in keeping the torch of Truth bright through our mother tongue Kashmiri. Festivals of Muslim saints; Rishis and seekers of truth raise us above considerations of caste, creed and religion.

In this age when the planet of man has squeezed itself with the conquest of time and space, it is imperative that our traditional treasure of centuries should guide us in our moral, social and intellectual life. It will be in keeping with our contribution to our homogeneity in particular and to our, national glory in general.

The reader may consider the approach as subjective and therefore open to discussion.



THE STORY OF THE VITASTA RIVER OF KASHMIR

J. N. Ganhar

The Vitasta is to Kashmir what the Ganga is to the rest of northern India. It is the life-stream of the Happy Valley.

The name Vitasta which Kashmiris residing in Calcutta have chosen for their Annual, is a very ancient name. It is mentioned in the Rig Veda. The ancient Greeks who came to India some centuries before Christ, called it the Hydaaspes. Kashmiris - Hindus and Muslims alike - have shortened its name to Vyath. The name Jhelum which is now borne by the river outside the valley is wholly foreign to the genuine usage of Kashmir.

Kashmir is God's own land. It is, as it has aptly been called, a "paradise on earth". And happily its early inhabitants invested the natural features, and phenomena of their heavenly home with divine associations. The Vitasta, for example, was for them a representation of Lord Siva's consort, Parvati.

At the beginning of the world, the Valley, according to the Nilamatapuram, was filled with water. This large mountain-lake was called Satisaras, the lake of Sati, wife of Siva. In this lake lived a demon who, through severe penance and sincere prayers had won the boon of invincibility in water. In course of time he developed into a terror with the result that few could dare approach the lake or its neighbourhood.

Man was helpless against this powerful monster. It was, therefore, left to Nila, the tutelary Naga deity of Kashmir, to bring about his destruction.

Nila too could do little by himself. He, therefore, sought the good offices of his father, Kashyap-muni. And at the latter's request, the gods, headed by Siva, rid the land of this scourge, by draining off the waters of the mountain-girt lake.

After Kashmir had been created, Siva again at the request of Kashyapa, prevailed upon his consort to appear in the land in the shape of a river so that people could live in it. After some hesitation the goddess agreed to do so; she assumed the form of a river in the underworld and asked her consort to make an opening by which she might come to the surface. Siva struck the ground near the habitation of Nilanaga with the point of his trishul (trident) and through the fissure thus made gushed forth the river. As the fissure measured but one span - vitasti - it came to be known as the Vitasta. This source of the sacred river is the present-day Nilanag or Vernag which visitors to Kashmir see soon after they emerge from the Jawahar tunnel on their way to Srinagar.

The legend related in the Nilamatapuram makes the river disappear again. It, however, re-appeared after supplications and prayers by Kashyapa who also managed to secure it the company of other rivers Vishav and Sindh-representations respectively of goddesses Lakshmi and Ganga.

There are varying traditions about the second appearance of the holy river. According to one version it appeared from the spring of Panzath while according to another it appeared from the Vethavuthur. The latter spring is still regarded as the source of the Vitasta and worship is offered here on the river's birthday.

Kashmir is the gift of the Vitasta just as the northern plain of India is the gift of the Ganga. The bed of the valley is formed of the alluvium deposited by the Vitasta and its tributaries through the ages. The whole economy of the valley has, for centuries, centred round the river and its tributaries. Till recent times, the river uninterruptedly continued to be the main artery of communication and commerce in Kashmir, for, from Khanabal near Anantnag) to Khadanyar (below Baramulla) – a course of about one hundred miles - it is navigable throughout.

Little wonder, therefore, that the People of Kashmir looked upon the river as a goddess and celebrated its birthday with ceremony and enthusiasm !

The birthday of the Vitasta falls due on the thirteenth of the bright half of Bhadrapada, which this year corresponds to September the eight. On this auspicious day worship is now offered at the river's source at Vethavuthur. In olden days people all over the valley also offered floral and other offerings throughout its course:- In the evening diyas (earthenware lamps) were lit and set afloat on the river on grass-rings prepared for the purpose. It must indeed have been a fascinating sight to see thousands of lamps floating merrily on the bosom of the river.

Kings and commoners, the high and the low, all participated in this great river festival. The last we find historical mention of it is in the time of the great Kashmir ruler Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin, (1420 to 1470 A.D.) whose nobility of character and catholicity of outlook have justly earned him the title of Badshah or "Great King".



MORALITY VANISHING ALARMING

Enforcement of discipline becomes imperative for an integrated socio-cultural and spiritual development of man. In fact, need for enforcing such a discipline must have always been felt in the evolution of the human society. That must have necessitated development of various religions, sets and sub-sets in the world. These religious outfits defined, variously, the acts of morality and immorality as means to establishing a good social order as also to emancipating man, finally, on the path of godhood. Based on these religious dicta, various institutions at socio-political levels came into being for enforcing efficient governance. We have now the constitutions defining the different systems of governance. For instance, in the countries having democratic setup, there is a system of three tier governance of legislature, executive and judiciary. The rule and regulations are made under the relevant provisions of the respective constitutions. It has to be born in mind here that all rules and regulations are made for the ultimate aim of the welfare of society.



H. N. Tiku
Jammu

There cannot be two opinions about the fact that the age old and time honored moral values, based on religious tenets, are getting eroded fast. Alongside, the constitutional provisions for enforcing a discipline at the mundane level, that is to say, at the level of governance of the state are also getting eroded rather more vehemently. The cardinal principles and the rules are now followed more in disregard than in observance. It has a global ramification. In some regions or countries. But it is the human society, at large, that is getting gradually affected adversely, morally. An urgent need is therefore felt, globally, to create a mass awareness about this momentous issue with a view to arresting this menacing trend and creating an atmosphere of moral regeneration.

Among other developing countries, India, with its teeming population, needs a more vibrant awareness campaign in the matter of fighting back the growing menace of moral degeneration. India has the world-rating of eighth in corruption. Corruption in India has virtually not only intensified but has also magnified many fold since we became independent sixty two years back. While the people gave and took bribes in the old days in hundreds and thousands now it is in lakhs and crores. The virus of corruption has spread to the areas which previously were considered free from it. Numerous examples can be quoted in support of this argument. Corruption in our country has assumed horrendous dimensions. Corruption at the bureaucratic level virtually now pales into insignificance in relation to the corruption at the political level. Our Choicest political leaders indulge in inconceivable modes of indulging in illegal gratifications. We have has numerous scandals in the recent past.

With a view to bringing about an integrated development of our country, the most ambitious plans and programmes have been launched for the last six decades or our independence. But it appears that the real and meaningful development has been eluding us, as the rich is becoming richer and the poor poorer. The widening disparity between the urban rich and the rural poor together with discrimination at the socio-religious levels is at the base of the most of our country's sickness including corruption. By far the maximum portion of the tons of money pumped into the various development schemes of the country, goes to the coffers of the rich, the mafia and the socio-economic exploiters. As a result of this, the gap between the "haves" and "have-nots" has been constantly widening. The growing unemployment among the youths belonging to the lower rungs of our society, is also becoming very explosive day after day the problem is directly staring into our face.

Criminalization of politics has become yet another stagnant feature of our public life. Crime has reached menacing levels in major cities and towns and we have not been able to check it. The proven criminals facing charges of murders find their way into the state Assemblies and the Parliament. The law of the land is perhaps, toothless to put an effective spoke in such entries. Even our Judiciary which is supposed to be an independent agency of our administration is not free from corruption. Very recently a case of corruption against a sitting senior judge, who has allegedly swindled large sums of money, has been reported in the media. Then it does not stop there. Cases of sex scandals and other such cases of serious moral turpitude involving ministers, top level bureaucrats and top ranking police officers have come to light recently.

The basic malady of it all lies our succumbing to the influence of the corrupt, the goons, the pillagers and the musclemen who, through their money and muscle power, manage to get elected to the Parliament and the state Assemblies. What can the general representatives? The entire political system of the country has been and is being constantly vitiated, blatantly. It is precisely because of this that an honest politician in our polity is fast becoming an endangered species.

The picture of corruption of all hues that has been attempted to be drawn, in the preceding paragraphs, in respect of our country as a whole, fits equally well, precisely in all its details, in respect of our Jammu & Kashmir also. Incidentally, however, it may be interesting to note here that the two members of the previous state legislative assembly have transgressed all the moral, social and administrative norms in procuring petrol pumps earmarked for the Disabled and have thus set a glaringly stagnant example of misuse of political power and influence.

Corruption is rampant at the top. It jeers and mocks at us from the above and trickles down to the bottom and spreads to every nook and corner of the administration. The roots have gone so deep that a simple treatment will not cure the corrupt minds. Essentially, therefore, we have to guard the top against getting inflected, basically. Such a safeguard can be undertaken at the time of elections. That is why an effectively vigorous awareness campaign has to be started in right earnest.

The culture of the country has been affected very much due to the western influence. Conveyed mostly through T.V Programmes, Film Industry. One sees nakedness being encouraged among females especially youth. There seems competition in the industry in exhibiting nakedness.

In this mad rush for materialization basic human values like Love, Trust, Faith, Mutual Understanding, tolerance, Kindness and similar higher human values are breaking down all around us. There is a galloping levels of divorce rates. Mental Illness, Conflicts, Stress and various forms of human sufferings. That is why it is difficult to have a happy, stable and progressive society to face challenges of 21st century. Keeping in view present trend in the society our value system has been increasingly coming under stress as a result of variety of factors including population explosion, growing poverty influence of western culture etc. with Liberalization and Globalization, these trends have been reinforced so much adherence to human values in personal as well as Social Life is becoming increasingly difficult for people of all walks of life.

If this trend goes on there will be complete disregard towards elders which may ultimately cause anarchy in family life and public life. We have 30 Lac youth who are drug addicts and more that 50 Lacs have contracted HIV/AIDS Sexual harassment is increasing day by day. Night clubs who have blessings of the Govt. are functioning as brokers in a dignified manner. It seems Parents and the Govt. does not take any cognizance of this detraction in the community. We may loose our heritage and culture, for which we are otherwise known in the world. Immediate remedy to get rid of this is to have trust on moral education by introducing it as compulsory subject in the curriculum right from primary to University

level. Besides campaign launched by the society from gross level roping in spiritual organization as well in this auspicious mission. I would also venture to remind that all of us have a responsibility to work for a just society, however distant it may become for the society of Gurudev Tagore's dream and Mahatma Gandhi efforts.

Charity begins at home. So the first action in this direction has to be taken by Parents by providing "SANASKAR" moral education to their children right from the childhood, so that they understand what is right and what is wrong. Besides given awareness of our culture and rituals to be adopted by them during their life span. Parents and teachers have to be watchful during their adolescence period from 10 years to 20th years of their age. This is the most concerned period to make or mar the career of our youth. If we are to ensure reforming our society we need to give topmost priority towards "SANASKAR" moral education to our children and youth. I pray to the parents, teachers and selfless social activities to accede to my prayer.

**"Where the mind is without fears and the head is held high;
where knowledge is free; where words come out from depth of truth".**

The writer is President SANASKAR ORG. & Voice President, K. P. Sabha, Jammu.



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MAP OF INDIA NOT TO SCALE

INFLUENCE OF ADVAITA ON MUSLIM RISHIS OF KASHMIR

T. N. Kundan

Preamble

Kashmir has had a galaxy of saint-poets, both Hindus and Muslims. While Hindus are invariably referred as Rishis, Muslims are given various epithets. One of the epithets given is Sufi, which I feel is a misnomer. Sufis have come to Kashmir towards late thirteenth century and fourteenth century. They include Sharafud-Din Bulbul and Sayyad Mir AH Hamadani etc. They were Sayyads, who had escaped the tyranny in their country of origin and had sought refuge in Kashmir. With the advent of Islam and large scale conversion the demographic situation changed and the valley became Muslim majority place. Naturally, therefore, these inhabitants carried forward their Hindu tradition in the matter of their faith, customs, language, beliefs and so on. Kashmiris had a six hundred year old philosophy called Kashmir Shaiva Philosophy, which had seeped into the very psyche and the way of life of the populace. This philosophy is a non-dualistic doctrine, which emphasizes that the creation is the manifestation of the Creator and that in the ultimate analysis a being as a seeker can attain the Supreme and be one with Him.

That God is one is a universally accepted fact. There is no difference of opinion about the existence of one God, although there is some doubt about the existence of God itself in some faiths. All those who do not doubt the existence of God universally believe that only one Supreme Power exists. There is absolute unanimity on this point among the major religions, religious ideologues, philosophers and thinkers. This view is held by those who believe in Confucianism, Taoism and Shinto in the East, by the Christians, Jews and Muslims in the West and the Middle-East as also by Indians with Sanatana Dharma as their faith. Even Zoroastrians believe in one God, 'Ahur Mazda' although they also believe that there is another evil entity called 'Angra Manyu', which misleads people. This is more or less like Christian and Muslims' concept of Satan. Christians believe in trinity of God, Son and the Holy Ghost, who they believe are one like water, ice and steam are as clarified by Huston Smith in his book 'The World's Religions'. As regards Indian view point, the God is no doubt one called 'Brahman' but He is also perceived through various powers of the nature, which are viewed as 'Devatas' (Literally those that shine) as His different facets only. Thus there is universal 'Ekeshwaravad' or belief in one God. This is called 'Vahdat-ul-vajud' in Islamic parlance. Sometimes this term is mixed up with 'Advaita' or non-dualism of the Upanishads. Advaita actually denotes oneness of 'Jeevatma', the individual soul and 'Paramatma', the Universal Soul. This doctrine of the Upanishads is against the tenets of Islam. When a Sufi saint or poet talks of oneness he is referring to this doctrine and not to the existence of one God, for he says 'Anal Haq and Man Khuda' – I am the Truth and I am the God. This is the reason why Mansur-al-Hallaj was hanged and burnt for such an utterance. Sufis were not accepted in the fold of Islam for a long time till Islam lost political power and they became very important instruments in spreading Islam in different countries. The Muslim Rishis in Kashmir who are called Sufis are, however, a class apart by themselves.

Advaita as conceived in the corpus of Upanishadic literature, the Brahma Sutra of Badarayana and the Bhagavad Gita (The three together are called 'Prasthanas Trayee') has been interpreted and enunciated in a variety of ways. Basically it is a doctrine explaining the relationship between the Creator and the creation. Some sages and philosophers have held that the two are really one and what we see and observe outside these, is all an illusion. Some of them believe that no doubt the two are one but individually they have their own identity. Some sages have likened the two to the phenomenon of an object and its reflection in a mirror, while others have explained the two as the ocean and its waves. The Kashmir Shaiva Darshan has not subscribed to the illusion theory. It propounds that since the creation is the manifestation of the Creator and since the Creator is real there cannot be anything unreal about the manifestation. What is unreal is the apparent difference observed between the Creator and the creation. This difference is actually an illusion and once this veil of illusion is removed from our vision we can clearly perceive the truth of the individual soul and the Universal Soul being one. This state can be

achieved in a variety of ways including contemplation, devotion, spiritual pursuit and the like. This doctrine has appealed the thinkers world over, whether Greek and Roman philosophers, Eastern thinkers, Christian monks or Muslim Sufis. The Muslim saint poets of Kashmir also could not remain unaffected by this captivating doctrine.

I remember my old home in Chhattabal. There was a long lane leading to our house from the main road. On the one side of the lane there were cultivated fields full of vegetables and tobacco. The other side was a row of houses. One of these belonged to one Sheikh Mehmud, who ran a small shop in the ground floor, selling milk, yogurt and some pulses. Whenever I passed by this shop or went to him to purchase yogurt, I would observe a number of men sitting with him and talking about mystic subjects. Soon I came to know that he was also a holy person of the same Rishi order and had a number of disciples whom he guided in their spiritual pursuit. This 'Peer-mureed' or 'Guru-shishya' tradition in Hindu terminology, meaning a lineage of preceptor and disciple is an essential feature of the Rishi order. This holy person was revered and though illiterate, he also wrote mystical poetry to bring home to his disciples the secrets of mysticism, as was the practice with other holy persons of this order.

Lal Ded and Nunda Rishi

The 'Adikavayitri' or the first poetess of Kashmiri language is considered to be Lal Ded, who was a great mystic and a 'Shaiva Sadhika' or the seeker of the Divine through the path of Kashmir Shaiva Darshan. She has left behind a corpus of her sayings, which are in the form of four-liners called 'Vakh' (or Sanskrit Vakya). These have been translated into Sanskrit, Hindi, and English and interpreted by many a scholar. Let me quote two of her Vakhs to denote how she denounced the false exhibitionist practices and pointed to the essence of spiritualism. She has deprecated the practice of 'Bali' or animal sacrifice in these words: 'Yi kamyu vopadeesh dyutui hayo bata, atseetan vatas dyun sutseetan kath ahar? O Pandit! Who has advised you to offer as a feed an animate sheep to an inanimate stone idol?' Similarly she has ridiculed the idol worship when she says, 'Diva vata deever vata, heri bon chhui ikavata, pooz kath karakh hayo Bata? Your deity is made of stone, the shrine is made of stone, everything from top to bottom is the same stone, what are you going to worship, O Pandita?' She laid stress on the need to go inwards and realize the self and perceive the Divine in everything. These two 'Vakhs' of her will make this point clear. 'Go'ran d'opnam kunui vatsun, nyabra d'opnam andar atsun, sui Lali gav vakh ta vatsun. My preceptor told me but one thing only and that was to go from without to within. Lala adopted this in letter and spirit.' 'Kava chhuk divan anine vatsha, trukai chhuk ta andrei atsha Shiv chhui aet ta kun mo gatsh sa haz kathi myani karto patsh. Why are you groping in the dark like the blind? If you are wise go within yourself. Shiva is there in your heart. Do trust me since it has come to me naturally.' This great poetess was followed by Nunda Rishi, another great ascetic poet of the Kashmiri literature, who wrote four-liners called 'Shrukh' (or Shloka in Sanskrit). He did penance in a cave and was greatly influenced by his senior Lal Ded. He wrote, 'Tas Padmanporachi Lale, Tami gale amryeth chav. Swa sanin avatar lwale, tithyui mye var ditam Diva. The great Lal Ded of Padamanpura drank a mouthful of nectar. For us she is an incarnation. O Lord! Give me a similar boon as you gave her.' In the true tradition of Vedanta he considered the world an illusion. He addresses himself in these words: 'Hai zuva bram chhui samsar ho, zuva marun mothui kava, s'or ta zuva gara panano. O my self realize that this world is an illusion, why do you forget the inevitable death; remember your own home, the abode of the Divine.' This influence of non-dualism or 'Advaita' and other Upanishadic principles as were prevalent in Kashmir is vividly seen in the writings, compositions and other verses of the later Muslim saint-poets of Kashmir.

Let us first see what these Saint poets have said about their mentor, Lal Ded. Mohmud Gami (1765 – 1855), a great name in Kashmiri poetry, who may not strictly be clubbed with Saint poets has written a beautiful verse associating every seeker with Lal Ded in these words: 'Tsonza shoobai ba khazmatsei, granz Sahibo hyetsthas na zanh. Ada nav pyom Lala matsei, aavaz vatsei no. I am nothing but a maid to serve you, no one to be counted by you. Then I got the name of ecstatic Lala, My Lord! Did you not hear my wail?' Shamas Faqir (1843 – 1906, real name Mohammad Siddiq Bhatt), one of the foremost Saint-poets of Kashmir who lived in Chinikral Mohalla in Srinagar was fascinated by the writings of Lal Ded. He has paid tribute to her in one of his compositions and also made a mention of her having given spiritual guidance to Nunda Rishi. Says he, 'Kor Lali ikavata aakash pranas, zan milanav Bhagavaanas seit. Lali trov zala no't manz pote'l khanas. Zan milanav Bhagavaanas seit. Tchala gayi Lala ma'ts

shurahyar shranas. Hala tami kor zagi tikatar tarnas. Kala tami tso'tnai nafsi shaitanas, zan milanav Bhagavaanas seit. Vopa deesh karni gayi Nunda reshanas. Rindav dophas aini Irfan. Tshyapi tshipras gyundun Shahi Hamadanas, zan milinav Bhagavaanas seit. Lala did breath control called 'Pranabhyas' to realize the Divine. Lala offered a pitcherful of water to the idol in the shrine to know the Lord. Lala slipped to the riverbank called 'Shurahyaar' to take a bath and took a plunge to cross the river of life. She controlled the sense objects in order to realize Him. She went to give spiritual lessons to Nunda Rishi and the knowledgeable found it to be the pure mysticism. She virtually teased Shahi Hamadan, who could not gauge her spiritual heights (there is difference of opinion on whether there ever was a meeting between Shah Hamadan and Lal Ded as there is some conflict in the dates). Another Saint poet, Ahmad Batawa'r, a contemporary of Shams Faqir (1845 – 1918), has described the exalted spiritual position of Lal Ded in this verse: 'Lala matsi kala tso't nafsi shaitanas. Kala karan Alla Lal sape'n hoo. Lola ha'ts mahav gayi he Bhagavaanas. Jan chum meelith jahanas saet Lala in ecstasy killed all her senses, engrossed in the love of God she became one with Him. My self is one with the universal self.' While poets other than Rishis have also sung in praise of Lal Ded, but the manner in which the Rishi poets have quoted her, repeated her idiom and referred to her clearly shows the deep impact that her philosophy had had on their minds resulting in their express acknowledgement through their verses.

The Impact and the Influence

When religions travel to new pastures they adopt many new things both ideologically and in order to gain acceptance among the local inhabitants. Buddhism underwent changes when it travelled outside India to Tibet, China, Japan, Korea and other places. Christian theology was reformed in Europe quite substantially. To quote Lippman, 'Prophet Muhammad's vision of a united polytribal community fused into one brotherhood by Islam has long since been proved to be unattainable' because of which Islam thrives as a religion but not as a polity. In India also a multitude of regional and tribal rituals and customs have got fused into the mainstream religion. The Muslim Saints of Kashmir could not also remain unaffected by the influence of the Hindu tradition of thought, ideology and philosophy, which was powerful and inherited by them. Even though they held the Prophet and the holy Qura'n in high esteem, they absorbed the major tenets of the Hindu philosophy in their own spiritual practices and prescriptions. This became a very strong cementing factor between the Hindus and the Muslims. The lead had come from Lal Ded when she proclaimed: 'Shiv chhui thali thali rozan mo zan Bhata ta musalman. Trukai chhuk ta paan panun parzan, soi chhai sahibas saet zani zaan. The Divine verily pervades everything here, don't you differentiate between a Hindu and a Muslim. If you are wise realize your own self and that is realization of the Divine.' The lead thus having been provided these Saint poets have tread on the same path and have earned respect, reverence and love from both the communities. No wonder, therefore, that these Saint poets, even though professing Muslim faith, earned love, reverence and regard from Hindus as well. Some of these holy men professed great regard for the Hindu deities and why not; for them there was no difference and no conflict. Holy persons like Makhdoom Sahib, Dastagir Sahib, Batamol Sahib (Muslims) and Krishna Kar, Peer Pandit Padshah (Hindus) were revered equally by both the communities. About Makhdoom Sahib there is a legend that he had a firm belief in Hindu concept of Mother Goddess in her 'Jwala' or Flame form. His mausoleum situated at the Hill of Hari Parvat was burnt thrice in fire and the Mother Goddess 'Jwala' had to be propitiated so that there is no more devastation of this holy place by fire.

In the backdrop of what has been stated about it would be worth our while to study the impact and the influence of the Hindu thought, Hindu practices and Hindu tradition on some of the prominent Muslim Saint poets of Kashmir, who in my opinion should appropriately be called Muslim Rishis. This is evident not only from what we hear about them but is also explicitly brought out by them in their poetic compositions.

Shams Faqir

Lal Ded had said 'Asi aes tai asi asav asi dore kaer patavath. We only were and we only shall be, it is we only who kept on coming and going.' Shams said the same thing in his own way. 'Yun ta gatshun mo mashrai, tami gatshit chhu tuhund garai. Do not forget birth and death because His abode is beyond this

transmigration.' The Gita has stated that people see the secret of life with awe and wonder and no one knows the reality of self. This idea has been conveyed by him thus: 'Kyah chhu hayat kyah chhu mamat, kath cheezas nav kara bo zaat. What is life and what is death, what shall I call the Self (or the Divine)?' Lal Ded had said, 'Phiran phiran nyoth anguj gaji manech dui tsaji no. Telling the beads of the rosary you have rubbed the flesh of your thumb and finger but the duality has not gone from your mind.' The same idea has been conveyed by this Sufi in the following verse. 'Ha zahida kyah chhuk tsa karan, raath doh goi tasbih phiran. Mokhta ravi fatus rachhit zom, roni mutsrith shroni shroni ko't gom. What are you doing you fool, you have been telling the rosary day and night. Going after fake things you are losing the real pearl. Have I lost the jingle by untying the bells?' Again Lal Ded had dissuaded from giving spiritual message to an undeserving person in these words: 'Syeki shathas byol no vaezve, Kharas gore dina ravi doh. Moodas jnanach kath no vaenze, kom yajyan raavi teel. Do not sow seed in a sandy belt; you will waste a whole day in feeding a donkey with jaggery. Do not give spiritual knowledge to a fool, as you will waste oil in preparing cakes from chaff.' Shams Faqir has put the same thing thus: 'Nasihah kaerzi no nasli shaitanas, tala kani zanzyan aasi ma kham. Maarfat kyah kari napak banas, tas naadanas kar tsali tshai. Do not give advice to a satanic person because basically he is raw and not ripe. Mysticism is a waste for an impure one. Alas! When shall his ignorance go away.' The opening lines of one of his ghazals are an excellent example of the non-dualism of the Vedanta. 'Bo chhus kenh nai kho'd panay, bo kenh nai kas vanay panay. I am nothing; it is He himself in my form. How shall I explain my not being anything to any one.' This can be compared with this line from Shankaracharya: 'Tad-eko-vashishthah Shivah kevalo-aham. I am Shiva and Shiva alone'. He has described omnipresence of God in these words: 'Mye vuchh har shayi su yaar, chhuno kanh moi ti khali. Vanai bo siri israr yino aasakh vubali. I perceive the Divine at every place. Not an inch is without Him. This is the secret I reveal to you; do not get lost.'

Ahmad Batawari

Ahmad Batawari was a contemporary of Shams Faqir and lived from 1845 to 1918. He was an advocate of the immortality and continuity of life. In the footprints of Lal Ded he has said 'Hayatuk aaftab chhuna zanh losan, bozan kona chhuk yi chhu yaksan. - The Sun of life never sets, why don't you understand that the Divine pervades everything equally.' He has freely used the Hindu mythology to bring home his point of view. A few examples are given here. 'Saalkas balkas Shiva Naranas, tsonven ikavata pranas saet. Tarkas saath chum vetsarnag sranas, jan chum meelith jahanas saet. Veshnas, Krishnas, Resh madanas, Maha Ganish tati kas kari namaskar, Ganga raza byuthum Gangabal thanas... Ravun rovmut manz tawanas, Sita sata rats He chhavan, Tsayi Rama Tsandras manz daricha khanas... Shaster dendar gupt gnanas, zuv chhuk Shaster dil sat noor, Ahmad Batawar gupt rood panas, jan chum meelith jahanas saet. A seeker, a child, Shiva and Narayana, all these four are together to be remembered through the vital breath. This is the auspicious time to bathe in the spring of contemplation. The individual self is united with the universal self. Maha Ganesh is bewildered in the gathering of the sages. He sees Vishnu, Krishna among them and whom he should salute in reverence. The Lord of the Ganges is seated at the source of the Ganges. Ravana has gone astray while Sita is engrossed with her consort. She is there with Shri Rama. It is the Shastras (the revealed text) that give the secret knowledge. The life essence for the knowledgeable are these texts while their hearts are full of divine light. Ahmad Batawar has remained hidden and his self is one with the universal self.'

Swachhi Kral

This poet lived around the same time in a village named 'Yander' in Pulwama. He was an ardent believer in non-dualism. He says, 'Akh tsa te byeyi bo ganzer maba, haba yi chhui gumanai. Me and you are not to be taken as different because dualism is a delusion.' 'Dapyomus bavatam pananui mye aasun, dapunam pan panun gatshi thari kasun. I asked Him to reveal Himself to me. He replied that for that you have to go beyond your self.' Long before, Lal Ded had stated, 'Larah lazam manz maidanas aend aend kaer mas takiya ta gah. So rooz yati tai bo gayas panas vonye gav vanas falav dith. In the middle of a field I constructed a house and decorated it on all sides. The house remained here and I only went away as if the shopkeeper left after downing the shutters of his shop.' Swachh Kral has this to say in the same vein, 'Yath fan sarayi dyun chhui shaba, ath manz mo trav dukanai. Path chhui marun az ya saba, haba yi

chhui gumanai. You have to spend just a night in this mortal inn. Do not start a business here. For you have to die now or in the morn; it is all a delusion.' He advocates adopting a vision of discrimination to see right from wrong. 'Dapyomas swarma laegith kyah chhu banan. Dapunam poz ta apuz ada chhu nanan. I asked him what use is the collerium of discrimination in ones eyes. He replied that this enables' one to distinguish right from wrong.' He sees the Divine in everything, the ocean in every drop. 'Joi manz basith chhui daryav, nav dar aab tai aab dar nav. The river exists in a brook, water inside a boat and boat inside the water.'

Nyama Saab

Nyama saab was senior (born 1805) and he also lived at Chinikral mohalla of Srinagar. He has time and again reiterated what Lal Ded had said in these words: 'Lal bo drayas lolare tshandan lustum dyan keho raath. Vucchhum Pandit panani gare, sui mye rotmas nyechhther ta saath. I set out in search of Him early at dawn and wandered day and night. Ultimately I saw Him within myself and that was the auspicious moment for me.' At one place he has said, 'Yas naad layi su chum nishi, kamyu sheeshi chovnas mai. That one whom I call aloud is near me. What a cup of wine he has made me drink!' At other place he repeats, 'Shah chhui basith panane gare, hooore mye nyunam tsure dil. The Lord is seated within me, he has taken my heart away.' Again he says, 'Yaar chhui gari panane, su no me vane aaw. My Beloved is within me but I failed to recognize Him.' Nyama seems to have reached a stage where he has shunned the notion of 'I' and 'my'. This is the high point of Upanishadic Vedanta. 'Orai aayov ladith chhav, dopnam sorui myonui gav. Ba dapun myonui vasith pyav, ath nav aalim haarith pyav. He came with all His grandeur and declared that everything is His. The notion of 'I' in me was gone because no reason or intelligence is of any use in this arena.' He has described the status of the Divine purposefully in indefinite terms because he feels that none of the religious schools has any clue to that. 'Sang ta gnyana math haeratas. Nyermalas manz myani naav. Shubi shinyah tati khidmatas, pyom tsyatas tas chhu myon naav. Bouddh congregations (Sangha) and Hindu centers of spiritualism (Maths) are themselves bewildered; the boat of my life is in the pure sacred waters. Even nihilism is meaningless there for I realized that He and I are one - with the same name.'

Shah Ghafur

This great holy man lived in the beginning of 19th century at village Chhivan in Badgam. He has adopted the Vedantic dictum 'So-aham' (or I am He) in its pristine purity and has written a full poem with this title. 'Brahma, Veshan, Maheeshwar garun, shuft ho chhui tyuhundui zuv. Pan hai khatanai jan hyekh marun, darnayi darun suhamsu. Seek to know the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva as they are the givers of your life. If they hide themselves from you give your life at their feet. Adopt always the great mantra of 'I am He'. 'Bashar travith, Ishar tsa garun, Isharas saet roz sapnakh sui Ishar sapdun sharir gav marun.... Dah chhi avtaar zanh lagi na tharun, mah zan prazlan naran chhui, Ram Ram karun gav naam sandarun, daranayi darun suhamsu. Leave the individual soul and go after the Universal soul. Remain with God and you will become God. For that you have to shun your self. There are ten different incarnations of God. Narayana only shines in all of them like the Moon. So you need not feel hesitant. Repeating the name Rama is the way to remember God and once you get habituated to that you will feel one with the Divine.' Saying so, he is at once reminded of the crucification of Mansoor and he warns, 'Chhu vanan Shah Ghafur vaati ma marun. When Shah Ghafur says that the Divine and I are one, he should not be crucified for this truth.' Again he says, 'Shah Ghafur pazichi han chhuna bavan, tan chhas rachhni lachha bo'd jaan. Po'z gatshi aashkar asi maranavan. Intentionally Shah Ghafur avoids telling the truth. After all he has to save his skin for the life is very precious. If he reveals the truth (of oneness of God and man) he will be killed.' One is reminded of these lines from a Urdu poetess of repute: 'Sach bolna bhi lazim jeena bhi hai zaroori, sach bolne ki khatir Mansoor ho na jana'. Speaking the truth is necessary but to live also is essential, one should not give up one's life like Mansoor did simply to speak the truth.

Asad Paray

Asad Paray is a later poet who lived in village Hajin (1862 to 1930). The effect of Hindu mythology and philosophy is apparent from most of his poems. 'Naran naguk mas' is a glaring example of this influence.

It would suffice to quote a few stanzas from this poem. 'Om ba karith drass Omkarasay, Om Narayan sat logum saet, tosas Omki pan khalmasay ba rasa rasay kornas tayar. Suhamsu yaar vuchha novnasay tathya Rama tsander sholyav, sayas tahndis tal thovnasay. Jugyah lagith doonya zajmasay, khalvakh dandakvanasay manz, pranay abhyas sharir zolmasay. Bhavanaki nagarada tan navmasay, bava sara vuchhim divay jan. Haramokha bala paan mansovmasay, bo rasa rasay kornas tayar. I started my spiritual journey uttering the sacred 'Om' and the Divine accompanied me all through. I went on chanting Om as if He was preparing me for the journey slowly and steadily. When by His grace I realized that He and I are one, I perceived the radiance of Shri Rama. He kept me under His refuge. In the solitude of a forest I lit the sacred fire like a Yogi. I burnt my body in the fire of breath control. In the sacred waters of the shrine at Bhavan I cleansed my body. This helped me to see the divine radiance here itself. I sacrificed my childhood at the sacred foothills of Harmukh, the abode of Shiva and He geared me for the journey slowly and steadily.

Ahad Zargar

Perhaps last of the great tradition of Muslim Rishi poets, Ahad Zargar is a forceful exponent of this ideology, which thrives on non-dualism, self-realization and emphasis on contemplation. He was born around 1916-17 in the house of Mohiuddin Zargar, a weaver by profession, whose ancestors were goldsmiths because of which the family got the surname 'Zargar'. Although he had studied a little of the Persian language but by any standards he can be said to be illiterate like many of his predecessors. Many holy persons would visit their house and in their company he got attracted to this field of mysticism and spiritualism. Finally he became the disciple to one Khwaja Abdul Kabir Lone of Kawadara, Srinagar at the young age of fifteen. He emphasized the need for interaction with the holy persons in the very first verse that he wrote. 'Shad roz dila myani kyazi chhuk gamanaey, Saet mehramanaey thav ikhlas – Rejoice my heart, why are you gloomy? Keep in contact with the knowledgeable persons.'

I have stated elsewhere that calling these Muslim Rishis as Sufis is a misnomer. Ahad Zargar's saying supports my contention. It is well known that 'Zikr' or rhythmic movement of head, body and arms is an essential feature of a Sufi. Such a person is called 'Zakir'. By this practice he recites the name of God, tells the beads of a rosary and aims at 'Fana' or complete annihilation of the Self. Ahad Zargar opposes this practice as useless and lays stress on contemplation and thought process, essential features of 'Advaita' or non-dualism. Says he, 'Zikir tai tasbih zalith trav, fikrav gaetsh gaetsh seer parzanav – give up this Zikra and the rosary and try to know the secret by contemplation. Not only this, he calls it a fraud and deception, which leads us to nowhere. In his words, 'Makrav saet no dai athi aav, fikrav gaetsh gaetsh seer parzanav – You cannot attain God by these frauds and deceptions. You should know the secret only by a serious thought process and contemplation'. He does not see any difference between himself and the Supreme, again a prescription of the non-dualist philosophy. For him self-realization and realization of the Divine are one and the same thing. 'Dayi saey bronh sapud oasis bui- Only I existed before the Divine'. 'Ha Ahad Zargara dur kar daey, pura ada deshakh panun deedar – O! Ye Ahad Zargar, shun all duality and then alone you will realize your self'.

Zargar is influenced by Hindu theology so much that he freely uses terms from that and refers to Hindu sacred scriptures with reverence. 'Rig Ved, Yajur Ved, Sam Ved, Athar Ved vaster sanyasyan tai. Khastar go'ran tsor veed havinam, jugya samana gnyan – My preceptor taught me the four Vedas and revealed to me the knowledge from these, which is the characteristics of a Jogi'. Kashmir Shaiva Philosophy describes the Creator as 'Prakasha' or radiance and the creation as 'Vimarsh' or awareness of Him as the multitude in the form of creation. This holy person says the same thing in his own way. Aakash paatal prakash meelith su gash gatshi vuchhun tai – At the horizon there is a grandeur of light when the two worlds meet. That radiance is worth seeing. He acknowledges the benefits of chanting the sacred 'OM' and refers to the Hindu practice of 'Pranayam' or breath control. 'Dama Shama dyut me Omkaran tav – I practiced breath control and was spiritually ignited by the sacred OM'. Bhagavad Gita has described the abode of the Supreme as self-illuminated. In the same spirit Zargar says: 'Na chhu tor subaha ta na chhu tor sham- na chhu tor kalma ta na chhu Ram Ram, na chhu tor millat-u- mazhab saman, rinda ban zindagi sara kartan – That supreme abode has no mornings, no evenings. There is no classification of sacred words nor is there any demarcation of creed and religion. Free yourself of all these divisive notions and try to know the secret of life.'

He uses Hindu names of the Divine, Hindu ways of worship and Hindu religious symbols freely in his verses, sometimes in a better way than a Hindu Rishi would use. I cite a few examples here. 'Goshi goshi Shankaras Shainkh kona vayav- Why not blow the conch in every nook and corner to please Shankara?' 'Om ki aalav dity mye har shayav- I chanted aloud OM at every place.' 'Ram bo ko'rhas Rama rubayav- I was ecstatic to listen to the hymns in praise of Lord Rama'. The great Lalla had in a typical mystic way referred to the Divine as nameless in these words: 'Goras pritham sasi late, yas na kenh nav tas kyah chhu nav- I asked my preceptor repeatedly about the name of that nameless Divine'. Ahad Zargar has followed suit and has said, 'Chhu kenh nai karith kenhnas ral, vuchhum kenh nai mye deedan tal, chhu kenh nai kyah mye kornam tshal – He is formless and you get absorbed in that formless. I have myself perceived the formless before my eyes. Being formless how come He has enchanted me'.

'Advaita' or non-dualism is essentially a philosophy that believes in one-ness of the Creator and the creation. Knowing self according to this doctrine is tantamount to knowing the Divine. This has been amply explained and expressed by Ahad Zargar time and again in his compositions. A few examples are cited here. 'Lamakan sapdith vaechh lamakan- you have to become the Divine (Literally one who has no house) in order to realize the Divine. 'Aabaech soorath aabas banayo, khabas milavan khabas saet, grakas pananizath athi aayo – Water merged with water and all the illusions were removed. The seeker perceived his own self.' 'Katrass meelith gav daryav – the entire river got merged with one drop.' 'Baey chhus maikhana paimanay, baey chhus saqi hyeth sarshar, baey chhus baegrans maerfata maiy, aki nokta gatsh bedar- I am the goblet in the tavern. I am the cupbearer and I only am distributing the wine of spiritualism. Thus you need to become wise by just one hint.'

The great Lalla had said six centuries earlier, 'Asi aes tai asi aasav, asi dore kaer patavath – We only were in the past and we only shall be in the future. We only have been coming and going all the time'. Underscoring the same view about the continuity of life Zargar says, 'Baey chhus aamut az kehnaiy, baey chhus kehnaichi ziyi hund bahar, baey nata panaiy chhus kehnaiy, aki nokta gatsh bedar – From nothingness I have emerged, I am the fruit of nothingness. I am not I but nothingness. Again you should take a hint and awaken'. Non-dualism is a creed with this great mystic. He has no qualms to declare himself as the supreme and that too in a wonderful terminology. He says, 'Bae chhus shama ta parvanay, baey chhus gashuk banikar, baey shamso qamar prazlanaiy, aki nokta gatsh bedar- I am the candle as also the butterfly that hovers around it. I am the one from whom the light emanates, I am the shining Sun and Moon. Take the hint and awaken'.

Other Luminaries

There is no Muslim Saint poet or Rishi, as I prefer to call him, who may have remained unaffected by the Hindu philosophy, mythology and religious beliefs prevalent among the Kashmiri Pandits. Non-dualism, universality of the Divine, transmigration of soul, continuity of life, chanting the name of God, penance in solitude and maintaining secrecy in spiritual matters as also 'Guru-shishya parampara' or teacher-taught tradition are some of the prominent principles which have influenced these pious souls and which they have clearly expressed in their poems. For the Divine they have often used the Hindu terminology like 'Naran' or 'Daiy' (Narayan or Dev). Suffice it to cite a few examples from other such luminary-poets.

Rehman Dar who lived at Chhattabal, Srinagar around the middle of 19th century has said, 'Nishi chhui panas paan parzanav. He is within you and so realize your self.' Rahim Saab, who lived in Sopore and died in 1875, writes, 'Samah kornam aem Omkaran. Chanting Om has created poise and balance in me.' Moomin Saab (1810) has explained the high point of yoga in this line, 'Aslas saet gatshi vassal sapdun ye. One should get merged with the ultimate Truth.' Shah Qalander who lived at Haigam in mid 19th century has almost quoted Lal Ded verbatim in this verse, 'Lava ta prava chhai navi khota navye, ravas atagath sori na zanh, Shiv Shah Qalander chhuna kansi hyuyve kamadeev divaye Manasbal. The radiance and glare is newer and newer while the Sun cannot cease to rise and set. Shiva is unique and unparalleled and Kamadev is enjoying at Manasbal (A village in Kashmir, literally the lake of the mind.). Another great Saint Vahab Khar has written a full 'Masnavi' on Sheikh Sanna clearly bringing out his love and devotion towards Hindu tradition and philosophy. In Hindu mysticism there is a tradition of keeping the directions of the preceptor secret and the disciple, after getting initiated makes a pledge in

these words, 'Shrutam me gopaya – I have heard what you have told me and I know I have to keep it a secret'. Ahmad Rah, who lived at Dalgate in Srinagar has stated the same thing in his poem thus: 'Peeran vaenim easar, seer gatshi vyaparavun. Seeras ma kar guftar, deedar tas deedan – my preceptor revealed the secret to me and this secret has to be protected. Secret should never be talked about and then only the seeker is able to have a glimpse of the Supreme'. Referring to the Hindu concept of 'Jeevan-mukhti – emancipation during life time', he says 'Mar zinda par soo ham soo hamas, damas saeti zaan – attain death while living, repeat 'I am He' and in a moment you will get enlightened'.

Another great name is that of Samad Mir. Originally he belonged to Nambal Har but lived initially at Narwara in Srinagar before going back to his village, where he lived up to his death in 1959. He was a disciple of Khwaja Ramzan Dar of Anantnag who initiated him in mystic discipline. He also advocated the doctrine of non-dualism and self-realization. Says he, 'Pay hyot aashqav kaaba butkhanas, gayi ada panas pana mushtaq – The seekers searched in the temples and the mosques and ultimately they realized that God was not different from them and they began loving their own selves'.

These examples can be multiplied by the dozens. The influence is so pronounced that the following line from Asad Paray appears to be the translation of the oft-quoted quotation from the Veda. The Veda has said, 'Ekam sat viprah bahudha vadanti. The Truth is one and the seers describe it in different ways.' Asad Paray has said the same thing in this way, 'Kath chha kuni vath chha byon byon. The Truth is one but the paths leading to that are different.' This points to the mountain peak theory according to which the ultimate Truth is like a mountain peak, which can be reached from many sides. Of course the climb may be easy and smooth from some sides and steep and tough from others. It is high time that we realized the truth of this statement and started respecting each others religious beliefs and customs as valid and relevant, so that harmony, love and peace are ensured for all times to come.

Conclusion

The non-dualism is a universal experience and the great thinkers of every religion have sometime or the other contributed to this on the basis of their own experience. Dionysus the Areopagite, a Christian monk of the 5th century has said, "Then beyond all distinction between knower and known the aspirant becomes merged in the nameless, formless Reality, wholly absorbed in that which is beyond all things and in nothing else... Having stilled his intellect and mind, he is united by his highest faculty with That which is beyond all knowing." Malise Ruthven in his book on Islam has this to say, "In the long term modernization is a global process... Muslim souls are likely to find the Sufi path of inner exploration and voluntary association more rewarding than revolutionary politics." In an article published in The Times of India Jamal Ahmad Khan has observed, "The Sufi saints, Muslim scholars and Islamic sects were liberal in their out look a la their Hindu counterparts and recognized that there were several paths to God, Love of God and service to mankind were their most important principles They were believers in pantheistic monism, the earliest exposition of which is to be found in the Upanishads." The great Chinese Philosopher, Lao-tzu has said, 'Knowing others is wisdom and knowing yourself is enlightenment.' The bottom line is that the emancipation lies in realizing immortality of the soul, in awareness of the Self and in being an integral part of the universal consciousness. This is what Rishis and saint-poets of Kashmir have absorbed and expressed in their poems. Together with Hindu Rishis these noble Muslim Rishis preached a life of piety, purity, contentment, love and firm belief in God, who they said was attainable by love, devotion and penance.



RITUALS AND CEREMONIES OF KASHMIRI PANDITS

Prof. Girdhari Mohan Ganjoo

Kashmiri Pandits have a distinct culture of their own which has taken a particular form. They have a way of life limited to them, with their peculiar historical traditions having adapted to the specific physical environment of the snow-bound valley of Kashmir. This way of life is governed by both written and unwritten 'Laws' or traditions, religious, beliefs, ideals and Incentives. What is noteworthy is, that this way of life has been both unconsciously and deliberately passed on from one generation to the next by the specific methods of child rearing.

Some rituals and ceremonies of the community are associated with rearing and training, representing unconscious attempts at fostering attitudes in the young.

1. Kahnether' is the purificatory ceremony after confinement usually performed on the eleventh day following delivery when the 'mother leaves the confinement room. A 'havan' is performed and the child is given a name. Earlier, both mother and child are given a bath on or after the sixth day of the delivery in a ceremony called 'Shran Sundar,'. The water for the both is prepared with great care. Herbs like *geuthir*, *wanbabar*, *Kala wenth*, *wupal Hak* and condiments, like *Shonth gandar*, *liddar gander*, are boiled : In water in a large pot, (*degcha*) for nearly four hours. Later, the pot is removed from the fire place and the water, stirred with the iron handle of the fire stoker (*kruch dan*) before it is left to become tepid. Care is taken not to add cold water to it. After the bath, the mid-wife passes lighted pieces of birch-bark round the heads of the child and the mother and of all the persons present, uttering, the words *Shokh tah punahsund* (happiness and more children to you).

2. Zara-kasai is the. haircutting ceremony performed when the boy is about four or five years old. The boy's head is clean shaved, leaving only chog, tuft of uncut hair at the centre of the skull. A havan is performed. Relatives and guests are treated to a feast.

3. Yagnopavit or *mekhal* is generally performed before the boy "reaches his' thirteenth year. The sacred thread is put round the boy's neck by the guru and he becomes a twice-born Brahman. He begs alms (*abeed*) for his guru from his relatives and others who come, especially, to offer *abeed*, ranging from Rs. 2/- to Rs. 51/- each. The boy gives the entire collection, of money (which may amount to a tidy four-figure' sum to his guru, He throws flowers, grains, almonds, Coconuts, Pistachio, nuts, etc. on the sacred fire in the midst of chanting of Vedic hymns, He is shown a virgin and a heifer seven times. The guru sanctifies the initiate by sprinkling his mouth with a few drops of a potion made of heifers's Urine, Ghee and Milk. Later, the boy stands on a mystic figure traced with lime and coloured rice powder on the ground (*weug*) while the women) singing around him. Shells and coins are thrown over his head and he is carried in a procession down to the river-front to perform his first *Ssndhia* or prayer ceremony. Congratulations are offered and later everyone is served food comprising dal, rice and vegetable. A few days prior to this *gar-navai* or *levun* (house cleaning ceremony)*manzirat* (the boy's hands and feet are coloured red with the dye of *mehsнди*) and *divagon* (bath and annointment of the boy followed by the guru invoking the protection of Sixty-four deities called *yogins*) ceremonies are performed, Cash presents (*gulmeuth*) are given to the father of the boy by the relatives and friends from his mother's side on *divsgon*. Clothes etc. are brought for the boy, his parents and other relatives' by his' maternal i.e. mother's parents side on *duri butta*. Relatives and friends are treated to a feast in which vegetarian food is served. Relatives are invited to the house, women sing songs and make merry everyday, beginning from the *gar-navai* night. The day after the *yagnopavit* *Jag the Kushal hom* ceremony is performed. There i~ a 'feast and afterwards the invited guests return to their homes and married girls are given Rs. 3/- to Rs. 10/- each as *atagat*.

4. Vivah or marriage (*nethar*) is the most important ceremony in the life of a Kashmiri Pandit boy. The custom of arranged marriages prevails; The services of professional match-maker (*manzim yor*) are called in and the horoscopes of the bride and bridegroom are compared by the astrologer. If the horoscopes are favourable and age, education, family status etc. are found to be compatible the girl's parents send to the boy's parents some salt, sugar and cash presents. The boy and the girl are seen respectively by the members of the girl's family and the boy's family in order to approve the match. Likewise, in the post 1960 era, the boy and the girl are given an opportunity to meet for a talk at the house of a mutual acquaintance. The astrologer fixes an auspicious day for the marriage. The rites of 'gara-navai' (house cleaning), *manzirat* and *divagon* are performed. The bride's formal initiation into Brahmanism dates from her *divagon*. On the wedding day the bridegroom is dressed in an achkan or a new suit and a colourful turban, laced with a sehra of golden thread. On this day the bridegroom is called *maharaza*. A procession is formed in the compound where the bridegroom stands on *weug* (a mysical round figure traced with lime and coloured rice powders). Then the eldest lady of the house comes and moves over his head a *thali* (plate) in which are placed lighted *divas* (earthen lamps). This is called *alath*. A couple of pigeons are released in the air. All the while ladies sing songs and shower coins, sugar, flower petals over the groom. The bridegroom, accompanied by the pot *maharaza* or the best man, sets out in a car at the head of a motor-cade carrying wedding guests to bride's house. As they approach the bride's house, conches are blown, and a near relative of the bride's family comes forward to receive the party, which has now formed into a formal procession. In the compound of bride's house *weug* is kept ready for the bridegroom to stand upon, The bride is brought wrapped in a *pashmina dusa* (an expensive blanket made of *pashmina*) and made to stand to his left side on the *weug*. Then the rite of having a *thali* with lighted lamps (*alath*) and releasing pigeon is performed by the bride's eldest lady. The *lagan* or the nuptial ceremony is performed by the priest of the bride assisted by other priests. Various Incantations, invoking the blessings of the gods, are recited and afterwards the bride and the bridegroom partake food served in a *thali* or plate (*dai bata*). Then they are made to walk together; hand in hand, on seven coins of silver round the fire lighted on the occasion. This is called *Satpadhi*. The priests are given *dakshina* or cash presents, Towards the close of the ceremony the colourful *posh puza* takes place. Covered by a gorgeous silken sheet the bride and the bridegroom, seated face to face and holding each other's hands, are offered flowers and blessings by the parents of the bride and other relatives, while the priests recite vedic hymns in a chorus.

After the *lagan* is over, the bridegroom with his bride and members of his party return to his house in a car. Before leaving the bride's house, the couple is made to stand on the *weug* and the *alath* ceremony is repeated. At the bridegroom's house also the *weug* ceremony is performed. As the bridal couple approach the house, the ladies sing in chorus, its crescendo reaches the climax with the arrival of the bride and the bridegroom. Before the bridegroom is allowed to enter his house with his bride, he must pay money to his paternal aunt or sister (*Zambrand*) who bars the door. In the evening the bride and the bridegroom visit bride's father's house for *Satraat* or *parmatshun* and she shows her jewellery, clothes and presents to her parents. The bridegroom is treated to a feast and given a new suit of clothes, cash presents, *nabad not* (candy) and dry fruits. On return to the bride-groom's house the conjugal union ceremony takes place. The bride is given numerous gifts consisting of gold jewellery, silver-ware, *pashmina* shawls, clothes and other valuable household articles including a set of utensils. Among the ornaments gifted by the bride's father to her is *dijharo* (ear-ornament of gold) which every Kashmiri Panditani wears on and after her marriage.



THE LIFE OF LAL DED

Lal Ded or Lalleswari, fondly called as Lalla, a great spiritual saint of Kashmir was born on Bhadra Shukla Pakash Ashtami, in the month of September in early part of the 14th Century. She was born in a pious Brahmin family that lived at the ancient city of Pandrenthan founded by the Emperor Ashoka. Those days is used to be the capital of the Emperor, the Srinagar city was established only later. There seems to be some controversy about the year of her birth as different chroniclers give 3 different years (AD 1300, 1334 & 1346) even some mention Sempor near Pampore as place of her birth which seems to be unprobable. Lal Ded's date of birth may be presumed to be between 1317 and 1320 AD as suggested by Prof. J. L. Kaul in his work on Lal Ded.



Dr. B. L. Bradoo
(Chandigarh)

The Life of Lal Ded is shorouded in myth, miracle and legend. Most of these have been associated from her very birth. She had shown keen interest in religion as she was brought up in a religious atmosphere with puja and sadhana at her parental home. She not only imbibed the atmosphere of piety and religion but also came under the influence of her family guru Pandit Siddha Shrikantha, affectionately called Siddha Mol, from an early stage of her childhood. This moulded her future to renounce the world and wander all over in pursuit of God. She laid stress on the innerquest and in sincere pursuit of spiritual perfection. She believed in human goodness and purity of sould and considered all human beings as one without any discrimination between man and man. Hindu or a Musalman.

At the age of 12 years, she was married to a young man in Brahmin family surnamed Nica Bhatt, resident of Drangabal at Pampore, the ancient town of Padampora. No contemporary record or chronicle is available of her period. It is only much later that her name and work began to be mentioned in different chronicles and records written by various personalities in different languages in the valley (Persian, Sanskrit etc.) As a married woman, she was gravely ill treated by her cruel mother-in-law and also received harsh treatment from her husband. Lal Ded was given a new name of Padmavati by her in-laws, but her maiden name Lalla was never given up. She was affectionately called Lalla by all her close friends, neighbours and relatives.

The young Padmavati was often reproached even scolded on the slightest pretext. Patiently she bore all taunts and insults but never complained to anyone. She would remain calm but sad without receiving any love and affection from her in-laws. Even only a little rice was served to her as a thin layer spread over a stone (nalwat) that was placed in her thalli by her mother-in-law. Padmavati would collect and eat her little rice, get up calmly wash the stone and put it again in the kitchen without raising an eyebrow. This had become a daily routine till one day, her father-in-law came to know himself about this fact. He was indeed shocked. Such cruelty and the like would make Lalla aloof and that she would never like to mix with anyone in the neighbourhood. In order to avoid people, she would get up very early in the morning and leave for the ghat to fetch water in a pitcher on her head. Her mother-in-law would often question her as to where did she idle away time till her return home, accusing her of disloyalty to her husband, who had reason to disbelieve her on account of her frigidity towards him. Hence she had no children from this marriage.

However the truth was soon found out as she would leave early only to pray to God on whom she used to meditate at a quiet spot away from her home while she would leave to fetch water. The legend has it that she used to cross the river to the shrine of Nata Keshava Bhairava, at the ghat of Zinpore village.

Here she held her daily communication with God that caused a routine delay and hence misunderstandings at her in-laws home.

Once while returning late to her home with the pitcher of water on her head, her husband in his rage at her conduct stuck the pitcher of water, it broke into pieces, but the water in it stood frozen on her head till she filled all the pots in the kitchen and threw the remaining water outside. That became a pond and came to be known as "Lalla Trag" the pond of Lalla. It continued to be filled with water till 1925 but later it went dry. This dry pond exists even to this day. Her miraculous powers became slowly well known, her fame spread and many people came for her darshan. Finally she left home in search of God and would often put forth a few lines (Vaakhs) to people around her.

In her later days she wandered about in nude or seminude condition not bothering about her own looks and received unwanted comments from the onlookers. A part of her belly (Lal in Kashmiri) increased in size and hung loose down from the abdomen. So some say, it is for this reason that she was called 'Lal Ded or Lal Moj'. But this does not seem to be true as she would herself use her name 'Lalla or Lalli' in her vaakhs as this name occurs at least 21 times in a total of 184 vaakhs spoken by her (J.L. Kaul) and not available in written form as Kashmiri Language was a colloquial language among the masses. later after few centuries many authors wrote down these vaakhs in different languages and they became an important topic of research.

There are other legends as well, that were told and retold in various forms by the late chroniclers. Once her family guru Siddha Shrikantha was having his morning bath in the Vitasta at ghat Siddayar. He noticed that Lala was washing an earthen pot from outside but was filled with dirt inside. When she was questioned, she replied 'what use it is to cleanse the body while the innerself is not purified? That reveals her knowledge of spiritual thought she had already achieved. Once in Pampore Lal Ded's father-in-law saw her standing almost nude among many spectators, so he led her into his house to put on some clothes and cover her body. She protested, saying there was no human being, only goats and sheep, and she asked him to look out through a window. As he saw, he was astonished to find sheep and goats indeed.

Lal Ded had given up the need for performing various rituals, religious ceremonies and also the worship of icons and images. She would not believe in worship of idols, pilgrimages, recitation of scriptures or observing fasts and other rites. This denigration of the ceremonial pieties is well seen in her vaakhs. Her aim was to show that God is present everywhere, as well inside each living being. Lal Ded turned into a mystic follower in search of Lord. Her wandering way of life must have been the possible reason that early Sanskrit and Persian scholars considered her as an ordinary figure and so did not mention anything about her, as those days greater importance was given to kings and their courtiers, who rather took interest in Islamization and conversion process of the Hindus. Even orthodox Brahmins would not approve her way of life because she would respect every individual, irrespective of the religion.

She is said to have met the saint Mir Sayyid Ali Hamdani (Shah Hamdan) who came to Kashmir thrice (AD 1372, 1379 and 1383) and seems to have conversed with him on spiritual subjects. Later his son Mir Mohd. Hamdani also came to Kashmir with hundreds of followers for spreading Islam in the valley. Later Sayyid Husain Samnani came to Kashmir (AD 1371) during the reign of Sultan Shihab-ud-Din. Some chroniclers write that Lalla felt elated and received beneficence of secret doctrine and polished her spiritual powers from the Sufi and thus Muslims would call her Lalla Arifa. It is said that at the Village of Khampore, on the main road to Shopian, Lalla saw Mir Ali Hamdani approaching from the opposite side. She rushed to a grocers shop who turned her away and finally she entered a bakers shop and jumped into the hot burning oven. The baker got frightened and covered the oven with lid, but later found Lal Ded attired in Golden dress to meet Sayyid Hamdani unabashed. Thus there is a common saying in Kashmiri "Ayeyi wanis ta gayi kandras"

A different version says that when Hamdani came to baker's shop, he asked baker to remove the lid and called out to Lal Ded whereupon she came dressed up in beautiful garments. However, there is no evidence about this anecdote of the oven or that Lal Ded ever met Hamdani or Sumnani as many chroniclers do not mention of these meetings at all. She had already attained her great yogic powers and insight of her Trika darshan to reach the God. Reverse may be true as these Sufi's might have seen the greatness of Lal Ded as a saint of high order and they might have been enlightened and got benefited in their own way. These Hamdanis and Sayyids had themselves escaped the wrath of Taimar Lane and deserted their homeland in search of peace and simplicity on the valley in which Mohammedan dynasty had already set foot.

From a total of 184 vaakhs only about 80 to 100 are said to be authentic. They piece together her biography as a saint, the significance of which lies in the growth and attainment of her spiritual realization. Thus from these we can understand something of her philosophy, her outlook on life and her universal message for the masses. Her vaakhs were outpourings of her soul and feelings of her inner experience. Vaakhs are indeed oldest known specimens of Kashmiri language in the 14th century. However, these vaakhs came down to us by oral transmission and therefore have been subjected to alterations and linguistic changes with time. Yet they preserved many ancient and original expression of old Kashmiri language, that was used only in a spoken form in her times. Her vaakhs may be regarded as the earliest form of modern Kashmiri language as they are still understandable by a common man, leaving every one in deep spiritual thought about their deep meaning and great consolation for the human beings. Thus the more we read or listen to them, the more we get attracted to the philosophy of Lal Ded. There would be no end ever to this eternal love for Lal Ded.

While she debunked idol worship, animal sacrifice and pilgrimage to holy places and indeed all external observations, she stressed on the doctrine of Karma and transmigration. She believed in the concept of rebirth. She explains to her family guru Siddha Srikantha as to how she took about seven different successive births as a woman, as a filly, a pup and so on and finally again as a woman who was married in the family of Nica Bhatt at Pampore. At the time of her marriage, the bride Lalla whispered to Srikantha that the boy born in my first birth at Pandrethan is the bridegroom at this time. Srikantha was indeed amazed to hear this story of transmigration and rebirth as revealed by Lalla. This anecdote has been given by Sh. Anand Kaul.

Some political events of the 14th century may also be mentioned here. During those days, king Suhadeva ruled Kashmir from (AD 1301-20). Many muslim adventurers like Bulbul Shah (sayyid Abdul Rehman Turkistani) and Shah Mir from Swat, north west came in to the valley. In 1319 Dulchu (Zulqadar Khan) a Tartar Chief from Central Asia, invaded the valley. Suhadeva fled to Kashmir. Dulchu created anarchy followed by reign of another intruder, Rinchana from Tibet from 1320-23 who got converted to Islam. After his death in 1326, Udyanadeva, brother of Suhadeva ruled from 1323-28, followed by Kota Rani 1338-39 till Shah Mir (Sultan Shams-ud-Din) 1339-42 finally ascended the throne and founded the Mohmadan dynasty in Kashmir. Sultan Alau-Din ruled from 1343-45 and later Sultan Shihab-ud-Din from 1354-1372, followed by Qutub-Din Aibak 1373-1389. His son Sikander Butshiken ruled from 1389-1413. It is these series of Muslim rulers encouraged the Hamdanis with large number of Sayyids to settle in the valley for spreading Islam during the period of Lal Ded and afterwards. No mention of these rulers is available in her vaakhs. Naturally, Lal Ded must have been very young about the time of Dulchus tyranny and she had already passed away by the time Butshiken ascended the throne. In his rule, most of the temples were desecrated and persecution of Brahmins in Kashmir was at its peak. Saint Nund Rishi is said to have borne when Lal Ded was about 50 years old. Nund Rishi also contributed vaakhs that have often been mixed with those of Lal Ded.

It is said that Lal Ded died at Vegibror and that a flame of bright light shot forth from her body and vanished from sight. Others point out that one say she sat in a large earthen vessel (Tagara) and placed

another such vessel on her head. Later when upper one was removed, she had disappeared. She passed away on Phalgun Shukla Pakash Ashtami leaving no trail behind. It is surprizing that no monument, no temple or tomb is known where her body was cremated or laid to rest. The exact date and year of her death is not definitely known. It is presumed that she lived for about 60-70 years or more. But it is her vaakhs that make her immortal and provide a source of love and guidance for the future generations of mankind.

In conclusion, it may be said that Lalla had surely done Tapasya and many good deeds in her previous life that moulded her body from the very birth. In spite of the great hardships in her life, she continued her search for the Lord to complete the process of achieving enlightenment to get the final Mukhti. Thus there was no need for any idol worship or reading any scriptures and recitation of Mantras which as per Lalla are meant for beginners. She had almost neglected her own body and entered into her soul with deep devotion to observe the Lord within her, not needing any guru or a missionary to achieve the goal.

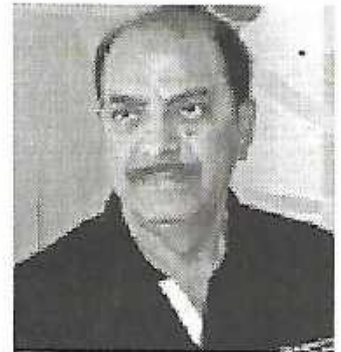
Lal Ded is a rare spiritual genius, a saint par excellence who in her own life time attained to the way of the supreme and enetered the abode of light "Prakashtan" of God in her own self (Vacchum pandit panen gare). have seen the Shiv and Shakti sealed in one (Vucchum shiv ta shakti milith). I have seen the universe. Thus Lal Ded stands as a supreme towering personality among the great saints that this world has produced for the welfare of the mankind.

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CROSS CONNECTION

Twenty-first century and scientific technology are touching the limits beyond the stars; the moon and the satellite galaxies, Computer technology -all swinging at the zenith and after every fraction of second, new dimensions glorify the graphical computer screen. As a medical professional, I believe in medical ethics and the high morale of human values. I still feel the fragrance of that special respect which the human society emitted and sprinkled to intoxicate me and elevated my rank and status to a super human who basically I never was and still I am no way near to that distant dream. Doctors of yore were thought to be the 'august Avatars' of medicine as to cure the needy without any prejudice, ill will or greed. The people had a belief that after God in heaven, humans have a demigod on earth who treats the aches, cures the diseases, bashes the miseries, saves the lives of sufferers and eradicates the physical sufferings.



Dr. Roshan Saraf

I don't differentiate between doctors of yester years and doctors of today. However, frankly speaking a huge traveler as I am, I have experienced that the computer gadget has eased the diagnostic procedure of a clinician and dwarfed the capabilities of good doctors and the erstwhile pulse studying marvel and a palpable physician have now owned the 'lethargic method' of diagnosing the disease of the patients. Yes! He feeds his 'genie' with complaints of patients with a delicate rub to his 'wonder mouse' and the graph fills the blank. There is no doubt that if new technologies come to our aide, why not to take best use of the facilities in the clinical process and procedure. 'Clinical lethargy' as I call it, creates malpractice and malpractice makes a man greedy and the greed takes the shine and the shimmer off one's character and order of discipline. Today, the doctors by and large have become commercial' Alibabas' filling their greedy wallets with money, money and money; neglecting all noble and human values of the holy profession and are lined up in a queue of immoral rat race.

My write-up reminds me of an episode when a patient suffering from a gastro-intestinal problem went to a doctor to get some remedy for his aches and ailments, the doctor fed his hungry computer with veg/non-veg complaints without bothering to percuss or palpate the abdominal region of the ailing patient. As medical ethics go -when a doctor touches the patient, the patient in his psyche feels a touch of solace to his ailments. Yes! 50% of his disease gets cured and this is not a myth but a profound belief; an essence, an ethics of a relation between a patient and a doctor. Poor patient waiting desperately looked towards the screen with wanting eyes as if a goat waiting to get slaughtered any moment now. Finally the result astonished the patient when the doctor said -"O Man! You are a gone case; I can do nothing, no remedy for you except pray to heavens to rewrite your luck". The patient almost succumbed to the acrid advice of the doctor and in a feeble tone asked -"Sir! What am I suffering from"? The doctor nodding his bald head replied -"You are a manglik, you have mangal dosh and your horoscope does not match with the other one. Either you choose other one or I refer you to a specialist; may be your mangal dosh gets diluted." Poor patient like a dumb lamb unable to understand even a word of whatever the genius doctor said still gathered all his ailing courage . and meekly asked the doctor -"Sir! I have come with a complaint of dyspepsia syndrome; inspite of curing my ailment you have multiplied my disease with one more symptom of 'puzzle hiccup'. I have not come to match my horoscope or to deliquesce my mangal dosh; tell me frankly- "Are you a doctor or a jyotish guru or is it a cross-connection"?



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NEW YEAR OF MY DREAMS

Dr. Roshan Saraf

On the eve of new dawn I had a nippy nap
when I saw a sensational calendar
for the year with dazzling description of a prosperous map...

JANUARY - with a melody of joy and happiness,
Forgetting chilly spells of the bygone year
and dancing in tune and rhythm without any prejudice or grievance...

FEBRUARY - all castes and creeds assembled in a hall,
Bedecked with divine mark of Om Allah and Christ's cross
and humming one hymn of eternal Lord without bias and brawl...

MARCH - when off springs of hibernating daffodils
try hard to split the earth's top,
Perfuming the dew surface of brooks-n-rills...

APRIL - the passionate prince of spring on green velvet,
Taking a joy ride all over the meadows
from pleasant sunrise to golden sunset...

MAY - blossoms blooming from belle bossom
of the passionate hearts,
Attracting thirsty souls with its flavoring magnetism...

JUNE - the vigorous month of sun's blaze
when glaciers melt in humility
when lakes, springs and oceans roar in mile craze...

JULY - in comes the soothing shower of monsoon,
Inviting sun to play hide and seek
under glittering aura of rainbow and rain in tune...

AUGUST - when earth in lush green virginity,
Juicy stems opening their gynoecia,
Emitting the perfume to embrace the viruity...

SEPTEMBER - whenfruits and flowers bent in humbleness
greet the nature
with nectar of vitamins and mesmerizing incense...

OCTOBER - time to harvest the hard work,
Time to unite and promise not to lurk,
Time to sing and dance in a rhythmic jerk...

NOVEMBER - the month of festive celebrations,
Month of 'Ganapati', 'Navratri' and 'Diwali'
Month of worship and meditations...

DECEMBER - time to count friends and forgive foes,
Time to probe within our hearts
and clean mush and moss with a divine dose...



VITASTA

Dr. Roshan Saraf



Dr. Roshan Saraf

I am Vitasta - the soothing heart-throb in shine and shimmer;
Flowing rhythmically with glistening ripples;
Attracting mermaids to have a cool dip after a dreamy slumber...

I am as old as time immortal;
Refracting sun and moon into the wavy sparkling crystal;
I am fresh and attractive like a Spanish wine bottle...

I have serpent like sizzling surface
with temples and shrines on my'luscious banks;
Making me pious and adding grace to my face...

I am a mystic mother as I nourish never to perish;
I am a darling as young and old take a joy ride;
And with a splash sail like a fiancé fish...

Alas! The unethical bruises and lacerations
all over my luring limbs
with blood stains tainting my nectar with slushy abrasions...

How come the human rubble
piled upon on my back and breast
Polluting my holy stairs by creating jink and jumble...

I wonder where is the man with vermilion on his forehead;
The pious woman with basket of flowers
Oblating every petal of their devotions with a humble bend...

Believe me! Without Pandits I feel alone and segregated;
Caged in a blind frozen cell
but waiting to listen to jingling holy hymns unabated;

I am Vitasta - an origin and insertion of a culture;
A nectar of rituals to hundreds and thousands;
An emblem, an identity and a cynosure for ever...



BHAND PATHER : A FAMOUS FOLK THEATRE OF KASHMIR

Moti Lal Kemmu
(Jammu)

In all the languages of northern India, the word Bhand is commonly used for a liar, jester, clown and one who cannot be relied upon. Being a wandering minstrel, a Bhand would entertain people with his humorous acts of imitation and jesting. Centuries ago, bhands would keep people of a village or any locality awake for a whole night by their humorous performances.

Prior to the advent of Islam in Kashmir, theatre activity was associated with rituals, festivals and annual me/as of important shrines, deities, and yatras connected with them. While celebrating the birthdays of Lord Buddha, Krishna and other deities, performances of music, dance and drama were an important part of the festivity. Kashmir had a great tradition of Sanskrit play-writing. Natas (actors) and natyacharyas were trained in the art of theatre according to the rules of Natya Shastra of Bharat Muni.

Rajatarangini and Nilamata Purana give us numerous references in this regard. While the music and drama performances were patronized by the royal and aristocratic families, besides teachers of poetics and literature for their students, Bhand Natyam, which reflected people's aspirations and which presented caricatures of princes, royal personages and officials presented by the folk artistes, were patronized by the people in general. Abhinavagupta, a 10th century Sanskrit poet, scholar, commentator, and Shaivite philosopher, is the first Sanskrit scholar to give us some information about these folk artistes. According to him, folk natya was a powerful entertainment for people before Natya Shastra came into being. In folk theatre, much emphasis was laid on imitation (anukritya), whereas in Natya emphasis was given to anukeertan. Abhinavagupta expounded on and differentiated between the two concepts introduced by Bharat Muni.

In Bhand Natyam, the bhand actors would imitate princes so accurately as to make them perspire, and present them as laughing stock before the people. Abhinavagupta considers the dance of bhands as part of Rhand Natyam which also makes the audience laugh. In short, we could conclude that what was known as Rhand Natyam in the 10th century came to be known as Bhand Pather afterwards. Rhands were reported to have performed in the court of Zain-ul-Abedin (1420-1470), popularly known as 'Badshah' on the occasion of his son's birthday, as per his court poet Srivara. Says he, Bhands presented their humorous acts with long beards, clenching teeth, shooting eyes, thickly bristled moustache. "Nund Reshi, a contemporary of Badshah, was a saint poet of Kashmir who used the following terms in one of his shrukhs (shlokas) -pather for plays, magun for the head of the bhand party, and ranga for theatre and theatre houses.

Both the words, bhand and pather are derived from Sanskrit. Bhand means a jester and Pather means dramatic personnel. In Rhand Pather; a form of jesting combines mime, gesture, imitation, caricature, humorous delivery of dialogues, songs and dances. No importance is given to make-up and costume of jesters. Bhands have a repertoire of more than half a dozen plays which they call Pather. Prominently performed plays were Darz Pather Wattal Pather; Gosaine Pather; Raza Pather; Angrez Pather; Rata Pather; Shikargah Pather and Rakarwal Pather. Performing Pather by bhands is also known as Jashan (festival). Each Jashan lasts for hours together and sometimes different parties perform one Pather after the other from dawn to dusk, excepting Namaz (prayer) time.

Bhands of Kashmir reside in about 80 villages in different tehsils of the Valley. Their areas of festival performance are specified from earlier times. At certain festivals they perform collectively. In Kashmir

these festivals start soon after the transplantation time in May-June every year. Once these ashans were held in temples and their compounds and the Bhandwere known as Bhagats (devotees) and most of the participants were Brahmins. Now all the Bhand performers are Muslims, yet some of the families are known as Bhagats. Even in Revenue-records, Bhands are recorded as Bhagats.

Bhands mostly perform during the daytime, in front of a huge audience as part of the mela or urs at Muslim shrines. Father performance begins with the playing of the nagara by the Karidaar who makes rounds of the arena selected for performance. The beating of the nagara is a call for the audience, which throngs from all the corners and take their seats in a circle. After Karidaan; enter the surnai player and the dhol player who play tunes on their instruments. Music forms an indispensable part of Father plays, because Bhands have to cater to the tastes of all kinds of audiences - men, women and children besides providing background music for the pather performance. Therefore, surnai (folk shehnai), dhol and nagara are important instruments best suited for open-air performances.

Then enters the Magun with two female consorts known as darz. They are followed by Maskharas (jesters), All enter in a majestic manner on the beats of nagara in a stylized mode. Magun has along chaddar in his left hand. Two corners of the chaddar are in the hands of two darzes who dance on the right and left of the magun. After salutation to the stage (ranga), audience and the musicians in a stylistic fashion, they dance and exhibit the preparedness for the performance. On the right hand Magun carries a miniature axe. When the jesters disturb him, he terrorizes them with this axe. The Magun and two darzes are well dressed and the rest wear common clothes. He has a whip of bhang tied to his waist under his gown. He is dressed as a king of yesteryears. Darzes are dressed like bacha dancers of Bachi Nagma, a folk dance of Kashmir. Bacha wears a long gown well fitted above the hips and loose below the hips which is known as a peshwas. All the jesters imitate the dance of the Magun and darzes, create hindrance in keeping the pace, poise and grace of dance. One jester mimes as if he is feeling terror-stricken, another expresses wonder at the rich attire of the Magun and the beauties attending on him, and the third on his valour and prowess. This type of dance, mimicry, and mime continues for more than half-an-hour and the audience enjoys this unique mime-play. In a short dance-cum-mime sequence that follows, the Magun exhibits in pantomime the distillation of wine drinking, making his consorts drink, and getting intoxicated. Seeing him fully drunk, the jesters take away his consorts on their shoulders and hide them in different directions in the audience, or on the branches of nearby trees, wherefrom they speak to the older maskhara one by one. Now mime-play is over and the funny delivery of dialogues of jesters steal the show. Throughout this play, the darzes do not speak a single word. Instead, it is the jester who speaks to her on behalf of his elder maskhara. After the Magun gets tipsy from the effect of intoxication, the jesters make the king dance to their tunes. Almost all the performing Bhands of Kashmir present this play, but the groups which have experienced jesters with proficiency in slapstick, singing, using words with double meaning and quick repartee and improvization are considered the best. The Magun in this play is performing a double role and it becomes difficult to differentiate him from the king. As long as he is doing the mime till the drinking of wine, he is a Magun and thereafter the Dard king -all this without changing costumes or making any new entry in the arena. It is only the Vad on the sumai which changes and signifies the change in the role. Dardistan is an area in the north east of the Kashmir valley presently known as Gurez. The women of Gurez are beautiful and known as darzes. Though darzes only dance in this play yet the play has been named after them as Darz Father. This play seems to have remained in the repertoire of Bhand theatre for many centuries now. Gosain Father is about those ascetics who visit Kashmir every year during July-August for the Amarnath Yatra. Every ascetic is a member of one or the other clan and belongs to some akhara. In this play, a group of ascetics get served by the local Brahmin devotee and his sons who act as jesters. The traits, rituals, articulate postures, walk and mood of getting angered over the minutest misunderstanding of the ascetics through which humour is created are some niceties of this folk play. The first half of the play is again a mime drama. All the ascetics enter in different gaits in their usual half-naked saffron attires, longhair and beards. Besides

the elder Gosain, Thada, Mirchi, and Futra Kodi are some of the characters of the play. In the second half of the play we find a gopali dancing and singing, expressing her search for her love amongst the ascetics who is named Ashiq Gosain by jesters. Unfortunately, she does not know his real name, clan, or akhara but she describes his form, and can recognize him through the rings worn by him in his ears and fingers. Jesters make best use of this situation by making enquiries in a humourous language. After she leaves the scene, Ashiq Gosain enters with poise, in slow steps, while shedding tears. Jesters consider him an alien. They make enquiries about him, and terrorize him about the day in (witch) of the village who arrives on the spot with a mask on her face and tries to drag and lift the ashqi. But he is still in his calm posture, undisturbed. The jesters realize the power in the ashqi and drag the dayin away from the scene. On further enquiry, the ashqi desires to have a darshan of gopali who is behind the curtains a watching. Now the jesters work as go-between for ashqi and gopali. Gopali's desire is to remain with the ashqi as his beloved, but the ashqi is desirous of a darshan (glimpse) of Gopali as manifestation of shakti (energy). She is told to give up jewellery, cosmetics, worldly attractions, and to the surprise of all jesters, she is willing to do all this and renounce the world for him. Ultimately, reciting some of the vakhs and shrukhs of Lal Dyad and Nund Reshi (Kashmiri poets of 14th century), the ashqi is taken away from the scene behind a curtain and is supposed to have vanished. Jesters blame gopali for killing the ashqi and ask her to hand over his mortal remains to his clanmates. She has nothing to give. Thereafter, like Mirabai, she renounces the world and like a true jogan she sings songs of separation. The third and last part of the play is only hilarious destiny created by depicting the death scenes of different professionals of the society, who remain attached to wrong doings and worldly affairs throughout their life. It is a satire on the incongruities of life, the maneuverings of patwaris (revenue officials), police officials, leaders, black-marketeers, profit makers and others.

Like Laila of Laila-Majnoo and Heer of Heer-Ranjha, we have so many poetic references and depictions about gopali in Kashmiri poetry, folk, mystic and modern -as the beloved of the gosain and a symbol of the search for truth. Gopali has emerged from the gopi of Bhagwat Puranam, and after establishing her presence in the literary genres of all the languages of India, the main gopi loved by Lord Krishna assumes the name of Radha. One can find her in the Bhagwat-Mela Natakam and Gola Vesham of Andhra Pradesh, Golan in the Tamasha of Maharashtra, and as the milk-maid and Gujri in many poetic compositions of Indian literature.

Raza Pather portrays a king whose administrators are more powerful than him. They extract their undue shares from the people through exploitation. This play seems to have come into being soon after the reign of Pathans in Kashmir in the beginning of the 19th century. Though the Raza seems to be a Hindu, his administrator, Sha-Gosh seems to be a tyrant Pathan who speaks Farsi (Persian). A potter, a wrestler, a barber, an escapee Pathan, Sangwan as chobdar and a Kashmiri Pandit as a revenue official are some of the characters who pretend not to understand Farsi and create laughable situations.

In Wattal Pather; the depiction and enactment of marriage rituals of cobblers, sweepers and butchers, all of low caste, takes place. A distinguished feature of the play is that all the characters that enter the arena have a bit of their tongues stuck outside their lips signifying their devotion to work of lowest standard which is shunned by other sociable people.

Bata Pather caricatures the lethargy and hesitancy of the pandits of Kashmir to do agricultural labor. This folk play was one of the seven episodes in a series, but much of it is lost. It lost artistic grace and remained confined to ridicule, but some rare songs and musical melodies are still preserved. There are two typical dance sequences in the play. In one of the dances, the process of sowing cotton, and the making of cotton cloth is exhibited and expressed through mime, music and dance. One significant and strange situation in the beginning of this folk play is appearance of bata or buhri peer, a prototype of hanuman standing on a plank on the shoulders of four jesters brought into the arena. He has white

spots on his half-naked body and a long tail burning at its end. He jumps and moves his gada (club). He moves behind the audience, and his role comes to an end.

In *Angrez Pather*, an Englishman with his memsahib visits a village along with his ardali (orderly), feels hungry, needs something to eat, and intends to take rest, but farcical situations and misunderstanding of his English entertain the audience. The Englishman does not speak correct and direct English but imitates the sounds of the words. This verbal nonsense provokes laughter. Some Bhand parties add *Shikargah Pather* with this play and create incongruous situations when the Englishman fails to kill any animal with his gun.

The only play in which masks and dummy horses are used along with sword play is *Shikargah Fathel*; a visual feast to be seen in the jungle environment with a message of preserving wildlife and satirizing false valour.

Bakarwal Fathel depicts a Gujjar shepherd on visit to a village, enjoying a folk play and taking part in the sword dance boasting of prowess but in reality only exhibiting cowardice. Simultaneously, he uses bi-lingual nuances full of mispronunciations, evoking laughter from the audience. His caricature is well-portrayed and the play is short and crisp like one-act plays.

Arm Fathel presents a vegetable grower teaching the art of growing vegetables to a non-Kashmiri to whom he promises the hand of his daughter on the condition that he joins the Gilgit expedition as a labourer instead of remaining a vegetable grower who has to undergo forced labour. But through his maneuverings, he returns alive and gets married. Ritualistic songs and the character of the vegetable grower's wife are notable in this folk play.

Some of the folk plays mentioned above are socio-political satires full of humour and present a variety of corrupt, dishonest, tyrannical rulers and village administrators well known to the village folk.

All the *Fathel* plays have reached us orally and therefore, from time to time, much of their performance values, verbal niceties, linguistic qualities and artistic embellishments have been lost and their contents have got interpolated with local and present-day concerns.

Whereas all other folk theatre forms of India use stories from the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, the *Puranas* and other religious texts, the *Bhand Fathel* is totally secular in nature and presents a humorous and satirical representation of people from different professions such as cobbler, sweeper, doctor, patwari, thief, musician, potter, vegetable grower, baker, bangle seller, goldsmith, hawker, clerk, mullah and others whose caricatures and hypocrisies are presented to create spontaneous laughter. Usually two types of plays are enacted by Bhand parties – traditional ones, which are group plays involving music, dance and drama, and others which are essentially character portrayals. In the second type, except for the main character, others are supporting characters who bring out the emotive, satirical or humorous characteristics that make people laugh.

Kashmiri is the main language used in *Bhand Pather* but Persian is also used for some characters, which is reminiscent of Mughal and Persian rule. At times jesters speak dialects of Punjabi, Dogri and distorted Urdu to make audiences laugh. Distortion of words, lines of songs, parodies, and use of punning and verbal nonsense is also common in *Pathel* plays. Female roles are enacted by men dressed in female dresses.

Bhand parties have one specific dance, *Bhand Chowkh* which is performed on the first day of urses and repeated on the third day at a fixed venue. *Chowkh* in Kashmiri means a square. A mela or a fair held for four days on four consecutive days is also known as *chowkh*. Most such fairs are held soon after the transplantation of crop, when farmers get some respite. More than two dozen *sumai* players stand together in a line and play their instruments, with more than twenty drummers (*Dhol* players) and about a dozen *nagara* players on either side. In front of all the musicians, there are about forty dancers and

maskharas who are dancing together in front of the ziyarat (shrine). In the beginning all the dancers join hands and move right, making a circular movement. Simultaneously, they take a step forward and backward, waving their hands, or clapping to the rhythm. Some keep a long chaddar in their hands, waving the same effectively on taal (beats) and enter the arena. Then all of them stand in a row and each dancer dances as an individual, goes near the shrine, bows his head in reverence and turns back but keeps up the rhythm throughout. Finally, all the performers dance collectively.

Once it was customary for the Bhands to dance Bhand Chowkh before venturing performances of Pather plays, because it formed the preparation now known as rangapooz (previously known as purva ranga). Bhands dance roy, bachi nagma, and dhamali in between the plays to entertain their audiences.

The Bhands are mostly landless agricultural labourers. During winters they make kangris, baskets, and other handicrafts or weave carpets. Some attend to gabba making. Soon after harvest time, Bhands collect their share of the produce from the farmers as payment for their labour. Traditionally, this is called mangai. Nilamata Furana called the tradition as prekhsha danam. Even after the 'land to the tiller' and agrarian reforms, the custom goes on. Prior to the partition of India, some Bhand groups used to travel to old Punjab areas and perform for mixed audiences, singing Persian, Punjabi and Pashto songs. Some Bhands had exhibited their talent in the Darbars of Lucknow nawabs and thereafter settled there. Some of the Bhands had learnt the art of Qawwali singing from such centres, a practice which is slowly dying out.

Every Pather performance ends with a prayer from the elder Maskhara or Magun. Mostly the prayer goes like this:

God save our country and the Ruler,
God save our country from invaders and aggression,
Ya Allah! Let there be no earthquakes,
Let there be no floods, drought and famines

This is called Bhand Doy Kher, a prototype of Bharat Vakyam of Sanskrit drama. At the end of each sentence, the audience repeats -Ameen.

Magun: Head of the Bhand party is known as Magun. All the instruments, costumes, and other paraphernalia is always under his custody. It is he who distributes roles, trains young Bhands in all the intricacies of art, and teaches music. He decides the dates and places of performances. A new entrant has to act as a dancer, then learns acting and later moves to other roles. He is directly concerned about the party, its discipline, its performance and has to distribute the remuneration. While all other actors and performers receive one equal share, a Magun receives two. He is greatly respected by village folk.

Maskhara: The clown or jester in Bhand Pather is known as Maskhara. The word Maskhara has a Persian origin. In some Pather plays, Maskhara plays more than one role in his own clothes. Even if a Maskhara has a thick moustache, he will just keep his cotton chaddar on his head and enact a female role. In days of yore Maskhara was trained in the art of dhol, nagara and sumai playing; he was taught Kashmiri folk and traditional music or Soofiyana Kalam. As a child he has to dance as a Bacha dancer both for folk and traditional music. He has to be a versatile performer and imbibe all the traditions of folk art. One of the prerequisites of a Maskhara was to learn to vibrate the puffed-up cheek on one side of the face.

A versatile Maskhara is one who is a good singer, can modulate his voice quickly, who has a relaxed body and is able to make faces, one who can compose couplets spontaneously, make use of puns, and has a quick sense of timing and repartee, one who can create humour by bodily actions and speech and has a sharp memory, and can remember songs and dialogues by listening to them only once.

Vod: It means music, melody or change of tunes in Bhand terminology.

The writer was the Dy. Secretary of J & K cultural Academy. He lives in Jammu.



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SECRETARY'S REPORT 2009 -2010

Year 2009 – 2010 started on Navreh with the newly elected committee assuming office under the stewardship of President Mr. Sanjay Kaul.

Like the previous years, Kashmir Sabha, Kolkata organized various religious and social functions throughout the year. The religious functions were held to celebrate various festivals and the social functions to create the bonding and connect to the valley.

The activities carried out during the year are detailed below:

1) Religious Functions:

- 1.1 **Navreh and Zang-Trai:** A program was arranged by Sabha to celebrate the occasions of Navreh and Zang-Trai on March 29, 2009 at the Bhawan. Athgat & Noon (Salt) packet were distributed to all the ladies.
- 1.2 **Swami Laxman Joo Jayanti:** Swami Laxman joo was an authority on Shavism and a highly revered saint of Kashmir. His birth anniversary was celebrated with Pooja followed by distribution of Prasaad (Naveed) and a delicious dinner at Kashmir Bhavan on April 22, 2009. The function was sponsored as usual by Mrs. Bina Misri and Mr. B M Misri.
- 1.3 **Jesht Ashtami:** One of the most auspicious festivals of the Pandit Community in Kashmir which would see most of the community paying a visit to the Shrine of Khir Bhawani popularly known as Tula Mula is Jesht Ashtami. This year the festival was celebrated on May 31, 2009. Program started with Pooja followed by Prasaad. The program was sponsored by Mrs. Anjali Tikoo and Mr. Rajesh Tikoo.
- 1.4 **Sharika Jyanti / Haar Navmi:** Sharika Bhagwati is regarded as the Isht – Devi of Kashmir with her seat at Hari Parbat, Srinagar. The festival was celebrated on June 30, 2009 at the Bhawan. Prayers / Pooja were held followed by Prasaad and Dinner. The function was sponsored by Mrs. Niba Kaul.
- 1.5 **Bhagwan Gopi Nath Jayanti:** Bhagwan Gopi Nath Ji is revered by Kashmiri Pandit Community as a highly accomplished Saint. His 111th Birth Anniversary was celebrated with an elaborate Pooja followed by Prasaad and dinner on July 04, 2009.
- 1.6 **Janamashtami:** Janamashtami popularly known as Zaram Sattam in Kashmir being the birthday of Lord Krishna was celebrated in Kashmir Bhawan on Aug 16, 2009. An in-house cultural program, managed by the cultural committee and presented mostly by the children and ladies was organized at the Bhawan. The program was a huge success and was liked by all. The dinner that followed after the cultural program added to the pleasures of the day.
- 1.7 **Dushehra / Vijay Dashmi:** Dushehra was celebrated at Bhawan on September 28, 2009. The program was followed by Lunch.
- 1.8 **Deepawali:** A get-together was organized on Nov 01, 2009 at the Bhawan to celebrate Deepawali. The program started with Lunch followed by in house Musical Program.
- 1.9 **Annual Havan:** As usual the biggest event of the year was Havan and had the participation of the entire community. The start of the event got a little delayed than planned but then it turned out to be a blessing in disguise as it gave an opportunity to all the members to spend more time at the Sabha thereby enhancing the festive look of the Bhawan. The Havan started on Jan 09, 2010 - Saturday evening and the Puranahuti was conducted on Jan 10, 2010 - Sunday evening followed by Naveed.



1.10 Kushal-hom: As is the custom, a function was organized on January 25, to celebrate the Kushal-hom. The participants not only enjoyed the Gup-shup amongst themselves, but also a very sumptuous typical Kashmiri veg / non-veg lunch followed by several rounds of Sheer Chai.

1.11 Herath & Salaam: A luncheon function was organized at the Bhawan to celebrate the most auspicious festival of the community – HERATH (Shivratri) on Feb 22, 2010. Bhajans, popular music, various games like Antakshari and Bingo were organized but the best of all was the games with shells (HAAR) and of course the wonderful Kashmiri Lunch.

2) Other Functions:

2.10 Monsoon Get-together: A luncheon get-together was arranged on July 19, 2009. The get-together was well attended and people indulged in Gup Shup / Ghana Bajana.

2.2 Felicitation: Nov 21, 2009 saw Kashmir Bhavan holding a felicitation function in honour of Prof B N Kaul of Srinagar who was awarded Vivekananda Gold Medal 2009 by Ramakrishna Mission. The function was chaired by Swami Arwindji Mahraj. A Silver Plaque was presented to Prof. Kaul. Also a cheque of Rs. 25000/= favouring Ramakrishna Mission, Srinagar was handed over to him for the preservation of the Shavala in Srinagar.

2.3 Kashmiri Musiqee: December 27, 2009 saw Kashmir Sabha organize a Musical program presented by a very renowned singer of Kashmir - Mrs. Nirja Pandita. The whole day program was organized on the lines of Mehndiraat. Stalls like Mehndi application and Gol-Guppa were a great hit while the music was serene and heavenly taking everybody down their memory lanes to the Kashmir as they remembered. The day was thoroughly enjoyed by one and all.



Mrs. Nirja Pandita

3) Condolences:

3.1 The Pandit community lost a selfless person in Mr. Nagarjuna Ganjoo who tirelessly worked for collecting the info regarding the admission to various professional institutes across the length and breadth of India. He would then make sure that this info reaches all the community members thus helping many Kashmiri Youth to pursue higher / professional education. Kashmir Sabha deeply mourns the sad demise of dear Nagarjuna Ganjoo.

3.2 Kashmir Sabha Kolkata also lost Mr. Kanoongo, a senior member of the community. Sabha deeply mourns the loss of Mr. Kanoongo.

3.3 Not the least but the largest shock that the community in Kolkata had to bear was the sad demise of the founder member Sri Uday Nath Kaul of Sabha in Kolkata. He is till date well remembered for the yeomen service to the community in Kolkata.

Kashmir Sabha, Kolkata prays to Lord Almighty to accord peace to the departed souls and give courage to their loved ones to bear the ir-repairable loss.

4) Social Service:

4.1.0 Kashmir Sabha Kolkata announced the following scholarships :

4.1.1 Col. Kak Memorial Scholarship: Rs.750/= per month for 2 candidates

4.1.2 Sanjay Surali Memorial Scholarship: Rs. 750/= per month

4.2.0 A cheque of Rs. 25000/= was issued to Ramakrishna Mission Srinagar towards preservation/ restoration of age old Shivalya Temple at Chotta Bazar Srinagar, Kashmir.

Sri S. Kaul



Our Children in a play :

Krishna Leela on Janmashtami Function
celebrated at Sabha's Bhavan





Sri B.N.Koul, Swami Arvindji Maharaj & Dr. B.K. Moza at Kashmir Bhavan, Kolkata



Kashmir Sabha welcomes Sri B.N. Koul & Swami Bodhasarananda of Ramkrishna Mission at our Bhavan, Kolkata



Shri M.K. Ogra (First), Dr. B.K. Moza (Second) & Shri Sunil Kaul (Third), chatting at the function, Kashmir-Sabha, Kolkata

**Shri R. Kaul
Kashmir Sabha, Kolkata
Prof. B.N. Kaul,
Ramkrishna Ashram, Srinagar,
Kashmir at our Bhavan, Kolkata**



Mata Jeshta Bagvati of Srinagar, Kashmir



Mata Kheer Bhavani, Tulamula, Kashmir

DINA NATH NADIM-A POET OF CREATIVE GENIUS

Balkrishan Sanyasi.

The period 1931-1955 was a period of great turbulence because of political and social instability in Kashmir and also in the rest of the Country. There was mass upsurge right from the year of 1931 against the Monarchy and the forces opposing the establishment of Democratic set up in the J & K State. Anger and protest of the Kashmiri Poets was also loudly heard by the masses resulting in the intensification of the popular demand for ending the dynasty rule in the state. Poets like Ghulam Ahmed Mahjoor and Abdul Ahad Azad took the lead in infusing the sense of Patriotism in the minds of Kashmiris.

In 1947 there was Pakistani raid on Kashmir invented by the Imperialist Countries. Even after attaining Independence by our Country, Kashmiris were in a state of uncertainty because of the effects of the raid and the delay in the establishment of rule of Law till Maharaja Hari Singh the ruler of the State finally decided to quit after integrating the State with the rest of the Country. Lot remained to be done to improve the life of an ordinary citizen. Peasantry unrest continued till the Zamindari system was abolished in 1949. The transition from one Political system to other gave birth to the divergent view points emerging from within the existing Political parties guided by their respective political ideologies influencing the minds of the writers and poets as well.

Earlier in 1947 the left wing politicians of the State gave serious thought to beat the Pakistani and imperialist conspiracies by involving poets and writers under the banner of Patriotism and Secularism. Their exercise led to the formation of a literary organization namely Cultural Congress with its literary magazine KONGPOSH.

Here it is worthwhile to mention that Mahjoor and Azad had emerged the representative Kashmiri poets during the mass movement right from 1930 onwards. No doubt Mahjoor was a poet with revolutionary fervor, raising voice of protest against the then Socio Political System but he was more a love lyricist and is still known and loved by Kashmiris for his Romantic poems. Abdul Ahad Azad on the other hand earned a name of a revolutionary poet. Though he died at a very young age but his poetry of revolution has its lasting effect on the mind set of an average Kashmiri even today. His poetry has a message of struggle against the Socio economic unevenness and political anarchy created by the rulers and their henchmen. His poetry was all for ending human sufferings and for establishment of social justice. Here it needs to be remembered that the revolutionary Kashmiri poetry has its origin in Azad's verses and not in the Jang Namas written by the earliest Kashmiri poets.

Dina Nath Koul Nadim appealed on the literary scene of Kashmir in the middle of Nineteen thirties and his poetic themes targeted the exploiters of the Age Vehemently. His verses represented the oppressed class and he became voice of masses. He was known as Abdul Ahd Azad's right side up in raising his voice of revolt against the establishment. His poetic journey earned him name and fame in the years to come. He came from a Middle Class family. He lost his father in early childhood. His widowed mother though un-educated left no stone unturned in bringing him up so as to grow him a genius of his times. His mother had the Kashmiri Folk lores and folk tales on the tip of her tongue and was also acquainted with Kashmir devotional literature. She had also good command on Kashmiri spoken words. It is said that Dina Nath was right from his early age inspired by his mother's talent. Dina Nath got associated with a small patriotic group of Kashmiri youths in early thirties, who favoured the revolutionary freedom movement of the Country. This group was headed by Balji Zuthshi and the other members of the organization were Ramnath Vaishnavi, Jaggan Nath Koul, K. N. Mohnoori, Prem Nath Dhar, N. N. Raina (Mazari) and others. It is my belief that an artist, a writer and a poet carries along with him from

his early age the imprints of his cultural heritage which he never forgets. His writings cannot therefore, escape its impact, Dina Nath was deeply rooted in Kashmiri culture and his poetry is full of traditional shades here and there. Traditions have a history and history is a record of the events of the past and present. Nadim knew of his past Sociocultural heritage and while living in the present he was aware that whatever he writes and recites in public, he actually represents the sufferers of Kashmir in particular. His earlier verses were full of revolution and he was considered poet of revolt by Kashmiri people.

"I will not sing, I will not rejoice,
The dreadful vibrations of Sun-Rays
Hover around me
Cheaters are conspiring
They may take away from me my flower garden
The flowers have turned breathless
Flowers are blemished
Warmongers have tightened their belts
They may wage a war any moment,
I will not sing, I will not rejoice"

Nadim's revolutionary verses echoed and created an atmosphere of revolution in Kashmir. His contemporaries like Rahman Rahi, Amin Kamil, Som Nath Zuthshi and Prem Nath Pardesi joined his rank and file. Their writings proved to be directions for exposing imperialists, capitalists and feudal Lords. All these veteran poets and writers became the active members of the cultural congress. This organization presented the progressive and revolutionary face of Kashmiri literature before the masses. All these writers were well versed with the freedom movements and the Socialistic literature world over.

Dina Nath Nadim was influenced by Karl Marks and the revolutionary freedom movement of India. He raised his voice against all kinds of exploitations. His poetry from 1947 to the end of 1950 represented the anger and pain of land less peasantry. The three Spiritual poets of those days busy in revolutionising the mind of an average Kashmiri to stand up in protest against the exploiters of his time. In the mean time the cultural congress got replaced by the cultural conference but Dina Nath Nadim's hold on progressive writer's movement of Kashmir remained unchanged. He was known as the father of cultural renaissance of Kashmir. Nadim introduced short story, free verse, Blank verse, Sonnet, Opera, Haiku, and Haersath, in Kashmiri Literature. While adopting all kinds of forms and techniques, Nadim could not separate himself from the sentiments of cultural inclusiveness. There were many more writers of repute (Young and Old) namely Arjun Dev, Majboor, Pitambar Nath Dhar Fani, Mirza. Arif Beig, Abdul Satar Ranjoor, Radhe Nath, Masrat, Gulam Ahmad Gash, Motilal Saqi, Chaman Lal Chaman, Makhhan Lal Bekas, Moti Lal Naz, P. N. Koul, Sayil, and others who joined progressive writer's movement in later years, but the movement in itself had to face the wrath of its critics, who reduced the progressive literary movement to slogan mongering. The year of 1959 saw the end of progressive literature. It was replaced by modernism. The writers of all languages began to read world literature to know the latest literary trends emerging world over. Dina Nath Nadim claimed that he welcomed the modernism but did not show eagerness to study the western literature, because he wanted to save his own writings from the western influence.

Nadim at times seems to be mystic as he wishes long life to human dignity and human love. He also wishes hunger to be removed totally to retain and restore human dignity and honour. He will see inequality to be removed. He says:-

"Fight for justice is not sinful,

Let this be thrashed out once for all

Let the shadowy Chinar sooth everyone equally

Let the lines be drawn between black and white

Free minds aspire for freedom and joy

Let high hopes not be dashed to ground"

It is important to mention here that Dina Nath was conscious of the fact that an identity is basic to an earthly existence. Every individual and every community has an identity of its own and this is essential for being recognized as unique beings. What was dear to Nadim was his language. He could not part away himself from the purity of language in his usages in his writings.

A veteran critic and writer Mohd. Yousuf Teng once said. "In Nadim's hands, Kashmiri Language and literature experienced a new birth and he fostered this renaissance with loving care." Teng is of the opinion that Nadim is only second literary genius produced by Kashmir after Lalded in Kashmiri literature. Nadim while addressing a Kashmiri Youth says :-

"You are the fire and its smouldering heat

You are the radiant glow of powerful youth

You are the murmuring spring breeze

Do come out of clouds in disguise

Lead the masses and become their savior

Do come forward to attain martyrdom "

Nadim's songs of revolution are of colorful themes and speak of optimism though painted on the canvass of pessimism. He says:-

"A rumor has spread that the war is in the offing

Let it not break out tomorrow

Tomorrow the world has to reach to its heights

Let the war not break out tomorrow

Tomorrow my breast will ooze, the nipple turning red

Fest-ivities will be hosted tomorrow

Tomorrow hope will dawn after a long pause

Let the war not break out tomorrow."

Through the communication we create the concept of self. We create relationships with ourselves within the community and build images and institutions. We communicate and act together and create and recreate the soul and mind and community relationships, thus the communication syndrome need not be taken as a spiritual dictum. Communication syndrome is a psychological reality. Human nature is guided by the opinions and counter opinions for activating the mind to act and react. Poets are supposed to guide the world in smoothening the odds created by the forces enimical to love, peace and progress. It is through communication and narration that poets send their messages to create an order out of disorder. Nadim as a poet was a skilful communicator a messenger, and a narrator. He wrote for the humanity though he first preferred to write for a Kashmiri. His poetry communicates three essentials and these are peace, love and romance. He wants to replace the imperialistic and feudal forces with the forces of peace, the hatred with Love and Pathos with romance. He says:

"The morning breeze blushes while hiding under the shade of mountains
Is she at cross with the summer flowers
Or is she in sleep with blisters of my heart close to her breast
O my beloved! open your doors and windows
The summer has come to your doorstep"

The pessimistic indications in Nadim's poetry serve as a powerful message to down trodden. These Messages awake the effective lot from slumber. He says :-

"Behold around and find
The fog still looming large
The residual Sun Spot if any
Followed by somber smoke
May flowers in full bloom
Glaring with fragrance
The veriegated colours though seemingly shy
The Luxuriant humid spring breeze
And the budding Foiral fancies
Why then?
The mist amassed in gatherings
The civility banned,
The doors of truth barred.
Even now and loudly too
Oaths are taken in the name of Gandhi and Nehru
Why then?
The truth is crucified,
Sincerity and simplicity ignored."

While drawing the images of hope and dismay from the existing image of beauty, Nadim proves himself to be a fantastic narrator. In one of his sonnet's he translates the beauty of Moon into a hope for those who are starving. He compares the rising moon with the loaf of bread. He feels joyous at the rise of the Moon because of the assurance which he draws from this Moon rise" that plenty of rice plants could grow on the Mountains. The poet feels that the fairies of the forest would cook the meals for the starving lot. The poet equally narrates the tale of the earthly exploitation while observing the "moon rise in the evening. It is in the same poem that the poet expresses the helplessness of a tired lass. He says that the rising moon is like a daily wager, wearing a worn shirt while receiving the wages at the end of the day from the churlish contractor. The contractor cheats her by paying some fake coins as the part of her total payment.

Nadim's affinity with the noble thoughts which come from all sides, can be judged from his statement made by him in a radio interview held in 1980. A veteran Kashmiri poet Rahman Rahi while questioning Nadim's progressive leanings asked him that keeping in view his poetic experiments where in Mythological scenes are visible and his liking for Neelmat Puran and legends thereof, one is compelled to conclude that Nadim has never been a progressive writer. Nadim's quick reply was that if his mythological approach and his attachment with Neelmat Puran restricts his critics from calling him a progressive writer, he has no hesitation in accepting such a verdict.

During his China tour Dina Nath witnessed an opera named "WHITE HAired GIRL II in a cultural programme and he was inspired to write operas. His operas "BAMBUR YAMBURZAL and NEKI BEDI are classical experiences of the two conflicting views emanating from Nature. These Operas are in a way affirmation of the victory of the good forces over the evil forces. These Operas are mellow dramas with rhythmical rhythm. Operas like "REEMAL NAGRAI" written by Nadim and Noor Mohd Roshan together and "VETH VET AST A II written by Nadim alone are the examples of legendry poetry with which Nadim associates himself. Here he becomes completely sentimental and is swayed in the waves of cultural inclusiveness. Nadim had the capability to transform Kashmiri phrases and idioms into forceful symbols. He had a special technique of using metaphors and similes, which created beauty and novelty in his themes.

Being his student 'in Hindu High School Badiyar Srinagar, I got a role in Nadim's opera "KIBEDI" in 1958. I even today recollect his approach as a Director of the Opera. It was his wit and hard work which made the opera a grand success. I have seen him creating rhythms to suit his songs in the opera. For me he was a successful Director with strong musical sense. To be frank enough, it was aesthetics present in the Opera which inspired me to become a Kashmiri poet.

At the time of cultural crisis, a poet or an artist draws his strength what "JOYCE" called "SILENCE, EXILE AND CONNINGNESS," this is true of Dina Nath Nadim. He really created a vibrant and powerful poetry while living a life of poverty in uneven political systems. He faced odds while being surrounded by the cunning hierarchy thus considering himself as self exiled poet. However, he always listened to his conscience and engaged himself in writing verses, creating new forms and new rhythms. The period from 1960 to 1980 is known the period of the modernism in literary circles. "T.S. ELIOT" came out with the concept of stream of consciousness. This according to him means that the consciousness while being active, flows with the powerful speed from within the three layers of mind, projecting thoughtful images on the canvass of the super consciousness thus converging into a full-fledged piece of literature. This powerful thought influenced the poets, writers and artists world over. JEAN PAUL SARTRE's theory of existentialism put poets and writers on a search to trace the existence of man out of the brightness and darkness of "Somethingness and nothingness" respectively. The questions as to how one exists art what for one exists came to the fore. The poets and writers gave psychological and philosophical orientation to their thoughts. Here it is pertinent to note that the Kashmiri poetry was also effected by the emerging trends of the modern writings. Human sensibility and local issues became the focus of attention of the poets world over. Dina Nath Nadim while adopting the psychological and philosophical overtones maintained his originality in the process of his observations and experiments.

He penetrated deep into the human mind from within using the symbols with creative skills. He talked about the changing behaviour of the seasons, the flowers and colours of the flowers. Nadim's poems TAWA TAW A, DUTCHYUT, CHAERKA TH, NABAD TE TETHA VENA AND WUNAL depict variety of experiments which created surprises and joy in the literary circles and among the people in general who received these verse with tremendous love. Nadim was 'of the opinion that soul can not be held tight within human body for it has grown so fond of beauty that it will for long time be impatient with thrust to reach to the desired goal. He was very aware of the eroticism present in the instinctive behaviour of the human beings and also of the pleasure pain relationship present in the human mind.

In the poem NABADTE TETRA YEN, Nadim has opened the vistas of consciousness'. After going through this poem one concludes that his poetry has strengthened from within by implied metaphorical imagery. What is striking about him is that he was simple, realistic yet sensitive in his feelings, exposing the outer and inner problems of the human beings. In the above mentioned poem he talks about the desire promoting body to act with hope and determination to create adventurous moments. After creation of these moments, hope raises further hope with the positive note to attain pleasures and confirm its establishment. The struggle continues till pleasure gets established but the self gets humiliated

at the end because of the conflicts which are created within the layers of consciousness sending shock waves to mind body relationship. The above poem is full of mythological symbols making it creative and thought provoking. One feels that the poet wants to conclude with the premise that human efforts to attain pleasure leads him to some painful moments the painful moments do not pain him because he is in the process of seeking pleasure. That is why sweet becomes sour and sour becomes sweet. Unlike Marxists Nadim did not demystify mythology because he knew that the mythological irrelevance can have relevance in human psychology. In fact he makes his readers to believe that the study of mythology can guide them properly in understanding the true nature of man. Myth is not falsehood. It is different kind of truth. Mythologist "DEV DUTT PATANAİK" says :-

"There are many kinds of truth. Some objective and some subjective. Some logical and some intuitive. Some cultural and some universal. Some are based on evidence and others are depending on faith."

I am of the opinion that Nadim cannot be painted as an enslaved poet because no political ideology seems to have gripped his poetic talent. Nadim has been free and frank communicator of his experiences and observations through his experiments. He drew boundless mythical and materialistic reservoir to paint pictures of peace and love, that stand out for their simplicity and clarity. He actually liked to be guided by various concepts that appealed to his creative genius whether those concepts came from KARL MARX or from NEELMAT PURAN. This made him to question the so-called established truths by the so-called socio political systems. He says:-

“Resident-crow of poplar Tree flew with a faggot
To the Tree-top.
Amused he was when he rested the faggot firmly
On the branch of the Tree.
Alas: a breeze blew away the faggot
To the ground in the Smith.
Resident crow of Mulberry Tree traced it in
The darkness and flew with it to the tree
Squeezing the faggot, crow rested it
In the hollow of the tree.
Alas: showers washed the faggot away again.
Resident Crow of chinar tree found the faggot on
His way to home.
And thrust it upon the leaves quietly.
Who knows how long can faggot escape the gushing wind?
Neither the faggot prevents its return from
Cut off nor the nest is woven.
The Crow’s cawing alone is echoing around since morning.

These lines represent the struggle for existence. One is astonished to notice that these lines depict the ongoing struggle of the Kashmiri Pandits who are at present engaged in the battle of survival in exile.

Nadim has written many descriptive poems narrating there in the cultural and social behaviour of an average Kashmiri with all the disparities and dissimilarities found in his native social structure. The year 1981 marked the beginning of the period of post modernism in the history of literatures. Till then modern writing had dragged the literature miles away from its readers because of showing no concern with the day to day activities of human life. Post modern literature now could not ignore human values. The post

modern literature therefore, started showing concern with the human suffering, their joys and their disappointments. Kashmiri poets like Rāhmaṅ Rahi, Amin Kamil, Dina Nath Nadim, Vasudev Reh, Ghulam Nabi Khyal, Ghulam Nabi Firak and many other literary personalities came out with new literature touching the sentiments of the human beings. Nadim wrote Small poems introducing short poem technique in Kashmiri poetry. The poems he named as HAERSA TH. It is through these poems that he managed to express the events effecting man's mind and body resulting in activating his personality and behaviour from which one gets impressions of painful and joyous moments of life which he expresses through his bodily movements and facial expressions:

Nadim has been considered as the leading light in the history of Kashmiri literature in the second half of the twentieth century. The period from 1946 to 1988 is known Nadim era insofar as Kashmiri Poetry is concerned. He also wrote poems in Hindi. Nadim had a had a colourful personality. He was humble and a soft spoken gentleman but was a forceful communicator of his ideas. He was a chess player and had the liking of visiting Dal Lake more often in a Shikara. My father Gopi Nath Vaishnavi and Nadim were bosom friends and both played the chess together. The Sahitya Academy Award winner Dina Nath Nadim who was born in March 1916 breathed his last in March 1987 at his residence Jawahir Nagar, Srinagar, Kashmir.

BALKRISHAN SANYASI

Translated from the Kashmiri by Arvind Gigoo

Won't you tell me once again:

You tormentor,
I will give you all.

I liked it
when you said so the first time
but
I ignored it.

Say it again.
I will listen and digest.
If you say it again
I will listen
from the flaming pyre
from the ashes.
Thereafter who will you give to?
It will be
burning.
So give
my desires
to the burning pyre.

They will lit the pyre
and
go home.
Who cares for the aftermath?

I will be burning
alone
You will lap the tragic day.



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Raginya Isht Devi

of Kheer Bhawani, Tulla Mulla, Kashmir

(The Painting is presented by Late Subadra Haskar, daughter of Late Dr. Kailash Katjoo, ex-Governor of West Bengal)

SECTION-II

**SOME OF THE ARTICLES
REPRODUCED FULL OF WORTHY
CONTENT REQUIRED TO GO
THROUGH ONCE AGAIN FOR
NECESSARY ACTION AND
IMPLEMENTATION ETC.**



Selected Vaakh of Lal Ded

*" Kyaah kara paantsan dahan ta kaahan
Wokhshu'n yeth legi karith yim gahi
Saeri samahun yeth razi lamahan,
Ada kyaazi raa vihey kaahan gaav"*

Meaning :-

Ah me ! The five (bhuta-s) the ten (indriya-s) and the eleventh, their Lord the mind, scraped this pot the living body and went away. Had altogether pulled on the rope. Why should the Eleventh have lost the cow?
(why should the soul have gone astray?)

THE KASHMIRI PANDITS, MIGRATION AND THE THREAT TO OUR IDENTITY

Lt. Col. S. K. Dhar (Retd.)

Since the last mass migration of the Kashmiri Pandits from the Valley in early 1990, there has been a great deal of debate, both within the community and outside it, on the future of our community. In spite of all the rhetoric, however, no clear picture has emerged on where the community is heading and what, if any, are the solutions to our problems. Much is being made of the trauma faced by Kashmiri Pandits consequent to this latest migration, but we tend to lose sight of the fact that migration out of the Valley is nothing new to our community. We have been doing it for centuries. The reasons have been diverse. At some stages in our history, our ancestors have been forced to flee the Valley due to extreme oppression by Muslim rulers who descended on the Valley from time to time and forced mass conversions to Islam and genocide of those who resisted. Some of these migrants returned to the Valley when comparative tranquility returned, but substantial numbers took up abode in various parts of the Indo-Gangetic Plain.

Besides the forced migrations, however, there has always been a steady trickle of Pandits from the Valley to other parts of the country in search of better prospects, whether for education or for employment. The Kashmiri migrants by and large the well and prospered by dint of their intelligence, adaptability and industry, and encouraged relations and friends to follow suit and found them employment opportunities also. In more recent times, long before the mass migration of early 1990, Pandits have been seeking their fortunes farther afield for higher education and employment, and are mostly doing well. Though we are one of the smallest communities in the world, Kashmiri Pandits can be found thriving in practically every country over the globe. Kashmir has one of the worst educational systems in the country, and opportunities for employment and individual growth have always been extremely restricted, particularly for aspiring and educated Youth. This has been particularly frustrating for the Pandits, and hence the steady stream of migrants, who then settled down wherever they found their fortunes, within the country or abroad, and only kept tenuous links with the land of their origin, until these too were suddenly and rudely snapped in the January and February of 1990.

Why the latest mass migration happened is no longer of immediate relevance. History will in due course analyse the whys and wherefores of it. Many reasons have been advanced, some valid and some not so valid. What is of vital importance at this point in time is where we go from here. What, if any, is the future of our community as a community and how do we go about ensuring that our identity is not entirely wiped out?

To start with, we must face some bitter truths. We Kashmiri Pandits are a highly individualistic and arrogant people and refuse to recognise any superiors. We therefore do not willingly submit to collective discipline and are resistant to collective councilor action. This was sadly evident in the nature of our migration of January 1990 when we left the Valley as individual family groups and did not by and large take even our immediate neighbours into confidence, far from helping those needing assistance, or acting as a cohesive mass.

As a tiny community, we have an extraordinary number of sociopolitical organisations, all functioning ostensibly for the benefit of the community but working largely at cross-purposes. We have to take cognisance of the sad fact that we are too insignificant in numbers to constitute an effective vote-bank which might influence any shade of political opinion in our favour. We therefore must, if we want our

voice to be heard, develop the cohesion and unity to make up in assertiveness what we lack in numbers. So far We have utterly failed to achieve this. Instead, Our so called leaders and intellectuals have over the past seven years or mote, fallen into the habit of spouting rhetoric and wallowing in self-pity, which evokes no purposeful response from any quarter that matters.

Furthermore, we are completely averse to taking risks or facing discomfort, and we make no bones about it. The fact of the matter is that most migrant families, barring a minority that still live in migrant camps, have by now found a comfortable living for ourselves outside the Valley and will not be prepared to return even when complete normalcy returns, under the argument that it will not be fair to our children to expose them again to an uncertain future. One positive fall-out of our recent migration has been that our outlook has been released from the narrow confines of the close ring of mountains that enclose our Valley and we have attained a vision of the vast world outside arid the opportunities it offers. Why then return to the confines from which Fate has released us? Be that as it may, the hard reality is that if we are really keen to preserve our identity and dignity as a community we shall have to take recourse to positive and purposeful action, a lot of it unpalatable. We cannot get something for nothing, So if we are serious about our identity and our homeland we have to be prepared for some sacrifice. History both ancient and modern, is replete with instances of this. The most recent perhaps, is that of the Jews and the state of Israel. They have suffered incredible hardships and toll in suffering and human life to attain their homeland. Only a very tiny fraction of such sacrifice would be required of us. Are we prepared to face it? Again, nearer home there are the Parsis. They too, like us, are a tiny non-violent intellectual community and could easily have been swamped by sheer numbers of the majority in Maharashtra and Gujrat, their home states. What has kept them together, effective and vibrant is their strong community cohesiveness of one for all and all for one. Can we create such an identity? Conditions in Kashmir are now fast returning to as near normal as they are likely to get in the foreseeable future. If we are really serious about our continued existence as a community it is time to cut out empty rhetoric and indulgence in self-pity. Nobody will help us if we do not move for ourselves. This is the time for community elders to give up wishful thinking and formulate some practicable suggestions and solutions, which would be capable of implementation and for which we could effectively and realistically bargain with the State and Central Governments. The State Government has formulated a rehabilitation package, however flawed and imperfect. Let us not simply and arbitrarily throw it out of the window. If we have nothing better to offer let us take it as a starting point and come up with improvements to safeguard our interests, our identity and our physical and social wellbeing. At the outset of embarking on such an exercise, however, we must have a reasonably clear idea of how many, and which age-groups, would in fact be prepared to return to the Valley, given reasonably favourable conditions, with the intention of actually living there.

It is nobody's contention that solutions to resettlement problems are easy. To cite a few examples only, what help, in practical terms, would be available to restore properties destroyed, damaged, looted, or occupied by local Muslims who will be most reluctant to vacate them? What steps, and how speedily, would the State Government take to restore agricultural holdings and orchards to the migrants? Even accepting that returning migrants would initially be lodged in protected communes from where they would visit their homes during the resettlement process, what reasonable safeguards would be provided to the returning Pandits until they are fully settled and acclimatised in their environment. Above all, what guarantees will the State and Central Governments be in a position to provide that there will be no return to the situation of January 1990?

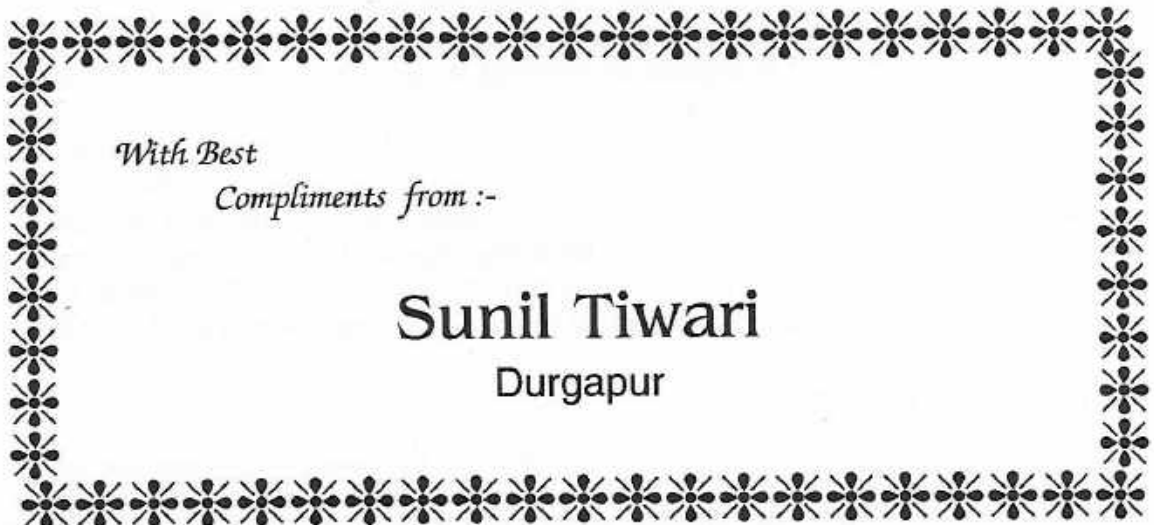
It must also be recognised that the returning Pandits would, to some extent at least, have to assume responsibility for their own self-defence and the defence of their properties. It would not be difficult to adequately train and organise them for this would also give them self confidence and would at the same time serve as an effective deterrent to would-be mischievous elements. We must be prepared to lay by

the heel the myth that we are too small a community to fend for ourselves. If the local Muslim, who is of the same ethnic and socio-cultural background as the Pandit, could take up arms in the name of Islam, why can we not do likewise in defence of our very identity and survival? This is a matter that we need to ponder upon.

A start can be made with Kashmiri Pandit Government servants, bank and hospital employees and similar other cadres going back to their jobs the Valley when the "Darbar" moves back in the Spring of 1998. Pandit businessmen are already shuttling to the Valley and back again in significant numbers. They can now spend longer spells in valley.

There is a very sad and serious omission that the older generation Pandits have been guilty of over the past half-century, which it is perhaps not too late to redress even at this late stage. We have neglected to teach our children our mother-tongue and to inculcate in them a sense of identity and any knowledge of our socio-cultural heritage. They are largely ignorant of Kashmiri folklore or even the geography of the Kashmir region, and we, their elders must accept the entire blame and responsibility for this. All the talk about the community identity is largely meaningless to them. The Kashmiri Muslims on the other hand, have assiduously maintained the language, customs and lore, and continue to inculcate them in their children even when they move abroad. It will be well worth going seriously into whether anything can still be done to retrieve the situation.

Inspite of all that has happened in the last eight years, an abundance of goodwill towards Pandits still exists among the bulk of the Valley Muslims. We would do well to foster this. There will, of course always be elements who will be unhappy about our return. That is inevitable. In the long term though, ways will have to be devised to neutralise such elements, as only then can we be reasonably certain of a stable future for us in the Valley. We have, however, to make a start somewhere if we are serious about preserving our identity. Situated as we are at present we face an even more bleak future as Kashmiri Pandits may continue to flourish as individuals, but ethnically and, socio-culturally they shall have lost their identity and joined the pariahs of the world. That is a future too chilling to contemplate.



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Sunil Tiwari
Durgapur

ON PRESERVING KASHMIRI PANDIT IDENTITY

Dr. Brij Krishen Moza

The Kashmiri Pandit community has got displaced from their hearths and homes in Kashmir. They have, for all intents and purposes, lost their roots, having been blown off like pollen grains by the storm of terrorist fundamentalism in Kashmir. Whilst the majority of them are in some kind of shelters in Udhampur, Jammu and Delhi, they have got dispersed not only throughout India but also throughout the world. Historically Kashmiri Pandits have faced many crises to their identity. But, the one which they are facing today is different and more severe because conditions have changed drastically; the values of life have assumed a different meaning, the exposures are different and diverse, the tempo of life has gained a difficult-to-contain speed, emotional attachments have given way to detached relations and the whole environment, which surrounds us is surcharged with increasing materialistic currents, denuding the spirit out of the humanity in general, carrying spiritualistic concepts and conformations as carcasses into the vast ocean of no concern. Therefore, the question may arise as to whether, under present scenario of prevailing trends, there is any need at all, for identity, leaving aside preserving the same?

IDENTITY CONCEPT

But, a deeper thought and query reveals that identity is a natural phenomenon, characteristic of living organisms. Dictionaries reveal identity as being the same; sameness, individuality; personality etc. Biologists have given maximum attention to identity and identification of living organisms, characterising them by physical features and anatomical characteristics to establish the sameness amongst them. Taxonomists have for ages tried to find the taxones to establish identity and chemotaxonomists have established the role of chemical congeners the chemotaxones, to achieve this very objective. Biochemists have established the role of genes in characterising the living species and the superiority thereof. These chemical identities have been found to determine the varying characteristics of living beings; their features, attitudes, traits, tastes, likes, dislikes and related aspects which constitute a social communion. Scientists spending their lives in studying the characteristics of living organisms have established the struggle for existence as a fundamental objective of living matter and evolutionary scientists have revealed how the human beings developed over millions of years their special identity which has been appropriate for their existence in changing conditions of environment and the struggle caused therefrom. Procreation is fundamental for living beings to preserve the samenesses of their characteristics, which have survived the environmental shocks, or what we call identity. In this process of existence, it is the fittest characteristic which has survived the present shocks and is capable of surviving those of the future. As such identity is an essential aspect of recognitive existence which has assumed time tested relevance under all circumstances in the process of achieving continuity. Under present scenario of Indian society, community identity is drawing more attention from social, political and religious points of view and is becoming more and more meaningful with these changing trends. For a microscopic community like that of Kashmiri Pandits the relevance of identity is therefore assuming a critical importance. The requirement of its preservation becomes consequential to the determination of its worthwhile and distinguishably positive characteristics; these being the attributes for which this miniscule minority has distinguished itself over thousands of years.

KASHMIRI PANDIT IDENTITY

Having given the above preamble to identity, it becomes necessary to discuss the distinguishing characteristics of Kashmiri Pandit community and its positive attributes. Though not being a student of history, whatever information I have gathered, suggest that Kashmiri Pandits are pure offshoots of the

Aryan stock. there is established evidence which confirms /that they are the descendants of Saraswat Hindus who settled in Kashmir thousands of years back. Generally speaking they are tall, well built, handsome people of fair complexion with rosy tint, sharp features, long noses, broad foreheads, big eyes, 'black hair and broad shoulders. Their womenfolk are attractive, hardworking, intelligent and dedicated. The people on the whole are a contented, jovial lot, who have over ages, developed lot of patience and perseverance, a philosophic, literary outlook and an inner urge for knowledge of the unknown and the curiosity thereof. Kashmir was once upon a time inhabited by Hindus only who had to face turmoil at the hands of Naga rulers, Buddhist conquerors and later on Muslim intruders. During these upheavals most of this Hindu populace suffered persecution, violence and suppression. Most of those who survived slaughter had to get converted or they fled the beautiful vale in search of safer, respectable and gainful pastures. What remained was a small number of Brahmins who resisted conversion at a heavy cost; having been reduced to meek, humble and miserable conditions and who remained rigid -for good or bad consequences in not accepting back those who had been converted to other faiths when such opportunities arose with changing times'. As such this left over stock comprised of pure Saraswat descendants having presumed genes of the original Saraswat Aryans who thousands of years back found Kashmir a fit place for their livelihood and inhabitation. Because of abundant and handsome natural resources, fertile land, salubrious climate and geographic positioning, Kashmir became an important centre of trade, education and culture and therefore a conspicuous place attracting attention of its neighbouring countries. With Brahmanical background, Kashmiri Pandits dedicated themselves to perpetuation of spiritualistic pursuits, philosophic conceptualisation and search for realisation of self. As such, environment, resources, and their inner capabilities made them a distinguished stock of people with impressive physical features, intellectual bent of mind, peaceful, patient and hardworking attitude; generally contented with their status unless disturbed by serious external threats, outrages and intrusions. The cold snowy climate did generally keep them indoors, on more easily available non-vegetarian diets, which might have contributed to their lazy attitudes and to their individualistic, read-in-between-the-lines personalities; each whilst in his own cocoon giving his own version of the same thought and trying to reveal that his was far excelling than that of the others. Persecutions did make them into a subjugated personality, sick at heart yet keeping a smiling face; accepting the realities with caution, bordering on cowardice, so as not to lose their individuality but adjusting in respect of the details from situation to situation. Historical anecdotes reveal that Kashmiri Pandits, having left Kashmir during the massacre of Sikandar Butshikan, were later recalled because there was a real vacuum in administration and literary machineries of the state. Then Sanskrit was the language of the state and Kashmiri Pandits had attained great scholarship in this language. They were promised all privileges and prospects and so many returned to their homeland and once again devotedly set the worn out state machinery right. Having done so, the then rulers wanted to make use of them and at the same time contain their influence. So, they changed the state language from Sanskrit to Persian thus depriving the Pandits of their authority based on their command on the Sanskrit language. Seeing this trend, Kashmiri Pandits immediately changed over to learning Persian and Arabic and in a short span of time they excelled in these languages also and retained their position in the courts of the rulers or in their respective vocations, Many may take a view that Kashmiri Pandits have been flexible, compromising, clever, argumentative and self seeking individuals. This, however, need not be argued. Whatever the views, the fact remains that historically Kashmiri Pandits have passed through great shocks and threats to their existence; yet they have survived. In the process some hybridisation of characteristics might have taken place which becomes quite natural and easy to explain. Being a miniscule minority but a conspicuous community of very prominent individuals, this aspect might have been much more highlighted by those who could not attain such phenomenal success.

KASHMIRI PANDIT NOMENCLATURE

Kashmiri Pandits who are the Brahmins of Kashmiri origin, have received this distinctive title from Mughal rulers who used to pick them from Kashmir for their scholarship; knowledge, administrative

capabilities and humour. Thereafter all the Brahmins from Kashmir were called in the courts as Kashmiri Pandits. India, till recent times, was a country ruled by Rajas, Maharajas and Nawabs. Irrespective of their religious leanings, the rulers of these states used to employ the Brahmins from Kashmir in the courts as advisers, or tutors for their children or for certain specialised jobs. These Brahmins, very few in each location, used to live in close proximity of each other and used to be together in view of their common nostalgic feelings of Kashmir, their sameness as far as language, life style, food habits and mutual understanding were concerned. Thus they used to be distinguished from others in alien lands as Kashmiri Pandits. They used to live in pockets which in course of time grew into prominent Kashmiri "Muhallas" far away from Kashmir. Such localities could be found in Lahore, Multan, Amritsar, Delhi, Jaipur, Lucknow, Allahabad etc. which, are still existing. Though few in numbers, these Kashmiri Pandits used to preserve their community identity by observing Kashmiri traditions, rituals and festivals; keeping alive the nostalgic memories of Kashmir from where they had originated. By and large they, preferred to have marriages within the community.

So, whether residing in Kashmir or migrated to different places, Kashmiri Pandits achieved the recognition for overall excellence, above average understanding of comparative knowledge whether in arts, science or humanities, popularity for their polished, cultured and social behaviour, leadership qualities and for their charismatic personalities. Though known as Kashmiri Pandits for obvious reasons, their contributions did not remain within the parochial limits but were broad-based on the national level; these being recognized in the context of Indian civilisation, literature, arts, culture etc., from the ancient times. If Vedas, Upanishads, Shaivism, Sanskrit literature, Grammar and Poetics, Arts and Sculptures constitute the edifice of Indian Civilisation, Kashmiri Pandits have provided the pillars on which this edifice is resting. Kashmiri Pandit women have kept pace with men from time immemorial, in true Aryan spirit, and have received recognition in the fields of arts, crafts, education, poetics and spiritualistic pursuits, administration, courage and valour, beauty and charm, besides being devoted to their family obligations. This miniscule community is privileged to have produced reportedly the first Surgeon, the first Mathematician, the first Historian, the first woman Monarch, the first High Court Judge, the first and the only Lady Prime Minister in India, having held seven times the coveted position of President of Congress Party which was the main nationalistic party in our country till our Independence. As recorded in Raj-Tarangini, Kashmiri Pandits developed the hunger-strike as the most effective non-violent weapon thousand years back; again, for the first time in the world. In present day statistics, there is perhaps no discipline of Science, Arts, Administration, Management, etc. where Kashmiri Pandits have not attained positions of prominence within the country and abroad. Even a decade back the wealthiest person in the world was a Kashmiri Pandit.

This being the background of Kashmiri Pandit identity, one feels proud of it and there can be no two opinions that this identity requires to be preserved because this is far above parochial considerations having in it the concerns and contributions of nationalistic, humanitarian intellectual and spiritualistic involvements. It is also clear that Kashmiri Pandit community has the special genes which have distinguished them till now and so this identity has to be preserved.

PRESERVATION OF PANDIT IDENTITY

With the above remarkable background of Kashmiri Pandit identity, the question now arises as to how to preserve it under the fast changing conditions and when we have lost our roots in Kashmir? One can be optimistic that in the near future, conditions may improve and many Kashmiri Pandits may return to Kashmir and as such this identity may receive once again the natural habitat for its preservation. But, this is a futuristic proposition which in no way becomes a complete solution to the question which is the subject of this presentation. As such, we have to take stock of present exigencies and the stark

realities which we face presently as Kashmiri Pandits. The determining considerations which emerge in this context are that we are scattered, very small in numbers, individualistic with global exposures, no natural or acquired compulsions of learning mother tongue, no ten commandments, no commanding leadership to steer us together, no fanatic inheritance to maintaining our identity and so on and so forth. Yet, we have reasons to feel proud of our identity the preservation of which therefore, emerges as a natural responsibility. The following tenets become noteworthy in this context.

Accent on Excellence: One of the hallmarks of Kashmiri Pandit characteristics is the accent on excellence. Preservation of this prominent identification must assume a, family obligation whether positioned in Jammu, Jodhpur, Jorhat, Jeddah or Johannesburg. Once the spirit of excellence is maintained in the family and there is traditional awareness amongst our children that this is our natural heritage, the identity is automatically getting projected and preserved. This does not require any special effort except conviction in each one of us that this is our responsibility to pass on this tradition of excellence to our generations to come.

Kashmiriyat : Though originally an important aspect of Kashmiri Pandit behaviour, all communities living in Kashmir, reveal certain common attitudes. One of these is hospitality. Whether rich or poor or in between, this unurbane characteristic is highly developed in Kashmir, great Urdu poet, Brij Narain Chakbast Kashmiri Pandit of Kashmiri Muhalla, Lucknow was travelling in Kashmir through its hills and vales, and towns and villages. Arrising out of his personal experiences and being so excited and overwhelmed with the hospitality of Kashmir, he expressed his instant and spontaneous appreciation, through a remarkable verse which conveys and explains very lucidly and meaningfully his deep feelings as follows :-

*“Zarra zarra hai mere Kashmir ka mehman nawaz
Rah mein pathar ke tukdoon ne diya pani mujhe”*

meaning, every particle of my Kashmir if overwhelmingly hospitable that even the stones hiding brooks on my way, gave me water quench my thirst.

Another important aspect of the Kashmiri way of life has been respect, tolerance and affilty particularly in respect of religious faiths or their peaceful coexistence, Historically, Kashmiri Pandits welcomed all religious faiths and belief which gained access within the boundaries of Kashmir even in that era when it was inhabited by only Hindus and was ruled by Brahmin rulers Along with temples, mosques were not only allowed to be built but also worshipped. Not going into their pros and cons, these historical rights or wrongs and the controversies that these have presently gathered, it suffices to say that secular faith has been deep-rooted in Kashmiri Pandit philosophy of life. The great saint-poetess of Kashmir, Lalleshwari, known popularly in Kashmir as “Lal-Ded”, and for that matter the great Sufi-saint of Kashmir, Nund Rishi of Islamic origin, laid highest emphasis on spiritualism; they ascended to great heights beyond the narrow compartments of race, religion and caste. Whether or not this aspect of Kashmiriyat is holding any meaning in present scenario of communal developments of Kashmir and consequent, sufferings of Kashmiri Pandits, it is definitely a, predominant aspect of their background. No wonder this element of their background has been the guiding force behind the nationalistic fervour, of Kashmiri Pandits who have produced great leaders, poets and litterateurs shining as stars on the national scene.

Whether Kashmmyat is a misnomer in prevailing circumstances or not one associates this expression with certain peculiarities or practices which have withstood the denudation of time and have remained rock-strong in symbolising ones Kashmiri origin. “Dejharoo” , used by Kashmiri Pandit women as a gold ornament signifying their married status, a dazzling example of Kashmiri Pandit symbolisation and identity. It was interesting, though very surprising, to behold Priyanka Gandhi exhibiting this symbolic ornamentation of Kashmiri Pandit origin, when she got married recently.

Samitis/Sabhas & Samajs : Kashmiri Pandits have formed Samitis/Sabhas in most of the locations where there are a number of such families. There must be a more organised effort to have such organisations which can provide for community get-togethers to celebrate festivals and such traditional occasions on community ritualistic nuances. These also provide a forum for getting together members, of their own choice, and voice their common concerns from such community platforms. If our children gather together for a function, a sports event, a picnic or a cultural celebration organised by such Sabhas, they automatically get awareness about community identity and thereby a feeling of responsibility to preserve the same. Further, it enables mixing and acquaintance of families and youngsters specially, which in present day scenario may prove helpful in developing natural matrimonial relationships. As such, Sabhas/Samitis have to play a great role in preserving our identity. It requires to be emphasized that there should be only one Sabha/Samiti at one location otherwise the spirit of getting together is lost and the resources of effort, time and finance are getting diverted in rat races which do not serve the objectives that require to be observed to preserve our identity.

Kashmir Bhawans : Wherever the number of Kashmiri Pandit families is reasonably large creation of Kashmir Bhawans is necessary. Kashmiri Bhawans provide a natural habitat for preservation of Kashmiri tradition and cultural development. Provided with relevant libraries to preserve our glorious records of past, such community centres do serve a great purpose in preserving our identity by frequent get-togethers, seminars, cultural functions and such means as can bring our community togetherness. A bulletin emanating from this community centre, giving the news and views of the members and a directory of addresses and telephone numbers serves a great deal in bringing us together in our moments of happiness and sorrow. These also become a convenient and temporary shelter for those who have to visit such locations under adverse or emergent conditions. The advantages of such temporary shelters are obvious, being economical, informative and contact-enabling which in a new or strange location are extremely helpful. It requires to be mentioned that with a little planning and organization, Kashmir Bhawans can become self financing propositions; their role as the centre for preserving the cultural and community identity remaining as the primary objective. Kashmir Sabha, Calcutta and the Kashmir Bhawan over here stand out as a model of distant effort for preservation of Kashmiri Pandit identity.

Apex Body, A.I.K.S. : A decade and half back it was considered necessary to have an Apex Body, named All India Kashmiri Samaj, A.I.K.S., to coordinate the activities of various units, the Sabhas and Samitis, formed at different locations and to provide them with advice and guidance in respect of maintaining cultural cohesiveness of the scattered Kashmiri Pandit community. It was also assumed that such an Apex Body would provide for bringing the member units together by way of exchanging necessary information emanating from different units besides bringing out a directory of names and addresses and matrimonial data. As a result, the scattered community would have available to them the background material for preserving the traditional and cultural heritage, a common forum for safeguarding the common community interests and a service mechanism for dispersal of information relevant to maintaining community ties and sharing of its concerns. Our A.I.K.S. under the prevailing circumstances has been since then doing a remarkable job. But, in between, Kashmir became explosive with terrorism resulting in the diaspora of Kashmiri Pandits the priorities of A.I.K.S., therefore, shifted for obvious reasons, to very sensitive and complex issues of displaced brethren and to their relief and rehabilitation. In this respect various political organisations of Kashmiri Pandits which had their origin in Srinagar or Kashmir also became natural frontal organisations of Jammu or Delhi where they shifted their headquarters, each trying to be helpful to the cause of displaced migrants but from different platforms and different political points of view. Kashmiri Pandit Sabha, Jammu and Kashmiri Samiti, Delhi, the community organisations at these two centres, which, being nearer to Kashmir and having a major concentration of displaced Kashmiri Pandits, played a great role in every respect in safeguarding the interest, of the community in these two vital head quarters. Panun Kashmir, a political organisation of

displaced Kashmiri Pandits which recently unfortunately split into another outfit, Panun Kashmir Movement, raised the slogan of separate It motherland for Kashmiri Pandits in Kashmir, became very popular globally for bringing awareness to Kashmiri Pandit problems caused by internal displacement and denial of human rights within their state. In this respect this organisation of young intellectuals, has been playing a great role and has revealed remarkable resourcefulness and leadership qualities. A mushroom growth of organisations, could be possibly justified as multipronged approach in achieving a common objective. But in practical terms it harms the community and brings to surface, at a critical loss, its weaknesses, and harms the leadership development, and the discipline so necessary for healthy growth. This brings a great constraint in rational utilisation of limited resources of intellect, effort, time and finance and results in embarrassment in facing the authorities. In the process of each organisation aspiring to play a frontal role, the leadership role which the Apex Body was to play, got diluted giving rise to leadership confusion and crisis therein. This is obviously and very unfortunately a very unhealthy development; this sensitive topic has been debated on many platforms and forums within our country and abroad. As such, it will suffice to appeal to all frontal organisations to come under one umbrella for serving the common cause of rehabilitation of displaced brethren and for preserving the identity of community. It is necessary to evolve one Apex Body of capable experts for our common issues to provide strong leadership to community the various frontal organisations can distribute and divide the jobs based on their special attainments and expertise.

Setting up Institutions: There are various equally important areas necessary for preserving our community identity which should draw the attention of our frontal organisations at Delhi and Jammu. One is related to creating an institute for training our traditional "Guruji's" necessary for keeping up our tradition of "Karam-Kand" and other religious observances. This vocation is becoming conspicuous by its absence for obvious reasons. If an institute is set up which can train up the required number of Guruji's annually and these trained professionals- be assured of their respect and comparable financial earnings by various units scattered at different locations, then we can preserve our this important identity. Similarly, professional approach has to be given to setting up institutions of catering in Kashmiri Pandit cuisine. Such professionals are very much required objectively as also for preserving our traditions of high quality cuisine.

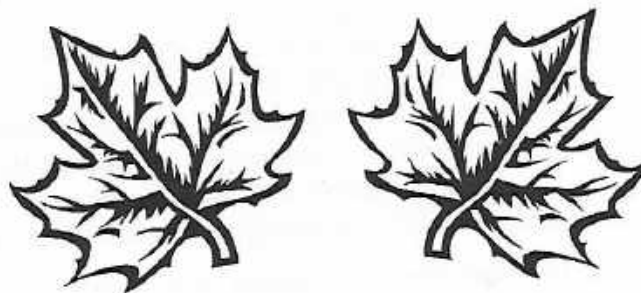
Inter-community marriages: With changing values of life, diverse exposures and widespread dispersal it may be difficult to retain matrimonial relationships within the community. But, for preserving our identity it is undoubtedly very vital. Essentially it is in the awareness amongst our youngsters about realising the advantages of having intercommunity marriages and in obtaining the opportunities of their finding the suitable matches within the community, that to some extent, a feasible approach lies in achieving this objective. It has to be a spontaneous process for which no bindings can be meaningfully advocated, A great deal lies in family atmosphere, upbringing of children and the training they receive from their parents. May be Samitis, Sabhas, Samajs and Kashmir Bhawans fulfilling the role that has been discussed above, will prove greatly helpful retaining matrimonial relationship within community.

Mother tongue: Last but not the least important aspect of our preserving community-identity is to preserve our mother tongue. Again, here we are not equipped to teach children in Kashmiri language nor are there any compulsions of curriculum or any viable requirements to learn this language except on emotional grounds. We in Calcutta considered it necessary to speak to our children in Kashmiri language when we migrated to this place decades back. As a result, our next generation carried on and preserved this tradition. This accomplishment was greatly helped by our regular visits to Kashmir and stay over there. But now there are more circumstantial constraints and practical difficulties. Unless our frontal organisations and Apex Body develop some teaching courses for our children to learn Kashmiri and individual families take it as a moral obligation to speak to children in Kashmiri, it is more probable

our mother tongue will receive a great set-back so far as Kashmiri Pandits are concerned as did its script receive long time back. One can, only hopefully draw attention to this and expect individual families will pay heed to this vital requirement of preserving our identity. Our frontal organisations and Apex Body could play a great role in this connection in developing a conversational curriculum and course for learning Kashmiri language. With present day communication facilities, audio-visual aids cassettes, films and the like it should not be difficult to develop a teaching course but the real success lies in the emphasis which individual families give to this, so far as its implementation is concerned.

CONCLUSION

Conclusively, our community background and heritage is glorious. Our identity is linked to this positive background. With fundamentalist terrorism in Kashmir, the Kashmiri Pandit community has got scattered throughout world. As such, the preservation of our identity is at risk being threatened by its extinction. Our present priority is rehabilitation of our suffering displaced brethren. A united effort, a commanding competent single Apex Body located centrally pertinent Sabhas/Samitis and Kashmir Bhawans at different locations are necessary for preserving our identity. Opportunities of frequent get-together cultural functions to celebrate our festivities on traditional lines, insight into our cultural heritage and background and social closeness based on our common leanings and tastes, cultural and cuisine get-togethers, literary discussions and music-cum-folklore gatherings are vital for preserving our identity. Equally important, yet very sensitive and complex issues are keeping up our mother tongue intercommunity marriages and traditional system of "Karam-Kand" and such observances as "Yugnopavit". It is not an easy job but given proper leadership and bringing about awareness about our these requirements in our individual families is absolutely necessary for bringing about preservation of our glorious identity.



ON FOLLOWING CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS

If you were a Kashmiri and walking on a road in Timbaktoo and heard female voices coming from a house singing "Henzey", the customary Kashmiri "wanwun" sung on marriages, you will get a thrill which can better be felt than described. If your overall feeling on hearing or observing a custom like that of our singing the "Henzey" song gives you pleasure and a sense of belonging, without making you parochial in outlook, observing such customs and traditions is something we should encourage.



(Late)
Pt. Udai Kaul

Granted that most of those who sing the "Henzey" song do not follow the meaning of what they sing, This is particularly so of non-Kashmiri speaking Kashmiris. So what if you do not follow what you sing? Reciting the Veda Mantras or the Bhagwad Gita have a powerful effect even though one may not follow what one recites, The mere fact of the recitation gives one a feeling of satisfaction, of piety and one's having done something good. So also about singing of the "Henzey" on marriages, and following of customs the genesis and the meaning of which one may not follow Everything that we do not understand or anything that does not stand the test of reason need not necessarily be condemned. "There are more things in Heaven and Earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy, Horatio" said that old bard Shakespeare. The acid test of acceptability of a particular custom should be whether following that custom is a source of peace and pleasure, of giving you a feeling of "belonging" of "comerodie", of affinity. For custom basically resides in the haunts of mind, and you feel nearer to your kith and kin by not only imbibing but also contributing to the common heritage by following a tradition or a custom, Only such customs prevail as stand the test of time, Like Darwin's theory of "Survival of the fittest", such customs alone survive which have proved useful and a source of pleasure to its followers. Statutes and Law are essentially based only on customs which were beneficial.

You can tell one community from the other, one part of the state from the other, by the customs they follow, If one were only to guard, against being parochial, of being limited In outlook and approach and helped in building the customs and traditions of one community It certainly will be better for the entire country, Tell what is your own, nurture it and the whole community gets benefitted. If we took full care of our own compounds and houses, the entire mohalla gets benefitted, and if mohallas took care about their localities the city and the State and like that the whole country gets benefitted.

In order to draw the best out Of following one's custom, one may follow what Swami Chinmayanand exhorted his listeners recently in a recent lecture in Calcutta to do for achieving best results in seeking God-realisation, Swamiji's 'prescribed' what he succinctly called PIC- P ,standing for Participation, I for Involvement and C for Commitment. Taking a cue from what Swamiji spoke in some other context, if we Participate in our customs, if then got ourselves "Involved" in those customs and then finally we "Committed" ourselves to following those customs, the world will certainly be a better place.



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SECTION-III

**ARTICLES DEALING WITH TOPICS OF
GENERAL NATURE AND IMPORTANT
SUBJECTS ETC.**



Selected Vaakh of Lal Ded

*" Shiv chhuy thali-thali rozaan,
Mo zaan Huond ta Musalman,
Trukhai chhuk ta paan prazanaau
Soi chhai Saahibas zaani-zaan "*

Meaning :-

Shiva abides in all that is, everywhere,
then do not discriminate between Hindu and Musalman.

If thou art wise, know thyself;
that is true knowledge of the Lord

PURPOSE OF BHAGWAD GITA ACCORDING TO SHAIVA VIEW
(AS EXPLAINED BY
HIS HOLINESS SWAMI LAKSHMAN JOO MAHARAJ)

Kashmir Shaivism is basically an enquiry into the truth of human experience. It is a venture at discovering permanence in changefulness and universality in individuality. It, therefore, affirms the spirit of modern science. Studied in the right way, Kashmir Shaivism is bound to reveal its utility and charm to the modern mind. There is a purposeful uniqueness in this system of Indian spiritual thought. To give an instance here, I would point out how the great Shaiva teacher Abhinavgupta explains the purpose of the Gita in his gitarha samgraha (a commentary on Gita).

While trying to solve the problem of life in the light of the lord's song, Abhinavgupta says: What is the main purpose of our life here? Why is our mind torn by conflicting duties and loyalties? These are very difficult questions he sets to solve in his commentary. The freedom from all our miseries, he very boldly and emphatically declares, can neither be obtained through the renunciation of the world, nor by hatred towards the world but by feeling the presence of God everywhere, who is the in most centre of each and every object.

There is an unceasing battle going on between Right (Pandu) and Wrong (Kuru) in one's own body (dharma-ksetre) which is analogous to the war between the Kauravas and the Pandavas. Each side strives to gain the upper hand. This famous conflict between the two sides shows how man should side with the Right ultimately to conquer the wrong and thus become the instrument of God's good purpose on earth.

Dharamkshetre signifies that the minds of people as they are by nature pure, get polluted by selfish interests and wicked thoughts leading them to the acts of vileness and wildness. Abhinavgupta explains 'mamakah' as vile and impure thoughts coming in man's mind by his inherent ignorance and selfishness. Ultimately there is the victory of the right.

Chapter I

There is war going on between a sense organ and its object. In the senses thus war is always going on. Sorrow fights with pleasure and pleasure fights with sadness. Lust fights with detachment and detachment fights with lust. It is all going on in one's own body. This is war. One is apt to give in. What has the yogi to do in this battlefield of life: Here good fights with bad; right fights with wrong; pride fights with humility and vice versa. This fight does not only go in the waking state, but it also continues in the dreaming state. He will find this fight going on everywhere. This always goes on in his mind. He says- "Should I do the right or I should do wrong. Should I do this or I should do that." He is in a fix.

There is a way, there is a yukti and that is: Do not think right, do not think wrong. Be relaxed in your own nature. Just enjoy this fight. You only witness it. Do not get entangled either in right or in wrong. Just witness this war between senses and their objects. Then you will be neither right nor wrong.

Chapter II

Here is a unique and wonderful attitude towards the mind. If you get attached with the objective world you are, in fact, detached. If you get detached from the objective world, you become attached to it. If you renounce this world and go for meditation in the cave of a dense forest you think of what you have abandoned -a box, the bedroom, a towel or a transistor. This way you have actually not renounced. You are holding those things. In fact, by abandoning, nothing will happen. But by enjoying everything will happen. Therefore, by enjoying you will remain detached because you will not think of the otherwise

renounced things you possessed. Traces will vanish while enjoying. Being detached will entangle you because traces of attachment remain there.

Chapter III

You have earned a bundle of currency notes, which is lying on your table. Think at that moment that it is not yours. Then you will not be sad or worried even if it is destroyed by your son, wasted by your wife or is somehow lost. In this manner think about all your animate or inanimate possessions. You will experience no wrath or loss of temper. This way you must live unattached in this world.

Chapter IV

You will only suffer if you control your mind by negation or by suppression. Don't waste your time in controlling the mind. Enjoyment of the world of senses is meant for meditation. You have to enjoy the world for the sake of meditation. Go and do everything but be focussed towards the Lord in every action. That is meditation.

Chapter V

Anything can happen in this world. Even what appears impossible to you, may come to happen. One may die at any moment. Your house may catch fire and turn to ashes. Your bank draft or money balance may be taken away. Be in an equilibrium state always. If you have \$1000 in your pocket. Well and good. If you have nothing and you are a pauper, then also, well and good. Think like that. You will be liberated from the repeated births and deaths.

Chapter VI

Remember God in each and every action in this world. Then everything is achieved, even if you feel that it is not. Sometimes, you see paddy fields ripe at one place only; but when rainfall takes place and roots get wet, then all fields turn into ripening colour in a short time. So remember God. You have already achieved everything. It is only a question of a few days now.

Chapter VII

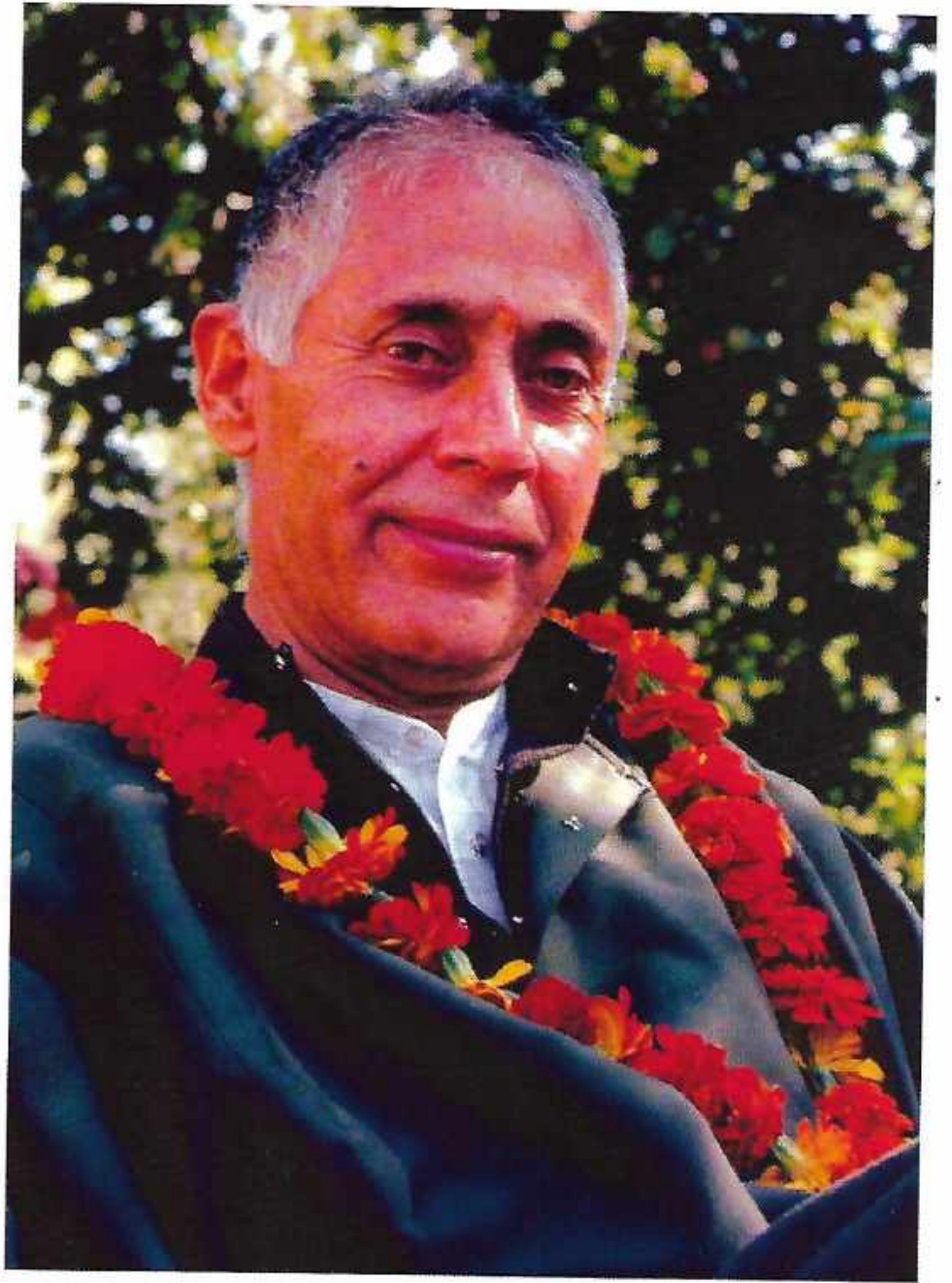
You must develop intense love of Lord Krishna in yourself and nothing else. Then, everything will be solved. The Lord's name becomes Kalpamanjari - the boon-granting creeper for you. For instance you want money. Money will come out of your love for Lord Krishna. Lord Krishna gave a promise to Arjuna - If you remember Me always, I will take care of your anxieties. That will be my worry. You just remain attached to Me. I will do the other things of your life."

Chapter VIII

There is a trick in how you find out the reality of Lord Siva everywhere. Remember Him while recording your speech in your tape recorder. Just remember Him while struggling in your office or doing your work there. Remember Him when you busy yourself in taking a delicious dish. He will be with you. If you go and witness a motion picture and you are enjoying it, then Lord Siva will be sitting by your side. He will relate to you what the meaning of the picture is. You won't see that He is Lord Siva. You will only think that he is somebody who has come to see the picture. So, inside and outside Lord Siva will be your side always.

Chapter IX

There are five energies of Lord Siva. They are -creative energy, protective energy, destructive energy, concealing energy and revealing energy. But all these energies are meant for revealing His nature. You have just to see and analyse that. You have to see where the revealing nature of struggle is, where the revealing nature in sadness, in joy, in enjoyment and in torture is. You must find revealing nature. It exists everywhere. Watch your breath each and every second, that is remembering the Lord.



His Holiness Iswar Swaroop
Swami Lakshman Joo Maharaj

Chapter X

Lord Krishna said, "O, Arjuna! I will repeat My supreme word to you, so that you understand it fully well. I do so because you are dear to Me. Nobody knows Me and I know everything." Abhinavagupta concludes that any thought or any action that comes in your mind or in your senses, you do according to your movement of senses. You should just hold that movement and divert it towards your own nature, and see that nothing is moving. There is no thought at all. It is just the routine. You have nothing to do with it.

Chapter XI

Lord Krishna explains to Arjuna in a practical way how He is everything in this world. He reveals His universal form -Visvarupa- to Arjuna. "I am the sky. I am the air. I am the fire. I am the water. I am the earth. I am the mountain. I am the ocean. I am everything." Therefore, you must feel that God-consciousness is pervading in the same scale in all the three worlds. The three worlds according to Sankhya Philosophy are this world, the earth; the world of stars and planets, the space and beyond i.e. the Heaven. The impure world is earth. The world of heaven is pure, the world of stars and space is both pure and impure. But God-consciousness, which pervades all the three world, is neither pure, nor impure, nor pure and impure for the yogi. If you thus understand this whole universe, this cosmos, you will become one with Lord Siva.

Chapter XII

Your meditation will be all useless unless you have attachment and love for Lord Siva. Your meditation must be with full zeal and devotion to Lord Siva, not routine-like. As all the activities of a wife are focussed towards her husband and those of a husband towards his wife, so must all your actions be focussed towards meditation on Lord Siva or Lord Krishna. When this longing goes beyond control (vaivasya), at that point the yogi feels the existence of Lord Siva everywhere. You must feel that you can't live without Him, without the presence of God. Then God is very near you.

Chapter XIII

Lord Krishna explains to Arjuna that there are two elements existing in this universe. One is Prakrti and the other Purusa. Prakrti is active but unconscious. Purusa is inactive but conscious. When both unite, creation of the world takes place. For example, if Purusa who is conscious, wants to go to the town, he knows the road leading there, but he cannot go because he is active. So he unites with Prakrti. But Prakrti is unconscious. Purusa whips on her back and make her move this way and that way till he reaches the town. Therefore the presence of both Prakrti and Purusa is necessary in the formation of this universe.

But from the Saiva point of view, this differentiated perception of these two elements is the field of the ignorant. Those who are filled with God-consciousness feel that Purusa and Prakrti are one Reality only. That is Siva.

Chapter XIV

Here Lord Krishna describes the position and differentiated actions of the three gunas. Abhinavagupta concludes that ego does not at all remain in the mind of the yogi who has attachment, love and zeal for the Lord. For him it does not matter whether he is in sattvic state, rajasic state or tamasic state.

There are three kinds of waves moving in this world. One is sattva, another is rajas and the third is tamas. They vibrate in individuals. They do not vibrate universally. When one person has a sattvic wave passing through him, it is not necessary that the person sitting near him also feel the same wave. That person may feel the tamas wave and some other person may feel a rajas wave at that time.

When the sattvic wave functions, love of God appears in your mind. You have great inclination for meditation then. Detachment for worldly pleasures is experience. When the rajasic wave functions, there is attachment for worldly pleasures and love of God is ignored. When there is a tamasic wave, you are inclined to sleep; you feel giddy and dull. All you want to do then is to lie down, sleep and snore.

But the yogi, who has found passage to the supreme flow of the wave of devotion to Siva, is not affected by any or many waves of the three gunas at a particular time. He is 'gunatita' beyond the play of the waves of the gunas.

Chapter XV

Lord Krishna says that this whole universe, the whole cosmos of the three worlds is like the big tree called Asvaththa. It is a wonderful tree. It is upside down. The roots are in heaven and branches in hell. It is the universal tree. This big tree is Lord Siva Himself- the expansion of His own body (Self). He is Himself the root, the trunk and the branches - everything.

Abhinavagupta means to convey that you must not sit for meditation. You must not meditate at some particular time or in a particular place or with particular vibrations or particular asanas. If you do so, then other times, other places and other conditions will be devoid of Lord Siva for you. You must, therefore, be conscious of Lord Siva's presence at every time, in every place and in all states of mind. That is true meditation. You must feel the presence of the Lord everywhere and in each and every action of your daily life.

Thus the yogi adores the Lord in each and every way which he adopts in doing the actions of his daily life. That is the real way of understanding Lord Siva.

"Therefore, O Arjuna!" says Lord Krishna, "you must focus your thought on Brahman always. In each and every action of yours, you must focus your mind on one point and that is the Lord." Differentiated perception is the great illusion - "dvaitam mahamohan" when you say, this is the pure way of meditation and that is an impure way, that means there is absence of true meditation. When you think that you are not out of meditation, you are gone. You do not meditate at all. True meditation is remembering Lord Siva with love and zeal in every activity of the world. So even in the worldly activities the yogi is in trance.

Thus you have to develop constant remembrance of God in your self with devotion and love.

Chapter XVI

You must try hard to become divine and not cultivate demoniacal properties in you. By saying that a yogi adores the Lord by doing good as well as bad, and right as well as wrong, one has to understand that one has to rise above both. It is said just to make one understand how to do actions in a detached manner. You have to understand that 'not doing bad action alone' cannot carry you to that point.

But still you must not do bad actions. You must follow the injunctions of "the Sastras, the ordinances. At the same time you have to know that this way of routine life is not the chief aim. The final goal of life is to merge in Lord Siva.

So you must not boast of being pure or virtuous, while you must remain so. You should not tell lies but at the same time do not boast of being truthful, for truthfulness only is not the goal. The goal is something else, and that is attachment, love and devotion for Lord Siva.

Chapter XVII

What you were doing during the period of ignorance you continue to do the same actions during the period of knowledge, when you are a realized soul. There is no change in your activities -eating, walking, talking, cutting your nails and hair going to bath-room, etc. on realization of God-consciousness activity remains the same but the fruit is unique. The fruit is liberation from the pangs of repeated births. and deaths. Faith in the essential and non-committal Self is necessary.

Chapter XVIII

It is the three gunas (qualities) which give rise to the differentiated intellect. The intellect then becomes dull and Stupid. It becomes ignorance in the absence of God-consciousness. You must cut such intellect to pieces, by being established in the guileless atmasvarupa. Shatter the limited intellect and awake to the universal oneness of Supreme Consciousness. That is the state of Visnu, which is beyond thought, which is beautiful with His own nature.

When a yogi evolves into that state, when the little self of Jiva merges in the universal Self of Siva, then whatever action is done, that becomes a means to attain Lord Siva. Understand this secret.

The Great Shaiva philosopher and saint, Swami Lakshman Joo Maharaj was born in 1907 at Namchbal (Fatehkadal), Srinagar, Kashmir. Swamiji was a rare jewel who had supreme command over both the theoretical and the practical aspects of Kashmir Shaivism. He spent his whole life, beginning when he was a small boy, studying and practicing the teaching of this tradition and in doing so realized the reality of its thought.

In Swami Lakshmanjoo 's teachings, he constantly emphasizes the secular nature of this great tradition. He wants it to be clearly understood by everyone that Kashmir Shaivism does not discriminate against anyone on the basis of caste, creed, color, or sex. No one is restricted from becoming involved in the practice and teachings of this tradition. This teaching is universal, open to one and all. In Swamiji's words "To realize that God and individual are one is the essence of Kashmir Shaivism"

FIVE NIYAMS(EXTERNAL DISCIPLINES) AND FIVE NIYAMS (INTERNAL DISCIPLINES) IN KASHMIR SHAIVISM AS EXPLAINED BY HIS HOLINESS SWAMI LAKSHMAN JOO MAHARAJ

Swachanandanatha is the form of Lord Shiva that is ever blissful, omnipresent and having eighteen arms. The eighteen arms of Swachanandanatha are for the protection of the individual but in order to receive this protection, the individual must adhere to divine discipline comprising of five Niyams and five Yams. The five Niyams include Purity(Saucha), Contentment (Santosha), Self Control and tolerance(Tapasya), Self knowing (Svadhayaya) and Devotion to God(Ishwara pranidhana). The five Yams include Non Violence (Ahimsa), Truth (Satya), Non Stealing (Asteya), Character (Bramcharya) and Non Hoarding (Aparigraha). I shall be exploring the five niyams first.

NIYAMS(EXTERNAL DISCIPLINES)

I. Purity(Saucha):

Saucha means cleanliness, the essence of purity; purity of body, mind and tongue. To keep the body clean is essential for God Consciousness. The mind must be cleaned and purified of all wretched and impious thoughts. By purity of speech, I mean that the words you speak should not be harsh or hurt anybody. You must always speak the truth. Be nice and polite with your words and deeds. The fruit that accrues from maintaining purity (Saucha) of body, mind and action is that your liking for your body and external beauty will diminish. This in turn will propel you towards God realization.

2. Contentment(Santosha):

Santosha means real satisfaction. You should be satisfied with whatever you have. You must take whatever little you possess as a gift from the lord. The lord knows what to give, how much to give and how to give it. This whole universe along with its substances is directed and pervaded by Lord Shiva.

Whatever exists is His property and therefore whatsoever out of that property He, according to His choice bestows upon you, enjoy it. Do not covet others property. For, after all whatever exists is not the property of anyone except Lord Shiva. The fruit that accrues from maintaining complete contentment is that you become completely at peace in the entire lifetime.

3. Self Control and tolerance(Tapasya):

It means follow your duty according to your capacity and circumstances even if you may have to face hardships. It is my advice that you must not overeat by filling yourself with excess food. You should leave your stomach slightly empty. This will keep your body in form and your mind agile and alert. This world crushes the dust under its feet but the seeker of Truth should be humbler than the dust. Be tolerant. Forgive somebody who does something ill to you. You will feel much more peaceful and earn more praise this way rather than by shouting at him or paying him back in his own coin. This self control is real Tapasya and is the essence of patience and tolerance. Without it you cannot meditate.

The fruit that is acquired through practicing self control and Tolerance is that through it all impurity in your body and organs vanishes and you become filled with power.

4. Self knowing (Svadhayaya)

You should devote your time to study and reflecting upon scriptures such as the Bhagwad Gita. You should try to know yourself by understanding yourself. Introspect and try to correct your own mistakes. You must stop all kinds of gossip. Do not speak ill of anyone. The fruit that accrues from continuously striving for self knowledge by a constant study of the scriptures is that the Lord whom you seek (Ishta Deva) will shine before you. He need not come and reveal to you in his physical form. Even those people who see Lord Shiva in their dreams are highly fortunate and blessed souls.

5. Devotion to God (Ishwara pranidhana)

This is the final and supreme Niyama. It means love and devotion to God. The love of Lord Shiva Creates devotion. If you pray to Lord Shiva and are devoted to Him, it is not possible for Him to neglect you. He will reveal Himself to you and purify you with His glorious eighteen arms helping you to enter into the realm of God consciousness. Through devotion of Lord Shiva, samadhi is effortlessly attained. The surrender to God must be complete where both body and mind are to be surrendered to the will of God.

While swamijee was explaining this in a lecture in Srinagar, one of the devotees put this question to him: "Sir, does surrender to God come first or surrender to the Guru? Smilingly, Swamijee replied: Simpleton, is the Guru different from the God?"

YAMS (INTERNAL DISCIPLINES):

1. Non-Violence (Ahimsa):

Non violence is of two kinds; predominant and subtle. Subtle non-violence is that wherein the effects of ones actions or words are taken into account. It is also violence if your words or actions harm another psyche, or cause anger or hatred in another. You should be humble and soft spoken. This subtle non-violence must be followed through a strict discipline of the body, mind and the soul.

No power on earth can make two mutual enemies enter into combat in the presence of He, who being established in subtle non-violence, does not harm anyone. Predominant Non violence is the shunning of that what is the worst of all violence, the killing of a living being, taking of its life for the pleasure of eating it. There is no greater sin than this.

2. Truth(Satya):

Truth is both objective and internal.

By objective truth, I do not mean truth, which will create, or enmity. Always speak such that the talk is sweet to everyone. Do not speak the truth that is undesirable or creates problems.

Internal truth is of a different kind. It is truthful meditation. If after you withdraw your organs of action and your organs of cognition, you are internally stimulating yourself with thoughts of sensual pleasures, you are on a wrong path. Your activities are meaningless and have no value.

Whosoever does not utter falsehood even by chance or error has a great power in utterance. Whatever he says is fulfilled and comes out to be true. He may say to a person "May God bless you" and God actually blesses that person. Thus his truthfulness bears its fruit."

3. Non Stealing (Asteya):

Asteya means not being dishonest. Dishonesty does not simply mean physical dishonesty and theft as when your objective possessions are Stolen by burglars during the night. There is another aspect to stealing which is not very overt. This is called mental theft. We might feel, " Oh! That person was junior to me. Now he has become my senior." Or you might think, "my neighbour has got 3 cars while I have only one". By doing this you have already become a thief. Greed due to temptation is theft as are jealousy and envy.

The fruit of being established in honesty is that all luxury will automatically be at your disposal. Besides this, Lord takes upon himself to protect all the belongings and possessions of such a person.

4. Character (Bramcharya):

Brahmcharya means the maintenance of mental and physical character. It means not yielding to sensual temptation, not allowing the mode of sensual desire to capture your mind. Through cultivating Brahmcharya, you can attain what is own as Viryalabha, the Storage of power. The fruits of being established as Brahmcharya in mind, action and words is that you spend much less effort in meditation and the realization is faster.

If your conduct of remembering God is protected for the sake of duty and your duty is protected for the sake of knowing Lord Shiva and your knowledge is protected for the sake of contemplation, then without doubt, you will gain liberation quickly.

5. Non Hoarding (Aparigraha):

Aparigraha means the absence of the habit of disease of hoarding. We all hoard too much. The more things you hoard, the more you will be worried and preoccupied for their preservation and care. We should junk all useless items. Distribute them to the needy persons before these items decay and become even more useless.

The fruit which accrues when you are established in the state marked by the absence of hoarding is that you become able to know your past, present and future. This is the power that adheres to him who does not hoard.



SHIVA RATRI IN KASHMIR SHAIVISM

(with commentary by Ishwaroop swami Lakshman Joo Maharaj)

For sincere devotees of Shiva, the 14th day of the dark lunar fortnight, falling in the month of Phalgun (February) is considered extremely auspicious. Most dualist Shaiva traditions believe that on this "night of Shiva" (Shiva Ratri) access to deeper levels of consciousness is made easier by the fact that the door to Shiva's transcendental abode is open, and therefore Shiva's grace is shining forth for everyone. The centuries old tradition of observing fasts, performing puja, or remaining in meditation throughout this night, is common among Shiva worshipersⁱ.

In most Shaiva traditions outside of Kashmir, Shiva forms the third part of the trinity of Devas consisting of Brahma the creator, Vishnu the preserver and Shiva the destroyer. For the monistic tradition of Kashmir Shaivism however, the Shiva of this trinity is known as Rudra. In Kashmir Shaivism all three Devas -Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra, are merely offshoots of the innumerable energies (shaktis) of Paramashiva (supreme Shiva). The Paramashiva of Kashmir Shaivism sits neither on Mount Kailash, nor in any limited worldly abode. In Kashmir Shaivism Paramashiva is the one reality, the nature of the whole universe, the supreme light of consciousness.

Kashmir Shaivism has a very different understanding of Shiva ratri. In his translation of a verse from the Shivastotravaliⁱⁱ, composed by the Shaiva sage Utpaladeva (8 century C.E.), Swami Lakshmanjoo eludes to the real meaning of Shivratri.

In the abode of your nectarized residence, where the functioning of the sun has stopped completely, and where the light of the moon has taken its end, that is Shiva ratri. And that unique Shiva ratri shines by its own glory, it is not perceived by an external light, it is glorified by its own light. (Shivastotravali 4:22)

In his commentary Swami Lakshmanjoo points out the hidden meaning of Utpaladeva's hymn.

"Where the functioning of the sun and moon has taken its end is the external meaning of Shiva ratri. When the outgoing breath, ingoing breath and all notions of mind have stopped completely, that is the internal meaning and that is supreme Shiva ratri. With internal Shiva ratri you have the rise of cidananda. And that rise of God consciousness will never occur when there is breathing in and breathing out, or when there are thoughts in your mind. That unique Shiva ratri will take place only when these three; ingoing breath, out-coming breath and all thoughts have ceased completely. That is what is known as the real marriage of Shiva and Parvati, the union of the energies of cit shakti-universal consciousness-(Shiva), and ananda shakti-universal bliss-(Parvati) -the rise of God consciousness.

In an impromptu talk, given in 1990 (about one year before his passing), Swami Lakshmanjoo gave the following description of Shiva ratri^{iv}.

"Shiva ratri means white night, it does not mean dark night !

Shiva is white, and ratri means night. So, Shiva ratri is that night which is bright, white, brilliant and glittering. It is that night where all things are visible. Actually Shiva ratri is a bright night for yogis and a dark night for limited beings, because limited beings feel darkness at night."

Swami Lakshmanjoo concluded his talk by saying that ShiVA ratri means that night where you are filled with the shaktipata^v-(grace) of Lord Shiva. It is that night on which Shiva bestows intense shaktipata to whom ever he pleases.

ii "I bow to that Shiva who is the great ocean of God consciousness, where the gods Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra, Iswara and Sadashiva seem just like bubbles." Stava cintamani of Bhatta Narayana, Verse 34.

iii Swami Lakshmanjoo. trans., Shivastotravali of Utpaladeva, (Kashmir) 1978 - Universal Shaiva Fellowship-library.

iv Video recording, (Nepal 1990 -Universal Shaiva Fellowship-library).

v Lakshmanjoo, Kashmir Shaivism: The Secret Supreme, (chpt. 10 Pg. 65.)-lists nine different intensities of Lord Shiva's grace.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION INSTITUTE OF CULTURE
GOL PARK, KOLKATA 700 029

Presentation of the
VIVEKANANDA MEDAL 2009

To

Prof. Brij Nath Kaul, Srinagar, Kashmir

By

Sri Gopal Krishna Gandhi, Hon'ble Governor of West Bengal

On Wednesday, 18 November 2009

THE CITATION

The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture has great pleasure in presenting the "**Vivekananda Medal 2009**" to Prof. Brij Nath Kaul of Srinagar, Kashmir, on this day, 18 November 2009, in recognition and appreciation of his valuable contribution and utmost dedication to the uplift of the common people of Srinagar, Kashmir, irrespective of caste, creed and religion, drawing inspiration from the ideas and ideals of Swami Vivekananda.

Prof. Kaul (Date of Birth 17th March, 1942) was one of the prominent youths of a group of young men who were inspired and influenced by Ramakrishna – Vivekananda ideology. They established in 1955 a small centre under the name 'Ramakrishna Ashrama' in the city of Srinagar to spread the universal message of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda in Kashmir. Prof. Kaul served as a Professor of Physics at the Kashmir University from 1964 to 1992 from which post he resigned and dedicated himself to fully serve the cause of the Ashrama with utmost devotion and created a spiritual atmosphere. Prof. Kaul nurtured the Ashrama under all circumstances, especially during the period of militancy in Kashmir. He continued to serve the cause of the Ashrama by staying on the campus all alone, even ready to sacrifice his life and encountered all odd situations when the terrorism was at its peak at which time majority of the Hindus left the Valley for a safe place. When the Indian army wanted to give him and the Ashrama protection from the militants, he refused. The militants could not but pay homage to him. For his long dedicated service for the common people of Srinagar, he is held in high esteem by both the Hindus as well as the Muslims. To serve the poor, particularly rural people of Kashmir, he has been running a charitable dispensary and free medical check-up facility at the Ashrama. His spirit of service, a sense of commitment and devotion to the ideals of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda are rarely seen now-a-days.

As a result of his dedication and sacrifice, the Ashrama has become a branch centre of the Ramakrishna Order today and the Headquarters at Belur Math has made him the President of the local Managing Committee. Many boys of Kashmir who came in contact with this Ashrama through Prof. Kaul, were greatly inspired by the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda ideology. Some of them even joined the Ramakrishna order and became monks.

We hope that Prof. Kaul will maintain his devotion and dedication with his selfless service and help the common and poor people of Srinagar to reach the goal visualized by Swami Vivekananda.

May the blessings of Sri Sri Thakur, Sree Ma and Swamiji shower on Prof. Brij Nath Kaul in his endeavour to fulfil his noble mission.

We wish him many years of fruitful life.

Date: 18 NOVEMBER 2009

Place: KOLKATA

Sd/-

Secretary

WELCOME ADDRESS BY SWAMI SARVABHUTANANDAJI MAHARAJ, SECRETARY, RAMAKRISHNA MISSION INSTITUTE OF CULTURE:

Namah shri yathirajaya vivekananda suraye; sat-chit-sukha svarupaya svamine tapa harine.

Most Revered Srimat Swami Prabhanandaji Maharaj, Sri Gopal Krishna Gandhi, honourable Governor of West Bengal, other respected senior swamis, brother monks, respected nuns, members of the managing committee, and devotees of Sri Ramakrishna, I heartily welcome you all on behalf of the institute and on my behalf. Today, we have assembled here on the very special occasion when the prestigious award of this institute namely, Vivekananda Medal, will be awarded to Prof. Brij Nath Kaul of Srinagar, Kashmir by Sri Gopal Krishna Gandhi, honourable Governor of West Bengal.

This award was instituted by Nivedita Brati Sangha, an eminent women organization. The main object of the organization is to fulfill the noble mission of Sister Nivedita by way of serving humanity on the enduring values of our national culture. The organization received inspiration from several senior swamis of our Order, particularly from Revered Swami Ranganathanandaji Maharaj, past president, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission.

In 1985, Nivedita Brati Sangha made this corpus donation with the stipulation that out of the income of the endowment, a gold medal named 'Vivekananda Medal' would be awarded to a person or an institution for outstanding work for the dissemination of the ideas of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda for uplifting the condition of rural and tribal people. The recipients are of the Vivekananda Medal in earlier years were as follows:

1. In 1999, Sri Shivshankar Chakraborty, representing the northeastern region of India.
2. In 2000, Sri Subimal Chatterjee, representing the central region of India.
3. In 2004, Dr S Sudarshan, representing the southern region of India.
4. In 2007, SEWA-RURAL, Gujarat representing the western region of India.

This year we have selected Prof. Brij Nath Kaul of Srinagar, Kashmir, for the Vivekananda Medal meant for the northern region of the country. Prof. Kaul, as a prominent youth of a group of young men, established, way back in 1955, a small centre under the name Ramakrishna Ashram at Srinagar. Against all the odds and spate of militancy in Kashmir, he nurtured the ashram, even risking his life. Resigning from the post of professor of physics in Kashmir University, he dedicated himself fully to the cause of serving the poor and rural people irrespective of caste, creed, and religion, for which he is held in high esteem by the common people of Srinagar, both Hindus and Muslims. Due to his devotion and sacrifice, the ashram has become a branch centre of the Ramakrishna Order and the headquarters of the Belur Math has made him the president of the local managing committee. I am happy to congratulate Prof. Brij Nath Kaul, the fifth recipient of the Vivekananda Medal. He has been instrumental in establishing the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda ideology firmly in Kashmir and inspires many youth with his devotion and spirit of service towards poor and rural people. Some of them have even joined the Order and become monks. In appreciation of his outstanding contribution and services, the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture has great pleasure in presenting Prof. Brij Nath Kaul, a gold medal of 7.290 grams of 22 carats which will be conferred on him by shortly Sri Gopal Krishna Gandhi, honourable Governor of West Bengal. I once again welcome you all. Thank you. Namaskar.



**ADDRESS BY THE CHIEF GUEST,
SWAMI PRABHANANDAJI MAHARAJ, GENERAL SECRETARY,
RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND RAMAKRISHNA MISSION:**

Sarvani bhutani vishanti saukhyam, sarvani bhutani ajanta shantim;

Sarvani bhutanyapi narayanah, sampurnam anandam upashrayantam.

May all come together in friendly relation, let all be peaceful, in all beings is the Narayana, let all embrace fulfilment and have joy.

As you have already heard from Swami Sarvabhutanandaji, the Secretary of this institute, the special occasion on which we have all assembled. I myself, feel very happy to participate in this particular programme because, I myself was associated with this institute for quite some time. And on this particular occasion, because the person who is receiving the award, is known to me since 1969. And also, Sri Gopal Krishna Gandhi, Governor of West Bengal, who is very dear to all the people of West Bengal and all the people of Ramakrishna Mission. I personally, on behalf of the Ramakrishna Mission, heartily welcome Sri Gopal Krishna Gandhi, honourable Governor of West Bengal, Prof. Brij Nath Kaul, the fifth awardee of this important award, Swami Sarvabhutananda, Swami Bodhasarananda, all other swamis of the Ramakrishna Order, nuns of Sarada Math and other places, and members of the managing committee, other distinguished guests, and admirers of Swami Vivekananda.

You have already heard about the particular feature of this particular award in the sense that this award was instituted in addition to the Vivekananda Award, that is mostly for scholarly activities. And this particular Vivekananda Medal is especially for those who have translated those wonderful ideas of Swami Vivekananda for the enrichment of the life of people, particularly for the service of poor people. And, let me tell you a little about those persons who have received the award in the past. Late Shivshankar Chakraborty, he was the director of Lokshiksha Parishad, Narendrapur. Many of you must be knowing him. He has a great contribution in the rural Bengal and also in some slums of Calcutta. The big transformation that you have seen in the notorious slum of Rambagan is mostly because of his service. He was the first recipient. The second recipient was Late Subimal Chatterjee of Abhujmarh fame. Abhujmarh is the largest area where tribals are living and Ramakrishna Mission started working under the leadership of Swami Atmananda there. Besides the beautiful centre at Narainpur, there are five centres inside. And, many of you must be knowing that that area has been very much affected by the so-called Maoists. In the midst of that, they were serving and Subimal Chatterjee was the right hand man of Swami Atmananda. He is still remembered by all, particularly in that area. The third recipient was Dr Sudarshan, who worked in various capacities, but he was awarded because of his wonderful service in the B R Hills among the very poor tribals. Those of you, who have some occasion to visit that area, please visit. It is something wonderful, the work he has done there. And, the fourth one is one Dr Desai and his friends. They, under SEWA-RURAL, have done some wonderful work. This time I visited their area and was very much impressed. And, today, you have heard about the fifth recipient. I need not elaborate, but this much I tell you: Ramakrishna Mission started a centre in Kashmir long back. Swami Vivekananda himself during his lifetime expressed a wish that a centre be started there and there was offer of a land, but for technical reasons that did not materialise. Afterwards, a centre was started but it could not continue for various reasons. And now, Prof. Kaul and some of his young friends, they started working. I have visited that area and I have seen the typical situation in which they function particularly when the militants used to create a lot of problems in the early days. Now, things are settled to a large extent. And, I am very much impressed by the service that small centre is offering. And, Mr Kaul deserves this award. I convey my greetings.

And about our dear chairman of this session, Sri Gopal Krishna Gandhi. He is so popular among us. I was charmed to come across one book—I am mentioning this because it is really something charming—titled 'A Frank Friendship: Gandhi and Bengal—A descriptive chronology'. It is of about six hundred pages and is a Seagull publication. And, the book is wonderfully engaging, and carefully compiled, and skilfully edited. The book opens with a statement which touches every heart whoever reads it. The statement made by Gandhiji on the seventh of June, 1925. He said: 'I am not able to leave Bengal, and Bengal will not let me go.' Why do I say that the book is skilfully edited? I will just mention one interesting incident that has been referred to there. Gandhiji, as you all know, has been a great admirer of Swamiji and he had heard about Nivedita, Sister Nivedita. When he met Sister Nivedita, it was in a hotel and Gandhiji was disappointed, to be frank. He didn't expect that Nivedita, of whom Gandhiji had heard so much, she would be in such a situation. Now, Gopal Krishnaji, when he was editing that portion, how wonderfully he has covered, he has placed the correct perspective which shows his correct understanding. So, I heartily congratulate Sri Gandhi for this wonderful contribution. We shall remember him for his support to the institution and to all our activities all over India.

Now, behind this present award, as you all know, are the inspiring words of Swami Vivekananda. It is Swami Vivekananda's life and message which has inspired so many people. It has inspired Prof. Shankar Dasgupta, the secretary of Nivedita Brati Sangha, who instituted this particular Vivekananda Medal and also has inspired all the awardees—I know everyone of them—and still functioning under the inspiration of Swami Vivekananda. And, you know that wonderful finding of Swami Vivekananda: The eternal value which India cherishes, mentioning that, Swami Vivekananda said: 'The national ideals of India are renunciation and service. Intensify her in those two channels and the rest will take care.' This has inspired all. This has inspired the national leaders and this has inspired lots of social workers and monks and nuns like us. And, you must know that Swami Vivekananda himself was inspired not only by Sri Ramakrishna, but by the scriptures. Among the scriptures, Upanishads was the prime source of inspiration for him, and among the Upanishads, the most wonderful Upanishad, Ishopanishad. You will find the message of renunciation in all the Upanishads, but what Vivekananda preached you will find in a nutshell in Ishopanishad, particularly in the first verse itself. Incidentally, you know, you find that, that portion—tena tyaktena bhunjitha—that inspired Swamiji. Swami Vivekananda himself has given a talk on Ishopanishad and you will find that when he is interpreting that particular portion, he says that, 'renunciation really means deification of the world, deify it. It is God alone. Give up the world which you have conjectured because your conjecture was based upon a very partial experience, upon very poor reasoning, and upon your weakness, give it up. Based on that he gave a practical suggestion. His suggestion was, he told: 'He who sees Shiva in the poor, in the weak, and in the diseased really worships Shiva. If he sees Shiva only in the image in the temple, his worship is but preliminary.' These wonderful inspiring words of Swami Vivekananda have inspired so many and I feel tempted to mention just one thing. Mahatma Gandhi, now he was also very much inspired by this particular verse. In at least three lectures in Kerala, in 1937, particularly, he gave a series of lectures based on this particular verse. In Kottayam, he mentioned a very beautiful interpretation of this particular portion of the verse, tena tyaktena bhunjitha. Gandhiji said and it was published in Harijan: 'Since God pervades everything, nothing belongs to you, not even your own body. God is the undisputed unchallengeable Master of everything you possess. ... This mantra tells me that I cannot hold as mine anything that belongs to God and that, if my life and that of all who believe in this mantra has to be a life of perfect dedication, it follows that it will have to be a life of continual service to fellow creatures.' When I read one of these types of interpretations starting from that of the great Shankaracharya to that of Mahatma Gandhi, I feel inspired. I request you to get yourself acquainted with this particular verse, particularly and the words of Swami Vivekananda on this particular topic. Without taking any further time, I congratulate once again the recipient of the Vivekananda Medal of this year and I am thankful to all of you for giving me a patient hearing.

SPEECH BY PROF. BRIJ NATH KAUL ON THE OCCASSION OF RECEIPT OF VIVEKANANDA MEDAL 2009:

Mananiya Rajyapal, Sri Gopal Krishna Gandhiji, Srimat Swami Prabhanandaji, General Secretary, Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Srimat Swami Sarvabhutanandaji, Secretary Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, brother monks, friends,

It is a pleasant surprise and pleasure that the 'Vivekananda Medal' instituted by Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture has been awarded to us at Ramakrishna Mission, Srinagar, this year. This award is, in fact, in recognition of the contribution of Ramakrishna Movement to overall ancient spiritual and cultural traditions of our country in general, and to Kashmir's contribution, in particular, to which, reference will be given in detail.

After the decline of Buddhist influence in the valley and its own great contribution in spreading the message of Bhagawan Buddha through Kashmir to Ladakh, Tibet, China, and Central Asia, starts the first millennium of AD era with the revival of interest in Advaita Shaiva Thought. The earliest reference to this fact is provided by Vijaya Malni Tantra manuscript in its fragmented and tattered form.

Then we had the epochal discovery of Shiva-Sutras by Vasugupta in the early ninth and tenth Century. His students, Sri Somanatha and Bhatta Kalata, followed by great Abhinavagupta, taking Shiva-Sutras as the base propounded their schools of thought. Sri Somanatha wrote beautiful commentary on Shiva-Sutras and explained the subtle and intricate Advaita Shaiva thought. Sri Utpaldeva was a combination of great intellectual acumen and deep devotional temperament. He propounded his Ishvara-Pratibhijna thought and put Buddhist nihilist thought at bay by his powerful arguments. His divinely charged and ecstatic Sanskrit shlokas in his famous Shiva-Stotravali restarted the bhakti movement in Kashmir Shaiva thought. Bhatta Kalata propounded his theory of Spanda-Karika (Eternal Throb).

These streams flowing from Shiva-Sutras constitute the essence of Advaita Shaiva system of Kashmir. It was at the masterly hands of the great acharya Abhinavagupta, that the whole system got classified and categorized with his brilliant commentaries and explanations. His magnum opus, Tantraloka, is to this time the most authoritative document on this thought process.

In this very era appeared the great Shankara followed by Ramanujacharya and in their own way contributed to the Advaita thought system. This process continued and the advent of Islam in the thirteenth century interacted with this thought. Sanskrit learning and scholarship now was at its ebb.

It was Laleshwari's contribution now to turn a new page in the history of Kashmir's spiritual and literary tradition. Sanskrit learning being at its ebb, Laleshwari lived and taught Advaita Shaiva thought through her verses known as Nakhs, and the message percolated down to the masses and became popular with both the principal communities of the valley and thus evolved what is known as the composite Kashmir culture. Another great contribution to this tradition was made by the great spiritual and literary giant in Sheikh-Nur-ud-Din Wali also known as Nund Rishi, the originator of the monastic rishi order of Kashmir Islamic Sufism. He taught and preached in the Kashmiri language through his verses known as Shrukhs.

Both Laleshwari and Nund Rishi contributed to the nourishment and development of the Kashmiri language. In the subsequent centuries, we had the rule of Sultans, Mghans, followed by the Sikh rule. This was the most horrible time for spiritual and literary pursuits when people were struggling for their bare existence. It was an era of violence, intolerance, and persecution. Sanskrit literature was destroyed and mutilated and only a few lovers of the lore could save something for the future generations.

In the late seventeen and eighteen centuries AD started the bhakti movement in Kashmir again as a composite culture of the Hindus and Muslims. The great Kashmiri poet, Pandit Paramanand. Prakash

Kaul, Wahab Khar, Shamas Fakir, Samad Dar, and others contributed their literary might to this movement.

Pandit Paramanand, in his famous 'Leela of Amamath', highlights the Amarnath pilgrimage as the ascent of human consciousness from the Muladhara base to the Sahasrara in the head as the culmination of the Amamath Yatra. He outpours his feelings as:

shiv shakti ekh nama-rupa beun, neryea kya van noon vanun,
paramanand panas banum, man sther karu pujan prabhu.

-Unity of Shiva-Shakti in the diversity of name and form will result in the
Supreme bliss, Paramanand.

Another great contributor to this movement was poetess-sadhaka par excellence, Rupa Bhavani. In the middle of the nineteenth century, the Dogra rule started in the valley and emerged the unified state of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh comprising Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist people. Maharaja Ranbir Singh started a separate Kashmir research department under able and renowned Kashmiri pundits and Muslim scholars. Mr Stein and Mr Lawrence, two European administrators in the Maharaj's government helped to consolidate the department, retrieving ancient Sanskrit literature manuscripts and getting it printed, published and translated into English language and this treasure of literature was now available in Sanskrit and English, and a new revival takes place in the learning process.

In the late nineteenth century, Swami Vivekananda appeared on the spiritual horizon of Kashmir during Maharaja Hari Singh's rule. Besides visiting Sri Amamathji and Mother Ksheer Bhavani, Swamiji interacted with local people and met the famous Kashmiri historian Pandit Anand Kaul Bamzi and Pandit Nav Narayan Razdan, the pioneer of houseboat industry in the valley. Pandit Razadan provided his houseboat to Swamiji for his stay in the water bodies of Srinagar city. Swamiji had a great desire to start a Math and College of Sanskrit studies in the Srinagar city but that never materialized for various reasons despite his best efforts both at Srinagar and Jammu.

With the Swamiji's visit many monks and devotees of our Sangha and others visited the valley and in interaction with the local people, introduced the salient features of the Ramakrishna-Vivekarianda Bhavadhara. Resurgent youth coming out of schools and colleges could get easy access to Sanskrit scriptures available in Sanskrit, English, and Hindi languages besides Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature.

In this period acharya Lakshmanjoo practised and taught Kashmir Shaiva system to the people at large in the valley and a new era of awakening on the spiritual front started. In the year 1955, many local students and devotees organized themselves and started the Ramakrishna Ashrama in the heart of Srinagar city with the blessings of such elders as Master Zinda Kaul, the then poet laureate of Kashmir and others. The ashrama grew from a humble beginning and with the passing of time, a beautiful shrine hall, library- cum-book sales centre and dispensary-cum-diagnostic laboratory came up. In addition to this, the Srinagar ashrama did a monumental service in getting Shaiva-Shakti literature in Sanskrit translated into English and Hindi. These works were printed, published, and distributed throughout the country. Thus Ramakrishna Bhavadhara, through its spiritual and service oriented activities, found a ready response in the minds of the people steeped in Saiva traditions. With a happy blend of Shiva-Shakti Ekh with Sri Ramakrishna Nitya-Leela Bhava Ekh, evolved a beautiful synthesis which became the ideological base for the future evolutions of the Ramakrishna Movement in the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Many eminent monks of Ramakrishna Order visited the valley in the period from 1960 to 1990 and through lectures and classes inspired people with the message of Sri Ramakrishna, Ma Sarada, and Swamiji. Some of them joined the Ramakrishna Sangha and are serving the organization in various capacities.

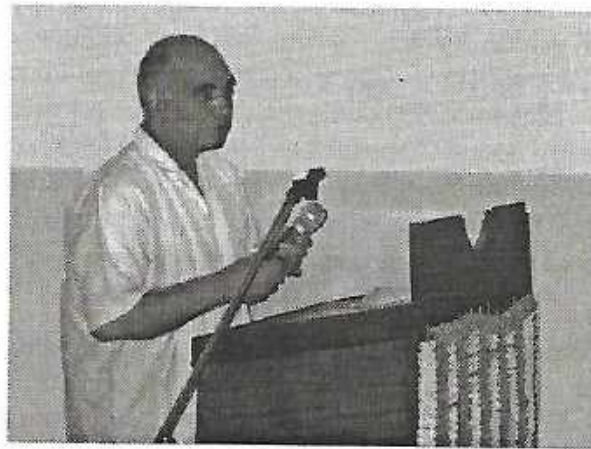
One Kashmiri pandit-monk Srimat Shakti Chaitanya started a centre in the name of Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama in the suburbs of Jammu city in the year 1960 and after forty years of hard struggle and ascetic life was able to get this ashrama affiliated to Belur Math in the year 2000 AD. Thus, Ramakrishna Mission, Jammu is fast coming up as a centre of spiritual and service activities in the Dogra land.

The years 1989 to this day witnessed one of the worst and darkest period in the history of Jammu and Kashmir. Bigoted armed terrorist groups vandalized the valley and tried their best to finish to the last, the hundreds of years of composite and synthetic tradition of the state. Innocent Hindus and Muslims were targeted, killed, and brutalized. Lakhs of Hindus and thousands of Muslims and Sikhs were forced to leave their native land they had inhabited for centuries and made refugees in their own country. Plunder, loot, burning of property became the order of the day. All our religious and cultural centres were attacked and desecrated.

In this atmosphere of gloom and utter hopelessness, we, few of us, stayed back. Drawing strength and inspiration from the Ramakrishna- Vivekarianda Bhavadhara, we continued with our services at a very reduced scale at the ashrama thus providing solace and succour to the few Hindus who stayed back.

Monks and devotees of our Sangha continued to visit us in the valley. In the year 2008, after a great struggle and persistent efforts for many decades, Srinagar centre was affiliated to Belur Math and thus Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama centre started to function in the valley.

Under the new dispensation, we have been able to restart our service activities and are thus participating in an all-round effort by various agencies to provide healing touch to the bruised, mutilated, and damaged psyche of the people in the valley and those who are living as refugees in the other parts of the country. Our appeal to all of you to help us in this gigantic effort to restore Jammu and Kashmir back to its pristine eminence as the Crown of India and the ray of light and hope that was seen by Mahatma Gandhiji long back to re-emerge from Kashmir and engulf our entire subcontinent with its peace and harmony.



Prof. B. N. Kaul,
Ramkrishna Mission Ashram, Srinagar, Kashmir

ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE MEETING, SRI GOPAL KRISHNA GANDHI, HONOURABLE GOVERNOR OF WEST BENGAL:

Revered Swami Prabhanandaji Maharaj, Swami Sarvabhutanandaji Maharaj, Swami Bodhasaranandaji Maharaj, Prof. Brij Nath Kaul, the anchors of this evening, Swami Prasannatmanandaji, Mr Biplab Ganguly, venerable monks and brahmacharins, distinguished invitees, and friends,

An award needs to be merited. First, by the institutor of the award; the institutor of an award must merit the privilege of instituting the award. Who can deserve the privilege amounting to a prerogative for instituting a medal in the name of Swami Vivekananda than the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture? So, the first criterion for meriting an award by the institutor of the award has been richly fulfilled. Then, the award must be merited by the person receiving the award. Who can deserve the Vivekananda Medal as much as Prof. Brij Nath Kaul? But, finally the association of the person handing over the award, that association must be merited by the person handing over the award. This is where a serious difficulty arises today. For, I am a typical example and product of the consumerist world, who in moments of penitence and prayers dons appropriate robes and mantles to enter these hallowed precincts. But, I think in the inscrutable working of the divine principles that orchestrate both time and space, there has to be some reason why even an undeserving pair of hands such as mine can be associated with the handing over of this medal. I did so with tribulation, not just because I am not used to handling seventeen grams of 22 carat gold, that also is a thing new for me, but, because of what is inscribed on the medal and what the medal personifies in it.

I have found the observations of Revered Swami Prabhanandaji Maharaj, as always, most illuminating and inspiring. What we heard in the citation and what we heard from Prof. Brij Nath Kaul has been immensely uplifting and hope-giving. I cannot afford in the three minutes left to me to say more than this that Kashmir is an extraordinary creation of history and geography, of time and space. Where in our parts of the world can we find in such extraordinary perfection the presence of the faith traditions of Hindus, Buddhists, and of course, of Islam, the followers of Islam, as in Kashmir? All three together in one place! Let us be sure that the ray of hope which Prof. Brij Nath Kaul referred to is meant to strengthen and illuminate and grow from a way to a dawn and to an extraordinary illumination. I say this because I remember my late brother Ramachandra Gandhi once reminding me of Swamiji's visit to the temple at Kshira- Bhavani in Kashmir, 25 kms, I just heard, from Srinagar. And there, greatly concerned about protecting the shrine, Swamiji meditated. Swamiji himself says that the words came to him clear from Kshira- Bhavani herself. She said: 'Do you protect me, or do I protect you?' I will also say that when we think of Kashmir we are bound to remember Prince Dara Shikoh who built the Pari Mahal on the fringes of the Dal Lake in Srinagar. It was meant to be a centre to study the sky, a centre for, a venue for astronomical studies. But, it was also meant to be a place for religious concord and harmony. So, Dara Shikoh's great legacy also preserves and protects that great coming together of the faith traditions in Kashmir.

I belong, as I said, to a very mundane world. And, I am not sure that many of the audience here, do not share my interest in what is commonly called as popular music. But, in a recent film, I heard an extraordinary musical composition by A R Rahman, of which the words are: 'Khwaja mere khwaja, mere dil mein samaja.' That Khwaja does not belong to one religion, but is the essence of all religions. When he says, the dervish is singing to that combination of Persian, Urdu, and Hindi, khwaja mere khwaja mere, dil mein sama ja, I think he speaks for all of us. What is it that we want? Our hearts, which would contain and accept the wish, which Prof. Brij Nath Kaul himself mentioned, the future of Kashmir, and through that the future of our beautiful land and great India.

Finally, may I refer again to Prince Dara Shikoh in the context of Kashmir and say that were it not for the fact that this son of Emperor Shahjahan who was meant to be the emperor of India but could not be, were it not for the fact that Dara Shikoh had the Upanishads translated into Persian, the world would not have received this light of the Upanishads. Because, then from the Persian came the German translation, and from the German translation, the translation into the other languages written in the Roman script. I have not read the Upanishads in any great degree, but where I have ventured into that body of spiritual truths, it has been through English translations and I must acknowledge that were it not for Dara Shikoh, I would have been illiterate in the Upanishads, for I lack Sanskrit. That is the great tradition which Kashmir has given for which an extraordinary segment has received a medal in the name of that immortal to whom Kshira-Bhavani said: 'Do you protect me, or do I protect you?'



VOTE OF THANKS BY SWAMI BODHASARANANDA, PRESIDENT, ADVAITA ASHRAMA, MAYAVATI, HIMALAYAS

We had a wonderful time this afternoon. Now the time is come when we should propose a vote of thanks. I will not keep you long. I will try to be as brief as possible.

First of all I must thank Chief Guest of the meeting Revered Swami Prabhanandaji Maharaj. He gave us in his illuminating speech a brief introduction about the four persons who were awarded Vivekananda Medal in the past. He also made some significant observations on the spread of Ramakrishna Movement in Kashmir. It was because of his keen interest that the local Ramakrishna Ashrama got affiliation from the Belur Math. Whether Swami Vivekananda's spiritual movement is dead or live depends on whether it still inspires people or not. So many people are sacrificing their interest for the welfare of others on the lines of Swami Vivekananda's teachings is itself a proof.

Revered Swami Prabhanandaji also told us about the deep relation Mahatma Gandhi had with Bengal and his love for the Upanishads, especially Isha Upanishad. In this connection, I remember Gandhiji once remarked if by accident all the Hindu scriptures get drowned in the Indian Ocean, and the first verse of the Isha Upanishad-Isha vas yam idam sarvam yat kinchitjagatyamjagat-somehow remains, the Hinduism will survive.

Next my thanks go to the honourable Governor Sri Gopal Krishna Gandhi for coming here to confer the Vivekananda Medal to Mr. Kaul. He gave a wonderful speech in his inimitable style. His lectures are always full of humour and wisdom.

Next my congratulations are due to Sri Brij Nath Kaul who has come all the way from Srinagar. While I stand before you, I remember how the terror and destruction was unleashed all around by misguided Muslim youths in 1989 in the valley of Kashmir. When the militants blurted anti-national and anti-minority propaganda from public address system in the mosques, the whole Hindu community left the valley for fear of their lives. Their houses were looted and burnt. But this man camped in the Ashrama to see that the worship of Sri Ramakrishna does not stop even for a single day. The peculiarity of Kashmir is that there are more number of temples than mosques. All the temples were desecrated and closed, the only temple where the lamp of devotion remained kindled was Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama.

In 1992 one night when Brij Nath ji was sleeping in the Ashrama, he was suddenly awakened by some militants. In the midnight darkness one young man, with pistol in hand, demanded him to open the main Shrine. Some militants were waiting outside. When Mr Kaul came out to meet his demand, some strange thing happened. The militant sat down on the ground, went on cursing himself and apologized for his mistake. As honourable Governor quoted the words of Divine Mother to Swami Vivekananda at Kshir Bhawani "do you protect me, or I protect you". The same drama was enacted. Sri Ramakrishna showed him who protects whom.

Lastly the valley of Kashmir has from the beginning enjoyed a special geo-political position in the sub-continent. From time to time, it became a part of North Indian empires, but mostly it retained an Independent status as a kingdom under Hindu and Muslim rulers. In this context the names of two great rulers- Lalitaditya (8th century) and Zain-ul-Abidin (15th century) made a special name for themselves. The latter's love of learning and art and religious tolerance made him the father of Kashmir Nationalism.

Culturally speaking, Kashmir was a seat of learning and people practised Hindu religion as practised in the Vedic period. Later it became a focal point of Buddhism when the lower classes got converted to Islam, the small community of Brahmins evolved, in course of time, a unique religious philosophy, known as Trika or Kashmir Shaivism. Finally, the forceful impact of Islam left an indelible impress on the socio-religious atmosphere of this land. Islam also got modified to some extent due to the influence of Sufi mystics. Two mystic saints Lalla Ded and Sheikh Nur-ud-Din are venerated even now by Hindus and Muslims.

It is interesting to see the Shaiva School of philosophy founded by Vasugupta and developed by Somananda, Utpalacharya, Abhinavagupta and others became very dominant. Kashmir experienced successive Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim influences, and it created a harmonized culture. It thus became a laboratory for the process of blending of cultures. Linguistically Kashmir was a home of Sanskrit learning, later it became a centre of Persian language also. Out of this mixture grew present Kashmiri language.

Thank you once again ladies and gentlemen, monks and nuns, and dignitaries on the dias.



Swami Bodhasarananda (Arvind Ji)
Ramkrishna Mission Ashram, Srinagar, Kashmir

KASHMIRIS IN A NEW DICTIONARY

ADARSH AJIT

Name of the book	:	A New Lexicon of the Kashmiris
Author	:	B.L. Saraf
Publisher	:	UBSPD
Price	:	Rs 175/-
Page	:	162
Year of publication	:	2010

B.L. Saraf's book A New Lexicon of the Kashmiris contains 150 cameos about socio-political and cultural degradation of the Kashmiris. Each cameo is like a hard hitting column of a bold columnist for a bold newspaper. Arvind Gigoo's The Ugly Kashmiri has "stirred" Bushan Lal Saraf to write this book of cameos.

B.L. Saraf has given us new definitions that expose the masked men having deceptive faces and exploiting the common people in the name of religion, politics and emotion. These people bring the values of faith and concern to a colossal wreck. In cameo number 39 a freedom fighter is defined as "One who makes others die for his own cause." The turmoil in Kashmir confirms his conviction about the Hurriyat Conference which he calls "A body of men and women who meet to repeal earlier resolutions of mass destruction." The vacillating political theories emanating from the Kashmiri Muslim leaders are responsible for spoiling the peaceful atmosphere in Kashmir. This vacillation has been incorporated in the cameo captioned "Insufficiently Imagined" which describes the character of Kashmiri Muslims vacillating from Pakistan and independence to self-rule. Various cameos divulge the true story of those self-styled experts on Kashmir who do not know even an iota about the history and geography of Kashmir, and have surfaced as political heads, columnists, novelists and parliamentarians. Such personalities have been sneered at by B.L. Saraf in the cameos like "Jejune" and "Headless Chicken."

Bushan Lal Saraf makes us travel through the history of Kashmir from 1931. The communal tension, mass movements, historical agreements, the dreams of the masses and incompetence of the leaders to address the Kashmir problem are mirrored in different cameos under different headings. The response given to Pakistan relating to Kashmir imbroglio has been well defined satirically. Jawaharlal Nehru's decision to take the Kashmir issue to the United Nations and his commitment of plebiscite, Sheikh's dream of Naya Kashmir and the accords and agreements arrived at between Kashmir and Delhi make one ponder over the approach of the leaders. They have proved counter-productive. Kashmir history and the concept of Kashmiriat have been summed up in a few lines giving us the real feel of Kashmir:

Kashmir History

Winners account: triumphant prose of the victor, tampered briefly with the weak interludes of the meek.

The alienation of Kashmiris has been the talk of almost all the Kashmir centric political parties. B. L. Saraf's bisection of the alienation fits the political character shown by the leaders to the general masses from time to time:

Alienation

Separation of power seekers from the seat of power.

By an X-ray of Kashmir politics the author has exposed politicians-the hardcore and the moderate claiming to be prisoners of conscience. His acumen, grasp and writing skills are demonstrated clearly though agitatedly:

Prisoner of Conscience

A promoter of subversion

In some cameos almost all Kashmiri Pandit leaders have been attacked in one way or the other. Saraf has not spared any Kashmiri Pandit leader, and no one can escape the satire and irony used by the author. In "Acquired Sufficiency Syndrome" the author has named the negative trends that are executed at Jammu even in rented rooms and tents. With pride people spend lavishly on rituals and functions like Char Achchun and ring ceremonies. Cameo "Ringxiety" conveys the pain of inter-caste marriages to the parents of the Kashmiri Pandit youth. The youth shatter the dreams of their parents living in exile. By looking at the developments even a common man can confirm the truth of these cameos:

Business of Leisure

Blending business with leisurely indulgence in the Kashmiri Pandit migrant politics

Claque

The inhabitants of the migrant camps herded to Abhinav Theatre to listen to their sole benefactor.

Empowerment

Give power to all the leaders of Kashmiri Pandit migrants

Gerrymander

Shift the Habba Kadal constituency to Jammu.

The ideas of a constituency in exile, political empowerment and homeland philosophy have been put under the scanner.

On the political demand of homeland clamoured mainly by a particular political organisation championing to be the frontline political organisation of Kashmiri Pandits, the author in cameo 50 terms "Homeland" as "Home without land." Such type of censure is also seen in cameo 109 under the caption "Panun Kashmir" where "Panun (our) taken out. Kashmir is left." Besides, this cameo carries weight when we recollect the agitation of Amarnath land row when all Kashmiri Muslims, like in 1990, came on the roads against the land occupation by Shri Amarnath Shrine Board. The whole episode unfolds another tragedy to explain Kashmiri political mindset in cameo 12 entitled "Blasphemy"

Saraf has condemned the establishment for the poor response shown towards the Pandits. The sufferings of the displaced community are multiplied on one pretext or the other. Despite living in exile for two decades now Kashmiri Pandits have been asked to prove their identity by demanding affidavits and by creating cumbersome rules and regulations. They have been denied the right to vote by creating hurdles:

Affidavit

A solemn affirmation a Pandit migrant is asked to make every now and then to prove that he is alive.

Cameos like "Conscription", "Weapons of Mass Distraction" and "Suffrage" project the government's inefficiency, impotence and lack of interest in solving the problems of the exiles. Instead of addressing their problems the government makes their lives hellish by issuing tyrannical orders day in and day out.

Frontal attack on the working pattern of the agencies and the security forces deployed for bringing peace in the valley has been made by alleging security lapses and the corruption resulting in tortures inflicted on the innocent.

Catch and Kill

1-Catch him, cash him and leave him.

2-Catch him, cash him and kill the other.

Similarly cameo number 19 is projected as:

Cordon

1- Lay siege for the innocent

2-Open escape route for the wanted

The dedication of the book by Saraf to Sampkuj and Gopi Nath balances the wrath of the author shown in various cameos with his concern, love and pain for the sufferers especially the old who have been caught in the web of circumstances. For their better future the young prefer to live far away from their parents resulting in the agony of the parents. Virtually Jammu is a city for the migrants who are old. These truthful experiences are penned down in cameo 36:

Filial Gratitude

Dump the old and infirm parents in an old age home and be free from all obligations.

A New Lexicon of the Kashmiris shows how the wounds of the common Kashmiris Muslims and Pandits — remain unattended. Leaders have amassed huge wealth in the name of azadi and plebiscite. They are using the common people as the cannon fodder for maintaining their mansions of self-interest. Self Rule and Autonomy are the tools used to bring the valley to chaos, confusion and instability. Article 370 has been defined as “a whip that suits the convenience of the opportunist politicians” and a means of devouring the funds without being answerable. Cameo “Inseparable Part” is a political dissection of the accession of Kashmir with India, and its elasticity has been used according to the wishes and the aspirations of the Kashmiri Muslim leadership. It satisfies their changing ideologies and their changing needs with the changing times. Their chameleon-like character has turned India into a milch cow. Inefficiency, corruption, lethargy, black money, according, to Saraf, are the gross domestic products of Kashmir. The successive governments in the state watched this type of set-up with satisfaction. In the clash of compulsions among India, Pakistan, militant leaders and mainstream politicians, the innocent Kashmiris get assaulted with every ticking of the clock. The impartial efforts to substantiate author’s alleged statement that the heritage of the dead is the Kashmir booming with the sounds of guns and odour of gunpowder fail altogether.

There are some loopholes in the book. Bombast has been used in the book that compels a reader to look up the words in a dictionary. I could not find some words anywhere. But then cameos are not meant for all. One should have political depth, knowledge of history and society in order to unfold the cameos. In a few cameos international politics has been criticized. They have no scope in this book about Kashmir. Some of the cameos run on the same contours revealing the same sense. These repetitions should have been given due thought. For showing such a ferocious outburst, though genuine, the author should have included a cameo criticizing his own contribution towards the Pandit community. The author is a retired Sessions Judge. He should have made some comments on the working pattern of the judiciary where a militant is let off and an innocent is sentenced.

B.L. Saraf’s A New Lexicon of the Kashmiri should be read by all the Kashmiri Muslim leaders, intellectual/ and thinkers, Kashmiri Pandits, their leaders, the leaders at the centre and the leaders of the countries interested in the Kashmir problem. The book will present before them the fact of Kashmiri politics and the mesh created by all the Kashmiri and Indian politicians. The book lifts the lid from the pot of petty political gains played by those whose moral duty was to bring “healing touch” to the wounded hearts and unhappy minds of the common Kashmiri Muslims and Kashmiri Pandit refugees. A must for a Kashmir watcher.

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With Best Compliments From :-



Md. Jamal

**C/o KayaKalp Hospital,
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VIRTUE, HAPPINESS AND TRANQUILITY (POINTS TO NOTE AND GET POISED)

For everybody's Knowledge and Kind information we must be aware of the hard fact that moral progress is not the domain or natural province of the high born nor is it achieved by accident or luck, but by working on ourselves – daily. In keeping with the democratic and unstuffy spirit of Epictetus doctrine, the great stoic key ideas in the form of useful and straight-forward teachings are presented here for everybody's benefit, for youngsters, in particular. Main aim is to convey the authentic spirit and to give fresh expression to what he would have said today. I have tried to express the main Epictetus's thought in an up to date one that will inspire readers not only to contemplate but to make the small successive changes that culminate in personal dignity and a meaningful, noble life as interpreted by Sharon Labell the great renowned international writer, in lucid language.



Makhan Lal Koul/Misri
From Bombay

For Epictetus, a happy life and a virtuous life are synonymous. Happiness and personal fulfillment are the natural consequences of doing the right thing. Part of his genius is in his emphasis on moral progress over the seeking of moral perfection. His notion of the good life is not a matter of following a laundry list of precepts but of bringing our actions and desires into harmony with nature. Goodness is an equal opportunity enterprise, available to anyone at anytime rich and poor, educated or simple. It is not the exclusive province of spiritual professionals.

Epictetus is very traditional and un-contemporary. Whereas our society regards professional achievement, wealth, power and fame as desirable and admirable. Epictetus views these as incidental and irrelevant to true happiness. What matters most is what sort of person you are becoming, what sort of life you are living. Main guide to personal serenity and moral direction amid the trials of life:

Why be Good

Virtue, until its very recent revival, has sounded old-fashioned. Virtue had nothing to do with being a goody-goody or a doormat. Virtue, happiness, and tranquility are not separate or distinct experiences but co-emergent states.

Virtuous life leads to inner coherence and outward harmony. There is great relief in being morally consistent. The soul relaxes and we can thus efficiently move forward in our endeavours without any hindrance call forth the best we have by making our personal moral code explicit to ourselves. Freedom, ease and confidence are won as our outer action gradually conforms to this code. Minimize the importance we would place on external choices, what we might today call lifestyle choices and to concentrate on the small but significant inner moral choices we make in the course of any day.

The Soul's Cry

The insistent feeling that something is not right with our lives and the longing to be restored to our better selves will not go away our fears of love and anger, our sense of impotence, fears of death and being alone and outsized ambitions bring us to ask our first sincere philosophical questions.

It's true there is no obviously apparent meaning to our lives and the cruelty, injustice, bodily discomfort, illness, annoyance and inconveniences big and small are the uninteresting facts of any day. So what do you do about this? How do we, in spite of the pain and suffering in the outside world and our wayward emotional lives ennobled lives rather than success being to a despairing numbness and merely coping like a mule with tedium and unbidden responsibilities. When the soul cries out, it is a sign that we have arrived at a necessary, mature stage of self reflection. The secret is not to get stuck there dithering or wringing your hands, but to move forward by resolving to heal yourself just move into courage.

The Real Purpose

It is of course the love of wisdom. It is the art of living a good life. It is authentically practiced only by those who wed it with action in the world toward a better life for all. Besides rooting out the souls corruptions, the life of wisdom is also meant to stir us from our lassitude and move us in the direction of an energetic cheerful life.

Skilled use of logic, disputation and the developed ability to name things correctly are some of the instruments to achieve abiding, clear-sighted and inner tranquility, which is true happiness.

Happiness is commonly mistaken for passively experienced pleasure and leisure. That conception of happiness is good only as far as it goes. The only worthy object of all our efforts is a flourishing life.

True happiness is the ongoing dynamic performance of worthy deeds. The flourishing life whose foundation is virtuous intention, is something we continually improvise and in doing so our souls mature. Our life has usefulness to ourselves and the people we touch. We do become deep thinkers to discover what is really true and what is merely the accidental result of flawed reasoning, recklessly acquired erroneous judgment, well intended but misguided teachings of parent and teachers and unexamined acculturation.

To ease our souls' suffering, we engage in disciplined introspection in which we conduct thought experiments to strengthen our ability to distinguish between wholesome and lazy, harmful beliefs and habits.

The First Step

The first step to living wisely is to relinquish self conceit.

Behold the world fresh as it is, on its own terms through the eyes of a beginner. To know that you do not know and to be willing to admit that you do not know without sheepishly apologizing is real strength and sets the stage for learning and progress in every endeavour.

The wisest among us appreciate the natural limits of our knowledge and have the mettle to preserve their naiveté. The wise do not confuse information or data however prodigious or cleverly deployed, with comprehensive knowledge or transcendent wisdom. Once you realize how little we do know, you are not so easily duped by fast-talkers, spirited curiosity is an emblem of a flourishing life.

Arrogance is the most potent impediment to the flourishing life. Clear thinking and self-importance cannot logically coexist. Everyone in this world is important if you really want peace of mind and success in your endeavours, forgo self-importance.

Conceit is an iron gate that admits no new knowledge, no expansive possibilities, nor constructive ideas. Indulging in excessive pride in your own knowledge, abilities, or experiences and attempting to take on more power or authority than is your due is fatal. Such tendencies not only alienate others but also lead to complacency. You keep running around in the same familiar circles. You get caught in the same sticky web. Nothing novel ever takes place. Stop jabbering like a magpie. Notice what is actually happening, not just what you think is happening, or wish were happening. Look and listen.

Have the courage to try an undertaking and possibly do it poorly. Unremarkable lives are marked by the fear of not looking capable when trying something new.

New experiences are meant to deepen our lives and advance us to new levels of competence. They are not meant to be used by the self-important as fodder.

The legitimate glow of satisfaction at accomplishing a hard won worthy goal, should not be confused with arrogance which is characterised by self-preoccupation and lack of interest in the feelings and affairs of others.

The flourishing life depends on Self-Sufficiency:

The flourishing life is not achieved by techniques. A flourishing life depends on our responding, as best we can, to those things uniquely incumbent on us.

To live an extraordinary life means we must elevate our moral stature by culturing our character. The untrained brood about constituent elements of their lives. They waste precious time in regret or wishing their particulars were different. The morally trained, rather than resenting or dodging their current life situation and duties, give thanks for them and fully immerse themselves in their duties to their family, friends, neighbours and job.

The over valuation of money, status, and competition poisons our personal relations. The flourishing life cannot be achieved until we moderate our desires and see how superficial they are.

Starting out is Hard

The first steps towards wisdom are the most strenuous, because our weak and stubborn souls dread exertion without absolute guarantee of reward. As you progress in your efforts. Your resolve is fortified and self improvement progressively comes easier.

By the steady but patient commitment to removing unsound beliefs from our soul, we become increasingly adept at seeing through our flimsy fears and our lack of self control.

The Virtuous are invincible

The difference between the instructed and the ignorant is that the wise know that the virtuous are invincible. They aren't tricked and provoked by the way things appear to be. The instructed respect the kinship we share with the ultimate and thus comfort themselves on compassionate, self-aware citizens of the universe. They understand that the wise life, which leads to tranquility, comes from conforming to nature and to reason.



SELF REALISATION

Our sacred scriptures and holy manuscripts written on birch-wood leaves expounds the ancient philosophy of life has come down to this planet earth ours, through ages written by well versed and scholarly persons, rishis and munis, saints and seers, thus presents the eternal principles of life and living.

Living is the technique that needs to be learnt and practiced. The technique provides the formula for combining continual action with enduring peace. It further equips one with a clear intellect to meet the challenges of the world.

Stress, depression, disease, individuals and militancy, vandalism, terrorism in nations is threatening humanity with extinction. These sources of impending disaster to the continual neglect of human intellect. It highlights the fundamental difference between intelligence and intellect.

Intelligence is acquired from external educational agencies, while the intellect is developed through one's personal effort in thinking, reasoning, questioning.

The world is an admixture of fortune, pleasure and pain, virtue and vice. The inevitable pairs of opposites in life are inexhaustible, your mental equilibrium and intellectual equipoise should remain unaffected by these fluctuations. You become established in that state by your attunement to value higher. Adults too seek word of wisdom. But they are involved in the petty attractions of this world. People are lost in name, fame, power, position, status, money and family.

These are the toys that presently make their joy. The preceptor feels sympathetically at their pettiness and therefore feels sorry for the childishness of human beings. The very first sight of a sense object inflames the mind of the unwise. The mind falls an easy prey to those enchanting sense object in this world. It develops endless desires. Some people are frustrated in their life unable to fulfill their desire. Thus people spent half their life in material and sensual pursuit and suffer from disappointment. Those who are truthful and wise find bliss within themselves.

The universe is a complete composite whole of the inanimate. Both have distinct roles to play to sustain the world. None are more or less important. They serve as spokes in the wheel. God acts as hub holding them altogether. None is superior or inferior to another in the perfectly designed universe. Yet people suffer from complexes of superiority of inferiority. You must rise above complexes. Dissolve your ego, just play your role in life to the best of your ability, and that leads you to perfection.

It is of prime importance that you develop your intellect. A strong intellect alone can control the mind's desire and direct actions properly, until then you must seek wise counsel, your mind otherwise will go on desiring – your desires are endless, insatiable, you can never find contentment through indulgence your desire. Thus if each takes care of one self the world will automatically be taken care of.

The cautious humanity against too great impedents to peace and progress in life is :-

- 1) The insatiable nature of human desire.
- 2) The tendency to be extrovert and not introvert.

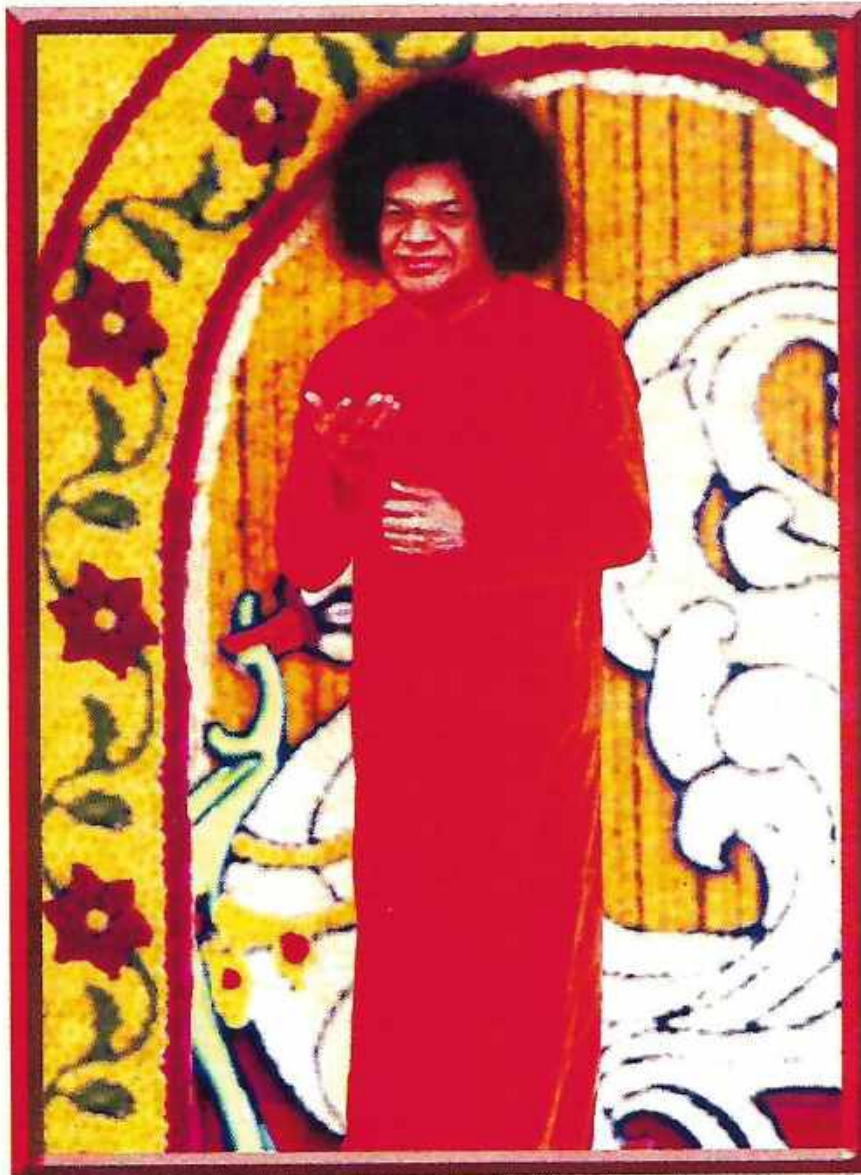
Now, I hereby reproduce the chapter titled "BUILDING CHARACTER AND POSITIVE TRAITS" compiled in the book viz. SAI SANDESH by Prof. Anil Kumaraju professor (Bio-Sciences) Sri Satya-Sai Institute of higher learning for everybody's kind & keen attraction, full adherence and strict compliances as per as feasible and practicable youngsters in particular to take note of :-



Brij Mohan Misri
Kolkata

Sai Sandesh

Sai Gems For Healthy Living



ANIL KUMAR KAMARAJU

Building Character and Positive Traits

One:- Change yourself

Once a question was put to Ramana Maharshi. Somebody complained to him that there were some mischievous people around and some were loud and rude and that something needed to be done about them.

The answer that Shri Ramana Maharshi gave to them applies equally to everyone of us. Ramana Maharshi said, "You have come here to reform yourself, not to reform others. That is not your business. Leave that to me. I am here. If you are going to transform everybody, then I have no business here have no job. So it is better that you mind your own job. It is better you think of your own business. Don't think of others -change yourself".

We always want things to be in a certain way and we go on recommending, suggesting and advising people, giving unsolicited, unwanted advice. This only means that we want to change conditions which are, at best, external. You may change the **condition**, but your mind is **conditioned**. So, there is no use in changing outer conditions without changing what is within - without bringing about a change within you. It is not that important to change the outer condition but it is more important to change yourself.

Two:- Inner conflict

Sometimes it is quite possible to make a mistake because of too much work and tension. This results in anger and conflict with people. We can be sympathetic towards such people because they are overburdened which causes inner agitation, making them tense and angry. All this causes people to be harsh and discourteous. This is additional luggage on head. In these circumstances, what should be done? The best solution is to say, "I am sorry", at the earliest and immediate opportunity. Once I say, "I am sorry" the head load is taken away. Not apologising makes us feel bad. Hence, it is better to utter these three simple words and be free.

Three:- Our capital is time

What is our capital? When we start a business, people will ask, "What is your capital?" Our capital is time. We have so many minutes - 10,080 minutes per week. That is our capital. We should make utmost benefit of every minute. God has given us the greatest capital of time. We may get money or we may not. We may be in a position or we may not. But these things can be gained. These things can be acquired, but once time is gone it is gone forever.

That is why Baba says, "Time waste is life waste. Laziness is rust and dust. Realisation is rest and best". He adds further, "lifetime waste is time waste". Hence we should understand that time is our capital. Baba mentioned this point when He was talking to a group of doctors from Mumbai - "Don't waste your time because time is God. God is time. God is a master of time. God transcends time. He is time and master of time. He is beyond time. So, if you waste time, you are wasting Divinity. You are misusing Divinity. It is an abuse of Divinity".

Four:- The richest treasure

A pertinent question to ask is: What is the richest treasure in the world? Even if you are given unlimited land, gold and diamond mines, you still desire more. Baba asked, "Who is the richest man?" He Himself answered, "The richest man is the one who has satisfaction and the poorest man is the one who has many desires".

While gold and diamond mines do not infuse a sense of well being, we should possess the rich treasure of satisfaction - not bank balances, jewellery or land but a peaceful and contented mind that forms our richest treasure.

Five :- Simplicity

The second thing that we need is to have the best life. Which is the best city in the world where we can have the best life? The best city is not geographical like New York, Mumbai or Delhi. The best city is Simplicity. Simplicity-is the- best city: If you remain simple, you can have ample joy everywhere and at all times. Greatness lies in simplicity.

Bhagawan says, "I take simple food. I lead a simple life"

All great people lead simple lives. They believe in simple food, simple living and high thinking. Unfortunately, today we have very high life and only ordinary thinking. That is the reason we are confused and unhappy. But those who have opted for the spiritual life find happiness in simplicity.

Six:- Seek out your own faults and others' merits

A desirable attitude to cultivate is to seek out your own faults and the merits of others. Baba says; "Never complain. If you can, explain. If you think you are capable, inspire. All cannot do it. Often people can make others perspire instead of inspire". If you cannot inspire, at least explain but never complain.

When you seek out your own faults and the merits of others, it helps you to have a feeling of well being.

When we say that another person is bad, we won't be able to identify something bad in others unless there is something bad in us. In fact, all that say for others is already within us, according to Baba. He adds, "Reflection of inner being". Everything is a reflection of our inner being, the good and bad or whatever you may say of others. This point needs to be stressed.

Seven:- Humility and Gratitude

It is desirable to maintain a low profile in life and cultivate humility and gratitude. But the trouble starts when we think that we are better than others. Swami gives the example of the court of Dhritharashtra. He called both Dharmaraja and Duryodhana and told them to go and find any good person in the kingdom. After some time both returned. Duryodhana reported that he did not find any good person in the kingdom and claimed that there was no other than he who was good. He declared that he was the only good man.

Then Dharmaraja (Yudhishtir) reported that except him, all were good. He added that he was the only bad person in the kingdom.

Such feelings should be emulated: " All others are better than I am". The feeling of so-called superiority should be kept under constant check.

The virtue of gratitude and happiness for everything that we have needs to be cultivated. We should state, "lord, I am happy with the good lot you have given to me". In life we should not be unhappy for what we do not have.

Eight:- Choice and preference

When we have a ceiling on our desires, it leads to happiness with whatever we have. There are two important words in this context: one is Choice and the other is Preference. Be preferential and choiceless: A preference when there are two choices or be choiceless and take anything that is available. So, by being choiceless in life, we-can-be quite happy. So, there is great joy in preference, but there is misery in a choice. Then, when our desires are on check, happiness follows.

Nine:- Unity of thought word and deed

The unity of thought, word and deed ensures health; happiness, mental balance, equanimity, and tranquillity. Our actions should be in consonance with our internal feelings and honesty and integrity in our communication.

The unfortunate aspect of present times is that there is no harmony in thought, word and deed. What we do in spirit, what we really mean, what we say all are at variance. Our mental condition is not in equanimity and hence we always tense.

It is important to have harmony of thought, word and, deed. When one is happy outside and unhappy inside it creates distortion in life. That which is outside is called personality and that which is inside is individuality. Personality is all about social manners, etiquette, pomp and show. But when personality and the individuality are one and the same - that which is within is in conformity with that what is outside, we then have a feeling of well being, which is true harmony of thought, word and deed.

Ten:- Life is simple

We should cultivate an attitude to make life simple. Whenever Baba is asked about anything, he will say, "very simple, very simple" If He is asked about the complexity of spirituality, sadhana or; adwaita he will answer, "No, no, no, very easy, very simple". According to Baba, everything is simple and easy; but modern man is clever enough to make Simple things complicated. Man complicates simple things, whereas Divinity makes a complex thing simple. That is the sign of Divinity.

So let us Understand that life is simple and if We find any difficulty, it is due to our foolishness and wrong perception that is responsible. Else, life is so simple. Baba has remarked that no engineering, or medicine or architecture has helped human society to progress. Birds, bees and animals, all live without the knowledge of engineering, medicine or architecture and still lead a fulfilled life. Hence, we must ponder deeply on the simplicity of life.

Eleven:- Practise Silence

The feeling of well being will be there if one observes a period of silence. This is very necessary and is emphasised by all religious leaders. By silence is not meant silence in the ordinary sense. Silence can be in different states, not only physical silence. Silence means Withdrawal of thoughts. Silence means withdrawal of mind and a thoughtless state, that of complete stillness. It is a state of void and emptiness.

Somebody asked sage Ramana Maharshi, "Swami what should I do for liberation?" Ramana Maharshi answered, "Only think that what you have to do, is not to do". Why not to do? Because Whatever you do, you do at the level of the mind. Whatever is done is by the prompting of the mind - is the will of the mind, which is just worldly, and mundane. The actual "Reality" transcends the mind. It is beyond the state of mind. Therefore, the point is that silence is the withdrawal of "I" ness -the withdrawal of ego. The I-ness is gone. It is a state of egolessness, thoughtlessness, withdrawal of the mind. In that state one feels good and happy.

Refrain from too much talk. Practise daily silence. Don't talk more than absolutely necessary, particularly when it carries a personal note. If the talk is about Baba or spiritual philosophy, it is quite okay. But when it carries a personal note, the ego will take over. Hence one has to be careful and refrain from too much talk.

Observe silence

Why? It is only in silence that the voice of God is heard. It is only in the depth of silence that God can be felt, but we have no time to listen to that Voice. What happens in silence? Listen in and to silence. Hear the voiceless. But, when there is silence, how can you hear? When there is utter stillness, when there is no word, and no voice, how do you hear? But you can just hear. Hear in silence; listen to the state of void. What is the sound of silence? And how do you listen to the sound of silence? What is voicelessness? What is there to hear?

A simple example may suffice. You begin to chant "Om Om Om" for sometime and then softly for some time and later mentally keep reciting "Om Om Om" and stop at that; you will then listen to the

voice of silence. In that state of silence, without noticing, You will find "Om Om Om" resounding within. Even when there is no lip movement, still Om is ringing within. That is the inner voice. That is the sound of silence.

When it is not shouted, when it is not spoken through the lips, if there is some sound going on within, that is the sound of silence. We should practise this silence, So that we can be tuned to the inner voice. That inner voice naturally tells us what to do. It will give us directions and guidelines that are possible only in the state of silence.

We should also be mindful that we are in the presence of God and God does not have to speak always. He can convey silently and make Himself understood in silence. That is possible when we experience the depth of silence.

Very often Baba's movements have a message for us. His gestures and looks communicate. Those are wordless, but full of sound; voiceless, but filled with import. So, to catch a glimpse of Divinity, to receive the message from Bhagawan through His looks or gestures, by His gentle walk, though He does not speak, we have to practise silence. Silence has to be practised to receive messages from Bhagawan in every possible way.

Hence it is absolutely necessary to practise silence daily. One doctor, Dr. Debour Bright has prescribed "PQT" i.e. Personal Quiet Time, meaning the time when you should observe silence. Dr. Bright has prescribed to Practise PQT twice a day for 20 minutes, which will help you to master your stress and tension.

Today, many people are sick because of stress and tension - tension for reasons unknown; stress for nothing. But all this stress and tension is of our own making. There is no reason in fact, to be stressful or tense.

How can one overcome all this stress and strain? One simple solution is to sing Sai bhajan loudly. The other way is to listen to Sai bhajan in silence. As you drive to your office in your car, you can put on the cassette and listen to bhajan as you proceed. This is one of the best ways to release stress and tension.



A LEGAL PERSON WITH SPIRITUAL MIND PANDIT BANSI DHAR NEHRU

The firm foundation of the Mughal empire in India was laid by a Uzbek Mongol warrior Zahiruddin Mohammad Babar, who was born in 1483 in a tiny village Andijan on the border of Uzbekistan and Krigistan after defeating the Sultan of Delhi Ibrahim Lodi in the battle of Panipat which took place in 1526. The Rajputs soon there after under the command of Rana Sanga challenged the authority of Babar, but were badly routed in the battle of Khanwa near Agra on 16th March, 1527.

Babar with a big army then went upto Bihar to crush the revolt of Afghan chieftains and on the way his commander in chief Mir Baqi destroyed the ancient Ram Temple at Ayodhya and built a mosque at that spot in 1528. Babar, then returned back to Agra where he died on 26th December 1530 due to injuries received in the battle with Afghans in 1529 at the Ghaghra's is basin in Bihar.

After Babar's death his son Nasiruddin Humanyu ascended the throne, but he had to fight relentless battles with various rebellious Afghan chieftains for eight long years. The disgruntled Afghan chieftains found Sher Shah Suri as an able commander who defeated Humanyu in the battle of Chausa in Bihar and assumed power at Delhi in 1538. Sher Shah Sufi kept Humanyu constantly on the run and finally drove him out of India in 1543. Sher Shah Suri died on 22nd May 1545 due to injuries suffered in a blast after which the Afghan power disintegrated.

Humanyu then taking full advantage of this fluid political situation again came back to India with reinforcements from Iran and reoccupied the throne at Delhi after defeating Adil Shah in the second battle of Panipat in 1555. Humanyu died a year later in 1556 due to a great fall from the wooden staircase of his personal library and was succeeded by his son Jalaluddin Akbar.

Akbar though illiterate was very shrewd and cunning ruler. To contain the military power of Rajputs on his side he married Harkhu Bai a Rajput princess who was the daughter of Bharmmal the chieftain of Amer principality. Akbar conquered Kashmir in 1586 by first inviting its Sultan Yusuf Shah Chak to Agra for talks and then putting him in detention. Akbar for the first time divided the country into 12 provinces and appointed their governors for their effective administration. Akbar died in 1605 and was succeeded by his son Nooruddin Jahangir who had a great fascination for Kashmir which is reflected by the following Persian couplet composed by him.

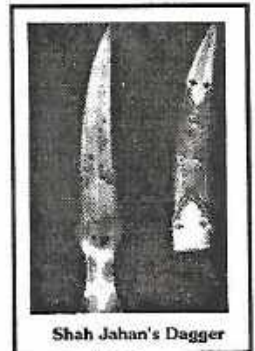
Agar firdaus bar rue zaminast
Haminasto haminasto haminast

Jahangir died in Kashmir in 1627 after which his son Shahabuddin Shahjahan ascended the throne but his son Mohiuddin Aurangzeb created a new precedent in Mughal history when he deposed his father Shahjahan from the throne and put him under detention in the Agra Fort and became emperor in 1658. Aurangzeb was a ruthless ruler and the decline of the Mughal empire started soon after his death in 1707.

It is interesting to note here that the emperor Shahjahan's historic dagger 40.8 cms long including scabbard with a 20.5 cms long blade having a curving watered steel and tapering blade swollen at the tip double edged with a central ridge, gold koftgiri decoration on either side below the forte consisting of a cartouche bearing



Dr. B.N. Sharga



Shah Jahan's Dagger

two long narrow apparels was acquired by a famous Belgium industrialist and antique conector Tesenfans (1920-1999) was auctioned by London based Bonham a rare Mughal artifact for Rs. 3.92 crores on 8th April 2008.

Here it should also be kept in mind that the Mughal emperors had a great weakness for women. They used to maintain very big harems containing innumerable concubines belonging to different castes, creeds, bloods and breeds. Whenever they used to go on any battle front they were always accompanied by a big contingent of their Begums and selected tawaifs for their recreation.

So after the death of Aurangzeb the war games started for the succession in the Mughal hierarchy. Shah Alam I who ascended the throne in 1707 killed his younger brothers Azam Shah and Khan Baksh around 1710 besides making peace with the various chiefs of Rajputana like Ajit Singh of Jodhpur, Bijay Singh of Amer, Raja Durga Das, Jai Singh of Jaipur and Amar Singh of Mewar to consolidate his position and power.

Shah Alam I who ascended the throne at the age of 63 years died in 1713 making way for Jahandar Shah to take up the reins of administration but he was a great casanova who used to pass most of his time in the company of a tawaif. Lal Kunwar instead of looking after the administration of the country properly so his authority was challenged by prince Farrukhsiyar whose father Azam Shah was killed by Shah Alam I to usurp the throne. Farrukhsiyar after taking help from Abdullah Khan of Allahabad and Hussain Ali Khan of Patna then in January 1713 killed Jahandar Shah and his son Azizuddin Shah and declared himself as an emperor.

Farrukhsiyar then in 1716 paid a visit to Srinagar to seek support from Kashmiri noble men like Inayat Ullah Kashmiri, Mohammad Murad and Pandit Raj Kaul. Inayatullah was raised to the status of a mansabdar of 4000 and was made an imperial revenue minister. Farrukhsiyar was very much impressed by Pt. Raj Kaul and his command over the Persian language and asked the latter to come over to Delhi.

That is how Pt. Raj Kaul a resident of Habba Kadal, who was born around 1695 came to Delhi in 1716 with his family members from Kashmir on the invitation of Farrukhsiyar who made the former a teacher for the royal family members.

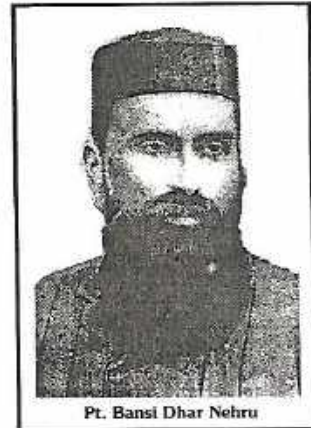
The Mughal emperor Farrukhsiyar allotted a decent haveli to Pt. Raj Kaul for living on the bank of a canal which used to bring water from the river Yamuna to the Red Fort for royal members and also granted a jagir to Pt. Raj Kaul to maintain his economic status. Pt. Raj Kaul due to his closeness with the emperor soon started wielding a considerable influence in the Mughal court and developed good contacts in the administrative hierarchy. So that way Pt. Raj Kaul established himself very well at Delhi and led a life of fulfillment without much trouble.

Farrukhsiyar soon became a victim of political conspiracies and machinations in power struggle. On the instigation of Mohammad Shah the Afghan soldiers dragged out Farrukhsiyar from his haram when he was having a nice time with his concubines first blinded him in February 1719 and finally killed him on 28th April, 1719. Mohammad Shah then ascended the throne, who also had a great weakness for women due to which he was nick named as Rangiley.

In this fast changing political scenario Pt. Raj Kaul somehow succeeded in maintaining his position and social status. He had a son Pt. Vishwa Nath Kaul, who was born around 1725 at Delhi. After completing his studies at the Persian College, Delhi, Pt. Vishwa Nath Kaul had no problem in getting a good job in the Mughal court due to the connections of his father. He had three sons Sahib Ram, Mansa Ram and Tika Ram, Since all these three brothers used to live on the bank of a canal which is called Nehar in the Persian language so they started writing Nehru as their surname to have a separate identity of their family.

Pt. Sahib Ram Nehru was born around 1755 at Delhi. He had his education in the Persian College which was near the Ajmeri Gate at that time. He had a son Ram Narain Nehru, who migrated to Ambala for better job prospects. Some of his descendants are now living in Ambala, Meerut, Dehradun and Lucknow.

Pt. Mansa Ram Nehru was born around 1765 at Delhi. He had his education in the Persian College, Delhi. He had a son Pt. Laxmi Narain Nehru. But unfortunately not much is known about Pt. Tika Ram Nehru who was born around 1767 at Delhi and his descendants although a lot of effort was made to trace out this branch of the Nehru family.



Pt. Bansi Dhar Nehru

The British after the Anglo Maratha war (1803-1805) in which Marathas were completely routed by the British troops under Lord Lake had full control over the administration of Delhi. The powers of the Mughal emperor Akbar Shah II were considerably reduced and were confined within the four walls of the Red Fort so Pt. Laxmi Narain Nehru who was born around 1795 thought it prudent to take up job with the East India Company and became its Vakil to look after its interests at Delhi.

Pt. Laxmi Narain Nehru had a son Pt. Ganga Dhar Nehru who was born in 1827 at Delhi. Pt. Ganga Dhar Nehru had his education in Delhi College and was a classmate of Pt. Radha Kishan Sapru, Pt. Bishambhar Nath Sahab and Pt. Swaroop Narain Haksar there. He was a stout and brave person. He was a good horseman and fencing expert. Due to these qualities the last Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar (1837-1858) appointed Pt. Ganga Dhar Nehru as the Kotwal of Delhi around 1845. He was married with Indrani who was the daughter of Pt. Shanker Nath Zutshi of Bazaar Sita Ram employed in the Mughal court as calligrapher to write royal decrees in good handwriting.

When the Mutiny broke out in 1857 and the British troops under the command of Hodson deposed the Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar and kept him under detention in a small dingy cell of the Red Fort before sending him to Rangoon in Burma, Pt. Ganga Dhar Nehru then along with his family members consisting of his two sons Bansi Dhar and Nand Lal their two wives and his daughters Patrani and Maharani migrated from Delhi to Agra. Pt. Ganga Dhar Nehru's third and youngest son Pt. Moti Lal Nehru was not born till then. As both Patrani and Maharani were very fair and beautiful the British troops intercepted them thinking that they were taking the European girls with them. Pt. Nand Lal Nehru then saved the ugly situation as he had some knowledge of the English language to explain his position to the British sergeant otherwise all of them would have landed in great trouble. Pt. Ganga Dhar Nehru died at Agra in February 1861 at the age of only 34 years. He was survived by his two sons Bansi Dhar and Nand Lal besides his two daughters Patrani and Maharani and his wife Mrs. Indrani Nehru. Pt. Ganga Dhar Nehru's third and youngest son Pt. Moti Lal Nehru was a posthumous child who was born three months after the death of his father on 6 May 1861 at Agra.

Pt. Ganga Dhar Nehru's elder daughter Patrani was married with Pt. Dwarika Nath Takru of Kashmiri Mohalla, Lucknow. Later on this Takru family shifted to Naryalwali Gali in Aminabad. The other daughter Maharani was married with Pt. Lalji Prasad Zutshi of Lahore. Her daughter in law Mrs. Lado Rani Zutshi (1882-1968) became a great freedom fighter and used to live in George Town, Allahabad after the partition of the country in 1947.

Pt. Ganga Dhar Nehru's second son Pt. Nand Lal Nehru was born in 1845 at Delhi. He had his schooling in Hindu College, Delhi. To sustain the family after the death of his father he became Dewan of Khetri a small principality in Rajputana. He remained there for about ten years. After the death of

Khetri's ruler some serious differences cropped up over succession to the throne between Pt. Nand Lal Nehru and the British Political Agent of Rajputana due to which Pt. Nand Lal Nehru left his job and came back to Agra to start his legal practice at the Sadre Dewani Adalat there. He then shifted to Allahabad around 1872 to start his legal practice at the High Court. He took a rented house in the Meerganj locality in the neighbourhood of the famous courtesan Jaddan Bai and started living there with his family Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru was born in the same house on 14 November 1889.

Pt. Nand Lal Nehru was married around 1856 with Nand Rani the daughter of Pt. Ram Nath Taimni whose ancestor was Pt. Bishan Nath Taimni a shawl merchant of Sopore in Kashmir, who came to Lucknow around 1780 and built Resham Wali Kothi at Chaupatian. It should be noted here that all the Taimnis are the descendants of Pt. Bishan Nath Taimni.

Pt. Nand Lal Nehru died suddenly in 1887 in the prime of his youth after which his wife Mrs. Nand Rani Nehru became a mental wreck. She lost all interest in life and became bed ridden. She subsequently died around 1910 and as per her wish her last rites were performed by the saints of Jhusi.

Pt. Nand Lal Nehru had five sons Bihari Lal, Mohan Lal, Shyam Lal, Brij Lal and Or. Kishan Lal besides a daughter Brij Mohini who was married with Pt. Janki Nath Sharga a cousin of my grandfather Rai Bahadur Pt. Shyam Manohar Nath Sharga the then district and sessions judge and a traditional Wasiqedar of Oudh.

Bihari Lal Nehru was married with Kishan Rani (Tejwanti) the daughter of Pt. Maharaj Krishna Tankha of Hardoi. He had a son Manohar Lal Nehru and three daughters Leelawati married to Pt. Raj Nath Gurtu, Kalawati married to Pt. Triloki Nath Madan of Srinagar and Sheila;

Mohan Lal Nehru established the Allahabad Law Journal Press. He was married with Kamla the daughter of Rai Bahadur Pt. Har Prasad Oar of Kashmiri Mohalla Lucknow. Some writers confuse this 'senior Mrs. Kamla Nehru nee Dar who studied in Kashmiri Mohalla Girls College with the junior Mrs. Kamla Nehru nee Kaul who was the wife of Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru.

Mohan Lal Nehru had a son Ratan Kumar Nehru and a daughter Roop Kumari who was married with Pt. Harihar Nath Wanchoo.

Shyam Lal Nehru was married with Uma who I am told was the daughter of Pt. Manmohan Nath Hukku of Agra. He had a son Capt. Anand Kumar Nehru and a daughter

Shyam Kumari who married Jameel Khan. Capt. Anand Kumar Nehru was in the British Indian Army whose son Arun Kumar Nehru was the Minister for internal security in the Rajive Gandhi government.

Brij Lal Nehru became Finance Minister of Maharaja Pratap Sjngh of Jammu and Kashmir state;" He was married with Rameshwari the daughter of Raja Narendra Nath Raina Chhijballi of Labore. He had two sons Brij Kumar Nehru I.C.S. and Balwant Kumar Nehru Brij Kumar Nehru was India's High Commissioner in London and then Governor of Jammu and Kashmir state.

Dr. Kishan Lal Nehru after doing his M.B.Ch.B. from the Univesity of Edinburgh became Suprintendant of King George's Medical College, Lucknow. He was married with Shivrajwati the daughter of Pt. Jagat Narain Mulla a famous criminal lawyer of Lucknow.

Pt. Ganga Dhar Nehru's third son Pt. Moti Lal Nehru was born on 6th May 1861 at Agra. He was not a very serious student during his school days. He around 1881 did his matriculation from the Government High School, Kanpur. He then cleared the Pleader's examination of the Allahabad High Court and started his legal practice in 1883 at Kanpur under Pt. Prithvi Nath Chak. Pt. Moti Lal Nehru then shifted to Allahabad in 1886 to assist his elder brother. He became a well known lawyer of Allahabad very soon. He went to England in 1895 but on his return to Allahabad he did not perform any

Prayashchit as he was initially a completely westernised person with no faith in Indian dogmas. He was a regular visitor to our haveli upto 1920, but when he came into contact with Mahatma Gandhi and jumped into the freedom movement he became an entirely changed person. He stopped visiting our place as my grandfather was a judge and a loyal British officer.

Pt. Moti Lal Nehru had a roaring legal practice and was the richest Kashmiri Pandit of Allahabad. Big Zamindars, taluqdars Rajas and Maharajas generally used to be his clients. He was a very important national figure and one of the shining stars of our freedom movement. In the fag end of his life he developed some serious liver ailment. He was admitted in King George's Medical College, Lucknow where he breathed his last on 6th February 1931. His body was then taken by car by his son Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru from Lucknow to Allahabad for cremation.

Pt. Moti Lal Nehru married twice. His first wife was Bhonashuri Nagu, who was the daughter of Pt. Prithvi Nath Nagu of Kashmiri Mohalla, Lucknow. She died quite young during child birth. Incidentally Bhonashuri Nagu's younger sister Jwalashuri Nagu who was the first wife of famous Urdu poet of Lucknow Pt. Brij Narain Chakbast also died quite young during child birth. Pt. Moti Lal Nehru's second wife was Swaroop Rani who was the sister of Rai Bahadur Prem Nath Thussu of Lahore. Mrs. Swaroop Rani Nehru died on 10th January 1938 at Allahabad. Her sister Senapati was married with Pt. Mohan Krishna Kaul of Kashmiri Mohalla, Lucknow whose son Brij Krishna Kaul compiled two volumes of Bahar-e-Gulshan-e-Kashmir containing life history of Kashmiri Pandit poets.

Pt. Moti Lal Nehru had two sons Jawahar Lal and Hira Lal who died quite young due to smallpox besides two daughters Swaroop Kumari (Vijay Laxmi) married to Ranjit Pandit and Krishna married to G.P. Hutheesing. Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru after completing his studies in England and becoming a barrister was married in 1916 in Sheesh Mahal of the Haksar family in Bazaar Sita Ram, Delhi with Kamla the daughter of Pt. Jawahar Mal Kaul who was the real, son of Dewan Kishan Lal Atal, but given in adoption to Pt. Bishambhar Nath Kaul of Hardoi. Dewan Kishan Lal Atal died in 1920 due to sun stroke while boarding a Tonga at the Charbagh railway station. He was coming from Delhi to Lucknow to meet his sister Mrs. Shyam Rani Sharga living in Kashmiri Mohalla who was my great grandmother. The Kanyadaan of Mrs. Kamla Nehru was performed by her uncle Pt. Arjun Nath Atal as the marriage in the same Gotra is not allowed in Hindus. Mrs. Kamla Nehru died on 28th February 1936 at Vienna. Her mother Mrs. Rajpati Kaul died in 1949 due to brain haemorrhage.

Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru became the first Prime Minister of the country in 1947. He was a champion of non aligned movement. He was a great visionary who laid the firm foundations of modern democratic India. He was one of the top ranking political leaders of the world. To write anything about him will be like showing a lamp to the sun.

Pt. Ganga Dhar Nehru's eldest son Pt. Bansi Dhar Nehru was born in 1843 at Delhi. After his schooling in the Hindu College at Delhi, he was taken in the judicial service by the British and was made a Munsif. He then started living separately from the other members of the Nehru clan in his own make believe world. Due to his hardwork and devotion to duty he gradually went up the ladder and retired as the subordinate judge of Agra in 1895.

Pt. Bansi Dhar Nehru was married around 1850 with Anandi Shuri the daughter of a wealthy landlord Pt. Badri Nath Kao of Kashmiri Mohalla, Lucknow whose ancestor Pt. Bholi Nath Kao was occupying some high post in the court of Nawab Asafud-Daula of Oudh. His descendant Pt. Rameswar Nath Kao was the founder director of the intelligence agency R.A. W. and played a key role in Indo Pak war of 1971 during the tenure of Mrs. Indira Gandhi as the Prime Minister of the country.

Pt. Bansi Dhar Nehru was a highly religious, orthodox and superstitious person. He used to take his meals all alone sitting on a wooden plank in the kitchen where no body was allowed not even his

children. He had a great faith in the traditional Kashmiri rituals. After his retirement from the active government service he started living with his in-laws in Kashmiri Mohalla, Lucknow. He had a keen interest in astrology so the members of the community used to come to his place with their horoscopes to have an idea about the effects of stars on their life and how to overcome their bad forward person believing in very high moral values.

Pt. Bansi Dhar Nehru had a spiritual bent of mind so he used to prefer to spend his time in isolation. That is why he was not very social person. He used to read religious texts to pass his time. In the fag end of his life he almost led a life of a recluse. He went to Kasauli in 1913 perhaps to rejuvenate his failing health where he died. His last rites were performed by his youngest brother Pt. Moti Lal Nehru on 31st May 1913 at Solan who took Mrs. Khemawati Muttoo the daughter Lucknow with him for certain rituals.

Pt. Bansi Dhar Nehru had three sons Kunwar Bahadur Nehru, Raj Bahadur Nehru and Dr. Shri Shridhar Kailaswati married with Pt. Tribhuvan Nath Tikku of Kanpur, Bilaswati with Pt. Brij Krishna Aga the owner of Kashmiri Hotel Kanpur and Khemawati with Rai Bahadur Pt. Harihar Nath Muttoo of Lucknow who was the first Indian to become an Income Tax Commissioner in the British period. Mrs. Khemawati Muttoo's son Pt. Rameshwar Nath Muttoo was the first Kashmiri to become the independent India in 1969.

Pt. Bansi Dhar Nehru's eldest son Pt. Kunwar Bahadur Nehru got an employment in Lahore so he shifted his base there. He was married with Laxmi Rani the daughter of Pt. Hriday Narain Dar of Lucknow. He had three sons Shanti Dhar Nehru, Dheeraj Dhar Nehru and Santosh Dhar Nehru, besides a daughter Krishna who was married with Dewan Brahma Nath Madan the son of Raja Gyan Nath Madan of Lahore.

Shanti Dhar Nehru was born in 1901. After his studies he became an Income Tax inspector. He married quite late in life in 1940s. His wife Saraswati was the daughter of Pt. Amar Nath Bakaya of Kashmiri Mohaua, Lucknow. Shanti Dhar Nehru had some property in Bazaar Sita Ram, Delhi as well. He became critically ill in 1963 and was admitted in King George's Medical College, Lucknow for treatment where he died. He had no issue so my cousin Pt. Hari Mohan Nath Sharga helped his widow Mrs. Saraswati Nehru in performing the last rites of the deceased. A year later while living in Rani Katra, Lucknow in a rented house Mrs. Saraswati Nehru was murdered in 1964 for money by some robber.

Santosh Dhar Nehru due to some differences in the family ran away from his home around 1926 as a matriculate. He landed in Kanpur where he married a local Brahmin girl. This Brahmin woman bore a son Rajendra Kumar Nehru and a daughter Sheela who was married to Dr. A.N. Srivastava of London. Rajendra Kumar Nehru had a steel casting factory in Kanpur. He married a local Sikh girl, Mulawant Kaur the daughter of Sardat Harnam Singh Sarna of Rawalpindi (Pakistan). He died in 2001, He had a son Sudhir Hehru besides two daughters Preeti and Nita. Now his family lives at 104/435, P-Road, Kanpur-208012.

Dheeraj Dhar Nehru was mentally unstable. He used to perform one ritual after another all the time so he could not marry. Not much is known about him.

Pt. Bansi Dhar Nehru's second son Raj Bahadur Nehru was married with Laxmi a K.P. girl of Lahore. He had a son Maharaj Bahadur Nehru and a daughter, Munni (Dhanrajpati) married to Pt. Kashi Prasad Munshi of Hardoi. Maharaj Bahadur Nehru had a shop Bahadur and Co. at Allahabad, which was financed by his grand uncle Pt. Moti Lal Nehru.

Pt. Bansi Dhar Nehru's youngest son Dr. Shri Shridhar Nehru was born on 17th November, 1888. He did his Ph.D. under a Nobel Laureate Prof. Phillip Lenard from the Heidelberg University of Germany in

1911 and then passed the prestigious I.C.S. examination of that era from London in 1913, but he could not achieve something big in life as his cousin Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru and his father Pt. Moti Lal Nehru were playing a leading role in the freedom movement against the British. So that way Dr. Shri Shridhar Nehru became a "victim of political circumstances and was never in the good books of the British. Dr. S.S. Nehru was married in 1914 with Raj Dulari the daughter of Pt. Kailas Prasad Kitchlu who was the first Indian to become the director of instructions at Allahabad. Dr. S.S. Nehru died as a frustrated man on 22nd May 1965 at Kasauli in Himachal Pradesh. His wife Mrs. Raj Dulari Nehru died much later on 14th November 1991 at Allahabad at the ripe age of 94 years. They had no issue.

Now Mrs. Sonia Gandhi an Itallian by birth is carrying forward the legacy and values of this famous Nehru Gandhi family which gave three Prime Ministers to the country setting an example for others to follow. Theodore Roosevelt has very rightly said that power undirected by high purpose spells calamity, and high purpose by itself is utterly useless if the power to put it into effect is lacking.



Mrs Indira Gandhi, Mrs. Krishna, Pt. J. L. Nehru, Chandra Lakshmi, Mrs. VijayaLakshmi Pandit.



**AN IDEAL DAUGHTER OF THAKUR SHRI RAMAKRISHNA AND
SHRI SHRI MAA SARADAMONI - SMT. SUBHADRA HAKSAR
(5TH SEPTEMBER, 1912 TO 5TH MARCH, 2007)**

Dipankar Sengupta (Kolkata)

Mother India has given birth to prominent sons and daughters in all spheres of life. If we have a flashback by turning the pages of Indian history, we shall see that there are many examples relating to the same. I have seen many daughters of Thakur Shri Ramakrishna and Shri Shri Maa Saradmoni in my life. In my eyes, Mrs Subhadra Haksar is an ideal daughter of 'Thakur and Maa, commanding respect in all spheres of life. Let's have a flashback.

On the 5th of September 1912, a noble soul was born in a Kashmiri Saraswat Brahmin family to the renowned patriot, lawyer, politician and intellectual giant Dr. Kailash Nath Katju (who was also the former Governor of West Bengal) and Shrimati Lakshmirani Katju (nee Kaul) in the Jaora state of Madhya Pradesh. She was their eldest daughter- Miss Subhadra Prabha Katju in early life and later Mrs Subhadra Prabha Haksar. In 1915 when she was three years old, she along with her parents and other family members migrated to Allahabad or Prayag where her father Dr. K.N. Katju decided to practice as a lawyer at the Allahabad High Court. The Katjus settled there permanently. Miss Subhadra Katju had her schooling and higher education in Allahabad. She graduated from Allahabad University in the year 1932 when she was just twenty years old.

In the same year (1932), Miss Subhadra Prabha Katju got married to Shri Prakash Narain Haksar of Gwalior (1906-1969) who years later became the Deputy Managing Director of Dunlop India Limited in Kolkata. Miss Subhadra Prabha Katju became Mrs Subhadra Prabha Haksar from that time onwards. Mr. P. N. Haksar's parents were Col. Sir Kailash Narayan Haksar (who was the Finance Member of Gwalior, and later became the tutor and guardian of Maharaja Dr. Karan Singh of Kashmir) and Shrimati Swamp Kishori Haksar (daughter of Pandit Jialal Hukku and grand daughter of Bijnaur Resident Pandit Motilal Hukku.). They were married in 1895 when Col. Sri Kailash Narayan Haksar was only eighteen years old. They had four children - Mrs Shyambanti Wattal, Mr. P. N. Haksar, Mrs Rajan Nehru and Mrs Masuri Sapru.

The Haksars, like the Katjus, were also Kashmiri Saraswat Brahmins who had migrated from Kashmir Valley long ago and in the course of circumstances settled down in Gwalior (now in Madhya Pradesh). The Haksars were also highly blue-blooded aristocrats like Dr. K.N.Katju's family.

She was a little over nine years old when Gandhiji visited the school where she was studying. The little girl was so impressed that Gandhian influence moulded the course of her coming year. She started wearing 'Khadi' clothes, gave up foreign clothes and became a pure 'swadeshi' in words and deeds. When she was eleven years old in 1923, she had gone to Puri with her parents and became acquainted with some Bengali families. She had an opportunity to know them at close quarters in 1937, when she came to live in Kolkata, with her husband. She started reading Hindi translations of the novels of the great Bengali novelist Sarat Chandra Chatterjee. She had strong literary leanings as she had bagged the second prize in story writing in her first year in college-and first prize in a similar contest in her second



Mrs Subhadra Haksar

year. It is this literary instinct that impelled her to learn the Bengali language. She started taking lessons in Bengali and was soon able to read and speak fluently in Bengali. She used to read Bengali books in original in the later years of her life.

In 1942 when Mr. P.N. Haksar was transferred to Delhi, she accompanied him. From that time onwards she and her husband became family friends of Mr. S.K. Handoo of the then Imperial Bank, his wife Mrs Chandrakumari Handoo (also a Ramakrishna Missionite) and her sister Mrs Manmohini Sahgal and their family members. In 1946, her father-in-law gave her a copy of Romain Rollands's 'Gospel of Shri Ramakrishna.' This book had an electrifying influence on her and changed her way of life. She became a member of the Ramakrishna Mission and took initiation (Diksha) under Swami Gangeshananda of the same Institution. She associated herself with the local Ramakrishna Ashram at Delhi and 'mahila samities'.

In 1947 during the time of Partition she was in Delhi. After the Partition, under the instructions of her Gurudev, Swami Gangeshananda, she was active in helping refugees from East Pakistan with food, clothing, blankets and other things through the Ramakrishna Mission and the Mahila Samiti.

In 1949, Dr. K.N. Katju became the Governor of West Bengal. At the same time Mr. P.N. Haksar was transferred to Kolkata once again. From 1949 onwards, Mrs Subhadra Haksar became a permanent resident of Kolkata. The year 1950 witnessed the infamous Bengal famine. In Delhi, Shri K.M. Munshi, the Food Minister and Smt. Lilavati Munshi, his wife, formed the All India Food Council. They approached Mrs Haksar for opening the West Bengal branch of the Food Council in Kolkata. Through her efforts, the State Food Council was established in 1950 in a building in Esplanade area, the space being set up by the Govt. of West Bengal. A committee consisting of members from different states was set up as under:-

Lady Pratima Mitter (President), Smt. Lila Roy (Treasurer), Smt. Meera Chowdhury (Secretary), Smt. Jayashree Sen. (Lt. Secretary), Smt Jyotsna Chandra, Smt. Rama Chatterjee, Smt. Malini Divakar and Smt. Phulrenu Guha. Under her auspices, a cheap canteen named 'Annapurna' was established, where lunch was available at 0.50 paise only. It was a great success and invitations started coming to Smt. Haksar for setting up similar subsidised canteens. Through her effort and expertise, cheap canteens were set up at St. Xavier's College, Medical College, Science College, Indian Airlines Office (C.R. Avenue) and Zoological Gardens in Kolkata. She also helped with her advice and by training staff in establishing similar cheap canteens at I.I. T. Kharagpur, at Durgapur Steel Plant and some other places in Durgapur.

Smt. Haksar was also a pioneer in organizing Food Exhibition in India. One of the first of its kind was held at Govt. House, Kolkata, where stalls from different states were put up. As Secretary (the then President) of West Bengal Women's Food Council, she organized many such exhibitions connected with food and children's tiffin. Lunch packets for providing free lunch to students at corporation schools in Calcutta, were supplied through 'Annapurna'. During the Indo-Pak war of 1965 and the Bangladesh war of 1971, she set up a workshop where staffs were trained to make Dalia Khichuri which became immensely popular. She was also instrumental in providing food, clothes and blankets to the refugees at Howrah Station.

Due to various reasons, 'Annapurna' had to be closed in 1971. At the Elliot Road premises of the All Bengal Women's Union, a cheap canteen called 'Suruchi' began on similar lines, which is still functioning.

Smt. Haksar has always fought for the upliftment of women. She was associated with numerous women's welfare organizations. She was associated with 'Ananda Ashram', 'Mahila Samiti', 'Saroj Nalini' etc. She involved herself deeply in social work along with these dignitaries -Mrs Ashoka Gupta, Dr Phulrenu Guha, Mrs Renuka Roy, Mrs Sita Chowdhury, Mrs Ramola Sinha, Mrs Saraju Sen and many others.

During the tenure of Dr. K. N. Katju as West Bengal Governor, many of the Kashmiri Pandits had the occasion to meet one another at his place the Governor's House on Navroz (or Kashmiri New Year) once every year. She along with the dignitaries like Mr P.N. Haksar, Mr S.K. Handoo, Mrs Chandrakumari Handoo, Mr Bakaya, Mrs Bilas Razdan, Dr B. K. Moza and others of that time helped in forming the Kashmir Sabha of Kolkata around 1956. She became an important office bearer of the Sabha along with her husband and other dignitaries; She was president of the Kashmir Sabhha twice. - 1965 to 1969, 1970 to 1978. Mr. P.N. Haksar, her husband, was President once - 1961 to 1962.

A good writer, she wrote articles from time to time on a variety of subjects. For a long time she was actively involved with Sarada Balgram Project (a home for 500 destitute children) of Gwalior and was a prominent member of the board of trustees. A Ramakrishna Mission devotee, she was successful in setting up the all India Convention of Women Devotees of Shri Ramakrishna and Shri Maa. In March 1953, the Holy Mother Birth Centenary Committee formed a small Convention sub-committee consisting of women only for the purpose of organizing this convention; it carried out all the preliminary work. In the same year Smt. Haksar along with Smt. Subha Lakshmi Amma from South India and some ladies decided to form the Sri Sarada Sangha of which Smt. Haksar was the pillar of strength. A convention of Women Devotees was held in Kolkata in early 1954 to celebrate the Holy Mother's Birth Centenary. She was the convener of the Convention Sub Committee and Secretary of the Reception Committee. She, along with other dignitaries of the R.K. Mission, played an important role in making the celebration a grand success. Her unstinted service to the organization since 1953 has been rewarded by the Sangha having at present 44 branches with dedicated service throughout India. A cool and calm person under all circumstances, she has showered love and affection on all concerned. Following the example of Sri Sarada Maa, she worked with dedication and determination in spite of her frail health. From time to time she used to give Radio talks also.

In 1953, during the centenary celebrations of Sri Sarada Maa, Smt. Meera Devi expressed a desire to Smt. Haksar to open a school in the name of Sarada Maa at New Alipore, Kolkata under the banner - SRI-SARADA ASHRAM and sought her help. At first the school started functioning on a small plot of land. Later Central and State level financial aid as well as personal donations were arranged by Smt. Haksar.

We can have a glimpse of the enormity of Smt. Haksar's work if we glance at the various posts held by her - Vice President, Society for the Prevention of Blindness; Secretary, West Bengal Women's Food Council, Member of several women's organizations such as All Bengal Women's Union, West Bengal Coordinating Council of Women and, above all, West Bengal Women's Social Welfare Board, 'Siksha -Niketan' etc.

A deeply religious woman, she claims that whatever success she achieved in life was all due to the blessings of Ramakrishna Deva, Saradamoni Maa, Swamiji and her Gurudev; last but not the least her parent's blessings were also there. She has played all the roles - of an ideal daughter, ideal wife, ideal mother, ideal grandmom and ideal great grandmom successfully in life. She has two sons - Aditya Narayan Dhairyasheel Haksar and Sushil Narayan Haksar and two daughters -Mrs Kiran Dar and Miss Chandra Reshmi Haksar. Her youngest daughter died when she was 7/8 years old in 1946-1947. Her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren are now living in different parts of India and the world.

I had the privilege and pleasure to know this gracious, revered and well-loved lady personally from 2001 pujas onwards till her demise on 5th March 2007 at the ripe old age of 94 and half years. I used to call her 'Dadima' and she made me her adopted grandson from my first meeting with her at her residence Flat- 72, Owners Court, 6th Mayfair Road, Kolkata on 2001 Puja vacation. I lost my paternal grandmother on Sept 1987 but God gave me Subhadra Haksar as Dadima years later, even though for a short span of time. Before that in the same year, my introduction to her was on phone. On Jan,

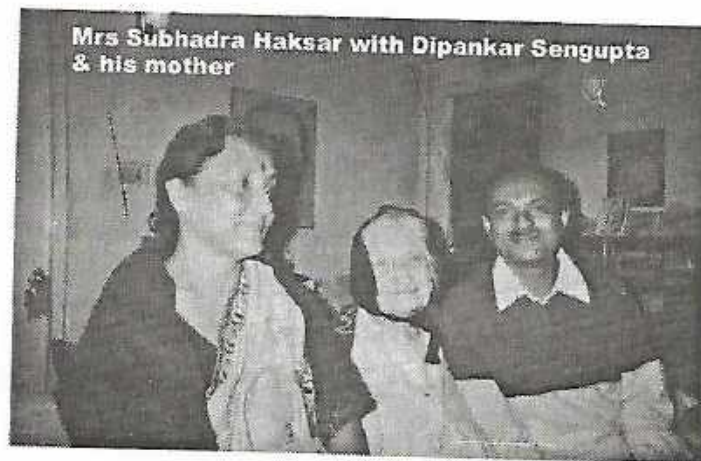
2001 when I had a phone talk from Kashmir Bhavan Kolkata to Dadima's Mayfair residence, at first Mrs Kiran Dar talked to me and then Dadima also talked with me for 15 minutes in English giving details about her paternal family in Allahabad. During 2001 Pujas, when I first went to her house, Mrs Dar had a talk with me and told me - "Dipankar, my mother is willing to talk with you, Please come", I went and touched her feet; she said 'Ami bangla bolte pari(I can speak Bengali)." She gave me a book on the birth centenary celebrations of Saroda Maa and with her signature said - "Give this book to your mother". She came to know from me that my parents and I were Ramakrishna Mission devotees. When I was leaving for home, she said- "Abar Asbe (Come again)," Once I went to her house; she told me - "This is Sarada Maa- everyone's mother" by pointing towards a picture of Sarada Maa. Then she showed me two pictures "Beta, this is my husband. This one is my mother". I told her- "Your mother was Mrs Lakshmirani Katju from Jodhpur, later of Allahabad", She said "Kikare janle beta? (How you came to know?)" I told her that I came to know by reading Dr. B.N. Sharga's book.

She used to live a retired life in her Mayfair Road residence in Kolkata with 'her two daughters and a host of attendants. She attained fame, success and happiness in life. She used to command the respect of people from many walks of life, Here lies her importance as a dedicated social worker and a nice human being, who worked for the people and was regarded by all. She used to tell her daughters that when she will pass away, Sarada Maa would come to take her, The prophecy came true. On 3rd March 2007 when a lady came to see her, she told her "Kal Sarada Maa Ayee ': And, on 5th March 2007, she passed away into the Eternal abode in the Lotus arms of Thakur and Maa. She is an example for us to emulate. The greatest tribute we can pay to her memory is to follow her example to as much extent as we can, The contribution of this noble soul is written in golden letters in the pages of history.

In all these respects, she is an ideal daughter of Thakur Sri Ramakrishna and Shri Shri Maa Saradamoni.

Om Shantil Om Namah Sivayal

Jai Mata Ksheer Bhawani !



BENEVOLENT – SHE IS

Dr. Roshan Saraf

In anguish and perennial pain,
In blazing suffering and irrational rain,
Protect me with blissful umbrella – O eternal Mother!

In the vast ocean of ignorance,
In the blind depth of impatience,
Teach and guide me to wit and wisdom – O divine Mother!

The rage of ego and greed for lust
has tainted gold into rust,
Oblate me on flames and ash my rake desires – O gracious Mother!

I walked, I ran, I climbed uphill,
I slipped, I fumbled and fell in immoral rills,
Just hold my trembling hand and correct my path – O benevolent Mother!

I know for sure that you are there
to dilute my illusions and ferocious fear,
Calm my stormy dementia and carry my boat to safe shores – O omnipotent Mother!

I desire to worship your Lotus feet,
I pray to deliquesce my sins and selfish sleet,
Sprinkle dew of love and nectar of bliss – O blissful Mother!

Nine nights of devotional abridgement
is the treasure key to my spiritual attainment
and benevolent food for my nourishment – O immortal Mother!

The word 'Mother' is the hymn immortal,
It is the song compassionate and spiritual,
It is a lilting lullaby mesmerizing and devotional – O omniscient Mother!



KASHMIR : KASHMIRIAT

Shravan Kaul

My physical association with Jammu & Kashmir has been at the most a couple of months post my birth in Jammu in April 1995. In the short span of fifteen years of my life, I have been confronted most with two words – Kashmir & Kashmiriat. Till recently, both these words have had no meaning for me despite the in-numerous explanations from my parents and grand-parents.

All the time, the elders in the family have been reminding me that I am a Butta (Kashmiri Pandit) and that I should take pride in being a Kashmiri and with every reminder, I would become even more defiant. For me, Kashmir as explained to me simply did not exist. I could really never understand why the elders in the family have to keep telling me all this. I had no qualms about being called a Hindu or an Indian but why this tag of Kashmiri. Somehow all these years, the explanations offered to me have all been beyond my comprehension.

Who could fathom, it will take just took two weeks to change my perception. Yes, the two weeks – one each that I was fortunate to spend this year in Kashmir and Jammu accompanied by my father. The visit to Kashmir was quite an experience. Suddenly the meaning of Kashmiriat was there for me to see with naked eyes and also feel for myself the pain and anguish that my elders and other community members have been going through.

The often repeated sight of repetitive hugging and incessant tears rolling down the cheeks of my father and his Muslim friends in Kashmir was a sight that got engrained on my mind and possibly explained it all and was further reinforced by the excellent hospitality of the entire Kashmiri Muslim Family that I had never known but hosted our stay in the valley, a family that seemed to be my lost family.

The welcome offered with love and affection everywhere, the temples like TulaMula, Zeethyar, Martand, Shankaracharya and many more standing upright despite the onslaughts by separatists, the sight of Shrines like Mukdam Sahib where Hindus and Muslims pray together and above all the scenic beauty of snow clad mountains in Gulmarg, the musical Lidder in Pahelgam, the calm and serene Dal Lake and Manasbal Lake, the beautiful Mughal Gardens and Pari Mahal and many more were enough to drill into my mind the meaning of the two words that I have confronted most.

The visit to my ancestral house and the nearby Raghu Nath Mandir did pinch the heart but seeing a Kashmiri Pandit Lady with Dejhor buying vegetables in Habbakadal showed a glimmer of hope. Hope that Kashmir Pandit community in Kashmir is not going to be extinct. History may have repeated itself, I am told, seventh time in marginalizing the Kashmir Pandit community in Kashmir but as History stands witness as it always has, we will not be wiped out of Kashmir. For those of us, who settle in different corners of the world on account of our livelihood, we and our forthcoming generations might merge with the local communities but our hearts and souls will always remain Kashmiri.



LETTER TO KASHMIRI MUSLIMS

Arvind Gigoo (Jammu)

My dear Kashmiri Muslims.

Right from 1947 your leaders and politicians lied to you, confused you and exploited you. The crafty politicians used you for their selfish ends and the Indian leadership took you for granted. Pakistan played upon your religious sentiments. Then some other countries started playing their own games with you. When George Bush condemned Muslim terrorism you became sad. When Obama praised Muslims you became happy. When Pakistan mentions Kashmir you feel elated.

You are a gullible lot. You believe in false promises. Nobody trusts you. Your tragedy is the result of the politicking of your leaders and of those you consider your well-wishers.

Kashmir is an issue of betrayal, blunder, falsehood and mistrust. It is a confusing admixture of plebiscite, Pakistan, India(?), independence and ambiguous ideas and theories. Once it was **jana gana mana**; then it was **nizam-e-mustafa**. You turned so foolish that you thought **azadi** was a question of some days. Now things have degenerated into something you have no control over.

In the last twenty years you lost hundreds of thousands of people— young boys, men, women and children. You lost your humanism and your cultural ethos. You lost Pandits. You are living in lies. You are a victim of depression, repentance, sorrow and defeat.

Pakistanis have a very poor opinion of you. Indians don't trust you at all. Your leaders don't care for you.

Militants, double agents, suspects, informants, spies, looters, freebooters and con men thrive in Kashmir. Nobody knows who is doing what. You suffer from political and societal schizophrenia and civilizational dementia.

You have lost your freedom of speech. The cunning among you talk one thing in private and change their stance in public. Some have chosen silence, and silence, during a period of political unrest, is dangerous. Political blackmailers, extortionists, security forces and greedy opportunists have devastated you. Now you are insensitive to your own suffering and to the suffering of your own people. Rumours and farcical slogans have placed you in a quagmire of directionless aspiration, purposelessness and psychological trauma. You have yet to fix your goal.

Your educated youth have intellect, vision and dreams. But unemployment, uncertainty and lack of opportunity have frustrated them. How long will they and you go on waiting for the outcome of 'meaningful and composite dialogue'?

Answer your own questions. Question your leaders, politicians and think. Everything is in your hands. Shifting loyalties and short term plans will lead you nowhere. For sixty-three years your leaders did nothing for you. Pursue only one goal. Politics of doubletalk is bound to fail. And remember what Lancelot Hogben has said: 'No society is safe in the hands of its clever people.'

(Arvind Gigoo, a retired professor of English, is the author of *The Ugly Kashmiri*).

Courtesy: **Greater Kashmir**. Srinagar, Dated: 08/04/2010,

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IN SEARCH OF A BETTER WORLD

Jolly Mohan Kaul (Kolkata)

I feel honoured to have been asked to write about my recently published book, *In Search of a Better World*, for the *Vitasta* annual number. I must admit, however, that it is a little awkward for me to write about my own book. I suppose I have been asked to do so because of the fact that I am a Kashmiri Pandit and feel proud of my roots. The book is really an autobiography, which I felt impelled to write because I have lived a chequered life and, in a sense, as the writer of the Afterword to the book says in a lighter vein :: "Like the proverbial cat he has lived many lives and knowing him makes nine lives not quite enough".

On a more serious note, I have stated in the book: "My life has been marked by amazing twists and turns. I have lived several different lives, as it were. Those who have seen me in one incarnation find it difficult to recognize me in another"

Our family migrated from Kashmir most likely from an area in Rainawadi in Srinagar some two centuries ago. My father had traced out the family tree from the first ancestor who came and settled in Sitaram ka Bazaar in Delhi. Over the years the family tree grew branches and spread roots and many distinguished Kashmiri Pandit names appear in the family tree.

Naturally, the book begins with my father and goes on to speak about our family and our early years. Explaining the peculiar fact of our having unusual first names I have written: "My father Shyam Mohan Nath, was born in a traditional Kashmiri family but had struggled all along against traditional concepts that he thought were outmoded. He was a great believer in adopting modern ideas which, to him, meant 'western' ideas. This explains a unique feature in our Kashmiri Pandit family: all the children were given English names, Prince, Major, Little Young, Victor and Jolly! Even families far more westernized than ours did not experiment with names.

My father who worked in the Indian Railways was transferred to Calcutta in 1925 and the rest of the family including me, then aged five, moved a little later. Writing about those days the book goes on to say: "Since we were coming to Calcutta for the first time, our first contacts were naturally with the Kashmiri Pandit community. Kashmiri Pandits had come and settled in the city long before our arrival. Sambhunath Pandit was the first Indian judge of the Calcutta High Court and eminent enough to have had a street, Sambhunath Pandit Street, and a hospital named after him. His house, or a part of the original, is listed as a heritage house. I remember our family being invited for lunch or dinner on a few occasions to the huge haveli on the western end of Sambhunath Pandit Street along with the rest of the biradri that is the entire community."

The book continues to speak about some of these families, some of whom were related to us. Some of them took a prominent part in the national movement; participated in Satyagraha struggles at the call of Gandhiji; and went to jail on a number of occasions and traces my journey through St Xavier's School and College. It was after I entered College that my life took a dramatic turn. Socialist and communist ideas were sweeping across the student community and I was swept by that tide straight into the Communist movement.

Beginning as an ordinary activist at the grassroot level, I rose to become Secretary of the Calcutta District, then one of the most important areas of Party activity and also to the National Council, the apex All India body. During the over 20 years I spent in the movement I had varied experiences including nearly three and a half years in jail.

It was during this period that I married Manikuntala Sen, who was also a prominent communist leader and served for two terms, 10 years, as a Member of the Legislative Assembly and was for some time

Deputy Leader of the Communist group in the Assembly while Jyoti Basu was the leader. While in the Party, I participated in and witnessed the gradual rise in the fortunes of the Party and also noted how, as its fortunes soared, its values deteriorated and the longer it enjoyed power the less it championed the cause of the poor and the aam admi.

In the course of the nearly quarter century of work as a whole time worker of the Party on a wage that barely enabled us to survive I resigned from the Party. Shocked to find that a section of the Party refused to condemn the Chinese aggression against the country and was bent on splitting the Party, I realized that it was no longer possible for me to work for the cause of building a better society and a better world within the folds of a Party that refused to see the reality. I, therefore, resigned from the Party stating, however, that I was interested in the case of democracy socialism and peace but that I would have to work for the cause outside the Party.

The book goes on to describe my struggle for survival outside the Party. For the rest I quote from the blurb on the flap of the cover of the book. "Jolly Kaul built three additional careers in the corporate world as the head of public relations for Indian Oxygen Ltd, as a journalist with a news agency, editing the economic journal Capital, and as a free-lance journalist contributing to numerous journals and newspapers and finally as a social activist in the Gandhi Labour Foundation run by the Gandhian trade unionist, Kanti Mehta. On each occasion he continued to search for ways to contribute towards the improvement of society. This search, says Dr Amlan Datta in his Foreword "has a wider significance for the history of this age, the epoch to which he and he rest of us jointly belong. This is why all of us have much to learn from Kaul's faithful report on his "Search for a better World".

The book was formally released on 25th February in Kolkata at the auditorium of the Indian Council of Cultural Relations in India by Prof Tapan Roychoudhuri, an eminent historian and on 17th March at the India International Centre, by Prof Bipan Chandra, Chairman of the National Book Trust, New Delhi. At both these places the book was well received. It has been reviewed in a number of journals and newspapers. As it might be of interest I am giving below the text of a review that appeared in the Telegraph, Kolkata.

In search of a better world: Memoirs By Jolly Mohan Kaul, Samya, Rs 550 Perhaps no one has been more aptly named than Jolly Kaul. Despite a life of hardship and vicissitude, he hasn't lost his sense of fun and enjoyment of life even at the age of 90. This makes his memoirs a delight to read. There is no rancour or regret. Yet, there could have been since he spent a large part of his adult life in the pursuit of a chimera. Jolly Kaul's inner calm may be rooted in his spirituality that he discovered in old age. Or it could be located in the fact that he has always remained true to himself. His life has been anchored in his own sense of responsibility towards himself.

All this might be read as an attempt to turn Kaul into a great and extraordinary man. Nothing could be further from the truth. Jolly Kaul is an ordinary, good human being. His ordinariness and his goodness make him an unsung hero of our times. He was, as his surname suggests, born into a Kashmiri Pandit family. But he grew up in Calcutta and went to St Xavier's School and College. He was a good but not an outstanding student. While a post-graduate student, he was drawn to the communist party and he joined it as an underground worker. He thus left a life of middle-class comforts to live in a party den where he had no work save washing utensils. He decided that he would perform this menial task to the best of his abilities. This incident is revealing of Kaul's attitude, especially to work.

Kaul takes his readers through his days in the party — his years in prison, his rise in the party hierarchy, his life among the workers and his resignation from the party. Familiar and famous names flit in and out of his narrative — Muzaffar Ahmed (Kakababu), Jyoti Basu, Somnath Lahiri, Indrajit Gupta, Hiren Mukerji, Nikhil Chakravorty and so on. It was during his days as a party worker that he met and married a remarkable woman — Manikuntala Sen, who was a communist member of the West Bengal Legislative Assembly for many years. Even though it was a marriage of comrades, it was actually made in heaven.

Not only were they happy together in spite of terrible financial deprivation but they also complemented each other in various ways. It was Manikuntala Sen who did not allow Kaul to be seduced by the perks of the corporate world when he joined it.

Kaul's exit from the CPI was, surprisingly, not acrimonious. Somnath Lahiri wanted to denounce him in true Stalinist fashion but was stopped by Bhowani Sen. After his resignation, Kaul eked out a living through freelance journalism. His break came with the help of a former comrade, Prasanta Sanyal, who recommended him for a job in Indian Oxygen where Sanyal then worked. Initially, there was some resistance because of Kaul's communist and trade union background but this was broken in a telling way. The CPI leader, Bhupesh Gupta, who occasionally stayed with Kaul even after the latter had left the party, heard of the resistance and spoke to N. Dandekar who sat with Gupta in the Rajya Sabha. Dandekar was a member of the Swatantra Party and was the chairman of the Indian Oxygen board. He spoke to the managing director and the path was cleared for Kaul's appointment. Thus, one former comrade, one full-time communist MP and one Swatantra Party member helped to get employment for an out-of-work former member of the CPI. The power of the network!

From being a PR of Indian Oxygen for a few years, Kaul came back to journalism as the editor of the journal called Capital. The story of his career should not take away from the loss he suffered when his wife died after a prolonged illness. There is a moving chapter in this book entitled "Manikuntala and I".

There is also a chapter on Muzaffar Ahmed which this reviewer found a bit jarring because it is written in the spirit of blind loyalty – the kind of blindness that at one time made bright men and women worship Lenin and Stalin. Surely, Kaul doesn't expect anyone to believe that Ahmed's vision of "communism" embodied a better world, at least the better world that continues to be Kaul's quest. – RUDRANGSHU MUKHERJEE.



Book Stall Outside the Meeting Auditorium, Kolkata.



Releasing of the Book in a Satyajit Ray Meeting Auditorium, Kolkata on 25th February, 2010 at 6 p.m.



KRISHNA'S BANSI

When I was a child my mother and other elders used to tell me stories of Shri Ram, Shri Krishna, Lord Shiva, Ganesha etc. My mother would often describe the physical features of Sri Krishna, His eyes, face, lips, His curly hair, His hands, feet, peacock feather on His head and also the inseparable Bansi (flute). But no one could throw any light on the origin of His flute or its significance. The Gopis/Gops and the Flute are two characteristics, which have always remained inalienable features of Lord Krishna. The Gopis always felt irked when Krishna would play His flute. There was such an attraction in the melodious tune of His flute that everything came to a stand still. Cows would stop grazing, Gopis would forget their domestic chores, calves would stop drinking milk from their mother cows, and even the beloved Yamuna would stop flowing momentarily.



Bhushan Lal Bhan

Here the question arises, where from did this flute come from? Not much is known to common people like me about the origin of Bansi. I put forward this question to many Pandits and scholars but could not get any satisfactory reply. One version is that long ago there was a poor Brahmin who had a beautiful girl who was staunch devotee of Lord Narayana. Once while her parents were away collecting firewood, a bad character Shudra who had an eye on this girl, caught hold of her and molested her. The poor girl revealed this mishap to her parents when they returned and wanted to commit sati. Her parents supported her in this resolve. Consequently, when she attained liberation, it is said that Lord Narayana was pleased with her sacrifice. He gave a boon to the leftover half burned wood pieces in her pyre, that these wood pieces would reappear in the form of a bamboo from which flutes will be made and Krishna would touch these flutes with His divine lips.

The second version is that when Krishna was a small boy of two & a half years of age, Lord Shiva desired to have a darshan of 'Sri Bal Krishna', Shiva came in the disguise of a flute vender and played flute. While playing, He passed by Krishna's house in Nandgaon. Hearing the sound of the flute Sri Bal Krishna followed Lord Shiva. When Lord Shiva reached outside the village He turned back to have a glimpse of Sri Bal Krishna. Both had a divine look at each other. Sri Krishna requested Lord Shiva to give him the flute. Lord Shiva gave it to Him and Krishna tried to play the flute but could not. He became angry and tossed the flute on ground. Lord Shiva who is a master of Universal knowledge, taught Sri Krishna to play it by holding it near the lips and placing fingers on the holes. Sri Krishna tried several times but all in vain. Sri Krishna almost gave up. Lord Shiva then advised Bal Krishna to seek blessings from Mata Saraswati who would become His (Krishna's) guru and then after initiating Him as Her disciple, she would shower Him with the knowledge of Ragas, Sur, Tal and melody. Accordingly, Sri Bal Krishna, who was Param Brahm in the physical form, requested Saraswati Mata accordingly. She showered Him with full 'Gyan' of music i.e. ragas, sur, tal and melody. Thereafter Krishna started playing flute with Divine melody, the tune of which created miracles in and around Brij Mandal. The birds forgot chirping and the cows stopped grazing. Damsels, maids, young ones, virgins, middle aged and old ladies were madly in divine love with Krishna and became statue like on listening to the melodious tune of the flute. The bulls stopped ploughing and the farmers too could not control their feelings, they got glued to His tune. Even the trees and rocks of 'Brij Bhoomi' enjoyed the sound of this flute.

Here the question arises why Krishna chose to play the flute when there were other musical instruments like Veena, Dhamru, Mridang, Janjer etc. It is written in the Holy Scriptures that Radha Rani would feel irked when Sri Krishna played flute. She is said to have asked Sri Krishna why He loved flute so much giving it a place on His lips and feeding it with the nectar of His lips for which all the Gopis including Radha Rani were craving. Radha even accused Sri Krishna of giving Bansi preference over her and other Gopis who were in deep love with Him.

Sri Krishna, justifying His love for Bansi, explained to Radha Rani that Bansi is alike and smooth from inside and outside. There are no double standards in Bansi, and unlike human beings there is no filth or dirt inside. By playing flute with such admiration He sent a clear message to His devotees that they too should be clean from inside and outside, as Sri Krishna does not like a devotee with double standards or with malicious mind.

Secondly, Sri Krishna told Radha Rani that the Bansi had no strings or chains. In other words Sri Krishna wants his devotees to be free from attachments or strings of Maya as Maya is a great hindrance for a devotee on his path of spirituality. With attachment towards family, house, wealth, bank-balance, cash, gold etc, a devotee gets stuck in Maya and does not proceed further on the path of spirituality. Bansi is free from such Mayavi strings. Bansi has no tags; although it is made from a bamboo stick but the Bansi maker selects only that part of bamboo, which has no joints and is smooth from top to bottom.

Again Sri Krishna compares a human body with a Bansi, which has seven holes for seven notes, one hole for inlet of air and another for outlet, in all nine openings. Similarly, a human body too has nine outlets; two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, one mouth, one for urination and other for passing faeces. Sri Krishna desires that eyes must be used for darshan of Saints and God and His cosmic world while ears must be used to listen to Holy Scriptures like Ramayana, Bhagwat, Gita etc. Nostrils should smell scented flowers which we can put at the lotus feet of God, mouth for singing the praises of God, and the rest of two organs must be used for the excretion process for which these have been made by the nature. Over indulgence in carnal desires never makes the human being satisfied. The more one indulges in satisfying lust, the wilder it grows. So one should keep desires under control and should not go beyond prescribed norms as laid down in our holy books.

Sri Krishna told Radha Rani that a devotee should be straight forward. He should not have any hypocrisy in mind and there should be no cheating. Sri Krishna also desires that a devotee should qualify himself to become a true devotee like His Bansi, which got elevated and attained the resting place on the Divine lips of Sri Krishna.

The Bansi has totally surrendered before Sri Krishna; she is what we call Jad Chetanya or inanimate with no life. She sings when Lord Krishna makes it sing. She accepts the amrit of Krishna's lips. This is known as 'shamagat mood' (total surrender).

There is a Puranic tale, once Dholak (Drum) had a casual discussion with Bansi telling her that he was tired of receiving hard beatings time and feeling pain in his body. He asked Bansi what Karmas she (Bansi) had performed which got her a place on the beautiful lips of Sri Krishna and received the nectar of love through His breath over and over again. The dholak further added that when Sri Krishna was blowing His breath in her, a part of the breath would also blow from His nostrils and it would seem as if Bansi was being fanned by Sri Krishna in a hot season.

Bansi replied that she was just an insignificant piece of wood, virtually a useless thing, but she had surrendered to Sri Krishna in total and she considered Sri Krishna her Swami. As per His desire, He plays her, blows His breath in her, and makes her sing to His tunes, and when He desires He keeps her on the shelf or on the ground. How He treats her depends on the sweet will of Sri Krishna and she never feels happy or sad about it.

Bansi also added that when she took birth as Bansi, she had seven holes. Since the Lord himself has provided these holes, she never tries to hide them and instead she perceives God and Prakrati through these holes. Bansi told Dholak that he had covered his holes, and when anyone tries to cover his weaknesses artificially he was sure to receive the beating. In the end Bansi opined that anyone who surrenders to Krishna completely, Krishna was sure to take care of him.

Once a couple of Gopis asked Sri Krishna about the best qualities of his Bansi. Sri Krishna replied that Bansi was the devotee of Bhakti Marg. Like a true devotee she is quiet and when Krishna makes her sing she sings. She maintains silence and repeats Lord's name in heart of her hearts like a true devotee. As and when Bansi was made to speak, she spoke very little but very sweetly. Thus Krishna opines that a true devotee should always use polite language as the injury caused by one's indiscreet and impolite language hurts beyond imagination.

We should surrender ourselves to the lotus feet of Shri Krishna, recite His praises and enjoy the fruits of His benevolence.

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DIVINE MEETING OF BHAGAVAN GOPINATH JI & SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

It was 8th of July 2006 When I happened to meet Prof C.L.Sapru at Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji Ashram, Pamposh Enclave, New Delhi. It was Bhagavaan Ji's birthday (lunar) and we all had assembled to celebrate this auspicious day. Prof Sapru and myself were discussing about the life and messages of saints and sages in general and about the visit of swami Vivekanand to Kashmir in particular. Prof Sapru narrated an interesting event about the divine meeting of Swami Vivekananda with Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji.

Swami Ji visited Kashmir in 1897 & 1898 with a group of American and other devotees. His authentic biography records reveal that on 3rd of July 1898 Swami Ji visited interior of Srinagar city (Bana-Mohalla) to get an American Flag stitched from the only Kashmiri Pandit tailor Tara Chand. Swami Ji wanted to hoist this flag on the deck of his houseboat next day, i.e. 4th of July 1898 (American Independence Day) in presence of his devotees. This houseboat in which Swami Ji was staying belonged to Pandit Narayan Das (nick named as Naav Naran), Pandit Narayan Das was the father of Swami lakshman Joo. However, this houseboat was provided to Swami Vivekananda by Raja Ram Singh (brother of Maharaja Pratap Singh).

The shop of Pandit Tara Chand tailor from whom the said American flag was to be stitched, was just below the house of Pandit Narayan Joo Bhan, father of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji. Swami Viveknanda Ji explained the tailor about the making of this flag which would have taken a couple of hours to stitch it and thus Swami Ji was supposed to wait there for sometime. Incidentally some family members of Pandit Narayan Joo Bhan are said to have visited the tailor's shop out of curiosity and had a glimpse of Swami Ji. Traditionally Kashmiri Pandits are simple and hospitable by nature and on having seen a Sanyasi those days, an average Kashmiri Pandit would love to invite him to his house and serve him in the name of God. Accordingly they requested Swami Ji to have rest and take some tea etc upstairs, i.e., in the house of Pandit Narayan Joo Bhan. Swami Ji is believed to have accepted their request and went upstairs. It is said that Swami Ji was offered water, tea and snacks. This was eventually a very auspicious day for the family because a male child was born on this day (3rd of July 1898) and a renowned saint too visited their house. During Swami's brief stay in the house he was informed about the birth of a male child in the family on the same day (who later on was famous by the name of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji). They requested Swami Ji to see the child and bless Him. On seeing the child it is believed that some spiritual message might have been communicated.

The visit of Swami Ji to Srinagar, then his visit to the shop of Pandit Tara Chand tailor and his brief stay in the house of Pandit Narayan Joo Bhan on 3rd July 1898, communicates that this divine meeting between Swami Ji and Bhagavaan Bab Maharaj was a superb incident and was fixed by the "Supreme." This is the auspicious day of 3rd July, the birthday (solar) of JAGAT GURU BHAGAVAN GOPINATH JI MAHARAJ, 3rd July is also celebrated as FOUNDATION DAY of Jagat Guru Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji Charitatile Cultural and Research Foundation, New Delhi, the centenary memorial of Bhagavaan Ji.

(Bhushan Lal Bhan as narrated by Prof. C.L. Sapru)





Bhagvaan Gopinath Ji



Swami Vivekananda



MORTAL FRAME – A RENTED ACCOMMODATION

Bhushan Lal Bhan (Ph. : 9810659294)

Whenever a person hires a rented house, three main conditions are put forward by the landlord to the tenant:-

1. Rent of the house is to be paid on the due date without asking for it.
2. The interiors and exteriors of the house is to be maintained clean. The house should be protected from dirt of all sorts.
3. The lodging is to be vacated without any problem by the tenant as and when asked for.

Similarly, lord has blessed our mortal frame (the human body) under three specific conditions:-

1. Payment on time
2. Premises to be kept clean
3. Quit the house on time without hesitation.

Great saints say that man, before entering the world, promises God that he will remember Him all the time. This will be man's payment of rent by holding regular prayers, by meditating, sewa etc. Once born, however, recall God and turn to Him only when in trouble. While in comfort, we tend to forget Him. Mother Kunti, in her prayers, asked God to grant her misfortunes and miseries so that she can keep remembering Him. All living things go through the recurring cycle of life and death in various forms. In human form, one gets a chance to devote life to God and thus pay Him back for Thy blessings. Lord is omnipresent and one can easily repay Him by thought and deeds. By praying at His lotus feet, we remit God the rent of this house, that is the mortal frame.

The second promise made by man to Lord is that the house will be kept clean always. But man often fails to keep his promise because his mind and body gets filled with Kam (lust), Krodh (anger), Lobh (greed) Moh (ego) and Ahankar (pride). His ego takes hold of him, he becomes jealous, starts lying, deceives others and thus curbs his conscience. As a result, a beautiful house becomes a hiding place for evil spirits. This displeases and pains God as it would hurt a landlord when he sees his home unclean. Here, we must act upon Bhagawaanji's advise of

Shuzzar - (Purity)	This rented house should be kept clean like a temple and all dirt must be meticulously removed time and again.
Pazzar - (Truthfulness)	Nothing compares to being truthful. To cover one lie, we end up telling ten more. It is important to have the courage to speak and face truth, and all difficulties will be overcome.
Sezzar - (Rectitude)	If we are straight forward in our dealings with God, He will always be kind with us. One must remember that although God is with us, He sometimes tests our faith. We must steadfastly believe in Him and follow the three principles of Shuzzar, Pazzar and Sezzar.

The **third** condition is that we must vacate this rented house as and when our master desires. Bhagat Kabir in one of his verses has said that while others get terrified at the word death, he feels happy on hearing the same word for it means that God is coming nearer. He believes that death will lead him to eternal truth.

God is continuously sending signals and preparing us to vacate the premises. These signals are sent through sequential physical decay. Our hair turns grey, wrinkles appear on our face, teeth decay and falloff, weakening eyesight etc. are among other signs. Various diseases surround us. These are His messages to indicate that 'Kal' is approaching. One should consider the body as a mere rented premises and take just as much care of it as is needed to keep it healthy with balanced mind. It is important to realize that we all have to give up our body eventually and this can happen anytime and anywhere. As long as one surrenders to God's will, there will be hope of salvation.

Reflection on above.

While in the mortal frame, the right path to salvation is through a Guru. Guru's Updesh must be followed in all walks of life. Our own Bhagawaan ji was a different type of Guru than others. His mantra "Om Namoh Bhagwate Gopinathaye" is equivalent to the mantra "Om Namoh Bhagwate Vasudevaye" which granted Narad Muni eternal peace and became Lord Narayana's closest confidant. Let us all consider ourselves to be 'Gops' and 'Gopis' and Bhagawaanji as our Krishna or Narayan, It is my personal conviction that it will not take much time for Bhagawaanji to reach out to his beloved devotees and save them from miseries. There are ample examples where His devotees have experienced Bhagawaanji coming to their rescue, For those of us who have not seen Bhagawaanji in His mortal frame, they can reach out to Him by way of Shri Guru Gita, Bhagwat Gita and other holy scriptures

Guru Brahma Guru Vishnu

Guru Sakshat Maheshwara

Our beloved Guru Bhagawaan Gopinathji is multifaceted. For us, He is Brahma the creator and generator, He is also Vishnu -the Organisor and finally He is Maheshwara -the destroyer, He is Param Brahma or infinite It is difficult to comprehend Him and it is beyond the power of pen to describe Him. We can only pray that He should bestow us with true faith and devotion so that we can pray at His lotus feet. We must ask Him to help us live the life of a true devotee and a loyal tenant of His house with grace and dignity.



OM NAMAH BHAGVATE GOPINATHAYA NAMAH
SIGNIFICANCE OF PRAYING AT THE FEET OF LORD
(THE ONLY WAY TO ESCAPE THE CIRCLE OF KAAL AND MAYA)

Bhushan Lal Bhan

Sri Guru Charan Saroj Raj
NU Man Mukur Sudhari
Barnau Raghubar Bimal Jasu
Jo Dayak Phal Chari

The great saint-poet Tulsidasji, before Composing Sri Hanuman Chalisa, bows at the feet of his Guru Sri Ramanand. From here began the successes of his life. Tulsidasji says that the dust of his Guru's feet cleansed his body and mind thus making him free of sins. Then he proceeds to pray to Lord Rama, Who in turn, bestowed him with four boons Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksh (Righteousness, Worldly Possessions obtained through honest means, Fulfillment of pure desires and Release from the cycle of death and rebirth).

In all epics, it has been stressed heavily that those who desire to tread the spiritual path must pray at the lotus feet of Lord. In the very first verse of Sri Guru Gita, the author prays and pays obeisance at the feet of Guru in keeping with ancient Indian traditions. Lord Mahadeva, in a discourse to Mata Parvati, explains that a disciple should wash his sins by washing the feet of his Guru and then should proceed to have a bath with the leftover water. This gives him a benefit equivalent to visiting holy pilgrimages and shrines like Ganga, Kashi, Prayag and Gaya. After bath with such water, the disciple must meditate on the lotus feet of his Guru which enables him to attain Guru Kripa and finally salvation because there can be no salvation without Guru's Pleasure (Kripa).

In Ramayana, we get a few examples where the feet of Lord led devotees to immortality. Before crossing Ganga, Khewat had the good fortune of washing and praying at the feet of Lord Raffia, Lord Lakshman and Mother Sita, Who were on their exile. As a result of his bhakti, Khewat received the boon of salvation from Lord Rama. In another example, Lord Raffia while walking in the jungle touched a stone by chance. This stone turned into Ahilya, wife of Rishi Gautam. She had been cursed by her husband to turn into a stone and stay in the state till Lord Rama himself would touch her with his feet and thus, she became immortal. Another example is when Lord Rama, while enlightening Shabri about nine Bhakti Margas, tells her that one of the Margas is Paade Savenam, that is, selfless service at the feet of Lord.

A beautiful illustration in this context is from Bhagwat Puran. It is said that Kalinaga had created terror in river Yamuna. Once Lord Krishna, while playing on the banks of the river, threw his ball mischievously into the river. On the pretext of retrieving his ball, he went underwater where he stood on Kalinaga's head and crushed his head Ahankaar. Finally Kalinaga prayed at the Lord's feet for forgiveness and started to live in Yamuna in peaceful co-existence with other creatures.

In Mahabharata, before the commencement of Dharma Yudh, Kauravas' supreme commander Dhuryodhana approached Lord Krishna from the side of his head, seeking his help in the war. Lord Krishna gave his entire army and armaments to Kauravas. At the same time, Arjuna, the Pandavas' general and archrival of Dhuryodhana, approached Lord Krishna from the side of his feet. With folded hands at the feet of the Lord, he humbly asked for help against the Kauravas. Lord Krishna accepted his request and proceeded to become his guide in the war that culminated in victory for the Pandavas.

Shri Dharmacharya, in Panchastavi, highlights the divine power of Mother who sent the wicked demon Mahishawsur to Patal-lok just by the mere touch of her toe.

All these examples from various scriptures add to one significant point. We should always pray and meditate on the lotus feet of the Lord. This is the only way of attaining Guru Kripa, which is the only key to cross the oceans of Maya and Kaal.

Jai Guru Dev



Book Review

THE WORLD OF NAKED TRUTH (Views on Arvind Gigoo's The Ugly Kashmiri)

Name of the book : The Ugly Kashmiri
(Cameos in exile)
Author : Arvind Gigoo
Publisher : Allied Publishers New Delhi
Pages : 186
Price : Rs 250/-



Makhn Lal Saraf

Arvind Gigoo's book *The Ugly Kashmiri (Cameos in exile)* is a commendable and extraordinary addition to the treasure of literature on Kashmir. Although it is written in English yet its subject is Kashmir and the soul is Kashmiri. The critical reviews on the book form a bigger volume than the book itself. Obviously the book has travelled through the length and breadth of India. This speaks much about the importance and beauty of the book.

The book, both tragic and comic, has broken the conventional and traditional genre of writing, and found its own innovative way of expression. It depicts the unpleasant and bitter historical, political and social events of Kashmir before and after the independence of India. These significant events have been recorded and hinted at through one-liners and very short sketches called 'cameos'

The Allied Publishers, New Delhi, deserve all praise for having understood the meaning and significance of the tragic and comic characters delineated in the book. They have built a mansion out of these cameos and thrown it open to the public.

Each cameo in *The Ugly Kashmiri* is a carefully chiselled sculpture of a sculptor. Each is independent of the others and complete in itself. Each cameo confronts us with its tale, ridicules us, jeers and mocks at us and satirizes us. Each cameo mimics and faces us with a cynical laughter. Some cameos tickle us and push us into the world of disturbing and naked truth. Such is the power of imagination. At times a cameo laughs at its misfortune and passes the intensity of its tragedy to us. The cameos gaze at us, and when we look at them we are humbled by our cunning and wickedness. The onlooker comes very close to the solidified fossils of truth. The result is that the character and the reader weep together in a way that the third onlooker experiences a momentary relief but, after a time, falls silent and feels sorrowful. The political event and the historical fact have given him a punch. The cameos have frozen and fossilized in exile. At times the cameos exchange compartments and places of occupation. They are balanced and do 'justice' to the Kashmiris of all shades. They give shock and surprise to the readers who are unfortunate for having faced reality. Some associations have exploited the cameos for their private ends.

Cameo 178 reads:

"I am where I am not; therefore I am not where I am."

This is solid and whole, chiselled and shaped perfectly. It narrates its own tale of woe. This is a one-liner. After that a line within a line and then continuous lines. It contains layer upon layer of meaning and tale. It has compressed a long and tragic story of generations.

The last line on page 152 is :

“Never trust your well-wishers.”

It speaks about the selfish aims of the politicians and persons responsible for migration. They achieve their egotistical aims after destroying the social and political fabric of Kashmir. And they do possess the strong will and determination to do so. This cameo is pregnant with meaning and is complete.

Cameo no. 172 is :

“Please introduce yourself.”

“I am my own ancestor.”

This cameo hears what is spoken to it. It speaks what it is made to speak. It has its own frozen existence. Alone, helpless and sad it is standing on a road from where for centuries it has seen people coming and going.

Arvind Gigoo has rebelled against the characteristics that are necessary for a tragedy and comedy. He has given us a new genre for writing. He has expressed a tragic event in a comic way. The reader is bewildered when he finds a sombre meaning in a funny cameo.

Only a competent writer can demolish the traditional genre of writing. But he can do so only if he knows how to enter and exit from the old rules that constitute writing. By writing *The Ugly Kashmiri* Arvind Gigoo has invented a form and genre which can appeal to the young writers because it should be easy for them to adopt. This form can become a school of writing. But after reading this book a question arises:

How does the author of the book expect from the readers the context and background of the historical and political complications which he had in mind while writing these dense and brain-teasing cameos? The book is surely difficult for all especially those who haven't undergone and experienced the happenings that took place in Kashmir after independence. The book poses many problems and so it is not easy for the readers to decipher the hidden meanings in the cameos and interpret them.

When an elderly / old man reads the book between the lines each cameo enlivens, and shouts its tragedy, pain and pathos. A unique sensibility overpowers him. This sensibility doesn't stop unless he (the reader) shares it with some other person. He will burst if he keeps all this to himself. Some cameos are easy for a Kashmiri young man to understand because they depict the present-day conditions. But most of the cameos demand thorough understanding, knowledge and awareness of the historical and political situations depicted in them.

While reading the book I was attracted towards some complex, paradoxical and heavily loaded cameos. I visualized them talking to me in a different manner.

Gigoo's cameo 62 reads:

“A tear fell upon a trunk in the truck. It was a Muslim tear.”

I reshaped and expanded this cameo in my own way:

A Pandit trunk in a truck shook.

It was restive.

It quivered and revealed its pain:

"Where am I going?"

Where shall I fall down?

I don't know

Where to?

Will I change into a doormat?"

A tear fell upon the trunk.

A voice whispered;

"Where are you going?

you isolated man,

you aborigine

you original Kashmiri,

Where?"

I saw a tear.

I held it.

The tear became warm.

I stared at it.

It turned into glass.

I fixed my gaze.

The tear was me.

It showed many shapes.

The peaceful motherland changed colour.

It was rust.

then red

then green

and then the dirt of blood.

The tear fell.

It had crossed Pir Panchal.

The tear chased me shouting:

"Stop! Stop! Don't run away."

It had fallen like a falling star.

But it was a tear.

It was a tear of a Muslim.

A Muslim tear.

Any reader can understand cameo 116:-

"Panditji, don't weep over your dead father in my house. This is inauspicious for me."

My expanded version of this cameo is:

Panditji, stop this mourning in this rented house.

You consigned your father to the fire.

I must live now in my two-storeyed house.

your weeping

your mourning

the coming and going of the mourners

the recitation of the Gita

are inauspicious for me

in my two-storeyed house.

Panditji, I too have to live now.

The Ugly Kashmiri is a biting satire on all the Kashmiri Muslims, Kashmiri Pandits and social and political organizations. By writing this book the author has relieved himself of a very heavy burden, and lightened himself by lampooning all. Even the readers share his lightness. Everybody should read this book and pass it on to the young and the future generations as a part of inheritance. That way it will be a reference book for the coming generations.

In the end I strongly feel that this book should be translated into Kashmiri so that the enthusiastic Kashmiri reader, with a sense of humour, is able to read and enjoy it.

(Makhanlal Saraf is a stage, TV and Radio artiste, producer, director, playwright and scriptwriter. He is associated with the Allahabad Natya Sangh and International Theater Institute of Paris. He is the author of : kashri manz drama tehreek (Theatre Movement in Kashmir), From Actor to Artiste and Folk Theatre in Kashmir.)

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TO BE OR NOT TO BE

Suneesh Kaul

There are many times in your life when we look back and realise that we really haven't found the time to think about who we really are and what our real identities truly are. I regretfully haven't had my share of introspection.

I am a nuclear Kashmiri. Strange as it sounds, it is the definition of my individuality. I never actually had the pleasure to know my motherland. "Motherland", now this word has a new sense to my generation; our confines have gone past the homes of our ancestors. We are unclear with the whole idea of digging the culture and heritage that our parents and their parents have left for us. I say this with a white conscience. For me being called a Kashmiri has never been a matter of pride, it is more like a tag which I carry. Honestly speaking, the identity crisis never really bothered me, but now that I enter this critical phase in my life where I have to actually sit down and reflect upon where this attitude is going to take me, I see a gloomy vista ahead. Even after knowing that the blame is entirely on my shoulders I can't but fail to remember the countless times my parents have reminded me the love they shared with "their" Kashmir and that I should also follow their insight about the image they carry. Maybe, that is what did not register in my mind, and this is where the entire process of self determining failed to begin. But as I speak, the fog over my mind has started to drift away. There is still hope. I seem to have completed this jigsaw and now see a beautiful picture right in front of me. The next step my thought process asks me to take is to stimulate others of my age and take special care with those who still haven't begun to look at things in the right perspective, my perspective. "To be or not to be" is not a question I want to see on their lips and for that, I will definitely need a deeper insight into my own ethics.

I just wish that this would have taken a lot earlier to comprehend; I would have at least seen a smile on the faces of my anxious parentage. Call me atypical but this is the one thing that I really have sought to accomplish in all my short life. This kind of makes you think that we haven't lost the battle with our values perishing with time and I believe it is this internal affection that we share for each other that will lead to us holding our ideals high "again".



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ENGLISH CREATIVE WRITING IN EXILE !!?

Arvind Gigoo

English creative writing of substance and quality produced by the Kashmiri Pandits in exile is meagre. This literature is not even the shadow of the literature written by the Palestinians. The only notable books (I mean creative) written in English by the Kashmiri Pandits are listed below in order of their literary merit :-

Number 1.	: The Ugly Kashmiri (Cameos in exile) <i>Arvind Gigoo</i>	Published in 2006
Number 2	: Of Gods, Men and Militants <i>Dr. K. L. Chowdhury</i>	Published in 2000
Number 3	: Under the Shadow of Militancy (The Diary of an Unknown Kashmiri) <i>Tej N Dhar</i>	Published in 2002

Salman Rushdie — *O need not mention it* — is not a Pandit in exile although he is Kashmiri by origin. But his remarkable novel *Shalimar the Clown* (which every Kashmiri should read) encompasses, besides the history and politics of Kashmir, the language and culture of Kashmiris, and details all the aspects of Kashmiri Pandit migration. Sudha Koul, the author of the interesting and enjoyable *The Tiger Ladies* (*A Memoir of Kashmir*), is not a 'migrant' in the sense others are.

Exile creates conditions for the making of great works of art — "flashy things" and "distilled waters". Voltair's three years of exile in England gave rise to his philosophy of intellectual liberty. John Mirley said: "Voltaireism may be said to have begun from the flight of its founder from Paris to London."

In twenty years we, Kashmiri Pandits, gave only three books of creative writing in English (mentioned above) which are worthy of note. Notwithstanding these three books, our English literary scene is dismal and dreary.

Creative writing as a fine art is an essential ingredient of culture. A wit has said: "In fiction everything is true except name and dates; in history nothing is true except names and dates."

We haven't given any sublime prose fiction, profound short stories, elegant memories, autobiographies, diaries, confessions or literary essays to the Indian writing in English. Cliched journalistic articles, repetitive write-ups, platitudinous essays, repetitious features and lookalike columns published in the community journals and newspapers are of no significance and value. Such writings do not last.

Chaste, sensuous and magical prose surpasses poetry especially in modern times when free verse is abused and misused. (I have myself done so). A creative writer can reach a wider readership through clean, simple and pellucid prose.

What have we, exiles/emigres, left for the future generations in the form of creative writing?

Three books !!?

And we, old persons, cannot give anything substantial now.

The Kashmiri Pandit youth should seriously think about this vacuity of creative writing in English, and remember that it is the intellectual, emotional and aesthetic elements that make-up a fine work of art. Moreover, man, and not climate and nature, should be the subject and centre of creative writing in exile.

The youth, in spite of the busy life they lead and the pressures they work under, should train and prepare themselves by reading great masters of world literature including Jews and Black Americans, and the produce worthwhile literary works.

That way they will enrich literature and culture.



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KALUCHAK TO KOLKATA

What happened at Kaluchak on 14th May, 2002 is now an ugly page of history. Killing of pilgrims in a Bus, attack on residential family quarters of soldiers guarding our borders and killing of school children, their mothers, babies in their laps by Pakistani Fidayeen terrorists was not only shocking for myself and my family members living in the close neighborhood of Kaluchak but also to understand that whole of J&K including this army area on the National Highway is not a safe place any more. I had to leave for Kolkata on 16th May. Watching the action by our security personnel, running ambulances with injured women and children and dead bodies from 6 a.m. to 9.30 a.m. was so horrifying that I decided to abandon my visit to Kolkata. After hearing the news that the Fidayeens were killed by our Security Forces and search was for other members of Fidayeen group if any, made us scared at Apna Vihar and we watchfully kept a vigil over the on-going traffic for some time.



Moti Lal Kemmu

My wife and daughter were so scared that for a while we decided to lock our premises and leave for Bombay for some time. But after 11.30 p.m. when panic and reprisal action was over we heaved a sigh of relief. From 8 a.m. phone calls started coming from Bombay, Ahmedabad from my sons and local enquires from my friends and relatives enquiring about our well-being. This made us more and more panicky. Already shattered by the exile from the valley, all movable property worth lacs looted by militants and locals of Srinagar, refusal by the local Police authorities to lodge FIR about the loss, killing of some of our close relatives at point blank distances at Srinagar had made us to live as scared, awe stricken humans for the last 13 years and now Grenade attacks, cross firing and Fidayeen attacks took place in our close neighbourhood, all this was making us doubtful about our existence.

Kaluchak killings made us inactive for two days. Responding to telephone calls, explaining the happenings, viewing the T.V. shooting of the scenes repeatedly made us sit indoors and ponder about the action by Govt. of India to follow.

I had not been able to visit Kolkata during the 70 years of my life. I got many chances to visit but always something happened and the visit was abandoned. This time also I was to postpone the visit due to Kaluchak happenings but I waited with patience and decided to leave for Kolkata on 16th as decided earlier.

On 18th May, I was received at Kolkata by Pritim Roy, an actor of Rangkarmee, one of the prominent Theatre groups of Kolkata devoted to the production of plays in Hindi and Bangla. I was taken to the office of the Rangkarmee at 22, Raja Tagore Lane ~ the city and had to occupy their guest room. After making myself comfortable, I had the opportunity to witness "Antaryatra" a one character, one actress performance by Usha Ganguli at the Madhusudhan Mancha at 6 p.m. I was fortunate to sit among the stalwarts of Bangla Theatre and cinema to see this play. On my right Shri Tapas Sen the wizard of Stage Lighting of India and on my left was Shri Subrato Mukharjee, the famous character-actor who worked in all the films of Late Satyajit Ray.

Antaryatra is a play designed and performed by Usha Ganguli as solo performance. In fact she developed this play herself and call it, 'in dialogue with my characters'. 13 Female roles are enacted one by one and chain of events at different spots of the stage using different hand props and dupattas. These female roles are the ones that have been taken out from the productions of Rangkarmee performed during the last 25 years. The roles are known both nationally and internationally. Usha Ganguli's growth as an actress has been rooted in a concern to react and respond to all those forces that inhibit the fulfillment of humanity. The characters she has played over the years have been for her experiences of living other lives and learning the modes of survival and the struggles they call for in different

situations". These characters she has chosen from and recreated once again for solo performance are from Gorky's MOTHER, Ibsen's DOLLS HOUSE, Brecht's MOTHER COURAGE, and from Indian playwrights like Tagore, Mahesh Elkunchwar, Ratnakar Matkari, Manu Bhandari, Mahasheveta Devi and Shafaat Khan. Having remained a dancer, she has the perfect skill to find and portray balance between rhythm and reality on the stage and achieve rare exuberance. In short one can say that Usha Ganguli has tremendous potential to portray Indian woman in different situations- European women's struggle for survival -and all her women emerge as critics of life rising to a higher state of realization as they grow within their plays and life. In spite of some trouble with her right knee she has enough stamina to stand on the stage for the portrayal of different roles woven together to present this play called ANTARYATRA.

The set designed by Shri Khalid Hussain was the most suited for this play. It was a charming fetish attraction giving full scope to the actress to move from one spot to another. The lighting was devised and designed by Shri Tapas Sen which further helped the actress to bring out the inner feelings of characterization.

There was a galaxy of intellectuals and artists of Kolkata on the stage after the show felicitating the actress for her performance.

Usha Ganguli teaches Hindi at the Bhawanipur College in the morning hours and devotes whole time for the theatre later on. She has traveled almost all over the country presenting her plays. She was the first women director I had seen in Jammu presenting her plays COURT MARTIAL and MAIY AT. Later on I had seen her RUDALI at Delhi in which she herself played the main role. After acting several roles under different directors of famous Indian plays she formed her own group RANGKARMEE in the year 1970.

On 19th May I saw the famous Ibsenian play in Bangla - PUTUL KHELA a production recreated by the daughter of late Shambu Mitra and Tripti Mitra who presented the play during the year 1958 to 1978 and were very successful to the extent that theatre enthusiasts would come from other parts of the country to see the play. Both Shambu and Tripti were great artistes of Bangla Theatre of the last century who devotedly developed Bangla Theatre. Their daughter Sanwli Mitra and her husband presented PUTUL KHELA AS A TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF OLD VETERANS. The Ibsen's Doll's House was written during 1879-80, a realistic play in which problem of combining language which shall at once seem natural and be dramatically appropriate. In this play Ibsen took a loving husband as his hero and his heroine a childish creature, adoring her husband and yet, when her eyes are opened to his character, determining that she must leave his house. This is the old theme of marriage and money certainly, but presented with such a difference as to make to see it absolutely new. This play served as a clarion call to the younger generation of dramatic realists because of its novelty of treatment and style.

" Presented in a smaller air conditioned Hall with 300 chairs the audience viewed the play with patience till end. There was no murmur or side talks as long as the play was on, trying to get into the essence of the performance and view it with keen interest is the finest quality of Bangla audience, I have experienced.

On 20th May I spent my morning hours reading the Hindi version of my play NAGAR UDAS, as the same evening I had to read it at the mini auditorium before an invited audience. As soon as I reached Kolkata, the day temperature began to rise. It was highest after 23 years on this day; viz. 44 degrees Celsius. The heat of Jammu and the day temperature perhaps traveled with me to Kolkata and I got afraid if invited gentry would come to listen to a Kashmiri play when Bangla theatrists are far ahead of all the language theatres of India and have a tradition of modern theatre of more than 150 years having set several national and international records.;

Premises of Fine Arts Academy, Kolkata is a complex of several art galleries, Theatre Halls, Cinema Halls mini auditoriums and open spaces for exhibitions of sorts and open air Theatre performances. It

seems to be a meeting ground of sorts of artists and performers. Jibnananda Sabhagar is also situated in the complex where I had to read my play at 6 p.m. I was received at the gate by the actors of Rangkannee, introduced to the audience by Usha Ganguli and felicitated with gifts and bouquets. Half a dozen Kashmiris were also present in the audience at the Sabbaghar among the actors, theatrists and others. The complex is situated in the center of the city and is hub of cultural activities. I was told that the central building was designed by Late Satyajit Ray and has 3 cinema Halls in it, a Hall in each storey. After my reading the play there was some interaction with some of seniors and actors besides smt. Pratibha Agarwal, Usha Ganguli, Shri B.K. Moza. of K.P. Sabha of Kolkata and shri Sushil Ji. I was asked whether translation loses some charms after its version from the original language I said yes, fervour and flavour and colloquial nuances lose the charm.

The next day I visited Natya Shodh Sansthan at Salt Lake in company of Shri Sushil Ji an actor of Rangkannee. I had no idea of this Sansthan having its own building and being in possession of valuable documentary material for theatrists. Viewing the 4 storey building with the following words above the gate 'NATYA SHODH SANTHAN', I was totally taken aback. I had imagined that this Sansthan would be housed in some shabby corner of the city with two or three rooms storing the documentary material. I could within myself praise the sense of cultural awakening and wisdom of Bangla people to have some separate place, a building, housing documentary information and history of Indian Theatre, theatrists, playwrights, artistes and others. As soon as I enter the premises my eyes were on a photograph and I exclaimed "must be Tagore's Visarjan" a number of such photographs were seen by me on the three sides of stairs and foyer like space. Soon Pratibha Agarwal, the director of the Sansthan came to receive me and I was taken the round of all the stories and rooms of the Sansthan. I was really astonished to find that immense work has been done by Pratibha Ji. The Sansthan was founded on 19th July 1981 and it entered its new premises in February 2000. It is really country's repository of archival material and documentation center of Indian Theatre in respect of books, photographs, manuscripts, periodicals, set-models, costumes, masks, audio and video recordings, posters, replicas of tickets, press cuttings and review clippings, brochures, recordings OF INTERVIEWS AND MANY MORE THINGS CONNECTED WITH theater and Theatre arts. It provides full facilities to students and scholars of Theatre and remains open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. It will be a true research center for interested scholars in future.

This Sansthan is not only a building and material it houses but conducts Seminars, lectures, recitals etc. throughout the year and has a publishing programme too. It has already produced some monographs of some of the Theatre personalities. I did not find information about the Theatre of Kashmir but Press Cuttings and reviews about theatre activity of Jammu preserved in two separate folders.

From Sansthan, we left for Bharatiya Bhasha Parishad which has done immense work for the development of Hindi and its propagation as National language. I was quite ignorant about the activities of the Parishad. I spent a few minutes in the Library of the Parishad as most of office bearers were not available. There is a book-shop at the entrance selling books of the Parishad etc. Parishad publishes a journal in Hindi IV AGARTH. A latest number devoted to the Indian theatre was given to me by Smt Pratibha Agarwal at the Natya Shodh Sansthan. Parishad is housed in a big mansion, 5 storeys high on Shakespeare lane in Kolkata. It was donated to Parishad by one Hindi enthusiast. After leaving the Parishad premises I was introduced to a simple bearded personality of my own age and Susheel Ji told me that the donar of Parishad building was his brother. I considered myself lucky enough to have met brother of the donar of a building to Parishad.

We walked to Fine Arts premises where I had to see a Bangla play of Bangla actors and actresses under the direction of a young director.

The sale proceeds of the show were to be donated to the victims of Gujrat riots. The tickets were sold in advance and the house was packed before the second bell rang. Before entering the Hall I had my ticket in my hand. Watching from a distance a Bangla youngman approached me to enquire if I have any spare tickets for sale. There were people who wanted to see this first show in spite of the fact that all the tickets were sold in advance.

The play, a Bangla adaptation of a German play about an actor patronized by Nazi dictator Hitler. Shri Gautam was in the lead and I was watching one of the great actors whose body and voice was fully trained for this role of immense variety and magnitude. Other actors and actresses were doing full justice to their roles. There I was proper co-ordination which enabled the production to go unblemished. I wish I could have followed Bangla language and understood all the nuances of the language. This Brechtian style production will be remembered by me as long as I live. After the curtain fall I along with Usha Ganguly went inside to congratulate Shri Gautam, the Director, and all those associated with the production. For whole night I was thinking about the acting style, the importance of the Mirror, huge head of Hitler and the significant things of the production.

The next day I spent in the company of Shri B.M. Misri; President Kashmiri Pandit Sabha Kolkata at his residence where I saw his Video recording of Yagnopavit ceremony of his grand son performed at Kolkata with all the Sanskaras and rituals as being observed by Kashmiri Pandits. The video recording was edited by Shri Misri himself. Shri Misri was a top class actor of Samaj Sudhar Sammiti Natak Vibhag and Kala Kendra Srinagar during sixth decade of the last century and had enacted many a prominent roles. He was also a stage singer and entertaining his audiences with his wonderful performance. He mostly worked under the direction of Mr K. N. Bhan a famous art director of J&K state. While chatting about those old days on stage where maximum time we have passed in Kashmir.

In the afternoon we left for Salt Lake where office of the Kashmir Pandit Sabha is situated. Shri B.K. Moza and some of the other members were present. It is a three storey building with a hall, conference Hall, Guest Rooms, library, and meeting rooms etc. Books on Kashmirology have been preserved in the premises. Unfortunately it is only the people of old generation taking interest in maintaining liason with each other through Kashmiri, younger generation seems to be isolated. May be the younger generation may be joining the community on the occasion of Navreh and other festivals. Since whole of the community is scattered and a few centers have emerged with their Headquarters at Kolkata, Bombay, Bangalore, New Delhi and other places, yet there seems to be little liason between all the places, all the Sabhas and community organizations. The Sabha Publishes VITASTA, journal with a special issue devoted to some specific topic every year in three languages, English, Hindi & Kashmiri. A great amount of energy workload, and money is devoted for the endeavour. Shri Moza is the spirit behind this endeavour. I wish younger generations of Pandits take interest in this endeavour so that VITASTA is published unhampered in future and establishes contact between the community centers all over the globe.

On 23rd I was all set to return. I had done my packing early in the morning and in the afternoon Pritim Roy and Opendra saw me off in Rajdhani. I reached back to Jammu on 25th morning and began to ponder about the great interest Bangla people of Kolkata are taking in the cultural development of the country in general and of Bangla culture and art in particular. There are many Festivals of Theatre and music that take place annually here.

After One Month I began to write this travelogue of mine, again and again remembering what happened at Kaluchak a month earlier which had made me to think to abandon the travel to Kolkata. I had narrated the tragic incidents to Usha Ganguli that took place at Kaluchak on 14th May. Usha Ji was conducting a rehearsal of Kashi Nama on 22nd and she asked one of the child artistes to become - Fidayeen and another to act his victim, as happened at Kaluchak. The victim child was at her dressing table preparing to leave for her school when a Fidayeen shot her dead. The child artiste had improvised her scene so accurately that Usha Ji was all praise for her. Will this scene be a part of Kashi Nama production? I do not know. But I am afraid if pan Islamic Terrorist movements spread what will happen to our culture, Bangla Culture, Shall our traditions survive?



THE VALLEY WHERE SNOW STOPPED FALLING !

Promilla Qazi (Faridabad)

The smell of roasted potatoes was hung in the air with aroma of fresh Haakh (green leaves; very common vegetable of Kashmir) and rice cooking in almost every household. Only a few were lucky enough to see mutton boiling in the Degh (A big vessel) Darkness started descending with more chill, engulfing every light around fading them slowly. Almost all houses were wrapped in a deserted look and smoke of fresh coals in the Kangdi.

Zoya cleaned all the vessels and shared the heat of Kangdi with her mother. Under the heavy quilt she was shivering and waiting for the morning. Morning of new hopes and dreams.! Her eyes closed in prayer but the face which emerged and broke her Ibadat (prayer) was not of any God or Pegumber but a young handsome face of a man. The naughtiest eyes, golden hair, Crimson cheeks and fairest of all, her beloved, her only friend", Adil.

A deep sigh escaped her clenched teeth which stirred her mother. In the faint sight of street light she looked at Zoya and her heart fluttered too in deepest pain. The tear drop on both the corners of their eyes tried to hide from each-other. They both had their share of pain which was never discussed or shared; a silent compromise of understanding was made unknowingly within two tormented souls.

The newspapers and news channels were blaring about the Aman (peace) in valley and since few years the massacre was indeed stopped but they both could never get out of it despite so called normalcy. The blood oozing body of Rehman, her abba, and frozen body of her elder brother in tow, their wounded and silenced voices; frost bites of tragedy never left their heart even for a moment. They lost the bound of sharing, with two lost members, forever.

The patches on their Pheran and hearts were not enough to give them warmth on the coldest nights. Sabiha never accepted the truth and kept on waiting for the two men of her life in spite of burying their bodies she waited for some miracle to get them back, and Zoya played along the game which she detested but carried without any fuss. Hide and seek of emotions was breaking her growing up days piece by piece and that was the time when she met Adil.

It was a beautiful day when she left for the market with her big basket of sorted vegetables and a small basket of dry fish. Azan (Morning Prayer) and temple bells were tolling. Hustle bustle of morning activity was full on. Many known-unknown faces were taking a dip in the river, noise from the houseboats in the row, running chicks around, and daily customer's bargaining made that place full of life. She loved this period where life was moving and merry. After the stagnation at her small house it was always a welcome.

The dimple on her rosy cheeks and silver dangles which her mother threw in one of her fits and she picked and wore them and the yellow scarf with red dots on her head, she looked prettiest. Her beautiful eyes darted towards everything and without any fear she settled there on her favorite place from where she could see river, road and people. Soon her basket was empty but the smell of dry fish remained on her hands and Pheran. She stood on the bank of Jhelum and watched boats going around. She longed for any such rides. She felt the money in her Pheran pocket, touched that many times but did not have any courage to take that out for a small ride. She wanted to go to the other side but she did not dare to.

Suddenly the sunny morning turned breezy and within hours it started snowing unexpectedly. The flakes of snow softly landed on her yellow scarf, on the dimples of her rosy cheeks and on her hands. She was mesmerized. Feeling the delicate sensation she closed her eyes. For a moment she was lost but suddenly she started running towards her house. Shouting hysterically...

"Please drop my baskets at home Shabbo."

"Okay, don't worry, I will take care." Not only Shabbo but all the ladies there were looking at her sympathetically. Snow was the worst time for her mother which transported her to the frozen body of her only son. Fits were acute and unmanageable, everyone knew in that small village. Not even a single house was left without any scar of past years but Zoya's mother's scar never healed.

"Oh Allah, please let Armi sleep inside the house, please don't let her come out and see the snow" she was praying frantically. It was impossible to handle her fits alone. She was afraid and cold with fear. Wiping snowflakes from her body she kept running. On the last slope towards her home she collided with someone and fell down, rolling down, in utter confusion too, she could see another body rolling besides her. Earth and sky were topsy turvy. Everything was running in slow motion. Strangely she did not feel any fear or cold. They were laughing when they stooped at that hill foot. His golden hair, fair skin and sparkling eyes were same. Even years could not change him except his height and physic. He was looking tall, lean and handsome. Laughing heartedly he hugged her and she too embraced him. He was Adil, who had left village few years back and was studying in Srinagar.

In his polo neck sweater and jeans he was looking dashing. Suddenly she was very conscious of her clothes. In her patched Pheran and old scarf she felt shy and embarrassed. She did not know that Adil's eyes could see only the spark of her eyes, dimple of her cheeks and silver dangles shining. She did not know that her tender youth and her beauty was enough to hold anyone.

"You did that intentionally?" she asked shyly.

"Yeah, I was waiting for you and when you were running towards home I collided with you" he was still laughing.

She smiled back and tried to hide the patch on her Pheran.

"I heard about the tragedy at your place."

Her eyes suddenly lost all sheen. The dimple in her cheeks became sad hollows and tears started streaming down. She looked at her house which was quite. A volcano was in process and it could burst anytime.

"I hate them." She whispered. "I will kill them"

"You knew who were they?"

"No they did not show their faces, just threw the bodies outside the house. Two people of my family killed in twenty days! Why? And the left behind are dying each day. What did we do?" she was crying but her eyes were red with anger and helplessness.

"This is Zihad Zoya, some sacrifices were needed."

"Zihad? you call it Zihad? Killing innocent people ruthlessly, and leaving their families on mercy of others is Zihad?"

Adil looked at her, pacifying the anger with his presence. Suddenly a shrilling noise left Zoya cold. She pushed Adil and ran towards her mother who had come out. Wailing, beating her chest, she fell on the imaginary bodies of her beloved husband and only son. Every snow reminded her the most tragic day of her life and compelled her to relive that moment. Zoya tried to control her and Adil watched it all. ... terrified.

Sobbing and wailing of two ladies was penetrating like knives to ears whoever could hear them. Slowly Adil turned and left. Their pain terrified him.

Soon Zoya's mornings brightened up with Adil's presence. On the slopes, under walnut trees, near the stream they kept meeting. Snow-clad mountains, Maple trees, and beautiful nature became companion and witness of their love. Adil got beautiful velvet Pherans and silken scarves for her which she could never wear except for some moments when he insisted her to show him. They were happy youngsters who were living the moment under the shadows of tension and uncertainty.

Soon he had to leave. She was crestfallen. It was time to go. He hugged her in his warm embrace. All his warmth was melting in her chilled bones. Suddenly her heart beat stopped for a moment. She froze in his arms. All the warmth vanished in a second. She felt a hard and cold thing touching her body. She need not to see that; her instinct told her what it was !

A gun!!!!

"You are not going to attend the college. ..." It was not a question, she whispered.

He kept mum with downcast eyes.

" Adil ..." she was trembling.

"All these years you were not studying but getting training at camps?" tears were dry, her lips pale. All she could feel was blood of her father's dead body soaking her and hard and blue hands of her brother hanging stiff.

Adil's handsome face was ashen. She looked at him. How she loved his presence, how she adored him! His golden hair and naughty eyes suddenly seemed so cold and distant. She turned slowly and walked away. Her heart was crying but no tears were there. He tried to speak but she stopped him. She heard him kick his bike and he left. For a moment she stood there, without looking back and sighed. Another killer was on prowl and he was her beloved!

Slowly but steadily she walked to the nearest army camp.

Adil's encounter was next day in all daily newspapers. His dead handsome face had the coldest eyes. She deliberately averted her eyes from the photo but her heart kept on watching her beloved in deep sleep.

"Promilla Qazi" is a short story writer based in Faridabad.





Selected Vaakh of Lal Ded

*" Moodas gyaanich kath no van-zey,
Kharas gor dina raavi doh,
Seki shaathas byol no vavy-zay
Raav'rzina Kom yaajan teel."*

Meaning :-

Impart not esoteric truth to fools,
nor on molasses feed an ass.
Do not sow seed in sandy beds,
nor waste your oil cakes on bran.



SECTION-IV

HINDI & KASHMIRI



Selected Vaakh of Lal Ded

*" Haa manushi kayaazi chhuk
Vuthaan seki loor,
Ami rati haa-maali pakina naav,
Leukhuy yi Naaraani Karm'ni rikhi
Tee maali heaky na phirit kaanh, "*

Meaning :-

O man, why do you twist a stick of sand ?
You cannot tow your boat with it.
What God has written "in Karma's line"
cannot be altered or reversed.

कश्मीरी पंडित और कुंभ का महात्म्य

भारत सम्पूर्ण विश्व में एक अनोखा देश है जहां विभिन्न धर्म, सम्प्रदाय, मत और पंथ में आस्था रखने वाले व्यक्ति एक साथ मिलजुल कर रहते हैं जिसको हम बड़े गर्व के साथ अनेकता में एकता की संज्ञा देते हैं। हर वर्ग के अपने अलग-अलग तीज त्योहार हैं। जिनको उसके अनुयायी बड़ी लगन और श्रद्धाभाव के साथ मनाते हैं। इनमें सनातन धर्म सबसे अधिक प्राचीन और प्रकृति के नियमों के निकट है जो सृष्टि की रचना से जुड़ा हुआ है जिसका कोई आदि और अन्त नहीं है। यह निरन्तर है अतः सनातन है। इस धर्म के कुछ मूल सिद्धांत हैं जो सृष्टि का समन्वय बनाये रखने के लिये नितान्त आवश्यक हैं और जिनका हम सबको पालन करना हमारा एक परम कर्तव्य है।



डा०
वैकुण्ठ नाथ शर्मा

हमारा शरीर पांच तत्वों अग्नि, वायु, जल, पृथ्वी और आकाश से मिलकर बना है और गृत्यु के पश्चात इन्हीं पांचो तत्वों में विलीन हो जाता है ये ही पंच तत्व हमारे शरीर में जीवन का संचार करते है और उसको गति प्रदान करते हैं। प्रकृति का यह नियम बिना किसी रुकावट के निरन्तर चलता रहता है। प्रकृति के इस क्रम को बनाये रखने के लिये इन पांचों तत्वों में समन्वय बनाये रखना आवश्यक हैं और जिसकी पूर्ति के लिये कुंभ महापर्व आयोजित किया जाता है।

हमारे धर्म ग्रन्थों के अनुसार भगवान विष्णु की नाभि से ब्रह्मा प्रकट हुए। जिन्होंने इस सृष्टि की रचना की। कुछ अति बहुमूल्य वस्तुएँ प्राप्त करने के उद्देश्य से समुद्र मंथन किया गया। जिसमें सफेद एरावत हाथी निकला जिसको इन्द्र ने ग्रहण किया, विष निकला जिसका पान करके भगवान शिव नीलकंठ बन गये, कामधेनु गाय और कल्पवृक्ष स्वर्ग चले गये पर जब अमृत कलश निकला तो अमृत पान कर अमरत्व प्राप्त करने के लिये देवताओं और असुरों में छीना - झपटी होने लगी इस छीना - झपटी में कलश से अमृत की कुछ बूंदे हरिद्वार, प्रयाग, नासिक तथा उज्जैन में गिरीं जिसके कारण यह चारों नगर पवित्र माने जाने लगे और वहां कुंभ महापर्व का आयोजन प्रारम्भ हुआ। कुछ ऐसी धारणा बनी कि यदि कुंभ महापर्व के अवसर पर प्रयाग में संगम में, हरिद्वार में गंगा नदी में, नासिक में गोदावरी नदी में तथा उज्जैन में शिप्रा नदी में डुबकी लगाकर स्नान कर लिया जाय तो मनुष्य को मोक्ष प्राप्त होता है और वह बिना किसी रुकावट के सीधा स्वर्ग में जाता है।

अमृत पान को लेकर देवताओं और असुरों के मध्य हो रही खींचतान को सुलझाने के लिये भगवान विष्णु को मोहिनी के रूप में प्रकट होना पड़ा और उन्होंने दोनों पक्षों को अमृत पान के लिये संयम से रहने को कहा और पूरे अनुशासन के साथ एक पंक्ति में बैठने का सुझाव दिया। फिर अमृत पान उस तरफ से कराना प्रारम्भ किया जिधर देवतागण बैठे हुए थे। राहु को लगा कि कहीं उसका नम्बर आते-आते अमृत समाप्त न हो जाये और वह अमृतपान से वंचित रह जाये। इसलिए वह देवताओं के बीच उनका रूप धारण कर बैठ गया। जब उसने अमृत पान कर लिया तो सूर्य और चन्द्रमा जो उसके निकट बैठे हुए थे। विष्णु जी को संकेत द्वारा बताया कि यह तो डुफ्लिकेट है। जिस पर विष्णु जी ने क्रोध में आकर अपने सुदर्शन चक्र से राहु के गले को उसके धड़ से काट दिया पर तब तक वह अमृत पान कर चुका था अतः वह अमर हो गया। पर इस घटना से राहु सूर्य और चन्द्रमा का शत्रु हो गया और जब भी वह सूर्य या चन्द्रमा को अपना निवाला बनाता है तो उनमें गृहण लगता है।

कुंभ महापर्व वास्तव में प्रकृति के पंच महाभूतों की रक्षा करता है। यह एक प्रकार से प्रकृति और सुखद मानव जीवन के मध्य शुभ-शुभ सम्भावनाओं को खोजने की प्रक्रिया का नाम है। जिसमें विभिन्न संस्कृतियों के मध्य एक समरसता के साथ तारतम्य स्थापित करने का मार्ग ढूँढा जाता है। ताकि जीवन को समृद्ध और शान्तिमय बनाया जा सके यह सर्वहित को दृष्टिगत रखते हुए सबको यथोचित सम्मान देने के साथ-साथ सदकर्मों को सबल बनाने के लिए सब में प्रेम और भक्ति की भावना को संचार करने का एक प्रबल माध्यम है। हमारे धर्मशास्त्रों में इस बात का स्पष्ट उल्लेख है कि पवित्र गंगा जो राजा भगीरथ की कठोर तपस्या के कारण भगवान शिव की जटा से निकल कर इस धरती पर अवतरित हुई को मोक्षप्रदान करने वाली एक कल्याणकारी नदी माना गया है। जिसके कारण सम्पूर्ण मानव समाज उसके प्रति अपनी कृतज्ञता प्रकट करने के लिये उसके तटों पर पहुंचा ताकि उसकी पवित्रता निरन्तर बनी रहे और उसे हर प्रकार के प्रदूषण से मुक्त रखा जा सके। कुंभ महापर्व का वास्तव में उद्देश्य मानव और प्रकृति के बीच सह अस्तित्व की भावना को जागृत करना है।

व्यवहारिक रूप में भी मानव प्रकृति का ही एक अंग है दोनों एक दूसरे के पूरक हैं। परन्तु जीवन की जटिलतायें और अनियंत्रित विकास अब जल, जंगल, ज़मीन और जीवों के लिये संकट उत्पन्न कर रहा है। उनकी रक्षा और संरक्षण के लिये कुंभ जैसे महापर्व का महत्व और अधिक बढ़ गया है। मानवीय लोभ के कारण प्रकृति का स्वरूप तीव्र गति के साथ बदलता जा रहा है। प्रकृति का शोषण, प्रदूषण और अतिक्रमण हमारे लोभ के ज्वलंत प्रमाण हैं। इसका समाधान किसी आधुनिक तकनीक या प्रौद्योगिकी से सम्भव नहीं अपितु आपसी सूझबूझ से सम्भव है जो कुंभ जैसे महापर्व के आयोजन में पनपती है और जिसके लिये किसी शासन की नहीं अपितु अनुशासन की आवश्यकता है। देवासुर संग्राम के पीछे असुरों द्वारा प्रकृति जन्य वस्तुओं पर अपना आधिपत्य जमाने की भावना अधिक थी इस कारण इसे धर्म और अधर्म के बीच का संघर्ष भी कहा जा सकता है।

कश्मीरी पंडितों का इस कुंभ के महापर्व से क्या नाता है इसको भलिभांति समझने के लिये हमें कश्मीर के इतिहास पर एक विहंगम दृष्टि डालनी होगी। कश्मीर एक सीमान्त राज्य है जो अपनी अनोखी भौगोलिक स्थिति के कारण आदि काल से विदेशी आक्रंताओं के आक्रमणों और उनकी घुसपैठ को निरन्तर झेलता रहा। सबसे बड़े आश्चर्य की बात यह रही कि अनेक विदेशी घुसपैठिये स्थानीय नागरिकों की उदारता और दयाभाव के कारण कालान्तर में षडयंत्र रचकर कश्मीर के शासक बन गये। इन विदेशी घुसपैठियों की करतूतों और कारगुज़ारियों का सविस्तार वर्णन करना इस आलेख में सम्भव नहीं क्योंकि उससे विषयान्तर हो जाने की सम्भावना अधिक है। संक्षेप में कहा जा सकता है कि कश्मीर के लम्बे इतिहास में कश्मीर पर अधिकतर गैर कश्मीरी शासक राज्य करते रहे। जिनका कभी भी कश्मीर से कोई सरोकार नहीं रहा।

सम्राट अशोक २६७-२३२ ईसा से पूर्व जो मगध के मौर्य वंश का था के शासन काल में कश्मीर में बौद्ध धर्म का बहुत बड़े पैमाने पर प्रचार और प्रसार हुआ तथा एक प्रकार से सारा कश्मीर बौद्ध धर्म का अनुयायी हो गया उस काल खण्ड में कश्मीर में अनेक बौद्ध मठ और विहार निर्माण किये गये। अनेक विद्वान कश्मीरी पंडित बौद्ध धर्म के प्रचार के लिये अन्य देशों में गये और वहां के नागरिकों का बौद्ध धर्म से परिचय कराया जो उस समय की परिस्थितियों में काफी दुषकर और कठिन कार्य था। पर जब महापराक्रमी सम्राट ललितादित्य ७२५ ई में कश्मीर का शासक बना तो उसने पुनः बौद्ध धर्म में रमे हुए कश्मीरी पंडितों में सनातन धर्म की अलख जगाई और उनको सनातन धर्म के तीज त्योहार मनाने को प्रेरित किया। ललितादिन्य स्वयं सूर्य वंशी क्षत्रिय था उसने सूर्य को समर्पित मार्तण्ड मन्दिर का निर्माण कराया वह शिव भक्त था इस नाते उसने कश्मीर में सनातन धर्म की पुनःप्रतिष्ठा स्थापित

करने के लिये उससे जुड़े अनेक आस्था के केन्द्रों का कश्मीर में जीर्णोद्धार कराया ताकि सनातन धर्म को एक नयी गति प्रदान की जा सके।

ललितादित्य की विजयी सेनायें तिब्बत को पार कर एक तूफान के समान चीन के बीजिंग नगर तक गयीं। उसने दारदिस्तान को पार कर टर्की पर आक्रमण कर दिया और उसको अपने आधीन कर लिया। उसने इरान और अफगानिस्तान को अपने साम्राज्य का अंग बना लिया। उसने पंजाब, सिंध मेवाड़, मालवा तथा गुजरात को अपने आधीन कर लिया और कश्मीर के साम्राज्य की सीमा का विस्तार अरब सागर के तट पर स्थित द्वारिका नगर तक कर लिया।

हर्षवर्धन ने ६०६ ई में कन्नौज का एक विशाल साम्राज्य स्थापित कर लिया था। ललितादित्य ने ७४० ई. में कन्नौज पर आक्रमण कर दिया और वहां के राजा यशोवर्मन को परास्त कर अपने साम्राज्य की सीमा का पूर्व में उड़ीसा तक विस्तार कर लिया। वह अपने साथ कन्नौज के अनेक विद्वान कान्यकुब्ज ब्राह्मणों को कश्मीर ले गया जिनमें महान कवि भवभूति और शैवाचार्य अत्रिगुप्त भी थे जिनके वंशज वासुगुप्त को कश्मीर के शैवमत का मेरुदंड माना जाता है। ललितादित्य की इन विजयों के कारण हरिद्वार, प्रयाग, उज्जैन तथा नासिक जैसे पवित्र नगर जहां कुम्भ महाषर्य का आयोजन होता था उसके साम्राज्य का अंग बन गये। जिसके कारण ललितादित्य का कुंभ के महापर्व से साक्षात्कार हुआ और उसने इस प्रकार का मेला कश्मीर में आयोजित करने की एक वृहद कार्य योजना बनायी। अपने इस स्वप्न को मूर्ति रूप देने के लिये उसने दक्षिण कश्मीर में उस स्थान का चयन किया जहां झेलम नदी का सिन्धु नदी में संगम होता है और वहाँ फूलपुर नाम से एक नगर बसाया जो अब शादीपुर के नाम से जाना जाता है और पाक अधिकृत कश्मीर के मुंजपफराबाद ज़िले में आता है।

ललितादित्य ने इस प्रकार ४वीं शताब्दी में कश्मीर के शादीपुर नगर में कुंभ मेला आयोजित करने की परम्परा का सूत्रपात किया। यह कुंभ मेला भाद्रमास की शुक्ल पक्ष की चतुर्थी से लेकर शारदा अष्टमी तक आयोजित किया जाता था और इस में काफ़ी बड़ी कश्मीरी पंडित श्रद्धालु भाग लेते थे। जिनके लिये यह किसी तीर्थराज से कम न था। ईसमें भाग लेकर प्राप्त करने का अपना एक अलग महत्व था।

जब आदिशंकराचार्य (७८८-८२०) ने शादीपुर के निकट कृष्ण गंगा की घाटी में स्थित शारदा गांव में ९वीं शताब्दी में शारदा सर्वज्ञ पीठ नाम से भारत में प्रथम पीठ स्थापित की और देश में शंकराचार्य पद्धति की परम्परा का शुभारम्भ किया तो शादीपुर में आयोजित होने वाले कुंभ मेले का महत्व कई गुना बढ़ गया और इसका पुण्य प्राप्त करने के लिये दूर-दूर से श्रद्धालु आने लगे और इसने एक धार्मिक पर्व का रूप ले लिया। कश्मीर के हिन्दू शासकों ने भी इस कुंभ मेले के आयोजन में अपना भरपूर सहयोग प्रदान किया। यह कुंभ मेला कश्मीर में बिना किसी व्यवधान के भारत के १९४७ में स्वतंत्र होने तक चलता रहा पर २६ अक्टूबर १९४७ को पाकिस्तान के सैनिकों द्वारा कबायलियों के छद्म वेष में कश्मीर पर आक्रमण कर देने के पश्चात राजनीतिक परिस्थितियों में अमूल चूक परिवर्तन हो जाने के कारण इस कुंभ मेले के आयोजन को स्थगित करना पड़ा और अब यह एक बीते हुए कल की स्मृति बन कर रह गया है।

समय की पुकार है कि इस अति प्राचीन कुंभ मेले के पुनः आयोजन के लिये एक सार्थक पहल की जाये। जिस प्रकार भारत सरकार सिखों के जत्थों को ननकाना साहब के दर्शन का प्रबन्ध करती है हाजियों की मक्का-मदीना की यात्रा की व्यवस्था करती है उसी प्रकार कश्मीरी पंडितों के दिलों को भारत सरकार द्वारा पाक अधिकृत कश्मीर में स्थित शारदा पीठ के दर्शन करने की व्यवस्था करनी चाहिये ताकि वे भी अपने सदियों पुराने आस्था के केन्द्र से

जुड़ सके। जितनी जल्दी इसको एक साकार रूप दिया जाये उतना ही अधिक भविष्य में यह इस क्षेत्र के लिये लाभकारी सिद्ध होगा।

कुंभ के महापर्व में सर्व जन हिताय सर्व जन सुखाय की मूल भावना निहित है इसलिये इसको जन मानव के उत्थान के लिये शुभ और कल्याणकारी माना जाता है। यह हमें प्रकृति का सन्तुलन बनाये रखने के लिये हमारा क्या दायित्व है उसका बोध कराता है। यह समाज के हर वर्ग में समरसता स्थापित करने का पाठ पढ़ाता है। इसका आयोजन १२ वर्ष के अन्तराल पर किया जाता है। ६ वर्ष के अन्तराल पर अर्ध कुंभ आयोजित होता है। यहां पर सुधी पाठको के लिये यह बताना नितान्त आवश्यक है कि कुंभ परम्परा के कारण भारत सम्पूर्ण विश्व का जगदगुरु बना और जिसके विचलन और विखण्डन के कारण देश सांस्कृतिक, भौतिक तथा नैतिक पतन की कगार पर जा पहुंचा है अब जिसको उसे स्थान पर पुनः आसीन करने के लिये ज्ञान परम्परा को फिर जीवित करने की आवश्यकता है। पंच भूतों की रक्षा आवश्यक है क्योंकि उन्हीं की योगिक क्रिया द्वारा प्राणों का संचार होता है जब जल पर ही संकट है तो फिर प्राणों की सुरक्षा असम्भव है। नदी का मूल जल है और जल से ही इस संसार का सारा जीवन है। इसलिये इस सृष्टि की रक्षा और संवर्द्धन हेतु किये गये सुर-असुर संघर्ष को कुंभ का रूप दिया गया है जितनी जल्दी हम इस मूल मंत्र को समझ ले उतना ही यह हम सबके लिये हितकारी होगा। जल की महिमा का गुणगान संत रहीमदास ने कुछ इस प्रकार किया है।

रहिमन पानी राखिये, बिन पानी सब सून ।

पानी गये न ऊबरे, भोती, मानुक चून ॥

डा० बैकुण्ड नाथ शर्मा, मनोहर निवास, कश्मीरी मोहल्ला, लखनऊ २२६००३



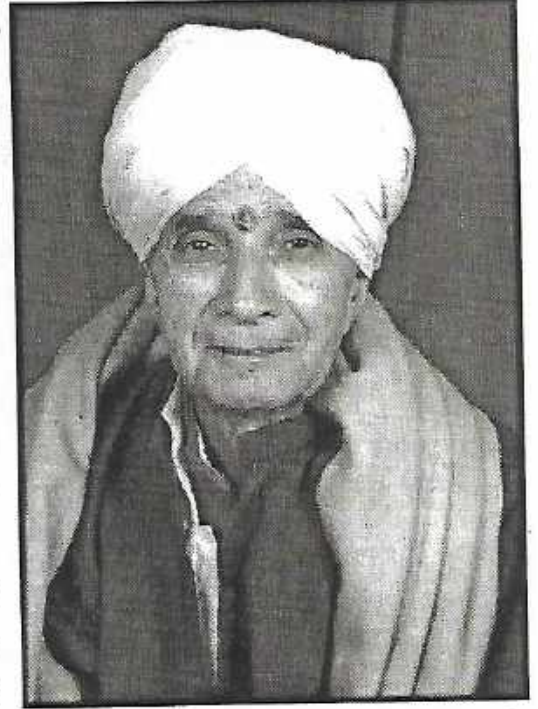
भारतीय संस्कृति के ज्योतिष्मान नक्षत्र

पं० प्रेम नाथ शास्त्री

कश्मीर प्राचीन काल से सारे विश्व में प्राकृतिक संपदा के लिए ही नहीं, अपितु साहित्यिक संपदा के लिए भी प्रसिद्ध रहा है। प्राकृतिक संपदा तथा साहित्यिक संपदा के समन्वय के कारण इसकी यशरूपी पताका हज़ारों वर्षों के बाद इस समय भी सारी दुनिया में फहरती है। कश्मीर प्राचीन काल में संस्कृत का प्रधान केन्द्र था, तभी तो यह शारदा पीठ (Seat of learning) के नाम से विश्व में विख्यात था। संस्कृत वाङ्मय में इसका नाम शारदा मठ तथा शारदा देश भी पाया जाता है। कल्हण के समकालीन, कवि विल्हण ने अपने महाकाव्य 'विक्रमाङ्कदेव चरित' में अपनी मातृभूमि-कश्मीर के विषय में इस प्रकार अपने उद्गार प्रकट किये हैं :-

'सहोदरः कुङ्कुम् केसराणां भवन्ति नुनं कविता विलासः। न शरदा देशमपास्य दृष्ट स्तेषां यदन्यत्र मया प्ररोहः॥

अर्थात् : कविता का तथा केसर का समन्वय मैंने कश्मीर के बिना कहीं नहीं देखा है। जहां कविता का विलास है वहां केसर नहीं है, और जहां केसर है वहां कविता का विलास नहीं है, लेकिन कश्मीर में प्राकृतिक सम्पदा के साथ साहित्यिक संपदा का भी अद्भुत समन्वय



है। कश्मीर संस्कृत का मुख्य पीठ होने के कारण विश्व का आकर्षण केन्द्र रहा था। इसी कारण विदेशों से भी लोग यहां आकर आचार्यों से विविध विषयों की शिक्षा प्राप्त करते थे। इतिहास के अध्ययन से ज्ञात होता है कि तिब्बत से आकर — कुमार जीव ने यहां गुणवर्मन् नामक आचार्य से शास्त्रों का अध्ययन किया था। इसी प्रकार सातवीं शती में चीनी यात्री ह्वेनसांग ने जयन्द्र विहार (यह विहार-श्रीनगर में जामा मस्जिद के पास था) में दो वर्षों तक रहकर बौद्ध ग्रन्थों का अध्ययन किया। आठवीं शती में आदि गुरु शंकराचार्य ने 'सौन्दर्य लहरी' की रचना की जिसमें उन्होंने वेदान्ती होकर भी शिव तथा शक्ति की उपासना की। सौन्दर्य लहरी का प्रथम श्लोक - 'शिव शक्तया युक्तो०' इसका प्रत्यक्ष प्रमाण है। यहां ही शारदा विश्वविद्यालय की ओर से उन्हें 'सर्वज्ञत्व' की उपाधि प्रदान की गई ऐसी जनश्रुति इस समय भी इस मत की पुष्टि करती है।

वस्तुतः भारतीय संस्कृति तथा संस्कृत का प्रधान केन्द्र होने के कारण कश्मीर साहित्यिक गतिविधियों का भी केन्द्र रहा था। यहां समय-समय पर साहित्यिक सम्मेलनों का आयोजन भी होता था। कुषाण वंश के सुप्रसिद्ध सम्राट् कनिष्क के समय में बौद्धों का बहत् सम्मेलन कनिष्क पुर में (वर्तमान कनिसपुर में) हुआ था जिसमें भारत के विभिन्न राज्यों से विविध शास्त्रों में निष्णात विद्वान सम्मिलित हुए थे। यहां ही उन्होंने बौद्ध ग्रन्थों की जटिल व्याख्या का सरलीकरण किया। यहां से वे आचार्य जैसे-गुणवर्मन्, विमलाक्ष, पुण्यत्राता, धर्मयज्ञ, कुमारजीव आदि मध्य एशिया के विभिन्न राज्यों से विविध शास्त्रों में निष्णात विद्वान सम्मिलित हुए थे। यहां ही उन्होंने बौद्ध ग्रन्थों की जटिल व्याख्या का सरलीकरण किया। यहां से वे आचार्य जैसे-गुणवर्मन्, विमलाक्ष, पुण्यत्राता, धर्मयज्ञ कुमारजीव आदि मध्य एशिया के विभिन्न क्षेत्रों में जाकर महायान बौद्ध धर्म का प्रचार करने लगे। - बारहवीं शती में कवि कल्हण के समय में अर्थात् बारहवीं शती में महाकवि मंख ने एक पण्डित सभा का आयोजन किया, जिसमें कल्हण के अतिरिक्त अन्य विद्वानों ने भी अपनी-अपनी रचनायें सुनाई। इसका वर्णन मङ्ख रचित - 'श्रीकण्ठचरितम्' में सविस्तार मिलता है।

शारदा देवी की कृपा से यहां ऐसे साहित्यकार-लेखक, कवि, दार्शनिक, कथाकार, इतिहासकार, अलङ्कारिक आदि पैदा हुए, जिनकी अमर रचनायें इस समय भी समूचे विश्व को आश्चर्यचकित करती हैं। आठवीं शती से बारहवीं शती का युग 'कश्मीर का स्वर्ण युग' माना जाता है इस स्वर्ण युग में वाग्देवी के अनुग्रह से आचार्य वसुगुप्त, सोमानन्द, उत्पल देव तथा आचार्य अभिनव गुप्त जैसे दार्शनिक पैदा हुए जिन्होंने वेदान्त, सांख्य आदि दर्शनों का मंथन करके ऐसा दर्शन विश्व को दिया जो त्रिक दर्शन, शैव दर्शन अथवा प्रत्यभिज्ञा दर्शन के नामों से प्रसिद्ध है।

मध्य युग में अर्थात् चौदहवीं शती में मुस्लिम संस्कृति के प्रभाव से संस्कृत को काफी धक्का लग गया। यवनों के प्रायः पांच सौ वर्षों तक शासन काल के दौरान कश्मीर में फारसी भाषा राज्य भाषा के पद पर प्रतिष्ठित हुई। फलतः संस्कृत के स्थान पर फारसी भाषा का प्रचार व प्रसार उत्तरोत्तर बढ़ने लगा। इन युगों में - शाहमीरी युग, चक युग, पठान युग, तथा मुगल युग में कट्टर पंथी सुल्तान शासकों ने संस्कृत के स्रोत नष्ट करने की भरसक कोशिश की, लेकिन वे इस अपवित्र उद्देश्य में सफल न हुए। वैदिक काल से बहता हुआ यह अक्षय स्रोत (Source) वितस्ता के प्रवाह के समान निर्बाध रूप से घाटी में चलता रहा।

आधुनिक युग में यानी - 'डोगरा शासन' काल में संस्कृत का प्रत्येक रूप में विकास हुआ। इस भाषा के बहुमुखी विकास के लिए महाराजा रणवीर सिंह तथा प्रताप सिंह ने अनेक उल्लेखनीय कदम उठाये। जिनका वर्णन करना विस्तार मय से संभव नहीं है।

स्वतंत्रता के बाद कश्मीर में संस्कृत के विकास के लिए जम्मू व कश्मीर सरकार ने विशेष रूप से ध्यान नहीं दिया। इस दौरान स्वयं सेवी संस्थाओं ने इसके प्रचार व प्रसार के लिए महत्त्वपूर्ण काम किये। इन संस्थाओं में, फतेह कदल में स्थित 'श्री रामत्रिक आश्रम', ईश्वर स्वरूप जी, श्री लक्ष्मण जी आश्रम, - 'कश्मीर संस्कृत साहित्य सम्मेलन' तथा श्रद्धेय डा० कर्ण सिंह द्वारा स्थापित 'भारतीय विद्या भवन' डा० राधाकृष्ण काव द्वारा स्थापित - 'शारदा पीठ रिसर्च सेंटर' आदि प्रमुख हैं। (इस लेख का लेखक भी 'भा० विद्या भवन' का अंतरङ्ग सदस्य था)।

इस भारतीय संस्कृति की परम्परा को पुनर्जीवित करने में श्री प्रेम नाथ शास्त्री जी का महत्त्वपूर्ण योगदान रहा है। पं० प्रेमनाथ जी का जन्म बीसवीं शती के दूसरे दशक में यानी ४ अक्टूबर १९२० ई में कश्मीर के ऐतिहासिक स्थान विजयेश्वर (वर्तमान 'व्यजबोर' के) एक प्रतिष्ठित ब्राह्मण कुल में हुआ था इनके पिता श्री का नाम पं० ज्योतिषी अत्ताम राम शर्मा था जो ज्योतिष शास्त्र के प्रकाण्ड पंडित थे। इनकी माता का नाम राधा माली था। श्रीमति राधामाली के दो पुत्र थे - प्रेमनाथ जी तथा ज्योतिषी काशी नाथ शर्मा। जिस समय पं० प्रेम नाथ जी किशोरवस्था में थे माता जी की छत्र छाया हमेशा के लिए उनके सिर से उठ गई। २१ वर्ष की आयु में पं० प्रेमनाथ जी का विवाह पं० गोविन्द शर्मा की सुपुत्री जी से हुआ। तुलसी जी को ससुराल में - 'गुणवती' के नाम से पुकारा जाता था। वास्तव में वह अपने गुणों के कारण 'तुलसी' के समान लोकप्रिय हुई।

पं० प्रेमनाथ जी को अपने पूज्य पिता जी ने प्रारम्भिक शिक्षा अपने घर में दी। पं० अत्ताम राम जी से उसने लघु सिद्धान्त कौमुदी अमर कोश, पञ्चतंत्र तथा वृत्त रत्नाकर आदि ग्रन्थ पढे। कालान्तर पिता जी ने उसको जम्मू के 'रघुनाथ संस्कृत महाविद्यालय' में नियमपूर्वक पढ़ने के लिए भेज दिया। उस समय वहां के आचार्यों में से पुरुषराम शास्त्री, पं० अनन्तराम शास्त्री, पं० काकाराम शास्त्री तथा पं० जयराम शास्त्री आदि थे। अपनी कुशाग्र बुद्धि के कारण पं० प्रेमनाथ जी ने प्राज्ञ, विशारद तथा शास्त्री की परीक्षाएँ इस महाविद्यालय के द्वारा पंजाब यूनिवर्सिटी लाहौर से क्रमशः अच्छे अंक लेकर उत्तीर्ण की। शास्त्री परीक्षा उन्होंने प्रथम श्रेणी में पास की। बाद में उन्होंने मार्तण्ड (वर्तमान-मट्टन) में स्थित 'हिन्दू हाई स्कूल' में संस्कृत अध्यापक के रूप में कुछ दिनों तक काम किया। उस समय जम्मू व कश्मीर के प्रधानमंत्री शेख मोहम्मद अब्दुला ने प्राईवेट स्कूलों की आर्थिक सहायता (Grant in aid) बंद कर दी।

परिणामतः विद्यालय बंद हुआ। सभी अध्यापक वहां नौकरी छोड़ने के विषय हुए। शास्त्री जी इससे विचलित न हुए क्योंकि वे ज्योतिष विद्या के धुरंधर विद्वान थे। अब तन-मन से उन्होंने अपना ध्यान इस विद्या की ओर के केन्द्रित किया। इससे उनकी ख्याति सारे कश्मीर मंडल में फैल गई। उन्होंने विजयेश्वर पंचाङ्ग निर्माण का काम अपने हाथ में लिया। वे दिन रात एक ऋषि की तरह इसकी साधना में लग गये। इस कार्य में उन्हें ज्योतिषी श्रीकण्ड शर्मा का भी सहयोग था। उन्होंने उर्दू, हिन्दी तथा शारदा भाषा में पंचाङ्ग निकालने का बीड़ा उठाया। हजारों की संख्या में 'विजयेश्वर पंचाङ्ग' प्रकाशित किये गये। इनकी मांग लोगों में उत्तरोत्तर बढ़ने लगी। अब उन्होंने कर्मकाण्ड सम्बन्धी पुस्तकों का भी प्रकाशन आरम्भ किया। समाज में जिन पुस्तकों का अभाव था, उसको उन्होंने पूरा किया।

शास्त्री जी समाज सुधारक भी थे। वे कश्मीरी पण्डितों के बुरे व्यसनों की निन्दा हमेशा करते थे। दहेज प्रथा के भी वे घोर विरोधी थे। अपने भाषणों के द्वारा वे भारतीय संस्कृति को अपनाने के लिए जनता को समय-समय पर सचेत करते थे। "भारतीय संस्कृति के संस्कार बच्चों को शैशवावस्था में देने चाहिए ताकि उनका नैतिक पलन न हो जाये।

उनके ये अनमोल वचन मुझे इस समय भी याद हैं। 'मांसाहार शास्त्रों में निषेध' है। इस पर वे जीवन के अन्त तक बोलते रहे। इनके प्रवचनों से प्रभावित होकर बहुत से लोगों ने मांसाहार खाना छोड़ दिया। वे स्वयं वैष्णव थे। ऋषियों की तरह साधा जीवन व्यतीत करते थे। समाज सुधारक के अतिरिक्त वे उदार दृष्टि कोण के महापुरुष थे - उनका यह कथन था कि हम सब कश्मीरी पण्डित सारस्वत ब्राह्मण हैं। गोर (गुरु) और कारकुन का प्रश्न वही उठाते हैं जिनका दृष्टिकोण संकुचित होता है। वस्तुतः वह सच्चाई को नहीं जानते हैं। विस्थापित होने के बाद भी ये क्षुद्र विचार यदि हमारे दिमाग में उठेंगे, इससे हमारी जाति का पतन अवश्य होगा। ऐसे बुरे विचारों की ओर कभी ध्यान नहीं देना चाहिए। यहां पर यह कहना मैं सहगत समझता हूँ कि मध्यकाल में क्रूर शासक सिकन्दर बुत शिकन के समय कश्मीरी ब्राह्मणों को देशत्याग करना पड़ा।

बाद में सहनशील जैन उल्लाब्दीन बड़शाह ने पलायन कर्ता कश्मीरी ब्राह्मणों को वापिस अपनी जन्मभूमि में बुलाया। यहां सुलतान ने उन्हें फिर से बसाया। उस समय की स्थिति को देखकर एक माई ने सनातन धर्म की रक्षा के लिए अपना जीवन समर्पित कर दिया। वह धर्म तथा संस्कृति का रक्षक कालान्तर आदरवाचक 'गुरु' से निन्दावाचक 'गोर' कहलाने लगा। 'कारकुन' शब्द फारसी का है जिसका अर्थ - काम करने वाला है। यह बड़शाह के युग से आज तक चलता रहा है।

शास्त्री जी युग पुरुष थे। उन्होंने हमारे समाज को विशेषतः कश्मीरी पण्डितों को एक सही दिशा दी। दिग्भ्रान्त तथा सम्भ्रान्त जनमानस का पथ प्रदर्शन किया। सब शास्त्रों का निचोड़ उनके सामने प्रकाशनों तथा कैसेटों के माध्यम से रख दिया। यद्यपि बिरादरी में कुछ लोग उनका विरोध करते थे तो भी वह एक साहसी मल्लाह की तरह शास्त्र रूपी नाव को पार ले जाने में सफल हुए। वह एक सफल वक्ता थे। शास्त्रों पर उन्होंने पूर्णरूप से अधिकार था। वह सभा में जिस समय किसी विषय पर भाषण देते थे, शास्त्र प्रमाणों द्वारा उसकी पुष्टि करते थे। संस्कृत श्लोकों का उच्चारण वह शुद्धरूप में करते थे। उच्चारण की शैली में कश्मीरीयत् टपकती थी। संस्कृत श्लोकों की व्याख्या सरल रूप में कश्मीरी में करते थे। जिससे श्रोतागण आसानी से श्लोकों को समझता था। रामायण, महाभारत, श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, पुराणों, तथा धर्म शास्त्रों के उदाहरण वे विषयानुसार देते थे जिन्हें सुनकर श्रोतागण मंत्रमुग्ध होते थे। उनकी वाणी दिव्यवाणी थी उसमें आकर्षण था। वह हृदयग्राही थी तथा स्मरणीय।

आदरणीय स्व० प्रेमनाथ जी शास्त्री को मैं गत चार दशकों से जानता हूँ उनके साथ मेरे घनिष्ठ सम्बन्ध रहे थे। वास्तव में उनका व्यक्तित्व इतना प्रखर था। जो भी एक बार उनके संपर्क में आता था, वह उन्हें कभी भूल नहीं सकता था। वे विख्यात शिक्षक थे, उपदेशक तथा ओजस्वी वक्ता थे। मुझे अनेक बार उनका भाषण सुनने का अवसर मिला था। वे कश्मीरी पण्डितों की समास्याओं की गहराई में जाते थे और अपनी बात बड़े ही प्रामाणिक ढंग से कहते थे। उनका लेखन भी उतना ही गहन और गम्भीर है। उनकी सम्पदित तथा संशोधित रचनायें मैंने पढ़ी हैं और उनसे मेरा मन बड़ा प्रभावित हुआ है। उनकी सबसे बड़ी विशेषता यह थी कि वे बड़े ही सहृदय व्यक्ति थे। बड़ी ही आत्मीयता

से मिलते थे और अपने स्नेह से दूसरे का मन जीत लेते थे। मानवीय गुण तथा देशभक्ति की भावना उनमें कूट-कूट कर भरी हुए थी। हाय: शास्त्री जी अपना पञ्चभौतिक शरीर छोड़ कर अगस्त १९९९ ई० में ब्रह्मलीन हुए। शास्त्री जी के निधन से जो कश्मीरी समाज को क्षति हुई, उसको कौन इस युग में पूरा कर सकता है? इस पर प्रश्न चिन्ह लग गया है। संस्कृत साहित्य में उसके योगदान को कौन भूल सकता है? आजकल पुरोहितों के अभाव में एक कश्मीरी पण्डित स्वयं ही 'प्रेप्सुन', श्राद्ध संकल्प तथा शिवरात्रि आदि की पूजा कर सकता है। इसका श्रेय प्रेम नाथ जी शास्त्री को मिलता है शास्त्री जी अपनी विद्वता से तथा अपने कर्मठ व्यक्तित्व से भारत में ही नहीं अपितु विदेशों में भी पूजा जाता है। मुझे इस समय संस्कृत की यह सूक्ति याद आती है - "स्वदेशे पूज्यते राजा विद्वान् सर्वत्र पूज्यते" अपने अपने वैदुष्य से अनेक पुरस्कार प्राप्त किये थे। 'पनुन कश्मीर' ने दिल्ली में उन्हें जनवरी १९९८ ई० में शारदा सम्मान से पुरस्कृत किया। इसी प्रकार भगवान् श्री गोपी नाथ जी ट्रस्ट आदि संस्थाओं ने इन्हें सम्मानित तथा पुरस्कृत किया। यह शोधात्मक लेख लिखते समय मुझे अपने पूज्यपाद स्व० प० विदलाल जी का यह संस्कृत पद्य विस्मृत नहीं होता है :-

'एकश्चन्द्रस्तमो हन्ति न च ताराः सहस्रशः

अर्थ : एक ही चन्द्रमा सारे अन्धकार को मिटाता है हजारों सितारे नहीं। निःसंदेह शास्त्री जी के ज्ञानालोक से युग युगों तक सारी दिशायें आलोकित होगी। ऐसी मेरी धारणा है।

लेखक : प्रो० डा० बी० एन० कल्ला (राष्ट्रपति पुरस्कार सम्मानित),
एम. ए. एम. ओ. एल. शास्त्री, बी०एड०पी०एच०डी० (संस्कृत)
पूर्व संस्कृत प्राध्यापक, मध्य एशियाई अध्ययन केन्द्र कश्मीर विश्वविद्यालय
वर्तमान-शास्त्र चूड़ामणि संस्कृत प्राध्यापक, रणवीर संस्कृत विद्यापीठ, जम्मू

इनके द्वारा संशोधित तथा सम्पादित पुस्तकें :-

- | | |
|--|---|
| १) कर्मकाण्ड दीपिका (हिन्दी तथा उर्दू में) | ६) संध्या (हिन्दी तथा उर्दू में) |
| २) पञ्चस्तवी (हिन्दी तथा उर्दू में) | ७) सहस्र नामावलि : (शिव, विष्णु, गणेश, सूर्य, भवानी, शारिका, ज्वाला, तथा महाराजा) |
| ३) भवानी सहस्रनाम | ४) अन्तिम संस्कार विधि: (हिन्दी तथा उर्दू में) |
| ४) शिव रात्रि पूजा (हिन्दी तथा उर्दू में) | ९) शारदा प्राईमर |
| ५) महिम्नस्तोत्र (हिन्दी तथा उर्दू में) | १०) भगवद्गीता (उर्दू में) आदि। |

ऐसे युग पुरुष, युगदृष्टा तथा युग स्रष्टा को मेरा कोटिशः नमन।

नौम्यहमसाभपुत्रं श्री प्रेमनाथ नामकम्।

कश्यपस्य प्रियं रत्नं कश्मीरजस्य सौरभम् ॥

जयतु संस्कृतम् जयतु भारती

संदर्भ :-

- १) जोनराजकृत राजतरङ्गिणी: सम्पादित-प्रो० श्री कंठ कौल।
- २) बिल्हण कृत-विक्रमांक देव चरितम् - सम्पादित - डा० बुहलर।
- ३) विश्व संस्कृत शताब्दी ग्रन्थः जम्मू व कश्मीर राज्य भागः (अस्य शतकस्य (१८६६-१९६६ ई०) संस्कृत चिदासः) इस शती के संस्कृत विद्वान इस भाग का लेखकः - डा० बी० एन० कल्ला शास्त्री।
- ४) मध्य एशिया का इतिहासः- डा० बैजनाथ।
- ५) श्री राजा हिन्दी (मध्य एशिया में कश्मीर के बौद्ध विद्वानों की देन-लेखक - डा० बदरीनाथ कल्ला।
प्रकाशक : जम्मू व कश्मीर कलचरल अकाडेमी, जम्मू।

कश्मीरी आशाओं की सदाबहार कली है (अपना कहानी का एक पृष्ठ)

श्यामलाल वली

संसार के पहले भयंकर युद्ध के पश्चात् देशों और जातियों में उथल-पुथल उत्पन्न हुए। जरमनी के कैसर ने पांच साल तक यूरोप के मैदानों को खून और आँसुओं से लथपथ किया। रूस कई शताब्दियों की जारशाही को लात मारकर कम्युनिस्ट बन रहा था। हंगरी और आस्ट्रिया हाप्सबर्ग और निकोलस ताज व तखत से बेदखल किये गये थे। इंगलिस्तान ने भी अपने चमकते हुए ताज के हीरे अथवा हिन्दोस्तान से प्रण किया था कि लड़ाई में सफलता प्राप्त करके जनता को शासन में हिस्सेदार बनाया जायेगा, इस कारण कि हिन्दोस्तान के सिपाहियों ने यूरोप, अफ्रीका, पूर्वी तथा मध्य एशिया में अपनी रणवीरता के जोहर दिखाये थे और सारे संसार को अपनी बहादुरी के कारनामों से आश्चर्य में डाला था।

कश्मीरी में डोग्राशाही थी साम्राज्यका एक अंग। महाराजा प्रतापसिंह राजगद्दी पर विराजमान था। राजपाठ की चमक-दमक से वह किसी हद तक बेपरवाह साधारणतः गरीबों साधुओं और फकीरों की सेवा ओर सोहबत करता था। आजकल के जमाने में हर किसी गुजरे राजा-महाराज की निन्दा होती है और यह समय का फैशन बन गया है, परन्तु सच्ची बात यह है कि इन राजाओं और महाराजों में भी कुछ गुण थे जिनसे जनता उन्हें प्यार करती थी। मनुष्यत्व के कई विचित्र स्वभाव उन में मौजूद थे, इसीलिए हर बात को भूलाना और निन्दा करना ठीक नहीं। मैं इन राजाओं और महाराजों का वकील नहीं। इन में कई बहुत बुरे थे, लेकिन हर एक को एक ही लाटी से हॉकना ठीक नहीं।

महाराजा प्रताप सिंह की हकूमत और मेरी जान पहचान का यह एक तजरुबा है जिसका उल्लेख मैं यहाँ करता हूँ। १६२१ ई के दिन थे। श्रीनगर में वितस्ता नदी पर राजगढ़ महल तथा गधाधर जी मन्दिर के ठीक सामने बसन्त बाग का सुन्दर घाट स्थित है। इस घाट के दक्षिण को एक स्थान पर शिवलिंग है। अपना घर बसन्तबाग के पास होने के कारण मैं और मुहल्ले के कई और लड़के इस घाट पर प्रतिदिन नहाने आते और वितस्ता में तैरते थे, स्नान से छुटकारा पाकर उस 'लिंग' पर जल चढ़ाते थे, फूलों की वर्षा करते थे और कभी कभी दीप भी जलाते थे। इस जगह गरमी के दिनों में उन साधुओं का मेला लगता था जो अमरनाथ जी की यात्रा तक यहाँ विश्राम करते थे। बसन्तबाग घाट की पूर्वी ओर एक बगीचा था जिसमें रंग-बिरंगे फूल खिलते थे, जो हर प्रभात को महाराजा साहब की पूजा में लगाये जाते थे। इस समय वहाँ प्रइवेट बंगले खड़े हैं। हर प्रातःकाल इन साधुओं के साथ मेरा मेल-मिलाप होता था। इन के कई वर्ग थे - बैरागी, नांगा, जोगी, जंगम, इत्यादि। इन सबको महाराजा की ओर से खान-पान और चरस मिलता था। "हींग लगे न फटकिरी, रंग चोखा आवे" की कहावत पर यह साधु मजे के दिन गुजारते थे और विशालकाय चिनारों की शीतल छाया में मस्त पड़े रहते थे। कोई-कोई इनमें धूनी भी रमाता था। कोई रातके सुनसान वातावरण में बांसुरी बजाकर वितस्ताके किनारे चारों ओर मन-मोहनी वातावरण उत्पन्न करता था ! बांसुरी की आवाज, रात का समय नदी का किनारा और चारों ओर खामोशी - ऐसा वातावरण इस दुखी संसार में कुछ समय के लिये आनन्द और प्रसन्नता का दृश्य जतलाता था। महाराजा जो रात को देर तक जागृत रहता था शीश महल सीढ़ियों से वितस्ता की ओर झांक कर प्रसन्न होता था। अब यह शीश महलकी सीढ़ियाँ मौजूद नहीं, यहाँ महाराज के दरबार हाल "गोलघर"को लोक-राज्य ने आईन साज असेम्बली तथा कोन्सिल में बदल दिया है। यहाँ अब सेशन के समय "यूनियन झण्डा" शान से फहराता है।

लड़कपन, बेपरवाही के दिन के दिन और फिर मन बाग व बहार और प्रकृति की सुन्दरता का पुजारी हो, बसन्त बाग का साफ सुथरा पत्थरों से सजाया हुआ पतन (घाट), चिनार की छाया, फूल और क्यारियाँ, सामने स्थित

राजमहलों की शान, साधुओं की टोलियां, भजन और कीर्तन, समीप "चूँट कोल" नदी और वितस्ता का संगम, इसके पास स्थित धर्मशाला और छोटे मन्दिर से शंख की आवाज, गधाधर के स्वर्णजड़ित मन्दिर का दृश्य, शीशमहल की सीढ़ियाँ, इधर-उधर नदी में चलते शिकारे और गाते हुए नाविकों के मधुर गीत, न भूलने वाला दृश्य था।

महाराजा के पास हर कोई जा सकता था। हम भी कभी नाव से पार उतर कर उसकी पूजा आदि का तमाशा देखने जाते थे। जब यहाँ कई दरजन फूलवाले भिन्न-भिन्न फूल मालाएँ लेकर आते थे तो दीख पड़ता था कि महाराजा फूलों का इतना इच्छुक नहीं था जितना वह लोगों से मिलने का, क्योंकि नगर के कई स्थानों से फूल वाले आते थे और महाराजा सारे नगर के समाचार से परिचित रहता था।

महाराजा छोटे कद का आदमी, पूरी मलमल की पगड़ी सिर पर पहने हुए, सफेद लट्टे का कुर्ता पहने, सफेद चादर कन्धों पर, चूड़ीदार पाजामा पहने, नंगे पाँव, बाथे पर चन्दन का तिलक, वाये हाथ में "राम-राम पट" की तोलिया, ऐसा दिखाई देता था कि वह ऋषि है। वह महाराजा था। देश की आर्थिक दशा ठीक न थी, लोग गरीब थे, आय के साधन सीमित थे। चीजें सस्ती थीं। सरकारी नोकरी स्थायी -----। छोटे-छोटे अहलिकार किसी हद तक ईमानदार थे। बड़े-बड़े अफसरों ने जागीरे, चक, बाग और नम्बल अपने अधिकार में लिए थे। इनके लिए दिन ईद और रात दीवाली थी, और अधिकतर वह पंजाव के बासी थे। सेना डोग्रों के एकाधिकार में थी। राज्य में शान्ति थी, किन्तु शमशान की शान्ति नहीं कि जनता को दबाया गया है। नहीं ! हर कोई कारीगर, मजदूर, मुन्शी, किसान कुछ न कुछ काम के साथ लगा रहता था। गरमी की ऋतु में दर्शक लोग आते थे। फिर नाविकों, दुकानदारों और दूसरे पेशों के लोगों की आर्थिक दशा सुधर जाती थी।

गरमियों के दिन थे। एक प्रातःकाल जब हम बसन्त बाग गये दरबार जम्मू से श्रीनगर आ गया था, क्योंकि श्रीनगर डोग्राशाही का गरमी के दिनों की राजधानी थी। हम ने देखा कि बसन्त बाग के घाट पर स्त्रियोंकी भीड़ लगी है और उनमें कुछ बच्चे तथा पुरुष भी थे। वह स्त्रियाँ महल की ओर पुकार कर कह रही है :-

"माहराज साबो बोजतो दाद, ब्यछहति असि करान छी फरयाद" अर्थात् - "महाराजा साहब, हमारी दादरसी करो, हम भूखे आप से फरयाद करते हैं।"

कुछ क्षणों में एक मूँछों वाला बहादुर जवान, जो लम्बे कद वाला था और सुन्दर वस्त्र पहने थे, नाव से उतर कर आया और उन स्त्रियों से कहने लगा, "माहराज साब सब कुछ जानता है, घबराने की बात नहीं।" फिर उसने एक थैली से चाँदी के रूपये निकाले और बांट डाले। स्त्रियाँ अपने घरों को गयीं। मैं एक साधु के पास आकर बैठ गया। उसको आने वाले सब "सीताराम गोसाई" कहते थे। वह एक सुझौल युवक था। सिर पर बाल थे जो धुनी की राख मलमल कर भूरे बन गये थे। वह सुन्दर था और अपने को नैपाली जताता। हिन्दी ठीक बोल रहा था, जिसमें उर्दू भी मिला होता था। उसने मुझ से पूछा कि स्त्रियों की भीड़ क्यों थी। वह कुछ दिन से ही बसन्त बाग मे आ गया था। मैंने कहा, "देश में अकाल पड़ने का बहुत डर है। गलदारों तथा बड़दारों ने सारा अनाज दबा लिया है। कीमत चढ़ रही हैं और मालूम नहीं क्या होगा। अब सरकार ने चार त्रख (२५ सेर) धान और छः त्रख (३५ सेर) मक्काई की रसद निश्चित की है।"

सीताराम ने पूछा - "स्त्रियाँ क्या कहती थीं?" मैं ने कहा - "वह महाराजा से फरयाद करती थीं कि हम भूखे हैं।" सीताराम ने फिर पूछा - "अच्छा वह जाने पर क्यों राजी हो गयीं? मैंने कहा कि महाराजा साहब ने संदेसा भेजा है कि वह हर बात को जानता है, और कुछ रूपये भी भेजे।"

सीताराम ने कहा - "क्या इससे इनकी भूख मिट सकेगी?" मैंने उत्तर दिया - "नहीं।" फिर मैंने इससे कहा कि सरकार ने चार त्रख धान और छः त्रख मक्काई का बन्दोबस्त किया है। इसको जनता "पोंडचेन्दि" कहते हैं, क्योंकि हर कोई घाट मुहरिर को एक आना शाली टिकट के साथ देते हैं और भीड़ इतनी रहती है कि लोग घाटों पर मधुमक्खियों की तरह दूट पड़ते हैं। सीताराम ने कहा - "इसका क्या इलाज है?" मैंने कहा कि गलदार डीठ लोग हैं, वह धान को नष्ट करना पसन्द करेंगे लेकिन सस्ते दामों पर बेचने के लिए तैयार न होंगे। यह हालत इस से

पैदा हुई कि युद्ध के पश्चात् इन्फ्लुएंजा की बीमारी चली, मौसमी हलात खराब हो गये और किसान लोग अन्न ठीक मात्रा में उत्पन्न नहीं कर सके। इससे ग़लदारों को अवसर मिला कि उन्होंने बाजार पर अधिकार जमाया। सीताराम ने करवट ली और धूनी के की एक और लेट गया। चिनार की छाया के नीचे, महल के इस पार, प्रताप सिंह के लंगर का अतिथि, वह चरस न पीता था और बातें भी अधिक न करता था।

कुछ दिनों के पश्चात् जेष्ठाष्टमी का मेला था। जेष्ठाष्टमी शुक्ल पक्ष को हर साल खीरभवानी (राज्ञादेवी) का जन्मोत्सव बड़ी श्रद्धा और अटल भक्ति से तुलमुला (कश्मीर) में मनाया जाता है। यह पवित्र स्थान श्रीनगर से चौदह मील दूर है। सड़क और नदी से जाने का रास्ता है। यहाँ एक रमणीय, पवित्र और चमत्कारी अमृतकुण्ड है, जिसका पानी समय-समय पर रंग बदलता है। इसी कुण्ड के बीच एक छोटा संगमरमर का मन्दिर है जो प्रताप सिंह ने धर्मार्थ से बनवाया था। आज कल यहाँ यज्ञशालायें और विशाल धर्मशालायें बनी हुई हैं, जिन पर कई लाख रुपये खर्च हुए हैं और इनसे यात्रियों को बहुत सुविधा प्राप्त है। जेष्ठाष्टमी को यहाँ दूर दूर से यात्री आते हैं, पुष्प चढ़ाते हैं, आरती होती है और शाम को सामूहिक प्रार्थना में हजारों नर-नारी सम्मिलित होते हैं, जिनके हाथों में घी के दीप जलते हैं और ज्योति तथा रोशनी का वह समुद्र देख पड़ता है कि आंखों की झलक उमड़ आती है। इस साल महाराजा साहब भी जेष्ठाष्टमी को यहाँ आये थे। हजारों यात्री भी तांगों, नावों और पैदल यहाँ आये हये थे। नावों की पंक्तियां 'सिन्धु नाला' संगम, (शादीपुर) से बराबर नदी के दोनों किनारों पर लगी हुई थीं। महाराजा साहब अपनी 'चाकवारी', जो खूब सजायी हुई नाव थी, में आ गये। एक दरजन नाविक इसको चपू दे रहे थे। प्रमात को महाराजा साहब चरण गङ्गा पर चिनार के नीचे जहाँ शामियाना और फर्श सजाया गया था, बैठ गये। यात्री खुशी खुशी सब कुछ देख रहे थे। क्या सुहावना समय था! सूर्य की नन्हीं-नन्हीं किरणें चिनार के पत्तोंके पत्तों पर खेल रही थीं। कोई स्नान में लगा था, कोई पूजा पाठमें मग्न था। छोटी छोटी नदियाँ, हरे हरे पेड़, पक्षियों के चहचहाते झुण्ड, मस्ती की तरंग, नन्हें शिशुओं की आवाज और यात्रियों की भीड़ और कुछ दूर एक कीर्तन मंडली ललीश्वरी का वाक्य और परमानन्द जी के गीत गा रही थी। महाराजा साहब को एक मुसाहिब (नोकर) पगड़ी बांध रहा था जो पूरी एक मलमल थी और भी कुछ मुसाहिब समीप बैठे थे। मैं भी एक तरफ खड़ा था। महाराजा ने पण्डित नारायण जू ज्योतिषी से कुछ बात कही। यह कश्मीरी ज्योतिषी आप के प्रश्न का उत्तर दे रहा था कि अकस्मात् एक साधु आया। सारे शरीर पर भस्म लगा हुआ था। आंखें शेर की तरह लाल, हाथ में एक लम्बा चिमटा था, माथे पर रक्त चन्दन का टीका लगाये भैरव जैसी आकृति थी उसकी। वह शामियाने के पास आया और ललकारने लगा - "ओ महाराज! तेरा राज्य नष्ट होगा।" महाराज साहब ने आंखें ऊपर उठाई और साधु को धीमी आयाज में कहा - "क्या मांगते हो साधु?" साधु ने कहा - "तुम भिखारी से मैं क्या माँगूँ? हाँ, लोगों पर तुम्हारा अधिकार है। इस अधिकार के कारण मैं तुम से जनता के लिए चावल मांगता हूँ।" महाराज ने कहा - "साधु, शान्ति करो," और फिर खजाजघी से कहा कि साधु के हाथ में रुपये थमावे। खजाजघी ने उठकर कुछ "एडर्वड" रुपये साधु को पेश किये। साधु ने उन रूपयों को हाथ में लेकर दूर फैंक दिया और फिर महाराजा साहब की ओर ललकार कर कहा - "तुम्हारी पूजा सफल न होगी," और उसने विचित्र रूप से चिमटा धुमाना आरम्भ किया। मैं ने इस साधु को पहचाना कि वह बसन्त बाग में नया आया हुआ नेपाली साधु "सीता-राम" है। मैं तुरन्त दौड़ा और इसकी टोंगों में लिपट गया। यह दशा देखकर वह चकित हो गया। चिमटा को नीचे दबाकर उसने मुझे बाहों से पकड़ लिया। इतने में ही पुलिस थानेदार आया, परन्तु महाराजा साहब ने आज्ञा दी कि साधु को कोई न छेड़े। यात्रियों ने अब प्रार्थना की। महाराजा साहब ने कहा - 'प्रबन्ध हो रहा है। पण्डित नरेन्द्र नाथ कौल को अन्न की समस्या हल करने का सारा काम सौंपा जायेगा।' सीताराम को मैंने दूर खींचा और वह भी जाने पर राजी था, नहीं तो कहां भीम और कहां बालक। उसने मुझे उस खूंगे (बड़ी नौका में) लिया जो साधुओं को तुलमुला जाने के लिये महाराजा साहब से मुफ्त मिला था। महाराजा साहब की ओर से ही लंगर का प्रबन्ध भी था और चरस पीने वाले साधुओं की आतिशबाजियां उड़ रही थीं। क्या खूब तमाशा है यह संसार!

डूंगे में सीताराम साधु मेरी और साफ कश्मीरी मैं बोलने लगा, "भाई तुम क्यों घबरा गये थे?" एक साधु ने बीच में कहा, "छोटा बेचारा है।" मुझे आश्चर्य हो गया कि एक सप्ताह से आया हुआ नेपाली साधु क्योंकर ऐसा साफ कश्मीरी बोल सकता है। मैंने सीताराम से कहा - "तुम नेपाली साधु हो, इतनी साफ कश्मीरी कब और कहाँ सीखे हो?" वह हँसने लगा और कहने लगा - "सुनो! आज मैं इस रहस्य को प्रकट करूँगा। बीस साल की बात है। मैं तहसील पुलवामा का रहने वाला हूँ। मेरी माँ थी और दो भाई थे। मैंने कुछ पढ़ाई की और पढ़ने में मन न लगा। मैं बुन्दोबस्त दफ्तर में शजराकश नियुक्त हुआ तब हमारे लिए यह बड़ी असामी थी। चपरासी, मुन्शी, गाडे, इस तरह के ओहदे हमारे लिये थे कि दिन भर अपने अफसरों की चोमाचाटी करें। मेरे आफिसर एक तहसीलदार साहब गोजबानवाला के थे। बड़े तुन्द मिजाज के थे। उनके हाथ हर समय पीछे को रहते थे। उसने मुझसे कहा कि गोजुरों से घी वसूल करों। उस समय हम पीरपंजाल पहाड़ी के उस ओर गये थे। मैंने तहसीलदार साहब से कहा कि गोजुरों के पास घी नहीं है और जिसके पास मौजूद है वह पैसा मांगता है। इस तरह का उत्तर तहसीलदार के लिए गोली से कम न था। उसने मुझे गालियाँ दीं। मैंने बहुत तेजी से जूता निकाल कर एक दो. तीन बार उसके सिर पर दे मारा। पगड़ी दूर गिर गई और सिर से खून बहने लगा, क्योंकि मेरे जूते में मेख (कील) लगे हुए थे। तहसीलदार चिल्लाने लगा - "हाय! पकड़ो, पकड़ो" मैंने फिर एकबार मुंह पर जूता मारा। कोई गोजर उसकी मदद को न आया। चपरासी डर गया। किसी ने मुझे हाथ तक न लगाया। तहसीलदार की दुर्गत हो गई। खून बहता जा रहा था। नजदीक कोई डिस्पेन्सरी न थी और शायद पुलिस का थाना भी दूर था। मैं घबराया और जल्दी से पीर पंजाल के दूसरी तरफ जा निकला। किशतवार से होते हुए कलू, कांगडा पहुँचा। यहां साधु का भेष धारण किया। घरबार से बेखबर सीधा नेपाल का तरफ चल पड़ा। वहां एक साधु की संगत की। उसने कुछ आसन दिखाये, लेकिन कश्मीर की तरफ मेरे ध्यान कभी न मिटा। 'मातृभूमि-सतीसर' आज पहली बार बीस साल बाद कश्मीर आया था लेकिन यहाँ जनता के कष्ट को सह न सका हूँ। कश्मीर। मेरी इच्छाओं की कली, कश्मीर रमणीय स्वर्गभूमि है। मैंने सुना था कि महाराजा सहब साधुओं की सेवा टहल करता है, लेकिन वह आवाजें जो बसन्त बाग में स्त्रियां दे रही थीं 'महाराज साबो बोज तो दाद, बोछहत अति छी करान फरयाद' मुझे से सही न गई, परन्तु यह सच है कि महाराजा एक साधु है, ऋषि है। मैंने इतनी गुस्ताखी की लेकिन वह क्रोधित न हुआ बल्कि पुलिस को मुझे पकड़ने से रोका।" फिर सीताराम ने महाराजा के पैसे से बना हुआ भोजन खाया - मालपूड़ी भुजिया, सब्जी दूध, हलवा इत्यादि। बसन्त बाग वाले साधु के तुलमुला (खीरभवानी) जाने का सारा प्रबन्ध आपकी आज्ञा से हुआ था। सीताराम ने मुझे कहा कि मैं फिर बसन्त बाग श्रीनगर से उससे मिलूँ।



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संघर्ष मय जीवन

श्रीमती कान्ता सपरू (कोलकाता)

बाल्यकाल से ही जीवन की विषमताओं से क्षुब्ध होकर मन और मस्तिष्क दोनों जैसे अद्भुत परिस्थितियों में समय व्यतीत कर रहे थे।

चहुँ और निराशा ही निराशा के घनघोर बादल छाए हुये थे। अनायास परिवर्तन का आभास हुआ आशा के उमड़ते हुए क्षण जैसे मोड़कर आये और मन परिवर्तित हुआ। जैसे किसी से प्रण किया हो कि अब पीछे मुड़कर देखने का अबसर नहीं आने देना है।

परिस्थितियाँ शनैःशनैः अनुकूल होने लगी विचारधारोओं में परिवर्तन आया, परन्तु मन का भारीपन एक गोलाकार की स्थिति में हृदय के कोने कोने में अपनी जड़े स्थिर करती गयी।

यौवन अपनी नयी क्षलक ले कर प्रखरने लगा। परन्तु यह सब परिवर्तन क्षण भंगुर था। अब शनैः शनैः आभास होने लगा कि पुनः बातावरण में सुधार आयेगा।

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विषमताएँ बढ़ गयी साधारण प्रेम मयबातावरण भी विषाक्त बन गया अपने कुछछणों की छाप अमिट हुयी।

शनैः शनैः दैनिक कार्यक्रम में असहनीयता का रूप धारण कर चहुँ और असहनीयता और अस्वभाविकता से घृणा ने अपनी दृढ़ नींव जमायी, मन की स्थिति पूर्ण रूप से डँबाडोल हुआ।

नेत्रों में चहुँ और विषमता चोर अविवादीत समय मँडराने लगा।

मनुष्य जो कि एक कठपुतली के समान है लटकने लगा और यही प्रेरणा मिली कि पीछे मुड़ना अपराध होगा।

अतः जीवन संघर्ष है। और यही प्रेरणा समय समय मिली जिसको प्राप्त कर यह विषम घड़ियाँ विता पा रहे हैं।

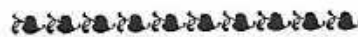
तब, तब जोड़ नये सुनहरे समनों की प्रतीक्षा की वास्तविकता साक्षात् हुयी।

दोंग और दूकोसला में मन उलक्ष गया। किसी भी दिशा से यह प्रमाणित नहीं हुआ कि वास्तविकता क्या है, और कहाँ से इसका प्रदुर्भाव हुआ।

यूँ तो यौवन अवस्था प्रतिपल हर नये पल के साथ स्वयं को धकेलने में समर्थ होती है।

जीर्ण अवस्था शान्तिमय स्नेहमय वातावरण की रवोज में भटकती रहती है। प्रतिपल हर सांस से यही प्रेरणा प्राप्त होती है कि जीवन एक संघर्ष है।

यौवन ने प्रोढ़ अवस्था में पदार्पण किया। जीर्ण और अखम जीवन असहनीय प्रमाशात हुआ। प्रति पल संघर्ष में व्यतीत हुआ।



गीत

प्यारे हताश

मुझे कोई अपना सा घर दे दो।
या घर जाने का वर दे दो॥
मरुस्थल में रहना आता नहीं।
आतप का सहना भी भाता नहीं॥
'जबर-बन' के हिम का शिखर दे दो।
मुझे कोई अपना सा घर दे दो॥
कब लौट आए पुरानी बहार।
भ्रमण झील का और नौका विहार ॥
'झील' को झिलमिलानी सहर दे दो।
मुझे गाँव का अपना घर दे दो॥
'कश्यप' को घर से निकाला है किसने।
मेरा आशियाना जलाया है किसने॥
'जलोदभव' समय के ज़हर दे दो।
हिम-नगों से घिरा 'सतीसर' दे दो॥
क्या इतिहास अपना, कोई कहता रहे।
'वितस्ता' का जल जैसे बहता रहे।
'कल्हण' की सी बुद्धि प्रखर दे दो।

मेरी लेखनी में वो असर दे दो॥
कहो किसने छिनी हैं भाषा मेरी।
वो दुनिया मेरी और वो आशा मेरी ॥
'ललद्यद' के वाखों का स्वार दे दो।
नहीं कुछ तो उझड़ा सा घर दे दो ॥
मेरे मोहल्ले के लोग अब हैं कहाँ ।
पता कोई दे दे मैं ढूँँ ढूँँ वहाँ॥
'जिन्दा हूँ' उन को खबर दे दो ।
मुझे अपने आंगन का घर दे दो ॥
बहिन-भाई कितने जो नाहक मरे ।
घर छोड़ भागे वो सहमे डरे ॥
उन्हें सर छुपाने का घर दे दो ।
'ऋषि-वाटिका' का शजर दे दो ॥
'माँ शारदा' के परम प्राण है हम ।
'लल्लट' 'मम्मट' के संतान है हम॥
पुनः अपने घर में बसर दे दो।
वो झोपड़ सा, टूटा सा, घर दे दो ॥

१. जौबर वन : डल झील की उपर वाली पहाड़ी और चेटा देवी (जिगीठ याडद) के समने वाला 'हिम खिखर'
- जंबर : सुन्दर
वन : जंगल
२. जलोदभव : वह राक्षस जिसे 'कश्यप ऋषि' ने अहत में मार डाला
३. सतीसर : कश्मीर का पुराना नाम
४. वाख : ललद्यद की कविता को ही वाख कहते हैं। चौदवीं शताब्दी का सबसे महान और कश्मीरी भाषा की सर्वप्रथम कवित्री-योगिनी।
५. ऋषि-वारिका : कश्मीर की ऋषि-वारिका इसलिये कहा जाता आरहा है क्योंकि यहाँ पर ऋषियों, मुनिों, सन्तों ने जन्म लिया है।
६. लल्लटा मम्मट : दो बड़े संस्कृत विद्वानों जिनका जन्मस्थान कश्मीर रहा है।
७. शजर : वृक्ष

बेटी हो तो ऐसी

सैन फ्रांसिस्को के एअरपोर्ट से निकल कर ज्यों ही मैं कार में बैठी, मुझे वहां के खुलेपन का अहसास हुआ। सायंकाल के सात बजने पर भी सूर्य नील गगन में उज्ज्वल हंसी बिखेर रहा था। साफ-सुथरी खुली सड़क पर कार सरपट भाग रही थीं। रंग-बिरंगी फिसलती हुई कारें, लम्बी सफेद चमचमाते ट्रैके, सड़क के दोनों ओर फलों के बगीचों में फलों से लदे हुए वृक्ष तो कहीं फसलों से भरे लम्बे खेत मन को मोह लेते थे। सामने 'डेविस' थे। मकानों की कतारें, सामने लाल फूलों और हरी दूब से सटे हुईं। देखने में आकर्षक और छोटे-छोटे से घर भीतर जाने पर कई कमरे-आधुनिक सभी सुविधाओं सहित। कलकते की भीड़ में दो कमरे का फ्लैट जिसके पास हो उसे भाग्यशाली ही समझेंगे। इतने ढेर से कमरे प्रकाश, धूप और फूलों की महक से सुवासिता। मार्ग की थकान प्लेन में बाइस घंटों का लगातार सफर। यात्रा भी ऐसी कि रात आयी ही नहीं दिन लगातार दिन ही दिन देखा। अतः नींद से आंखें बोझिल हो चुकी थी किन्तु नींद भी जैसे गायब हो गयी थी।



श्रीमती निभा रानी कौल (कोलकाता)

प्रातःकाल आंख लगी ही थी कि मेरी पुत्री ने मुझे पुकारा 'मम्मी देखो मेरी सहेली आपसे मिलने आयी है। ड्राईंग रूम में जाकर देखा-छरंहरी लड़की, गोरा रंग और तीखे नाक नक्श बिखरी हुई सुनहरी लटें उड़ती हुई सी, हाफ पैंट और टी शर्ट पहने दोनों हाथ जोड़े खड़ी थी। स्वीटी ने परिचय दिया, यह 'सूसन' है मुझसे नमस्कार करना सीखा है। 'यह है मेरी मां।' उसने कहा, 'आपसे मिलकर बड़ी खुशी हुई। अभी विद्यालय जाना है फिर आऊंगी। उसके जाते ही स्वीटी से पूछा यह क्या स्कूल में पढ़ रही है। नहीं मम्मी यह पढ़ा रही है। बेचारी के पति चल बसे हैं। अब यहां अकेले ही रहती है। 'हाय' मेरे मुख से निकल पड़ा इस छोटी सी आयु में बेचारी विधवा हो गयी है। अब ससुराल में रहती है या मायके में। 'यहां पर यह अकेले ही रहती है।' 'हाय-हाय क्या इसका कोई अपना नहीं है।' 'सब हैं मम्मी पर यहां सब अपने घर में रहना चाहते हैं कोई किसी पर बोझ नहीं बनता। कहते हैं अपने घर में जो आजादी है वह दूसरे के पास कहां? चाहे वह मां-पिता या सास-ससूर का ही घर क्यों न हो।

सूसन कई बार मुझसे मिलने आती। कहती 'आप कितनी अच्छी हैं इतनी दूर से स्वीटी से मिलने आयीं। आप बहुत प्यार करती हैं अपनी पुत्री को।' मैंने कहा, इसमें नयी बात कौन सी हैं। सभी मां अपनी संतान को अपनी जान से भी अधिक प्यार करती हैं। तुम्हारी मां भी करती होगी। 'मेरी मां। मेरी मां ने कभी प्यार नहीं किया।' 'ऐसा नहीं हो सकता यह तुम्हारी भूल है। मां तो ममता की साक्षात् मूर्ति हैं।' 'सच कहती हूँ मेरी मां ने मुझे कभी प्यार नहीं किया। केवल यह मत करों वह मत करो कहती रहती। मेरे पुरुष मित्र को देखकर वह जल भून जाती। उनके साथ मिलने को सख्त मनाही की। यहां तक मेरी पढ़ाई छुड़ाने के लिए भी तैयार हुई। मैंने भी चुपचाप उसके साथ विवाह किया और यहां आकर रहने लगी। किन्तु मेरे दुर्भाग्य ने यहां भी पीछा किया। एक मिला था प्यार करनेवाला। वह भी भगवान के घर चला गया। मैं अकेली रह गयी ठोकरें खाने के लिए कहते हुए उसकी आंखें भर आयीं। मैंने पूछा, तुमने माता-पिता को यह समाचार दिया था?' 'नहीं आंटी इनकी मृत्युका समाचार सुनकर वे खुश होते और मैं उन्हें यह खुशी दे नहीं सकती।' मैंने उसे समझाने की बहुत चेष्टा की परन्तु उसके हृदय पर घृणा की सिल जमी हुई थी जिसे मैं हटा न सकी। मैंने सोचा ये अमरीकन लड़कियाँ अपने माता-पिता की नहीं हुई तो दूसरे की क्या होंगी? उसके प्रति जो कुछ सदुभाव मेरे मन में था वह घृणा में बदल गया।

एक दिन दस बजे प्रातः वह आयी और मुझे चाभी देकर कहने लगी, 'आंटी मेरे पिता हास्पिटल में हैं। मुझे शीघ्र बुलाया है। पेपरवाले को कह दें कल से पेपर न दे। मुझे भी ग्यारह बजे की फ्लाइट पकड़नी है। वह जल्दी में थी अतः मैंने आशीष देकर उसे विदा किया। ठीक पन्द्रहवें दिन दो बजे के समय मेरे यहां से वह चाबी ले गयी। मैं

भी द्वार पर निकली तो देखा वह ह्वील चेयर पर किसी को बिठाकर घर ले गयी। शाम को स्वीटी को मैंने सूसन का किसी रोगी महिला के साथ लौटने का समाचार सुनाया। स्वीटी ने कहा चलो मां हम उससे मिलने चलते हैं। घर में प्रवेश करते ही उस महिला को देखा तो लगा सूसन की मां ही होगी। मुख की बनावट आयु के अन्तर को भी घूमिल न कर सकी थी। उसके पिता की मृत्यु उसके पहुंचते ही हो गयी थी और मां भी जीवन के अन्तिम पड़ाव पर पहुंच चुकी थी। सूसन ने कहा, मेरी माँ से मिलियो रोगों ने इन्हे जकड़ लिया है। पिताजी को अचानक पैरेलिसिस हुआ था। मेरे पहुंचते ही वे चल बसे। भइया भाभी इन्हें हास्पिटल में रखना चाहते थे। मैंने पूछ लिया यदि मेरे साथ रहना चाहेगी तो वहीं इलाज होगा। मां झट मान गयी, मैं इसे लेकर यहां आयी।

मैंने मन में सोचा यहां क्या चिकित्सा होगी। बेचारी यहां बेमौत मर जायेगी। इस अवस्था में भी इससे बदला लेगी। सूसन के प्रति जमी घृणा मेरे मन में और कठोर हो गयी। मैं इसके बिद्यालय जाते ही उस असहाय रोगिणी के पास जाती। उसी से ज्ञात हुआ कि उसे ब्रेन कैंसर है डा. ने तीन-चार माह तक का ही समय दिया है। इसका अकेलापन मुझे अपनी बीमारी से भी दुःखद लगा। सोचा अन्तिम समय इसके साथ ही बिता दूं। इसने बहुत बड़ा आघात सहा है। इसके लिए क्या-क्या स्वप्ने देखे थे। बहुत ही तीव्र बुद्धि की थी यह। विद्यालय में सदा प्रथम आती। मैं भी बहुत अनुशासन रखती थी इस पर। जब इसने शिक्षक, से जो अंधेड़ आयु का था, मित्रता की तो मैं क्रोध से दुःख से पागल हो गयी। इसके लिए लड़कों की क्या कमी थी। मैंने इसे बुरा भला कहा और उस शिक्षक से मिलने की मनाही की। इसने चुपके से उसके साथ विवाह किया और उसके साथ यहां आ गयी। मैंने तो खटिया पकड़ ली। अपनी लाड़ली को दिल से न निकाल सकी। इसके पिता ने कहा हमारे लिए वह मर गयी। भूल कर भी उसका नाम न लेना। पर उसका एड्रेस जिस दिन पता लगा था तो कहने लगे तुम कुछ स्वस्थ हो जाओ हम पास चलेंगे। बेचारे उनको भी मन की मन में ही रही। मैंने भी बेचारी को कुछ सुख तो दिया नहीं सेवा करवा रही हूं। क्या थी और क्या हो गयी है? मैंने सोचा मां हो ना तब भी स्नेह का सागर हिलोरें मार रहा है।

शाम के पांच बजे हम ग्रीन पार्क में घूमने जाते। अचानक सूसन की मां को ह्वील चेयर पर सूसन के साथ देखा। मैंने पूछा तुम यहां कैसे? कहने लगी मैं प्रतिदिन मां को यहां घुमाने ले आती हूं सोचा इतनी दूर ह्वील चेयर पर ले आती है। यहां से लगभग एक सौ मील की दूरी पर हम लेक टाह देखने गये। जंगल पहाड़ और शहरों के मध्य अगाध जल राशि हिलोरें मारती हुई सामने ही सूसन को बर्गर सेकते देखा। सामने उसकी मां ह्वील चेयर पर लेक को निहार कर निहाल हो रही थी। मैं स्तम्भित हो उठी। जिसे कार में बिठाना और कार से निकालना ही अत्यन्त कठिन है कैसे ले आयी इतनी दूर यह दुबली पतली लड़की। दूसरे दिन मैं इसके घर गयी। सूसन घर पर ही थी। मां के लिए 'सीरियल' बना रही थी। कहने लगी मां अब कुछ चबा नहीं पाती, इसलिए सीरियल जैसे-तैसे गले से उतार लेती है। मैंने कहा ऐसी अवस्था में इन्हें इतनी दूर क्यों ले जाती हो? कहने लगी सारा दिन बिस्तर पर पड़ी रहती है। घूमने फिरने से इसका दिल कुछ तो बहल जायेगा। इतने में उसकी मां ने आंखें खोली 'सूसन' ने लेटे-लेटे ही मां को चम्मच से सीरियल खिलाना आरम्भ किया। मां को आंखें भर आयीं। आंसु मोतियों की तरह कपोलों से लुड़कने लगे। सूसन को मां के प्रति घृणा की सिल पिघल गयी थी और आंखों से टप-टप आंसू मां के मुख पर गिर कर उसके आंसुओं के साथ मिलकर एकाकार हो रहे थे। मैं स्वयं को रोक न सकी। सूसन के प्रति जमी हुई घृणा उसकी सेवा देखकर बहने लगी। न जाने मुझे क्या हुआ मैं उस विदेशी नारी को अपने हृदय से लगाकर आंसू बहाने लगी। दूसरे ही दिन डाक्टर के कहने पर वह उसे चिकित्सालय ले गयी। भाई को भी तार भेजकर बुला लिया जब तक सूसन के भाई और भाभी पहुंचे वह परलोक सिंघार चुकी थी। वापस भारत आने पर धूल और उमस से लिपटा हुआ कलकत्ता मुझे अपने आगोश में लेने के लिए आतुर खड़ा था। अपने देश की मिट्टी की महक के सामने अमरीका के सब सुख वैभव फीके पड़ गये। घर पहुंचते ही सब मुझसे ऐसे मिले जैसे वर्षों बाद मिले हों। अमरीका से लायी कैंडी मेरी बहू पड़ोस के घर देने गयी तो लौटकर कहा, लगता है सरला की मां बीमार है।

मैंने कहा, "तुमने पूछा नहीं।" कहने लगी, "पूछा था कौन कराह रहा है?" कहने लगी "मालूम नहीं", मां होगी उसको ही कराहने की आदत पड़ गयी है। संध्या के समय मैं उसके घर पर गयी। टीवी पर जोर-जोर से पिक्चर चल रही थी। सब मिलकर देखने में मग्न थे। मैंने पूछा मां कहां है तुम्हारी? कहने लगी भीतर है। मैं भीतर गयी वह छटपटा रही थी। उसकी उल्टी सांसें चल रही थी। मैं उसके निकट बैठकर सहलाने लगी। उसके होंठ हिलने लगे। आंसू टप-टप गिरने लगे। कुछ कहना चाहती थी कह न सकी। मैंने सरला को बुलाया और फटकार कर कहा टीवी की आवाज कम करो। "डा. को बुलाया है क्या?" "नहीं आंटी उनको तो सांस की बीमारी है। आये दिन ऐसा होता रहते है फिर स्वयं ठीक होता है।" मैंने कहा, "आज तो हालत खराब है।" मैंने डा. को फोन किया। डा. ने देखा कहा, शीघ्र चिकित्सालय में भर्ती करना होगा। सरला ने कहा, सबेरे ले जेयेंगे। अभी तो रात का समय है। मेरी आंखों के सामने वह दृश्य उपस्थित हो गया, जब सरला ने अपने पिता की मृत्यु पर कहा था। अब तो मां अकेली कैसे रह पायेगी। उसकी देखभाल के लिए हमें ही यहां रहना पड़ेगा। अपने पति और बच्चोंके साथ सरला मां के घर में रहने क्या आयी। माँ का अपना ही घर पराया हो गया।

रात को ही सरला की मां परलोक सिंघार चुकी। सरला का हृदय विदारक रुदन पत्थरों को भी पिघला गया। मां का अन्तिम संस्कार धूमधाम से सम्पन्न हुआ। आज उसकी तेरहवीं है। सरला आये हुए सभी अतिथियों से हाथ जोड़-जोड़कर खाने के लिए आग्रह कर रही है जिससे उसकी मां की आत्मा की शान्ति मिले। अतिथियों से घर ठसाठस भर गया है। कोई कहता है 'बेटी हो तो ऐसी।'



With Best

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Sunil Tiwari

Durgapur

सफलता की आधारशिला

मनुष्य के अन्तस् में सफलता की कामना का अथाह सागर है जिसके रहते वह जीवन-पर्यन्त प्रयास करता रहता है। उसके अन्तस् की जिजीविषा, सहजता, सामान्यता और सफलता को पा लेने के लिए सतत बेचैन रहती है। यही प्रक्रिया उसके जीवन में निरन्तर परिवर्तन एवं विकास की प्रेरणादायिनी शक्ति है। नवीन पद्धतियों को अपनाकर ही मनुष्य समाज के साथ कदम से कदम मिलाकर चल सकता है, अन्यथा पिछड़ जायेगा। प्रायः देखा जाता है कि सफलता प्राप्ति हेतु मनुष्य कड़ी मेहनत, सतत परिश्रम करते हैं किन्तु असफल हो जाते हैं। इसका कारण क्या है, यह जानकर उन कमियों को दूर करना नितान्त आवश्यक है। व्यक्ति चाहे किसी भी स्तर पर सफलता की कामना कर रहा हो, आवश्यक है कि उसकी कार्यशैली सुगठित, सुनियोजित, प्रतियोगितात्मक एवं व्यावसायिक हो। इसलिए व्यक्ति को आरम्भ से ही एकाग्रचित और कर्मठ होना चाहिए। सफलता भी ऐसे ही व्यक्तियों का साथ देती है जो मेहनत करते हैं। महान विचारक कोपलीन का सफलता के संबन्ध में मत है कि - 'सफलता भाग्य या प्रतिभा से नहीं, अपितु उचित तैयारी और अटल विश्वास से मिलती है।' किसी भी स्तर पर सफल होने के लिए सहनशील, चतुर मधुर भाषी, ध्येय के प्रति समर्पित और विवेकशील होना आवश्यक है।



श्रीमति बीना मिसरी
(कोलकाता)

प्रायः देखा जाता है कि मनुष्य छोटी-छोटी बात पर क्रोधित हो जाते हैं, अपना काम दूसरों पर टाल देते हैं, बेवजह दूसरों के काम में दखल देते हैं। सफल होने के लिए ऐसा न करें। कई बार ऐसा भी होता है कि व्यक्ति कठिन परिस्थितियों से घबराकर अपना लक्ष्य बीच में बदल देता है। यह सही नहीं है। मनुष्य की वृत्ति संघर्ष-सघन होनी चाहिए जिससे वह सकारात्मक और नकारात्मक पहलुओं का सामना करते हुए एक ऐसे जीवन दर्शन को रेखांकित कर सके जो सम्पन्न हो एवं सफलता के प्रति आस्था का गहरा पक्षधर हो। योग वशिष्ठ में लिखा है - 'जो व्यक्ति जिसको चाहता है, उसके लिए प्रयास करता है और यदि वह अपना विचार बीच में नहीं बदलता तो उसे वह अवश्य प्राप्त होता है।'

इसके अतिरिक्त व्यक्ति का आदर्शवादी होना भी आवश्यक है। जो व्यक्ति नियमों एवं सिद्धान्तों की अवहेलना करते हैं और कार्य के प्रति पलायनवादी होते हैं, उनकी योजनाएँ विफल हो जाती हैं, जबकि परिस्थितियों से जूझता धैर्यशील, मेहनती व्यक्ति बार-बार ढह जाने पर भी कपड़े झाड़कर फिर से संघर्ष करने के लिए तैयार हो जाता है। ऐसे ही व्यक्तियों का जीवन दर्शन एक कालातीत पैमाना बन जाता है। स्वामी रामतीर्थ ने सत्य ही कहा है - जो आराम चाहता है, वह अपनी वास्तविक उन्नति नहीं कर सकता।'

अतः वर्तमान के इस प्रतिस्पर्धात्मक युग में पूरे आत्मविश्वास के साथ चुनौतियों का सामना करे। नियमबद्धता, लगन और पूरी निष्ठा से यदि हम परिस्थितियों का सामना करेंगे तो नकारात्मक सोच स्वमेव सकारात्मक सोच में परिवर्तित हो जाएगी। औद्योगिक क्रांति वाले इस युग में आधुनिक और पुरातन तर्कों के मध्य सामंजस्य बनाते हुए अपने विचारों से एक नए वर्ग के अग्रेता बनने का प्रयास करे। यकीनन सफलता निश्चित रूप से हमारे कदम चुमेगी।



कश्मीरी संस्कृति – डूबता सूर्य

मन उदास है, याद हैं वह बालंयारबल् के किनारे तिमंजिले मकान की कंनी पर, नदी किनारे, जेहलम नदी के बहाव को ताकते हुए, दिन याद आ रहे हैं। याद आ रहा है, दादी का संध्या दीप, चिड़िया को चावल डालना, हारमण्डल बनाना, बांधफश देना, गड़वी में यारबल् से जल ला ठाकुर जी की, घंटी बजा, पूजा करना, यारबल् के किनारे बड़े बूढ़ों का नहाना, योन्या को धोना और पहनना, सूर्य को अर्ग देना और पित्रों का तरपन करना। एक सिनेमा की रील की भान्ति मनसपटल पर घूम जाती है।

कश्मीरी भाषा, हमारे संस्कार, हमारी प्रथायें, सब कुछ तो धीरे धीरे खत्म हो रहा है। हमारा अस्तित्व, धीरे धीरे लुप्त हो रहा है, और हम केवल शब्दों में ही 'कश्मीरी' पंडित रह गये हैं।



डॉ. फूल चन्द्रा

सब कुछ तो खत्म हो रहा है, और हम इसकी पीड़ा ही नहीं समझ रहे हैं। यह पीड़ा पीढ़ी दर पीढ़ी अग्रसर नहीं हो रही, क्योंकि अगामी पीढ़ी अपने जीवन की धारा में इतनी उलझ गई है, कि वह भूल ही गई है, कि उसका अस्तित्व कहां से शुरु हुआ था, और कहां जाकर थम गया है।

विस्थापन ने हमारी संस्कृति की गरिमा को समाप्त कर दिया है और उसका समाधान हमें ढूँढना पड़ेगा।

भाषा :-

पूरे संसार में क मीरी पंडित, बिखर चुके हैं। वे अपनी आजीविका को पाने के लिए झूज रहे हैं और कश्मीरी भाषा धीरे धीरे लुप्त हो रही है। विस्थापित होने के बाद आगामी पीढ़ी कश्मीरी भाषा समझने तक सीमित हो गई, और उसकी अगली पीढ़ी का बच्चा बड़े गर्व से कहता है हमे कश्मीरी नहीं आती आप क्या बोलते हो ? और हिन्दुस्तान से बाहर पला बच्चा कहती है Papa we don't know what is kashmiri, I can't understand what you are saying.

रह गई यादें वह दूर दूर बनिहाल के पार जहां प्यार से बलाइयां ली जाती थी, हमारी भाषा का मिठास, उसके शब्दों में आग्रह, वात्सल्य, कहां खो गया हमारी भाषा का अस्तित्व, क्या हम उसे वापिस ला पायेंगे। बलाय लगया, म्योन मरून छू, क्या ये शब्द अब कोई जानता है ?

प्रोफेसर चमन लाल सपरू, जिन्होंने क मीरी भाषा को बहुत महत्व दिया। इन्होंने कश्मीरी भाषा में कई पुस्तकें लिखी। इनको योगदान कश्मीरी भाषा में बहुत है। डा. रूप किशन भट्ट ने कश्मीरी भाषा का प्रायमर निकाला। इस प्रकार अनेकों कश्मीरी बुद्धीजीवियों ने कश्मीरी भाषा को बहुत योगदान दिया है। उनका प्रयत्न यह है कि यह भाषा जीवित रहे।

हमारे पर्व :- प्रत्येक पर्व एक महिमा रखता था। हर घर की एक परम्परा होती थी। हम पूर्वज पीढ़ी दर पीढ़ी उन्हें मनाते रहे और आज वे हमारी दहलीज से बाहर जा चुके हैं। १९६० हम में विस्थापित हुए हैं। उन्होंने अपना सामाजिक, आर्थिक, आध्यात्मिक, जीवन कश्मीर में देखा है। उसे अपने अन्तर में बिठाया है, और जब यह विस्थापन की पीड़ा से उभरा तो धीरे धीरे महसूस किया, कि यह सारी प्रक्रियायें हमारे हाथों फिसल कर निकली जा रही हैं, और कश्मीर की घाटी में रह गई है।

शिवरात्री :-

हमारी परम्परायें खो गई। सबसे पहले शिवरात्री का यह मंजर सामूहिक परिवार, पूरे घर में पकवानों की सुगंध, शिवरात्री पूजा का वहां कलश, सनिवारी, त्रिदूषी डुलिजि, वे सब पात्र, स्वरितक को बनाना, और शिव जी की स्थापना

कर, उनकी पुष्पों से पूजा करना। कलश में, दूध दही, कन्द अर्पित करना और फिर भीगे अखरोटों का प्रसाद बाँटना। मंत्रोच्चारण पहले पंडितों के मुख से होता था, धीरे-धीरे कैंसटों में सिमटा और अब ये सब कुछ पीछे छूट गया, रह गया है, एक गड़वा अखरोटों से भरा, जिसमें फूलों की माला चढ़ा, सिंधूर से ऊ लिखना, और वर्क लगाना। इस गड़वे को रसोईघर के फट्टे पर कोने में सजाना और माथा टेक कर शिवरात्री के पर्व का अभिनन्दन करना। क्या हम सोच सकते थे कि एक संयुक्त परिवार से निकल कर, शिवरात्री का पर्व, अगामी पीढ़ी के तीन सदस्यों के परिवार तक सीमित रह जायेगा? शिवरात्री की आस्था अभी समाप्त नहीं हुई, परन्तु क्या यह अगामी पीढ़ी इसे उसी आस्था से मनायेगी?

जन्म दिन मनाना :-

जन्म दिन, पुत्र का हो या पुत्री का, बड़े का हो या छोटे का, यह पर्व एक प्रेरणा से मनाया जाता था। पीले चावल जिसे 'तंहर' कहते हैं, बनाई जाती थी, बिना अन्न को ग्रहण किये, पूजा की जाती थी। मां अपने पुत्र के जन्मदिन पर, और पत्नी अपने पति के जन्म दिन पर, नये वस्त्र धारण करती थी। जिसका भी जन्म दिन होता था वह नये वस्त्र धारण करके, पूजा में बैठ जाता था। पूजा या पंडित जी करते थे या पिता जी, पीले चावल का प्रषाद, एक भीची हुई पीले चावल का 'मेच्च', दही में लिपटी, हथेली पर रखकर खाने को मिलती थी। एक 'मंचवी' से से भूख उमड़ सी जाती थी और उससे संतोष नहीं होता था।

धीरे-धीरे व्यस्ता के कारण, प्रवृत्तियों में बदलाव के कारण, जन्म दिन मनाना, धीरे धीरे लुप्त हो रहा है। जन्म दिन को जहां धार्मिक रूप से मनाया जाता था, अब वह एक ड्रिंक्स पार्टी में बदल गया है। क्या हम अपनी इस पारंपरिक सभ्यता और संस्कृति को वापिस कर सकते हैं।

यज्ञनोपवीत् - मेखला :-

लाखों रुपये खर्च कर कश्मीरी पंडित समुदाय अपने पुत्रों की मेखला करते थे। यह प्रथा हिन्दु धर्म के ब्राह्मण परिवारों में युगों से चली आ रही है। यह हमारे धर्म में शिक्षा आरम्भ करते समय, एक यज्ञ किया जाता था। जिनमें पुत्रों को गेरुए वस्त्र पहना, हवन किया जाता था। गले में जनेऊ डाला जाता था। उन्हें भिक्षा मांगने के लिए एक थाली या पात्र दिया जाता था। समूह परिवार के सदस्य और मित्रगण उसे भिक्षा देते थे। यज्ञ रात्री को प्रीतिभोज से सम्पन्न होता था। धीरे-धीरे यज्ञनोपवीत् की महिमा तो बनी रही, परन्तु उसके अर्थ बदल गये। यह एक यज्ञ ही रह गया। बच्चों की उम्र का कोई सरोकार नहीं रहा। अब कभी भी किया जाता है क्योंकि इसमें धार्मिक से ज्यादा सामाजिक गतिविधियां बढ़ गईं। स्टाल लगाना, विभिन्न प्रकार के व्यंजन बनाने, सारे दिन भर में मांस दूध फोंफ दूध को बाटना खर्चा अधिक होता है, तो यह अब लड़के की शादी के साथ ही, एक दिन पहले किया जाता है। प्रत्येक परिवार में मेखला सामूहिक परिवार की मान्यता से होती थी। अतः उस समय उस खानदान में जितने पुत्र होते थे उन सब की मेखला इकट्ठा होती थी। अब सब परिवार बिखर गये। भाई भाई सारे संसार भर में अलग अलग रहने लगे। दो भाईयों के बीच की मानसिक, आर्थिक दूरियों ने 'मेखला' के पर्व को एक ही छोटे परिवार तक सीमित कर दिया है।

आज की पीढ़ी को अगर पूछा जाये कि मेखला क्या है? तो उन्हें शायद इसका उत्तर भी नहीं आता। पश्चिमी शहरों में मेखला केवल दो घंटे की पूजा रह गई है। वह भी तब तक जब तक गुरु जी है। अंग्रेजी वातावरण में पला पुत्र यह भी नहीं जानता कि योन्या क्या है। हिन्दुस्तान में भी, कई कश्मीरी ब्राह्मण पुत्र अपना योन्या निकाल कर बाथरूम में कील पर टांग देते हैं। क्या हम अपनी संस्कृति को बचा पाये हैं? क्या हम अपने बच्चों को इसकी महिमा समझा पायेंगे?

मंत्रोच्चारण :-

मेरे माता पिता, हब्बा कदल के रघुनाथ मंदिर में, सुबह उठकर मंत्रोच्चारण करते थे। मेरा बचपन इन्हीं स्वरों में बीता। गायत्री मंत्र, इन्द्रक्षी माता की स्तुति, गोरी माता की स्तुति। बचपन में मेरे पिता जी को, फिर ससुर जी

को ऊँचे स्वर से गाते सुना है। हाथों में रत्नदीप लेकर आरती किया करते थे। मैं अपने ही स्वरों में उनका साथ देती थी। उनके देहान्त के बाद, गौरी स्तुती, गौरी अम्बा — इद्राक्षी नामसा देवी — यह सब अकेले में गाने लगी। धीरे-धीरे मुझे लगा कि यह मुझ तक ही सीमित रह गया है और आधी अधूरी जानकारी के कारण बच्चों तक पहुँचा न पाई। क्या यह भजन, यह लीलायें, यह गौरी स्तुती, इद्राक्षी का पाठ — आगे हमारी आस्था का स्वरूप रहेगा? मैंने यह देखा कि विस्थापन के बीस वर्षों में हमारा धार्मिक झुकाव, कश्मीर की धार्मिक प्रवृत्तियों से बदल कर, विभिन्न प्रकार के धर्मों की आस्था में बदल चुकी है। जो हिन्दुस्तान के जिस क्षेत्र में रहता है, वह उसी क्षेत्र प्रान्त का हो गया। पंजाब में रामायण का पाठ, यू.पी. में कृष्ण लीला, महाराष्ट्र में गणेश स्तुति — अतः हम धीरे धीरे अपने धर्म, शिव स्तुति, शारिका माता की स्तुति के बारे में विस्मित ही रहे हैं।

थाल भरुन :-

नवरेह वाले दिन हम लोग रात को थाल भरते थे जिसमें चावल, चाय, चीनी, सोना, कलम, अखरोट, जन्तरी रुपये रखे जाते थे। सुबह नींद से उठते ही इस थाल का सब लोग मुँह देखते थे और पूजा करते थे। इसी चावल का 'तंहर' बनती थी जिसे प्रसाद के रूप परिवार में बाँटा जाता था। यह प्रथा धीरे-धीरे समाप्त हो रही है और व्यस्त लोगों को यह भी नहीं याद रहता कि कल नवरेह है, और हमें रात को थाल भरना है और सुबह उसका अभिनन्दन करना है। थाल भरने का अर्थ यह होता था कि प्रभु हमें पूरा वर्ष भर इन चीजों से वंचित मत करना जिस पर हमारा जीवन निर्भर है।

मेरे लिखने का अभिप्राय यह है कि बहुत कुछ हम खो चुके हैं, और बहुत कुछ खोते जा रहे हैं। क्या हम अपनी संस्कृति को बचा पायेंगे ?

मंगल गान :-

'वनवुन' यह कश्मीरी लोक संगीत का एक अत्यन्त सुखद मंगल गान होता था। प्रत्येक विवाह, मेखला या मंगल पर्व पर, जैसे 'लिवुन' पर सब रिश्तेदार जब इकट्ठा होते थे, तो सभी बुजुर्ग महिलायें 'वोट' में या कंठी में बैठकर मंगल गान या 'वनवुन' गाती थी। इसके शब्द लिखे नहीं होते थे उन्हें कंठस्थ होते थे, परन्तु धीरे धीरे इसके शब्द कई कश्मीरी लेखकों ने लिखे। परन्तु इसकी लय, उस पीढ़ी से अगामी पीढ़ी तक नहीं जा सकी। आधुनिक पीढ़ी यह जानती है कि 'वनवुन' एक ऐसा बिना वाद्य के लोक संगीत है, जो सीखा नहीं जा सकता। सी. डी. या कैसट में कैद जरूर कर दिया गया है, परन्तु न उस सी.डी. को सुनने, और समझने का समय किसी के पास है। लगता है यह 'वनवुन' धीरे-धीरे लुप्त हो जायेगा।

संध्या दीप जलाना :-

हमारे पूर्वज महिलायें हर रोज, गोधूली के समय संध्या दीप जलाती थी। वह दीप 'डब' के दाईं और बनी एक लकड़ी के फट्टे पर रखा करती थी। यह संध्या दीप, उस परिवार को प्रभु की अराधना के रूप में जलाया जाता था और अब संध्या दीप का महत्व ही समाप्त हो चुका है।

पक्षियों को खाने का भोग लगाना :-

कश्मीर में जब भोजन बनता था, थोड़े से चावल और सब्जी का भोग लगा, पक्षियों को डाला जाता था। डब के किनारे पर एक और फट्टी लगी होती थी, जिस पर ग्रहणी दोपहर को खाना बनाने के बाद खाने का भोग लगा कर पक्षियों को डालती थी। यह प्रक्रिया प्रत्येक जन्मदिन की पूजा पर भी पीले चावल से होती थी। किसी भी व्यक्ति के देहान्त के बाद प्रतिदिन खाना बना कर, पूरा एक वर्ष एक थाली में उसके लिए खाने का भोग लगता था और उसे उसी फट्टे पर पक्षियों के लिए रखा जाता था। कहा जाता है कि जब तक हम व्यक्ति का वार्षिक श्राद्ध नहीं करते, तब तक उनकी आत्मा अपने घर के आस पास ही फिरती रहती है और लगाया भोग खाती है। वार्षिक श्राद्ध के बाद वह आत्मा स्वर्ग चली जाती है तो यह खाने की प्रक्रिया समाप्त हो जाती है। आजकल प्रत्येक महिला

कामकाजी हो गई है। उसके व्यस्त जीवन में इतना समय ही नहीं है कि वह खाना बना कर उसका भोग लगा कर पक्षियों को खाने के लिए डाल दे।

विस्थापित लोगों का भावात्मक चमत्कार :-

यहां मैं कुछ लिखना चाहूँगी उन लोगों के लिए, जिन्होंने हमारी आस्था को एक उम्मीद दी।

1990 में कश्मीरी पंडितों का पलायन हुआ। हमारी आस्था वहीं रह गई। मन में अत्यन्त विरह की भावना जागने लगी और प्रतीत हुआ कि हमारा अस्तित्व कश्मीर में ही छूट गया है। इन बीस वर्षों में कश्मीरी समाज ने अपनी विरह की भावना को दूर किया और अपनी आस्था को पूर्ण करने का प्रयास किया। कश्मीरी समाज ने हारी परबत और खीर भवानी के धार्मिक स्मारक स्थापित किये। हारी परबत फरीदाबाद में बनाया गया। इसे बनाने का विचार श्री जे.एन. कौल, जो एस.ओ.एस. स्कूल के संस्थापक थे। वे कश्मीरी सेवक समाज के संस्थापक एवं मुखी थे, उनके और उनकी पत्नी के मन में फरीदाबाद के पहाड़ी की चोटी पर 'हारीपरबत' बनाने का विचार कौंधा, उन्होंने माता शारिका का स्वरूप वहीं स्थापित करना चाहा और उस सारी जगह को आध्यात्मिक संस्थान में बदला दिया। श्री जे.एन. कौल साहिब ने गांव वालों से वहां की जमीन मांगी। जिन्होंने निस्कोच इनको दान दी और वहां के हारीपर्वत का निर्माण आरम्भ हो गया। कौल साहब ने यह कार्य श्री सी.के. दास जी को सौंपा। चारों तरफ से योगदान, भावनात्मक रूप से लोगों का आरम्भ हुआ। पहाड़ी की चोटी पर 'शारिका' माता का भवन बनाया गया। वहां पर पहुँचने के लिए 100 सीढ़ियों का निर्माण किया गया। ताकि यह श्रीनगर के हारीपर्वत का ही स्वरूप ले सके और चोटी पर भव्य मंदिर बनाया गया। इस प्रकार सारा स्थल आध्यात्मिक स्थल में परिवर्तित हो गया।

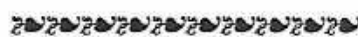
कश्मीरी समाज ने अपने आस्थायें खोईं, वहीं उन्होंने उसे जीवित रखने की चेष्टा भी की।

जम्मू में खीर भवानी मन्दिर की स्थापना की गई। यह भव्य मन्दिर हमारी इष्ट देवी 'खीर भवानी' की याद में बनवाया गया है। यह मन्दिर हमारी आस्था का प्रतीक है। जम्मू में कश्मीरी पंडितों की आबादी बहुत है। विस्थापन ने उन्हें श्रीनगर से जम्मू में ला पटका। अपनी खीर भवानी के विरह में उन्होंने इस मंदिर का प्रतिरूप जम्मू में बनाया। अब यह उनकी आस्था का केन्द्र है।

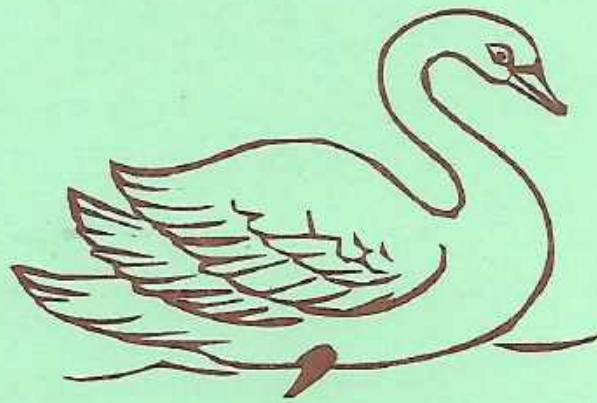
देहली में एक भव्य मंदिर बनाया गया है। यह मन्दिर I.P Extension, East Delhi में है। खीर भवानी का संगमरमर का यह मन्दिर पवित्र नाग के मध्य में बनाया गया है। इसके मध्य में भगवती की प्रतिमा अपने पारम्परिक परिधान, फिरन और तंरंगों में है। यह मन्दिर कश्मीर की खीर भवानी, जो तुल्ला-मुल्ला गांव में स्थित है, उसीकी परिकल्पना है। कश्मीरी समुदायों के लिए विस्थापन अत्यन्त ही मार्मिक समय था जब उन्हें माता खीर भवानी को छोड़ कर कश्मीर से विस्थापित होना पड़ा, यह विरह की भावना इस मन्दिर के रूप में उभर कर आई। ये मन्दिर कुलदीप धर ने बनवाया है। कुलदीप धर जी के माता पिता धार्मिक प्रवृत्ति के थे। उन्होंने अपने पुत्र को आध्यात्मिकता विरासत में दी। अतः उनके देहान्त के बाद कुलदीप जी का मन बहुत उच्चाट हुआ। विस्थापन की पीड़ा उनके मन में थी अतः वे महन्त रामशरण गिरि सिद्धेश्वर वाले को मिले। उन्हें अपना विचार प्रकट किया। महन्त जी की सहायता से इस मन्दिर का निर्माण करवाया। इसके निर्माण में कुलदीप जी को रमेश्वर राम-शरण गिरि वालों ने अपने आश्रम की जमीन दान में दी और उसमें काफी धनराशि का योगदान दिया। इस मन्दिर में निर्माण में कुलदीप जी को हजारों कश्मीरी लोगों का आर्थिक योगदान रहा, जिनके कारण ये आस्था का मन्दिर बन पाया।

नाज़ है हमें उन लोगों पर जिन्होंने हमारी संस्कृति को जीवित रखने की कोशिश की।

डॉ. फूल चन्द्राए हीरा नगर, पटियालाएण फोन : 093162-00944



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वह भूली-बिसरी यादें

कृष्णा घोष

जगह - श्रीनगर का एक क्षेत्र - फतेहकदला टॉंगे से उतरकर अन्दर की ओर बढ़े तो कुछ दूर चलकर दाहिनी ओर एक आलीशान मकान पर नजर रुकती है। यह मदनों का निवास स्थान था। इस इलाके के नामी-धामी पंडितों में गिनेजाने वाला ठीक उसके विपरीत बाईं ओर एक और आकर्षक बंगला डिजाईन का भवन था। जिसकी विशिष्टता सीना ताने खड़े संतरी की तरह आँगन में तीन देवदारु पेड़ थे। वहाँ से अगर सामने की ओर नज़र डाले तो कुछ दूरी पर एक तीन मंजिला मकान दिखाई देता है। उसमें रहता था, छे: सदस्यों का हमारा धर परिवार - तीन बयुस्क और तीन बच्चे। पिताजी (टाठया) कालेज में पढ़ाते थे। दो बच्चे स्कूल जाते थे और माँ (भाभी) अन्य ओरतो की तरह सुबह से शाम तक घर के काम काज में व्यस्त रहती थी।

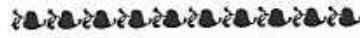
एक साधारण मध्यमवर्गीय पण्डित परिवार। न बड़ी बड़ी आशाये न ऊँची आक्राँक्षाये, बस इतना ही कि ईमानदारी की कमाई से शान्ति से दिन गुज़ारे और अपने बच्चों को अच्छी से अच्छी शिक्षा दी! आधुनिक संचार के साधन तो थे नहीं पर उसकी कमी भी महसूस नहीं होती थी। जिगरी बेनिजिगरी, बनिटाठी काकैन जिगरी, आदि, और उनके परिवारों का आना जाना तो लगा ही रहता था। किसी को भी सुख दुःख की खबर तेजी से संचारित होती थी। और उस संवाद वाहन की श्रंखला की मज़बूत कड़ी थी - गुरुजी (गोर) का सम्पर्क। हर छोटे बड़े त्योहार में उनकी उपस्थिति अनिवार्य होती थी। चूँकि एक गुरुजी के कई यजमान परिवार होते थे, आपस में सम्पर्क स्थापित रखना आसान होता था। बस इस नियमबद्ध जीवन शैली में सुख-दुःख से दिन बीतते गये।

फिर एक ऐसी आँधी चली जिसने रोज़मर्रा की जिन्दगी में उथल-पुथल मचा दी। देश का विभाजन हुआ और विनाशकारी रेउरों का आक्रमण हुआ। चारों ओर आतंक का वातावरण छा गया। कब वे श्रीनगर, पहुँचे और कत्ल आम शुरू करें इसी आशंका से दिल काँपते थे। घर के बड़े बुज़ुर्ग आपस में घुसुर-फुसुर करते थे। हमारे आंगन के काठगोले में दो बड़े बड़े गड्ढे खोदे गये और हमें यह समझाया गया कि इशारा पाते ही हमें उन गड्ढों में घुस जाना है। भाभी माई को लेकर एक मैं और हम दो बहने दूसरे में। उपर से सूखी घास बिछाई जायेगी। तो यह था एक कूर शत्रु से बचने का एक अविश्वासनीय उपाय। मर्दों ने अपने बचाव के लिए क्या सोचा था वह पता नहीं। या यों कहे कि सोचने की गुंजाइश ही नहीं थी। पता नहीं कितना समय इस अनिश्चितता में बिताने के बाद राहत की साँस ली, खबर मिली कि भारतीय सेना ने रेउरों को आगे बढ़ने से रोका है। अर्थात् श्रीनगर सुरक्षित है। खतरा टल गया।

खतरा तो टल गया परन्तु इस आँधी ने पंडितों के लिए हवा का रूख हमेशा के लिए बदल दिया। यह स्पष्ट हो गया कि यहां अब उनका कोई भविष्य नहीं है। केवल मीठी बातों से ही तो पेट नहीं भरता है। और लोगों की तरह टाठया ने भी श्रीनगर से बाहर जाने की ठानी। और एक दिन नोकरी का न्योता आया। सामान बाँधते गये और बड़ों की उदासीनता बढ़ती गयी। दूसरी ओर उत्सुकता और उत्साह से हम बच्चे फूलें नहीं समाते थे - ट्रेन में पहली बार चढ़ेंगे नई नई जगह देखेंगे। तो एक दिन निकल पडे जन्म भूमि को छोड़कर कर्मभूमि की ओर। दूर दराज उडीसा का मयूरगंज जिला - प्राकृतिक सौंदर्य से सुशोभिते जगह। हमें मिला एक विशाल बंगलो बगीचा समेत जो फल फूल के पेड़ पोधों से भरा था। तन को भरपूर खुराक मिली पर मन? नयेपन का आकर्षण खत्म होते ही यह एहसास हुआ कि हमने क्या खोया है। कहाँ हैं वे संगी साथी, रिशतेदार, हमारे हमदर्द, हमारे त्योहार, निशार्त और शालिमार बाग में पिकनिक तुलमुल हारी पर्वत - उन सब की याद में मन तड़पता रहा। अब पर्यटकों की तरह साल, में एक बार एक डेढ़ महीने के लिए जाते थे और हर बार पता लगता था कि कोई घर कोई कौल कोई रैना कोई

राजदान, श्रीनगर, छोड़कर नौकरी पाने को दूसरी जगहों में गये हैं। अर्थात् अल्पसंख्यक और भी अल्पसंख्यक हो गये है।

अब बुद्धिमानी इसीमें थी कि वस्तविकता को स्वीकार करें। जो बीत गया उसकी पकड़ को ढीला करें और जो वर्तमान और भविष्य है उसकी पकड़ को मजबूत करें। जहाँ भी बस गये वहाँ के लोगों को अपनायें उनके साहित्य और संस्कृति को समझे उनके त्याहारों में सम्मिलित हों। उन्होंने भी तो हमें अपनाया है। सदियों से जिनको भाई बहन बन्धु समझते थे उन्होंने तो धकेल बाहर निकाला। जो भी कसर बाकी थी वह अतंकवादियों ने पूरी की - और भी खुली तरह और भी क्रूरता से। एक सीमित दायरे में पीढ़ी दर पीढ़ी पली बड़ी विशिष्ट प्रकार की संस्कृति सदा के लिए लुप्त हो रही है। सबसे अधिक दुःख तो इस बात का है कि मनुष्य द्वारा रचित प्रकोप से पीड़ित एक निष्पाप असहाय जाति के सैंकड़ों व्यक्तियों को मार डाला गया अपमानित किया गया निष्कासित किया पर किसी टीवी चनेल, किसी समाचार पत्र और किसी संस्था ने यह उचित नहीं समझा कि साधारण जनता को सही घटना से परिचित करायें। नतीजा यह कि आज जब पर्यटक पूछते कश्मीर की सैर करके आते हैं और हमारे ही सामने उसका सुन्दरता के गुण गान करते हैं और फिर कहते हैं आप लोग इतनी सुन्दर जगह छोड़कर क्यों आये है? हमारे जखमों पर नमक!



संतयोगिनी लल्लेश्वरी

पं. त्रिलोकीनाथ वंचू

कच्चे धागे से खे रही हूँ नैया सागर में
सुनता दाता मेरी पुकार ले जाता पार।
कच्चे सकोरों में क्या जल समाए
मेरा जी मचल रहा है घर जाने को।

यह कैसी पुकार है? यह पुकार है एक प्रेमयोगिनी की, जो उस पार अपने प्रियतम से मिलने के लिए अधीर है, पर उसको ज्ञान है कि उसके प्रयत्न कच्चे धागे से नाव खींचने के बराबर हैं। जैसे कच्चे सकोरों में जल नहीं समाता, और रिस जाता है, किन्तु जब उन सकोरों को अग्नि में पका दिया जाता है, तो उन्हीं में जल ठहर जाता है। ऐसे ही तपस्या की शक्ति से अपना यह कच्चा देह पक जाता है और तब उसमें प्रेम-जल ठहर जाता है और वही साधना के द्वारा भवसागर से पार ले जाने के काम में समर्थ होता है, लेकिन यह प्रयत्न भी हरिकृपा बिना सार्थक नहीं होता और तभी तो वह पुकार रही है - हे दाता! मेरी पुकार सुन लो और मुझे भी पार ले जाओ। मेरा जी तो उस पार आने के लिए मचल रहा है - निजधाम लौटने के लिए।

यह वाक्य कश्मीर की शिव-योगिनी भाता लल्लेश्वरी की है, जिनका जन्म १४वीं शताब्दी (१३००-१३०२) में श्रीनगर का निकट पुरानदेष्ठान गाँव में पंडित परिवार में हुआ। बचपन में ही उन्होंने अपने कुलगुरु पंडित सिद्धमोल से दीक्षा ली थी। उनका विवाह पास ही के गाँव पद्मापुर में हुआ। ससुराल में उनकी सास उन्हें बहुत यातनाएँ देती थीं। प्रातः से देर रात तक घर का समस्त कार्य करते रहने के बावजूद, उनकी सास उन्हें कभी पेट-भर भोजन नहीं देती थी, इस प्रकार यह सिलसिला १२ वर्ष के विवाहित जीवन तक जारी रहा।

एक दिन की बात है कि योगिनी पौ फटते दरिया पर पानी भरने के लिए गयी थी, वहाँ पर उनकी पड़ोसिनी ने उनसे कहा कि आज तुम्हारे यहाँ बड़ा उत्सव है और खूब दावत होगी। यह सुनते ही उनके मुँह से अचानक निकला :-

‘भोज छोटा हो यह बड़ा, लल का बट (पत्थर) नहीं हटेगा’ ।

यह बात अंधेरे में घाट पर उनके ससुर ने सुन ली और दिन में सब मेहमानों के भोजन कर लेने के बाद जब उसकी सास ने उनके लिए भोजन परोसा तो थाली में सिलबट्टे के पत्थर के ऊपर थोड़ा सा भात फैलाया हुआ है, इस बात से घर में कोलाहल मच गया। अब तक यह बात छिपी हुई थी और चुपचाप अपने पर होने वाले इस अत्याचार को सहती रहती थी। इस बात के सर्वविदित हो जाने पर वह घर-गृहस्थी को त्यागकर सन्यासिनी बन गयीं यहाँ तक कि उन्होंने अपने वस्त्रों से भी सन्यास ले लिया। वे संसार की पहली महिला सन्यासिनी हैं जो अपने समस्त शेष जीवन काल में निःवस्त्र रहती थीं। उनके गुरु ससुर तथा अन्य पतरजनों ने काफी प्रयत्न किया कि वह घर वापस आ जाएँ पर वह वापिस नहीं लौटीं।

कश्मीर में उस समय मुस्लिम राज्य की स्थापना हो चुकी और काफी संख्या में हिन्दु-मुसलमान बन गये थे। हिन्दुओं के थोड़े से घर बाकी रह गये थे। लल्ल तो एक सन्यासिनी थी हीं उनके लिए जाति-पाँति का कोई महत्व नहीं था। वह किसी का भी, हिन्दु या मुसलमान का दिया हुआ खा लेती थीं। उन्हीं ने स्वयं कहा है:

मिथ्या कपट असत छोड़ा
मन को दिया यही उपदेश
जन में केवल उसे जाना
अन्न खाने में कैसा दोष।

उन्होंने अपने विचारों को 'वाक्यों' के माध्यम से व्यक्त किया। वह अपने वाक्यों से हिन्दु-मुसलमान, पंडित-ज्ञानी, जनसाधारण को सम्बोधित करती थीं। उनके वाक्यों का कश्मीर में हिन्दु-मुसलमान गुरुवाणी की तरह सुमिरन करते हैं। उन्होंने ३३ वर्ष के जीवन काल में लगभग १४०-२०० 'वाक्य' कहे हैं कश्मीर के 'शैव-दर्शन' की पद्धति से परिचित कराते हैं। अपने कई वाक्यों में उन्होंने प्राण, अपान, नादबिन्दु, कुण्डलिनी योग कलाओं एवं ब्रह्मरन्ध्र का वर्णन किया है।

अपनी साधना के विषय में उन्होंने एक वाक्य में स्वयं कहा है कि 'मैं तो तप के लिए ही इस संसार में आयी और बुद्धि के प्रकाश से ही मैंने परमात्मा को पाया। अब तो मेरे लिए जीवित रहना या मरना एक ही बात हैं और इस अवस्था में न अब मेरी दृष्टि में कोई मरेगा न मुझे कोई मरा हुआ जानेगा,' कितना स्पष्ट संकेत है जीवनमुक्त अवस्था का। और भी कहीं उन्होंने कहा है -

हम ही थे हम ही रहेंगे।
हम ही चले आये चिरकाल से,
जीवन और मरण का क्रम शिव का
समाप्त न होगा कभी
और न ही सूर्य का उदय व अस्त।

आगे चल के उन्होंने कहा

जन्म पाके विभव न दूँडा
लोभों भोगों से करी न प्रीती
थोडा ही आहार बहुत जाना
दुख दर्द सहा पाया प्रभू।

तन मन से गई उसकी ओर
सुनी सत की घंटा का नाद
वहीं धारना ध्यान से बांधा
और आकाश प्रकाश का जाना रहस्य।

उन दिनों कश्मीर में मुसलमानों के सूफी मत का प्रादुर्भाव हो गया था। उस समय नुन्द ऋषि (नूर-अधीनवली) और सैयद अली हमदानी (शाह हमदान) के साथ उनके कई वार्तालाप हुए। ऐसे ही एक वार्तालाप में नुन्दऋषि के शिष्य ने कहा था -

‘सूर्य जैसा प्रकाश कहाँ ?

गंगा जैसा तीर्थ कहाँ ?

भाई जैसा बन्धु कहाँ ?

पत्नी जैसा सुख कहाँ ?

जिस पर नुन्दऋषि ने कहा था -

‘नेत्र जैसा प्रकाश कहाँ ?

टाँगें जैसा तीर्थ कहाँ ?

जेब जैसा बन्धु कहाँ ?

भोजन जैसा सुख कहाँ ?

अर्थात् जब आँखें ही नहीं तो सूर्य का प्रकाश कैसे देखेंगे? जब पाँव असमर्थ हों तो तीर्थ यात्रा पर कैसे जाओगे? जब जेब में दाम नहीं तो भाई-बन्धु किस काम के ? और जब भोजन न मिले तो और सुख किस काम के?

इस पर लल्लेश्वरी ने कहा -

माय जैसा प्रकाश कहाँ ?

लय जैसा तीर्थ कहाँ ?

दय जैसा बन्धु कहाँ ?

भय जैसा सुख कहाँ ?

अर्थात् परमात्मा के प्रेम (माय) जैसा प्रकाश कहाँ ? परमात्मा में तालीनता (लय) जैसी तीर्थ-स्थल कहाँ ? परमात्मा जैसा दाता (दय) कहाँ? और भय जैसा सुख कहाँ ?

कठोपनिषद् (२/३/३) में वर्णित है -

भयादस्याग्निस्तपति, भयात् तपति सूर्यः ।

भयादिन्द्रश्च वायुश्च, मृत्युधवितिपत्वमः ॥

अर्थात् परमात्मा के भय से ही अग्नि जलती है, सूर्य तप रहा है, उसी के भय से इन्द्र, वायु और पाँचवें मृत्यु देवता (अपने-अपने कार्य में) प्रकृत हो रहे हैं।

माता लल्लेश्वरी ने अपने वाक्य में इसी भय की ओर संकेत किया है। लल्ल के जीवन काल में कश्मीर के हिन्दुओं पर वामपंथ का प्रभाव पड़ चुका था और देवी के मन्दिरों में पशुबलि दी जाती थी। एक दिन की बात है कि एक पंडित पद्मापुर के रास्ते पर खीव गाँव में स्थित ज्वाला जो की मन्दिर में बलि चढ़ाने के लिए भेड़ ले जा रहा था। रास्ते में लल्ल ने उससे पूछा कि वह उस भेड़ को कहाँ ले जा रहा है तो उसने उत्तर में कहा कि वह भगवती ज्वाला को अर्पण करने ले जा रहा है। इस पर लल्ल ने एक वाक्य कहा -

‘अरे पंडित तुम्हारी बुद्धि कहाँ गई? किसने तुझे यह उपदेश दिया और तुमने मान भी लिया? क्या पत्थर की शिला भी सजीव भेड़को ग्रहण कर सकती है। अरे मूर्ख यह बेचारा तुम्हारा क्या खाता है? यह तो भगवान का दिया हुआ तृण व जल का ही आहार लेता है।’

इसी तरह हिन्दु-मुसलिम भेद-भाव के बारे में उन्होंने एक 'वाक्य' में कहा है -

रवि न थलथल तापता,
तापता उत्तम देश।
वरुण न नीच घर प्रवेशता,
शिव तत्व है गूढ़, समझ उपदेश॥

अर्थात् सूर्य प्रत्येक स्थल पर, बिना किसी भेदभाव के, छोटी और बड़ी जाति के समस्त घरों में प्रवेश करता है तथा प्राण वायु देता है। इन्हीं से हमें यह उपदेश ग्रहण करना चाहिए कि क्षेप्त मनुष्यों के लिए सभी बराबर हैं, चाहे वे किसी भी जाति या किसी भी स्तर के हों। यही परमात्मा का नियम है जिसे समझना बहुत गूढ़ है और उसी नियमानुसार रवि और वरुण अपने-अपने कार्य में लगे हैं।

माता लल्लेश्वरी मध्यकालीन भारत की सन्त परम्परा की पहली योगिनी थीं जिन्होंने अपने 'वाक्यों' के माध्यम से शैव दर्शन, अहिंसा तथा सादा-सरल जीवन बिना किसी भेदभाव के व्यतीत करने का उपदेश दिया। उनके यही विचार आगे चलकर श्री रामानन्द जी (१४००-१४३० ई०) की शिक्षा। कबीर (१४४०-२५१८), गुरुनानक देव (१४३८) की वाणी में आये। सन्त तुलसीदास और मीराबाई की रचनाएँ काफी बाद में आईं।

प्रभु का साक्षात्कार और मुक्ति का अनुभव उन्होंने अपने 'वाक्यों' में इस तरह किया है -

'मैं वहाँ पहुँच गयी, उनके पास और देखा कि द्वार बन्ध हैं तथा सांकल लगा रखी है। पर मैं भी ना मुड़ी, वही प्रतीक्षा में बैठ गयी। मेरा संकल्प और दृढ़ हुआ, उनसे मिलने की इच्छा और प्रबल हुई।'

उन्होंने आगे कहा है -

हे नाथ अपने को न पहचाना
सदा माना हूँ मैं देह।
तू मैं मैं तू एक न जाना
तू कोन मैं कोन रहा संदेह॥

अपनी साधना की गति उन्होंने इस तरह समझायी -

लल्ल मैं निकली कपास के फूल भाँति
धुनके और डोर ने मुझे कैसा बिखेरा।
तकली और चरखे पर बनी मेरी लम्बी तार,
जुलाहे के करघे ने ताना-बाना।
धोबी ने मली सज्जी और साबुन,
और दे पटका पत्थर पर।
फिर दरजी की कैंची ने काटा,
तब जाके कहीं परम गति पाई।



खानु वुजांरी

मकखन लाल सराफ

वतनो छांड़थ कमि कमि वानुं असि गंयि खानु
वुजांरी।
गरि आंस्य रोज़ान कमि ताम शानु। असि गंयि
वुजांरी ॥०॥
दग यथ शहरस तानुवुंतानु, दांदिस अथ छुनु
कांह वातान।
गारि अंस्य द्रमुत्य लरज़य, असि गंयि खानुं
वुजांरी ॥०॥
अंस्य रुद्य फेरान थानुं पथ थानु, वति पंद्य
वुनिछिनु कुनि ठंहरान।
तसली असि गव प्रथ अकि तानु॥ असि गंयि
खानु वुजांरी ॥०॥
बानु फो'त फिरवान वानु पथ वानु, तालि प्यठ
ललवुनथोवन नार।
हंग मंगु कंन्य पोयि दावुं पथ दानुं॥ असि
गंयि खानु वुजांरी ॥०॥
कति कुस को'त लो'ग लरज़य जानुं, असि
राऽव पानस पनुनी ज़ान।
दर अ'च्छ लजिमचु मरगुनि वानु॥ असि गंयि
खानुं वुजांरी ॥०॥
कम कम मोसूम कम जानान, च्यन्तायि दजुवुन्य
सुबह शाम।
छग दिथ अ'ड्डट ल'ग्य कबरिस्तान॥ असि
गंयि खानु वुजांरी ॥०॥
म्वरत्तहार वस्य प्यन गवुं दान दान, 'दानु,
'सराफ' सोवस रोव सन्तोश।
कति कोत छग ल'ज मरगिस्तान॥ असि गंयि
खानु वुजांरी ॥०॥
दशि बो'यि गंन्दूयतव प्रथ अस्तानु, पाक
रव्वदाया से'ज़ि वति लाग।
शाम गवमंदिन्यन ही भगवान॥
असि गंयि खानुं वुजांरी॥०॥



कॉशुर पॅरिव लीखिव यिथु पॉटय्

कॉशिर्य अछरः क, ख, ग, च, छ, च़, छ़, ज, ज़, ट, ठ, ड, त, थ, द,
 न, प, फ, ब, म, य, र, ल, व, श, स, ह, क्ष, झ, त्र।
 कॉशिर्य स्वरः अ, आ, ऐ, औ, इ, ई, अु, अु, ए, ऐ, ओ, औ, व्व, य्।

स्वर	मात्रा	वरताव
अ	मूलस्वर	अख (एक), अज़ (आज), मस (बाल), बर (दरवाज़ा), कन (कान)
आ	७	आश (आशा), आव (आया), सास, (हज़ार), माम (मामा), नाव (नाम)
ऐ	ः	ऐछ (आंख), ऐड (आधी), च़ेर (चिडिया), मँछ (मक्खी), लँर (मकान)
औ	ँ	औस (मुंह), औल (इलायची), औठ (आठ), दौन (अनार), मौंज (माता)
इ	ि	यि (यह), यिम (ये), छि (हैं), ज़िठ (बडी), जि (कि), दिस (देदो)
ई	ी	ईद, टीन, (पीपा), शीन (बर्फ), सीर (ईट), मीच (नाप), तीज़ (तेज)
अु	ः	चु (तुम), ज़ु (दो), तु (और), सुच (दरजी), टुख (दौड), बु (मैं)
अु	ः	तुर (सदी), जुज़ (दो दो), चुन (चुरा), कमथ (कीमत), कुर (कूर)
उ	ु	हु (वह), छु (है), कुस (कौन), कुठ (कमर्रा), गुर (घोडा)
ए	-	हेर (सीढ़ी), नेर (निकल जाओ), च़ेर (देर), (खोबानी), तेल (तिल)
ऐ	ः	मे (मुझे), च़े (तुझे), चे (पी लो), शे (छः), त्रे (तीन), बैयि (और)
ओ	े	मोल (पिता), लोल (प्यार), चोन (आपका), च़ोर (चार), ज़ोल (जलाया)
औ	ँ	और (अच्छा), औड (आधा), औन (अंधा), बौड (बडा)
अं	ः	अंद (अंत), दंद (दांत), कौंड (काटा), मंज (मैं, अंदर), कांड (भूसा)
य	य्	ब्याख (दूसरा), म्योन (मेरा), ख्यन (खायेंगे), र्यथ (मास)
	य	अँस्य (हम), चौर्य (मूर्ख), अँन्य (अंधे), खौंस्य (कांसी के प्याले)
		पँक्य (चले), हँल्य (टेढ़े), जौर्य (जुवारी), बौय (भाई), छौंग्य (बोधियां)
व्व	-व	द्वद (द्वद, दूध), स्वख (सुख), ब्वद (बुद्धि), स्वन (सोना), फ्वख (फूख), व्वर (गुरु), व्वश (आह), व्वंग (केसर)

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ॐ नमः शिवाये

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बुजान तनु मनु मे तेंम्य सुंजु माय
जाय तस मे केंरमुच्च बसि बाँलिंजे
शिवाये नमः ॐ नमः शिवाये
नमः शिवाये ॐ नमः शिवाये
नमः शिवाये ॐ नमः शिवाय

अँध पेंख्य बू सारान तेंम्य सुंजु त्राये
छाये तु महिमाये बरान बू म्वलु माय
त्राये तें छाये छु प्रनाम म्योन शिवाये
शिवाये नमः ॐ नमः शिवाये
नमः शिवाये ॐ नमः शिवाये
नमः शिवाये ॐ नमः शिवाय

तेंम्य सुंजु बें चेनान तिम केंह केंह ग्राये
त्राये यिम करमें वति मे बिखशा दिवान
यिवान सु आनंव मे अँथ्य शिवु लीलाये
शिवाये नमः ॐ नमः शिवाये
नमः शिवाये ॐ नमः शिवाये
नमः शिवाये ॐ नमः शिवाय

स्वख ह्वख तस पतु बतु जगत्तस युस ज्राव
आव-गवन आषान छु समसार येथ्य ज्ञान
छान ते ध्यान विग्यान छु नमान नमू नमाये
शिवाये नमः ॐ नमः शिवाये
नमः शिवाये ॐ नमः शिवाये
नमः शिवाये ॐ नमः शिवाय

वावि दगि पीढायि तु बेयि आपुवाये
हेंजे एचि विजि तु शोकलम पूजाये
जाये प्रथ काले नाब बुजान शिवाये
शिवाये नमः ॐ नमः शिवाये
नमः शिवाये ॐ नमः शिवाये
नमः शिवाये ॐ नमः शिवाय

अनुग्रह तेंम्य सुन्दि प्रावान बें गटि गाश
आश छम स्पेंजु हाव्यम सुय अंतिम वथ
सथ छम मे वति गाश तेंम्य सुन्दि दयाये
शिवाये नमः ॐ नमः शिवाये
नमः शिवाये ॐ नमः शिवाये
नमः शिवाये ॐ नमः शिवाय

आबॉरी छुस बें तेंम्य सुंजि कृपाये
जाये तु प्रथ सुमु सु मे छॉप हावान
थावान बें व्यनुती मे दरशुन दिवाये
शिवाये नमः ॐ नमः शिवाये
नमः शिवाये ॐ नमः शिवाये
नमः शिवाये ॐ नमः शिवाये

चारु रेंस्य कौशिर्य

कोत्रो हाल सोन चें वन सेंह संसारस
 त्रौव्य अस्थि कारंबार ज़नैमुक्थ्य गुरुबार
 कौशरिस अमनस क्याह आयि गगरायि
 मॉसुम ज़ाशुर्य कोव्य कॅर्य देद तु लाल
 पॅर्यमुत्य हॉकिम, ऑलिम तु फॉज़िल
 कैह गॅत्य पॉर्य जायि कौत्या टासुरायि
 कैम्प आयि बैरिथ जेमि प्यठु परजायि
 श्रुच साफ रुद कति कुचा पेयि दगु
 मॅशरव किथु पॉठ्य बालन तु नालन
 नैद्री नाश गछान अस्य यि सूच्य सूची
 ऑखुर बनि क्या यथ गौर अदेंकारस
 ज़ान तय पहचान क्याह रोज़ि झालस
 बिखरेयि कूता अँस्य गामन तु शहरन
 छँकरौव्य बेनि बॉय कोत कोत वॉत्यी
 आशा अस्य यी यिमह छिनु नवि प्रायि
 कौत्यव लाचार तेलि नाव कॅर्य बदली
 रूद्य पथ वारि मंज़ बस काह गुरु सौनी
 पनुने कलमु सौत्य यिम गॅयि नामवार
 दूद तु शकर यिम ह्यौद मुसलमान रूद्य
 द्यार आयि दूरि दूरि तु हँधयार चूरि चूरि
 वॉनी छि सौनी कि कर गछि येतिफाक
 बंदूक बम क्याज़ि अस्य अध्थन तुलैवुय
 अस्यै गव कूत न्वकसान मॉली तु जानी
 अकबर, बडशाह किथ्य ज़बर राजि रूद्य
 तेलि फोल कूत कारुबार शहरन तु गामन
 हल करव अस्य मसलु मीलिथ तु सूंचिथ
 हक सोन कोत गछि तु अँस्य गछव वाफ
 लाफ तय शाफ पनुन्य अँस्य पूरै मुतराव
 कोतरौ हाल सोन चु वनसह संसारस

चारु रेंस्य अँस्य कौशिर वॉरान गॅय
 जुव दादि अँस्य कौशिर वॉरान गॅय
 बौरिथ व्यथ आयि कुच लाशव सौत्य
 वतनस मंज़ यिम वौन्य शरनार्थ गॅयि
 कौशिर संतान अस्य यॅड दादि द्राय
 जायि रेंस्य अँस्य कूताह वॉरान गॅय
 कौंझाह लॉनु लजि त्राहि त्राहि त्राद्य
 व्यसैरनु अस्य कूत गरमु सौत्य आय
 कौशिर्य वार्यन तु स्वनु पोशि वार्यन
 वॅगि बैर्य अस्य मूल म्वंजि वॉराज गॅय
 तारस किथु पॉठ्य लगि सौन्य नाव
 बालस तॅरिथ असि रोज़ि क्या ज़ान
 कति रूज़ असि व्वन्य स्व कौशिर माय
 सौत सौत ह्विथ यिम खूनै रगु गॅय
 पतु वत्तु अस्य आमृत्य कुत्य व्वचुराठ
 व्वखली तेलि कुत्य द्रायि ज़नमनजान
 यमि मंज़ अज़ तान्य लछ कैह ज़ाय
 ज़िमुवार हॉफिज़ कॅरुख आम तयार
 शानु स्रुत्य शानु रूद्य यिमै मिलवान
 यमि सौत्य कौशिर बस वॉरान गॅयि
 टेरिरिसटै ब्योल गल्लि मूलै दूरे दरज़
 अमि स्रुत्य असि व्वसु वथ गछि साफ
 ज़िद जहल अथ छा कुनि ति वोपाय
 हॉविथ गॅयि तिम कर्म्यै स्वराजिच वथ
 आमन पनैनौव्य पानय ललि हुंद्य वाख
 खींचिथ व्वडै प्यठह अमैनुक्थ्य तनाव
 वतनस पनुनिस बेयि पूरै कोनून सान
 अमनैच प्रावव अँस्य ति वारि मंज़ शान
 चारैरेंस्य अस्य कौशिर वॉरान गॅय

म्योन स्वंदर वतन

कॅशीर छि म्योन स्वंदर वतन, स्वंदर वतन, स्वंदर वतन
छि तत्ति जंगल बुकि आबशार, क्वंगें फुलै तें पोशें बहार
यारि कुल्य तें थेंद्य पहाड़, स्वंदर खलक तें बेंड्य चिनार
मिसालु यिम छि यी वेछनान, छु म्योन वतन स्वंदर वतन

स्वंदर वतन स्वंदर वतन, कॅशीर छि म्योन स्वंदर वतन

जंगल बॅरिथ छि हांगलव, सतेंतुत्यव तु स्वनें कुकिलव
शेरे बबर पशिम पेंछुन, शाहतूत शाहमार तु ट्रवट तेंती
नगीन नसीम तें जीलि डल, व्वलुर वासकुर तु वेथुवेतुर
वनान यिमन छि म्योन वतन, स्वंदर वतन स्वंदर वतन

स्वंदर वतन स्वंदर वतन, कॅशीर छि म्योन स्वंदर वतन

चववा तरफ छि पोशि बाग, किथ्य शालुमॉर तु निशात बाग
दिलन अनान छि यिम बहार, गुलमरग, गुरेस तु पॅहलगाम
शौही चेशुम तु ब्योड हॉरवन, नुनर, पोशकर तु वावजन
यिमनुय छु नाव म्योननुय वतन, स्वंदर वतन स्वंदर वतन

स्वंदर वतन स्वंदर वतन, कॅशीर छि म्योन स्वंदर वतन

डल क्या बॅरिथ गरें बोटवुय, शिकारिवुय तु चक्रवारिवुय
डूंगव तु नावव व्यथ बॅरिथ, आंचार बॅरिथ पंपोश जॅरिथ
मॉर पकान नॉग्यराय हिछी, लेदर यती सेंद स्वंदर यती
जगतुय ज्ञानान छु म्योन वतन, स्वंदर वतन स्वंदर वतन

स्वंदर वतन स्वंदर वतन, कॅशीर छि म्योन स्वंदर वतन

फल खास यति बादाम तु दून्य, चूर्नेन्य तु चूठ्य खसान यती
ऑलिच गिलास स्वचल तु हाख, च्वपॉर्य खसान हलमौ येती
रेशुम पशम तु पेपर मॉशी, कॉलीन तु कांगुर छि खास यती
मूल कॉयींगरी हुंद छु म्योन वतन, स्वंदर वतन स्वंदर वतन

स्वंदर वतन स्वंदर वतन, कॅशीर छि म्योन स्वंदर वतन

बॅसिथ बोड शहर द्वा तरफ, दरयावु क्यन दूनवुन्य वत्चन
च्वपॉर्य पहाड मंज्र ऑठ कॅदुल, छि जील बेंड्य अंद्यपखी
मंदर मॅशीद पासापसी, दुआयि खॉर करान यिछ कांह येछी
सुशांत छु कूत यि म्योननुय वतन, स्वंदर वतन स्वंदर वतन

स्वंदर वतन स्वंदर वतन, कॅशीर छि म्योन स्वंदर वतन

कम कम तीथं परबतव पेठी, तुलमुल तु ख्रुव तथकाल यता
गछान अमरनाथ आल्यव पेठी, शारदा परबथ हरम्बख येती
मारतंड मटन तु शंकराचार, टिकॅर गुहर, खंडर बैजिब्योर
तीरथ स्थान छु यि म्योन वतन, स्वंदर वतन, स्वंदर वतन

स्वंदर वतन स्वंदर वतन, कॅशीर छि म्योन स्वंदर वतन

यि जाय छि कशप तु कलहनन्य, ललु भाज हुंज्र तु नुद राशन
राजु ललतादित्य रेश अभिनव, सतपल तु वैद चरक वैथ्य यती
बुनियाद छि संगीन कूच त्रॉवमुच यिमंब, प्रग्यानची तु विग्यानची
कूत नामवार अवय छु यि म्योन वतन, स्वंदर वतन स्वंदर वतन

स्वंदर वतन स्वंदर वतन, कॅशीर छि म्योन स्वंदर वतन

वुन्य क्यन छु म्योन वतन दुखी, दुशमन छि चामेत्य अंद्यपखी
पनुन्य छि गॉमुत्य फीरिथुय, अँछ पॅट गॅडिथ तु ब्रॉठ नीरथुव
जवान आमुत्य बम बंदूक ह्यथुय, निशानु छि करान मॉसुमनुय
नोसूर छि करान यिम म्योननुय वतन, स्वंदर वतन स्वंदर वतन

स्वंदर वतन स्वंदर वतन, कॅशीर छि म्योन स्वंदर वतन

लाघार बें छुच सहान तत्तिच, कौसें मारामरी तु अफरतफरी
बु गछें ज़रुर कपस बेथि तिमन, टॉठ्य बादियन तु चोटिकन
बुजनावु तत्थ इनसॉनियत, येति बनान छि तथ कशमीरियत
नोव सरु ऑमीन बु करें सुय वतन, स्वंदर वतन स्वंदर वतन

स्वंदर वतन स्वंदर वतन, कॅशीर छि म्योन स्वंदर वतन

यादि कश्मीर

रूजिथ अंदर यथ गुन्जान नगरस, यादि कश्मीरस क्या करव
 बागि निशातस शानि शालमारस, यादि त्वकचारस क्या करव
 नालन तु बालन मॅशरावव क्या, यार्यन तु माहरेन्य स्वरनेवार्यन
 कुकलि बोलबोश सौपुनन संवारान, यादि संतूरस क्या करव
 गरदि गुबार तु दुह्य गट कार, अथ प्यठ बेयि छुय लूकॅ च्यलचार
 शिशु नागस, शांत बागस, तथ नागि व्यचारस यत्पि क्याह करव
 कैह येति शोलान मॅहलातन मंज, कृत्य छि डोलान फुट पाथन
 पॅट गंडव अॅछन, थोप दिमव कनन तॅ दिलि बेचारस क्या करव
 जिंदेगी कच्चाह तुफान मेल, फॅरसथ कति छि तॅ यति छुय जेल
 फ्रख कति त्रावव, दुख कति बावव तॅ यडि लाचारस क्याह करव
 यति छुय इनसान ति मॅशरावान, इनसॉनियतुक्य सब सामान
 मिशीनि हुन्द छुय ठिन्य ठिन्य ठीन्य, रेश प्रचारस क्याह करव
 छयनु गॉमॅत्य परॅ गॉमुत्य, तॅ कथ बाथि खॉतरय दरॅ गॉमुतय
 दूर गोमुत छु दुर गोमुत, तॅ बॉय बेनिचारस व्वन्य क्याह करव
 वतुनस सॉनिस क्या आव वाव, छॅकरनु अॅस्य आयि बेयि छुयोन बाव
 रीथ तय प्रीथ रूज बालायि ताख, मॅत्य ग्रैहचारस व्वन्य क्याह करव
 रूजिथ अंदर यथ गुन्जान नगरस, यादि कश्मीरस क्या करव
 बागि निशातस शानि शालमारस, यादि त्वकचारस क्या करव

नव बहारो कोतू गोख

कुमु आशायि चानि यिनॅ आयि, नव बहारो च कोतू गोख
 जीव होशि आयि कृत्य पोश द्रायि, सब ज़ारो च कोतू गोख
 रोशि चाने कॉत्य गोश फोत्ययो, जायि जायि चॉन्य माया
 वुज़ुनॉविथ वोन्य व्वसिनॉविथ, दिल बहारो च कोतू गोख
 डालि जॉरिथो चै पोशि फुलुयो, अॉत्य वॅरिथो शोक सान
 वुफ हेछिथुय कोत दूर गोखो, तु पोशिनूलो च कोतू गोख
 ग्रज़ुनॉविथ चै जरनु बॅरिथो, जिंदु कॅरिथो चै जंगलाथ
 सोज़ु बॅरिथुय यिम आबशारो, तु साज़गारो च कोतू गोख
 ललुनॉविथ तु फवलुनॉविथ, बाशि अनिथुय तु बेयि शबाब
 क्याज़ि गोखो च कमि दोखो, तु माज़ि लोलो च कोतू गोख
 नॉग्यरायो तु गॉब्य गगुरायो, यीच्च जलदी चै क्याह अॉस
 बेयि रूजिज़ेह च कैह कालो, डी त्वकुचारो च कोतू गोख
 सीर चॉनी अॅस्य क्यो ज्ञानान, गीर गॉमुत्य ज़ल्लुरि ज़ाल
 पॉतु कॅरिथुय चै कॉद कॅर्यथो, तु पॅहरदारो च कोतू गोख
 चॉन्य खेला कॉच्च लाजवाबो, तु चॉन्य लीला छि बेमिसाल
 चूनि जरुयो चानि पोत छायो, म्वखतु हारो च कोतू गोख
 कुमु आशायि चानि यिनु आयि, नव बहारो च कोतू गोख
 जीव होशि आयि कृत्य पोश द्रायि, सब ज़ारो च कोतू गोख

पोकुस स्योदुय

स्योदुय पोकुस सेदि वति बु स्योदुय
 स्योदुय पोकुस अँथ्य वति बु स्योदुय
 स्योदुय जन सुत्य वतु हावुक स्योदुय
 स्योदुय रोदुम लोल तु पोकुस स्योदुय
 अँदय पँथ्य वुछुम तु कुत्या दवान
 धवान मे सुत्य यिम कदम स्योदुय
 स्योदुय वुछुम मे सुत्य सु स्योदुय
 वन्य नो कुनुय बु कारवान स्योदुय

स्योदुय पोकुस बु स्योदुय स्योदुय
 कुनुय नु वन्य बु कारवान स्योदुय
 स्योदुय पोकुस सु सुत्य मे स्योदुय
 स्योदुय पोकुस बु कारवान स्योदुय
 बुछिम पकान कुन्य जरनु स्योदुय
 स्योदुय मेलान पानु वॉन्य स्योदुय
 स्योदुय बनान तिम दँरयाव स्योदुय
 सुमरान संगम यिम समंदर स्योदुय

स्योदुय पकान यिम जोयि स्योदुय
 कुन्य नु वन्य यिम दँरयाव स्योदुय
 स्योदुय सु सुत्य तु सागर स्योदुय
 स्योदुय स्वभाव तु अँकार स्योदुय
 स्योदुय प्रजान गॉब्ब वुजुमलु स्योदुय
 हावान सिर्यि चंद्रम तु तारख स्योदुय
 स्योदुय जगत जॉपान ब्रमांड स्योदुय
 स्योदुय तँस्य प्रावान परमार्थ स्योदुय

स्योदुय चलान गटु यिवान प्रागाश स्योदुय
 स्योदुय वुछान सुय ब्रान्तु तु वैकवंट स्योदुय
 स्योदुय सुय आकाश तु बँड पृथवी स्योदुय
 स्योदुय स्व ज्ञान तु ज्ञानान संसार स्योदुय
 स्व-बद सुत्य तु पकान स्योदुय
 स्व-कर्म करान तु स्व-वथ स्योदुय
 स्योदुय स्व-वथ तु स्वर्ग स्योदुय
 स्योदुय सु सुत्य तु सोरुय स्योदुय

स्योदुय चिंतन तु मंथन स्योदुय
 स्योदुय समुज्जार तु संसार स्योदुय
 स्योदुय मनुभाव तु मंथर स्योदुय
 स्योदुय सु पनुन तु प्रनाम स्योदुय
 स्योदुय पोकुस तु परमेश्वर स्योदुय
 स्योदुय सु रोदुम तु पोकुस स्योदुय
 स्योदुय तवु तोरुस बु तारु स्योदुय
 स्योदुय कोसुम तु कारवान स्योदुय

सोनु मॉलिये

मे दूरि च्युनुम साज़ु सोज़ सोनु मॉलिये
वॉल्यजि मंज़ छुम राग चोनुय रॉग्यनिये

नेनद्रि वेंथिथ शीनु कोह पुत्य वुछमुय
ज़ितिन्य ज़ोतान आरुबलु के चेंशिमय
अँछ मे मूर्यम तु मोखु वुछिमख दीविये
मे दूरि च्युनुम साज़ु सोज़ सोनु मॉलिये
वॉल्यजि मंज़ छुम राग चोनुय रॉग्यनिये

संगरमालन च़े दुध वुछथे शीनु बालुनुय
नोज़क ओंगुजौ जुलफ़ु पॉर्यथे काँकुनय
चॉन्य मस चालु बालु आबशार कौलिये
मे दूरि च्युनुम साज़ु सोज़ सोनु मॉलिये
वॉल्यजि मंज़ छुम राग चोनुय रॉग्यनिये

बोनि वतुरव न्रय साज़ु संतुर संज़रोवुये
ताल ले खँच सोहम सौरु सौरु स्वरुन्ये
ज़िंदु जीव गो सुमरन चानि स्वरुसॉतिये
मे दूरि च्युनुम साज़ु सोज़ सोनु मॉलिये
वॉल्यजि मंज़ छुम राग चोनुय रॉग्यनिये

तापु तन्नरॉय बुकु आयि हुकु जरनॉय
दमु द्रायखॉय जंगलु मॉर्यथे नॉग्यरॉये
खिंदु मॉर्यथुय रिंदु जॉन्य स्वनरवॉनिये
मे दूरि च्युनुम साज़ु सोज़ सोनु मॉलिये
वॉल्यजि मंज़ छुम राग चोनुय रॉग्यनिये

लोलु कुकिलव होश ओन पोशु बागुनुय
बोंबुर येम्बरुचवलि मुत्रॉव्य दौद्य दागुनुय
सौर मे सौर्यमय चिता नंदु सौरु मॉलिये
मे दूरि च्युनुम साज़ु सोज़ सोनु मॉलिये
वॉल्यजि मंज़ छुम राग चोनुय रॉग्यनिये

पोशु फुलया त्रेकि खॉरथ बादाम वारिनुय
कतिज काँदुर तु कुमिर आयि वलुसॉनय
गिलासु कुलिनुय मॉछ मोलथे मोदुमँतिये
मे दूरि च्युनुम साज़ु सोज़ सोनु मॉलिये
वॉल्यजि मंज़ छुम राग चोनुय रॉग्यनिये

क्वंगु फुलया यि पूरु जॉनिम मे ज़ूनु गाशे
पोंपरु वुडरे सु रास ग्युन्दुम मे बोलु बाशे
अँरनि रंग गोम अम्पी रुपु अँरनिमॉलिये
मे दूरि च्युनुम साज़ु सोज़ स्वनु मॉलिये
वॉल्यजि मंज़ छुम राग चोनुय रॉग्यनिये

डलु जीलसुय छाँडमख च्वपॉर्य सौरिसुय
शकलु वुछेम कोह कतारन हँज़ पॉनिसुय
ग्यानु गुतु खच्चु मे नावि खूरि ग्वनु मॉलिये
मे दूरि च्युनुम साज़ु सोज़ स्वनु मॉलिये
वॉल्यजि मंज़ छुम राग चोनुय रॉग्यनिये

रेशुवारि मंज़ रव्यिथे च़े कौत्य ग्यान ग्यॉनी
कशप मॉरुची कलहनन लीछ कोसु आरथी
रेशुपीरने च़े त्रुक्कं शासत्र रोछते रेशु मॉलिये
मे दूरि च्युनुम साज़ु सोज़ स्वनु मॉलिये
वॉल्यजि मंज़ छुम राग चोनुय रॉग्यनिये

लोल लोलुक्य दादि दिलु दॉर्य हबुखोलूने
क्रिशनु जूवन प्रॉव शिवु ज्ञान परमानंदनी
ज़ोन लँख्यमनन अबिनव ग्यान इशुबॉरये
मे दूरि च्युनुम साज़ु सोज़ स्वनु मॉलिये
वॉल्यजि मंज़ छुम राग चोनुय रॉग्यनिये

चॉन्य यि लीला किथु कत्य मे जॉन्यमय
मनु मंज़लिसु मे कमय लोलु ललुनॉवमुय
वाख खास चॉन्य ज़िंदु रुद्य ललु मॉजिये
मे दूरि च्युनुम साज़ु सोज़ स्वनु मॉलिये
वॉल्यजि मंज़ छुम राग चोनुय रॉग्यनिये

मे दूरि च्युनुम साज़ु सोज़ सोनु मॉलिये
वॉल्यजि मंज़ छुम राग चोनुय रॉग्यनिये

सौतच गाह त्राव

सौतच गाह त्राव यारि जानानो
 पोशे बागन गाशि वुज्जनाव चुय
 सोज्जच लय खार दिलि जानानो
 मनुचन तारन टाठि अलुनाव चुय

शित्थमुत्थ छि पॅश्य तय पंछी यारो
 लॅग्यमुत्थ छि कोह तय बॅञ्च बालो
 कुमुलावसेँ कॅन्य हिशि शीनु मान्यो
 होख्यमुत्थ नालन यारु ग्रज्जनाव चुय

जामु रॅस्य वॉरान कुल्य कॅट्च कतारो
 मंदुछान छि दोह-रात न्यथुन्ननि हालो
 पोशाक पारुखसेँह टाठि सबजे बहारो
 स्वंदर मालन सॉबा स्वंदराव चुय

नालान छु बुलबुल कूत वंनदुके हालो
 त्रावान छु दारि जॅर्य यि अॅशिने दारो
 आरु हॅत्य चू नालु बोज्ज ही मदन वारो
 अडु फुट्च बामन टाठि फवलॅनाव चुय

नारुतॅत्य छि वोशलान तच्चि कांगॅरि तच्चरो
 छ्वरु छ्वरु शुहि सॉत्य टॅञ्च तय जॉल्यो
 बलुनाव सेँह ज़खमन तु दाद्यन ही साहिबो
 अंगन तु आॅम्य बंदन टाळिच रॅछराव चुय

नासाज्ज छि अमि कॅहरु द्यद तय लालो
 वंदु किन्य छि गॉमुत्थ दूरफॉल्य बेगानो
 जुव अनसेँ व्वन्य ज़ीवन चू बादे बहारो
 यावन वीरय्न टाठि वुज्जनाव चुय

बॉबुर कोत फेरान बडि आशायो
 छांडान च्वपॉर्य यॅम्बुरज्वलन हो
 आशा चू पूर करसेँह ही दयावानो
 मनु अबिलाशन पज्य पूरनाव चुय

रूशिथ छि गॉमुच यि मॅहफिल यारो
 तूशिथ छि कति तान्य मैय ते प्यालो
 बॅर्य बॅर्य चावनाव यिम प्रेमुक्य प्यालो
 दगि रॅस्य दाद्यन टाठि बलुनाव चुय

वुज्जनाव सोन आज्ञाव वतन

येति दिल् आसि डौलमुत खोफु सुत्य
 तु कलु आसि जुवयोमुत जुसु सुत्य
 येति नोन आसि अलिम न आसनु किन्य
 तु बेअलिम आसन बरजसतु फोलान

येति वतन आसि यिवान छलु फलु करनु
 खयौली देवारव तु मसौयलव सुत्य
 येति अलफाज आसन वुज्जान तु व्वतलान
 अपिण्यारि कि तम्यि सन्यि सन्यरु पयठ

येति न थक्कुनि कूशिशि आसन नरि फहलान
 तथ मुकामस कून युस छु मुतज्ञाव पुर आसुनस
 येति साफु देरियायि वजूहात आसि रँस्य गछान
 वौरान सँहरायि न आसनुकि सेक्थि मंज

येति जमीर आसि यिवान पाँत्य पथ लमनु
 हर ह्मेशु तंग खयालन तु अमालन कुन
 तम्यि नर्कुकि संगीन सलौख्य गुलौमी निश
 म्यानि बबु छु वुज्जनाव सोन गौफिल वतन

म्यानि बबु छु वुज्जनाव सोन गौफिल वतन
 तम्यि नर्कुकि संगीन सलौख्य गुलौमी निश

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SECTION-V

NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF PERMANENT MEMBERS RESIDING IN EASTERN INDIA

01. Atal, Deepak
8-B, Golf Towers,
9, Prince Ghulam Md. Shah Rd.,
Kolkata-700 045
(R) : 2422-4939/4949
02. Atal, Vivek
Flat 2C, 7/1, Queen's Park, Kolkata-700 019
(R) : 2475-5545
03. Bambroo Ashok
C/o Delight Dairy Ltd., 5th Floor,
18, R. N. Mukherjee Road, Kolkata 700 001
(M) : 9836551234
04. Bhan, C. P.
34C, Satyam Shivam Sundaram Complex
1530 Garia Main Road,
Kolkata-700 084
(R) : 32538895
05. Bhan, Kapil,
Nicco, Athpur Residential Qtrs.
Shyamnagar, 24 Parganas (North)
(R) : 25811924
06. Bhan, P. K.
162/A/157 Lake Gardens
Kolkata-700 045
(R) : 30932523, (M) : 9051947197
07. Bhan, Ratan
Mrinalini Apt., Block A, 2nd Floor,
46, New Ballygunge,
Kolkata-700 039
(R) : 2344-1090, (M) : 9830133028
08. Bhat, Harish
Flat # C - 16, Sonarkilla Apartment,
91/92 - N, Kumorjala Road, Serampore,
Hooghly -712 201
(M) : 9830434329
09. Biswas, Pammi
CJ-146, Salt Lake City, Sector II,
Kolkata 700 091,
(R) : 2358-4102
10. Chaku, Dr. (Smt) Usha
Bipasha Apartment
G-6/5 C.I.T. Flat Sch. No. 143,
Shankar Bose Road, Chetla, Kolkata-700 027
(R) : 24797908, (M) : 9831002667
11. Dhar, Anil
Queen - 2B, Duke Garden, RB-29
Raghunathpur, VIP Road,
Kolkata 700 059
(R) : 25006763
12. Dhar, Avinash
Tolly Towers, Flat No. 505, 113, NSC
Bose Road, Kolkata - 700 040
(M) : 9831009826
13. Dhar, Avtar Kishen
Flat 101-A, Sapta Parni
58/1, Ballygunge Circular Road,
Kolkata 700 019
14. Dhar, Kiran (Smt)
Owners Court, Flat 72, 6 Mayfair Road,
Kolkata - 700 019
(R) : 22878723
15. Dhar Reena (Smt.)
311 CIT Road, Sch VIM,
Kolkata 700 054
(R) : 23628341
16. Durani, B. L.
House No. 31, Type V, Belvedere Estate,
Alipore, Kolkata - 700 027
(R) : 24566840, (M) : 9433045699
17. Ganju, R. N.
57/1B Ekdalia Road, Kolkata-700 019
(O) : 2217-6467, (R) : 2287-5405
18. Ganju, Ramesh
120/1, Rabindronagar, Dankuni (W.B.)
(R) : 03212-275275, (M) : 9836626241
19. Ganju, Ravi
R-402, DC Block, City Centre, Salt Lake,
Kolkata - 700 064
(R) : 23376463, (M) : 9331047017
20. Ghosh, (Smt.) Krishna
Flat 15, Vivekananda Housing Society
202 Maniktala Main Road, Kolkata-700 054
(R) : 2355 7709
21. Gurtu, (Dr.) J. N.
Sunny Park Apartments, Flat 9/3
Block B, 6-Sunny Park, Kolkata - 700 019
(O) : 24746727, 2461-8252, 2461-9450

22. Jalali, Upendra
67 Tripura Rai Lane, Salkia, Howrah
(R) : 26751022
23. Jinsi, Deepak
Flat-1B, 246/4 Rishi Bankim Chandra Road
Kolkata-700 028
(R) : 25518902
24. Joshi Lt. Col. D. K.
House No. 241, Block No. 18, Turfview
249 A J C Bose Road, Kolkata - 700 021
25. Kachroo Akshay
Flat No. 303, Block B,
34 Chander Mohan Roy Lane,
Serampore (Hooghly), West Bengal - 712 201
(R) : 26528501
(M) : 9830134469, 9830434329
26. Kachroo Dr. Rajender
19 Sakkia School Road, Salkia
Howrah 711 106
(O) 26652068, (R) : 26755349,
(M) : 9831103022
27. Kak, Ashok
Flat No. 2A, 33 South End Park
Kolkata 700 029
(R) : 24744048
28. Kapoor, Smt. Nirmal
2nd Floor, 42, Ballygunge Place
Kolkata-700 019
(R) : 2440 5899
29. Kaul, Anand,
2C Surya Sadan
166 RGM Tegoria on VIP Road,
Kolkata-700 157
(R) : 25794232
30. Kaul, (Dr.) Ajay
3C Sapphire Apartment
36B, New Road, Alipore, Kolkata-700 027
(O) : 24790084, (R) : 24567777/7890
(M) : 9830025356
31. Kaul, G. L.
3G, Rajshree Building
6 Hastings Park Road, 31 Judges Court
Kolkata - 700 027
(R) : 24791997
32. Kaul, J. N.
97 B. B. D. Sarani (Rail Park)
P. O. Rishra, Dist. Hooghly-712 205
33. Kaul, Jolly Mohan
G-7 Government Housing Estate
98, Karaya Road
Kolkata-700 019
(R) : 22907934, (M) : 9831955490
34. Kaul, L. N.
CJ 182, Sector 2, Salt Lake,
Kolkata - 700 091
(R) : 23340837, (M) : 9831257436
35. Kaul, Lalit,
18, Rajendra Lal Mitra Road,
Kolkata-700 085
(R) : 23539938, (M) : 9433066560
36. Kaul, M. K.
Flat F 1A, Block FA, Purbabbasan,
1582/3 Raj Danga Main Road,
Kolkata 700 107
(R) : 24416954, (M) : 9830197123
37. Kaul Mukesh
Annupama Apartment
Flat No. 5, Murigrant, V.I.P. Road
Kolkata 700 052
38. Kaul, (Smt.) Niva
B/4 Cluster IX, Purbachal
Sector III, Salt Lake
Kolkata-700 091
(R) : 32932568, 23351013
39. Kaul, Rajesh
1/A Sisir Bagan Road, Behala
Kolkata-700 034
(O) : 22488118 - 8120, (M) : 9830536127
40. Kaul, Rajesh
Flat 1A, Boishakhi Apartment,
178/2 Raibahadur Road,
Kolkata 700 034
41. Kaul, Rajiv
4A, Ashwini, Greenfield Heights
New Town, Rajarhat, Kolkata
(M) 9748073934
42. Kaul, Rajiv
14/1 Burdwan Road
Kolkata-700 027
(O) : 22485102/8220
(R) : 24791670
43. Kaul Reena Smt.
Sports Psychologist
SAI, B 21, Jal Vaya Vihar
LB-Block, Sector 3,
Salt Lake, Kolkata - 700 098
(O) : 23352715, (M) : 9831367359
44. Kaul, Roop N.
CJ-182, Salt Lake
Kolkata-700 091
(R) : 23343952

45. Kaul S. K.
B-64, Tivoli Court,
1C, Ballygunge Circular Road,
Kolkata - 700 019
(O) : 30587832, (R) : 22874039
(M) : 9830965969, 9830765969
46. Kaul, Sanjay
Flat No. SE, Block - 1, Ekta Heights,
56 Raja S C Mullick Road,
Kolkata - 700 032
(M) : 9874923687
47. Kaul, Shiv Kumar
13/A Bansdronei New Govt. Colony
P. O. Bansdronei, Kolkata-700 041
(R) : 24718443
48. Kaul, Sudesh
11 Khehat Ghosh Lane,
Kolkata-700 006
(R) : 22224774
49. Kaul, Vivek
P-311 C. I. Road, Sch VI M
Kolkata-700 054
(O) : 22296984/7014/9028
(R) : 23628885/ 23649282
(M) : 9830895813
50. Kitchlu, V. K.
National Tower
13 Loudon Street, 5th Floor,
Kolkata-700 017
(R) : 22815544/22804994
51. Kitchlu Veena Smt.
Flat 1A, Ajanta Apartment, Gurusaday Road,
Kolkata - 700 019
(R) : 22872544, (M) : 9830060024
52. Koul Dhananjaya
BE - 121, Ravindopally, Nera Kala Mandir,
Keshtopur
(M) : 9836744774
53. Maharaj, Arvind
Advaita Ashram
5 Dehi Entally Road, Kolkata-700 014
(R) : 22164000, 22440898
54. Mattoo, M. L.
Panchvati Complex, Gangotri Apartments
4A, V. I. P. Road, Kaikhali
P. O. Airport, Kolkata-700 052
(R) : 25730099
55. Misri, B. M.
Matri Smriti, 9/8C Jyotsna Apartments
Moore Avenue, Kolkata-700 040
(R) : 24112919, (M) : 9830204063
56. Moza, (Dr.) B. K./ Moza Rattan
211 Park Street, Kolkata-700 017
(R) : 22875143/32946111,
(M) : 9831576548
57. Mukherjee, (Smt.) Saroj
57/14 Ballygunge Circular Road,
Kolkata-700 019
(R) : 24755394
58. Munshi, Sunil
9B, Minto Park Sindycate
13, D2 Khan Road
Kolkata 700 027
(R) : 22233662, (M) : 9830019050
59. Munshi, Surendra
Flat 1D, Siddhashree,
16 Udai Shanker Sarini
Golf Club Road, Kolkata 700 033
(R) : 24235093
(M) : 9231682964
60. Ogra, M. K.
Venus Apartments
9 Mayfair Road, Kolkata-700 019
(R) : 22870146/22808752
(M) : 9831257402
61. Pandit, Capt. A. K.
Gol Park Co-op. Housing Society,
11-4-A, 49B, Govindpur Road,
Lake Gardens, Kolkata-700 045
(R) : 24175004
62. Pandita, Bikram
Anamika Apartments, 51/5/3 Rabindra Sarani
Lilua, Howrah-711 204
(R) : 26454213
63. Raina Col. Vikram
Commanding Officer,
4, Assam Regiment,
C/o 99 APO,
PIN (ARMY) - 910 404
64. Raina Deepak Kumar
Solver Arch Residency,
2C, 2nd Floor,
Near Loknath Temple, Rajarhat Road,
Kolkata - 700 054
65. Raina, P. L.
19/5 Arcadia Extension, Behala
Kolkata-700 034
66. Raina, (Smt.) Roopa
672 'O' Block, New Alipore,
Kolkata-700 053
(R) : 24003215
67. Raina, Susheel
Flat No. C2, Kiran Apartment,
2nd Floor, 82, Sucheta Nagar - 2,
Opposite Jivan Jyoti Gas Agency
Haltu, Kolkata - 700 078
(M) : 9830944069

68. Rawal, R. K.
SA-31, Salt Lake - II
(M) : 09810329490
69. Razdan, Ranjit
17/6 Sunny Park Apartments
6 Sunny Park, Kolkata - 700 019
(R) : 24615894, (M) : 9331842159
70. Roy Dr. Phool Kumari
5/1A, Govinda Roy Lane, Kolkata 700 029
(O) : 22474053, (R) : 24553089
71. Roy, (Smt.) Sunita Kaul
86C Harish Chatterjee Street
Kolkata-700 025
(M) 9748731540, 9831990517
72. Sapru, P. L./Sapru Rajiv
Flat 77, Kusum Apartments
11 Gurusaday Road,
Kolkata-700 019
(O) : 22872497, (R) : 22874415 / 30525544
73. Seth, (Mrs.) Reena nee Mattoo
157 Jodhpur Park, 4th floor
Kolkata-700 068,
(R) : 24739821
74. Shangloo Ramesh
166/C/491 Lake Gardens
Kolkata - 700 045,
(R) : 24221425
75. Sharma Krishna Smt.
6 Amar Basu Sarini (Near Ram Mandir)
Kolkata 700 007
(R) : 22416515
76. Shipuri P
C/o Mr. Rahul Kaul
A1 Income Tax Colony
Gangarampur Road, Nasik
Maharashtra 422005
(M) : 9831010637
77. Shivpuri, Atul
673, Block O, New Alipore
Kolkata-700 053
78. Shunglu, Anil
155/ Block G, New Alipore
Kolkata-700 053
79. Sumbally, B. N.
54 Rishi Aurobindo Sarani, Kolkata-700 090
(R) : 25312629
80. Takroo Rajeeb
Tritiya, 702, 1050/1 Survey Park
Kolkata - 700 075
81. Tankha Prabha Smt.
Tower 2, Flat 20G, South City
375 Prince Anwar Shah Road, Kolkata 700 068
(R) : 24999074, (M) : 9830021515
82. Tankha, V. K.
5 Wellesley Mansions
44A Rafi Ahmed Kidwai Road, Kolkata-700 016
(R) 22293623/7989
83. Thassu Avdesh
Neelachal Apt. Society, 98 Rajadanga
Kasba, C-3, Swati, Kolkata 700 107
(R) 64557894 (M) : 9830305199
84. Tickoo, Rajesh
DC 9/6 Shastri Bagan,
P.O. Desh Bandhu Nagar, Jora Mandir,
Kolkata 700 059
(O) : 32946711, (R) : 32964958
85. Tickoo, Ravinder
DC 9/6 Shastri Bagan,
P.O. Desh Bandhu Nagar, Jora Mandir,
Kolkata 700 059
(O) : 32946711, (R) : 32964958
86. Vatal Adarsh
IIFT Kolkata, J-1/14, EP & GP Block
Sector V, Salt Lake City, Kolkata
(9874527800
87. Wanchoo, (Dr.) R. N.
Radhika Apartments, Flat No. 12
412, Motilal Gupta Road, Kolkata - 700 082
(R) 24029448
88. Zutshi, M.
4/2 Leonard Road, Hastings, Kolkata-700 022
(R) : 22230697
89. Zutshi, N. K.
CK 190 Salt Lake, Kolkata-700 091
(M) : 9811735947

SECTION-VI

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,
Ernst & Young
Brigade Software Park, 14th Floor,
42, 27th Cross,
Banashankari 2nd Stage
Bangalore 560070
91 - 80671 - 4825
sharda.cherwoo@ey.com
03. Dhar, A. K.
42, Sector VI
Panchkula, Haryana 134109
Phone : 2586500/2586118
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-34, 1st Floor,
East of Kailash, New Delhi-110 065
Phone : (R) 41623553, (M) 981088453
08. Dhar, Raman
Flat No. 7, 2nd Floor, Anukool Bldg.
7 Bungalow, Varsova, Andheri (W)
Mumbai 400061
09. Dhar, Sanjay
42, Sector VI, Panchkula,
Haryana-134109
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. 180003
Phone : 2262108
12. Kak, Ashok
66, Siddharth Enclave
Ashram Chawk Ring Road,
Delhi-110 014
Phone : 684 4719
13. Kak, Col. P. N. (Retd.)
Villa 44, Palm Meadows
Ramagondanhalli, Whitefield Road
Bangalore 560066
Phone : 2852-5599
14. Kaul, Bhavnes, h,
2219 Vasant D II Kunj,
New Delhi-110070
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
Bamnerghata Road, Bangalore-560 076
Phone : (R) (080) 678 6965
17. Kaul, M. L./Kaul, A.K.
Flat No. 304, 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
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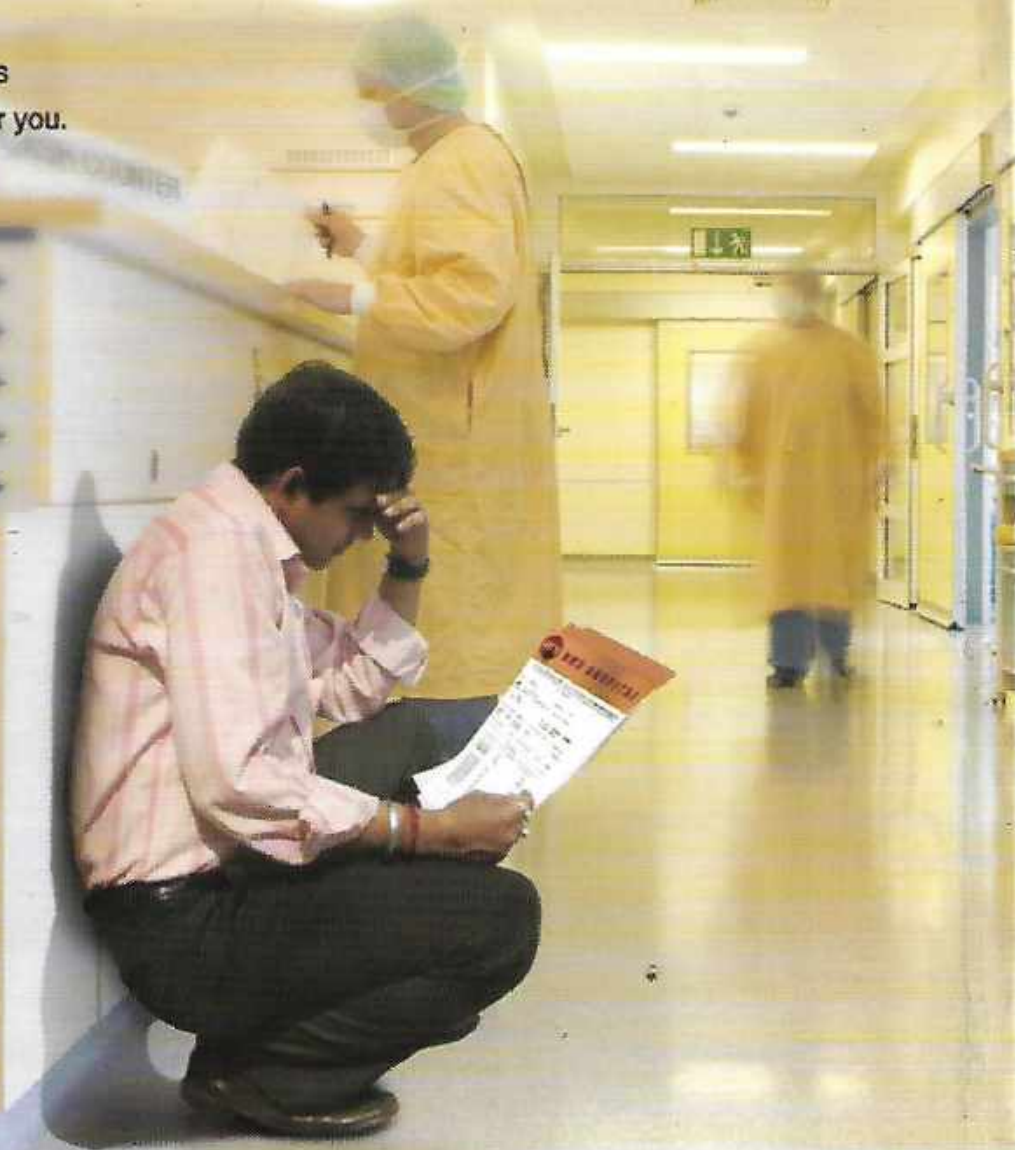
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