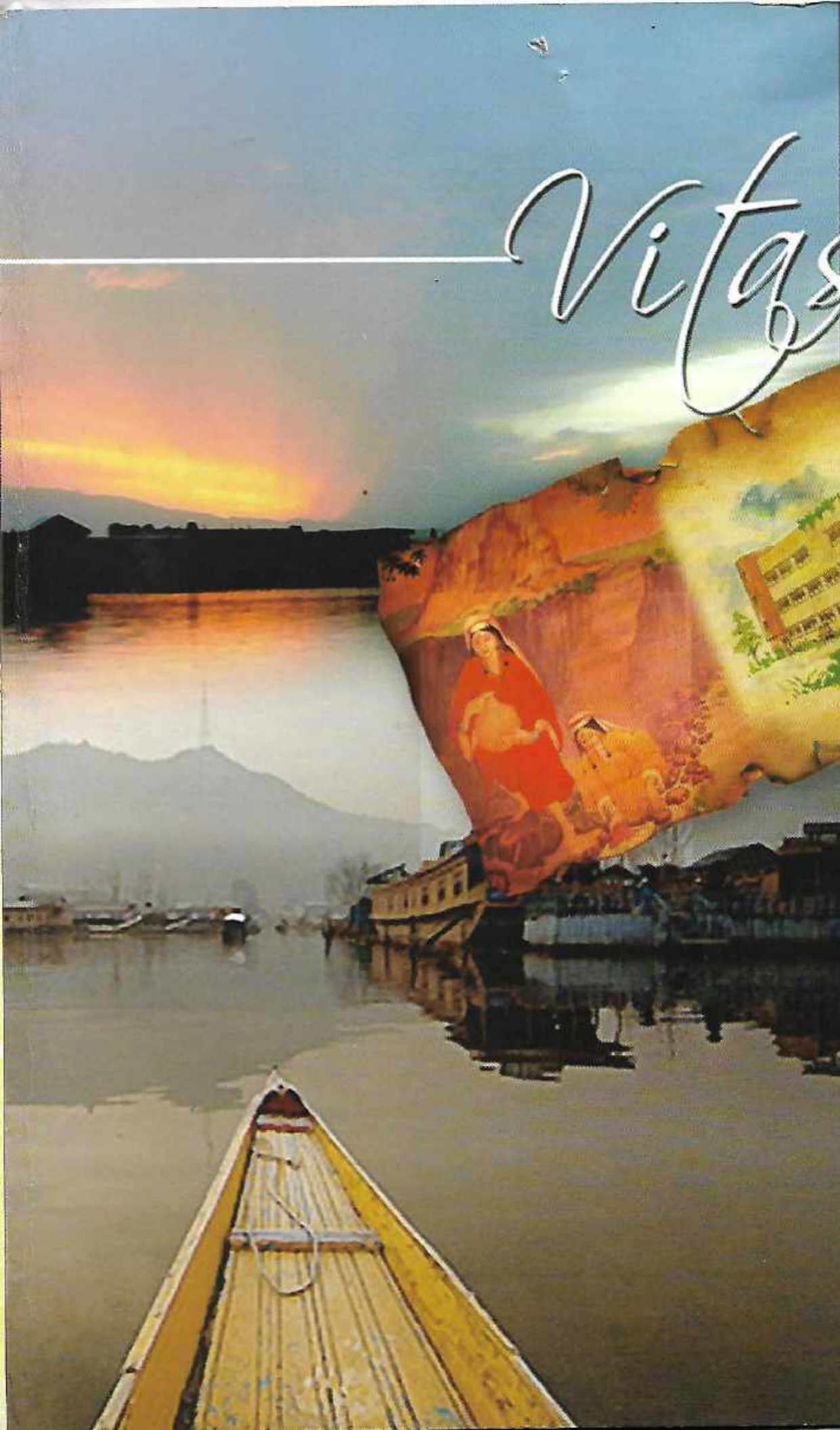


Vitasta



The Publication of Kashmir Sabha, Kolkata

Vol. XXIX (2018-2019)

THEME : KASHMIRI PANDIT COMMUNITY

SURVIVING AN ERA OF UNPRECEDENTED CHANGE IN 2019



Vitasta

2018-2019

Theme :

KASHMIRI PANDIT COMMUNITY :
SURVIVING AN ERA OF UNPRECEDENTED CHANGE IN 2019

Dedicated to :

- *To the Kashmiris who have suffered yet persisted in rekindling the values of communal peace, harmony and respect for one another so that all those separated from the land of their forefathers can return with honour and dignity.*
- *To the people of Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir regions who have enriched the cultural, social and religious fabric of the State in a spirit of tolerance as enshrined in - The truth is one, the wise call it by many names - "Ekam sad Viprah bahudha Vadanti".*

Section I

Preserving Humanist Traditions in the State

Section II

Preserving Our Cultural Identity, Particularly the Language

Section III

Preserving and Expanding
Social Media, Global Networking and Sabhas/Samitis.

Section IV

Preserving Our
Temples and Religious Places in the State.

Section V

Possible Solutions to the Jammu & Kashmir
Problem in view of Ground Realities.

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Section IX

Names And Addresses Of Permanent Members Residing Abroad

KASHMIR SABHA – KOLKATA

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Ms Pawanlata Kaul	Mr. Anil Dhar
Mr. Vivek Kaul	Prof. Surendra Munshi

KASHMIR SABHA KOLKATA

APRIL 2019 - MARCH 2020 CALENDAR

IMPORTANT KASHMIRI PANDIT FESTIVALS CUM FUNCTIONS TO BE
CELEBRATED AT KASHMIR SABHA BHAVAN,
CK-35, SALT LAKE, KOLKATA 700 091, PHONE : (033) 23583932

Sl. No.	Montl	Year	Date	Day	Festival	Sponsered By
1.	April	2019	6th	Saturday	Navreh & Zang Trai	Kashmir Sabha
2.	May	2019	1st	Wednesday	Swami Lakshman Joo Jayanti	Mr. & Mrs. B. M. Misri
3.	June	2019	10th	Monday	Zeasht Ashtami	Mr. & Mrs. Rajayesh Tikoo
4.	July	2019	10th	Wednesday	Haar Navmi/Sharika Jayanti	Mrs. Niva Rani Koul
5.	July	2019	13th	Saturday	Bhagwan Gopinath Jayanti	Kashmir Sabha
6.	August	2019	23rd	Friday	Janmashtami	Kashmir Sabha Note : The function will be held on 25th, August, Sunday.
7.	October	2019	8th	Tuesday	Dashera/Vijay Dashmi	Kashmir Sabha
8.	November	2019	24th	Sunday	Cultural Programme	Kashmir Sabha
9.	November	2019	17th	Sunday	Sports Day	Kashmir Sabha
10.	January	2020	25th & 26th	Saturday & Sunday	Annual Hawan	Kashmir Sabha
11.	February	2020	9th	Sunday	Koshal Home	Kashmir Sabha
12.	February	2020	16th	Sunday	Picnic	Kashmir Sabha
13.	March	2020	1st	Sunday	Salam	Kashmir Sabha
14.	March	2020	25th	Wednesday	Navreh/Zang Trai	Kashmir Sabha

The dates and days of the above mentioned Religious functions are based on Prem Nath Shastri's Vijayshor, Panchang of 2019-2020"

(B. M. Misri, Convenor of Cultural and Sports Activity Affairs, KSK)

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THEME

KASHMIRI PANDIT COMMUNITY :
SURVIVING AN ERA OF UNPRECEDENTED CHANGE IN 2019

Editor-in-Chief : Ms. REENA DHAR

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From the President's Desk

Namaskar - It is a matter of pride, privilege and honour for one to have been elected unanimously and considered worthy for the post of President of Kashmir Sabha Kolkata, the position which I have been holding now from April 2018.

It is an occasion of pride and great pleasure to present the forty third Annual number of the "Vitasta" (2018-19) the official organ of our Kashmir Sabha, Kolkata.

This prestigious annual publication of ours is very much loved and cherished by our Kashmiri fraternity all over.

I thank each and every member of the editorial team of Vitasta Annual headed by Srimati Reena Dhar as editor, who have selflessly worked successfully to make this issue happen.

Our Kashmir Sabha Kolkata main focus is essentially on local priorities, those including holding almost every month get-togethers on all our Kashmiri Pandit festival days to preserve our cultural identity, providing substantial medical help to the deserving and needy Biradari members followed by educational help to a number of deserving students as per the recommendation by Kashmiri organisation mostly from Jammu and Delhi.

We are living in a world where survival is common. After meeting our social and cultural objectives, the predominant goal of our small society is to strive for the harmony of mankind as we have done so in the history. This is the most creative task before us. In this way, we could carry forward our cultural heritage further along new dimensions.

Organizing our main creative task, it is indeed exciting to be organising for a great creative effort and dream of a better world of today and tomorrow for us.



Our links with our ancestral heritage have to be strengthened through our cultural, social and creative activities. By every account it seems clear that there is a bright future waiting for our efforts. Since awareness has dawned on us to join together for progress and creativity and promote world harmony. We have sufficient intellectuals and material resources to be able to achieve a better world of today and tomorrow.

Kashmir Sabha Kolkata has not limited its role to celebrate the different festivals only but has lent full support in different fields whenever the community demanded it.

I am thankful to all our executive members of the Sabha for their best co-operation for the betterment of Sabha in all respects and feel proud of their team spirit always related to Kashmir Sabha Kolkata.

Wishing you all the best.

Bina Misri

Secretary's Report

Annual Hawan at Kashmir Sabha Kolkata

Annual Hawan was performed on January 27- 28 this year. More than 100 devotees were present. Amongst the chanting of the Vedic mantras all of felt really spiritually satiated with the presence / blessing of all the Devi and Devtas around us. Mr. Manoj Mahata and Mrs. Suman Raina were the Yajman. After Puran Aahuti, all had Prasad and prayed for the peace and happiness of Mankind. A Koshalhom was performed the following Sunday.

Navreh and Zangtray celebration

Navreh and Zangtray was celebrated together on March 18th with great enthusiasm. After lunch, we had a beautiful musical cultural programme organized by the cultural committee headed by Mr. B M Misri.

Janam Ashtami

It was a grand full-day event, in which we had a wonderful performance by a professional transgender Dance group.

Many of our kids presented dance performances. This year we also had a quiz program based on Indian mythology organized and conducted by 12 year old Abhay Mahata.

Keeping alive the tradition of Kashmir Sabha Kolkata, we also celebrated **Mahashivratri / Salaam, Zyeshta Ashtami, Haar Navami, Dushera, and Jayantis of Swami Lakshman joo and Bhagwaan Gopinathji** with full fervor.

My sincere thanks, personally as well as on behalf the Kashmir Sabha, to all the sponsors of various functions. Thank you all for the sponsorship and also for bringing us together on such important occasions thereby helping us to remain in touch with our roots. We look forward to your continued support.

All of you are already aware about the up-gradation of the Bhawan and the facilities at the Bhawan. It is a humongous task not only in terms of the physical activities involved but also in terms of the finances required.

I take this opportunity to appeal to the benevolent side of all the members to please come forward and help us in generating the funds by way of donations to the Kashmir Sabha Trust. Please help.

We look forward to much more active participation of the members and also support in the drive to add to the existing membership. Any and all suggestions are welcome.

Regards,

Narendra Kaul

UP CLOSE, THE HEAT OF DISTANT FIRES.

Kashmiris have forever felt at home in Calcutta. Does that remain the case after Pulwama?

By Uddalak Mukherjee in Calcutta, Published 3.03.19, The Telegraph.

"This City," Plato had written in Republic, "is what it is because our citizens are what they are." But settlers, forced to choose a city as home under duress, can at times, hold the mirror up to it in a way original inhabitants cannot.

Days after it had been reported that bigoted mobs had threatened a Kashmiri doctor based in Calcutta, a group of Kashmiris — all of them Pandits — who have embraced Calcutta after being hounded out of the land that they once called home, gathered in Kashmir Bhawan in Salt Lake to discuss whether the Calcutta they knew

is, in fact, changing. Twenty cases have been lodged by the police against miscreants who intimidated Kashmiris. Forty arrests were made in Bengal alone after Pulwama.

Yet, the talk began with two women — one had left Srinagar in the early 1950s and the other reached Calcutta as recently as 2013 — eagerly pointing to some of the redeeming features of this metropolis. "Bengali families are refreshingly gender inclusive," said Suman Raina, who was born in Anantnag. Reena Dhar, elderly and experienced, joined in by saying, "It is still one of the safest cities with very little explicit discrimination." But she added, "It always helps if one can pick up Bengali quickly."

Rajesh Tikoo, another member of the Kashmir Sabha, offered a poignant example of Calcutta's fabled spirit of inclusion, telling the gathering how a business deal, which he had expected to come undone, had been salvaged after the negotiator, a Bengali, came to know that Tikoo was a displaced Pandit from Kashmir.

Other aspects of a shared culture came to light too. Narendra Kaul is convinced that Kashmiris can give Bengalis a run for their money in two things: "adda" and "an ability to take things easy". Suneel K. Kaul swore that both communities love animated conversations; "Don't forget our common fondness for rice," chirped Reena Dhar. "Add to the list the shared devotion to the shakti cult," said Suneel. There was excited chatter over Durga Puja, that quintessential symbol of Bengal's accommodation and pluralism, even though it soon became evident that the blatant commercialisation of the festival has not gone unnoticed.

But none of this mutual admiration could ignore the proverbial elephant in the room: the bullying of the Kashmiri doctor in Calcutta or the assault of a Kashmiri shawl trader in Nadia. The Pandits did come up with an explanation for the change, but it was a rather unexpected analysis.

"What happened in Kashmir in that fateful year of our expulsion could happen in Bengal," said Tikoo. "Bengal is missing the markers of the change," nodded Suneel grimly.



Narendra Kaul, Anil K. Dhar, Suman Raina, Rajesh Tikoo and Suneel K. Kaul. Picture by Uddalak Mukherjee

What are some of these markers? In spite of fondly reminiscing about their Muslim friends and neighbours in that now-distant land, most of the speakers complained about perceived demographic changes that are causing an imbalance in Calcutta's population as well as the marked sense of aggression in, and visibility of, the minority community. These transformations, they said, could explain the backlash.

On being asked whether their inferences were based on reliable data, Akshay Moza, one of the younger members of the sabha, conceded that the assumptions were based on "what we hear and read".

Could it be that their anxiety is linked to the horror and the embedded trauma of their cruel displacement, making them imagine transformations in the city that the Right-wing narrative alleges to be true?

The question was met by a counter query. "Why are civic rules not equal for all? Why is it that the police turn a blind eye to blatant violations by bikers who hail from particular areas of this city?" asked Akshay. Only Reena Dhar said, "We do not condone the assault on Kashmiris. But our suffering cannot be compared to what they are enduring." The elderly lady's decision to insert the metaphorical — dreaded — hyphen, indicative of a chasm that now separates the Kashmiri Pandit from the Kashmiri Muslim, is evidence of a change that transcends Calcutta's geographical boundaries.

How is a chasm crossed? By building a bridge. Calcutta's Kashmiri Pandits think that there are many ways of building one. "Revive older, inclusive traditions," chimed Akshay; "Let influential people come forward to bridge the gap," argued the two Kauls; Tikoo diagnosed the problem differently and came up with a solution as well. "Kashmir and Calcutta have witnessed migration for different reasons, political and economic. But the impact has been similarly debilitating. When the brightest minds choose to leave, what remains behind is a volatile residue — people — that is particularly vulnerable to division. The key is to invest heavily in education and economic regeneration in both places."

Suman, younger and unwilling to surrender to despair, confided that the idea of India is indestructible.

But as the orchestrated intimidation of Kashmiris all over India has demonstrated, there is a diabolical method in this madness. Would the city be able to heal itself? Or would it be washed away by a political tide that seeks to break and not build?

The choice is really up to Calcuttans and those who have come to call this city their own.

SITUATION WILL EASE SOON, HOPE KASHMIRI PANDITA.

by Subhro Niyogi | TNN | Feb. 23, 2019

Kashmiri Pandits, who were driven away from their homeland in 1989 and have made Kolkata their home, hope the attacks on ethnic Kashmiris in the city and elsewhere in the country will stop soon.

"We were literally forced to give up our homes and leave Kashmir. So, we understand the pain of getting uprooted. What happened to us should not happen to anyone anywhere. As Indian citizens, everyone has the right to live and earn anywhere in the country. That such incidents have happened in Bengal and Kolkata is shocking. This was never the culture here. There have been killings using guns and choppers over political differences. But the common man has not been effected, except for a day or two in 1984 when Sikhs were targeted after Indira Gandhi's assassination," said Narendra Kaul, secretary of Kashmir Sabha, a forum for the 100-odd Kashmiri Pandit families that currently reside in Kolkata. The abuse and threats to a Kashmiri cardiologist, who has been living in the city for two decades, has touched a few raw nerves. "What is the sense of targeting the doctor? Incidents like these can alienate even those sections of Kashmiris who are Indian at heart," he reasoned.

Some believe the extreme reaction against Kashmiris is due to the unprecedented nature of the attack in which a local boy had become a jihadi for the first time. "It is the government that needs to find a way to deal with the situation. People cannot take law into their hand. Treating every Kashmiri as a potential jihadi is unfair. If we consider Kashmiris Indians, they should be given the same treatment as you and me," said Sabha treasurer Ratan Mota.

The problem, most felt, was the intolerance that had crept into all levels of society. People get easily provoked and offended and react with venom. A Kashmiri, who has managed to escape any unsavory incident till now, said it was owing to him intentionally maintaining a low profile rather than anything else.

"We Kashmiris should not discuss about our vulnerability or anything else. We are living on the sword's edge and it is a double-edged sword. A word or phrase could easily get misconstrued. There are mischief mongers waiting to pounce. Keeping mum is the safest bet," he said.

Kashmiri Ifrah Butt, who lived in Kolkata for a short while before shifting base to Bengaluru, said the abuse and attack that Kashmiris elsewhere in India had faced following the Pulwama incident was more deep-seated than it appears. "A question is being asked about how Indian Kashmiris feel. But are Kashmiris accepted as Indians? In 2017, I was working with a human rights organisation in Bengaluru. The day after India lost the Champion's Trophy final to Pakistan, I felt the creeps when I went to office. I received a very cold reception from my colleagues who seemed to assume that I was a Pakistan supporter," she recounted.

If there is any place that she would want to settle down in, Butt says it is Kolkata. For during her brief stay in the city, she felt as secure as home.

KASHMIR ASSOCIATION ORGANISES PRAYERS FOR TROUBLED VALLEY

Jhimli Mukherjee Pandey | TNN | Feb 19, 2019

TimesPoints



A yajna being performed at
Kashmir Bhawan at Salt Lake

While the rest of the city has been mourning the CRPF jawans and organising candle light marches in their honour, the city's Kashmiris have been organising special prayer meets and condolences, hoping for peace to return to their strife torn valley. Many of the city's Kashmiris had left home many decades back, in search of safer pastures and every time such news reaches them, they shudder in horror as memories of another time come rushing back.

The past two days saw the members of the Kashmir Association get into a huddle at the Kashmir Bhawan, in Salt Lake, which is the place where they meet on religious and social occasions, festivities and also for mourning. A condolence meeting was organised for the slain soldiers and a special havan-yajna was organised for peace and prosperity of the Valley.

"It has been decades since we left home...we are old now and those were the heady days for our youth when the Valley was our home. Every time we hear of such incidents, our hearts bleed for our motherland," Narendra Kaul, secretary of the Association.

Most members of the Association, have friends who are still in the Valley, some live very close to Pulwama. "We find ourselves automatically connecting with them, trying to find out about their well being. And then we call each other and thump our breasts in despair," said another member, Sunil Kaul.

The members are still in shock and say that they never expected a sleepy place like Pulwama to become the scene of such an attack. "My ancestral home in Srinagar's Banmahalla is just 30 kilometres away from the spot. I remember Pulwama as a sleepy and green hamlet, a perfect picture of peace. I saw the news on TV first and saw that dream crashing like glass shards. Most of us were heartbroken as we called each other to share the news. Just like us, Kashmiris scattered all over the country are praying hard for peace to return to the Valley..." Narendra Kaul added.

The coming festivals of Shivratri and then Kashmiri new year according to the Vikrami Samvat calendar tgoos will see special peace prayers.

HAVE WE DONE ENOUGH?

Reena Dhar

Jammu and Kashmir continues to capture headlines for all the wrong reasons, ever since we gained Independence. However the turbulence that took place in 1989, shook it to its very core. The events since 1989 has been written about, discussed in various fora and remain a deep ingrained pain in every Kashmiri's heart. That in an independent country, the original inhabitants of the State could be hounded out purely on the basis of their religion, in the most brutal manner, has few parallels. This internal displacement has not really caused even a ripple in the upper echelons of the ruling authority either in the State or at the Centre, irrespective of the party in power or even amongst the general public who are otherwise politically astute. Both insignificant numbers would have been responsible in terms of voting leverage, as would be the lack of unity in putting our case forward. As those affected, the moot question is have we really done enough? One of the most revered Kashmiri saint Lal Ded's said:

Kyah kar dahan t kahan

Vokshun yath leji kasthi yim gay

Sariy samhan yath razi lamhan

Ad kyazi ravihey kahan gaav

Loosely translated it means in our context that if all pulled in one direction, why should anyone have got lost? She was of course referring to the spiritual field but this is the truth in the social milieu too and is so very relevant for us today. We have too many associations and organizations who are all well meaning, but need to keep their egos aside and focus on the minimum and practical requirement of the community so that a single view point can emerge.. With each passing day, the sheer enormity of the

events would fade away as the younger generation gets accustomed to living away from the Valley. Both socially and culturally we would be reduced to a foot note. Hence the necessity to dwell upon time and again on what we have



gone through, not to hope that the powers that may be will give a solution, but to seek a solution from within, to our very existence as a community.

Our strength has been that Kashmir has given us the flexibility to withstand onslaughts yet flourish spiritually and intellectually. We have respected other religions and our catholicity has made it possible for Buddhism to not just flourish but spread to many countries as far as Tibet, China, Japan, Cambodia etc. In fact Mahayan sect of Buddhism started from here. Islam made its entry by force but yet over time we realized its advantages and respected some of its tenets. While time and again we have owned up to the Hindu concept of 'Vasudaiva Kutumbakam', we will refuse to get submerged and lose our identity. As they say new routes are discovered only from points at which the caravan loses its way.

Our antiquity dates back to over 5000 years. The first recorded history in India of a State, the 'Rajtaringini' was written by a Kashmiri, Kalhana. Our Sate finds mention in the Mahabharat. Ours is the oldest Hindu Almanac in the country with the current one dated year 5094. We proudly claim to have the Sharda Peeth to which any one aspiring to the highest level of knowledge used to pay obseience. Traditionally even in Kashi those getting their Diksha used to take 4 steps towards north in veneration

to Sharda Desh i.e Kashmir, the highest seat of learning. We produced poets like Bilhana who wrote 'Chaur Panchashika' and 'Vikramadev charit'; Anandavardhan who wrote 'Dhwanilok' on principles of sound; Panini who was born about 100 Kms away from Sringar in the SWAT area wrote 'Ashtadhyayi' a profound treatise on grammar; Sarangdev wrote 'Sangit Ratnakar' which is a reference point in music both in the Hindustani as well as Karnatak system. Apart from this, Acharya Abhinav Gupta whose book 'Tantralok' forms the foundation of Kashmir Shaivism, wrote 46 literary classics. There were other famous scholars in the field of Shaivism such as Utpaldev etc. These are only few examples of the knowledge that emanated from Kashmir. Sanskrit was the language of Kashmir's court, culture and creative writing. Even the common people spoke in Sanskrit as per Bilhana. The intellect blossomed in the pristine surrounding provided by nature to give its people the joys of a peaceful life.

Post the 14th Century we have been at the receiving end of conquests whether they were the Mongols, the Mughals or the Afghans and with mass killing and conversion we were reduced to being a minority. However with the latest development, Hindus along with all other minorities in the Valley as per the 2011 census are reduced to less than 4%. There is a misnomer that post 1947, there was resentment against Hindus because they occupied the highest places in the administration and education as well. This was not a favour bestowed on them but only because of the adaptability of the Hindus to face up to any challenge that came their way, time and again. This happened when the Court language shifted from Sanskrit to Persian and later to Urdu. Even when the people were forced to shift outside the State in the bygone days, as tyranny was unleashed, they made a name for themselves wherever they had migrated.

This is of course history which has to be kept in the correct perspective. What is happening today is beyond the wishes of even an average Kashmiri Muslim who are silent spectators to the mayhem that is going on. They unnecessarily get involved out of necessity for sheer survival. The truth is that we belong to the same stock, sharing our language, culture and ethos otherwise why would we have poems written to our deities by Samad Mir, Ahad Zargar or Ali Mardan, to name a few? Why would Lal Ded and Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Noorani keep stressing on the same values? Why would Hindus venerate Charar-e-Sharief or make visits to Baba Rishi 3 kms away from Gulmarg? Both Hindus and Muslims were secure in their own faith so could reach out to the other with compassion and love in their hearts to stress on the common culture, language, basic unity of mankind, and common universal truths. Unfortunately we know that what is happening today is simply Islamization of the State via demand for establishing "Nizam-e-Mustafa". Religion is being used to misguide the gullible people in an all together different conceptual path to which they were not accustomed to. Even the name of Districts as in Anantnag, roads such as Dudganga Road, Shankaracharya hillock, Haari Parbat have been changed so that there remains little connection with Hindu lineage. Initially it was done in subtle ways but later thanks to those who came from across the border with both cash and weapons, it became an all out attack. The call for autonomy in the State is not for the development and prosperity of the State or its people but purely towards this end. There is no doubt that each life lost or maimed has a multiplier effect and instead of recognizing, that the militant onslaught is responsible, they shift the blame to the immediate cause forgetting how many young men in the army have lost their lives in the call of duty. For the

man on the street, his day to day life is affected as is education and business activities specially tourism.

What is needed is that everyone concerned including the Dogris, the Buddhists, the Hindus and the Muslims of the Valley sit together and create an environment of trust and honesty where ways are found to develop love and pride for the State in every aspect. A healing touch and specific plans closely monitored for an improved infrastructure, the reforestation efforts in extensive areas of forests denuded both by greed and militancy, the lakes crying for attention, the industrialization in tune with the ecological needs etc. Hopefully once the people settle down to a peaceful life they will not be swayed by those trying to exploit them in the name of religion. While it is true that the Centre spends more, per capita in Kashmir than elsewhere, rampant corruption has always been there and has become even more now a sine qua non. Most of the benefit does not reach the ultimate beneficiary so these leakages have to be plugged. Meanwhile the Hindus have to get their demands projected in one voice and there should be one apex organization who will present it, so that the government will know whom to deal with. While the fact is, that not a single person has been prosecuted much less convicted for all the murders, rapes and looting that happened in 1989, hence the confidence that such things will not be repeated in future is lacking. We clearly have not done enough, to be heard and understood. We have to have a single minded obsession like the Jews. Who thought that the Berlin wall would be brought down? All we want is that Kashmiri Hindus who are keen, can go back to their homes or others who cannot, due to exigencies of work or other reasons feel free and secure to do so and maintain their links with the State. It is not only essential just for the Kashmiri Hindus but for the very foundation of the country which

was formed on the basis of secularism. Kashmiris will flourish where ever they are, but in losing our contact with our State, we should not end up losing our identity.

With the above in mind our theme this year is as under:

Kashmiri Pandit Community: Surviving and era of unprecedented change in 2019

For convenience we have divided the current issue of Vitasta, in the following groups:

1. Preserving humanist traditions in the State.
2. Preserving our cultural identity, particularly the language.
3. Preserving and expanding social cohesiveness through social media, global networking, and Sabhas/Samitis.
4. Preserving our temples and religious places in the State including formalizing the land surrounding it.
5. Possible solutions to the Jammu & Kashmir problem in view of the ground realities.

While some articles may not appear to be relevant to the theme, on closer look we will find that all these glimpses into the past tell us where we have erred and therefore what should be avoided. They form the sinews of our attempts at survival as a community. Unless we examine all aspects of the problem, we will not be able to focus on the solution direly needed. While we hope for a better tomorrow, simultaneously we need to learn to respect our language, culture and our very roots, feeling a sense of pride in it.

Editing the Vitasta is indeed an honour particularly since the past editors have created a special niche for it in the mind of the readers. One cannot but be grateful

to Dr B. K. Moza who tirelessly raised it to its present standards. It is therefore with trepidation that I have ventured to take up this work. My gratitude to those who have contributed to Vitasta time and again. I am also grateful to those who had to be contacted several times but finally acceded to my request by sending their articles. I sincerely hope that Vitasta comes up to the standards expected. The Hindi and Kashmiri section have as over the years been edited by Smt Niva Kaul to whom we remain so grateful. The opinion expressed by the authors cover a wide spectrum of opinion and the Kashmir Sabha is in no way responsible for the same. Our apologies to those, whose articles have not found place in the Vitasta due to various

constraints. Last but not the least our thanks goes to the advertisers whose unstinting help goes far in publishing this Annual.

Let me end by the following quote of 'Chakbast'

*Bulbul Ko gul Mubarak gul ko chaman
Mubarak*

*Hum bekason ko apna pyara watan
Mubarak.*

Namaskar

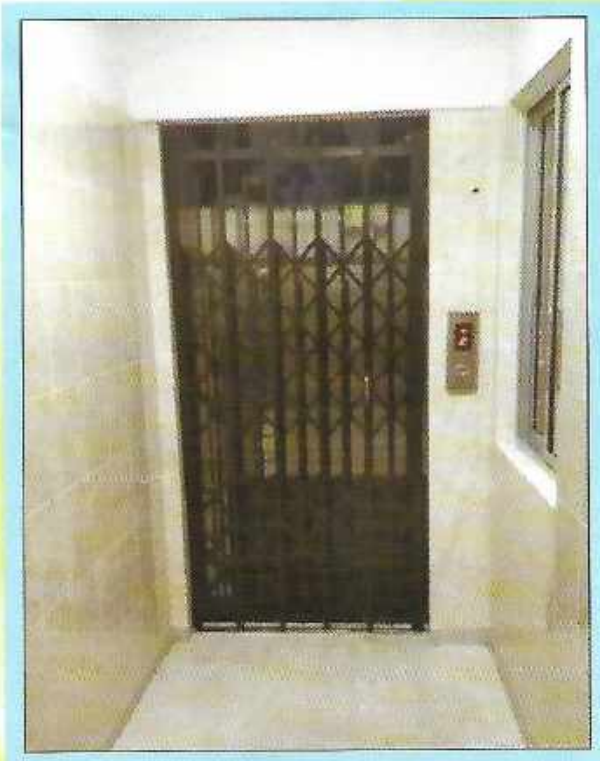
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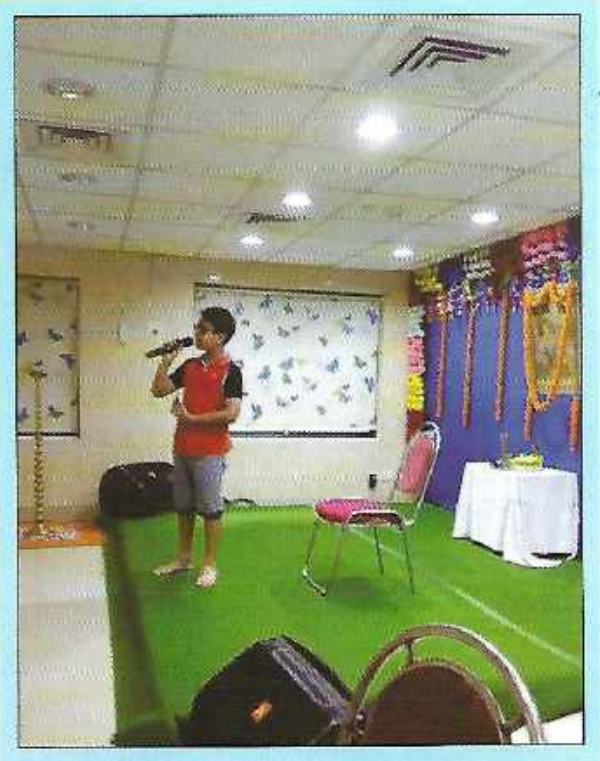
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THE NEW ADDITION TO THE BHAWAN



THE LITTLE QUIZ MASTER - ABHAY

Section I

Preserving Humanist Traditions in the State

KASHMIRIAT

Neerja Mattoo

Kashmir was once a shining example of the idea of India—a syncretic society where different religions coexisted harmoniously, differences were accepted and diversity celebrated. The word 'Kashmiriat' was coined to sum up these attributes. But today the landscape has undergone a drastic change and the word is no longer taken as a compliment. 'Kashmiriat' is anathema in the 'majoritarian' discourse on Kashmir these days. Given the major players' desire to emphasize a separate Kashmiri identity, a word that emphasized it, should have gained more usage, but it is not so. Why has the word become suspect? What did it stand for that is repugnant to them? Is the acceptance of a tolerant, inclusive way of life in which plurality and diversity flourished and were allowed to flourish, suddenly become unfashionable? Have religious identities become so dominant that they subsume ethnic, cultural or linguistic identities? No matter how disappointing to an older generation of Kashmiris it might be, but this fact stares us all in the face today and cannot be denied. The visible faces today, whether they are those of the aggressive disrupters of conferences called for dialogue outside Kashmir or what are now known as 'stone-pelters' and their leaders, seem to be situated at opposite poles of identity. Is it possible today for a young Kashmiri, Muslim or Kashmiri Pandit, to believe that the following verses could have been written by a Muslim the great Kashmiri Sufi poet Shah Ghafoor, leave alone make sense of the syncreticity advocated in them?

Brahma, Veshnu, Maheshwar gaarun

Shaf chhuy tahunday zu

Paan hay khatnay jaan hekh marun

Dharnay dharun sohamsu

(Search for Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwar,

The life that flows through you is their boon,

Should you lose them, it is death indeed,

Meditate with faith on Suhamsu (I am That).)

Secure and firmly anchored in their own faith, they were not afraid of reaching out to the other, making free use of different communities' myths and legends, enriching and enhancing their mystic experience, widening their horizon instead of shrinking their intellectual spaces. They chose to work on a much bigger canvas, no reference was taboo. But that unique Kashmiri identity which revelled in catholicity, whose vocabulary was accessible to every Kashmiri, irrespective of religion has gone into oblivion. Today it fills a Kashmiri Muslim teenager with wonder and surprise to find a sari clad woman speak Kashmiri. The taken-for-granted difference in dress once upon a time has developed into a major faultline. It seems that there is a definite design at work here to emphasize the differentness, to make one believe that the two Kashmiri communities never lived in harmony with each other. Unfortunately the two have drifted so far away from each other in physical space during the last almost three decades that the estrangement becomes evident, even in the idiom they use. Not only that, the scripts for Kashmiri used by the Pandits and Muslims today are different, as if to stress their different roots—the Devnagri and the Nastalikh, i.e., the Persian script. Suggesting a compromise provokes anger. That the Kashmiri language itself which surmounted the religious identity of the two communities has fallen into disuse is

another matter. In such divisive times, it needs the slightest nudge to trigger off real or imagined grievances and blow them up into confrontations. Thus you have rage on Srinagar streets and violent disruptions of conferences outside Kashmir, while the silent majority in both chooses to stay silent.

The Amarnath land row in 2008 was something waiting to happen. As the Yatra grew in popularity and drew more and more people from all over India to make the annual pilgrimage, there were rumblings in the local Kashmiri press protesting the two month long duration of the Yatra and about the influx of so many numbers. Even before the order to hand over land to the Shrine Board was passed, the popular mood in Kashmir was against prolonging the Yatra without really spelling out the specific reasons for this. The objections ranged from perhaps a genuine concern for the environment—that the terrain could not support too many footfalls and that it would bring too much pollution in its wake—to a hinted fear that it was an attempt to change the demographic status of Kashmir. As a member of the Board I never felt that there was a hidden agenda in demanding land to provide shelters and other amenities in a harsh terrain and unpredictable weather conditions, particularly because only a few years earlier more than a hundred pilgrims had died in a sudden snowstorm unprotected from the elements. There was no possibility of anyone—whether from Kashmir or outside the state to stay and live there permanently on that high altitude—more than 12,000 ft. high on an average. The apprehension that was created through statements by leaders that there was a sinister design in the land allotment grew into massive protests and marches in Kashmir, while the order to revoke the order was seen by the majority Hindu Jammu as hurting Hindu religious sentiments. And

they too came on the streets. Religious identities had become the overarching identities. But since the divisive time of 2008, there have been no problems with the Amarnath Yatra, except for one incident in 2017.

In spite of the fact that aspirations are different, and the heroes of one community are the villains of the other, the essential humanism of the common Kashmiri men and women is still alive. Here are a few instances.

The little temple that the 17th century mystic saint-poet Rupa Bhavani had built in Vaskur in the Ganderbal district is lovingly, in fact religiously, looked after by a Muslim caretaker. The adjacent well has crystal clear water, which he pulls up in a scrupulously clean bucket suspended from a pulley. The Alakh Sahiba Trust based in Jammu relies on him to keep the premises clean—he even, thoughtfully places some Puja Samagri inside the temple for the occasional worshipper. Can there be a better example of a pluralistic culture than this?

An itinerant folk singer from Handwara in North Kashmir, Noor Mohammad still sings of Akanandun and the agony of his Brahmin mother and father (Shiva puts them to the cruel test of demanding that they chop up their son into pieces and then cook them as a meal), with such compassion and empathy as though it was he who was having the dreadful experience.

The popular singer Gulzar Ganai still sings the mystic poems of Prakash Ram and others with the passion of a true believer in Kashmir's composite culture which is Kashmiriat.

An eminent academician and literary personality. Prof. Mattoo has translated Kashmiri poetry into English and authored some books as well. Email : nmatoo@yahoo.com, Cell : 9419003598

ON PRESERVING HUMANIST TRADITIONS IN THE STATE

Raj Kachroo

Founder - AMANMOVEMENT.ORG

When the editor asked me to write on 'Preserving Humanist traditions in the state' I was about to ask her whether she meant 'Humanitarian Tradition' instead of 'Humanist Traditions'. It is because we do not have a Humanist Tradition. We have been humanitarians because we are compassionate, magnanimous, merciful, forgiving and sympathetic people. Our humanitarian character has emerged out of our faith in God. Our culture, totally intertwined with our religion, has made us humanitarian. Humanists are also humanitarians but they do not believe in religion or in the existence of God. Humanism is a philosophy. The American Humanist Association defines "Humanism as a progressive philosophy of life that, without theism or other supernatural beliefs, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good". Western New York Humanist Society describes "Humanism as a joyous alternative to those religions that believe in a supernatural God ...". The International Humanist and Ethical Union defines "*Humanism as a democratic and ethical life stance which affirms that human beings have the right and responsibility to give meaning and shape to their own lives*". There are many definitions of Humanism. Every society or group or even every individual who claims to be a humanist has his/her own perception and definition of what humanism means? But there is one common feature amongst all humanists of the world. They are humanitarians but not by virtue of values inculcated into them through religious preaching. They do not believe in religion. We, on the other hand, were humanitarian because we were

religious. To preserve our humanitarian traditions we should strengthen our faith rather than logic. The latter is questionable and dynamic. Faith is permanent. (Incidentally, Humanism is a 'Make easy and Feel good' version of Hindu philosophy of Non Duality. We will not go any further into this aspect. That is for some other time).

Being Humanitarian has two aspects. One is that of being compassionate, forgiving, merciful, magnanimous and sympathetic. The other is that of contributing towards humanitarian aid. We had a tradition of charity. We used to believe charity would improve our 'Karma' which would, in turn, improve our present and the next life. Our charity was small in scale and highly localized. We did not have a tradition of contributing to humanitarian aid at national or international level. The reason was that we were relatively poor. And also we did not know the scale and the magnitude of devastation that major floods, hurricanes, wars and earth quakes can cause. We lived in our small world, relatively secure, cut off from rest of the world. The calamities that we used to see and face were relatively small in scale. In the past 30 years we have spread all over the world. We are now wealthier. We contribute generously and engage regularly in activities of humanitarian aid. We are now as good as any other community in India when it comes to contributing towards humanitarian aid. In a sense we have improved over the years. The younger generations, who are richer and feel more secure than their parents generation, are better than our generation when it comes to humanitarian aid.

While we can take pride in that we have improved on our contribution towards

humanitarian aid we must admit that we have lost in our ability to forgive. We are no longer magnanimous and compassionate. Our sympathy is not unconditional. Our mass exodus in 1989 has put our humanitarian tradition to test and we have not performed as well as we should have performed in this test. The humanitarian tragedy of 1989 has faltered our faith and regressed our humanitarian tradition. In television debates, community meetings and in social media we rant revenge rather than promote reconciliation and forgiveness. Aggression towards those who inflicted misery and violence on us is an accepted normal. Most of my friends and relatives, Kashmiri Pandits of my age and generation who were forced to leave Kashmir, have no sympathy for Kashmiri Muslims who themselves suffer violence, death and destruction on daily basis. We say that they have brought it upon themselves. We know that the people who inflicted misery and violence upon us are the same people who are now inflicting misery and violence upon them. And yet we are not ready to forgive the entire community for what they have done to us. I remember asking a Kashmiri Pandit, who is experienced in fund raising, to help me raise funds for a boarding school for orphans. He was listening to me but when I told him that all inhabitants of the school will be Kashmiri Muslims and many will be children of killed terrorists he told me that he will not be able to raise even a single rupee for this cause. He advised me to abandon this project and think of a project that would aim to seek "Revenge". I had suspected his response but I did not want to believe it.

Whenever an individual in our community used to face a tragedy our elders and spiritual masters used to teach us to strengthen our faith in God. We were taught and advised to reconcile with the will of God. Men and women of all faiths and across all times have relied on the power of forgiveness to heal their wounds. We were not any different. We were taught to forgive

for it is a powerful tool of spiritual advancement and psychological well being. What applies to an individual must also apply to a community. We, as a community, faced a massive tragedy in 1989. We, as a community, must learn to forgive and reconcile with the tragedy rather than agitate our minds and relish the idea of revenge. We must work to restore our compassionate, sympathetic and forgiving character to help us heal our wounds. It is for our own good. If we continue to agitate our minds we will do a lot of damage to ourselves. We will stagnate spiritually and regress further to new lows.

South Africa used forgiveness as a tool for reconciliation between communities who were engaged in a long and bloody conflict. We must have our own version of the "Truth and Reconciliation Commission". We can not forever stay in a state of anger and mourning. We must come out of our current state and engage actively in reconstruction of our state particularly its social fibre. We have experienced violence 30 years ago. We know how much it hurts. We cannot claim to be humanitarian if we do not feel the pain of those who are facing violence now.

It does not matter, even if, those facing violence now are the people who have inflicted violence upon us. Humanitarian character is not conditional. It is absolute. Otherwise it is just a deception. We have to start with ourselves. We have to learn to forgive and be unconditionally sympathetic and then pass on the tradition to our next generation. Only then we can say that we have maintained the humanitarian tradition of our ancestors. Otherwise our generation will be seen, in our history, as a destructive generation that has destroyed the most valuable inheritance , i.e., how to be human?.

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THE DIVINE VALLEY OF KASHMIR THEN AND NOW.

Kanwar K Kaul

The beauty of the valley of Kashmir is well known and amply documented. What is less known however is the fact that it is a paradise not merely in terms of a feast to the eyes but has also been a cradle, an epitome of divinity, in all its aspects unlike any other place on earth. The shrines, temples, mosques and tombs bear witness to this multicultural amalgam of faiths and philosophies. Kashmiri Shaivite philosophy of monoistic idealism, representing universal consciousness, flourished here for centuries. Evidence of Buddhism is apparent in many archeological sites along the length and breadth of the region, built during the reigns of Kanishka and Lalitaditya. Sufi thought and culture followed advent of Islam. Jesus is said to have lived here after his resurrection, at Rozabal near Srinagar- where his tomb exists to date.¹ It is believed by some authorities that, he came here in search of the 'lost tribe'. The sixth Sikh Guru visited Kashmir where the Chhatti Padshahi Gurudwara was built near Kathi Darwaza.² That this divine land should stand desecrated by its own people as a result of evil influences from outside its sacred precincts, is indeed a tragedy of history.

The valley abounds in tombs and temples of Hindu saints and Muslim *Sufis*. Both communities pay obeisance to them with great reverence. One of these was Rishi Peer' Nooruddin, also known as Nund Rishi and Peer Pandit Padsha. His memory is immortalized in the Shrine at *Chvri Sharif* which was desecrated by militants some years ago.³ He is said to have been nursed as a baby by a great Hindu woman saint of Kashmir 'Lal ded', who influenced him greatly. He founded the *Rishi* order of saints.

Jeewan Shah a saint who lived in Kashmir in the 18th century AD is said to have had spiritual powers. A story goes that during the Afghan reign a Kashmiri Pandit girl was abducted by the Governor Azad Khan's soldiers in a boat. Jeewan Shah having come to know of it uttered a curse:

“Agar hukme Khuda naist,
Ba hukme Jeewan Shah
Kashti garqe aab khud,
Hindva azaab bala shud”

Translated it means: “Even though it be not ordained by God, by the order of Jeewan Shah may the boat capsize drowning all but the Hindu girl in distress” A storm swept across the lake, the boat sank drowning all the soldiers but the girl swam safely to shore!

Kashmir valley was known for saints and seers of all shades, and with genuine credentials, both Sufi, and Hindu. I have had personal experiences of these as a boy, accompanying my father at almost every visit. I distinctly remember *Sobur Sahib*, who lived in a secluded place near the Pari Mahal and gave black pepper corns as *Tabarruk (prasad)*. Some I heard about and some that I met include Sati ded, Sonabab, Kashkak of Wayil, Nandbab, Gopinathji and Swami Laxman joo. They were well known in the valley. Swamiji was an intellectual and an authority on Kashmiri Shaivism. Sonabab once asked my father to carry firewood on his head and walk through a busy market, apparently to teach him the value of humility and to shun his ego forever. This my father did without hesitation! They were in contrast to god men we see and hear about these days, most of who prove as frauds sooner or later.

I must narrate some of my experiences of the "third dimension" relating to these Saints and Sufis as a young impressionable child. Although the events do not stand scientific scrutiny, yet they seemed to me as real, leaving inerasable memories, to this day. I have not been able to brush them aside as mere fantasy! Some of these episodes witnessed by adults in the family were corroborated later. I have been a personal witness to a bizarre sight, I saw one night when I was a primary schoolboy. *Sona Bab*, who was greatly revered by my father, smoked a "*Chillum*" of *charas* (a Cannabis herb), and remained in trance for long hours. Walking into our home one late night he 'ordered' my father to drive for a visit for an audience with '*Jwala Devi*' the fire goddess. He seemed to be in a hurry and hurled all invectives for not hurrying up to 'keep the appointment'. The driver was asked to pull out the car from the garage and move. I, my father and a couple of others from *Sona Bab*'s entourage got into the car but the driver, *Kanhaiya Singh* hesitated, saying that there was no fuel in the tank. He had measured it with his wooden 'gauge' (there were no petrol gauges in the cars then), and it showed only about half inch of petrol. More expletives from *Bab* and we had no choice but to move whatever the consequences. My father addressed the driver and told him go on till we were forced to stop. *Bab* ordered the driver to drive towards *Bijbehara*, a village on the Srinagar-Jammu highway. As we neared the *Batra Petrol pump* along the golf club for a fill up, severer invectives rained in on the poor driver and we were compelled to move on. After we had driven some miles on the road, *Bab* ordered a right turn into a dry rice field where he ordered us to get out, line up facing the north with folded hands. As we stood in anticipation, I witnessed a sight seen never before or thereafter. A bright blinding light appeared in the sky, unlike a lightening, stayed for a few seconds and vanished! Seems beyond any scientific reasoning and unbelievable, but it seems to me as if it

was yesterday! We returned, leaving *Bab* at his home in downtown. As we stopped back home at our garage, the car had to be pushed in as it was out of fuel! There may be doubts about the quantity of fuel in the car, but the bright light that I saw that night is indisputable. Incidentally, the Northern lights- *Aurora Borealis*- are not seen in this part of the globe!

One evening *Sona Bab* was seated on a carpet spread out in our lawn in the house where we were living in a rented accommodation, behind the *Nedou's* hotel. Around him were his devotees, watching him smoking his *Chillum*, almost in a trance and at which he would stay for hours. He spent nearly three days in the lawn rarely going into his tent nearby for sleep, resuming his seat during the day. A *Ladakhi* on horseback happened to pass by on the road outside overlooking the lawn. He went back and forth several times looking intensely at the gathering. Presuming that he was looking for directions, our gardener went out to help him. The *Ladakhi*, seemingly astonished, asked the gardener about *Sonabab*, who he was and since when had he been there. The gardener explained that he had been there for the last 3 days. Disbelieving him, the horseman said he had seen the self same person at *Baltal* in the morning. "How could he be here when I saw him seated on a rock at *Baltal*, smoking his *chillum*? I have been riding from there all day, faster than any person could reach here before me?" The gardener said he must have been somebody else. The rider sought to see *Sonabab* closer and after satisfying himself insisted that he was the person he saw. Swearing, he said he had offered his *chillum* to him as he stopped by! This anecdote was remembered well and as a boy of about eight, even though I could not then understand the mystery of the situation, I was a witness to the scene. As I grew up, I tried to analyze the story to offer a rational view of the incident from my scientific thinking as a professional, and brush it

aside, but have found difficult to do so! Could a person be present at two different places simultaneously? Or could one disappear from one place to reappear at another? Or did the horse rider have an illusion?

Once, with the intention of having 'deedar' of Sobur Sahib, a Muslim Sufi saint, I followed as usual, in tow with my father to this visit. We drove to *Gagribal point* along the Dal lake parked our car and took a *Shikara* ride across the lake. Climbing towards *Pari Mahal* we reached *Sobur Sahib's* lonely abode. He welcomed us in that lonely hideout and put a pot of water to boil for tea. While we sat, he was at his *Tasbeeh* for a while, praying. He pulled out some black pepper corns as *Tabarruk*, (*prasad*) and gave one each to us with blessings. A moment later he looked up at the clear sky and all of a sudden beseeched us to leave immediately, before the water for tea could come to boil. Fearing something ominous, we rushed down the slope, took the boat across the lake, boarded our car and drove back home. Gusts of wind overtook us and in a while the sky was overcast, and by the time we reached home a severe thunderstorm, with strong winds and rain lashed the valley. That was a storm of a magnitude the likes of which were rarely witnessed in living memory, uprooting the massive century old Chinar trees, raising high waves of water in rivers and lakes, raising buildings to the ground, floods, power failure and blackout. Many boats in the lake had capsized and were it not for *Sobur Sahib's* timely warning we may not have made it to home that night.

Life in the nineteen thirties and forties was essentially peaceful in the valley. Heinous crimes like murders, kidnapping, and rape were negligible. Guns were unknown to the peace loving population. I remember an isolated stabbing incident in the mid nineteen thirties which shook the valley for quite some time. Skirmishes between

some local communities did occur now and then, between parties of Moulvi Farooq and Sheikh Abdullah and later, between Sheikh Abdullah's party and the Maharaja's forces, demanding adequate representation of majority Muslims in the state government. Relations between communities at individual level were very cordial then. Each respected the other's religious sentiments and sensitivities. Eating and dining together between Hindus and Muslims was initially uncommon. At Hindu marriages, for instance, a separate dinner was arranged for Muslim friends, cooked and served by Muslim servers. A Muslim would not enter a Hindu's kitchen, nor would they eat together and so on. These deplorable practices however, disappeared in due course. Here is a quote from a Kashmiri writer, Dr. Gulzar Mufti,⁴ which bears credence to the relations between communities during the good old times:

"Having lived and shared my youth and boyhood with them, I cherish the memories of Pandit teachers, who taught me; I treasure the reminiscences of Pandit friends who were my mates. Even though our religions and faith were different, yet we shared a common heritage, a common language and a common culture. A Pandit knew what Eid-i-Milad-ul-Nabi (birth of Prophet Mohammed) or Eid-ul-Fitr (celebration after the month of Ramadan) meant for me. I knew what Hairath (Shivratri or great night of Lord Shiva) was for him. My mouth waters as I remember the taste of seasoned and osmotically saturated walnuts that I would get as a present from Hindu friends and neighbors, the day after Hairath."

With passage of time and a series of historical events the scenario changed entirely. Unsuccessful in its designs, Pakistan, to date, continues its proxy war by sending armed infiltrators, into the valley, recruiting and indoctrinating Kashmiri Muslim youth in terror training camps in POK and Pakistan and sending

them back to fight a 'holy war' in Kashmir. In aid of these evil designs, the local extremist leaders in the valley, under instructions from their masters across the border, lend a helping hand by radicalizing Kashmiri youth seeking 'azadi'. They hardly understand the meaning of Azadi, are paid for pelting stones and locally made bombs at the cops. Hefty sums of money trickle illegally into Kashmir through *Hawala* and some personal accounts to keep up the '*Jihad. Militancy and radicalism reached a peak when in 1989 and 90, under a well planned scheme, threatening imported tape-recorded messages blared from mosques all over asking Kashmiri Pandits to leave their valuables and women behind and leave the valley or face death. Houses were burnt, the men killed and their women raped, compelling the community of over three hundred thousand people to leave the valley in an almost overnight mass exodus.*

In one of his recent writings following a visit to Srinagar, Dr Ahmad⁵ a Kashmiri physician settled in USA has the following pertinent remarks that to my mind sum up the "bitter truth".

".....We claim to be the most devoutly religious people in the world, yet we do the most inhumane things for which I am extremely ashamed. We provoke police forces by throwing stones and hurling obscenities at them. We burn schools, courts, bridges, police stations and then pray collectively at the roadside for freedom. Where was the Huriyat when a Muslim teacher raped an eight year old girl? Where was Huriyat when a Muslim Police officer was thrown in the river along with his jeep? The problem with the current state is that no one is using common sense or logic to deal with the situation, as anger and hatred and fears continue to run rampant. The silent majority finds itself hapless in the violence scared milieu and no one is willing to speak the truth for fear

of being labelled a traitor. There can be no peace without equal justice to everyone in Kashmir:

justice for the innocent Kashmiri youth who have been killed and shot with pellets;

justice for the Kashmiri Pandit community to return home with dignity,

justice for the local police force who are being harassed and vilified,

justice for the CRPF men who were killed in sleep in cold blood.

Are we ready for so called Azadi? Do we have any moral or ethical conscience for that? Corruption and looting have become so rampant that Kashmir has received the honor of being the most corrupt state in India. Is this Azadi? We need Azadi from corruption, communalism, materialism, anarchy, agitation, hartals and stone pelters. We may not agree but we have to wake up to consequences of leaving this so called freedom movement unchecked. We know very well what the other side has to offer: extremism, bigotry, religious intolerance, kidnapping, violence and suicide bombings.....Let me make it very clear that the current unrest in Kashmir is neither a spontaneous outburst of anger against the killing of Burhan Wani, nor due to alienation of the Kashmiris because of poor governance and human rights abuses. It is a new phase of militancy aided and abetted by outside powers with the ultimate dream of turning Kashmir into an Islamic state Let's return Kashmir to an honorable home of 'Sufism', 'Kashmiriat' and 'Insaniyat' by following our beloved prophet's (PBUH) last sermon. He says 'Hurt no one so that no one may hurt you. You will neither inflict nor suffer any inequity'. History will never forgive us if we do not act wisely at this critical juncture"

Remedies seem obvious but are bogged down in the mire of lacking political

statesmanship, or call it political will and courage, indifference over the years or, in the words of Sudha Kaul's apt words 'disconnected interference'⁶. Meanwhile the Kashmiri Pandits continue to languish in exile in their own country, most of them compelled to live a life of destitution and indignity. I last visited Srinagar in July 2016 and met some old family friends who welcomed me cordially and we shared memories of good old times. On the streets however, it was different. Out of emotion I spontaneously wrote a few couplets, two of which I am sharing with my readers:

*Mandir ki ghantiyaan ab na woh pehli si
paak azaanein*

*Khuda bhi nadarad lagta hai yeh sheher
dekh kar*

*Ab ek baar phir choom le is sarzameen ko
Hamdam**

*Phir na kehna ghamzadaa the woh keher
dekh kar*

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*"Who is the friend and who the foe of your native land
Let you among yourselves thoughtfully make out -
The race and stock of all Kashmiris is one;
Let us mingle milk and sugar once again,
Hindus will man the helm and Muslims ply the oars,
Let us together row (ashore) the boat of this country.*

- Mahjoor

PRESERVING OUR HUMANIST TRADITIONS

Ravinder Ravi

In this era of turmoil, discord and strife there can be no better approach than the great humanist approach towards handling the situation and coping with the burning issues confronting the world at large. It is the human face alone which has time and again overcome the vagaries of nature as well as man-made tragedies. Being human and learning to be human rekindles a hope for a brighter tomorrow and inculcating human values gives rise and nourishes human rights also. A human touch does miracles when sincerely adopted. This humanist tradition transcends even religious context. Ingrained in our blood, this great tradition has been enriched since times immemorial. The very strong basis of our unique culture and identity lies in our peaceful co-existence and unity in diversity. Humanist traditions sustains not only moral values and ethical order but promotes communal amity and mutual understanding. Humanism encompasses all that is good and genuine irrespective of religious affiliations and other compulsions. Religion has always played a proactive role in shaping our humanist psyche in a positive manner. Sanatan Dharma believes and teaches universal brotherhood and peaceful co-existence in the society. Tolerance being the soul, of this way of life, has embedded various sections of the society in unison. The essence of religion is to preach universal love and compassion and reinforce the plurality and unity in diversity. Diversity, openness and accommodation nurtures far sightedness and narrow down differences. Spiritual discourses coupled with lessons on shared values and beliefs create a positive impact useful for human nature and behavior. Our collective wisdom has proved time and again, that humanity can do wonders and win hearts in any situation. With humanistic approach, an enemy today may turn a good friend tomorrow, nobody knows? Given the fact

our society nowadays is faced with highly inflammable and burning issues, these can be solved only through humane treatment. Humanist traditions provide a great opportunity in solving any contentious issue. Our great philosophy and religious texts have shown humanism to be a great harbinger of peace and prosperity to mankind. Moreover humanistic approach can deepen the connect with various communities in the society. Great world souls, irrespective of religious affiliations, preferred humanist approach than any hard line in combating day to day challenges being faced. Swami Vivekananda, the great monk of India believed in universal brotherhood and unparalleled Indian ethos and legacy. He never got bogged down, spoke his mind about what he thought was right. He gave vent to his feeling solely for the betterment of mankind. As we commemorate the 125th anniversary of Swami ji's famous address to the 'World Parliament of Religions' in Chicago on September 11, 1893' the relevance of his 'Updesh' of humanism, tolerance, peace and co-existence is more appropriate in the current times. In this age of protectionism, humanistic way of life can enrich plural democratic societies in a big way. Our humanistic traditions can play a great role in the society full of tension and canard and a hostile environment can turn into an atmosphere of love and joy. Humanistic traditions have the power to transform pessimistic attitude into an optimistic behavior.

Our great mystic poetess, Lal Ded, the Laleshwari of Padmanpore with her spontaneous flow and outpouring, bestowed upon us the pious words of wisdom (Waakhs). These Waakhs are a shining example of humanism and a treasure trove of tolerance and universal brotherhood. She did, what she perceived, was the best and never ever resorted to any kind of duplicity. Never ever thought

one thing and did another thing but led by a unique example of righteousness and probity. We see an actual unity in diversity while going through the Lall Waakhs. Another great mystic poet Sehzanand, adored as Nundreshi, also chose the path to self realization. Oneness and pluralist tradition remained the hallmark of his Shlokas (Shruks). There is a human touch prevalent everywhere in his discourses irrespective of religious beliefs. Down through the ages, the humanistic traditions have proved timeless and very powerful to see and feel a peaceful world. These Waakhs and Shruks reflect the inheritance of peerless traditions of humanism. Besides these traditions have always proved to be a catalyst in pre-empting any unforeseen and untoward happening. These humanistic traditions have outshone the myopic approach adopted for petty gains. Mystic poets like Ahmed Batwari, Shams Faqir, Shah Gafoor, Samad Mir, Nand Ram Parmanand, Krishen Jo Razdan and Master Zinda Kaul celebrated unity in diversity. There was no discrimination or any kind of prejudice in their creative and aesthetic sense. All they did was to spread the message of universal brotherhood and communal amity. Humanistic traditions are beyond limits and are perennial. These ever relevant traditions may even overshadow religions to overcome social and other discords faced by today's world. Globalization, commercialization, consumerism and protectionism etc have made cruel inroads in our societies. The more we engage and come closer, the more are the chances of derailment also. Hence sincere efforts remain the bedrock of any confidence building measure, trust deficit will vanish automatically. Faith moves mountains, this epithet reiterates one's unflinching resolve to preserve and maintain the unique humanistic traditions. For a peaceful, prosperous and a progressive society a human feeling is of paramount importance. Humanistic attitude eclipses the shabby and ugly face of intolerance in any form. This is an admitted fact that humanistic way of life

leads to peace, progress and prosperity. It is the only potent weapon against mass destruction and all social ills. In a pluralistic society, humanistic traditions have been playing a pivotal role in bringing about a positive change and ensuring cohesiveness. Similarly, pluralism is unthinkable unless human values are respected and nourished. Mutual understanding coupled with true human attitude gives birth to peace, tranquility and reconciliation. I would like to quote his holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar (TOI, the Speaking tree) to make my point, " Some years ago, I went to Iraq to take stock of our relief and rehabilitation work there. We were asked to stay in the Green Zone, the safe zone. There were 12 vehicles and two tankers provided for our security. They said the Red Zone was quite risky and there had been bomb blasts a few weeks back. But I insisted on going there. They were worried but since I was their guest, they could not refuse. There I went to a village that had only Shias because all the Sunnis had been driven away from there. They welcomed me. I sat with them, spoke with them and told them I wanted to bring a guest that evening and they agreed. So I brought with me a Sunni Imam who was among those driven away from that village. When they met and spoke to each other, the villagers decided, " we will welcome back the 8,000 families that were driven away from there." It is a matter of Understanding..." Although, religion and humanism can't be separated and both being inalienable to each other but humanism transcend every boundary and does not confine to a particular area, thinking, belief, community, time or space. Religion may fail to deliver but humanistic traditions shall go on forever and shall continue to thrive, develop and prosper in any conflict or war as humanity promotes mutual understanding and reinforces and strengthens the spirit of peaceful co-existence.

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'YOU MUST RETURN TO KASHMIR IN SPRING'

Siddhartha Gigoo

1

One evening, in the autumn of 1989, while returning home from school in Karan Nagar, Srinagar, I stopped by Bashir's hardware store some 20 paces before Safa Kadal, the seventh and oldest bridge over the Jhelum. Bashir had supplied all the hardware for the renovation of our house. My parents and grandparents hoped to live somewhat in style in the coming years. For years, my father collected artwork to decorate the house. A foreboding that the political and law and order situation was going to take a terrible turn kept us in a state of dilemma.

What should we do, in case...? we wondered.

'If you ever find yourself in trouble, just take my name,' Bashir had said to me earlier. Besides being a storekeeper, he was also my father's student. He was grateful to my father for the tuitions. But studies didn't interest Bashir. 'Studies are useless,' he would joke. 'Real education lies in political struggle for our people.'

Bashir claimed to have been appointed the area commander of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF). 'This part of Downtown Srinagar,' he said, 'is under my command.' But Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) lured the youth more than JKLF. It had risen to be the most feared of the insurgent outfits given its links with the Jamaat-e-Islami that professed Kashmir's merger with Pakistan. Bashir, however, dreamt of Azadi. 'My heart bleeds for Pakistan, but I shall live and die in Azad Jammu and Kashmir,' he would say.

That evening, I confided in Bashir about a troublesome incident involving some miscreants near my school. I didn't tell

him the reason for being singled out. On the previous day, in school, I had blurted out about being in possession of Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*. My uncle had got the book for us from Melbourne. Little did I know that my foolhardy disclosure would put me in harm's way. Some classmates leaked the news to outsiders and I found myself surrounded by people who threatened to punish me for the sacrilegious act. 'Do you want me to show it to you?' one man said to me, lifting the hem of his *pheran* and pointing to the nozzle of a gun. Putting his hand in the pocket of his *pheran*, his partner, who, people said was his younger brother and a 'HM boy', fished out a pistol. I told the two fellows about Bashir and I was let off with a warning. 'Don't ever spread such lies. And don't brag about the blasphemous book. You know the punishment for speaking against our Prophet?' they warned.

Bashir laughed and said I had committed a blunder by lying. 'These Hizbul boys are dangerous,' he said, 'but they would not hurt you as long as your big brother is around. Good you told them about me.'

Luckily, no one believed my truth about *The Satanic Verses*.

Later, Bashir came home to inspect the progress of the renovation of our house. The following afternoon, I stopped by at his shop again. He spoke of his ambition. 'I am going to be made the Regional Commander soon,' he said, elatedly. 'And, Inshallah, if I do well, I will become the Divisional Commander of JKLF some day'. Heroism, idealism, utter contempt for school education, loyalty for his teacher, and fondness for his teacher's son characterized Bashir.

Bashir had said that we would have to leave Kashmir soon. 'But until that time, no harm will come to Sir and you.'

He laid out an ambitious vision for Kashmir. 'It is going to be a long struggle for Azadi. It could take years, may be decades.'

'What if it doesn't happen?' I asked, knowing fully well that most people were made to believe Azadi was around the corner. Belief gave people hope. The propagandist broadcasts from Pakistan were encouraging. 'We will sip *kehwa* in Shalimar Garden in Azad Kashmir in March,' blared the voices on radio and TV. Euphoria prevailed in Muslim households. Inside the Pandit households, men, women and children battled fear and trembling.

'Azadi is a matter of days, you will see,' some of my Muslim schoolmates said. But Bashir thought otherwise. That day when I asked him what if Azadi didn't happen in his lifetime, he spoke of a Second Wave. 'Amanullah Khan has spelled it in his vision,' said Bashir emphatically. 'The Second Wave will be more determined and primed for action than the present one because it will fight a battle on the soil smeared with the blood of their elders.'

2

It's been 29 years ever since and Bashir's prediction has come true. The Second Wave is here. It seems more menacing than the first. The first had battled an ill-equipped military force. But the second is up in arms against the best of the forces.

Kashmir is witnessing the 90s redux minus the Azadi-seeking JKLF that stands disbanded and defunct now. The dreaded Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Taiba that have successfully altered the meaning of Islamic Jihad form the core of the Second Wave in Kashmir. If at all the Second Wave is contained or even eliminated in the years to come, what assurance do we have that a Third Wave, which perhaps will inflict damage at a catastrophic level, won't rise? Indoctrinated by the ISIS ideology, the present day Jaish or Lashkar militant

operating in Kashmir is willing to tackle the forces, spread havoc, put people's lives at grave risk, take a bullet and die for the sake of a lost cause - Pakistan or Islamic State or Jihad.

In the recent times, Jaish and Lashkar militants have killed hundreds of security forces and civilians including journalists, politicians and bureaucrats. Hundreds of commoners have committed suicide for unknown reasons. Several thousands are suffering from mental disorders. People continue to get killed during encounters, combing operations and crackdowns. Children are the worst affected. People living in the border areas of the Jammu Province fear for their lives on account of shelling by Pakistani forces. Infiltration remains unabated.

The Dogras of Jammu and the Muslims and Buddhists living in the Ladakh Province are disenchanted because no one is concerned about them. The Gujjars and Bakarwals don't even care what the fuss is all about for they are better off migrating from one mountain range to another.

Kashmir, for the present-day militants, is an unfinished business worth fighting and dying. For the security forces, Kashmir is just a posting to guard the 'crown'. For the ordinary folk who wake up in the morning and leave their homes to earn a living not even bothering if it's safe to go out or not, Kashmir is just another hopeless day. For those who're unable to make ends meet, Kashmir is a lacerating wait for a better tomorrow. For those who can't return to their long-lost homes even after quarter of a century, Kashmir is a memory or a photograph. For the political parties, Kashmir is a scramble for power.

'Kashmir is a blank cheque in my pocket,' Jinnah had boasted. Clearly, the people living in Kashmir are a dispensable lot. But the exiled Hindus of Kashmir, the Dogras of Jammu, and the Buddhists of Ladakh are the real trump card in the

hands of crafty politicians and arbiters. The Joker, as they say, in rummy. When it comes to any talks with those advocating separatism, the Joker will be dealt.

There are vested interests in India, Pakistan and elsewhere that don't want a solution because keeping the problem alive has, over the years, been incredibly profitable. A burning Kashmir generates a lot of academic funding in India and abroad. It keeps getting people to power. It keeps the security apparatus well-oiled. It keeps the coffers of zealots full. What will the let-Kashmir-burn people do when the fire is doused? How will they derive sustenance?

Kashmir is not the Indian state's biggest problem. It never was and, possibly, never will be. It's not even a problem for Indians whose only view into Kashmir is through endless debates on primetime TV in which Kashmir has been reduced to a mere refrain.

The conflict has cost common Kashmiris a way of life and rendered them bereft of hope. Over the years, more people have died in streets, in hospitals and in migrant camps than inside their homes. Nothing is known about thousands. The society stands divided on religious, sectarian and political lines. Suspicion, mistrust and betrayals have created partitions within the society and human relationships have lost their meaning. No one knows who's working for or against whom. No one knows what to believe and what not to believe. Daily life itself is paradoxical and full of absurdities and contradictions. To live there is to have your freedom snatched and remain trapped in an intricate web of insurgency, counter-insurgency, espionage and counter-espionage.

Is it ever possible that the common people of the Jammu and Kashmir state come together and work towards reclaiming the lost way of life notwithstanding their distinct identities, ideologies, perspectives,

experiences, compulsions, aspirations, etc.? This even at the risk of continued violence on the frontier and in the streets of Kashmir. We should even be prepared for a possibility of not ever finding a lasting solution to the conflict and terrorism in Kashmir. The recent history of the state is nothing but an amalgamation of successive socio-political deceptions, distortions and blunders.

If people are able to set up violence-free localities or zones, however small, where they feel empowered to cultivate peace and harmony; if people are given a sense of ownership in matters related to governance; if people are able to safeguard free speech, reconcile ideological divergences, and advocate religious and cultural diversity; if communities can take up vigilance and peace building; if ordinary masses that have suffered immensely over the past three decades rise against violence and terrorism, and cocoon their community from those seeking its destruction, then the old way of life that stood for harmonious co-existence can be reclaimed. But such an act should be of the commoners, by the commoners and for the commoners.

Countless people whose voices matter aren't even in the frame. Nobody knows about them and their dignified struggle for basic, simple things of life. How they have lived. What they have gone through. What they have lost. The spotlight must be put on them. They are the ones who have experienced humanity in its purest form. Despite having lost a lot, they have quietly suffered and given others hope. The humanity of such people must be placed before the world so that the generations to come will know the cost these people paid to live simple lives. The humanity of these people should not be held hostage to the misadventures of those seeking to curb freedom and the right to live peacefully. It is this humanity that might restore hope and happiness in the hearts of people, and make Kashmir a peaceful place once again.

It should be salvaged before it is too late to even know that it ever existed.

3

In January this year, I went to Kashmir for a day and saw our old house undergoing renovation. Several other houses in SafaKadal were being renovated. 'We Downtowners have been rebuilding our lives for years now,' quipped an elderly woman who didn't take even a fraction to recognize me. 'This is what we do. It is a perennial process here.' She pointed to our old house with tears in her eyes and said, 'that house is still yours, and will always be.'

Swanky hardware stores dotted the road leading to the bridge (SafaKadal). Bashir was nowhere.

Mir Khalid, author of *Jaffna Street: Tales of Life, Death, Betrayal and Survival in Kashmir*, a haunting memoir of growing up in Downtown Srinagar, was waiting for me at the bridge. 'What has happened to Downtowners?' I asked him upon seeing gloom and disillusionment written upon the faces of people there. 'Everything is floundering here,' he said, pointing to a row of desolate houses along Yarbal, the embankment along Jhelum. We talked about the irreconcilable paradoxes of human existence in Kashmir. Khalid's book profiles the old city and its residents with their infallible capacity to rise from the ashes.

Susheel Pajnu, an old neighbour and friend from Safa Kadal, took me to his home. His

family is the lone Kashmiri Pandit family living there. His father, who's well known for having curated the only two one-day international cricket matches ever held in Kashmir in 1983 and 1986, is battling dementia. The October 1983 match between India and West Indies is still remembered as the turning point in the history of Kashmir. The political leanings of the Muslims and their hatred for India came to the fore for the first time during that match. Every Muslim in Kashmir cheered for West Indies, and India's loss was celebrated for days. Cricket continues to be Susheel's passion. He runs the Safa Kadal Cricket Club now.

'Dad vacillates between islands of memory these days, but when you talk to him, he might remember some things,' said Susheel about his illustrious father. His father's memory sparkled when he saw me after years. 'You must return,' he said to me looking intently into my eyes. History flashed in his grey, misty eyes. It is that human history of living a life in isolation that I wish to examine.

Before bidding goodbye to him I expressed hope of seeing him again next year. 'I have something rare and precious to show you,' he said enticingly, with a glint in his eyes. 'You must return home in spring when everything is burgeoning.'

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THE KASHMIR PROBLEM

M. K. Kaw

Intrepid editors of political News Magazines have a penchant for setting up impossible tasks for their unwary authors, hoping that they would fall into a trap from which there is no easy exit. Scores of political commentators have burnt tons of midnight oil, which led to no easy solution of the Kashmir problem.

When the editor Vitasta posed this conundrum to me I was at once reminded of what my name sake Rasgotra told me after a long and contentious dialogue: "M.K let me share a secret with you. The Kashmir problem was simmering twenty years back. The best hunch I have is that twenty years later it will continue to simmer."

At that time I had thought to myself that a senior colleague had fended me off with a clever one-liner, just to conceal his ignorance. Having seen since then the ups and downs of international intrigue with respect to the hotspots of the world, I bow down today to their superior insight and wisdom.

Let us delve into history. The earliest Kashmir problem was a matrimonial one. The king of Ayodhya who was already married twice, was looking for a young and pretty bride and he chose Kaikeyi, the princess of Kashmir. She was not only beautiful but also a conspirator in royal affairs. She was able to coax two open-ended boons from the doting and decrepit Maharaja, boons that had momentous consequences for the Ramayana war.

Importance of Kashmir at the National level was again highlighted, when the Moguls decided to annex Kashmir to the empire. Very soon the valley became the

back drop to the amatory enterprises of the virile conquerors of Mongolian origin.

Kashmir became a football in the political sports of North West India between the Moguls, Afghans, Sikhs, Dogras and the British. When the British decided to leave India they permitted the 538 princely states to choose their future destiny. They could either merge in India or in Pakistan or retain their independence as a separate country. They hoped that this would convert India into a political anarchy.

But this was not to be. Between Sardar Patel, Jinnah, Mountbatten and Nehru, the political future of all the states was soon settled. Kashmir became a problem because both India and Pakistan wanted it. The British wanted it to be an independent Nation and conspired with Sheikh Abudulla to create a Sultanate. The Maharaja had similar ambitions for himself and did not sign the instrument of Accession till the Pakistani army, disguised as tribal raiders, was actually knocking at the gates of Srinagar.

A war between India and Pakistan now became inevitable and India pushed the Pakistanis back in order to retrieve its lost territory. At this stage Nehru intervened and referred the dispute to the United Nations. There the matter rests at this stage.

Many suggestions have been made for a solution of the Kashmir problem. The Military on both sides of the border would like to go for a military solution. In the process both the countries have acquired a tremendous stockpile of sophisticated equipment. They have flouted all the conventions on nuclear non-proliferation

and threatened the world with the perils of a nuclear war.

Pending the actualisation of such a perilous denouement, the two countries have engaged in major conflicts of the conventional kind with no definitive results. The nearest they came to a military solution was in 1971 when India scored a major victory. The two countries were a whisper away from a resolution of the Kashmir problem with the conversion of the Line of Actual Control into the international border between the two countries.

However the Shimla summit ended in a fiasco. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto prostrated himself at the feet of Indira Gandhi and promised to have the solution accepted by the Pakistani Nation. Shortly thereafter, he was sentenced to death and became another victim of the attempt to resolve the Kashmir problem.

But the political resolution of the Kashmir problem is only one part of the story. Many observers would like to believe that the Kashmir problem is not a local issue between India and Pakistan. They see it as a small part of the larger attempt to forge a Nizam-e-Mustafa, the story of whose domination over the mind of the North-Western region of India, which started in the eight century with the Arab invasion of Sind, is an important chapter in the clash between civilisations so graphically described by Samuel Huntington.

There are other models developed over time which represent attempts to describe alternative methods of bringing about change.

The most commonly used method could be called the bureaucratic solution. In this method, things are allowed to change from day to day, without taking any steps to

alter reality. Various actors in the drama play their roles without let or hindrance. The primary actors are the Secretaries in charge of Home and Defence. They have no idea what the Government policy is or should be. They can at best surmise what various political leaders have said at different points of time. They can make wild guesses as to why a particular stand was politically convenient at that point of time. They cannot judge the correctness of the stand from the point of view of any laid down parameters

The bureaucratic mode is effective in maintaining the status quo. It cannot alter reality or offer solutions. It creates the mythological impression that things are under control and that the immediate problems of the system are being taken care of. One can remain in the bureaucratic mode for eternity.

At the other end of the spectrum is the demographic or the final solution. This can work in autocratic societies. Members of the occupation army are encouraged to mate with native females and create a population with mixed genes. Tibet is a live example of such a racial absorption.

Then you have the stipulation of ruthless suppression in which the society with superior fire-power attacks the weaker society through overt and covert means and drubs them into submission. India has half-heartedly tried this solution in Kashmir, but succeeded only partially because our heart is not in it. Hindus have by centuries of training convinced themselves that the entire world is one family and we must live together -in peace and harmony. This places certain limits on the ruthlessness that can be visited on the local population, however anti national it may seem to be.

Pakistan has launched very inhuman covert operations over the last 70 years of

its existence. They have no qualms about cruelty and ruthlessness, but most of it hurts the Muslim segment of the population, which is their client population.

To sum up, the present status of the Kashmir problem is:

The military solution has been tried on both sides but the intervention of big powers and other players in the region do not permit an all-out confrontation. Even so, India's record on the military side is quite creditable. India is already flexing its muscles. None of the big powers wishes India to wrest Kashmir by force from Pakistan.

The demographic solution is out, because it does not suit our temperament.

What is left is the bureaucratic approach, which is already being tried out. We appointed an interlocutor some time back. Recently the BJP broke off its alliance with the PDP and appointed a new Governor. But such cosmetic changes do not solve international problems of the Kashmir variety.

So, as of now, Kashmir is likely to simmer and to simmer continuously.

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"God is one but is known by many names,

There is none who doesn't seek Him;

Realize the shortness of this life,

There is none whom He doesn't give"

- Sheikh Noor-ud-Din

ATTAINING HINDU-MUSLIM BROTHERLY TIES A DISTANT TASK BUT THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE

Jagannath Dhar

The Kashmir issue can be solved in one day if the residents of the valley succeed in reviving the old *baradari* spirit. The task is difficult but there is no other way out. It requires a change of heart. That change takes a long time to fructify.

Governments can't do that; nor can politicians. Socially-minded people can, if they intend to do so. They have to follow the old saying: *Vaishnava janato teney kahiya jey peer parayi jani ray*. Only that person is the true devotee of God who can empathize with the other's pains. Kashmiri Muslims have to understand Hindu's pain. They have been driven away from their hearths and homes. Hindus have to appreciate Muslim's problem. Their religion is being misinterpreted. In their places of prayer Muslim gatherings are told that *kafirs* deserve to be hated.

The anti-*kafir* hatred has been assuming different forms at different times. It entered the governance system too. *Kafirs*, if they wanted to live peacefully in countries, with a majority of Muslim population, were required to pay punishment money, named *jazia*. The *jazia* system attained so much importance that in some countries the Muslim rulers did not allow the *kafirs* to change religion and become Muslims because, then, the state would not receive the *jazia*. And the *jazia* funds were a big source of income for the Muslim rulers.

The Kashmir issue is not political. It is religious — nay, communal. The two major communities of that forest-locked state have just to recollect the sayings of their saints of all times. When Islam started blossoming in Kashmir, Lall Ded could conjecture that there could arise differences between the two communities. She cautioned: *Shiv chhui thali thali rozaan. Tsi mo zaan Hyond ti Musalman*. Shiv

pervades everywhere. Don't discriminate between a Hindu and a Muslim.

Lall, a Hindu, criticized many Hindu practices. She did not criticise Islamic ones. She told a Hindu, who was carrying

a sheep to be sacrificed at a temple: "The sheep is providing you wool, which saves you from cold and is supplying you cloth which helps shield your shaming body parts. Why are you carrying a living animal to be sacrificed for an idol, which is an inanimate stone? Lall was ahead of her time. At that juncture, Hindus were not taking meals prepared by Muslims, but Lall did take. She, also, said: Meals are sacred, by whomever these are prepared.

Hazrat Noor-ud-din accorded the highest respect to Lall. In his words: *Ami Padman Poarichi Lalle, yem amreth gali, gali, chow. Shiv chhondun thaley, thaley. Sui me war ditto dayo*. This Lall of Padmanpora (present Pampore), who gulps nectar incessantly. She searched for Shiv everywhere. Oh God grant to me, also, a similar, boon. Noor-ud-Deen never worried for Lall searching for Shiv and not Allah. Like Lall, he criticised the customs practiced by only the followers of his own religion. In his words: *Peerah vcuchhmai tasbihi phiraan. Morshid wuchhethi dyutnai kham. She chini kheyan hisham hishai. Chai peer, telli tsoor kam?* I saw a Muslim peer counting beads. As soon as he found one of his followers coming that side, he exhaled a hard voice from his throat. After that, he consumed six plates of food — all of them full. If he be a spiritual guide, whom would you name a thief?

In Kashmir, hatred against Hindus began



in August, 1931, when the security forces, under the command of a Dogra maharaja, fired at an unruly mob. As a reaction to that, Kashmiri Muslims attacked Hindu houses and business establishments. The law-breaking mobs resorted to loot, violence and killing. The movement, then named, agitation, was spearheaded by Muslim Conference, headed by Sheikh Abdullah. Four years after these violent acts, the Sheikh happened to go to Gandhiji's ashram. There, he sat in a back row. Gandhiji had not seen the Sheikh, earlier, but the Mahatma was such a keen observer that he could recognize the Sheikh from the photographs that had appeared in newspapers in connection with the Sheikh spearheading the movement. Gandhi ji told the Sheikh to sit in the front row. Then, he asked him: How many Hindus were killed in the movement? The Sheikh replied: "Three, Sir." The Mahatma continued: That is too small a number when compared to the bad name your organisation attained. The sentence went deep into the Sheikh's psyche. He returned to Kashmir and told his comrades in the Muslim Conference that they could not attain success in the fight against the Dogra rule unless other religionists too were brought into their political set up. This led to the changing the name of the earlier Muslim Conference into National Conference. The new political set up took into its lap many thinking-type persons from Kashmiri Pandits, Jammu Dogras and Sikhs of both the divisions of the state. It had in it a good number of Communism-loving public men, writers, artists, artistes and poets. The logo of plough for the party was designed by Prem Nath Dhar. The party utilized the services of the socialist-minded progressive Hindus in the formation of its political bible - Naya Kashmir - and laws for providing land to the tiller without any compensation to the owner. That piece of legislation was

implemented only in Jammu and Kashmir and nowhere else in India or Pakistan. It carried a clause that the owner could retain his land if it was being cultivated by his kin. Kashmiri Hindus were mostly in the professions. Not many of them were land cultivators. So, their land was gone, without any compensation. Muslim land owners declared (in some cases falsely) that their land cultivators were their relatives. That helped them keep the land with them.

The National Conference aligned itself with the Indian National Conference. This generated an idea that both the parties were equally secular. That was not a fact. It was well explained by Dr. Rajendra Prasad in December, 1947. At that time that future President was a minister in the Nehru's cabinet. Addressing a huge public meeting, near Turkman Gate, Delhi, (a Muslim-majority area), he said: "When a Hindu joins the Congress Party, he forgets his religion. Congress appears to have become his religion. When a Muslim joins Congress, he is first a Muslim, then a Congressman." This idea proved a once-and-for-all dictum. As a minister in the Union Cabinet, Mr. Omer Abdulla said that he is a Muslim Indian. No Hindu says that he is a Hindu Indian. A Hindu is, simply, an Indian. If he is forced to divulge his religion, he will call himself an Indian Hindu. No Briton calls himself a Christian, or Jew Briton. He is, simply, a Briton or, in old times, a Britisher. No American says that he is a Jewish American. If he is forced to talk about his faith, he says he is an American Jew.

At the time when India attained independence, Nehru could not properly comprehend what the National Conference and the Sheikh wanted. He got swayed when in a huge public meeting, in Lal Chowk, Srinagar, the Sheikh told him: "*Man tuu shudam, tuu man shudee. Man tan shudam, tuu jaan shudi. Har kas no goyad bad azeen, tuu deegaram, man*

deegaree." I become you. You become me. I become the body. You become the soul. Let not others say later that you and I are different entities. Nehru had a weakness of not going deeper into details. That quality lay with the Mahatma.

Gandhi ji sent Dr. Ram Manohar Lal Lohia to Kashmir to ascertain what Sheikh Abdullah wanted. When Lohia returned he told Gandhiji that the Sheikh wanted J & K to be as much a part of India, as any other state was. Gandhiji asked him: For how many days were you in Kashmir? Lohia replied: For two days. The Mahatma added: Go again and stay there for a week. Lohia did accordingly. When he came back, second time, and informed Gandhiji, about the aspirations of the Sheikh, Lohia said: "Sir the Sheikh wants independence for his state."

Different religionists have different weaknesses. A Hindu would like to show that he is a top-class intellectual. A Muslim would like to specialize in double-speaking. This double-speech system flourished with the passage of time. Leaders of the ruling party of Jammu and Kashmir would speak in three languages. In the country, outside J & K, they became nationalists, in the Jammu division, lovers of the state and in Kashmir communalists. That is the trouble why we cannot attain brotherly relations between different religious communities soon.

The religious dichotomy has been ingrained in the Kashmiri youngsters. It is mostly done in the premises that were raised for offering prayers to our creator. Clearing the minds of the communal hatred will take a long time. It could be of a generation. That is 35 years. It needs to be explained to the people that no religion is perfect, nor complete. Some statements, made in religious texts, have lost their value. We have to accept Harold Laski's idea, which he explained in *Grammar of Politics*, that the dead have no right to guide the living. For example Hindu shastras say

that if we do a good turn to some one, he, too, will do a good turn to us. This theory is unscientific. He will not return our action, or our favour, but what is in his nature. We may feed a snake for ten years, but it is in his nature that when he gets a chance he will bite us. Similarly, Judaism, Islam and Christianity are opposed to homosexuality. At places this sexual relationship is described as a disease; at others a crime. Some religious texts prescribe that homos deserve to be killed by stoning. However, scientific research shows that it is neither a disease, nor a crime. It is, something, natural and seven per cent of the human beings are homos. This scientific theory has been accepted by most of the progressive countries of the world. The Supreme Court of India, too, has declared that consensual sex between two adults of the same sex is not a crime. A tragedy, in this regard, is that while citizens of all the Indian states will benefit from this Supreme Court ruling, but people of J & K will not. The ruling does not apply to that state although Jammu and Kashmir has as many as 8,40,000 homos.

Religion is losing its grip in the world; but communalism is prospering. One third countries of the world are experiencing religious hatred. Social leaders of different faiths have to take pains to explain to the masses, more so to the youngsters, that religious hatred doesn't pay much, but harms a lot. Political leaders cannot do that. They have to seek votes. Seeking votes and speaking truth cannot, always, go together.

Change of heart will take time; may be a generation's. That is 35 years; but there is no substitute, if we seek peace and progress for followers of all faiths.

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RECLAIMING THE HUMANISTIC VALUES OF KASHMIR

Arun Wakhlu

1. Context:

The State of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) is one of the most beautiful and abundantly endowed places on earth. The people of J&K are extremely gracious, compassionate, hospitable and loving. They are also intrinsically peace loving and non-violent. Despite the recent troubles, most people yearn for peace and prosperity. There is a deep yearning for reclaiming the values of Kashmiriyat/ Humanism for restoring the state to its pristine glory.

The glory of Jammu and Kashmir is currently overshadowed. To use a metaphor, we visualize all the qualities that Kashmir stands for as the sun. Currently, this sun of ease, grace, abundance and immense natural beauty has been overshadowed by the clouds of corruption, apathy, depression, drug addiction and a widespread feeling of helplessness and hopelessness amongst the adult population. Despite the turmoil, it is a joy to see the innocent smiles and cheerfulness of most children. The enthusiasm and liveliness of children perhaps points to possible pathways to healing Kashmir.

2. Humanism

Before we discuss how to reclaim the humanistic values of Kashmir, let's spend a few moments of what Humanism is.

Humanism is a philosophical and ethical stance that emphasizes the value and agency of human beings, individually and collectively, and generally prefers critical thinking and evidence (rationalism and empiricism) over acceptance of dogma or superstition.

In modern times, humanist movements were typically non-religious movements

aligned with secularism. Today, humanism typically refers to a nontheistic life stance centred on human agency and looking to science rather than revelation from a supernatural source to understand the world. Humanism aims at free inquiry, separation of religion and state, the ideal of freedom, ethics based on critical intelligence, religious scepticism, the use of reason, science and technology for evolution and education.

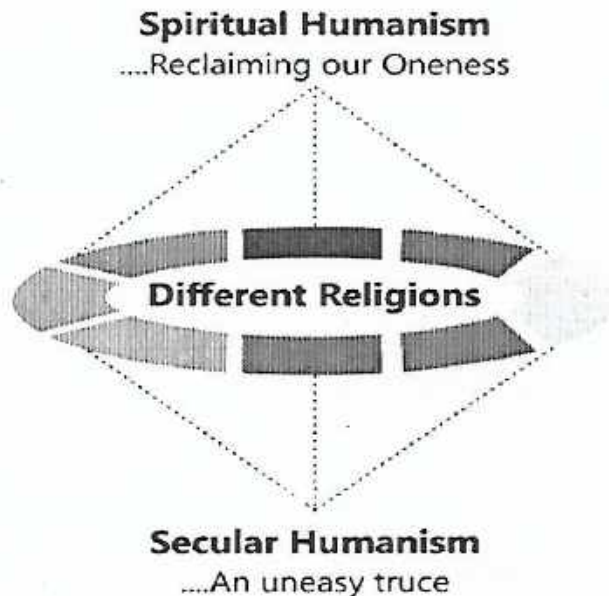


In the pursuit of this kind of lop sided humanism, there is the danger of denying the emotional and spiritual core of life. How would humanists describe the beauty of a rose? How would they create the fragrance and silence of a pine forest, or the miraculous process that makes a flower bloom?

In missing these elements out, Humanism does not seem to recognise the one life force that unifies everyone and everything in sacred wholeness. Our current obsession with secularism seems to have only led to a jousting and uneasy truce between different religions. This is hardly conducive to a stable and thriving harmony. There is a need for a fresh perspective.

All religions can be seen like windows in a house opening out onto the same sky. This is the common sky of unity, freedom, integrity, compassion, gratitude, service, love, appreciation, peace and the well-being of all. It is only when our humanism recognises and owns the transcendental unity of a spiritual perspective that it can become a force of healing and glorious thriving. When the people of Kashmir begin to live out these values of spiritual

humanism, Kashmir can reclaim its lost glory. Another name for Spiritual Humanism is *Kashmiriyat*. It is our firm belief that in reclaiming our spiritual humanism / *Kashmiriyat*, Jammu and Kashmir can once again become a light house for the whole world.



3. What's happening in Kashmir?

Before we look at how *Kashmiriyat* can be reclaimed, let's see what is actually happening on the ground (as in 2018). What I will share below is based on over 30 years of observation of the situation. It draws upon detailed conversations with a whole cross-section of people: common men and women, children, shopkeepers, taxi drivers, autorickhaw drivers, shikara boatmen, students, activists in NGOs, people in Pakistan, former militants, politicians, police constables and current and former ministers. Here are some insights gleaned from the above conversations:

There is a strong yearning in the people of Kashmir for freedom. They want the freedom to speak up freely with total safety and security, to tell the truth as it is, to walk freely without being harassed and seen as a terrorist. They want the freedom

to be treated with dignity and not to be lumped together with trouble makers, the freedom to receive excellent, responsible and ethical governance.

Kashmiris want the freedom to express themselves aesthetically and artistically, to wear what they like without anyone coercing them to wear something else, the freedom to pursue studies peacefully, the freedom to think rationally without being brainwashed, the freedom to debate and dialogue on contentious issues (like why men also should not wear the *Hijab* or equivalent for the very reasons that women are asked to wear them) and the freedom to keep shops open and earn a decent livelihood. They crave for the freedom from stink and garbage in the streets, freedom from drugs being plied to unwitting youth and the freedom to get good health care without paying through the nose. This is the real *Azadi* that people are really looking for.

It is clear that the turmoil in Kashmir has its roots in the absence of ethical and compassionate thinking and action amongst a large majority of the populations including those who govern the state. A culture of corruption, selfishness and half-truths abound. This is made worse by the absence of democratic spaces for open, heartfelt and honest conversations which could mitigate the falsehoods and lies that have infiltrated the minds of many people.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn has remarked that all violence is born from untruths and lies. He also said of violence:

"Violence, less and less embarrassed by the limits imposed by centuries of lawfulness, is brazenly and victoriously striding across the whole world, unconcerned that its infertility has been demonstrated and proved many times in history."

Lies, doctored news, rumours, brainwashing and deliberately planted distortions feed into a growing vicious circle

of violence. Virulent distortions and propaganda feed into inflaming passions, the spilling out of children, women and youth on to the streets, protection of criminals from the army, death of innocent people in cross-fire, more *hartals* (forced shutdowns of business) and emotionally charged funerals, more rage, more loss of business, and growing hatred. The vicious circle of lies, violence and suffering continues in this way.

Adding to this tragic drama is the negative role of the media. An appreciative look at Jammu and Kashmir shows that many good things are happening in the state. In two workshops on "Collaborating for Compassion" facilitated for hundred Leaders, Educators, NGO Activists, Students, Teachers, Media People and Govt. Officials in Srinagar on the 5th and 6th of October 2018, we found a huge out pouring of appreciation and gratitude. All felt that the People of Jammu and Kashmir are kind, generous, talented, creative, hospitable, spiritual, loving and intrinsically compassionate. Seeing Jammu and Kashmir with eyes of Appreciation and Gratitude, we were all overwhelmed by how much the Almighty has bestowed on the state. I have met many tourists travelling to J&K who come back extremely happy and surprised to find that things are different from what the media focusses on. The media often revels in pointing their camera on "what is going wrong in the valley". Fake NGOs and manipulative politicians add to this situation by selective reporting and distortions. The National Media sees only the dark side of what is happening in Kashmir - thanks to the focus of media channels on the sensational and negative. The impression gained in the rest of the world is the untruth that "Kashmir is burning". This suits all those who would like to see the violence and corruption continuing. Manipulating negative and powerless people who have lost a sense of hope, pride and dignity is easy. That's why all manipulators and vested interests

would like to see people cut off from the roots of Positivity and Hope.

The illusion of powerlessness is another strong unconscious conditioning. While there has been widespread suffering all around, a large part of the population in Kashmir is caught up in blaming and whining. This is the classic "victim stance" based on the narrative that it is the "others" who are doing things to us. By the same token it is always someone else, who has to save us.

While there has been immense suffering on all side, holding onto a Victim Mindset, and holding onto hatred and resentment is like nursing a burning piece of coal in your hands so that you can throw it on the "enemy". The levels of depression, psychosomatic disorders and stress related diseases have shot up in the past 30 years. And all that most leaders are doing is blaming someone!

Take a look at the table below. It looks at two dimensions of action (Passive and Active) and two of thinking (Positive and Negative). The four combinations that arise are 1) Passive Positive, 2) Active Positive, 3) Passive Negative and 4) Active Negative. If the whole population of J&K is divided into these four quadrants, we will find that the active negative elements are miniscule.(Probably 1-2%). The problem is that around 85% of the population is well meaning but Passive. Which quadrant would you put yourself in?

	Passive Inertia, No Action	Active Taking Joyful Action Now
Positive (Life affirming Compassionate)	Good, Well-meaning people, who don't do anything. 1	Compassionate and Active people who collaborate and act to make a difference. 2
Negative (Life destroying Violent)	Blaming, Moaning and Waiting people caught up in hopelessness and helplessness. 3	A small percentage of active evil doers: selfish people who are out of touch with their own goodness, the well being of others and with Life as a whole. 4

In exactly the same way, between India and Pakistan - it is only a small percentage of people that are perpetuating the hatred and violence. From personal experience and based on my conversations, I can confidently say that the majority of the populations on both sides would like Peace and Security for their children and friendship between the two nations. Again the reason why nothing is happening is because 85% of the well-meaning population on both sides is passive and not taking any positive actions.

4. What steps can we take to reclaim our lost glory?

It is now time for the People of Jammu and Kashmir to rise together to end the years of tragic suffering and reclaim our Joy, Peace and Abundance. For this we will need to be guided by the values of Spiritual Humanism/Kashmiriyat which is our greatest strength.

Below, a few steps have been listed which point towards how we can reclaim the glory that is Kashmir:

Awakening to Oneness:

A tiny light, when switched on, can dispel years of darkness in a room. Our limited minds, caught up with the past and worried about the future, have not been able to give us any fresh new ideas when it comes to healing Kashmir. The creative impulses of the Almighty can, however, show the way, provided we listen! When we listen to the Guidance of Love, Compassion, Allah, Shiva, our Inner Voice, in the silence of our Hearts, we will be guided on the right path. We will know what is good for us, good for others and also good for the future of our children and grandchildren. It is time for us to all remember what Ma Laleshwari has said:

Shiv chuy thalithalirozan,

Mo zanHyond tai Musalman;

Truk ay chuk pan panunprazanav,

Soy chaysahibaszanizyan.

(Shiv lives everywhere and in everyone;

Drop the illusion of "Hindu" and "Musalman".

If you are clever, discover who you really are;

That is knowing Shiv intimately as your own Self.)

God is neither Hindu, nor Muslim, nor Jew, nor Buddhist, nor Christian, nor Jain, nor Zoroastrian. The Infinite, Eternal Spirit of Love defies any classification that man's petty mind can come up with. The Infinite Silent Witnessing Awareness that created you and me as living, breathing, creative beings that we are, cannot be reduced to doctrines, dogmas, rituals and ceremonies. We can be guided towards creative and collaborative action if we listen to the love in our hearts.

The Silent Witnessing Awareness is the same as *Shiva, Wahe Guru* and *Allah*. There is no difference. It is who you are now, your inner most I Am (SWA). The funny thing is that you do not have to do anything to Be it. You already are that Infinite Peace and Love. You just need to remember it (*Zikr, Sumiran*). A good way to do that is to be quite and abide in the Silence of your Heart. If you still need a method, just witness your breath. With the in breath remember *So*, and the out breath *Hum*. Or with the in breath *All*, and the out breath *Ah*. Similarly, you could use the words *Je Sus*, or *Gu Ru*. This is the *Sahaz Wath* (Effortless Path) of Ma Laleshwari and Sant Kabir.

Choosing Positive and Creative Action:

Inspired by a remembrance of who we really are, the next step is Creative Action. An ounce of creative action is better than mountains of rhetoric and blaming. We have to drop the blame game and act together. It is time for all of us to introspect, see where we have gone wrong, and make amends. As Ghalib has said very eloquently:

"Umar bhar Ghalib yahi bhool karta raha;
Dhool chehre pe thi, aur aina saaf karta
raha"

(My whole life I kept making the same
mistake Ghalib,

the dust was on my face and I kept
polishing the mirror)

Focusing on inspired and collective action
is better than cursing the darkness.

Shikwa-e-zulmat-e-shab se to behtar tha;
Apne hisse ki koi shama jalate jaate

(How much better it would have been if,
instead of going on cursing the dark of the
evening,

we had lit the candle that was within our
hands to light...)

An important area of choice and freedom
that we all have, is the freedom to choose
our thoughts: Thoughts that bring hope,
strength, appreciation, gratitude and a
vision of a bright future for all. We can all
choose to acknowledge the past, forgive and
forge a new story. If we listen to our heart,
we will know what creative and positive
actions to take.

Compassionate Conversations:

There is a dire need for spaces for people
to talk to each other freely. When safe
spaces for open, heartfelt conversations are
created, and we are free to discuss things
that we truly care about, the collective
genius of people for positive action is
liberated. Untruths, based on partially
presented data or biased perspectives are
quelled, lies dismantled and the truth of
understanding the whole situation
emerges. Spaces for us to listen
empathetically to each other, to understand
the grief and impact of violence with
compassion, and to set the tone for healing
and forgiveness between different commu-
nities affected by the turmoil are needed.
This is the first step for building trust.
Holding on to hatred, fear, misperceptions
and untruths will only aggravate the
viscious circles of violence referred to

earlier in this article. It is possible to also
hold conversations between the army,
police, concerned citizens and leaders who
care about the well-being of all. Again,
mutual trust and understanding will pave
the way for positive actions.

Conversational tools and processes like
Appreciative Inquiry, Open Space
Technology and Word Café are available to
create such space for such compassionate
conversations. Good leaders/facilitators
would also have to be developed to make
this happen.

Collective Leadership

A transformation of the situation will call
for Leaders inspired by the Almighty to
stand up and make a difference. These
leaders would be the *Jugnus* (Fireflies who
keep their lights shining despite the
surrounding darkness) equipped with a
strong faith in God they would be people
choosing to walk the universal path of
Syezar, Pazar and Shwojar (Simplicity,
Honesty and Purity, as laid out by the sage
BhagwanGopinath). They would have
compassion for the suffering of people, be
skilled in the tools of Participatory
Leadership and collaborate with other
Jugnus to take the work of transformation
further.

All *Jugnus* will need to connect with
each other, have heartfelt and open
conversations and co-create ways forward.
The ensuing gradual transformation of the
situation and healing of the social fabric
affected by the *Jugnus* can be likened to
two metaphors:

1. A little bit of yogurt culture being put
into a pot of milk to transform the whole
pot into yogurt; and
2. Imaginal cells in a butterfly who clump
together within the caterpillar to slowly
metamorphose it into a butterfly.

Such *Jugnus* would have to be deeply
centred in their inner most essence, have
faith in the almighty, A recent special issue
of the travel magazine Condé Nast,
focussing on Jammu and Kashmir listed

out many young, educated and talented young people from J&K who are making a positive difference. These are all examples of *Jugnus* who can provide the collective leadership we need.

As we become more whole, a natural sense of responsibility born out of compassion and love arises in us.

As His Holiness the Dalai Lama puts it:

"To meet the challenges of our times, I believe that humanity must develop a greater sense of universal responsibility. Each of us must learn to work not just for our own individual self, family or nation, but for the benefit of all mankind."

Today all of us are so interdependent, so closely interconnected with each other, that with a sense of universal responsibility, a feeling of universal brotherhood and sisterhood, and an understanding and belief that we really are a part of one big human family, we can hope to overcome the downward spiral – and together take actions to bring about peace and prosperity in Jammu and Kashmir.

As more of us awaken to the infinite love and compassion that abounds at our core, we will consciously choose thoughts, words and action that inspire and initiate positive and creative actions. Art from the Heart will emerge as a spontaneous expression of our deep longing for peace and true *Azadi*. As awakened *Jugnus* and Artists start connecting, conversing and co-creating, healing and fresh solutions will emerge from a foundation for free thought and dialogue.

Given the intrinsic goodness of the people of Kashmir, our ingrained values of Kashmiriyat, we can become a lighthouse for the world.

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If you would like to be a part of the movement to heal J&K, drop a line to the author at arun.wakhlu@pragatileadership.com. Comments are welcome too.

THE AGONY OF ARTICLE 370

Maharaj Kaul

The notoriety of Article 370, the legal framework that connects India with Jammu and Kashmir State (J&K) as a nation, has grown to a mythic level for its political implications both among its vested players and its casual observers.

This article attempts to demythologize Article 370 and bring it down to its functional basis, which was the original intent of its framers. But to do that one has to go to the birth and evolution of the Kashmir Problem, to engage in its details, as the devil lies there.

When Britain decided in June, 1947 to leave India the problem of the latter's effective survival after its exit from the scene became a gnawing anxiety for it, as India had remained a fragmented fabric throughout its deep history. But the lines of the pattern of new India were already inscrutably crystallizing. A lot of Indian Muslims had already decided to have their own space as far back as early twentieth century. The ongoing accelerating Indian freedom movement, comprising both Hindus and Muslims, to free India from the yoke of Britain, did not bring the two closer, but put them on divergent goals of achieving separate nationalities, Indian and Pakistani. Following historical outline aims at providing an experience of the evolution of Article 370, which is more meaningful than just learning its dry final facts.

Instrument of Accession

Instrument of Accession (IOA) was a legal instrument which Britain first created in Government of India Act 1935 for precisely establishing its relationship with the Princely States. But when Britain decided to leave India in June 1947 (Indian Independence Act 1947), it was decided by

Britain, Indian National Congress, and Muslim League that IOA should be used to facilitate the incorporation of the Princely States in the new nations of India and Pakistan, which were called dominions at the point of their independences in 1947, before they made their constitutions and fully became republics, breaking completely free of the British yoke.

By 1947 India under Britain was divided into British India and Princely States. While the former was directly under the British government the latter were 578 states, basically ruled by either their princes or their controllers, but having a subsidiary alliance relationship of suzerainty or paramountcy with Britain. Typically, Britain controlled their defense, foreign affairs, and communications. British India had 54% of India's area and 77% of its population. The territories under British India were called provinces but those under the princes were called states.

By early 1947 it was well established which provinces of British India will the new dominions of India and Pakistan incorporate. Although almost all the princely states had also decided which new dominions they will join but at the time of the independence of India and Pakistan, August 15 and 14, 1947 respectively, a few states' incorporation took up to several years.

The significant situations were that of Hyderabad, Junagarh, and Jammu and Kashmir. While the Instrument of Accession for the Princely States was set up for the princes to decide which new dominion they wanted to join but the reality of the religious composition of the three mentioned states, where the religious orientations of the princes and their subjects differed, forced a change in

it. The amendment, accepted by all the three parties, Britain, Indian National Congress, and Muslim League, spelled that in case of differing religious orientations between a prince and his subjects, the will of the subjects would prevail in choosing which of the two dominions they would join. In case of Junagarh, where the prince created a lot of difficulty in following the amendment, India prevailed in letting its Hindu majority to join it. In case of Hyderabad the situation was more complicated as Nizam wanted Hyderabad to be an independent nation, though his Hindu-majority subjects wanted to join India. India did not want to have a foreign nation in its middle, so it forced Hyderabad to join it.

Since Maharaja Hari Singh of J&K harbored a deep ambition to make his state an independent nation, a Switzerland of the East, he would not choose one of the two dominions he would like to join even after their formation on August 14 and August 15, 1947. He asked for a Standstill Agreement to have more time to decide from the two entities, which Pakistan granted but India did not respond to. As India did not have any cards to play with, as Maharaja leaned for independence and the majority of his subjects were Muslims, it did not do anything to capture J&K. As time ticked on Pakistan's greed to acquire J&K swelled, seeing Maharaja's indecisiveness and India's lack of hunger to get it. On October 22, 1947 it attacked J&K, its army camouflaged by a tribal militia, giving an appearance of their revolt against Maharaja's government over some grievances. Maharaja had a miniscule army which evaporated momentarily. As the invaders came closer to Srinagar, Maharaja panicked. He sent an SOS to Governor General of India, Mountbatten, on October 25, 1947 to help him save his countrymen and himself. Mountbatten recommended to the newly founded Indian government that Maharaja should be

helped, but only after he accepted the IOA. Indian government accepted his advice and Maharaja signed the IOA on October 26, in Jammu, where he had run after invaders closed on him in Srinagar. The following day, October 27, Mountbatten, on behalf of India, accepted it. But it is one of the errors of history that Kashmir's accession to India is celebrated on October 26, while it was consummated on October 27, when Mountbatten signed it into law.

But one item in the approval of the IOA, not mentioned above, influenced the subsequent history of J&K-India relationship. While India accepted Maharaja's IOA, it added a rider condition to it, which was conveyed in the approval letter Mountbatten attached to it. That condition is the following:

"....it is my Government's wish that, as soon as law and order have been restored in Kashmir and her soiled cleared of the invader, the question of the State's accession should be settled by reference to the people."

What it meant was that the accession of J&K to India would only be completed after the will of its people about the accession is determined. India did this to be consistent with the principle it used in incorporating Junagarh and Hyderabad. Also, because J&K was under an invasion, people's will could only be properly known when it was cleared. It did not specify how that will could be determined. But it is well known that there are a few ways to do that: plebiscite, elections, through an empowered panel. But popular notion among the people, politicians, and the press was that it would be done through a plebiscite.

There was a second element in IOA that was also significant, though not as much as the first one. It was the Clause 7 Maharaja added to the standard IOA:

"Nothing in this Instrument shall be deemed to commit me in any way to

acceptance of any future constitution of India or to fetter my discretion to enter into arrangements with the Government of India under any such future constitution."

It meant that Maharaja was not obligated to accept any future changes in the constitution of India which it might think applicable to his state. Only foreign affairs, defense, and communications were under the union government but all other matters were under the state government.

India's war with Pakistan in defense of Kashmir went on through 1948, but on January 1, 1948, India went to U.N. to plead for forcing out of the invader, a ceasefire, and a plebiscite. Pakistan accepted the ceasefire, which took effect on January 1, 1949. But it took U.N. sometime to investigate the Pakistani attack. Then on April 21, 1948, under U.N. Security Council Resolution 47, in Chapter VI jurisdiction, it asked both the countries to accept certain conditions before a plebiscite was conducted. Because Pakistan would not fulfill U.N. conditions, therefore, the plebiscite was never conducted. U.N. could not enforce its resolution because its Chapter VI status was non-binding. Later, U.N. declared that since the demographics in J&K had changed significantly since the Pakistani attack in 1947, it was unfeasible to conduct the plebiscite. In 2003, President Musharraf of Pakistan announced that Pakistan will drop the demand of a U.N. resolution on Kashmir Problem. In November, 2010, U.N. announced that it had dropped J&K among the disputed territories in the world.

1. Outside the U.N. Nehru twice offered Jinnah a plebiscite but he declined it, because he believed Pakistan would lose it. One of the things Pakistan relied on in its attack on Kashmir was the support of Kashmiri Muslims (KMs). But it never received that support. Mountbatten, in 1948, at the end of

his term as the Governor General of India, with the agreement of India, offered Pakistan a division of Kashmir, which it rejected. Then in 1954, during Pakistan's Prime Minister Mohammed Ali's visit to India, Nehru offered him a plebiscite. Ali rejected it because he insisted that General Nimitz, then U.S. representative to U.N., be the plebiscite in-charge, which Nehru did not agree to, as he wanted someone from a smaller nation for that job. This was the last time India offered Pakistan a plebiscite. But plebiscite in J&K was put to death by its Constitution when it declared in Article 3(Part II): *J&K is and shall be an integral part of the Union of India.* Since Musharraf's time Pakistan has given up on the plebiscite to solve its claim on Kashmir. Its new thinking is that since Kashmir has Muslims as its majority, it ought to be with it. In the last decade majority of Kashmiri Muslims, about 95%, have moved away from joining Pakistan, instead they want to be an independent nation.

Constitution of India

There was a significant shortcoming in the newly formed dominions on account of a lack of a constitution to govern by. It was decided by all parties that India Act of 1935 would serve as a temporary constitution until new constitutions were framed. But it was done after some revisions to it, and served under Indian Independence Act of 1947, as a temporary constitution of India until Jan, 25, 1950, when on the following day, Jan. 26, India became a republic under its own constitution.

In India the work on the framing of a new constitution started right at its independence. The constitution had to incorporate in its framework broadly two areas: Union government and the Princely States. Since the latter were incorporated in the Union on a voluntary basis, it was

Union's obligation to ask them if they would accept the union constitution fully or of if they would like some amendments to be made to it. If they wanted the latter, they were asked to send their representatives to the Indian Constitution Assembly or to make their own constitution assemblies to create the amendments. Most of them were unable to make the assemblies in time. But a few of them did: Saurashtra Union, Travancore-Cochin, and Mysore. All the suggested amendments were accepted by the Union. Eventually, all the States accepted the Union constitution, except J&K, which wanted to have its own constitution. India had no choice but to accept it.

Article 370

In May 1949, the rulers of all the states agreed to accept the finalized Union constitution, with the exception of J&K, which fell in a separate category altogether.

J&K negotiated its constitutional relationship with the Union from May through October, 1949. It was agreed upon that it would set up its own constitutional assembly to frame its constitution. While it would take time to get that done, meanwhile, a temporary framework was created. That was called Article 370, which during its drafting was called Article 306A. It is Part XXI of the Indian Constitution, under Temporary, Transitional, and Special Provisions.

Nehru appointed a minister in his cabinet, without portfolio, Gopaldaswami Iyyengar, especially to frame Article 370. Iyyengar had been a Prime Minister of J&K for six years and, also, a Dewan. So, he was considered eminently qualified for the job.

Article 370 was debated in the Indian Constitutional Assembly in the presence of the five representatives from J&K: Sheikh Abdullah, Mirza Afzal Beg, Maulana Massoodi, and Moti Ram Baigra. Some of

them had some disagreements initially with it but eventually they were taken care of. On October 17, 1949, Article 370 was unanimously approved by the Constitutional Assembly of India. On November 25, 1949, Karan Singh, acting as the Regent of J&K signed it. And on January 26, 1950 President of India, Rajendar Prasad, signed it into law.

Salient Points of Article 370

1. It fully incorporates I.O.A., notably its clause of J&K's accession to India. (Article 1,b,i)
2. Union Parliament can only make laws for J&K which fall within the three spheres of Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Communications, as stipulated by IOA. (Article 1, b, i)
3. But because IOA did not give details of which items in the Union and Concurrent List covered the three spheres, a mechanism of establishing them was set up. President of India in *consultation* with the J&K Government can do it. (Article 1, b, i)
4. Also, the same mechanism will deal with matters beyond the three spheres, if India thought that they were needed for good governance, with *concurrence* of J&K Government. (Article 1, b, ii)
5. Since J&K Government was not fully developed by January 26, 1950, Maharaja of J&K, in *consultation* with its Council of Ministers, *for the time being*, was considered the Government of the State. There were no Legislative Assembly and Council of Ministers at that time, only thing there was Maharaja's Proclamation of March 5, 1948 to form a constitutional government. It was expected that when they were formed, along with the J&K Constitution, then the final Government of the State would be established. This clause was put as Explanation in Article 370, which made Sheikh Abdullah

unhappy, and has figured in Supreme Court's deliberation on Article 370. (Explanation)

6. If laws outside the three spheres of IOA are created, as indicated in Item 4 above, before the Constitutional Assembly is commissioned, then they will be subjected to its review before they are considered final. J&K Legislative Assembly could only give a *provisional* approval to them meanwhile. (Article 2)
7. President may declare Article 370 *void*, modify it, may make exceptions to it, or change dates of its or its clauses' applicability, if recommended by the J&K Constitution Assembly. (Article 3)

J&K Constitution

Maharaja's Proclamation of March 5, 1948 declared that J&K would have a constitutional government. Which implied that a new constitution would be created. The extant laws were not set up in a constitutional framework to meet the situation flowing from IOA.

But Maharaja by his proclamation on June 9, 1949, transferred all his powers over the government to his son, Karan Singh, because of his stated reason of health. He left J&K soon after, never to return.

Karan Singh made a proclamation on May 1, 1951 to convene J&K Constitutional Assembly. In it he also cited some items in the original proclamation by his father on the subject to be not able to meet the present situation.

J&K Constitution Assembly was set up on October 31, 1951 by J&K Legislative Assembly. It went through rigorous steps of establishing the basic principles of the future constitution and covered significant matters affecting its citizens and its relationship with India.

The correspondence on the negotiations on the constitution's framework and some of

its significant items among Nehru, Abdullah, Ayyangar, Patel, and other national and state leaders is imbued with passion and a sense of high purpose. Especially, passionate and poignant are letters between Abdullah and Nehru. The former was a nitpicker but latter wanted the integration of J&K and India to be consummated fast, leaving the details to be settled later. Abdullah had come to believe by his arrest on Aug. 9, 1953 that Indian government was not going to be honest in giving J&K the full extent of autonomy it owed to it by virtue of Article 370. Though he trusted Nehru but he was not sure about other Indian leaders. By his exit from the Constitutional Assembly it lost its most demanding leader. These negotiations between Indian and J&K leaders over the content of J&K's constitution were called Delhi Agreement. They were just negotiations, they lacked legal authority.

J&K Constitutional Assembly was dispersed on November 17, 1956 and was dissolved on January 25, 1957. President of India, by his Order on January 26, 1957, made it effective.

Salient Point of J&K's Constitution

Note: There have been 29 amendments made to J&K Constitution since its inception on Jan. 26, 1957.

2. Preamble: J&K has acceded to India on Oct. 26, 1947.
3. Article 3(Part II): J&K is and shall be an integral part of the Union of India.
4. Article 4(Part II): J&K territories are those which were under the Ruler of the State on Aug. 15, 1947.
5. Article 5(Part II): The executive and legislative power of the State to extends to all matters except those with respect to which Parliament has powers to make laws for the State under provisions of the Constitution of India.
6. Article 147(Part 12): No bill shall be introduced or moved in State

Legislative assembly to amend or change the above indicated Articles 3 and 5, which relate to J&K's relationship with India.

7. Also, if J&K Assembly wants to make changes to some aspects of the institutions of Governor and Election Commission, then it needs President's assent for them to come into effect.
8. J&K has its own flag but it can only be flown with deference to the Indian national flag.
9. Article 48(Part VI): Defines Pakistan administered Kashmir as "Pakistan Occupied Territory" and reserves 24 Assembly seats for it, which remain inoperative till the territory is handed over to J&K.
10. India has no power to declare financial emergency under Article 360 in the State. Only the State can initiate such an emergency.
11. India can declare security emergency in the State only in case of war or external threat, but not on account of State's internal disturbance, unless State asks for it. Under certain conditions, India can impose Governor's rule.
12. Matters related to Defense, Foreign Relations, Finance, and Communications are directly under the jurisdiction of India.
13. Head of State is the Governor, who is appointed by President, for five years at a time, and serves under his pleasure.
14. Citizens of India who do not qualify to be Permanent Residents of the State do not have a right acquire property there.

Article 35A

This article was made part of Indian Constitution by a Presidential Order in 1954. It protects J&K's Permanent Resident and other state laws above those

of the rights of any other citizen of India. Like an Indian citizens outside J&K cannot own property there and cannot claim state government jobs and other protections meant solely for J&K citizens. This article was incorporated in the Indian Constitution without a debate. Because of these matters it is considered to be a dark spot in India's Constitution and is being challenged in the Supreme Court. It was a gift given by India to J&K to make its accession to India strong.

Life after Article 370 and J&K Constitution

Article 370 stipulated that J&K Constitutional Assembly could declare it to be inoperative or be operative with such exceptions and modifications and from such date as it may specify. But it did not. So, it became permanent. But why is it still called "temporary, transitional, and special" under Part XXI of Indian Constitution? It is because it helps India to impose new legislation for J&K through Article 370, giving an appearance that the integration between India and J&K is still incomplete due to the history of latter's accession to India.

Ninety-four of the ninety-seven entries in the Union List were extended to J&K, as were 260 of the 395 Articles of the Indian Constitution from 1954 to 1994 by Presidential Orders made under article 370. The validity of these orders have been upheld by the Supreme Court of India. Its rationale has been that even though the J&K Constitutional Assembly was dissolved on Jan. 25, 1957, India could make new laws for the State with the concurrence of its government. This defies in the face of Article 370, which mandates that new laws have to be concurred by the Constitutional Assembly. So, logically speaking if the Assembly ceases to exist, then no new laws can be made for J&K. But who are we to challenge the Supreme Court, it makes the laws of the land.

J&K's Constitution was overridden by India in the following matters:

1. J&K had the Head of State, Sadar-i-Riyast, elected by its Legislative Assembly. Karan Singh became the first such head in 1952. But India got it changed to Governor, appointed by President, on November 24, 1966, after the State Constitution was amended on April 10, 1965, by the use of the Sixth Amendment, in violation of the Section 147 of the State Constitution.
2. India amended State's constitution debarring the state legislature from amending matters with respect to Governor, Election Commission, and the composition of the State Upper House (Legislative Council).

J&K's political leaders and people believe that India has committed a fraud by passing laws beyond the dissolution date of its Constitutional Assembly but latter believes that it has done so by the permission of Article 370, which has been upheld by the Supreme Court. So this erosion of Article 370 is very much affecting the relationship between the two. The former is calling for going back to pre-1953 level of J&K's autonomy.

Concluding Thoughts on Article 370

Article 370 is not the devil behind Kashmiri Muslims' political insurgency in Kashmir but it is a catalyst for that. If it were not there the place would have been quieter and more cooperative with the center. Engendering more private businesses in J&K and, therefore, more jobs for the unemployed youth. The supreme irony is that Kashmiri Muslims do not know the extent of harm they are doing to themselves. By living in a permanent state of anarchy, Kashmiri Muslims are destroying their economic growth and peace of mind.

Kashmiri Muslims by nature are slothful. Their only expression of energy is in

talking, and there are no facts so sacred for them that they cannot twist them into figments of their imagination to protect their ego, past inhuman actions, and Islam. They hounded out innocent Kashmiri Pandits in 1990, who were miniscule and a harmless community living with them ever since the advent of Islam in Kashmir in 1339. The original inhabitants of Kashmir were Pandits, dating back to 5,200 years.

The concept of plebiscite to determine the political status of J&K, which originated in India asking for it in IOA in 1947, was put to death when J&K settled the matter by providing in its constitution, in Article 3, in 1957, that it was an integral part of India. Also, the constitution forbids Article 3 to be amended.

Article 370 stands like a sword of Damocles for the center, for its autonomy privileges to Kashmiri Muslims is potent with separatism, alliance with Pakistan, and turning Kashmir into a Middle East-like Islamic state, discouraging Hindus to travel there, let alone living there. This is all the more painful because India is the largest democratically secular nation in the world.

The supreme irony is that Kashmir cannot be independent as it does not have the economic and military resources for that. Within weeks after the hypothetical independence of Kashmir, Pakistan will capture it, and Kashmiri Muslims will be rendered second-class citizens. Even independence overseen by U.N. will not prevent Pakistan infiltrating to control reins in Kashmir. Sensible Muslims know that but they want to keep the anarchy alive in Kashmir as it helps them maintain their political power, financial resources, and ego.

India cannot let go of Kashmir because first of all it has done nothing illegal and immoral in holding on to it. It was not India that captured Kashmir but it was Kashmir that asked for its help when Pakistan

attacked it in 1947. Ceding Kashmir to its arch enemy will invite huge security problem for India. It means Pakistan will be nearer to New Delhi by about 500 miles in north. Indian military will strongly advise against it and Indian Parliament will never approve it.

What Should India Do About Article 370?

What should we do about Article 370? First of all, it was a necessary legal instrument to let India and J&K live together. A lot of effort and cool thinking went into its formulation. Why it failed was because J&K political leaders promoted a lot of distrust between India and J&K, which they attributed to Indian manipulation to undercut it. This led to a permanent state of anarchy in J&K, which has suffocated its political, economic, and cultural progress.

Although India can keep on effecting legal changes in J&K through the mechanism embedded in Article 370, as it has done since January 26, 1950, when it was born, but that cannot give it a peace of mind, as the continuous political turbulence in Kashmir is politically unsettling to India. Kashmir is a bomb waiting to explode, with the connivance of India's arch enemy, Pakistan. This foreign policy implication of Kashmir Problem is not something India can throw under its rug. Let us see if it is feasible to jettison Article 370.

But India has never asked for the abrogation of Article 370. Recently B.P.Yadav, a lawyer based in Andhra Pradesh, petitioned before the Supreme Court of India, that it be abolished and that all laws of India be applicable to J&K. The Chief Justice of Supreme Court of India, H.L. Dattu, on October 30, 2015, decided that "We can strike down a provision if it is unconstitutional but we cannot be asking Parliament a provision. It has to be done by them." That meant that Article 370 has been in Indian Constitution for 66 years and, therefore, Supreme Court cannot remove it, so it is Indian Parliament which has to come up with a new law that abolishes it.

If Modi is strong on changing J&K political nightmare, he must pass a new bill in Parliament rescinding Article 370. Certainly, J&K will contest that in Supreme Court. We do not know what will be its verdict. It could well be that it will consider the new bill unconstitutional. So what, at least an effort was made to make sense of the center's relationship with J&K.

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DISCOVER IT

Anshul Aima Koul

The Sun has set,
On shore, I sit alone,
deep in my thoughts,
silence around.

Someone shouted,
"Why sitting on shore, wasting time,
go,
discover the world around".

"Discover Sun. sunset, sunshine
watch the river flow, rise & fall,
search for peak, search for ice,
don't return early, go & try."

"Grip the wind, hold the fire,
embrace cascade, blow in air,
why sit idle, discover your fruit.,
see the bird, try to fly."

"Bathe with sand, burn in Sun,
freeze with cold, don't cry,
why wasting time,
go discover the world around."

Its easy, easy to,
discover the world around,
I am not sitting idle,
I am discovering a thing,
very complex,
'Discovering myself.'
Searching for sun in me,
the river in me,
bird in me that wants to fly,
child in me that wants to cry,
the lust for fruit,
the dust that ruins.

Now go & be silent.
I am sitting on shore,
not wasting time,
I have to discover 'the world Inside'.

A N N U A L P I C N I C



Section II

**Preserving Our
Cultural Identity,
Particularly the Language**

PRESERVING MOTHER TONGUE - 2019 CHALLENGE FOR KASHMIRI PANDITS

Dr. B. K. Moza

Thirty years have passed by that Kashmiri Hindu community (Kashmiri Pandits) have got internally displaced from their thousands of years old motherland, the beautiful vale of Kashmir. Historically, they have suffered nine exoduses from their homeland and that in the year 1999 was the last one with a difference. It happened at a time when the country was an independent nation free from the foreign rulers and was a well-established democratic country of the world. In the year 1947 the Indian subcontinent was partitioned as India and Pakistan-based essentially on the Hindu populated, and Muslim dominated areas. J&K state became a border state with majority of Muslim inhabitants who preferred to get aligned to India with a special status. I would not like to go into the details of this alignment but it requires to be mentioned that with the special status that J&K state received, the Kashmiri Pandit community got into a peculiar political anomaly; being Hindu they became a minority in a Muslim majority state of a Hindu majority country, India; therefore, a reverse minority. That is to say that in their motherland, the state of J&K, they are an infinitesimal minority and in the country as a whole, they are amongst the majority community. But they never got recognized as a reverse minority, entitled to the rights that they are constitutionally entitled to. It is high time that this injustice meted to them is judicially corrected before their resettlement, if at all, in their homeland. The J&K state with a majority of Muslim inhabitants is an integral part of a Hindu majority India, but in the valley, the Kashmiri Hindus (Pandits) are an infinitesimally small minority. They are comparatively well educated community

and before exodus they were duly settled in their motherland in all walks of administration, education, health-care and trade etc. But, after partition the State became a self-ruled people's Government and Kashmiri Pandits, being a minority in the State, got very much discriminated in education opportunities, job avenues and other matters related to land ownership arising out of the then implemented Zamindari regulations. As such, realistically they had no alternative but to get gradually migrated for livelihood opportunities to the rest of the country; particularly, the younger generation, leaving behind the elderly parents and their properties there in the vale. It was a temporary migration for better livelihood; they used to visit their parents in homeland on vacation or celebration of festivities, marriages, incidents of deaths and/or other family get-togethers as and when these took place. Essentially they retained the tradition and cultural roots they had inherited specially the mother tongue.

But the displacement in 1989-90, which had shown its casting shadows in 1986 communal disturbances in Anant Nag district, was different; it took place causing murders of minorities, arson of their houses and announcements from mosques that Kashmiri Pandits should leave their homes and hearth or face terrorism and the atrocities of all sorts. It was a well-planned strategy of vested interests in terrorizing Kashmiri Pandit community out of Kashmir, lock stock and barrel throughout the vale. Murders of Kashmiri Pandit individuals of significant positions



created a panic and this was followed by a mayhem resulting reportedly in the murder of around seven hundred Pandits. As such, to save their lives and honor the Pandits moved out of their homeland presuming that within few months the political atmosphere would improve and they would return back after a temporary dislocation. But conditions continued to be hostile thus, discouraging their imminent return to their homeland. They had to continue languishing in camps at Udhampur, Jammu district and Delhi etc. They got internally displaced, dispersed and scattered throughout the country and in course of time to foreign lands also, in search of avenues of survival.

They became factually victims of a genocide but there was no judicial enquiry to confirm this fact of life; the politics of the day ignored them saying that they had fled their centuries old homeland in search of greener pastures. Jag Mohan, the then Governor of Kashmir reportedly played a role in facilitating the temporary dislocation of Kashmiri Pandits on the presumption that within few months the emerging terrorism would be brought under control and they would return to their hearth and homes accordingly. They were provided shelter in barren lands of Jammu district and nearby places in camps under very inhuman conditions. As a result many died of sun strokes, dehydration and related ailments, some died of snake bites and starvation that internally displaced people face; dependent on meager doles they received in relief camps. The pain was severe arising out of changed circumstances resulting in besides distress and dislocation to other expected social, cultural and behavioral changes. The youngsters, boys and girls left the camps and went to cities in search of livelihood and improved conditions and opportunities. This changed, to a great extent, the social fabric of the community; many boys and girls, in the process,

undertook inter-caste marriages with consequent social changes; the language which was a great cultural bond for the small community, in the vale of Kashmir, naturally, received a jolt.

During these thirty years, this community has got scattered far and wide under most painful circumstances of losing their hearth and home in their homeland yet they have shown strength and resilience in maintaining the essentials of their cultural heritage as far as possible. They got settled, generally speaking, in places where their safety was not in danger and where there were avenues to make use of their knowledgeable and academic careers and have, in a way, withstood the tests of time and circumstances. Everywhere, in general, they have formed their Samities, Sabhas, Samaj, Associations etc, and, Kashmir Bhawans to facilitate their get-togethers, enabling cultural preservation and social bonding.

They have tried, as far as possible to preserve Kashmiri language, which is their mother tongue. With time, however, this cultural heritage is showing denudation as the generations which have got born subsequent to their exodus from their homeland, have lesser avenues to interact in their mother tongue; they are also scattered throughout globe. Kashmiri language has not any official, commercial or intellectual privilege, a mother tongue deserves. Even in their homeland the official language was Urdu; English, Hindi etc., were also used for day to day use as and when required. The mother tongue was used in the households only. There was a handicap that their mother tongue had no functional script for day to day use conveniently. Its original Sharda script has got in disuse for obvious reasons for day to day usage. The "nastalik " Urdu script was the language for administration in their homeland; also Devanagari script was practiced by Kashmiri Pandits for some special occasions. But both these scripts

had short comings. Kashmiri language has some special phonetic peculiarities in respect of some vowels for which there were no equivalent fonts available. As such, there was a practical handicap in reproducing the language phonetically for regular use.

One of the favorable trends, the exodus offered was that it aroused the need for making our mother tongue a phonetic one; our Kashmiri language linguists made the desired effort to identify the handicaps in this respect and find their desired remedies. As became evident, Kashmiri language has six expressions peculiar to it which required finding appropriate fonts to make this language satisfactorily phonetic. Thanks to our professional linguists who identified these vowels and appropriated fonts to these six vowels with the help of digital experts and the language became satisfactorily phonetic and thus perfect for all intents and purposes. There are now available readers and primers of our mother tongue and a significant literature is now becoming available both in Nastaliq as also Devanagari scripts. The former is being used in Kashmir and the latter in journals that are being published by Kashmiri Pandit Associations or Institutions outside Kashmir. Thanks to our specialists we have a Kashmiri literary journal, of repute, "Vaakh", regularly getting published in Devanagari script and circulated amongst the concerned Biradari members regularly in our country and abroad. Even books are being published by Kashmiri litterateur using phonetic Devanagari script.

Kashmiri lyrics and their tune are reasonably popular in the country and are being reproduced by film industry both in Hindi and other language films and these have gained considerable popularity in the country and abroad. With Devanagari phonetic script there will be further considerable ease in their usage.

The purpose of mentioning all these details is that now it is conveniently and systematically possible to use Devanagari script, with which almost every educated person in India is vocable, for communicating in Kashmiri language without any difficulty. Earlier, one could say that our Kashmiri language had not an appropriate font but now that handicap is no longer there and one can conveniently communicate even digitally in this language through mobile phones etc. What is, therefore, required is effort and concern to preserve our mother tongue which is otherwise in a melting pot. Our Constitution recognizes Kashmiri languages as one of the national languages, as is evident from the currency notes in circulation. But the recognized script for Kashmiri language is Nastalik, the Urdu script. It is also appealed that in our Indian Constitution the Devanagari script be also recognized as an additional script for Kashmiri language as in Sindhi for which both Nastalik and Devanagari scripts are recognized. Kashmiri Pandits Diaspora is scattered globally and Devanagari script will facilitate their preserving mother tongue to a great extent.

This is, therefore, the present challenge for our community who are presently desirous of preserving Kashmiri culture. Year 2019 is the thirtieth year of our latest exodus and internal displacement from our motherland. With all assumed complaints of disunity, the community has withstood the pressures for preserving our cultural heritage in our scattered Diaspora. Now a special effort is desirable as also essential to preserve our mother tongue. Certainly for us this is the "Challenge 2019", to make use of recently developed systematic, scientific and well cultured font for our mother tongue to preserve our Kashmiri identity. Language and specially mother tongue is considered as the essential ingredient of preserving cultural identity. If we look at Europe, all countries or

communities use their mother tongue. Wars have been fought for preserving this cultural identity. Even in our subcontinent Bangladesh, the original East Pakistan, got carved out by war essentially for preserving the Bengali language in this country. We have to take a leaf from these experiences whether of Indian or International origin and preserve our mother tongue. Now we have the technology to interact with our brethren in our mother tongue digitally using mobile phones etc., for this purpose. Even if we are scattered, we can communicate with one another, continents apart, using the modern technology. Our Sabhas have thus a special objective to ensure that we make use of the present systematic and phonetic font for communicating in our mother tongue. Kashmiri Pandit Association, Mumbai has

already taken a lead by introducing the Project Zaan for enabling interested people to learn our mother tongue using the modern digital technology. The other Sabhas can take a leaf and serve the desired purpose.

Let this be the Challenge 2019 for the community to make special efforts to preserve our Kashmiri mother tongue and bow down sincerely before the altar of cultural preservation in surviving the present era of unprecedented change.

The author has been the backbone of Vitasta with his single minded devotion to raising the standards higher with every issue. Email : moza@cal2.vsnl.net.in, Cell : 9831551319.

*"Asseh maa kudd Huondh teh Muslim
beun beun asseh maa kun loluk soudaa Chhun"*

*(We have not segregated Hindu from a Muslim,
nor is prejudiced our deal in love).*

-Abdul Ahad Azad

IMPORTANCE OF OUR MOTHER-TONGUE IN OUR SURVIVAL

M.K.Raina

The big question for the Kashmiri Pandit community after 1990 exodus has been 'Will we survive?' This question is both significant as well as a very serious one. We may survive and perhaps be better than what we were in Kashmir, individually, but as a community, we are not so sure. In the three decades of our exodus, we have somehow been able to carve out pockets throughout the country in general and Delhi and Jammu in particular, where a good number of KPs have constructed houses and tried to create sort of mini Kashmirs. But what is our future, future of our Kashmiriat? And above all, will the year 2019 make any big difference?

Leaving our motherland in the worst conditions and due to threat to our lives has not been new for Kashmiri Pandits. The community has, over the centuries, always suffered the brunt of exoduses, latest that in 1990. During Afghan rule, things were seemingly worse but if we compare the situation prevailing at that time with the present one, the present one proves to be far more disastrous. The reason is, during Afghan rule, local populace, who were themselves Pandits once upon a time and had converted due to one or the other reason, were not themselves against the Pandits. Pandits suffered at the hands of rulers and not at the hands of local populace. This was the reason, Pandits after every exodus, strived to return back to their motherland. A time came when they were brutally murdered *en masse*, those who escaped death migrated to other places and finally, it is said, only eleven KP homes were left in Kashmir. This was most probably in the times of Malik Musa Raina. But every time, those who had left, returned back after the change of rulers and became part of the populace again.

What does the exodus of 1990 mean to us? When we talk of survival, we mean survival of the community as a distinct ethnic group, survival of our centuries old culture, customs, rites and rituals,



and survival of our mother-tongue, the Kashmiri language which is at the verge of extinction. Do we need to preserve our cultural heritage if we have to live like a distinct ethnic group? Do we need to preserve our language, our mother-tongue to keep Kashmiriat in us alive? A section of the society is of the view that language is not an important issue for survival. They say, we can live as Kashmiris even without speaking Kashmiri language. Do they have a point? May be, but I would like to differ from them.

We are fast losing our culture, in the sense that our younger generations do not know much or do not care to know much, about our rites and rituals. In due course, they may not even know what Yarbhal meant to their parents. They may not know about Yachh who we desperately wanted to have a glimpse of, during the harsh snowy winter nights. They may not know how valuable an old Kangdi used to be on Tela Ashtami and what it was like to move the burning Kangdi over our heads. They may not know what saying Namaskar with folded hands meant to their ancestors. They may not know that their parents and their ancestors used to accord respect not only to their own elders but also to elders in their mohallas and villages. They may not know what it meant to have darshan of Sonth Thaal or why so many things were kept on that Thaal. They may not know many things but can we really blame them for their lack of connectivity with our very

ethos? Some of us did not tell them stories of such rituals back home. Many rituals got lost or will get lost because the avenues were not and are not readily available to perform those rituals like Yarbali, Kangdi, Snow, River, Courtyard etc. But yes, we can definitely preserve the stories of our rituals by making them knowledgeable. As far as our language is concerned, we don't need to tell them stories nor do we need any particular geographical area to preserve it. We just need people who we can speak to, in our language. And this is where our own family comes first.

As we know, Kashmiri is spoken by the people only in the Valley of Kashmir. It is not even spoken in other part of Kashmir, now under occupation of Pakistan. This makes it more important to save a language which is not spoken by many around the world and which, if not given due attention, would die its own death in some decades. Kashmiri Pandits, out of Kashmir since 1990 are settling down in other parts of India, mingling with other communities to survive in an alien atmosphere and to achieve a respectable status. Here they are bound to learn other languages especially the State's official language and that of the local populace if different from the State language, in addition to Hindi and English taught in schools. Nobody teaches Kashmiri here. Nobody speaks Kashmiri around. But the saddest part is that we have abandoned our sweet language even in our homes, not because of any legal or local requirements but because of our disinterest in our mother-tongue. There are numerous instances showing that even parents do not speak Kashmiri between themselves in their homes, not to speak of teaching this language to their younger ones.

It is generally believed that the language and culture are inseparably related, therefore, language is considered as the verbal expression of cultural heritage, values and customs. If language is lost,

our identity is lost. When I ask a Kashmiri, a Muslim or a Pandit, as to why they don't speak in Kashmiri with their children, the answer is simple, one line '*Voni kus mahra PhD chhukh karun Kaashiris manz*'. I may not react, but do remember Amin Kamil's words '*Kaashiri sueti Kaashir saari, Nata Vaaraan Baalaki Haaraan Kaw*'.

Kashmiri Pandits were massacred brutally or driven out of the valley by the rulers like Sultan Sikandar (1393-1414 AD), Malik Musa Raina (1501-1510 AD) and Malik Gazi Chak (1518). As said earlier, this was perhaps the time when only 11 Pandit families remained in Kashmir to live. History is silent about when they returned back but returned they must have, as always, may be after 20 or 30 or 50 years at the change of rulers. Did they forget their culture and language while in alien lands? Answer is definitely 'No', because had it happened, we would have been speaking additional languages as our mother tongue, language of the lands where our ancestors had migrated to.

During Sultan Sikandar's time (1389-1413 AD), Hindus in thousands were put to the sword and history tells us that major portion of the Brahmin population migrated to the southern part of the country (PNK Bamzai). Their descendants may still be living there by another name but nobody calls them Kashmiris because they don't speak Kashmiri.

But there is a silver lining as well. Our scholars, writers, authors and also thousands of those who were not celebrated writers, started writing in Kashmiri, publishing books and filling columns and columns of our community magazines immediately after our exodus. Presently, our community journals are full of their writings, be it prose, poetry, essays, views and reviews. And let us admit it with pride, that the introduction of Standardised Devanagari Kashmiri script, which the government of the day is still avoiding to declare as an alternative script for

Kashmiri language, has done miracles. The script, which was updated and modified after the introduction of 6 diacritical marks to represent some peculiar Kashmiri sounds, has provided a real platform to authors who now have a streamlined script to write with uniformity. Previously every writer used to have his or her own diacritical marks which others would find difficult to understand and which resulted in total confusion and discouraged writers to write. Thanks to the committee headed by Dr. Roop Krishen Bhat who toiled hard and finalised the script for writing Kashmiri in Devanagari. Availability of software for the PCs has also made things much more easier.

Coming back to the importance of our language in our lives, I must relate here a small episode of 1990s. After exodus, I lived at the Bohri area of Talab Tillo in Jammu. A local Dogri boy used to sell vegetables on the roadside. He had lived in Kashmir for some years, and had learned a bit of Kashmiri language. He started calling us in broken Kashmiri, inviting us to his vegetable cart 'Nadru Mahra Nadru, Monji Mahra Monji'. And hearing his calls in Kashmiri, we used to rush to him, talk to him and buy what would be available with him. Need I say, he became a big vegetable vendor in just a year or two. Such is our inner love with our language but perhaps we do not realize it. And it is not that we (read Kashmiris) don't love our culture, or our younger generation cannot relate to it. They just need to have a sense of pride in the culture of their forefathers which will create a desire in them to delve deeper into it and spread it imperceptibly. This is where the guidance of parent is essential.

I am reminded of yet another episode at Dubai a few years back.

I was in Dubai for some official work. One day in the evening, I left my hotel room to find out if there was any Kashmiri working there at the Kashmir Arts shops in Bur

Dubai. I found a shop named Kashmir Emporium. A boy was sitting outside looking like a Kashmiri. I asked him his name. He was Tassaduq Mir. I gave him my name. He was very happy to see me, a Kashmiri Pandit. He called out to his colleague inside and asked him to come out. Shahnawaz did not come, so Tassaduq held my hand and took me in. From a distance, he said to Shahnawaz, "Look who has come, Raina Saab." Shahnawaz stood up in a huff, put something hastily in his right pant pocket and raised his hand to shake my hand. In a while I took a seat but found smoke coming out of Shahnawaz's pocket. His pocket was burning. He had hidden his burning cigarette in the pocket on seeing me. He rushed into the washroom to throw away the cigarette and douse the burning pocket, came back after a while to greet me. Now, the boys did not know me earlier, but the Kashmiri culture still lived inside them. I was an elderly person, so a fatherly figure for them. Next time I visited Dubai, I did not forget to carry Shopian apples exclusively for them. We too love our culture but perhaps do not realize it.

In my opinion, both language and the culture are important for our survival as an ethnic community, but if we cannot perform our rituals and have to part away with some of our cultural customs due to compelling circumstances, let us not say good bye to our language at least. Let us, not just speak ourselves in this language but also inculcate interest of our youngsters in it. I am sure, if language survives, we as a community will survive. I do not see any big change happening in 2019 and the years ahead unless we ourselves work towards this goal of preserving our cultural heritage and our mother tongue.

Mr. Raina through 'Zaan', Mumbai has done a tremendous job of popularizing Kashmiri language.
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LANGUAGE, LITERATURE, INTERNET, POLITICS AND KASHMIRI PANDITS

Adarsh Ajit

International Mother Tongue Day is observed every year. Despite some, laborious works exercised by different organizations to maintain and preserve Kashmiri language the results are not positive enough. Thus, the biggest challenge regarding preserving Kashmiri language remains alive before the Kashmiri Pandit Community. One thing is important to mention is that it is not only in Kashmiri Pandit community that Kashmiri language is almost non-existent amongst the progeny and the young ones but, in Kashmir also, the younger generation of Kashmiri Muslims have started talking in non-Kashmiri. However, it has assumed the shape of an epidemic in our community. We will not go into who is at fault. Nevertheless, we can have a look what ought to have been done.

There are many private schools run by Kashmiri Pandits. Mostly Kashmiri Pandit students study in these schools. If the management of these schools are taken into confidence and suggested to reserve a period, if not daily, yet weekly, so that the children are introduced to the Kashmiri language it would be an important step in the right direction.

Some authors in our community have composed Kashmiri Primer or other books aiming at the promotion of Kashmiri language amongst youth. However, no one took pains in making such types of books available in the community institutions. There rises the problem of financing, for making these books available in the schools. If we can spend crores of rupees on unproductive programmes and functions, why can we not make such books available in these schools with consent of the school management? If it would not be deemed as blasphemous, it

would have been far better than spending on hawans and yagnyas. Moreover, such type of work is itself not less than a yagnya or a hawan.

The exodus of Kashmiri Pandits is one of the biggest tragedy in modern history. Our authors, poets, and writers have been writing extensively since 1990. The writing, written by Kashmiri Pandits in exile is called Literature in Exile. Literature constitutes a big part of the culture. Though the pain, which Kashmiri Pandits have been facing for the last twenty-eight years, is unforgettable, their protest will be vividly apparent in future too, in the literature written in exile. Life without good literature is hollow and worthless. There are hundreds of books written by Kashmiri Pandit authors in Kashmiri whether in Nastaaliq or in Devnagri script. Arjan Dev Majboor's 'Teol', P N Shad's 'Pot Nazar' and R L Jowahar's 'Haruf Haruf Gawah' are few among them. The poems of Moti Lal Saqi, M L Aash, J L Saroor, M L Kanwal, Pyaray Hatash, Tej Rawal, Makhan Lal Bekas, Shamboo Nath Bhat Haleem, P N Kaul Sayil, Brij Nath Betab, Bal Krishen Sanyasi, Brij Hali and M L Masroof are of pivotal importance so far as exile consciousness is concerned. These and other poets wrote poetry about human condition in a world of science and technology, nature, love, romance, erosion of values, politics and human suffering. R L Shant, Hriday Kaul Bharati, Hari Krishan Kaul and Autar Krishan Rahbar, apart from writing about exile, wrote/write about contemporary issues which are universal in nature. The themes and craft of their stories are experimental and modern. Chaman Lal Hakhoo's novel in Kashmiri 'Vastrvanuk Saeh' is gripping. O.N Kaul's and Avtar Krishen Hugami's short stories and other literary writings

are an important addition to literature produced by Kashmiri Pandits. Pushkar Nath Dhar's 'Chetinav' is a collection of essays of wit, satire, and humour in Kashmiri.

Kashmiri Pandit writers, like Badri Nath Abhilash, Santosh Nadaan, R L Jowahar, J L Saroor, Brij Hali, P.N.Kaul Sayil and P.N.Bhat Gharib are famous for writing traditional devotional Kashmiri poetry. Many other Kashmiri Pandit writers wrote/are writing in Hindi, Urdu, and English as well. Unfortunately, J.L.Saroor and P.N.Bhat Gharib are no more. However, the big question is whether these books have any sizeable readership. And the bigger question is, whether there is any library that belongs to Kashmiri Pandits in which such types of books are kept available, irrespective of the fact whether there is adequate readership. Kashmiri Pandit writers would have to ponder over it afresh.

Though the pain which Kashmiri Pandits have been facing for last twenty-five years is unforgettable, their protest will be evident for posterity in the literature written in exile, whatever the form. However this too is experiencing a new change away from the stereotyped content. Life moves on and has to move. So will literature in exile move forward and be different from what we have been reading for the past so many years? The trend has started and will not and should not end. The new beginning in the change of content and form promises hope. Life without good literature is hollow and meaningless.

Kashmiri Muslims plead for their cause on the internet and social media. True or false, but they also try to highlight to the world about the atrocities committed on the innocent people. Leaving aside the authenticity and legitimacy of their movement, many books also stand published in which Muslim writers express their thoughts with focussed agenda. Mirza Wahid's 'The Collaborator' and Basharat Pir's 'Curfewed Night' are a few among

them. However, Kashmiri Pandits have also contributed in one way or the other for the cause of Kashmiri Pandit community.

Newspapers, magazines of substance, electronic channels, and books play a lead role to highlight the ground situation. Internet and social media have surpassed the old tools. If there is any false propaganda about the happenings, then counter propaganda becomes necessary because currently, it assumes tremendous significance. India has many problems and one among these is the negative track of our democracy. Central Government in the interests of India should continuously counter the negativities, through social media.

Barring a few organizations, most of the Kashmiri Pandit organizations, have been working for the cause of India and thus from time to time have delivered mature counter propaganda. This was the duty of all Indians. Kashmiri Pandits are mostly countering the separatist mindset largely through press conferences, seminars, and social media wherein may lie their strength. Pleading for India is a duty of Kashmiri Pandits because they are Indians first but working also for the cause of own Kashmiri Pandit community is very much needed.

We were talking of internet Jihadis of Kashmir. Kashmiri Muslims in aggregate use their strength of internet positively for their cause but if we peep through the various Kashmiri Pandit internet groups or individuals, we feel less service for the Pandit cause and more disservice. Less honour and more disgrace. We fight each other on the internet. We use abusive languages. Positive framework for the Pandit cause seems elusive.

Criticism is all fine. In fact, there should be constructive criticism otherwise, in absence of constructive criticism, the flaws and the errors go on accumulating. Dark rooms lead to megalomania. We have to calmly listen to others and then react in a

refined language. Problems arise when we deem ourselves all knowledgeable. That is never the case. No man is complete. None is wholly knowledgeable.

Kashmiri Pandits have a tough task. They have to fight against injustice meted to them. Human rights violations are committed on them. We have lost various rights in the biggest democracy of the world. No doubt, there are some persons, who have worked on the internet through facebook or through Kashmiri Pandit internet groups for the Pandit cause but in aggregate, we need to filter our approach and reassert ourselves in a positive direction. We cannot afford to disgrace each other. Criticism should be well within the mould of ethics.

Kashmiriat, Secularism, and Communalism are the three words, which are annoying to me along with a proverb 'The word impossible is found in the dictionary of fools'. The proverb rejects the real fact that there are so many things, which can be put under the category of 'impossible'.

The partition of India in 1947 is based on only one philosophy and that is 'Communalism'. Pakistan came into existence due to two nation theory. Expecting a nation to behave as a secular one, which has communal basis, is foolishness. Even if the country behaves like a secular one that clearly indicates that it is in a veil. Contrary to Pakistan, ideology of secularism, found place in the constitution of India. So, after communal division, India became secular. Kashmiri Pandits were never a communal lot. The culture, language, and literature of Kashmiri Pandits do not reflect that they are communal. Whether Article 370 or 35A, are abrogated or not, what difference does it make to the concept of secularism? Leaving aside the constitution of Jammu and Kashmir even the word 'Kashmiriyat' is merely a political tool. Had it been otherwise, the word secularism would have been incorporated in the constitution of Jammu and Kashmir. The word Kashmiriat in the Indian Political Lexicon seems an

imposed word otherwise the word would have been *koshrut* or *nam ta maaz* or likewise but Kashmiriat is altogether a non-Kashmiri word.

The existence of Pakistan on communal basis, the word 'secularism' in Indian constitution, the non existence of the word 'secularism' in the constitution of Jammu and Kashmir, the use of the word 'communal' and the word Kashmiriat are just tools of exploitation for the politicians. These philosophies have definite impact on the exiled community.

In 1990, Kashmiri Pandits were wiped off from the valley of Kashmir alleging Pandits to be the agents of India. Right from 1947, the government of India has failed in infusing the warmth of patriotism in the Kashmiri Muslims towards India. No effort was made to infuse Indian-ism in the hearts of Kashmiri Muslims. On the other hand Indian establishment just kept hoping that with time, things would improve. The result is that twenty-eight years have elapsed and every Indian establishment is a total failure in making the return of displaced Kashmiri Pandits possible. The most energetic Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi, till date, also has not shown any positive initiative. The elections of 2019, whatever would be the results, will have nothing special for Kashmiri Pandits.

Indian democracy is becoming counter-productive in many ways, overall. The negative political trends have become uncontrollable. Lie and deception have become the order of the day. After attaining Independence, for which Indians have given mammoth sacrifices, patriotism seems to be eluding. However, whichever government comes to power needs to rekindle the warmest of patriotism.

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KASHMIRI PANDITS' DISTINCT CULTURE AND ITS PRESERVATION DURING EXODUS

Col Tej K Tikoo, Ph.D. (Retd)

It is believed that on the onset of first Manvantra (meaning 'the age of Manu'; an astronomical period of time measurement), the nine ancient Vedic Rishis namely Kashyap, Maricha, Atri, Angira, Pulastya, Vishvamitra, Bhardwaja, Gautama and Jamdagni were the first to inhabit Satisar, when it was drained of its water. The place came to be known as Kashyap Mar, meaning the abode of Kashyap. Over a long period of time, this name got corrupted to Kashmir, its present name.

The ancestors of Kashmiri Pandits, the Saraswat Brahmans, lived on the banks of the mighty Saraswati River which flowed in the northwest region of India. Subsequent to its drying up around 1900 BCE, these people moved north and found shelter in Kashmir, perhaps, as a consequence of the drying up of Satisar. Kashmiri Pandits are the original inhabitants of the Valley of Kashmir, with a history of more than five thousand years, dating back beyond the *Neelmat* era, almost contemporaneous to the Vedic civilization of India.

Due to a very conducive environment during the reign of Hindu Kings in the first two millennia after these people settled in Kashmir, they developed a distinct literary culture that survives to the present day. Originally, they were and continue to be known as *Bhattas*. The term *Bhatta* is derived from ancient Sanskrit (Prakrit) name *bhartri*, which means doctor, scholar or intellectual. Pandit also means a learned person.

Kashmiri Pandits' religious thought and rituals, social customs and cultural moorings are deeply influenced by the

philosophy of Kashmir's great Shaivite philosophers, Abhinavgupta (10th century) and Kshemaraja (11th century). Kashmiri Shaivism's Trika (three fold) philosophy, basically states that the 'Reality' is represented by 'transcendental' (ara), 'material' (apara) and a combination of the two (para-apara). The secluded location of Kashmir valley, its temperate climate and natural beauty, allowed great mystics, saints and *Rishis* to delve deep into this philosophy and explore the mysteries of 'reality' and the 'purpose' of life. Over the centuries, Kashmiri Pandits produced a galaxy of such mystic poets, philosophers and *Rishis*, who further enriched this religious thought. It was the Kashmiri Pandits who carried Buddha's philosophy and Buddhist religious tenets far away to Tibet, centuries ago. It was Pandit Kalhana who wrote one of the most authentic and earliest known historical records of the events in Kashmir, called *Rajatarangini*.

Kashmiri Pandit culture, which evolved over centuries, is vibrant and multi-hued, with its unique features reflecting its richness. Being a persecuted community for centuries, its culture has evolved by constant re-appraisal and its need to survive and sustain itself against heavy odds. Many myths and legends, dating back to pre-historic times when the Valley was still *Satisar*, form part of its socio-cultural landscape. Kashmir Shaivism or Trika philosophy, characterized by its depth of thought and originality, was the product of this vibrant environment of the Valley. A deep love of nature and its diverse elements has, therefore, got ingrained into their religious rituals and social customs. Pilgrimage to mountain peaks (Harmukh, etc.) and performance of a large number of

religious and social rituals on the banks of Vitasta (River Jhelum) represent some of these sacred traditional practices. In short, nature's bounty in the form of gushing rivulets and icy springs that Kashmir is endowed with, inculcated in the community an immense love for nature, which got interwoven with their social/religious customs.

Culture being a complete pattern of social behavior of an ethnic group, its practices and collective thinking, manifested through group behaviour, Kashmiri Pandits' distinct culture and world view are inter-related. Religion, philosophy and value systems of the group have great bearing on it. Culture is not static as its dynamic nature enables it to adopt, reject and evolve constantly. This has been so in our case.

When insurgency broke out in Kashmir in 1989-90, there were less than half a million Pandits left in the Valley. The radical Islamists held complete sway in the Valley. Killings of prominent Kashmiri Pandits on the one hand, and targeting ordinary Pandits in unknown and far flung areas throughout the Valley, on the other, created enormous fear, panic and overwhelming sense of insecurity. Through sustained campaign with the help of posters, hoardings and public address systems blaring out from pulpits of the mosques, Pandits were offered three choices *ralive, galive ya tsalive* - meaning, join us (implying conversion to Islam), die or run away. State machinery was totally subverted, paralyzing those instruments of the administration which could be used to prevent their killings and instil a sense of security among the beleaguered community. Ensuring their own and their family members' survival became their top-most priority. This led to mass exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from Kashmir.

Once the whole ethnic group vacated the place that created and sustained our culture, our community got unhinged from its moorings. Under the circumstances,

ever since, it has become very difficult to preserve our distinct ethnic identity. This difficulty has got further compounded because Kashmiri Pandits are a small community and after exodus, are compelled to live in penny packets throughout the world. Due to these reasons, Kashmiri Pandits are in clear danger of losing their identity as a distinct ethnic group. This, despite the fact, that even after suffering persecution and being evicted from the Valley many times in the past, Kashmiri Pandits have retained their core beliefs. Sir Walter Lawrence writes in his book, *Vale of Kashmir*, "*Bhata, Bhata, Kaw Bata*"- (Kashmiri Pandits are knit together like a pack of crows)".

The exodus has forced the minuscule minority to take a hard look at preserving its centuries-old culture and its religious traditions. Numerous Bhavans, socio-cultural centres and replicas of iconic pilgrimage centres that existed in Kashmir, were replicated at various places throughout the country, where the Kashmiri Pandit Diaspora came to settle in large numbers after their exodus. From Jammu in the north, which has the maximum number of such structures, to Bengaluru in the south, and from Kolkotta in the east to Mumbai in the west, these Bhavans have helped Kashmiri Pandits to continue holding on to their cultural moorings. It can safely be said that to a large extent, the displaced community has succeeded in preserving their distinct identity within the overall Hindu tradition which, like a huge garden, permits every type of flower to bloom within its precincts. However, being a small minority, surrounded by numerically superior numbers, having their own different culture and tradition, it is only a matter of time before the Kashmiri Pandit culture and tradition will gradually get submerged in the larger Hindu identity. This is particularly so in the changing social values in the country where inter-community marriage has become a norm.

Besides, the religious tradition and cultural identity of a community is deeply connected to, and influenced by the land and environment in which the community has been living for centuries. After their displacement, without that land now sustaining us any more, saving our unique culture from being diluted becomes all the more difficult. The signs of this dilution of culture are already visible.

Over the past three decades since our exodus from Kashmir in 1989-90, a large number of our *biradari* have been regularly visiting the valley, particularly, places connected with our religious traditions. Such visits have ensured the upkeep of these temples, *Asthapans* and seats of saints/sages. Besides, a large number of our organisations are deeply connected with the maintenance of our iconic sites on regular basis. Over the past decade, many of our religious places have been repaired and restored to their original shape after these had been destroyed/desecrated or fallen into disuse. Such remedial actions have ensured that during our exodus, the community is able to keep

our temples/shrines and our symbols of socio-cultural traditions in Kashmir alive. By spending longer periods of time at regular intervals in Kashmir, the community can preserve their distinct culture and unique identity and pass on the essentials of our rites and rituals to our future generations also.

The other positive factor is the proximity of Jammu, where a large number of Kashmiri Pandit refugees are still living, to our land in Kashmir. This proximity helps regular contact with our *Tirath Sthals* as also prevents mental disconnect with the land that inspires our uniqueness. Nevertheless, the community has a huge challenge at its hands as the coming generation will find it difficult to identify itself with Kashmir in the absence of our permanent settlement there.

Col. Tikku is the President of AIKS. He has authored 'Kashmir: Its Aborigines and their Exodus' and is a regular contributor to Indian Defence Review. Email : tktikkoo@gmail.com.

*"Yes kulis sag dikhi, zaminas waali srehi
Lol yem yas kanshi bhior, tami bhior Dayas
Lol tas nishi drav tasi watan tsopari
Gatalev yi zon yim walith payas"*

*Whichever plant you water, the earth beneath is moistened.
Love whomsoever you may, you love the Lord.
He is the ocean of love and all rivers flow back to Him,
The wise who discovered the key (to bliss) realized this.*

-Zinda Kaul

PRESERVING KASHMIRI LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN DIASPORA MYTHS AND REALITY

Roop Krishen Bhat

Ever since the unfortunate and tragic mass displacement of Kashmiri Hindus in the year 1990 leaving behind their centuries old homeland in Kashmir, they have been wandering like nomads from place to place in search of social security, livelihoods, opportunities and mental peace. While as the decade of Nineties was the worst and physical survival remained the sole concern of the community, the last decade has been a period to ponder over, assess and analyze the physical, social and political losses suffered, accept the tragedies as they were and attempt to rearrange the broken threads, and move forward. Big volumes could be written on the bitter experiences, tragedies and sufferings the community has undergone during last twenty five years and such attempts have already been made by various writers, scholars, historians, journalists, community leaders and individuals. Sufficient and incredible literature has been written on various happenings in several languages including Kashmiri in the form of poetry, short stories, novels, biographies etc. Perhaps the unique and brighter side of the current displacement or migration has been the accumulation of vast amount of publication of displacement literature especially in Kashmiri Language. This becomes unique because in earlier similar displacements or migrations of Kashmiri Hindus from Kashmir there is hardly any such literature written in Kashmiri. The obvious reason has been the neglect or underdevelopment of Kashmiri language in those times and its status only as a spoken language.

Since then lot of water has flown down the Vitasta. Immediately after the Independence of India in fifties Kashmiri language was included in the school

curriculum in Kashmir, Academy of art, culture and languages established and a committee of scholars set up to recommend the script for the language. Persio-Arabic with modifications suitable to sound system of Kashmiri was accepted as the script. It may be mentioned here that the first ever script was Sharda and lot many manuscripts are even now available in that script. Nagri and Roman too were used by some scholars to write Kashmiri during those times. The decade of seventies has been the golden period as for as Kashmiri literature is concerned. Lot of young writers came to limelight and besides the rich poetic tradition new genres like short story, novel, essay, drama, travelogue were written and a lot of literature was accumulated. Both the litterateurs and the literature of this period i.e. the decade of seventies of the last millennium has virtually been the most rational, objective, secular and harmonious. Unfortunately the language was almost eliminated from school curriculum, but was introduced at PG level in the University of Kashmir. It gradually spread to several colleges. However, attitudinal changes towards the language started appearing amongst certain scholars in the decade of eighties and Urdu was preferred in day to day communication, public speeches, declarations, religious sermons, slogans and even prayers. The trend was further complicated by biased, rigid and unscientific stand of politicians and few scholars towards its scope and script.

Militancy added to its woes since the language of militants too was Urdu hence all dictates and communications were issued through this language. Broken and rustic variety of Urdu was preferred in and

outside homes instead of the much refined, sweet and easily comprehended mother tongue Kashmiri. Kashmiri Language was degraded and disowned to a greater extent during militancy in Kashmir. A conscious effort was made by certain vested elements to marginalize the Kashmiri language, literature and culture while simultaneously promoting Urdu. The Kashmiri scholars remained tight lipped and mute in the earlier years of militancy and not much was written or talked about in this period in the valley.

However, the trend was different so far as displaced Kashmiri scholars were concerned. Record number of books in all genres have been written in Kashmiri after displacement. Though there has been a boom in Kashmiri literature after displacement, even new names not heard earlier in the field of literature were born and became popular instantly but the language in itself has been the worst sufferer or victim so far as its use, patronage and promotion is concerned. Being forced to live and survive in alien cultures and amongst non Kashmiris our people voluntarily and effortlessly started ignoring and discarding their mother tongue for various silly and petty reasons like non native environment, curricular or career opportunity etc. Kashmiri was seen as a hindrance or obstacle in learning of other languages and unnecessary burden which if ignored would not make much difference for their survival as Kashmiri language was not a bread earner. Governmental hostility towards Kashmiri, the wider spread of the community across States and countries resulting in inter community marriages amongst our youngsters has further worsened the situation. There could be a host of other reasons some even boasting of being part of global fraternity or global world which in their eyes could be relished or lived only through English.

The excuses apart, the hard fact remains that we Kashmiris are generally hostile to

our language and culture or even to our existence as Kashmiris. We succumb to material gains easily, have inbuilt inferiority complexes about language and are prone to change at the cost of our identity or individuality, where ever we may be. Let me make an effort to answer and dispel some of the above reasons and underline the fact that a community is known only through language and culture and not through Surnames.

I presume and believe that there is a reasonable and sizable majority amongst us who want to live and be known as Kashmiris, rather than get dissolved as nobodies in the vast ocean of humans across the world. Since we are proud of our rich cultural heritage and of eminent legacy of great luminaries in various fields of knowledge known and respected globally we love to live and be known as Kashmiris.

Having said and accepted that, we have to consciously honour and explore the reasons to keep our identity alive. The sole and only method to do that, is to know and speak Kashmiri language where ever we may be – in our home with family members and fellow Kashmiris; where ever we meet, in offices, market places, social functions, get togethers etc. And even in alien environments. If Punjabis, Bengalis, Tamils, Gujratis can proudly do so, what stops us from doing the same? Following steps if followed may be helpful to achieve our goal.

1. We need to shed the tag of inferiority complex attached to being or speaking Kashmiri, which has gone deep into our psyche perhaps for historical reasons as I believe strongly so i.e having lived as slaves of outside rulers for hundreds of years, forced us to even hide the Kashmiri identity.

Of course Kashmiri is not in school curriculum outside Kashmir, but there are sufficient teaching-learning materials available in Kashmiri which could be

helpful, like, Books published by Central Institute of Indian languages, Mysore. Let us Learn Kashmiri-Primer and Reader, (in Devanagri) A Handbook on Audio cassette course, Basic, Intermediate and Advance Courses, Primer written by Sh.M K Raina, Spoken Kashmiri Courses by Prof Braj Kachroo and Prof Omkar Koul, a course in Kashmiri Language by Roop Krishen Bhat, a Kashmiri primer by Arvind Shah etc. There is a Devanagri software known as Arnimaal Aakruti available and used by all our community journals and writers and host of other materials available readily now. It may be mentioned that all these materials have been produced during last twenty five years keeping the need of community members in mind and lot of expertise and collective efforts, teamwork and hard labour has gone into it.

3. It takes just twenty clock hours to start from scratch and learn Devanagri script and those who know Devanagri already learning additional diacritical marks and signs for writing Kashmiri is a matter of two to three hours only. It would take thirty to fifty clock hours more to learn the basic structures of language and be able to speak smaller sentences and be able to communicate. If spoken regularly the perfection is achieved in few months time.

4. It is true that Kashmiri Language is not a bread winner like many other Indian languages, but Gujrati or Tamil or for that matter any other Indian language outside India is not a bread winner either, even then these are spoken over there widely by their speakers. What matters is the love, urge and pride for the language and community. Kashmiri like many other languages does have a limited commercial value, in translation, IT and communication, Mass Media, AIR, TV, etc. It serves as a secret language to avoid leakage of information and provides enjoyment, gives fulfilment, confidence and satisfaction.

5. It is a false apprehension that learning or speaking of Kashmiri would be an obstacle in learning of other languages, or over burden the children, spoil their English or Hindi pronunciation. It is a simple myth and it really works the other way round. There is research evidence that mother tongue helps the child to pick up or learn second or other language easily and faster. One always comprehends in mother tongue and translates communication in other language. In India most of the people are multilingual and simultaneously chaste in several languages. Several world known writers write in more than one language with perfection and ease and even better than monolinguals. Kashmiris have produced world class writers like Lal Ded, Mahjoor, Nadim, Rahi, Hari Krishen Kaul etc. Incidentally all of them except Lal Ded initially started writing in other languages and later switched to their mother tongue Kashmiri, excelled in the language and are widely translated and recognised. There are many other Kashmiri writers who wrote in other modern Indian languages like Urdu, Hindi etc. but only few of them received some recognition. However, we may boast of sending our children to English medium schools but we have hardly produced some one in English literature of international fame during last few hundred years. The matter of fact remains that one can achieve greater heights with ease, in one's mother tongue.

6. Inter community marriages remains an issue but the reality is that our youngsters have no opportunities or occasions to meet with each other. Where ever they are, in colleges or work places they are dominated or surrounded by non Kashmiris. Our NGOs or leaders have to create such opportunities where youngsters can meet. Camps held by KOA, USA is one such example. Our youngsters remain absent from almost all community functions. While as we are losers in terms of language and culture when our daughters marry outside the

community, however, the boys marrying other community girls could be counselled to learn Kashmiri and adopt Kashmiri culture. When we talk of culture, it does not mean eating *roganjosh* or *haakh* or wearing *pheran* but to carry forward and preserve host of rituals, basic sanskars from birth to death and traditions. Respect for elders, encouraging joint family system, celebration of festivals, preserving of folklore, performing and appreciating our musical and visual arts etc. Learn to love and practice basic Kashmiri cultural moorings.

7. NGOs and socio-cultural organizations have to shoulder responsibility to provide resources for preservation of language and culture by establishing Cultural centres with complete Kashmiri ambience, with facilities like learning/teaching of Kashmiri language and culture, art galleries, museums, libraries, seminar rooms, auditoriums, sports equipment, Kashmiri cuisine, entertainment etc. Such places should serve as alternatives to Clubs. While we have constructed a lot many Ashrams and temples but failed to establish such cultural centres. The Ashrams which have large infrastructures like Bhagwan Gopi Nath Asharam Jammu and many others could spare some space for such activities periodically. The Lal Ded Centre at Pamposh Enclave, Delhi is the only such centre which could be developed into one with such facilities as mentioned above.

The *shuhul taaph* organised by KECSS annually at Lal Ded centre and *Samanbal* organised by Kashmir Cultural Trust are few important events which may help preservation of language and culture to some extent. Other organisations like *Samprati* and *Naagrad adbi sangam* Jammu too are doing good work in this regard by organising seminars, conferences etc.

The role of CIIL, Mysore and NRLC Patiala has been phenomenal during last few decades. The materials produced and programmes organised were very helpful

for preservation and promotion of Kashmiri language and culture. The language camps for Kashmiri children organised at various places across the country proved beneficial and became popular. Unfortunately this Institute is currently in a very bad shape and not able to conduct any activity.

At an individual level an initiative of Sh AN Kaul Sahib former Editor-in-chief of Naad is worth mentioning here, who has set up Smt. Lalita Kaul Sahib annual awards for best speakers for youngsters in Kashmiri, being organised on the day of Mahashivratri by JKVM in Delhi. This has proved to be a good initiative towards preservation of Kashmiri in children. Another effort by JKVM of organising *Gaash tarukh* competition too could become a helpful one provided it is restricted to Kashmiri language only.

8. Subscription to *Vaakh*, the only literary journal in Devanagiri and some of our community magazines which carry the Kashmiri section may be of great help to be in touch with literary trends in Kashmiri and improve reading skill.

Whether we like it or not it is a hard fact that no other language than mother tongue remains the sole and complete language of communication. One may be an expert speaker in other languages but it is difficult to be a confident one and achieve the native speaker's level of ease and expertise in communication through other languages.

There is an individual and collective responsibility on all of us to contribute one or the other way, in this endeavour, do our best towards preserving our language, culture and thereby our identity as Kashmiri community. I hope all of us want to do that and live as proud Kashmiris where ever we may be.

The author is a writer, Linguist, media free lancer and former Director, MHRD, Govt. of India. His contribution is popularising the Kashmiri Language is phenomenal.
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RADIO SHARDA
90.04
(LISTEN AND BE HAPPY)

Arvind Gigoo

The ninety-one-year old man said: 'I would have died many years back but Radio Sharda kept me alive.'

An old Pandit woman goes on telling everybody: 'The lilas and Kashmiri songs broadcast from the radio every morning are profound. They give me solace.'

A young man said: 'I don't have the time for Radio Sharda. I am working for an MNC. Money is more important to me than anything else.'

Some years ago a handsome gentleman introduces himself as Ramesh Hangloo. He says that he wants to set up a private radio station in Jammu for the Kashmiri Pandit community. He talks with passion and conviction. Besides, he talks about the cultural troupe that he took to London a few years ago. He says that the idea of establishing a private radio station in Jammu came to him in London where he saw the radio stations of different communities broadcasting programmes about their culture, history and other things.

I think: 'This man seems to be a man with a vision. He is thinking on the right lines.'

And I leave with a feeling of satisfaction.

At times we meet on the roads and exchange pleasantries. Every time he talks about Radio Sharda. He does not talk of anything else. He has one goal, one fixation and one dream. He goes to Delhi four or five times a month to meet bureaucrats and others who can permit him to establish Radio Sharda in Jammu. At times I feel that he is a joker making a fool of himself.

Some years pass.

My wife switches on the radio which plays a Kashmiri devotional song. The first programme is broadcast. I listen intently. The man I met some years back is no funny jester. He is a serious man who wants to entertain and inform the Pandit community through Radio Sharda.

Ramesh Hangloo is an interviewer who interviews important Pandits of the community. The listeners wait for the conversations of Dr K L Chowdhury, Dr. K K Pandita and many others. They bring to the listeners useful information about health.

The programme **aaaradhana** has been going on for the past seven or eight years. The morning starts with the Kashmiri devotional songs. The announcer Anju Raina is excellent. She has won the hearts of the Kashmiri people. Her sensuous voice and its turns enthral all.

Sarita Raina, Sujata Pahalwan, Sandesha Kaul and many others present various programmes which are popular among the Pandit community. Sarita Raina presents **ram ram baedrean duen (The Rainbow)**. Bihari Kak, Bharati Zaroo Raina, Asha Zaroo, J K Raina and J K Kaul are some of the very talented radio artistes who, on Radio Sharda, greet the Kashmiri Pandits in the mornings, talk about many issues and thus make significant contribution to Kashmiri Pandit culture in exile. The poets recite poems and important persons of the community narrate their autobiographical sketches. **Safar zindagi hund (The Journey of Life)** is gripping. The programme reminds us of (**mean zindagi meon kaar**) **My Life My Work**. This interview lasts for one-and-a-half hours.

It is punctuated by Kashmiri songs. Women talk about religion, mythology and science. Discussions are broadcast which enlighten and inform and educate.

The names of the programmes are catchy and interesting. They evoke old times.

Kashmiri Pandits.....both men and women.....have got this platform for the first time in their lives. They freely speak on issues of public interest. The attention of the government is directed towards day-to-day problems of utmost interest like cleanliness, electricity, water supply and traffic.

Ramesh Hangloo says that the degree in journalism helped him become a broadcaster. And experience turned him into an interviewer.

A programme is about Pandit women. Some talks hint at the emancipation of women. Through one programme villages of Kashmir were/are introduced to the listeners.

Radio Sharda proved a boon for Pandit children. They participate in quiz programmes in Kashmiri. Besides, most of them are made to narrate interesting anecdotes, small stories and Kashmiri folktales.

Radio Sharda starts at 7 am and ends at 10 pm. Its psychological impact on the Pandits is visible. Pandits living in other countries of the world get connected to one another through it. Internet has made it possible for them to listen to Radio Sharda. If improved upon and channelized properly Radio Sharda can bring about a fruitful change in the community. It can free the community from the closed system it is a victim of. It has to free itself from some of the hackneyed and repetitive programmes it broadcasts.

Mr. A. Gigoo is the author of 'The ugly Kashmiri', 'Guliver in Kashmir', 'From Home to House' and has many translations to his credit. Cell : 8825054289.

*With Best Wishes to
Kashmir Sabha Members*

*From - Doctors
Jai Nath and Kanchan Gurtu*



PRESERVING OUR CULTURAL IDENTITY BY WAY OF PRESERVING OUR LANGUAGE

Dr Uday Kakroo

I have been asked to write an article on a subject, which is very close to my heart because every day I see that across the country or for that matter in the world, communities are facing the atypical syndrome of trying to keep their language intact and alive to preserve their cultural identity.

Every spoken language is representative of the culture of a particular community. Languages have held the communities together from one generation to the next. Each one of us must therefore realize the importance of protecting language to preserve our cultural heritage for posterity.

Research shows that migration plays a vital role in communities losing their language faster than non-migrating ones and thereby their cultural identity. The proverbial answer to explain this has been "While in Rome do as Romans do". And, the fact that this would lead to loss of national identity and cultural identity, is immaterial.

In 1991, Joshua Fishman, a great philosopher and writer also attributed language and culture shift to be physical and demographic dislocation, social dislocation and cultural dislocation.

Technology has made our lives easier in this digital age. But, digitization falls short when it comes to culture, as it cannot translate the "lullabies", the songs mothers sing to put their babies to sleep, the unique language by which mothers connect with their infants that has stood the test of time.

As the first teacher of the child, the language spoken by the mother usually becomes the language the child learns at home. A "mother tongue" is therefore the language first learned and first spoken by

the child. Our behaviour, values and beliefs are shaped by the mother tongue as it is the language that is most familiar to us since childhood. The richness of our traditions, cultural values, beliefs, rituals, mythology, folklore and cuisine that have been passed down for generations are narrated in one's native language by our ancestors and elders. All thoughts and emotions are best expressed through the native language. A dying language would mean the loss of this tremendous wealth.

Not many of us would know that there are around 6500 spoken languages today and about half of these are on the brink of extinction.¹

This is because English language has now become the preferred language globally. It is the only language, which is spoken and read by largest number of people in the world, for historical, political and socio economic reasons. Consequently, most of the languages around the world are finding a place in the endangered list. It has been estimated that 90% of the world's languages would become extinct by the end of this century.

I will now put across the viewpoints of many researchers who have worked on this subject with the hope that the reader may either choose to reject my viewpoint outright or may ponder over what has been written and realize the need for action.

In 2017, Kat Eschner has written in *Smithsonian Magazine* that four things that happen when a language dies are: "We lose the expression of a unique vision of what it means to be human, the memory of the planet's many histories and cultures and some of the best local resources for combating environmental threats; some people lose their mother tongue".²

"When a language dies what is primarily lost is the expression of a unique vision of what it means to be human," said David Crystal, honorary professor of linguistics at the University of Wales in the United Kingdom, and author of the book *Language Death*.³

In 2009, Paroma Basu wrote in the *National Geographic*, "The effects of language loss could be "culturally devastating. Each language is a key that can unlock local knowledge about medicinal secrets, ecological wisdom, weather and climate patterns, spiritual attitudes and artistic and mythological histories."

According to Jim Cummins from the University of Toronto, Children who come to school with a solid foundation in their mother tongue develop stronger literacy abilities in the school language. When parents and other caregivers (e.g. grandparents) are able to spend time with their children and tell stories or discuss issues with them in a way that develops their mother tongue vocabulary and concepts, children come to school well-prepared to learn the school language and succeed educationally. Children's knowledge and skills transfer across languages from the mother tongue they have learned in the home to the school language. From the point of view of children's development of concepts and thinking skills, the two languages are interdependent. Transfer across languages can be two-way: when the mother tongue is promoted in school (e.g. in a bilingual education program), the concepts, language, and literacy skills that children are learning in the majority language can transfer to the home language. In short, both languages nurture each other when the educational environment permits children access to both languages."⁴

Linguist James Crawford said, "When a language dies, it takes four major elements

with it: Linguistic diversity, intellectual diversity, cultural diversity, and cultural identity. These factors make the loss of a language similar to the loss of a species; once it's gone, there may be no way to recover what the world has lost."⁵

Use of the mother tongue in the growing up years helps the child bond with his parents, family, relatives, culture and history. Fluency in mother tongue makes it easy for the child to learn a second language. Supportive parents help their children to learn new languages, which enhances their vocabulary.

A language is dynamic and keeps on changing constantly, with addition of new words, which may have even been borrowed from other languages. A static language is a dead language. A language must constantly evolve and change to remain alive.

As far as we Kashmiris are concerned, regardless of the religion we practice, our tendency to speak non-Kashmiri languages, particularly Hindi/Urdu or for that matter, English language began to gain precedence in our homes since the early 80s, when private schools started mushrooming in the valley.

Research says that today more than 18% of the population in Kashmir, the youth in particular, have taken to speak in a language, other than Kashmiri at home, educational institutions or offices. Anyone found speaking his or her mother tongue is often regarded as backward or old-fashioned. Gaining fluency in spoken English over the mother tongue specifically has become a craze and is considered synonymous with high literacy and a symbol of modernization.

We do not hesitate to claim - with immense pride and rightfully so - to have descended from a very rich culture that has made significant contributions to the development of high human values globally

since ancient times; yet, when it comes to speaking our native language in homes or work places or even in community congregations, we hesitate to do so and tend to ignore its value.

While some children do learn and speak their mother tongue, most of them are moving away from their mother tongue; as a result the mother tongue is losing its importance. Therefore, it falls upon us as torch bearers of community values to enrich the childhood of our children by teaching them or speaking to them in Kashmiri language and expose them to the rich cultural heritage of our community.

All our brethren, who do not speak Kashmiri or have lost touch with the language, should be sensitized about the necessity of knowing and learning one's own mother tongue. It is important to make them understand that the ability to speak our mother tongue will connect them to our cultural heritage that they must have heard of or read about, but have never been able to relate to.

All of us who know the language should come together and design a language teaching methodology in such a manner that even a distant Kashmiri who may have left the valley centuries ago, is motivated to learn Kashmiri and is re-connected to his/her heritage via the language.

A researcher has put it, "culture and language have the deep-rooted relationship with language constituting an indispensable element of culture and the transmission of culture from one generation to other is possible only through the language and for preserving a culture and identity, safeguarding mother language is of utmost significance".

Parents who believe that by speaking Kashmiri, their children would not be able

to compete with others must know that there is credible research to suggest that proficiency in the mother tongue hastens learning of a second language. It falls on us, the parents, to appreciate the importance of the mother tongue (Kashmiri) and pass it on to the next generation to preserve the language for the future generations to come and save our cultural heritage for posterity. The grimpest predictions have 90 percent of the world's languages dying out by the end of this century. It would be a sad day if that happened with the Kashmiri language.

"Absolutely nothing is as important for nation's culture as its language" said Wilhelm von Humboldt in 1797.

I would like to conclude with the words of Joshua Fishman, who in his lecture on "What do you lose when you lose your language" in 1996 has given a captivating account of how Hebrew was revived from a sacred language to spoken language used in day to day life.

When Hebrew was being revived — a very unlikely success story— it had not been spoken in two thousand years, and those who knew the language best were opposed to its vernacular use. It was revived through terminologies, first by working out terminologies for carpentry and for kindergarten. Very close to what you need to have for every day, what adults needed every day and what teachers needed every day with those new children who were going to be the first children to be given the language very early, but not by their parents because their parents did not speak it. Rather by the few teachers who had learned to speak it. They were the ones to whom the children were entrusted. Children did not live with their parents. They lived in the children's home in a kibbutz with those teachers, the few

teachers who had forced themselves to learn how to speak it, not naturally but fluently. They needed a vocabulary for kindergarten, and the parents needed a vocabulary for carpentry. So, start low. Start exactly where the mother tongue starts and try to aim at that. Even the school can help you aim at that. Another bit of advice is, do not concentrate along institutional lines. Most languages are not institutional, but informal and spontaneous. That is where language lives. Children live; they play; they laugh; they fall; they argue; they jump; they want; they scream."

Creating cultural space is very important for a language if it is to become competitive within its own culture ... So there are family building, there are culture building, and there are intimacy building prerequisites for language fostering, things that you have to do because no school is going to do them."

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PRESERVE KASHMIR'S HERITAGE

Manmohan Dhar

India's claim on Kashmir does not arise only from the instrument of accession, but is based on irrefutable, deep, perennial, hoary and historical links, cultural affinity and religious identity from Kashyap Rishi to the varied and vibrant core of Indianness from Kashmir to Kanya Kumari and Kutch to Kamakhi in Assam.

The colourful pageant of a whole galaxy of kings, philosophers, historians, writers, religious luminaries, missionaries, artists etc. from Kashmir or those who visited Kashmir, includes great names like Kalhana, Panini, Patanjali, Kalidas, Shankracharya, Ramanuja, Pandvas, Ashoka, Kanishka, Krishna, Vivekananda, Lalitaditya, Abhinavagupta, Anandvardhana, Vasugupta, Kshemendra, Matrucheshta, Vasugupta etc. to name only a few.

Kashmir indeed was a centre of learning and active cultural and spiritual enquiry. Sanskrit was the *lingua franca* and according to Bilhana, even women spoke Sanskrit fluently. Though all over India Pali and Prakrit were predominant, it was the Kashmiri Scholars who helped to preserve the glory of Sanskrit language. Mahayan Buddhism was evolved and given coherent form and shape by Kashmiri scholars and Kashmiri missionaries fanned over to China, Tibet, Korea, Cambodia, Japan etc. to propagate the new faith.

Says Grierson,

"For upward of two thousand years Kashmir has been the home of Sanskrit learning and from this small valley have issued masterpieces of history, poetry, romance, fable and philosophy. For centuries Kashmir was the home of the greatest scholars". According to Lawrence "The valley of Kashmir is the

holy land of Hindus and I have rarely been in a village which cannot show some relic of Antiquity"

Upto the fourteenth century external cultural incursions largely made a quiet entry into the life and psyche of people, but after and during the fourteenth century dark clouds gathered on the horizon of Kashmir with the invasion of pathans. The gentle people of Kashmir, mostly Brahmins, engaged in pursuits of mind and spirit, with plenty of food, could not fight the sabre rattling and sinewy pathans, who had no respect for their knowledge, refined graces, and cultural excellence and easily overpowered these peace loving people into submission, followed by loot, rape, murder and conversion. Thus started the incursion of the Sword of Islam into Kashmir. Temples were demolished. Mosques were built on temple base structures. Pillars and stones of temples were used for building mosques and also as tomb stones. Hindus at one time were reduced to only eleven houses. The rest were killed, converted or forced to flee the land of their ancestors and seek shelter in various parts of India.

But the indomitable will of this gentle community did not give up. They faced torture by tolerance, persecution by patience and suppression with smiles. Their only defence against the sword of Islam was through suffering. The call of the valley was irresistible to the many who had left Kashmir. Under the benign rule of Zainulabidin, Kashmiri Pandits and Kashmiri Pandit Muslims evolved a new synthesis of Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam and Kashmiri version of a composite culture was born, which reached pinnacles of excellence in Laleshwari and Nunda Rishi.

In his message dated 15th December, 1981 to Kashmiri Samaj conference in Bombay, Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah states:

"Conjured and bequeathed to us by 'Kashyapa' the heritage of Kashmir was woven by the caresses of saints and godmen, who lived in the serene heights of the mountain valley ... like the crystal waters of a mountain sarovar, gurgling down the ages, singing an eternal song, the heritage has come down to us rich and varied absorbing into its bosom on its course the universal currents of Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam. At the confluence of those thoughts rose the celestial song or 'Lal Ded' that opened our eyes to the illusory differences of caste, creed and colour, beckoning us to seek the all prevailing oneness of human spirit ... and ingrained in our blood the nectar from the amalgam of the three faiths ... That is our heritage-the grandeur of which shone at the darkest hour of our history."

Indeed, in 1947, the amalgam of three faiths, making every Kashmiri truly secular, was put to the severest test. When India and Pakistan, following partition, were caught in the maelstrom of communal carnage; Muslims were standing guard at every house of Kashmiri Pandit to save them from loot, murder and rape by the Pakistani raiders, who were only three to four miles away from Srinagar. Kashmiri Muslims fought side by side with the Indian Army, to defeat the designs of invading forces of Pakistan to annex Kashmir to Pakistan by force.

Earlier Kashmiri Muslims had rejected overtures of Jinnah to the cult of Muslim League.

For Yaqub Khan, Yah Yah Khan and later to Bhutto, Kashmiri Muslims were their greatest undoing and their most shocking disappointment, during the three wars that Pakistan waged and lost against India to annex Kashmir. It was in a nut shell the

Catholic culture of Kashmir that came out triumphant through the repeated thrusts of communal Pakistan.

Right upto 1987-88, Kashmir was the safest place in India. Murders, dacoities, arson, pick-pocketing were virtually unknown. Hindus did not eat pork and availability of beef was almost unknown. Cow-slaughter was a crime very rarely resorted to by a few. Hindu women, young or old, laden with obligatory gold ornaments could move anywhere in Kashmir during day or night without being harassed or molested. Azan from mosques, temple bells and recitation of Sanskrit slokas filled the air so harmoniously each morning drawing Hindus and Muslims to prayer to the infinite aspects of Allah and Aham-Bramha. To the devout Kashmiri ear Quranic and Sanskrit recitations sounded identical in tune, tonal quality and indeed in spiritual content.

Zia-ul-Haq realised that Kashmir was defended by the impregnable wall of a catholic culture which the call for Islamic Jihad could not break through. He, therefore, drew up a plan to subvert and weaken the very fabric of this Catholic culture and a plan was drawn side by side with the armed subversion against Indian army, to destroy the Hindu links of Kashmir with India, declare the Sufi-culture un-Islamic and denigrate politicians, poets, writers and thinkers who upheld and promoted the composite culture of Kashmir.

Sheikh Abdullah was declared a traitor to the Islamic cause. Sheikh Nuruddin, Shamas Faqir, Waheb Khan Mahjoor and the other poets were declared reactionary. Kashmiri Pandits were declared as agents of India. Temples, monuments, manuscripts with links with Hindu history of Kashmir were ordered to be destroyed. Mosques were built by the side of temples. Lands belonging to the temples were appropriated for constructing Idgahs and for building mosques. Hindu names of towns and streets were changed to Muslim names. Anantnag town became Islamabad.

With money flowing into Kashmir from Middle East, Maqtabs for propagating Islamic fundamentalism and promoting anti-Hindu virus were started all over Kashmir. Non Kashmiri and non state subject Moulvis were inducted into Kashmir to delink Kashmiri Muslims from their composite culture and spiritual heritage. Even the tune of morning Azans was changed to sound like those in Arabian countries. Kashmiri youth were recruited with liberal lure of money and other rewards to 'save' Islam in Kashmir on the pretext that in Indian Kashmir Islam was in danger. A whisper campaign was set into motion telling Kashmiri Pandits that they were unwanted citizens living in Kashmir at the courtesy of the majority and the sooner they left Kashmir the better would it be for them.

The list of various actions planned is long, but the most important and frightening aspect of this whole plan is, that while the Indian army is defending Indian's presence in Kashmir, Pakistan has largely succeeded in putting into effect most of the subversive programmes to destroy Hindu content in Kashmiri catholic culture.

The most glaring, unprecedented and gruesome evidence of this plan is that Kashmiri Pandits have had to leave under persistent and repeated threats, partially carried out, of loot, rape, arson and murder. Temples and monuments were and are being desecrated and a large number of Manuscripts having links with greatest of Hindu celebrities in Kashmir, are under threat of being completely destroyed.

The least that can be said to caution authorities is that time is running out fast, and at the end of it all, while India may continue its hold on Kashmir, it will be like holding on to an empty shell from which the Kernel of culture garnered through centuries has been scooped out

and thrown on the dump heap of oblivion. Says Dr. Kalidas Nag, the great Historian:

"Toleration was the keynote of Kashmiri culture which would help the cause of Indian integration. ... The pre-Aryan races used to speak a dialect called "Paisachi Prakrit" which along with Sanskrit must have left many manuscripts crumbling in humid climate. So conservation is a difficult problem for which we must depend upon the expert help of 'UNESCO' authorities."

Little did the great historian anticipate that a time was going to come when not only humid climate but vicious agents of vandalism would make concerted, covert and deliberate attempts to destroy this precious heritage, which will have to be effectively thwarted.

A meticulously planned minimum working and workable programme has to be immediately put into action with a view to -

- a. Retrieving all these manuscripts, putting them in a safe place and taking measures, with the help of UNESCO, if necessary, to preserve them,
- b. Ensuring that the ancient monuments, of Hindus, Buddhists and Muslims, sculptures and old and new temples are properly and effectively protected, preserved and renovated; and
- c. Thwart every effort by the Fundamentalists to destroy the catholic culture of Kashmir nourished and nurtured over last five thousand years.

A Committee should be immediately set up to draw up details meticulously of how this can be done and formulate a strategy, in a manner in which least suspicion is raised, to prevent fundamentalists agents from destroying this valuable heritage.

This is an extract from late Manmohan Dhar's book, 'On Indian Values, Kashmir & Other Articles.'

H A W A N



Section III

**Preserving and Expanding
Social Media, Global Networking
and Sabhas/Samitis.**

CRYSTAL BALL GAZING - RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT

Ashok Dhar

Ever since Ms. Reena Dhar, Editor of VITASTA tasked me to share some thoughts on the theme as to how our Kashmiri Pandit community can preserve and expand social coherence through social media, global networking and Sabhas/Samitis, I have been swept by mixed feelings of hope and anxiety for what can lie in store for our community going ahead. At the outset, let me recall that Kashmir Sabha, Kolkata had brought out a special annual number at the time of its golden anniversary, Volume number XXXVII for 2005-6, edited by Dr B K Moza as Editor-in chief which suggested Sabhas, Samaj and Sammelans as the mantra for maintaining solidarity of our Biradari and long term survival with a distinct identity. Not much could be written to challenge this mantra, except adding Facebook, Twitter and Whatsapp which have brought the community closer in a virtual world for discussing issues of relevance affecting the community. Regrettably, a little over a decade since the golden anniversary number of VITASTA, our return to valley with safety, dignity and honour has still not happened and it seems to be of little concern to both central and state governments.

In such a background one can only do some crystal ball gazing in retrospect and prospect or look for some Nostradamus who can predict our future! Let us take a pause and look back in retrospect to look at our history as to how our community has survived thus far when faced with similar challenging circumstances in past. Those who do not learn from history are often condemned to repeat it.

From the earliest times upto 1150 AD, as recorded in *Rajatarangini* by Kalhana and its sequels written by Joonaraja (1150-

1450 AD), Sriivora (1459-1486 AD) and Praajya Bhatt (1486-1518 AD), it can be well argued that Kashmir was ruled by Kings and Queens professing Hinduism and Buddhism till about mid 14th century. Islamic rule began with Rinchin and got later consolidated under Shah Mir dynasty from mid-14th century to late 16th century. During the time when Hinduism and Buddhism co-existed and flourished, entire kingdom was largely practising Shaivite beliefs, except for a brief period when a significant section followed Buddhism. Mutual respect for both beliefs was the hallmark of society but after the visit of Adi Shankara in 8th century, revival of Hinduism in full glory was ensured. Great scholars like Abhinavgupta and others synthesised deep understanding of Vedanta and propagated a system of Shaivism, which did not discriminate between followers based on their caste, sex, level of knowledge or religion. It was basically a path of a spiritual journey respecting universal divinity while advocating a way of life where material and spiritual pursuits could be followed in tandem. There was no need for community to leave valley for about many thousands of years as people lived in a state of harmony. Hence, let us take a deep dive into the periods in history of Kashmir when exodus happened and how our community members maintained their cohesiveness and solidarity after leaving valley. This is based on my understanding of history and events, which I must disclose at the outset is not my primary area of expertise.

The first reported exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from valley happened during then famous reign of Sikander (1389-1413 AD)

of the Shah Mir dynasty who was disdainfully referred to as the 'iconoclast'. Sikander had little reverence for the intellectual depth and spiritual tradition of the Kashmiri Pandits. The story goes that Sikander issued a notorious decree ordering the Pandits to convert to Islam (*Raliv*) or opt for exile (*Tsaliv*) or else flee their homes (*Galiv*). The decree released a wave of destructive activities directed at the Pandits. Their homes were raided and sacred books were thrown in the Dal Lake. Saif-ud-din, the Minister, helped Sikander destroy images and temples and unleash wholesale destruction of Hindu shrines including the Martand temple and forcibly convert Hindus into Islam. Regrettably, he happened to be a Kashmiri Pandit in origin and a recent convert to Islam. Being rendered defenceless, the petrified Pandits deserted their homes and sought refuge outside Kashmir. Only eleven Kashmiri Pandit families were reported to have survived this phase of tyranny to stay back in the Valley. While this may be an exaggeration, suffice it to conclude that conditions forced most to convert and some to flee valley. It is ironic that the same slogans (*Raliv*, *Tsaliv* or *Galiv*) were raised in Kashmir from the mosques to create an environment of fear and coercion seven hundred years later in January 1990 that led to the last exodus of about 3.5 lakh Kashmiri Pandits in that year.

The second exodus took place during the rule of the Chaks (1506-1585 AD). The Chaks heaped untold misery on the Pandits by brutalizing them and obliging them to pay taxes for practising their religious rites and in the process, drove them to the desperation of seeking shelter outside Kashmir.

The third exodus can be traced to the times of Aurangzeb. Spurred by the zeal to Islamize the empire, Aurangzeb appointed several subehdar/administrators in far flung parts of the empire. It was Iftikar

Khan (1671-75 AD) who persecuted Kashmiri Pandits to such an extent for conversion that they approached Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Sikh Guru, at Anandpur and sought his personal intervention with the emperor on their behalf. This led to the Guru's martyrdom and conversion of the Sikh community into fighting Khalsa under his son, Guru Gobind Singh.

The fourth time the Pandits were compelled to leave their hearth was during the dark rule of the Afghans (1752 -1819 AD) whose barbaric propensities merged with religious frenzy and hatred for the infidels and even Muslims of Shia faith in valley were not spared.

The fifth exodus happened in 1931 when a group of young Kashmiri Muslim intellectuals expressed dissatisfaction at the Pandits monopolising government jobs in Kashmir. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was one of the prominent faces who stoked Muslim resentment over the privileges allegedly enjoyed by the illustrious Pandits. On 13 July 1931, the Pandits once again became targets of the religious frenzy of the Muslim intellectual youth. Helpless Pandits witnessed their properties being burnt and lives of family members and near and dear ones being lost. Many such victims of sectarian strife left their home for the fifth time in history.

The sixth exodus happened in 1986 when Gul Shah, the brother-in-law of Dr Farooq Abdullah seized power for twenty months. Gul Shah's brief reign was marked by anarchy, complete breakdown of administration and worst of all, communal tensions that could explode into a major upheaval. Shah himself played a diabolical game of inciting the Muslims against the Hindus by raising the slogan of 'Islam khatre mein hain' (Islam is in danger) and instigating a bloody programme directed towards the Pandits. The Pandits in

Southern Kashmir were targeted, their temples desecrated, womenfolk molested and properties destroyed. With the tacit support of the Islamist fundamentalists who, by that time, had begun to spread their tentacles in the region, the programme once again convinced the Pandits of their fragile existence in Kashmir and for the sixth time in history, forced some of them to leave the comfort of their homes and seek shelter elsewhere. The 1986 episode was only a miniscule version of the seventh and the last massive exodus that took place in 1990 in the wake of Islamic insurgency in Kashmir.

Those Kashmir Pandits who fled their homes *en masse* in the last exodus of 1990 were not destined to go back anymore; yet, over 28 years down the line, the idea of returning to the comforts of our home and hearth still remains a distant dream!

Let us now analyse the impact of various waves of exodus. The Kashmiri Pandits who migrated to the plains from valley as a result of the first exodus did mostly return back during the rule of Zain-ul-Abidin (1420-1470 AD). However, large number of Kashmiri Pandits who migrated post the second exodus and thereafter decided to settle down in their new chosen places of settlement. By virtue of God given intellect, with blessings of Goddess Saraswati and by dint of their hard work, they rose to very high positions in mainland India. Most of them settled in Allahabad, Lucknow, Delhi, Lahore and in states like Rajasthan, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh. People who migrated during the first, second, third and the fourth exodus got labelled as "Old Kashmiris" indicating their origin from Kashmir as they had lost touch with their mother tongue. People who left during the fifth, sixth and seventh phases of exodus could still speak Kashmiri as their mother tongue. However, "Old Kashmiries" retained their social coherence by adherence to Kashmiri rituals for various ceremonies, especially marriages, and tried to arrange marriages

of their children of within the community itself. Sometimes, they would also marry their sons with girls from community in valley when no appropriate match was available in plains. They also absorbed local customs and traditions of society and community of their place of settlement and got recognised everywhere for their sharp intellect and social skills.

The Nehrus, Saprus, Katjus, Haksars, Hukkus, Atals, Tankhas, Wanchos, Tikus, Dhars, Kunzroos are well known names amongst "Old Kashmiris". As a Kashmiri Pandit one can only be proud of the fact that these displaced people in a couple of generations rose to the highest levels of professional achievement in whatever they chose to pursue.

To name a few, Shambhu Nath Pandit became the first Indian Judge of Calcutta High court. A road and a hospital in Bhowanipur in South Kolkata are named in his honour and memory. Regrettably, he died at a young age of 42 yrs. Pandit Bishan Narayan Dhar, another lawyer by background, became the first to serve as the President of Indian National Congress in 1911. He was later followed by Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, a lawyer and politician, was chosen as the representative of Indian Liberals at the Round Table Conference (1931-1933) which sought to discuss grant of autonomy to Indian states. Dr. Kailash Nath Katju became Governor of Orissa and West Bengal and also served as Home and Defence Minister of independent India.

In post independent India, their children also rose to high positions in bureaucracy, diplomacy and the corporate world. P N Haksar served as Principal Secretary to Prime Minister and his cousin Neel Haksar became a diplomat. Ajit Narayan Haksar became the first Indian Chairman of ITC Ltd., and he was succeeded by his brother in-law J N Sapru. Kichloo brothers made a mark in arts and culture and Rajive Kaul

became the youngest President of Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

The people who migrated post-independence at the time of partition and thereafter before 1990 to pursue their career aspirations maintained their zeal for excellence. S L Shakder became Chief Election Commissioner, P N Dhar, an eminent Economist, became Principal Secretary to Prime Minister, T N Kaul became Indian Foreign Secretary, D P Dhar became Dy. Chairman of Planning Commission, R N Kao became the First head of Research and Analysis Wing (RAW). Kashmiri Pandits rose to become Chairman of leading public sector undertakings like NTPC, Indian Oil, HPC and others. They continued to excel in arts and culture, journalism, academics and whatever was a knowledge and intellect based profession.

While they continued to rise in their career, they realised a dire need for maintaining their social cohesiveness and identity setting the process of forming Sabhas. Perhaps, the first Kashmiri Pandit Sabha to come up outside Kashmir was in Amritsar in 1908. It was followed by a Sabha in Jammu in 1913. Kashmir Sabha, Kolkata was formed on Feb 19, 1956 at Federation Hall with Dr Govindjoo Vaishnavi as President and S S Raina as Secretary. A Kashmir Sahayak Sabha was set up in Delhi in 1953 and Dr H N Kunzru, community stalwart and statesman, laid the foundation stone of Kashmir Bhawan in Delhi on Feb 12, 1967. "Old Kashmiris" had a Kashmir Mandal in Mumbai and a new KPA Mumbai was formed in early 1950's. Both were merged in late 1970's. A Sabha too came up in Chandigarh in 1964 and momentum for new Sabhas was maintained.

Kolkata Sabha became a very vibrant community which issued its first *Vitasta* Annual Number edited by S S Raina in 1960. It was annual issue of community

newsletter named "News & Views". Every year, the community would meet to celebrate Navroz (Navreh) at the lawns of Governor Dr Katju's house. The first VITASTA annual number received messages from Bakshi Ghulam Ahmed as Prime Minister of Jammu & Kashmir, Sheo Narayan Fotedar, Chairman of Legislative Council Kashmir, Pandit Gopi Kishen, social worker and Dr. Kailash Nath Katju, the then Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh. Surprisingly, the contributors to the first VITASTA number were preoccupied with finding answers to the question "Whither Kashmiri Pandits" as reflected in the foreword of the Editor!

The mass exodus of 1990 has surprised everyone because it has lasted much longer than expected. Most Kashmiri Pandits who left *en masse* in 1990 expected the might of the Indian state and the state government to restore normalcy in the valley within months, if not days. Clearly, the Indian state was caught in a deep slumber and was grossly unprepared and ill equipped to face the challenges of radical Islam and militancy. It was beyond the imagination of the Kashmir Pandits in Valley in 1990 to picture a scenario that would make them leave their home and hearth for over 28 years. Regrettably, no one can predict how long this exodus will last. The suffering of community with limited assistance by various governments could once again be only mitigated by the strong belief of our Biradri in taking up "pen" and not "gun" and believing in self-help to secure a bright future for their children. Educating children and living in a trauma in depressing conditions was not easy. The members of the biradri, mostly service class, did their individual best to mitigate the suffering of their brethren. We sometimes fail to acknowledge how all of us have tried to be of some help in our humble ways considering that no one had ever imagined

that entire community will have to leave valley due to spread of fear and hatred.

The community members post the last exodus in 1990 mostly settled in Jammu and Delhi but large numbers also reached various places in Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Telengana. Unlike the first exodus during the reign of Sikander Butshikan, when Kashmir valley was insulated with limited connectivity and modes of transport, availability of quick evacuation modes by air or road in cars, taxis, buses and trucks helped *en masse* exodus in 1990. Our forefathers during the reign of Sikander Butshikan were not so lucky and could not escape the onslaught of forced conversion.

After attaining good professional education, our next generation of internally displaced people post 1990 has already started showing promise of bright future with blessings of Goddess Saraswati. It is so creditable and heart-warming to see the current generation setting up new Start Up enterprises, anchoring TV shows, joining IAS/IFS and making the community proud of its strength as individual professional achievers. Apart from excelling in various walks of life in India, this generation has spread its wings beyond Indian borders. Every day one hears of success stories of the younger generation now settled in USA, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and other distant places. Children of generations that migrated to the USA, for instance, during 1960s and 1970s have already reached positions of power and authority in their professions. Neel Kashkari, son of Prof. Kashkari became Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Financial Stability Crisis post Lehman crisis in USA. Aditya Bamzai, Associate Professor of Law, was recently nominated as legal expert for agency on privacy and

civil liberties in USA. Josh Kaul has been elected as the Attorney General in Wisconsin. The list is growing and endless. With such demonstrated achievements, one can be pretty sure in confidently predicting a brilliant high performance orientation for our progeny in whatever and wherever they wish to pursue. What could be the likely pitfalls?

One, unlike the desire and commitment of people who left the valley before 1947, marriages outside the community due to more liberal and modern orientation is likely to impact the Kashmiri identity over next few generations since the global population is not more than 7 lakhs. It is normal for children studying and working in various places spread over length and breadth within India and abroad to intermingle with people of different backgrounds and marry outside the community. While some introspection could help mitigate this trend, it is unlikely to be reversed in a big way in short and medium terms. Two, current generation is fast losing touch with mother tongue. Lack of knowledge of Kashmiri language may become a big setback for maintaining distinct cultural identity and cohesiveness amongst children of about 3 lakh people who migrated *en masse* in 1990. In absence of language skills, developing love for hearing and understanding Kashmiri music is unlikely. Three, due to more nuclear and DINK (double income no kids) families gaining currency, love of Kashmiri cuisine is also going for a toss reducing cooking expertise within homes for staple dishes. Language, food, dress, music and rituals are important components of ethnicity. A question then arises: if our ethnicity goes, for how long can we maintain our distinct identity as a community?

Some of these pitfalls are not new as the community had early warnings and was engaging to address them. All India

Kashmir Samaj (AIKS) was formed in Allahabad in 1980 under the Presidentship of Justice P.N. Bakshi to pro-actively address some of these issues with key objectives of removing evils of dowry system, securing suitable matches for boys and girls of marriageable ages within the community and encouraging group yagneopavit and marriage ceremonies. Helping young men and women to gain requisite skills for securing employment, coordination with all Sabhas and conducting annual Sammellans and interaction with the diaspora abroad were other objectives of AIKS.

At the time of formation of AIKS in 1980, it had 22 affiliated Samajs. In fact nine Samajs were added in just 9 months, prior to the formation of AIKS, in Patiala, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Moradabad, Jodhpur etc. in addition to the active Sabhas in Amritsar, Delhi, Lucknow, Calcutta, Allahabad and Mumbai. We can now take pride in the number of understandably over 350 registered Sabhas/Samitis/Associations in India and abroad. New Sabhas have come up in places such as Jammu, Bengaluru, Faridabad, Ghaziabad, Gurgaon, Noida, Ambala, Hyderabad, Pune, Jalandhar and in many other places post 1990 for collectively observing main festivals and community rituals. Sabhas/Associations have also come up in USA, Australia, Middle East, Europe and New Zealand and these can surely help in maintaining our social cohesiveness. Younger generation of entrepreneurs are also networking for KP Start Up enterprises and for a service class mentality driven community, which augurs well for the future of our community.

While each Sabha and Samiti is trying its utmost to preserve its cultural heritage, absence of unified leadership to guide the community is sadly missed. Despite the worst upheaval of community from valley and our suffering lasting over 28 years,

no lessons seem to have been learnt. With regret, one notes the comment of Col. Tej K Tikoo, President, AIKS in October 2018. Accession Day Special Issue of NAAD magazine "The Chimera of Unity" (page 4) regarding observing 'Balidaan Divas' on September 14 by different organisations at two different places, Jantar Mantar and B K Ganjoo Memorial Park in New Delhi.

"Whether we achieved anything in terms of our political struggle or not is debatable, but one thing we certainly did achieve i.e. conveying in no uncertain terms that we are as divided as ever even while asking for what exactly we want".

Looking ahead, Kashmir Pandits who had to flee their homes in 1990 are not likely to go back soon. Thought of returning to the comforts of our home and hearth with security, dignity, employment and honour in an inclusive society is a dream we should see day in and day out. However, our next generation will be born in places thousands of miles away from Kashmir. T.S. Eliot once said, "home is where one starts from." For children of our children and their children, regrettably home can be in distant lands in USA, UK, Australia or any other place in India. Kashmir will always remain home for me because that is where I was born and schooled and from where I set off into the wider world. One cannot expect the same level of association, enthusiasm and attachment of the journey if one starts from a home outside Kashmir. For instance, Josh Kaul, now elected as the Attorney General in USA is son of an immigrant Kashmiri Pandit and a Wisconsin born American. He is married to an American. It is unlikely that his children will have any connect or attachment with Kashmir unless he becomes proud of something in our heritage which he can propagate with zeal that commands respect of our future generations and people when they interact with heritage, so distinct, so powerful and so integral to humanism which attracts and commands universal respect.

For that what should we do? First, every Kashmir Pandit in current generation should learn and understand 'Kashmir Shaivism'. It gives primacy to universal consciousness and can help gain global acceptance and respect to help us retain a distinct identity for our social, cultural and welfare activities, even when our ethnicity faces challenging times. Second, we must all endeavour to visit Kshir Bhawani once a year, on Jeshtha Ashtami day from wherever we are based. It should be like undertaking a yearly Hajj like pilgrimage. People who are in Jammu, Delhi or other parts may visit the temple once a month on Ashtami days to create awareness about our roots. Mata's temple should over the years become the catalyst for the community at a global level. Younger generation can take advantage of the pilgrimage to visit other places of tourist attraction and show their children the place of their forefathers. As decades go by, it can become a fulcrum of the community's survival. Three, as shared by me in an article published in the last annual number, "Fact sheet from Kashmir", a permanent solution to the problem requires a deep understanding of many dimensions independently of and in

conjunction with each other viz Legality, Land, Morality, Operationality, Kashmiriyat, Sufism, Historicity and Identity (Le La MOKSHI). It will take time to implement a pareto optimal solution and I am researching to write about it in a book. Sharing historical folk tales and songs of Kashmir can educate the younger generation of the depth of understanding of our forefathers. For instance, Heemal and Nagrai can help reveal a modern day Nagin TV serial as a poor clone. Children can remember Lullaby and short stories lifelong. Hence, our mantra of Sabhas, Samitis and Sammellans for social cohesiveness and solidarity can be supplemented by new mantras : First, "Learn Kashmir Shaivism"; Two, "Chalo Kshir Bhawani" and Three, "Propogate Kashmiri folk tales and songs."

May Lord Shiva bless us all. Om Namah Shivay !

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SOCIAL MEDIA FOR OUR COMMUNITY - A BLESSING OR A CURSE?

Sunil Fotedar

Background

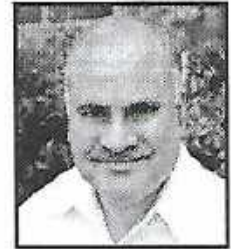
Ever since the advent of internet, sometime in early to mid-1990s when it became available to individuals in large numbers especially to those of us residing in the Western countries, several technological advances have taken place over the years. What was available to a few people is a worldwide phenomenon that is now used not only for personal communication or discussion between various individuals but has become a vehicle for e-commerce where a majority of commercial enterprises depend on the revenue generated through its platform.

This all started with one having personal e-mail ids and access to various bulletin boards, designed for any topic or region, where one could read and post messages freely. Here in the US, we also started a private e-mail group for our community members, where we would share details and discuss various issues on a regular basis. On one occasion when one member was attacked personally, we set a few guidelines for posting messages so that members are not offended. This was a huge learning curve back then. Soon afterwards, we had domain-based e-mail ids provided by hotmail.com, and later by yahoo.com and gmail.com to name a few. The internet started mushrooming from that point onwards to other countries such as India. After this, the first few years in early part of this century saw emergence of social media such as Facebook and Twitter that allowed individuals to connect with each other, even with those that they had not seen for 30, 40 or even 50 years.

Curse

Internet is no doubt one of the biggest achievements in the history of humankind,

other than landing a man on the moon in 1969. It is an extremely powerful tool that can be used to bring about positive changes to our lives. But it is a double-edged sword that can cut both ways, as its power can



also be misused wittingly or out of ignorance. As far as our community is concerned, we are indebted to our ancestors for inculcating value of education that has been our ticket to freedom from dark ages of tyranny, discrimination and persecution at the hands of our adversaries in Kashmir. However, just because we are an educated community, it does not make all of us net-savvy. Getting on internet and writing on several forums from our homes may give us some comfort, but this is false sense of security in this age of dark web. There are hackers and cyber-criminals out there watching for every single wrong move we make, using such techniques as social engineering, phishing and implanting malware on our computers, and one false step can potentially result in us losing life savings if we are not careful. Then there are netiquettes (proper etiquettes on using internet) that one must learn and adopt. I request members getting on to the internet first time around to familiarize themselves with netiquettes as there are many resources available on internet. One should not just assume that he knows everything. Because of our exodus from our homeland Kashmir, our community is scattered all over the world. We have truly become a global community, and as such we must make ourselves familiar with local laws and customs. Some countries enjoy more freedoms to express oneself than

others. What we write on any social media platform can land us in trouble, legally or otherwise, depending on the place we live at. In one particular instance, a professional from our community in India lost his job because of what he wrote against our adversaries on Facebook. People in several countries like India have been thrown in jail for what they wrote on Facebook. Long before the advent of fake news and Russians being accused of sowing seeds of discord between various ethnic groups in the 2016 US presidential elections in order to discourage citizens from voting for a particular candidate, and in favor of the sitting president, our adversaries have used fake Kashmiri Pandit-sounding names on various discussion forums to initiate ugly debates and divide our unsuspecting community in several groups. As administrator of one popular Facebook group, we have kicked out several fake identities from our group over last several years.

Blessing

If we are careful with using the internet as it was intended to be, everything about it is not all that gloomy. In fact, such platforms as Facebook and Twitter provide us with immense opportunities to do good to our community in many ways. Instead of wasting time and bandwidth in engaging with such endless debates as inter-caste marriage, unity in our community, whether we should be called Pandits or Hindus or Brahmins (several times discussed in the past on several forums without any end result, no matter how significant these topics can be to any individual), or using our enormous resources at our disposal for building '*hawans* and '*bhawans*' even though it may be important for some, we should think of ways to bring about positive impact to our community, especially to those among us who are still in dire need. Our community has no dearth of ideas but expressing our idea on any forum expecting

someone else to take up on our idea and run with it, is not ever going to happen. If we have something positive to contribute, we should own it up, express our idea on a forum, engage in dialog with other members and convince them that your idea is worth pursuing.

Social media can be used as a platform not to only address several challenges our community faces but initiate several working groups that tackle these from various angles. Most of us have now well-settled professionally, but there are some of us who have fallen through the cracks and need our immediate help. I have identified the following areas:

1. We have such problems as educational needs, as well as living conditions that need to be addressed. We have several organizations in India and Western countries doing their part but the fact that we still have some unfortunate brethren who are still in need to meet their educational expenses tells us that more is required. I am associated with Kashmiri Overseas Association (KOA), which is a charitable organization based in the US. A few individuals in our community soon after our exodus from Kashmir had the vision to identify certain problem areas and dedicated themselves to addressing those issues, not by using words but by action, such as financially supporting young kids and professionals to pursue our greatest asset, i.e. education. These programs have been running flawless for the past 25 years and counting. India-based organizations should parallel the efforts of KOA in terms of raising funds from well-to-do KPs in India for educational needs of those children that are not covered by KOA. It is not only KPs outside India that should be expected to help, but as they say, charity begins at home.

2. One more thing that needs our immediate action – with a lot of medical cases like kidney, liver and heart failures,

as well as life-threatening road accidents, it has become extremely difficult to raise money in large sums through appeals, primarily because of donor fatigue, and that too donations are collected on a short notice. Having some form of medical insurance in Western countries, with rising medical costs is an absolute necessity, without which we would be doomed financially should there be a medical emergency. Though we have organizations doing their utmost to cover for the medical expenses of those in need, but why leave it to chance and address it at the last minute? We have brought up the idea of making everyone in our community buy universal healthcare insurance that can be bought for peanuts, and those who cannot afford to buy premiums for their medical insurance can be supported financially by us.

3. We need working groups of brilliant minds to address such institutions as the UN to get our community declared as ethnic cleansed that led to our exodus from our homes and hearths of 5 centuries in the early 1990s, as well as build strong cases with witnesses to try all those with our blood on their hands with crimes against humanity in the court of law, if not Supreme Court of India, then ICC at Hague.

It is a given fact that we do not possess enough votes to help any political party in India. While delivering press briefs may be important, but it is not sufficient any more only to prove that we exist. It is high time

we choose deeds over words. What better way of communicating and addressing our issues and coming up with collective solution in an expeditious manner than social media that provides us access to our *biradari* anywhere in the world at a moment's notice! If we are careful in using social media, I see it as a blessing and God-sent for our community at large.

Disclaimer

I am not being critical here, as my suggestions seem to have ruffled many feathers in the past within certain quarters but requesting everyone to look at these suggestions with an open mind. We all love our community in our own unique ways and hope and pray that every member prospers. We are in it all together.

I wish everyone a happy and joyous new year 2019. May our community achieve the heights of glory never seen before in our entire history.

Associated with KOA for the last three decades including that of President twice, Mr. Sunil Fotedar has been responsible for creating a large number of websites for the community and programme director of KOA's Sponser a Child programme which supports 375 children living in the camps for their education. Recipient of Sharda Samman for Panner Kashur, Special Zoan Award by KPA, Mumbai and Sharika Samman from Kashmiri Sevak Samaj Faridabad.
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BANGALORE SABHA STRIVING TO PRESERVE OUR CULTURAL TRADITIONS

R. K. Mattoo

The mass exodus of our community with a history of 5000 years, from our roots in the valley has devastated our culture and traditions, even though we have appreciably recovered on educational, economical and social fronts.

Not knowing that the community will continue to remain in exile, even after nearly three decades have gone by, very little attention was paid to preserve our culture and traditions. Since the community was left to fend itself, with no concerted support either from the central or state governments, the struggle for existence started from day one.

Getting a one room accommodation or admission in a school for our children or a reservation in a train, a gas connection or a ration card became the immediate necessity for members of the community. The support from some political parties or the central government trickled not at regular intervals and with the result each individual started fighting his own battle.

Today, our present generation is doing much better in the field of education or employment and economically too, but not many are talking about our culture or traditions. Even some of the frontal KP organizations concentrated on reaching out to needy and thought of preserving and propagating our culture and traditions received a back seat. With the result small groups scattered all over the country and abroad live in silos.

It was only in the early 2010 that many KP organizations took up the preservation and propagation of our age old culture and traditions which will keep the community thriving. We saw many ashrams owing

allegiance to various saints and sages coming up in Jammu and Delhi and of late in other big cities of India which have become the places of mass meetings. A good trend indeed but needs large scale patronage from the youngsters.

Sharda language is being revived and taught by several organizations through private classes and also in association with some universities. Many books have been written on our religious places, rituals, traditions and festivals which are bound to impact the younger generation in their quest to know their roots.

In 1990 nearly 200 families suddenly landed in Bangalore and were accommodated in various *choultrys* and *mutts*, even on railway platforms. They were working in ITI and HMT and a few nationalized banks. For months they could not get adjusted in their PSUs. After a great struggle, they were accommodated in one room quarters and their salaries got delayed by months together.

Then a need to have an organization was felt to take up the problems with authorities jointly for better results. Kashmiri Hindu Samithi Karnataka was formed under Registrar of Societies Act. This turned out to be a lifeline for the displaced community in Bangalore and parts of Karnataka.

A need was felt to have a place of our own which will become the focal point for discussing our problems and also act as a common address for the community members in exile.

In the year 2000, KHS approached the government headed by Sh. S M Krishna with three demands:

1. To allot a plot of land for construction of a Bhavan to house a library and showcase our culture and traditions. There was a need to celebrate all our festivals together so that the younger generation could carry forward the age old traditions and keep them alive.

2. To register all KPs as Migrants from Valley in order to claim their statehood at any later stage.

3. To give reservations in educational institutions including engineering and medical courses and facilitate our children in getting free education.

All the three things were granted which proved to be a boon for the community in exile.

A Bhavan with 15,000 sq. ft of covered area (three floors) was constructed and inaugurated in 2013. In 2014, a KP Martyrs' Memorial, first of its kind in the country was also established, besides a library mostly having books on Kashmir and community history. It has a yoga hall, a dining hall, kitchen, four double rooms with bath and toilet, an auditorium which can house 350 people and a Hawan Shalla for celebrating our festivals and Hawans. Many marriages and yagneopavit in traditional manner have already been conducted at Bhavan.

Of late, a Shiva temple (Neelakantheshwara Temple) has been added and was thrown open to public on October 14, 2018.

Ishwar Ashram Trust (IAT) was also housed last year where teachings of Swami Lakshman Joo and Shaivism are being propogated.

Every effort is being made to make this Bhavan a common meeting place for the community so that our culture and traditions are kept alive despite being away from our roots.

Bhavan has become a focal centre for discussion on how we can preserve our cultural link after our migration from Kashmir, which is a genuine concern. We have a glorious culture developed by our ancestors over a long period of more than five thousand years. No one would like to dissociate himself with such an inheritance.

When we talk about culture, we mean our language, religious traditions, social customs, festivals, music, singing and dance, food, dress, art etc.

Unfortunately our Kashmiri language remained as a spoken language only. It has not developed as a mass medium for conveying our written thoughts. How can we then preserve this language, even as a spoken one? Perhaps the answer is to speak it in the family and familiarize children with its usage.

We are a highly religious people but we have not learnt the art of performing our religious functions. Today, we do not have sufficient priests in our community who can spread our religion. With the result, our religion and rituals are shrinking by the day. The day is not far off when we may have to adopt local rituals.

Our festivities in the social life are linked with our religious activities, with the result over the years spiritual content of a religious function has almost disappeared. There is a need to simplify our rituals.

Social customs are passed on from the older generation to young and it is through the social customs that we share the joys and sorrows of our loved ones. So we must know our social customs especially those associated with marriages, festivals or even in the case of death. This is our great inheritance, which can bind us together.

Even after three decades of our displacement, the community has not been

able to come out with a global directory. However, there are directories available of small groups but that does not serve the purpose of keeping the community together.

To keep the local touch in the food we cook and eat, we have set up a store where all typical spices and other pooja items are available. We also hold functions on festivals and try to educate our children the importance of celebrating these festivals.

Every year we hold a music festival where Kashmiri artists are given a platform to

perform and showcase their talent. On every function, our own kashmiri food is being served in traditional manner. Concerned over the fading away of cultural and religious ceremonies, we are constantly making renewed efforts to revive ancient rituals that are unique to the Hindus of the Valley.

Mr. R. K. Mattoo is the Editor of 'Spade a Spade', the journal of the Bangalore Kashmiri Association. Email : rkmattoo@gmail.com, Cell : 9448087344.

*"Hear O dear, the sweet sweet symphony,
I improversed a bridge of self and moved across;
And I beheld a bright revealing dawn;
Who a Hindu there, who a Musalman?
All skin, none alien, one we are "*

-Aziz Darvesh.

BJP FAILS EXILED KASHMIRI PANDITS (LEST THE NATION FORGETS THIS ILLUSTRIOUS COMMUNITY)

Ashok Bhan

KASHMIR is not a piece of land. It is the abode of the soul of India. Kashmir is an integral part of Indian civilisation for centuries. Most people in India and abroad think 'Kashmir is an integral part of India', is being parroted by leaders of all political hues that sounds like an arbitrary statement designed to rebuff Pakistan, and to reaffirm India's military might over a coveted geographical area. 'Kashmir is part of India' It is not a statement, but an impassioned avowal.

Kashmir was considered the abode of Saraswati, the highest seat of learning in India, and was also referred to as Sharda Peeth. So much so that when graduated from Kashi, they took 4 symbolic steps towards Kashmir, denoting their aspiration for higher learning. Almost the entire body of Sanskrit literature has its origins in Kashmir.

Rajtarangini, an authoritative historical tome on the royal lineage of Kashmir, written by Kalhan in the 12th century, outlines the greatness of King Lalitaditya, possibly the most powerful Indian Emperor of all times, whose kingdom in the 8th century extended from the Caspian Sea in the north to the Kaveri basin in the south, and included Assam in the east. How many Indians have even heard his name???

How many of us know that Srinagar was established by Ashok? That Mahayana Buddhism was spread across Mid Asia, China and Japan by Kashmiri monks? Patanjali, who gifted to humanity his Yog Sutra. Sharangdev, considered the father of both Hindustani and Carnatic music. Acharya Abhinav Gupta, one of the greatest scholars of all times, who wrote 46 literary classics, including the renowned Abhinav

Bharti. His principles of Ras are being taught in 80 universities around the world.

Why are the educationists and the policy makers deliberately withholding such vital slices of history from our text books? How will the present as well as future generations realize that Kashmir is the keystone of our heritage through millenia, finding mention even in our oldest scriptures? Kashmiri Pandits have rich heritage and their roots are engraved in the soil of the Valley for more than five thousand years. That can neither be destroyed nor obliterated by any power more so by unleashing terror and vicious campaign. But the ground reality in today's Age of Enlightenment is — Kashmir today is without Kashmiri Pandits. Realities are, at times harsh and strange. Kashmiri Pandits, the aborigine of Kashmir are out in exile, in this modern age of reason and enlightenment. The forced exodus of the Kashmiri Pandits in 1990, designed to effect the motivated ethnic cleansing, will go down, in the history of these aborigines of Kashmir, as a continuation of the persecution and genocide facing for hundreds of years. The atrocities peaked during despotic rule of tyrant kings.

But the tragic irony is that they did not get any respite even in the bright days of the enlightened times, especially in the post-independent days of their country, India.

Whatever be the vicissitudes of their history all pale into insignificance when we look at their present plight. The colossal crisis through which the exiled community or for that matter the entire Kashmiri society is passing through is in reality the crisis in the country's great values—the perversion in practise of its Constitutional jurisprudence, the socio-political and moral

norms. Acute fear and scare had been created which gripped the Kashmiri Pandits from Sept.1989 onwards after killings of prominent members of the Community. The Pandits started feeling what they had felt when hounded by Afgans in the second half of eighteenth century - "O heart, there is fear And dread in the city. Prepare for journey, Disorder is dominant in this city".

KILLING one and scaring a thousand was the concerted PLAN neatly executed by the local terror groups. The choice of exile was forced on the Kashmiri Pandit community by the Pakistan sponsored terrorists who imposed their writ on Kashmir by unleashing death and destruction. The State Government at that time abdicated its Constitutional duties and left the peoples life and liberty at the mercy of the, looters, marauders and terror groups. The terrorist violence is unabated till this day. The terrorists maimed, killed, lynched and looted a large number of Kashmiri Pandits. The terror stricken Pandits ran for life, leaving their homes and hearths behind them.

They sought refuge in Jammu, Delhi and elsewhere in the country. The cleansing process was completed and now Kashmir Valley is without Kashmiri Pandits. The native Kashmiris have entered in 29th year of Exile. Pandits crave for return to their roots. They say bidding farewell to the soil they have sprung from is too traumatic an experience to be conveyed in words. They always say - We love our homeland, every inch of its bounteous soil which has nourished us all; Every day resolve of these hapless Kashmiris is — STRIVE, STRUGGLE and STOP not till the Exile is reversed and they return back to their HOMELAND on their own terms.

The successive Central as well as the State government has done precious little for the rehabilitation of this Community, who have contributed, in a big way, to the

freedom struggle of India against the British imperialism, and also to the national reconstruction in the post Independent era. It is a community whose history generates envy at their achievements as well as sorrow at their plight today. The long history of these exiled Kashmiris has been of triumphs and tragedies. The antiquity of the Kashmiri natives and its Aryan origin are well established. Human memory is short and so is, unfortunately, the memory of our leaders especially of the current dispensation. It was I. K. Gujral as Prime Minister who said - 'If the Nation's coffers have to be emptied for dignified return and rehabilitation of this illustrious community back in the Valley, still it would be a lesser price for their contributions towards modern nation building".

The forced migration of 1990 left the Kashmiri Pandit Community shattered physically and psychologically. Scores of social organizations worked, day and night, on voluntary basis to bring succour to the exiled. In a permissive, soft and caste ridden Indian State and in many ways cruel, the exiled illustrious KP community have been created as refugees from its own flesh and blood and have been cast aside to fend for themselves. To survive as a distinct community is next to impossible in present day world until the exile is reversed and rehabilitated, physically back in the Valley. They are working relentlessly for the protection of their distinct socio-cultural entity. Their struggle is still going on. It is taking lot of time for the leadership of the community to put across its considered views on the ultimate resettlement of the entire Kashmiri Pandit Community in Kashmir on its own terms.

From 1989 till date Kashmiri Pandit groups are devoting a lot of time to their mission in one form or the other towards the task of restoring the honour and dignity of the Pandits. There is no one at the political

level not even the Prime Minister and the Home Minister or at bureaucratic level prepared to stick their neck out and demand action to restore the dignity and honour of the Pandits. and come out with an actionable time bound plan for the return of the exiled community back to Valley.

Hopes that with huge mandate the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government would pay serious attention to the plight and future of the Pandits were sadly belied. The present government is as inactive as any of the other governments that had held office since 1989. No Government has ever consulted the representatives of the exiled natives nor is there any return module plan in public domain.

The exiled Pandits have been waiting for 29 years, hoping that the day of their return with honour, dignity and security to their homeland will come. It has not happened so far, despite claims of considerable improvement in the ground situation.

Meanwhile, the plight of the Pandits has been slowly forgotten. Everybody sheds crocodile tears over their suffering, but there is nothing by way of action. The future of the Pandits, as an important stakeholder and component of the Kashmir imbroglio, is less and less talked about.

There are attempts by various social groups and civil society activists to ensure that the promises made by the nation, to restore the honour and dignity of the Pandits, are not forgotten. These groups

are interacting vigorously with leaders of the government and opposition political parties to ensure that this dimension of the Kashmir scenario is not forgotten. The socio-religious leadership of majority community and the groupings those who have for some reason have chosen not to be part of the main stream are helpful factors towards the return of natives back home.

The return of the Pandits to their homeland cannot be achieved unless the nation and the people of Kashmir are in unison and create consensus. The governments of India and the state have to plan out a common and comprehensive return module and enforce the same in time bound frame work. The government of India has a constitutional and political responsibility for working towards such a consensus and demonstrate a strong political will. It has to create infrastructures, Housing colonies etc., provide adequate jobs to the educated youth and rescind the distress sales of immovable properties and secure all the religious places, cultural centres and endowments. The greater obligation on the central and State governments is to create conducive economic and socio-Political environment for reversing their exile and facilitate their safe and dignified return to their homeland. **NATIVE KASHMIRI PANDITS ARE LONGING TO RETURN TO VALLEY—THEIR ROOTS & HOME LAND.**

Ashok Bhan - Senior Advocate, Supreme Court of India, and Chairman (Kashmir Strategy & Policy group). Email : ashokbhan@rediffmail.com

DEAR KASHMIR

Gunjan Misri

I wish to see your pious mountains as
pure as the driven snow,

Your winter snow glistening from heavens
above,

See it blossoming like the violet hues of
lily, nurtured and grown in one's own
garden

See the shikaras floating on the clear
water of your mountains

Admire the turning of colour from crimson
to red of the Chinnar tree,

Just to shed it all and envelope itself in
green again

I wish to meet your native people, so I can
feel their pain

Robbed of your home land, one you built
with efforts of a lifetime,

Robbed of the serene view, the mountains
surrounding one, in the morning when one
wakes

One's home attached to a million
memories, memories still buzzing in the
old dusty corners of ones brain

I've heard about your stories.

I've heard stories of rebellion after rebellion
like history repeated, in a valley so
beautiful like ours, wanted by one and all

As tears moist my voice and eyes alike, I
hear stories narrated by my relatives

Stories where loved ones were massacred
on the streets, by people of the valley, a
home of 20 years was left to a road without
a destination, unknown

It makes me question:

Why can't we live in
peace, why do we let this
fight of boundaries, fight
of land, fight of religions,
define our limits?



Why can't we live like brother's and sister's
in a land that belongs to us, in a home we
built together?

Why can't we settle?

Why can't we share?

Why is one so selfish, when it comes to
oneself?

Why can't we give up the arms and
embrace each other's warmth, to last us
an eternity under your snow?

There is an answer too,

Let's not let the division of religion, break
open the land we once walked together.

The roads lie here, still in your arms,
waiting for the people to trod upon, lighting
its path with the warmth of their hands
intertwined.

Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian, Buddhista
country so diverse like ours, has lived for
so long together. Let not the breadth of
religion come in between the depth and
necessity of human love and unity.

It's the way we think, that moulds us,

The influence we live in which shapes us.

"Kashmir, if heaven ever be found on earth, it is here, it is here!" , said he.

Beauty, why does one have to fight for beauty, why can't one share it,

Drink from the immortal fountain of your mountains bathed by the rivers of Vitasta, and Sindh

The snow covering your bare face, feel the warmth of the 'Kangerhs' fire in the early winter mornings, the laughter of thy neighbours from across the fences.

I know you can change, your people will be ours again, I will be with you again. There will be no hatred but moments of love, growth, and purity, just like our valley was, a very long time ago and with the arrows of time, I hope our unity circles back soon, again.

With the hope of being with you, in all your unity.

With love,

Your daughter,
Gunjan Misri

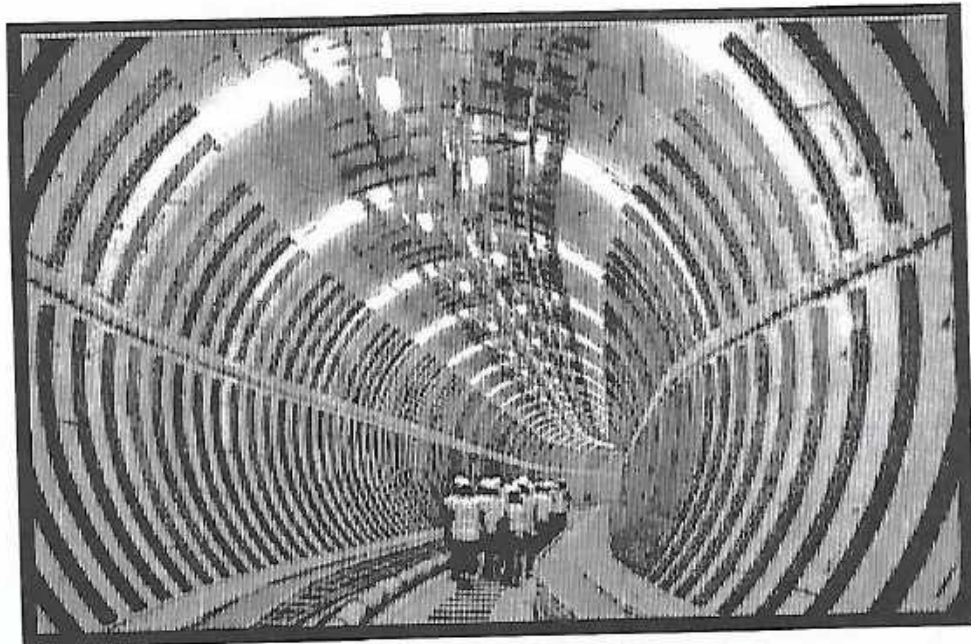
This Lalvaakh says it all :

Shiv chhuipatapatarozaan ; moZaanHyond ta Musalmaan; trukhaichhukh ta paanpraznav; soy chai SahibasZaeni - Zaan.

(Shiv resides on every road, every home, it doesn't discriminate between a Hindu or a Muslim, we do as humans. If you consider yourself a devotee, look within and you shall seek the answer that God is one and same, for all religions.)

Gunjan Misri is a 3rd year Biology Research student at present.

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Section IV

Preserving Our Temples and Religious Places in the State.

KASHMIR TEMPLES & SHRINES: LOOMING EXISTENTIAL CRISIS

Yoginder Kandhari

The landscape of Kashmir is dotted with magnificent religious places that bear an eloquent testimony to thousands of years of Hindu spiritual heritage. They create idyllic spiritual ambience for the devotees. The temples and shrines are inextricably linked to the physical and spiritual existence of Kashmiri Pandits (KPs). These are the defining landmarks and symbols of their faith. Apart from being inalienable Spiritual Centres of KP Community, these shrines and temples have immense heritage value. Several of these temples have been mapped by INTACH, a Valley based NGO, under the auspices of UNESCO - as part of thousands of years of Kashmir's Hindu heritage that must be preserved and protected.

Historically, Hindu temples and their other places of worship in the Valley have been subjected to desecration and plunder ever since advent of Islam there. Tohfatu'l - Ahbab, biography of Shamsu'd-Din Muhammad Araki - an Iranian Shi'a Muslim missionary of Nurbakhshiyeh order, who first visited Kashmir in A.H. 882/A.D. 1424, vividly narrates with pride how Araki and his band of Sufis unleashed mass conversion drive of Hindus to Islam by sword of Islam and how he vandalised places of Hindu worship. Destruction of Hindu temples/shrines and replacing those with *Ibadatgahs* (places of worship) of the new faith was then dignified as a sacred religious duty. Ironically, in free India too, especially during last four decades, burning down Hindu religious vestiges and usurping their assets in the Valley has turned into a 'sacred' loot. Most conservative estimates peg worth of Hindu religious assets in the Valley at Rs.30,000 Cr; Srinagar itself is home to assets worth Rs.7,000 Cr. For Islamists and real-estate

czars that offers a mouth-watering opportunity, be that a perverted religious obligation or a business proposition. Hence a race to gain control of these assets.

The Recent Past.

Not delving too deep into history, recent onslaught on Kashmiri Pandits' temples started in 1986. Exposing this dangerous politico-communal game-plan of Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, Praveen Donthi writes 'After the locks of the Babri Masjid were opened, riots broke out in some parts of the country. While Kashmir was largely undisturbed, violence did breakout in one district: Anantnag, Sayeed's stronghold. Here, several temples were desecrated and houses of Pandits were attacked. During my reporting, I heard allegations that Sayeed himself had organised the violence. Yousuf Jameel, a senior Kashmiri journalist, who covered the riots, told me that Congress was behind it because they had problems with G.M. Shah and wanted to get rid of him. I was told by Ghulam Hassan Mir, one of G. M. Shah's defectors in 1984, that "Mufti Sahib was behind it (riots)" - 'How Mufti Mohammad Shaped the 1987 Elections in Kashmir', Caravan, March 23, 2016. As if on Mufti's cue, this vandalization continues unabated till this date.

Present Status.

A visit to various temples/shrines/holy springs or even *Shamshan Bhoomis* in the Valley leaves one aghast at brazen encroachments of their assets, either through intimidation in an environment of conflict or through fraudulent and illegal sales. Land mafia, militants and their sympathizers, politicians, Sadhus, administration - bureaucrats, police hierarchy and revenue officials - Hindu

religious bodies and many a black sheep within the Kashmiri Pandit community are integral to this nexus. A walk on erstwhile Hari Parbat parikrama bears a testimony to wholesale encroachment of temple properties. Three full-fledged townships have come upon the land which was essentially annexed to the seat of Sharika, Kashmir's presiding deity. Encroachers of iconic *Saptrishi Asthapan* straight facedly retort 'where else could we go?'. The complicity of revenue officials, administration, and the militant-backed land mafia is evident. Otherwise, how could commercial buildings have come upon the land annotated *Ahl-e-Hanood* (belonging to Kashmiri Pandits) in revenue records?

After 'purging' Kashmir of Pandits and wresting their properties, grabbing Hindu temple assets was a natural progression for the militant-backed land mafia. Current armed uprising gifted Kashmir a lawless society wherein administration, complicit or at best indifferent, allowed trampling of these vestiges of Hindu civilization in Kashmir. Politicians and people in state administration too resorted to numerous *Benami* transactions to construct huge commercial complexes.

Casting aside any pretensions to protect faith, even Sadhus turned wheeler-dealers in this reprehensible barter of temple property for monetary considerations. Land belonging to Baba Dharm Das Mandir, in Srinagar, was sold/leased by its caretaker, 'Mahant' Gopal Das, backed by an obscure organization called *Sadhu Dharmasthan Surakshini Samiti*, J&K. This is not the only case in Kashmir of Mahants/Sadhus turning thugs for greed which they are supposed to have renounced. It is a common knowledge that many among them impersonated different 'visages' to sell temple properties at different places. Shockingly, even some top Hindu bureaucrats patronized these thugs either on the pretext of them belonging to Hindus faith or as a payback for their

token assistance during *Amarnathji Yatra*. Whenever questioned, encroachers are quick to flaunt fraudulent sale deeds to claim ownership

Response of the Community.

Having sold own assets in Kashmir, most of the community members have exhibited callous indifference to this brazen vandalization and sale of the temple assets. This debate has been reduced to casual discussions in cosy drawing-rooms over a proverbial drink. The self-imposed leadership of the community dabbles more in international politics than taking up core concerns of the community.

A couple of young Kashmiri Pandits, driven by an urge to make some quick buck, took up reconstruction/restoration of a few depilated temples in Srinagar and in its immediate vicinity. They were funded from Constituency Development Fund (CDF) of a Kashmiri Pandit MLC. Since this commitment was greed-driven, cracks developed in this unholy partnership and soon this effort too was in shambles. Currently, an NRI Kashmiri Pandit has undertaken to restore/develop some temples in the Valley. Having initially done an excellent job, his team too is now accused of swindling funds and of being involved in the sale of the very assets that they had undertaken to protect.

Angered, a team of non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits (KPs) filed a Public Interest Litigation(PIL) in Supreme Court, in 2007, against the unabated sale of temple assets in the Valley. However, SC advised them to move J&K High Court for the purpose. Justice Sunil Hali, in his interim judgment, in a case involving illegal sale of Baba Dharam Das Temple land, directed Kashmir Administration, firstly, to ensure that revenue authorities do not issue any Farads of temple lands to anyone, secondly, to take custody of properties regarding which no transfer has been affected and, lastly, to ensure protection

of properties by taking necessary steps in shape of demarcation and fencing of same. Needless to mention that vested interests and communal bias in the administration ensured non-compliance of these court directions. While adjudicating on a contempt petition filed by these Kashmiri Pandits, Justice Muzaffar Hussain Attar passed severe strictures against Divisional Commissioner Kashmir for his failure to file a status report about 27 temples in Srinagar. Taking cognizance of the lackadaisical attitude of the administration, Justice Attar reminded it of the constitutional obligation to uphold secular credentials. Even the report submitted thereafter remain wishy-washy confirming administration's indifference. Notwithstanding the tardy pace of court proceedings, litigants appear committed to their cause.

Sadly, Kashmiri Pandits who have managed to take control of some shrines treat these assets as their private fiefdom. Invariably, such people, as is rumoured, enjoy support and backing of some prominent Hindu outfits. Mostly, these managements do not believe in transparency. Often, cliques within managing committees take financial and administrative decisions that are then ratified during sham AGMs. Constitutions of most *Sansthas* have cunningly been tweaked to perpetuate hold of a few individuals or to oust those who dare question them. Repeated requests from members to make information, regarding Annual Balance Sheets, decisions taken, proceedings of AGMs etc, publicly posting those on websites have been ignored. Such stubbornness has naturally led to many a legal battle and to fight those in courts these managements spend lakhs out of public funds. How can public funds be squandered by those who profess to dedicate themselves to social work? Such unscrupulous people appear handpicks of some powerful organizations who intend

to gain overall control of Hindu religious assets in the Valley by placing their 'own men' at the helm. Some even suggest that it is part of an incomprehensible grandiose strategy to augment Hindu presence in the Valley. It can't get weirder than that!

Role of Trusts.

Dharmarth Trust manages many prominent temples and shrines in the Valley. However, this Trust itself has turned to be a property dealer. There are a series of allegations against it, of having alienated vast chunks of land belonging to Hindu Shrines under its watch for consideration without any legal or spiritual necessity there of. About 100 kanals of land belonging to Jawala Ji Asthapan, Khrew, have been handed over to some locals by Dharmarth Trust against monetary considerations for reasons not even remotely connected with religious and social activities of the Trust. Similarly, lands belonging to Ram Chander Ji Temple, at Sathoo Barbarshah, and Partap Ishwar Temple at Khonakhan, Srinagar, have been transferred illegally. Irrevocable Powers of Attorney authorising sale and alienation of such assets are in public domain and these shady deals have been covered by local newspapers. Politically powerful patrons of the Trust have managed to usurp these religious assets with impunity.

For long Durga Nag Trust has been in news for all the wrong reasons. All efforts to set things right have failed and now we have a situation where employees enjoy field day while warring Trust factions are mute onlookers. No one seems to be in control there. We need to realize that it is now difficult to conjure up the 'noble' souls who mercilessly squandered Trust's assets and to hold them to account. Two warring groups in the Trust need to bury their hatchet by setting aside egos and take control of whatever is left of it. Kashmiri Pandits must demand that

Sh. J. L. Tickoo's Enquiry Report about financial bungling by the Trustees and the managers of Durga Nag Trust must be made public to shame those who have swindled crores.

Political Insensitivity.

Most politicians, irrespective of the colour of their robes, are insensitive to the demands of the KP community in this regard. Isn't it a shame that the BJP legislators are in the forefront to stall any legislation to ensure protection of Kashmir's religious heritage? Not long ago, two Bills, namely 'Kashmiri Hindu Shrines & Religious Places Bill' and 'Shiv Khori Bill' were tabled in the state legislature. While 'Shiv Khori' Bill was passed, Bill for Kashmir Temples was stalled by vested interest. Obviously, politics overrides professed ideology. KPs have a civilizational obligation to raise voice against desecration of their identity and religious icons. The community needs to get real and leave aside political discussions, which in any case are always inconsequential, and rise in unison to halt attempts to wipe out their proud history.

Looking Ahead.

Kashmiri Pandits need to realise that their numbers don't count politically. They will always be taken for royal rides by all political parties. In such a scenario appealing to the administration or to the political parties in power to protect their civilizational and religious heritage is to bark up a wrong tree. If court directions to fence temple lands in the Valley could be openly flouted by the administration,

what should the community expect of the same establishment? Few among the KPs showed any concern when Kailash Vidhya Dham at Chinore in Jammu— a sprawling Ashram whose construction was mainly funded by Prof. M. L. Mam— has been grabbed by people wearing saffron robes and enjoying support of all the prominent functionaries. Prof. Mam is not allowed even to perform annual Hawan in the Ashram premises. The weak is always trampled.

Those Kashmiri Pandits who have joined various political outfits are there for their own interests and not to address community's concerns. Even those Kashmiri Pandits who rose to the top in bureaucratic and police hierarchy hardly exhibited any gumption to look after community's legitimate interests in the Valley. Post retirement, while some among them have served tenures in legislature as Kashmiri Pandit representatives rest feign to be concerned about the community's wellbeing.

Unless Kashmiri Pandits imbibe spirit of community-pride and reassert their claim to their place of birth forcefully, nothing is likely to be achieved. Just abusing one's tormentors during TV debates is a sign of weakness. Practically, much more needs to be done on ground. Otherwise, all this is a talk in thin air.

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PRESERVE OUR TEMPLES AND RELIGIOUS PLACES - RENDER MEANING TO LIFE

B L Saraf

What, essentially, distinguishes a human being from other species is his belief in moral living. In fact, this concept is integral to all religions. For us, in particular, whose faith is embedded in Vedic Dharma the principle of moral living is woven in the very fabric of our social and spiritual life. These moral values are so intricately interwoven that they effortlessly come to define our normal living. That, in a sense, could be called ethical living. Given our human gullibility often waywardness there is an imperative need for a regular reiteration of the moral covenant. Or else, we may falter in the pursuit of normal living. The Temples and Shrines act as a beacon light to guide us, to the righteous path. Their importance is, therefore, self emphasized.

In an unprecedented show of physical and emotional fortitude, we, the displaced Pandits, not only withstood the devastating onslaught of the inimical forces, but also survived with a fair degree of material and spiritual success. Our inbuilt instinct of survival, against heavy odds, has been phenomenal. What lent strength to the community's courage to weather the storm is a firm belief in its great heritage and sound intellectual foundation. We are indeed indebted to our men/women of vision and indomitable courage who, unmindful of their personal grief and pressing family commitments, were quick to reclaim the institutional sense that catered to, both, spiritual and mundane requirements of the displaced Pandits. Relocation of some of our educational institutions from the Valley to the plains, wherever the displaced found a temporary shelter, helped harness our human resource.

Alongside, Ashrams and spiritual places, conditioned to the peculiar way of worship, came to be built in Jammu and elsewhere: that catered to the spiritual attributes of a devout and provided him much needed emotional solace, thus saved him from falling prey to the myriad kinds of mental disorders. Devotee's spiritual faith kept flying high. This belief, precisely, explains why the internally displaced Kashmiri Hindus are one in raising the demand for a law to protect, preserve and manage their religious places in Kashmir.

Temples and Shrines of Hindus dot every nook and the corner of the Valley and, in presence of soul searing religious places of other faiths, they bear an eloquent testimony to its rich composite culture and shared spiritual heritage. They create an idyllic ambience for devotees of any faith. However, there are instances that whenever something happened in the Valley, not to the puritanical and sectarian liking of a section of majority community, Hindu shrines had to bear the brunt of fanaticism. The unholy practice peaked in 1989, when the inimical elements caused displacement of the Hindu community from the Valley and devastated its religious places. Temples and shrines were destroyed and their properties encroached upon by the unscrupulous elements, with the patronage of powerful persons. Moreover, they suffered for want of a statutory safeguard which could have on the state the necessity to protect them from the onslaught. Invoking the skewed notion of public purpose, State government too did not lag behind in encroaching lands of these religious places.

Statutory Protection Needed - Why ?

It may be pertinent to mention here that, in J & K, there are laws for protection and proper management of Mosques and Gurdwaras. And, none for Hindu Shrines. But that is not the only reason why we want a Law for protection and a management of our religious places. Condition of these religious places is pathetic. There is well documented record to prove that the unscrupulous have outraged the sanctity of these religious places and plundered their assets. Everything has been submitted to the highest State and Central executive authorities. But of no avail !

What we have been saying about defining features of Temples and Shrines, Supreme Court has eloquently lent support to it. While making an order on 08 06 2018, in WP No 649/2018 Titled Mrinalni v/s UOI the Court observed ;

"There is no doubt that proper management of pilgrimage centers of importance is a matter of public interest. These centers are of undoubted religious, social historical and architectural importance representing cultural heritage of the country. Millions of people visit these places not only for tourism but also for seeking inspiration for the righteous values and for their well being. They make huge offerings and donations for advancement of such values."

J & K government itself provides proof of the pitiable condition of our temples and Shrines. Pursuant to the great effort of the community, a Bill for Protection, Care and Management of temples and Shrines Of Hindus in Kashmir - shortly Bill No 11/ 2009 - was introduced in the State Assembly in 2009 budget session, by the NC-INC coalition government led by Omar Abdullah. But for reasons well known, it could not be rendered into an Act and with

the expiration of previous Assembly Bill stands lapsed.

Necessity of the Law in aims and objects of the Bill is emphasized, *inter alia*, thus:

"Due to the disturbed conditions in the Kashmir Valley in year 1990, the majority of the Hindus left the Valley and the Shrines remained unattended. There are complaints that properties of these Shrines have been encroached and most of them are in deteriorated condition. Many associations and bodies of the community have shown concern in this behalf."

Struggle For The law, Quite old

Late Shri P L Handoo - the then Minister of Law and Parliamentary affairs initiated a note, in August 2000, for the then Chief Minister, wherein he mentioned that Kashmiri Hindus had called on him and expressed desire "for enactment of law for ensuring protection and security of Devasthanas (Temples, Samadhis and Shrines)." He recorded in the note that "the matter had come under examination in 1987 - 88 period and a draft Bill was prepared" Then, unfortunate period of 1989 intervened so the matter could not be pursued further. Handoo Saheb concluded, that law as desired is need of the hour. He suggested broad contours of the proposed Legislation. However, his death halted the matter, which was revived in 2006.

Spiritual Centers and Symbols of Common Heritage

The Temples and Shrines are inextricably linked to the physical existence of Hindus in Kashmir. They are defining landmarks and symbols of faith of the Community and, undoubtedly, are its inalienable spiritual centers. That apart, they have immense heritage value. Quite a number of them have been mapped by INTACH -

under the auspices of UNESCO – as part of thousand years Kashmir heritage that must be protected.

Mandir Prabhandhak Committee For Kashmir Province – Government Order; GAD 1699 of 2001; 20. 12. 2001, and Bill No 2/ 2009 :

It is a matter of some satisfaction that government has shown concern to protect Temples in Kashmir. That explains the constitution of the above referred Committee, with the duty "to assess the ground position of Temples in the Valley and work for their maintenance and up keep of the same." While as the Committee did a good job in repairing some Shrines in the Valley, it couldn't yield desired results for want of a statutory support. In fact, the situation with regard to the health and status of these Shrines has gone from bad to worse. Their properties have been usurped and misappropriated by the very persons who claim to be their protectors. Hence a law is required to protect them from the evil influence of the so called "Trustees" and the land grabbers.

The situation became unbearable for the displaced community and the concern was reiterated vehemently. Appreciating it, Abdul Rahim Rathar of N C, as a leader of opposition, brought a BILL for the protection of these Shrines in 2007. The then CM Gulam Nabi Azad supported the move but persuaded Rathar Saheb to withdraw the Bill, on the assurance that his government would itself bring one. That did not happen. The National Conference led government, however, introduced the Bill No 11 /2009.

Source of Political Empowerment

The displaced Kashmiri Hindu community has a genuine grouse that it has fallen off the political and executive radar of the successive governments. That, it needs political empowerment. How can that be achieved? The proposed legislation shows

the way. Essence of the desired Act is a democratic and transparent management of our religious places, which calls for an elected body to take control of the management of the shrines at the grass root level. Present trend in governance is to devolve administrative functions on the elected village Panchayats (ULBs) and empower them to decide on all matters necessary for proper governance at the village level. In the emerging scenario, it will be impossible for any elected Panchayat body to ignore a member of Hindu community, who is elected to manage a religious place situated at the same level. His effective participation in the local body, which decides for the local people, stands assured. That will mean community's Political Empowerment. Importance of the law has to be viewed from that angle also.

As mentioned earlier the Bill, to the disappointment of entire Hindu community, could not be passed. Some persons with a vested interest and support of a nationalist party – which sheds crocodile tears for the displaced community on the drop of a hat, ensured death of the Bill.

For its disinclination in taking the Bill to its logical end, the government and the political leaders informed us that 'large sections' of the Hindu community in Jammu, Sadhu Samaj, Dharmarth Trust and other influential persons had objection to the proposed law.

The Community representatives interacted with the concerned government authorities, Dr Karan Singh and Omar Abdullah, Mehbooba Mufti – Ex- CMs and canvassed the point that the proposed law has enough provisions in it to take care of the objections, real or imaginary, raised by the opponents. Reference was made to the inbuilt mechanism incorporated in the following provisions, to address the genuine concerns of any ;

Clauses 4, 5 and 14(a) of Bill No 11/2009

The architecture of the proposed law is such that the Temple and Shrines will not, *ipso facto*, come under the purview of law, once the Act comes into force. Cl 14 says that only those temples and Shrines would be administered, managed and regulated by the Board, created under the proposed Act, which are notified under Cl ; 5 of the Bill. They could be notified only after objections, if any, of any body or an organization were disposed off by the Special Officer - not being less than Class 1st officer of the State Government - and confirmed, in appeal, by the territorial District Judge.

These provisions were sourced from the identical provisions of **J & K Wakf Act**. I and some other community members had an occasion to call on the then CM, Omar Abdullah when the aforementioned legal position was explained to him. He appreciated the point but expressed his inability to move forward in the matter because, as explained by him, a Jammu resident political big wig of the Congress party - based in Delhi - had activated the Congress High Command to put a hurdle in the making of required law. Ex C M was candid enough to tell the members of deputation that unless Temples and Shrines, marked out by the big wig, were exempted from the sweep of proposed law he felt helpless in the matter.

No Blanket Exemption - No Option Out

There cannot be and there should not be any blanket exemption or Option out clause in the proposed legislation. Each and every religious place of the Hindus in Kashmir must be subject to the provisions of the law. And then let the law take its own course. The 'Option Out' clause would rob the law of its soul and render it redundant. The point was made clear to the Ex CM and all the concerned administrative and political authorities whom we had an occasion to call on. Each and every

Community member must bear in mind that Hindu Religious places are integral and inseparable part of the Kashmir's ancient cultural and spiritual civilization, which does not stop at one generation. We have inherited it from our forefathers. It is not given to any one of us to have any compromise on the issue. None of us has a right to decide for the generations to come.

Role of Dharmarth and other so called Religious bodies?

Dharmarth Trust, which is supposed to look after some Temples and Shrines in Kashmir, has alienated vast chunks of their lands without any legal and spiritual necessity thereof. According to the media reports, published at various times in Jammu and elsewhere, Dharmarth Trust has handed over about 100 kanals of land belonging to Jawala Ji Asthapan Khrew to some persons against consideration. So has the land belonging to Temples of Shri Ramchandar ji Sathoo Barbarshah and Isher Pratap at Khona khan Srinagar been illegally sold. The part played by other so called Trusts is no better. These sham Trusts have allegedly misappropriated properties of Temple at Haft Chinnar Srinagar, valued at crores of Rupees, for which a criminal case stands registered against the concerned person. These are just a few illustrations of malfeasance of the so called trustees. List is quite exhaustive.

In Jammu also there is a clamor that the temples managed by the Dharmarth Trust should be handed over to a statutory board. Because, it is alleged that the managers of the Trust have mismanaged the Temples. Balwant Singh Mankotia - the NPP MLA in the previous Assembly - brought a Bill in the 2013 Budget Session of the Assembly for the purpose of creating a statutory board to manage Raghunath Mandir in Jammu and other Temples under the control of Dharmarth Trust. He

mentioned in the Assembly that condition of these temples was bad. Mankotia stated in support of his Bill, "In Raghunath Temple money was snatched from pockets of the people, What message we are we giving to the pilgrim tourists" Daily Excelsior, Jammu 2nd April 2013.

Assault Goes On.

The misappropriation of the Shrines Properties in the Valley goes on unabated. Even orders passed by the Hon'ble High Court at Srinagar in Writ Petition OWP 785 / 2008 titled *Ghulam Nabi Khan v/s State of J & K*, for protection of Mandir Properties and banning their sale, are followed more in breach than in observance. The misdeeds of the unscrupulous elements have been brought in the public domain by the media in great details

These unscrupulous elements, masquerading as Care takers, so called Trustees of non-existent and sham Trusts, are buying time to dispose of whatever little is left of the Shrine Properties. Any further delay in making the Law will help their unholy design.

Biggest Confidence Building Measure

The Central and State government are talking about return of displaced persons to the Valley. Kashmiri Hindu community feels that, in this regard, enactment of the law for protections of its religious places will constitute a significant confidence building measure. And will be indicative of the good intentions of both the governments.

The Kashmiri Hindu Community does not bear ill will against any person or organization. The campaign is, simply, driven by its belief in the preservation of Spiritual, Cultural and Heritage Centers for rendering meaning to life.

Shrine Board, a Community Institution

Former Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti, while addressing Imams and Executives of Wakf Board termed Muslim Wakf Board "as a community institution which needs to be developed on the most modern lines with the use of technology." According to her "Wakf Board has undertaken construction of many projects which will be of great help to the humanity. That assets of Muslim Wakf Board should be properly maintained so that it can generate enough resources to fund many big community welfare initiatives."

It is for this reason, also, that there is the need for proper protection and management of Temples and Shrines in Kashmir. Their properties and resources can be utilized for the benefit of society at large in the manner former Chief Minister has indicated Wakf properties are being used, like spreading education etc.

Protection and preservation of Religious places is an Existential matter for the Displaced Community.

Anthropological study has revealed that land alienation destroys the cultural identities; as, both are intertwined. The baneful effects of this principle will come into full play if the Pandit community's sign posts get obliterated in Kashmir. Put in simple terms, if Temples, Shrines and lands owned by them vanish the very *raison d'être* of Community's existence will be put in a jeopardy. Protection, preservation of temples and their properties is, therefore, an existential matter for the displaced community.

Sinister move ;

A sinister move is afoot in the Valley to change nomenclature and basic character of important land marks which represent its 5000 years old heritage and civilization. We now have Suleiman Teng in place of Shankarachaya hillock and Kohi maran for

Haari Parbat. The diabolical process goes on unabated, across the Valley. A new and farcical history is being written by the bigots masquerading as historians to distort the established facts, with a view to erase the foot prints of the aborigines. Under these circumstances the need to preserve our temples is so compelling as never before.

It will be appropriate to conclude with what the Apex Court asked the Union Government to do for proper protection and management of the Shrines across country;

"Since these issues may be common to various other important shrines in the country, we also direct respondent no-1 Union of India to constitute a committee to collect information with regard to such other shrines so that the management practices therein can be

reviewed for the benefit of all visitors, where ever necessary."

(Para 10 (v) of WP referred above)

We hope the quarters concerned will listen to the Apex Court and take enough statutory steps for preservation of our spiritual centers. However, with our experience gathered during the campaign for having the desired law there is need to enter a caveat.

Looking ahead, chances of having a Law for preservation of Temples, Shrines and their properties in Kashmir are bleak. A concerted push from all places, particularly from Delhi, is called for if our mission has to succeed.

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TRACES OF CIVILIZATIONAL TRANSITION IN KASHMIR

Kashinath Pandit

The story of the first footprints of Muhammadan people in Kashmir cannot be traced with any amount of certainty. Some writers think that *Chachnameh*, the history of the conquest of Sindh by the Arabs in A.D. 712 has reference to the presence of some Muhammadans in Kashmir. However, this is refuted on various counts. The original Arabic text (if there was one) of the work is not extant and what we have is the Farsi version made in around the second half of 13th century. Subsequently, numerous versions of Farsi text appeared but the authenticity of their contents remained a moot point. Besides this, the more authentic and much credited Arabic work on early conquests of Arabs, such as *Futuhu'l Buldan*¹ by Baladhuri, does not make any mention of Muslim presence in Kashmir in the 8th century, the period with which *Chachnameh* deals.²

Abu Rayhan al-Biruni (d. A.D. 1048), the celebrated Khwarazmian (Central Asia) scholar and polymath, accompanied Mahmud of Ghazna in his A.D 1017 Indian campaign. His valuable observations on Indian civilization and allusion to Kashmirian scholarship, particularly in astronomical science in his celebrated *Tahqiq-i Mal'ul Hind* (written in A.D. 1030)³ does not give any hint that the people of Muhammadan faith were to be found in Kashmir at that point in time.

However, describing the details of the aftermath of Mahmud's victory over Tralochanpala in or around A.D. 1018, Stein writes,

"The detailed account that *Tarikh-i-Yamini*⁴ gives of the decisive battle agrees in some particulars regarding the position occupied by the occupying forces to Kalhana's description. Mahmud won a victory in a

valley which leads from the region from Jhelum towards Kashmir. Some chiefs are said to have made a submission to the Sultan (Mahmud) in consequence of the victory. Also, the forcible conversion of Kashmiris to Islam is mentioned on the occasion."⁵

Keeping in mind considerable accuracy and authenticity of Kalhana's statement, particularly when he was not physically too far away in time from the event, we find that this was the first attempt of forcible conversion of Kashmiris to Muhammadan faith by the victorious troops of a foreign Muslim invader. It also explodes the myth propagated by biased commentators of mediaeval India that Mahmud of Ghazna was only a rapacious looter of the wealth of Hindu temples and that forced conversion of Hindus to Islamic faith was not on the agenda of his mission...

The word *Hammira* (Hamira)⁶ occurs in *Rajatarangini*⁷ for the first time when King Sangramaraja (A.D 1003 - 1028) deputed his Commander Tunga⁸ with military force for the assistance of Trilochanpala, the Commander of the army of Kabul Shahi or Hindu Shahi Kings with which house Kashmir royalty had blood relations and who were fighting against Mahmud. The *Hammira* of *Rajatarangini*, actually Amir of Arabic origin, is the part of Mahmud's title viz. *Amiru'l Momineen* or the Commander of the Faithful. Briefing Tunga on the fighting tactics of Mahmud's troops of Mahmud, Trilochanpala, the Commander of the Shahi troops advises him like this; "Until you have become acquainted with the *Turushka* warfare, you should post yourself on the scarp of this hill... Then he crossed thence rather with a small force to the other bank of Taushi and defeated a

corps which *Hammira* had sent on reconnaissance." (Verse 53).

Two words in this paragraph are significant; *Turushka* and *Taushi*. Kalhan Pandit has used *Turushka* at many places, distinguishing them from Kashmiris, Bhutia, Darads, Tibetans and other ethnic groups. The exact seat of the *Turushkas* could not be identified in *Rajatarangini*. However, in an indirect reference Kalhan Pandit, while writing about Lalliya Shahi in the chapter on King Shankaravarman of Kashmir (A.D 883-902) the founder of the Hindu Shahi kingdom of Waihind says, "Alakhana's support, the illustrious Lalliya Shahi - who, (placed) between the rulers of *Darads* and *Turushkas* as between a lion and a boar, resembled *Aryavarta* (as it lies) between the Himalaya and the Vindhya Mountains⁹ ... Presuming that the valleys in the declines of western Karakorum were the dwelling sites of *Darads*, it follows that *Turushka* concentration was around the sandy tracts of western Turkistan. 'Tagin' the suffix to the names like Sabuk-tagin and Alap-tagin - the ancestors of Mahmud of Ghazna - refers to a tribe of the *Turushkas* of this region. This clarifies Kalhan Pandit's statement that *Turushkas* formed a strong corps of Mahmud's army, and it was a contingent of this ethnic group that had come to Kashmir after the defeat of Tunga.

The word *Turushka* prominently figuring in above-cited two verses of *Rajatarangini* refers to a particular ethnic group of people in Central Asia. In *Shahnameh*, the great Iranian epic, Ferdowsi speaks of two peoples, namely Tur and Tajik as original inhabitants of "the lands beyond Oxus" (*vara rud*). Iranian and Arab historians have often spoken of two regions namely Iran and Turan defining Iran as the land of the people over whom Iraj ruled and Turan the land of the people over whom Tur ruled. Tur, Salam and Iraj are the three sons of legendary Iranian Emperor Feridoon who,

as the legend goes, had distributed his empire among his three sons during his lifetime.

Research conducted by eminent scholars like Barthold, Litvinsky and others have established that people of northern and eastern Central Asia (Tur's domain) were of Turko-Mongoloid stock and called Turks while those in the south (Iraj's domain) through which River Oxus (Amu) passed was inhabited by the Tajiks who like Iranians are of Aryan stock. These people spoke Tajik which is akin to Farsi, the language of Iranians. The people of Tur's lands spoke Turkic from which the name Turkistan is derived. The people of this land came to be called Turk. Stein is convinced that the word *Turushka* is the Sanskrit form of the word Turk.

In *Rajatarangini*, *Turushka* occurs for the first time in Book IV, verse 170 which runs like this: "Clearly it is by his command to display the mark of their bondage, that the *Turushkas* carry their arms at their back and shave half their head." This verse is in reference to King Lalitaditya Muktapida's (A.D. 700 - 736) campaign (*Digvijay*) in northern region meaning Central Asia. Stein adds a very **curious** footnote to this verse which merits a mention in full. He writes

"Wilson quotes (page 49) a similar legend from *Harivansha* which relates how the various tribes of *Mlechhas*¹⁰ was forced by King Sagara to dress their hair in different distinguishing fashions. The observations underlying Kalhana's story still hold good. Yarkandis¹¹ and Tibetans are fond of walking with their hands folded at their back, and can often be seen in this attitude in Bazaars of Srinagar.¹² Among Kashmiris, whether Brahmans or Muhammadans, this habit is very unusual."

It appears that the social structure that had endured for long centuries in Kashmir

met with drastic change after the defeat of Tunga, the Kashmirian Prime Minister and Commander, who had been deputed to support Trilochanpala, the Commander of Kabul Shahi forces somewhere around the present town of Jhelum in Punjab, which is also the confluence of the Vitasta (Jhelum) and Chandrabhaga (Chenab) Rivers. This was during the reign of King Kalasha (A.D 1063-1089). We gather that after that disastrous defeat, the troops of Mahmud comprising mostly of Turks, fanned out in the region north and northeast of Jhelum town. It was in this period that Turushkas made deep; inroads into Kashmir not only in physical terms but in political, and subsequently, social and cultural terms also. Historians have often noted that there is information deficit in Kashmir history between 11th and 13th century, a period of great turbulence and unevenness as we shall see in pages to follow. There is a need to revisit the transitional period of Kashmir history from one civilizational ethos to another which stands diametrically at the opposite end. The process of conversion from other faiths, especially of the idol-worshipping people (*butparast*) to Muhammadan faith seems to have caught the imagination of invading legions of Mahmud who chiefly comprised the Turks. Note this remark of Kalhan Pandit: "Then Tunga, after having, by his defeat, brought about the descent of the *Turushkas* on the whole surface of earth marched back slowly to his own country."¹³

The phrase "to his own country" in all probability means his native land of present Rajouri-Poonch zone and not Kashmir valley because he met with humiliation and opposition after this defeat. Therefore the interpretation of Kalhana's term "the whole surface of the earth" should mean the entire valley of Kashmir and its adjoining hilly areas.

The assertion that *Turushkas* made deep inroads into the politics of the Hindu

Kingdom of Kashmir at this point of time is borne out by another verse of Rajatarangini. Rebuking King Kalasha (A.D 1063 -1089) for his promiscuity, Kalhan writes: "Though the King had reached a mature age, he did not get rid of his vice and the evil habits which the wretched foreigners had taught him. The Takka¹⁴ [called] Vulliya bought from Turushka girls born in various distant regions, and brought them to him (Kalasha). This means that the top administrative echelons of Kashmirian royal court had fallen prey to carnal desire and the *Turushkas* exploited this weakness to push their political agenda by selling to them the girls in their captivity. This practice was unknown to Kashmiris, and, as Kalhan Pandit observes, was brought to Kashmir by "the wretched Turushkas."¹⁵ The practice of corrupting local courtiers, warlords (Damara chieftains) and powerful personalities by prompting them to the gratification of their carnal desire and bringing damsels to them became a recognized practice with the early foreign intruders. The author of *Baharistan* opens the chapter on Sultan Shamsu'd-Din Shahmir, the founder of first Muhammadan ruling house of Kashmir (A. D, 1339) as this:^{16 17}

Sultan Shamsud Din was gifted with intelligence and sagacity and established cordial relations with all leading personalities and chiefs of the domain of Kashmir. He also entered into matrimonial relations with them by giving his daughters in marriage to their sons..... Thus he established harmonious relations with the nobles and the lead personalities of Kashmir.

This is a polite way of saying that sex power was brought into play. The chieftains who were corrupted by Shahmir have been listed by Jonaraja.¹⁸ They included the Damara chiefs of Shankarapora (Pattan), Bhangila (Bengil), Bhringa (Brengh)¹⁹ and others.

(Endnotes)

¹ Edited by M.J. de Goeje, Leiden, 1870.

² See D.N. MacLean, Religion and Society in Arab Sind, Leiden, 1988. Storey vol I pp 650-51; vol II p. 1323

³ Albiruni's India, tr. By Eduard Sachau, K Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co, London, 1910.

⁴ Elliot and Dawson, vol. ii, p.87

⁵ Rajatarangini, tr. Stein, Book vii, fn. verses 47-69

⁶ See JRAS, ix, p. 190 seq

⁷ Bk VII, verse 53.

⁸ A khasha from Buddivasa identified with present Budil in Parnotsa (Proonts=Poonch). For fuller detail on Tunga see Rajatarangini, Note I, 105. Also see my A Muslim Missionary in Medieval Kashmir, p. 77, fn. 1.

⁹ Rajatarangini, Bk v, verse 152-53

¹⁰ Kalhana has used this word for people of non-Kashmiri stock and in the sense of impure. Aryans have generally distinguished between people of pure Aryan and impure non-Aryan blood. According to common usage among the Pandits of Kashmir, mleccha (abbreviated *mel* is used to identify Muhammadans of Kashmir.

¹¹ See The Most Important Finding of Niya in the Taklamakan by Wang Binghua. This article was originally at China Culture, Vol. I, 2 April 1996.

¹² M.A Stein, the translator of Rajatarangini was in Srinagar around 1891.

¹³ See Bk VII, verse 70 along with fn. Rajatarangini

¹⁴ See Rajat. Bk v, fn 150

¹⁵ *Ibid*, Bk vii, verse 520

¹⁶ Baharistan-i-Shahi: A Chronicle of Medieval Kashmir, tr. K.N. Pandit, Firma KLM Pvt. Ltd. Calcutta, 1991, p.28.

¹⁷ *Ibid*

¹⁸ Rajatarangini of Jonreaja, tr. J.C. Dutt, New Delhi, 1986, p. 77,

¹⁹ For more details about these place names and their chieftains see Rajat.v, 156n, vii, 499 and. Vol II, p4

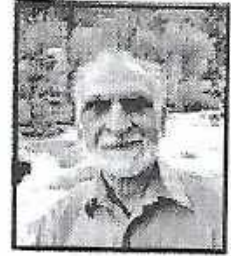
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RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL HISTORY OF CHAKRADHARA AND VIJAYESHA, THE TWO LOST ANCIENT TEMPLES OF KASHMIR

Dr. P. L. Ganju

*chakrabhrt-vijayeshaaadikeshava-ishanaabhushite,
tilaamshahapinayatraastiprithvyahtrthaihbbhahishkritah;
Rajatarangini, i-38, Kalhana, A.D. 1149 (English transliteration)*



Trans. 1: In that country, which is adorned by Keshva- Chakrabhrt and Shiva-Vijayesha and other (deities), there is not a space as large as a grain of sesame which has not its Tirthas. (Buhler, 1877)

Trans. 2: In that country which Keshva and Ishana adorn as Chakrabhrt and Vijayesha, as well as other(forms), there is not a space as large as a grain of sesame without a tirtha(Aurel Stein 1900)

Trans. 3: In that country adorned by chakrabhrt, Vijayesha, Aadikeshava and Ishana, there is not even so much land as can be covered by a sesame seed which is profane. (R.S. Pandit 1935)

From the first two translations of the Kalhana's shloka, given above, it is amply clear that the poet historian has specifically referred in given shloka only to the two ancient sacred temples of Kashmir :

- 1) Chakradhara, variously known as Vishnu, Keshava or Krishna and
- 2) Vijayesha, variously known as Shiva or Ishana, etc. The third translation seems to indicate four temples, which is not correct. The two said temples with various names have since long disappeared from the valley of Kashmir, leaving behind only their imprints on its soil. The site of Chakradhara is now modern Tsakdar, where the temple existed till it was destroyed by Sikandar Butshiken. In time the site of Vijayesha developed into Vijayesha-ksetra and lent its name to the sacred town of Vijayeshvara which gradually expanded to Vijabror, modern

Bijabihar. Now, where as there is no temple of Vishnu at Tsakdar, Bijabihara is blessed with a new temple of

Shiva, near its ancient site built by Maharaja Ranbir Singh, using the slabs of the old temple which was also destroyed by Sikandar Butshiken (see below)

Chakradhara and Vijayeshvara mentioned briefly in the Nilamata but very frequently in Rajatarangini, in context of their religious and political history, especially during the turbulent reign of the kings of the two collateral Lohara dynasties (A.D.1003- 1149). In his monumental book 'Kalhana's Rajatarangini', Sir Aurel Stein has given abundant details about the history and geography of these two ancient Tirthas of the Valley along with their religious importance.

The Temple of Chakradhara

In ancient and medieval Kashmir, Chakradhara was one of the most famous temples of Vishnu in the Valley. It existed in Kalhana's time also. The poet historian stated that the courtyard of the temple was enclosed by stuccoed massive wooden ramparts and gates, indicating that the shrine was not a stone structure (Rajat. viii-274).

Stein wrote that Chakradhara was situated on the top of the alluvial plateau of a small hill, the modern Tshakdar Udar, on the left bank of Vitasta. Prof. Buhler, a renowned Sanskrit scholar, senior to Sir Aurel Stein, located the site of the temple on the said Udar at the end of the plateau. He found a forty yards square quadrangular

area surrounded by regular rows of hollows in the ground, which separated it from the rest of the plateau, indicating that the enclosure of the temple was raised from these hollows. Since he did not find any stones in these furrows, he concluded that the enclosure of the temple was a stuccoed structure, confirming Kalhana's statement given above.

The Tsakdar Udar is situated near the village Vaghom, in the Dachunpor Pargana of Kashmir. The village is blessed with an ancient spring called Hastikarna. The ancient name of the village was Vyaghra-ashrama and the *spring* as Hastikarna Naga. The spring is mentioned by this name in the Mahatmyas of Vijayeshvara and Amreshvara and probably the one mentioned in the Nilamata is the same *spring*. Vitasta takes a deep bend at Hastikana before it reaches Tsakdar.

Once, at the foot of the Chakradhar and beyond it, towards modern Bijabror, there existed an ancient town called Narapura, ruled by King Nara-I. Stein subscribes to its antiquity, on the basis of the ancient coins, reaching back to Greek and Scythian rule, that have been extracted in large quantities from the low ground towards the river, and from the river bed itself.

There is an interesting legend associated with the destruction of both the town of Narapura by a tutelary deity of the area, called Sushravas Naga. Kalhana says that the king was infatuated with the beautiful daughter of the Naga, whom he had already given in marriage to a Brahmin. When the Naga came to know that the king wanted to abduct his daughter, he set the town on fire along with the king. It is believed that at that time thousands of terrified people fled from the town for safe refuge to the Chakradhara, where they were also burnt to death. As the legend goes, Sushravas had left Narapura in remorse and taken his habitation at a far off place in the

mountain lake, which bears his name, called Sushrama Nag, modern Sheshnag.

Chakradhara suffered another conflagration in the reign of King Sussala (A.D. 1112—20), when the internecine wars between the princes of the two collateral, Lohara dynasties raged in the Valley. The chieftains of many independent, feudal landholders of the Valley, called Damaras, took sides in these wars, creating mayhem. Sussala belonged to the Second dynasty. Earlier, his brother, King Uchhala (1101-11) had dethroned his distant cousin, King Harsha (1089-1101), a scion of the First Dynasty and assumed power in the Valley. Now, the youthful grandson of the slain King Harsha, called Bhikshachara, instigated by the Damaras, marched to Vijayeshvara and caused mayhem there. The royal forces and the inhabitants of Vijayeshksetra and the adjoining villages fled to the shrine of Chakradara, along with their belongings, for safe refuge there. Bhikshachara's allies followed them to the shrine but could not open its gates. One of the Damaras then set on fire the massive wooden enclosure of the besieged shrine, causing death of thousands of the fugitive royal forces, along with the inhabitants of the region. Kalhana compared the conflagration at Chakradhara with the burning of the three cities of demon Tripura.

It seems that, after the conflagration at the site of Chakradhara, the temple had been restored by King Sussala and remained a place of great sanctity for a long time. A number of princes of the Lohara dynasty would resort to it in their old age and die there, at the feet of the Deity, Vishnu -Chakradhara (Holder of the Sudarshan Chakra). 'Jonaraja mentions the statue of Chakradhara among those chief divine images which Sikandar Butshiken destroyed,' says Aurel Stein.

Temple of Vijayesha

Like Chakradhara (Vishnu), Vijayesha (Shiva) is also counted amongst the most famous temples of ancient Kashmir. It was

also protected by a massive wooden enclosure. Emperor Ashoka (268-231 B.C.), who built the Capital City of Shrinagari in the Valley, had removed it and built one using stone slabs. The Emperor had also built two temples in his own name within the courtyard of the temple. It testifies to the antiquity of the shrine of Vijayesha. It appears that, in the long run, the site of the ancient town of Narapura, situated at the base of the Chakradhar and burnt down by Susravas Naga, as mentioned above, gave way to the new town of Vijayeshksetra or Vijayeshvara. As mentioned above, the name of the modern town of Vijabror (Bijabihara, in the tourist guides) is the recollection of the ancient name of Vijayeshvara.

In his Rajatarangini, Kalhana referred to Vijayeshvara for the first time in the reign of King Mihirakula, while describing his cruelties in the northern region of the subcontinent (probably, Gandhara) and in the Valley of Kashmir. Subsequently, to atone for his sins, Mihirakula had bestowed one thousand Agraharas to the Brahmans of Vijayeshavara, who had migrated there some time earlier from Gandhara. Kalhana placed Mihirakula's reign between the Laukika samvat 2372 and 2242 corresponding to B.C. 704-774. Modern research scholars have identified Kalhana's Mihirakula, with the son of the first powerful Hun king, Toramana, on the basis of Kalhana's description of his barbarian character, the notices of the well-known Chinese pilgrims and the findings of other later scholars. Stein says that he succeeded his father who ruled from Kabul to Central India, in A.D. 515. Mihirakula was defeated by one of the later kings of the Gupta dynasty and driven to Kashmir, where he finally established his kingdom. Reference to Mihirakula's donation of the Agraharas to the Brahmans of Vijayeshvara indicates that this town was inhabited by people quite early in its history.

Subsequently, Vijayeshvara appears in Rajatarangini briefly in the reign of King Avantivarman (A.D. 855-883), King Yashaskara (A.D. 939-948) etc., but very frequently in the long reign of the Lohara dynasty. The pious Queen Suryamati, wife of King Ananta (A.D. 1028-1063), built a math by the side of Vijayesha and bestowed 108 Agraharas to the learned Brahmans at the famous temple.

Aurel Stein visited the ancient site of the temple in 1889 and found some of the ancient slabs and fragments scattered over there. On the basis of the tradition of the local Purohits and his own research, Stein concluded that the ancient temple of Vijayesha was situated there, on the left bank of Vitasta, about one hundred yards away from it and about 15 feet below the level of the surrounding ground. In Rajatarangini, Kalhana had mentioned that a bridge existed on the river overlooking the sacred temple. Stein also found a bridge there, confirming the site of the ancient temple.

In the long reign of the Lohara dynasty, when its kings and princes were mostly engaged in their internecine wars in the Valley, abetted by the militant feudal landholders, called the Damaras, the shrine of Vijayesha was witness to violence and bloodshed that took place in its vicinity. Yet the shrine survived as an important pilgrimage centre for many centuries up to the advent of the Muslim rule in the Valley, when Sikander Butshiken had removed its sacred Linga.

Vijayeshvara witnessed the worst political upheaval and treachery in the reign of King Ananta, grandson of King Samgramaraja (the first Lohara Prince installed by Queen Didda, when she was dying). Ananta was just eight years old, when he was put on the throne of Kashmir, in A.D. 1028. He grew up in the company of the fugitive Hindu Shahiya princes, Rudrapala and Diddapala, who had taken refuge in

Kashmir after their dynasty was vanquished in Punjab by Mahmud Ghajni. They would receive hefty maintenance allowances from the royal treasury and also held sway on the political affairs of the Valley. Along with them, Ananta indulged in great extravagance but yet emerged as a brave fighter on the battlefield, equalling the valour of the Shahiya princes.

When the Shahiya princes had died, King Ananta's overbearing wife, Queen Suryamati, held sway on his mind and dominated the affairs of the government. She had great weakness for her son Kalsha and, in 1063, when the king had completed thirty five years of his rule, Suryamati prevailed upon him to abdicate in his favour. Kalsha was duly coronated but his father continued to exercise his supremacy. Designating Kalsha as King of Kashmir, without any powers, proved a disaster for the family. King Kalsha led a licentious life, in the company of many highly depraved advisors. When the sinful deeds of the king became public, bringing shame to his parents, they moved to Vijayeshvara, along with their treasures, horses, foot soldiers and his allies, the Damaras, weakening the position of their son in the Capital.

At Vijayeshvara, Anantadeva made proper arrangements for his residence and put his treasures and other possessions under shelter, stationing his guards on the nearby plateau, called Naunagar Udar, a place commanding all the direct routes between Vijayeshvara (Vijabror) and Srinagar. Now, he abandoned all his cares and spent his time in festivities at the temple.

When Anantdeva had taken away all his treasures from the Capital, the ambitious King Kalsha found himself in great straits. He loaned money from the rich Damaras and raised his own forces and set out to attack his father at Vijayeshvara. When Kalsha's forces had reached Avantipura,

his mother Suryamati, having learnt about her son's dangerous plans, sent a secret message to him that he should retreat, or else he would be killed by his father who was still strong enough to defeat him.

Kalsha obeyed and retreated to the Capital but released his anger on his father's remaining allies there, by burning their houses. When Ananta came to know about his son's atrocities, he wanted to divest him of his kingship and install his grandson Harsha (son of Kalsha) on the throne of Kashmir. He immediately sent for him and Harsha came to Vijayeshvara without losing any time. This appeared to have appeased king Kalsha. Ananta came to the Capital to spend some time there but on learning that his son was planning to imprison him, he again resorted to Vijayeshvara, taking Harsha along with him.

Kalsha followed him to Vijayeshvara. One night he burnt down the stacks of horse fodder of his army and also killed many of his foot soldiers. Ananta wanted to retaliate but Suryamati, blinded by her love for her son Kalsha, dissuaded him to do so. Kalsha then set his father's residence and the town of Vijayeshvara on fire reducing them to ashes. Having lost all his wealth, the condition of the royal couple was now extremely pitiable. Adding fuel to the fire burning in the hearts of his parents, King Kalsha wanted to banish them to Parnotsa (Poonch), perhaps to live in their ancestral home in Lohara.

This led to a bitter altercation between Ananta and Suryamati, resulting in a protracted mud-sliding at each other. Ananta blamed his spouse for all his troubles, during his kingship and wanted to spend the last days of his life at the feet of the image of Vijayesha (Shiva) to gain merit for a better life in the other world. Frustrated by his son and duplicity of his wife, he drove a knife into his anus and

told his wife to announce that he had died of haemorrhage. Ananta died on the full moon day of Kartika in the year of Laukika era 4157 (A.D. 1081) and Suryamati guarded his body for the whole night.

Next day, she made elaborate arrangements for the ceremonial cremation of her husband. She waited for her son Kalsha, but he did not turn up and told Harsha not to believe his father. Then she rode her husband's pier, followed by three of her male servants and two females. Two of the favourites of Ananta renounced the world and stopped at the temple of Vijayesha. Thereafter, Kalsha came to see his son, again and again, to appease him and finally brought him to Srinagar.

King Jayasimha (A.D. 1128-49), son of King Sussala, renovated the temple of Vijayesha by covering it with a fresh coat of plaster and white wash to make it resemble 'Kailasha', says Kalhana. His son-in-law Somapala took an oath by sacred libation before the image of Vijayesha that he would defend the King's territory from his enemies. This is perhaps the last time when Vijayesha is mentioned in Rajatarangini.

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POEMS TO GURU & LORD SHIVA

Samad Mir & Ali Mardan
Translated by Rashneek Kher

I asked His Holiness, Swamiji, Is it possible that a saint can fall to temptation or desire? A true saint has reached a stage where desire and temptation stays away from him or her. It becomes his/her second nature to be bereft of desire so the question of falling to a temptation doesn't arise. I am not very sure if I have written it as well as he explained it to me but I had got my answer.

For many days I was trying to comprehend the meaning of the verse,

Faqiriy beem ros tamahas karaan laar

Now that I had "understood" (or so I believe) the meaning, I am making an attempt to translate the poem from which the verse is.

This verse is from a poem titled Faqiri (The state of being a Mendicant or The Mendicant himself) by the great Kashmiri Saint poet Abdul Ahad Zargar. Ahad Zargar describes his preceptor or his qualities in this poem. I am drawn to conclude that he mentions Faqirey (The Mendicant) and not Faqiri (the state of being a mendicant) because he would often refer to his Murshid or Guru as Faqir.

Faqirey tabavun aftaab chumay, Faqirey Kabavuy mehraab chumay

Faqirey Jabajanh shah dhuthumay, Faqirey Kabavuy mehraab chumay

That mendicant, like blazing sun; is my guide to the house of God

Omniscient that King, I see; is my guide to the house of God

Faqirey misli gulshan aav folfol, Faqirey rang rang jaame vael vael

Faqirey vasle sheshan aaseluluy moy, Faqirey Kabavuy mehraab chumay

That mendicant, like a blossoming garden; in colorful attires

He, the wine of truth in the carafe of unity; is my guide to the house of God

Faqirey darde poshan mushqi ambaar; Faqirey girde goshan manz chu zavar

Faqirey karde roshan ssat samay; Faqirey Kabavuy mehraab chumay

That mendicant, like copious fragrance of flowers in pain (seeker); iridescent jewels in ears

Effulgent at all times; is my guide to the house of God

Faqirey Ailaman chum alime daster; Faqirey Taleban chum taaj barsar

Faqirey Aemilan, aamale namay; Faqirey Kabavuy mehraab chumay

That mendicant, the repository of knowledge for learned; zenith of gnosis for the seeker

Song of piety for the virtuous; is my guide to the house of God

Faqirey peshwaye ganje asrar; Faqirey rehnumaye lole darbar

Faqirey badshahay lohe kalmey; Faqirey Kabavuy mehraab chumay

That mendicant, the keeper of the secret treasure, leader in the court of love

The king who writes our destiny; is my guide to the house of God

Faqirey Sahibay asrare abrar; Faqirey beem ros tamahas karaan laar

Faqirey Meeman don manz chum kalimay; Faqirey Kabavuy mehraab chumay

That mendicant, possessor of secrets and devout; who effortlessly keeps desire away

Kalima (Faith) between two Meem's (Nastaliq alphabets); is my guide to the house of God

*Faqirey "hu" vuchum azha naebar draav;
Faqirey rooh baneth myanes mares chaav*

*Faqirey Noah nabee yaeth naavee chumay;
Faqirey Kabavuy mehraab chumay*

That mendicant, as "hu" I saw exhale; entered my mortal body as soul

He, the Noah of my boat; is my guide to the house of God

*Faqirey os faqirey roze baaki;Faqirey chum
divan mas hamche saqi*

*Faqirey name maula jaame jaamay, Faqirey
Kabavuy mehraab chumay*

That mendicant, eternal, will and shall remain; he who intoxicates me and the wine

Whose name is the wine of the mystic, is my guide to the house of God

*Faqirey Ahad Zargar chuy che darbar;
Faqirey jalwe maaran andere naebar*

*Faqirey Lalnavantan rumay rumay; Faqirey
Kabavuy mehraab chumay*

That mendicant, who is resplendent in both worlds'; resides in my every breath,

Outside whose door I (Ahad Zargar) await, is my guide to the house of God

Ali Mardan Khan's - Huma Asli Maheshwar Bhood

Not many people in Kashmir would have known the name, Ali Mardan Khan, had it not been for the small area in downtown Srinagar that is named after this Afghan Governor. Despite this he would have remained a name in the books of history like many other rulers but for the verses that immortalized him in Kashmiri Folklore, despite him not being a Kashmiri. The verses were written at a time which was clearly our dark ages. It was forbidden for non Muslims (read Hindus) to read their scriptures or practice their religion openly. I am not sure if it is entirely true but it is widely believed that the Hindus were ordered not to recite Sanskrit verses thus forcing them to make Persian as their language of connect to their deities. Whatever may be the historical accuracy of this "order", to this day we recite Bhakti verses in Persian and there is one in particular which I remember and goes something like this:

*Chakreshwari Hajat rawa, Sajath gada ra
padshah*

*Vaah Vaah chi Lakshmi Thapna, shree
sharika devi nama*

That Goddess Chakreshwari, who can turn a beggar into a king

She who listens to our prayers and answers them

I salute, thee, Seat of Lakshmi, who incarnates in the form of Sharika (in Kashmir)

To cut a long story short, one evening Ali Mardan had a vision which took the shape of a beautiful Persian Devotional Poem. Most of us keep rendering them at religious and social festivals with fervor and devotion. Thanks to the oral tradition that has helped carry this poem in its totality to us. It also is a commonplace in most of

our Leela* renditions. I am using the version published in Sahaj Kosam (compiled by Moti Lal Saqi) for Mast Bab Ashram. It is slightly different from the version (the last verse differs) that comes down to us via the oral route. I make an attempt to transliterate the verses.

Huma Asli Maheshwar Bhood, Shab Shahi ki Man Deedam

Ghazanfar Charma-e-barbood, Shab Shahi Ki Man Deedam.

It was Shiva, the real God, the King I saw that night

Adorned was his body with Lion Skin, the King I saw that night

Ze Basmash Jam-e-bar-tan, Zunar-ish mar-e-bar garden

Ravanish Gang-e-bar sarbood, Shab Shahi.....

Besmearred with ash, Instead of the scared thread a snake coiled around his neck

Un ebbed flow the Ganga from his locks, the King I saw that night

Sah Chashmash bar-jabee-daarad, Zi mahro maaha roshan tar

*Se Karan Daste-Bastah Bood, Shab Shahi.....***

Brighter than sun and moon, shone his three eyes

In Salutations to him stood Vishnu, Brahma and Shiva (the 3 causes of the universe), the King.....

**This verse needs a little explanation, the three reasons though commonly understood as Shiva, Vishnu and Mahesh are seen in a different way by the Shaivites of Kashmir. The Will (Icha Shakti of Citi-Supreme Consciousness) in itself has the triple process of manifesting, maintaining and dissolving the universe. So the three reasons could also be understood as attainment of *Swantraya* (Freedom from Bondage of Ignorance)

Be Dastash AAb-e-Kaunsar, Ve bekh Nakoosay Nilofar

Hilalash Taj Bar Sar Bood, Shab Shahi.....

With a conch of Lotus Shoot in one hand and the pitcher of nectar in another

The Crescent Moon embellished his forehead, the King.....

Uma az soi-chip-binger, Zi Sad Khursheed Taban-tar

Savare Kulb-e-nar bood, Shab Shahi.....

Uma on his left, effulgent, like a thousand suns

Beseated on Nandi, I saw the king that night.....

Ajab Sanyasa deedam, Namu Narayanay Guftam

Be Khakhay Paye Bosidam, Shab Shahi....

Wonderstruck I said Namu Narayan, incredible sage he was

In reverence, I bowed to touch the specks of dust at his feet, the King.....

Nighahay bar mane Miskeen, Namud-e-az-chasme taaban-tar

Makanash La maaken tar bood, Shab Shahi.....

With his divine grace (Anugraha), he showered his radiance

Immersed me in the universe of consciousness, the King.....

Manam Mardan Ali Khanam, Ghulam-e-Shahe-Shahanam

Ajab Israr Main Beenam, Shab Shahi.....

I Ali Mardan Khan who is the servant of the king of the kings

Is witness to a mystic experience, the King.....

Another version of the last verse is *Manam Mardan Musalmanam, Ali Khanam Namee Dhanam*, which means

I Ali Mardan a devout Muslim, who owes every breath to Ali (the Caliph)

—————
This poem is also a reiteration of the Kashmiri Shaivite standpoint of the world being real as against the Vedantic concept of it being *Maya* (unreal). That the poet's vision is not of a formless deity but one that he describes in great detail with its physical attributes and iconography reinforces the Kashmiri Shaiva thought of

the creation being real when *Unmesh* (broadly translated as opening of eye/ thought) happens.

Note: I would welcome improvements in translation. Persian is not a language I am well versed with. I thank my friend Geetika, without her help this translation would not have been possible.

*Leela is a Kashmiri Devotional Poem.

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SARADA-MAI : A FORGOTTEN CULTURAL LINK (GODDESS SARADA)

Dr. V. N. Drabu, Jammu

A painting of goddess Sarada assigned to the 19th century (Goswamy, 1998, pp. 142-143)¹ corresponds to its iconographic description in *Silpa-sastra*. The five-headed goddess is seated cross-legged on a double lotus, resting against a huge bolster. The heads are arranged in tiers with lateral heads attached at various levels to a vertical column of heads. This reminds us of the polycaphalic figures seen in the Ladakh murals and painted book-covers as also of the gigantic stucco figures of Bodhisattvas inside the Seemtsek at Alachi. The central head is seen full face and others in three quarters. From the nimbus emerge golden rays. With an attenuated torso, the goddess is depicted holding a trisula, an ankusa, a pasa, a sankha, a cakra, a decapitated head and two full bloomed lotuses so placed as to appear like the sun and the moon. Usually in Kashmiri paintings multiple arms are shown fanning out from the elbows instead of from the shoulders. Here they fan out slightly from behind the shoulders and appear stiff and schematic. The central pair of arms are crossed across the chest. Each of the heads has a third eye, vertically placed on the forehead. The goddess is adorned with pearls and golden necklaces. She wears a short choli and a long dhoti that covers her crossed feet. Her stylized *vahana* is shown with a pointed beak and decorative wings and tail. At either side stand the devotees, a couple, the male figure on the right wearing a *dhoti* and *kantop* and the female on the left dressed in a skirt that covers the upper part of her body and the back of her head. Their ethnic traits speak of some common lineage of our highly cultured race in the heart of Asia.

Legend has it that pleased with the austerities of Sandilya, Saraswati, called 'Sarada' responded to his prayers and descended on one of the mountain peaks facing the bank of Madhumati, joined on its in course by the Krishan Gnaga in Kashmir, to ensure *bhoga* and *moksa* for ilie *sadhakas*. Perhaps no other place could be better suited for the descent of the goddess than *Sardi*, at the confluence of the Krsna-Madhumati, that commands a panoramic view of in the alpine forests wending their way through the majestic mountains and the enchanting serpentine streams and rivers to the vast uplands of Central Asia and the Mansorovar beyond. Man and animal are so intertwined in the warm embrace of Nature as to fully comprehend the mystery of *parapara* (supreme knowledge or *samvid*) that is obtain, through the five syllabled (*pancaksari*) Sarada. She is *devadevi*; she is *mahavidya*; she is *paratattva*. She is the goddess of learning, music and beauty. She is pure consciousness. She is the eventide energy of Gayatri. She grants rhythm, order and auspiciousness of knowledge. She is the seedbed of sixteen *matrkas*. To the true devotee she manifests herself as a white, a yellow and a green *myna*. Sometimes she may appear as *sabda* (*nadarupa*), the essence of a poem, on a *Sardi* stone slab adorned with the precious gems of poetry that verily establish the splendour and sparkling garland of *varna mala* (the rosary of alphabets). Both Bilhana and Kalhana wax eloquent in their ecstasy at the sight of saffron and the ever-flowing stream of Madhumati in the shape of the sweet speech (*vani*) of the poets. *Vagdevi* (the goddess of speech) thus signifies the

creative sound of the Universe. She represents the ultimate reality in the form of sound (*sabdabrahman*). Often in our fantasy our unconscious minds tend to draw upon our common pool of archetypal images. We mirror our mental images in the image of the archetype of 'Sarada' who may thus appear as a princess or protectress. Our myths, beliefs, metaphors construct a reality which is vital to our life and living. The worship of Sarada assists us in getting into harmony with the Universe and stay tuned with it. With her grace we acquire a coherent sound that helps transmission of ideas, wisdom and culture. Such speech is not mere verbal expression. It is associated with rationality and refinement. Goddess Sarada enables her worshippers to be both creative and communicative, whereby they make a significant contribution to society and culture. In fact, like Athena of the Greeks, the goddess helps us in understanding the communication patterns of our culture in its religious and philosophical context. A badly mutilated image of Athena in the SPS Museum, Srinagar, would suggest how close contacts with the Greeks, since very early times, must have led to an interaction of far-reaching importance between the two cultures in the distant past.

The shrine of Sarada stands on a hexagonal spring (19'X13') which is covered with a stone slab². Now in Pak occupied Kashmir, the pilgrims approached it through two principal routes of Muzaffarabad and Kupwara in north Kashmir. The pilgrims from Kashmir took the most frequented route from Kupwara to Sarada, covering the whole distance of nearly 40 miles through Ladaarana, Jungund, Navanagalle hill, Dudaniyal in different stages upto Kel. The other one from Muzaffarabad followed the upper

course of the *Krsna-ganga*, the pilgrims from the plains covering a distance of about 100 miles, from Titwal, Kamah, Keran, Dudaniyal to Sarada. The whole area from Jungund to Kel was known as *Drova* (dwar or entrance) which would suggest that this whole belt of about 60 sq. miles opened negotiable passes for merchants and missionaries making their way to Kashmir and Central Asia and back to north west India³. Sarada obviously appears to have been an important centre in Drova, attracting the Greeks from Bactria and Taxila and artists and scholars from other parts of India. The explorations of Sir Aurel Stein would suggest that Kashmir symbolized the efflorescence of an indigenous culture with the stamp of Greek thought refined and sharpened by Indian aesthetics. Sarada as one of the centres, may have provided nourishment to the flowering of such aesthetics with its abstruseness.

But to argue that Sarada was a university par excellence, specializing in certain branches like the six systems of Indian philosophy, is to stretch our imagination too far. For certain we don't know when and how *Gauri-tritiya* came to be celebrated here and what kind of degrees were awarded by a university the like of which never existed in Sarada. But what seems to be more plausible is the fact that the *Sarada* based on the *bija-mantras* of Sarada *Varnamala* proved quite rewarding and was successfully used by Adi Sankara. Such a *tantric sadhana* was defined as *matrka* or *Malini*. As such the Sarada script came to be known as *Siddhamatrka* and even now called *siddham* in Bali. It became quite popular with the Baudha-*tantric sadhakas* in Japan.

On the confluence of the Madhumati Krsna, pilgrims would offer oblations to their manes (pitris) in the bright fortnight

of Bahadrapada on Ganga saptami followed by animal sacrifice of goats on the 9th (naumi).

This reminds us of the legendary king Mankan of Kupwara (Mallapura) who is said to have been defeated and who got killed in one of the battles by his enemy. His minister is stated to have carried his dissected body to Telyan where he stopped to get some food. In his absence birds of prey settled on the mutilated body and set it afloat in the river. Dismayed, the minister continued his march to Sarada where he was astonished to see his master Mankan alive and in full armour, offering prayers to Goddess Sarada. Mankan next wanted to make an offering of his whole treasure of jewels and pearls as a mark of thanks giving for being restored to his principality. The Goddess dissuaded him from doing so; instead she desired that the spring be covered with a stone-slab. Does this anecdote imply that the Raja who might have been badly wounded in battle found a safe refuge in Sarada, the miraculous healing powers of the spring having restored his vigour, courage and determination to fight back the enemy with success? One thing is clear. She is not only a city or river goddess, but may be identified as the goddess of warriors too who sought her refuge in wars and battles. Sarada, therefore, assumes the form of Athena or Roma - a young woman, wearing a helmet and carrying a spear. Some of these attributes of the goddess are mentioned in the *Rudrayamala tantra*. If the iconography of this goddess dates back to the second century of the Christian era, it would seem reasonable to assume that our goddess Sarada had by that time established her reputation not only as a goddess of war but also of learning and

wisdom, She is not only the embodiment of ten *vidyas* (*dasavidya*); she is also the slayer of *daityas* or Candi. It is in this form that our benign and benevolent goddess appears in *Sarada sahsranama* in the *Rudra yamala tantra*. Obviously our goddess affirms the strength of the warrior community who were more attracted by its martial aspect than by the austere side of the *tantric sadhakas* or dry logicians. Metaphorically the sacrifice of goats on *naumi* would imply how the true spirit of worship is sacrifice (*sariram havi*) which, in the final analysis, leads to attainment of psychic energy (*parasakti*).

Except the remains of a fortress and a rampart 15' high and 35'X30', there are practically no remains other than a few terracotta tiles scattered in the vicinity of the shrine. The enclosure of the shrine contains a number of cells, most probably meant for *sadhakas* interested in *tantric* lore. There is nothing to suggest the existence of spacious halls or a well-equipped library of manuscripts within the precincts of the shrine or any evidence of degrees having ever been conferred on those who came to Sarada more as aspirants in quest of spiritual fulfilment than as students. The *tirtha* did not advocate any monastic life nor have any colossal ruins survived as to bear any mute testimony to the energy and creativity of the early centres of learning in India like Taxila or Nalanda. The universally accepted form of address was Sarada Mai, the mother, which denoted a 'relation', an emotive attitude of the devotees to the creative sphere of nature and the self-fulfilment of the *Sadhaks* in a certain pattern of *Matrike*-worship in a region which was designated as *Sarada-mandala* of *Sarada desa*⁴.

NOTES AND REFERENCES.

1. Karuna Goswamy, Kashmiri paintings, 1998, Delhi.
2. I owe all this information and what follows to my brethren from Batargam, Sarvashree Pt. Niranjannath, Kashinath, Amanath who were visibly moved while describing the shrine of Sarada to me and their close association with its adjoining area, collectively known as Drova (द्रोव).
3. Trade in wool, kuth, crocus was carried on an extensive scale, bringing the merchants and missionaries together on their way to the marts of Rome and trading stations in Central Asia upto far off China in the month of Asvina (Asu).
4. Interestingly several other pilgrimages can be spotted to exhibit a Kashmiri Pandit's love for spiritual attainment through a highly advanced form of *sadhana*. *Goosi* in Kupwara, *Tikar* near Kanihama, *Bhedagiri* (Budabrar) in Kelar-Pulwama may be cited as a few instances. At all these places we find Gojars taking an equal interest in offering sacrifices to the Goddess to increase their flock of sheep.

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THE MYSTERIOUS CAVE OF AMARNATH

Samsar Chand Kaul

MAN'S search after God began with the dawn of creation. This search has assumed various forms, some seekers have concentrated on the teachings of the great prophets of religions, and others have gone on pilgrimages to the birth places of saints and prophets and visited localities where the different gospels were preached. Thereby they seek inspiration to help them in their quest.

The grandeur of Northern India lies in its glorious mountain ranges ... the Himalayas. It is on these ramparts of Nature that the prosperity of India depends. Shri Krishna says in the Bhagwat Gita, 'I am the Himalayas among mountains.' The Indians look upon them as the abode of celestial beings. It is said that in the caves of Himalayas live sages who have been in meditation for hundreds of years. They occasionally reveal themselves in disguise to pilgrims. Among the many holy places in the side-valleys of these mountains, two Kidar Nath towards the south and Amar Nath in the interior of Kashmir Himalayas stand out prominently. There are also a number of mountain peaks which are dedicated to certain gods or goddesses. The most sacred spots in Tibet on the further side of the Indian border are Mount Kailas and the Manasarowar lake where adepts in spiritual lore are supposed to be living in their subtle bodies. These Masters are ever ready to guide the travellers on the spiritual path. I think one of the reasons why men go to these places is to see the Hand of the Creation in scenes of Nature's impressive grandeur. As these places are not easy of access, and as they are thousands of feet above the sea-level, beyond the dust and din of the world, man's soul gets elevated at the sight of their sublime beauty and thus he is brought closer to the object of his quest.

There are special days fixed according to the lunar calendar to visit these sacred places. The pilgrims assemble on a certain date in a certain place and start together. Such a rule is applicable only to those places which lie in mountains and the going is difficult. The Government provide facilities as far as possible everywhere for pilgrims.

The most famous of these pilgrimages is the Cave of Amar Nath which is an All-India Holy Place. People visit it from every corner of India. Mention of it occurs twice in the Rajatarangini (the history of Kashmir), first where the King Ram Deva is stated to have imprisoned the debauch King Sukh Deva and to have drowned him in the (Lambodheri) among the mountains of Amar Nath about 1,000 B.C., and a second time where King Sandimati (34 B.C. to 17 A.D.) is described as visiting the ice-lingam.

This shows that this sacred spot was known to the people in very early times. One can only guess as to how this cave was discovered. The villagers of the Kashmir Valley generally send their flocks under a shepherd's care to the pastures in summer. Each shepherd has his own pasture which he inherits from his father. The word Pahalgam means 'A village of shepherds'. While grazing his flock round the pastures of Pantsatarni, some shepherd may have lost some members of his flock. In search of these he may have climbed the mountain and found this cave with the shiva-lingam in it and communicated the news to his brothers who in turn must have made it known to others. The Maliks as the guides to the cave are now called, have a share in the offerings to the deity. Formerly, in absence of tangas and lorries the whole journey from Srinagar was done on foot. There were a large number of springs,

places and streams in the way where the pilgrims had to bathe, and drink water. Since the introduction of wheeled conveyances many of these places have been abandoned being out of the way and much time is thus saved. For the information of the reader I give a detailed list of places which a pilgrim is expected to visit for a bath and other ceremonial purposes.

Old Route. According to the Amar Nath Mahatmya a pilgrim is expected to bathe or drink water at the following places before he enters the Holy Cave. As some of the places are not accessible to wheeled conveyance, they are not now visited by pilgrims.

Srinagar : Shudashi Khetor, the modern Shurahyar about 2.5 miles from Srinagar. It is said that in ancient times there was a stone staircase leading from this place to the top of the Shankarachar. Lately a temple has been built here.

Shivpor : There must have been a temple here, but there is no trace of it now.

Pandrethan : The old Panthdreshti about 1.5 miles from Shurahyar. There is a temple in the middle of the spring built by Meru the Prime Minister of King Paratha (921-31 A.D.). Kak is of opinion that this is the temple of Shiv Rilhanesvara erected by Rilhana, the Prime Minister of Jayasimha, about the year A.D. 1135.

Padampor : This was the favourite haunt of Rajank Acharyas the present Razdan family. It is 5.5 miles from Pandrethan. It was here that Shri Lalishwari lived. There is a spot here which is called Lalatrag.

Javati : The modern Zewan. It is 7 miles from Srinagar. The road is metalled. There is a spring here dedicated to Vasak Nag. There are regular buses running now.

Meshitoud : It means sweet water, the modern Petwan.

Avantiporika : It is known as Seda Khetor, the modern Avantipor. There are at this

place old temples built by King Avantivarman (855-88. A.C.).

Barsu : There is a stream flowing through the village Rudara Ganga.

Jaubror : There must have been a temple here in olden times.

Mahawarishwarn : The old Mahawaras.

Haridrak Ganapati : Known as Hari Ganish.

Belihar : Known as Belyar. This was known as Lakshmi Khetor.

Wagahama : The place is known as Hastikaran.

Tsakrish : The modern Tsakodar. This is a plateau on the right bank of the Vitasta near Bijbihara. It is 28 miles from Srinagar.

Dewak Tirth : The modern Dewakivar.

Hari Tsander : It is the southern ghat of the Bijbihara stone temple. It contains a huge stone lingam.

Sthalwat : The modern Thajwor. It is 2.75 Miles from Bijbehara and here water drips from the southern side of the plateau through maiden-hair on the Shivlingam.

Suryi-Gohawati : The modern Sriguphvara. It is 4.75 miles from Thajwor.

Lambodari : A stream in which the pilgrims have to bathe.

Sirhom : Here is a spring called Surya Ganga where worship takes place.

Bodrus : The place is sacred to Ganpat whose worship removes all obstacles.

Tsatrus Bodrus : The place is now called Hayi.

Shirshi Ashram : The Water Nag Ganga flows by this Spot. It is 2 miles from Sriguphvara.

Sallar : Here the people bathe in the stream. The place is 3.5 miles from Tsatrus Bdrus and is reached by a pony track.

Bala Khelyan : Known as Vishna Khetor, the modern Bala Khellan.

Ganish Bal : 10.5 miles from Sallar. Here Ganish is worshipped. It is on the right bank of the Lidder below Pahalgam.

Mamalishwar (Shiva Lingam) : On the right bank of the Lidder is a spring and an old temple containing a Shiva Lingam at this place which is about a mile from Pahalgam. It is said that when Shiva removed His seat from Thojwara to Mamalishwar, Ganish who was his door-keeper did not allow devas to visit Him. Hence the name of the village Mamal - don't go.

On one occasion Indra sought permission to visit Shiva. Ganish did not allow him. So there followed a quarrel, Ganish became furious and thirsty. He drank the river which became dry. Shiva while playing at his tabor poked the stomach of Ganish with it and out flowed the stream again, hence Lambodari.

In my opinion the source of the Lidder is the Kolahoi glacier. A stream joins it at Lidderwat which is the corrupt form of Lambodar wat-a rock dedicated to Ganish who is also named Lambodar and it is from here that the river was named Lambodari the modern Lidder. This must have been a place of pilgrimage in the olden times. An affluent from Tarsar enters the river at this place.

Bragapati Khetra : It is a spring in Pahalgam. It is said that Vishnu was pleased with the worship of Brago whom He embraced. Brago perspired, which gave rise to a spring. This spring is behind the village.

Nila Ganga : It is about 3 miles from Pahalgam. Close by the foot of Pisu Hill was the tirth of Sthartishwar where pilgrims had to bathe. One day Shiva kissed the eyes of Parvati to which antimony had been applied. He washed her eyes in water which turned dark-blue, hence Nila Ganga. There was a great fight between the Devas and the Daityas. The

Devas did not allow the Daityas to see Shiva. The Daityas were defeated and ground down to tiny bits. Hence Pisu Hill.

Sheshiram Nag : A certain Daitya's body was entirely made of wind. He became very powerful. He troubled the Devas every way. They all entreated Shiva to rid them of the monster. Shiva told them that he was his disciple, and that they should approach Vishnu, which they did. Vishnu sent his Wahan, Sheshi Nag who sucked all the wind from the Daitya's body and the Daitya was killed. Pilgrims bathe in the lake.

Vaovajen : Some of the Daityas still concealed themselves in the lakes around the place. These lakes, were dried and the Daityas were killed. Hence Hoka Sar (dried lake). The Deva's were told to build small houses of stones as a shelter against the wind. Hence pilgrims also make toy sheds of stones.

Pantsatarni : This is believed to represent plaited hair (jata) of Shiva from which the Ganga flows. It is said that Shiva told one of his Rudhragans to beat the drum every evening. He forgot to do so one evening. Thereupon he was cursed and turned into a mountain which is now known as Bairau Bal.

Garbagar : On the other side of the Bairau Bal is Garbagar popularly known as Garba Yatra. Nandi complained to Shiva that he could not stop the rush of Devas coming to visit him. He ordered Nandi to get a huge rock and make a hole through it, so that everyone desirous of, visiting him would have to pass through that hole while Nandi would be standing near the hole.

Amaravati : All living beings besought Shiva to disclose a method which would render them immortal. Thereupon Shiva rinsed His plaited hair a (Jata) and out flowed the Amaravati - the stream of immortality. Some of the drops fell here and there giving birth to some of the gods,

while himself he turned into Sudhaling (immortal emblem) in a corner of the cave. Every one being satisfied praised Shiva.

Sangam : The confluence of the Amaravati with the Pansatarni is the place where a pilgrim has to perform Shradha (a ceremony for the dead). He is required to make a pedestal of barley flour with four golden nails struck in the four corners and a pure pearl set in the middle which should be given in charity to a Brahman who is supposed to be Shiva's form. When returning from Pahalgam the pilgrims revisit Mamalishwar and bathe in the nine springs of Naudal.

Patal Ganga : This is the last place where a pilgrim has to bathe. This is a spring near Nishat Bagh.

Chhari Sahib : In the Bragish Sahita it is said that after Reshi Kashap Ji reclaimed the Kashmir Valley from the waters it became populated through the agency of Nag Raja Takhek. It so happened once that Bragish Reshi roaming through the Himalayas arrived here. It was he who gave a clue of the cave of Amar Nath Ji to the people. He gave them a detailed account of the Tirthas and the places on the route to the cave.

After some decades the Daityas had the upper hand here and this place fell into oblivion, and the people forgot all about the route. Thereupon Bragish ji reappeared. He told the people that he had propitiated Bhagwan Mahadiv from whom he had obtained a sceptre which he had entrusted to Nag Raj Takdhek. They should go and get this sceptre from Nag Raj, and while ruler of the country shall make arrangements for the Pilgrims who should start in a body from Srinagar with the holy sceptre in front. There would be no hindrance nor any trouble on the way. The sceptre called the Chhari Sahib wielded at present by the Mahant under the supervision of the Dharmartha Department

has led the procession of pilgrims ever since.

In 1819 A.C. Pandit Har Dass Tiku founded the Chhawani Amar Nath at Rambagh where the Sadhus from the plains assembled and where he gave them free rations for the journey, both ways from his own private resources. This cost him about two lakhs.

The Mahants who wield the divine command of holy place have always been the carriers of two holy sceptres which symbolise that command. Wherever a Mahant visits a place and takes his seat with ceremony a man holding one of the sceptres stands on his right and the other on his left.

The whole Amar Nath pilgrimage procession is conducted under the auspices of the Chhari Sahib. No pilgrim is allowed to go ahead of the Chhari, which is guarded by the Dharmartha Department, Kashmir. I am told that the Chhari in Srinagar was first wielded by Mahant Atwargir near the present Shital Nath buildings. After some time Mahant Saraswatigir visited Kashmir and stayed at the spot Dashnami Akhara. He erected a platform and some buildings and began to entertain Sadhus who came from the plains to Amar Nath. He took the Chhari from Atwargir.

In the meantime Shivratananand Saraswati improved the Durga Nag Ashram to such an extent that most of the Sadhus bound for the pilgrimage stayed in his ashram and were much cared for and warmly entertained. He put forth the plea that the Chhari must belong to his ashram as he was the Shankarcharia of the place. Thereupon started a dispute over the Chhari Shivratananand Saraswati marched to the Amar Nath pilgrimage. A compromise was made between the two claimants and Mahant Saraswatigir considered Shivratananand a Sadak chela. The latter then naturally became the

wielder of Chhari Sahib. Under his command the arrangements for the sadhus were excellent. There were enough tents and pilgrims were much cared for. But a section of the Sadhus of the place was not satisfied with the agreement. They protested to the Government and made demonstrations. After the demise of Shivratananand, the Chhari passed into the hands of a Chela of Saraswatigir who now wields it under the control of Dharmartha.

The Chhari generally leaves on the 4th day of the bright fortnight of Sawan. A state official is always present to perform puja at Dashnami Akhara on the eve of its departure. The carrier of this holy sceptre must walk on foot. They visit Hari Parbat and Shankarachar before departure. They go by stages as pilgrims did of old but by a different route by-passing the places of interest mentioned in Amar Nath Mahatmya. The first halt is, at Pampor. At Bijbehara all sadhus accompanying the Chhari are given a dinner by the pujari of the temple. Villagers call it 'Gosain Mela', the fair of hermits. Bijbehara to Anantnag-5 miles. Anantnag - A great festival is celebrated for the townspeople who come to see the sadhus. Anantnag-Bawan 4.5 miles. Here is the famous spring of Martand where in the intercalary month or on vijaya saftami shraddhas are performed.

Bawan to Aishimuqam 9.5 miles.

Aishimuqam to Pahalgam 11.5 miles.

Near Pahalgam village there are sheds for pilgrims. All pilgrims coming from various parts of India assemble here and wait for the Chhari Sahib. They arrange with contractors for ponies or coolies for their luggage. It is necessary to have a tent and some warm clothes. Religious-minded people abhor putting on leather shoes. If leather shoes are used they must be nailed. Formerly pilgrims generally used grass shoes. They are most useful in going over glaciers. In this journey however, there is

only a small bit in the Cave Glen. A waterproof coat is very useful. A staff with an iron spike would prove useful. It is also advisable to keep handy some ready-made food. Cinnamon should be used along with tea.

Poorly clad people from the plains having no conception of the severe cold of the place, suffer a lot. The Government makes excellent arrangements for the convenience of pilgrims. A civil officer regulates the whole affair. Medical aid is provided and security measures are enforced. Some schools and colleges despatch batches of scouts to look after the weak. There is a regular bazaar held at the stage. The shopkeepers, confectioners, grain-dealers, vegetable-sellers sell their commodities at a high price. The contractors arrange for fuel. As the fuel is not available beyond Pisu Hill (11,081 ft.) it is advisable that the coolies or pony-men be instructed to carry one or two bundles of wood. No wood except juniper is procurable for the next two stages. The Government allots about ten thousand rupees for the maintenance of the weak Sadhus and children and makes every possible effort to give them comfort and ease.

The Public Works Department looks after the upkeep of the road and the bridges over the torrents. Lately an excellent arrangement for the bathing of men and women has been made near the cave. Also an iron railing has been erected round the Shivaling in the cave.

On the night of the 11th day of the bright fortnight of Sawan (July-August) all pilgrims assemble at Pahalgam. They all are now in full equipment including picturesque awnings of all sorts and forming an artificial village march like the Aryan of old, in a deeply devotional spirit, reciting the praises of various gods and of goddesses, introspecting and meditating the inward vibrations of their minds and this is the purpose of their journey. The

procession is best described by Swami Vivekananda in the following words: "The procession of several thousands of pilgrims in the far-away Cave of Amar Nath, nestled in a glacial gorge of the Western Himalayas, through some of the most charming scenery in the world, is fascinating in the extreme. It strikes one with wonderment to observe the quiet and orderly way in which a canvas town springs up in some valley with incredible rapidity at each halting place with its bazaars and broad streets running through the middle and vanishing as quickly at the break of dawn, when the whole army of gay pilgrims are on their march once more for the day. Then again the glow of the countless cooking-fires, the ashes covered Sadhus under the canopy of their large gem (orange) umbrellas pitched in the ground, sitting and discussing or meditating before their dhunies (fire), the Sanyasis of all orders in their various garbs, the men and women with children from all parts of the country in their characteristic costumes, and their devout faces, the torches shimmering at night fall, the blowing of conch-shells and horns, the singing of hymns and prayers in chorus, all these and many other romantic sights and experiences of a pilgrimage, which can be met with nowhere outside India, are the most impressive and convey to some extent an idea of the overmastering passion of the race for religion. Of the psychological aspect and significance of such pilgrimage, done on foot for days and days, much could be written. Suffice it to say, that it is one of those ancient institutions which have above all, kept the fire of spirituality burning in the hearts of the people. One sees here the very soul of the Hindu nation laid bare in all its innate beauty and sweetness of faith and devotion.

Pahalgam to Tsandanwari (9,200 ft.)
8.5 miles. The pilgrims rise early and in a long string walk one after another. Some

old ladies are carried in palanquin. The palanquin-bearers sing in chorus to avoid fatigue. Some rich people ride on ponies, while most of the people walk. It is a good pony-track which runs along the right bank of the torrent. The mountain slopes are densely forested. The flow of the blue waters rushing against the rocks, making delightful pools and dashing contacts infuse new life into the onlookers. Occasionally they hear the sweet music of the whistling thrush or see the gorgeous plumage of the white-capped redstart or a dipper diving in the swift torrent to get its food. The shady path under the pines which emit delicious fragrance lessens the fatigue of the traveller. Some pilgrims take a little rest, against a huge fir and with closed eyes meditate on the beauties of the skilful works of the Author of the Universe. Others open their thermos flasks and while enjoying the beauties of Nature which abound in these lovely spots, take a cup of tea to exhilarate themselves; while others again hold the hand of an old man to help him to go ahead. In the way they have to bathe at the Nila Ganga. Some pilgrims walk straight on and halt at Tsandarwari and pitch their tents there. It is a wise plan to be early at the stage, to pitch the tent, make a drain round it and get coolies to collect wood in good time. A small hatchet is of much use. Ponies carrying luggage should not be allowed to move away from oneself and coolies should not lag behind.

There are sheds at stages, but except during pilgrim traffic they are not well cared for. It would be desirable that the sheds at Pahalgam and Tsandanwari be placed direct under the Public Works Department and the sheds at Vaovajen and Pantsatarni entrusted to shepherds living there for summer months. They should be paid for that. In that case the sheds will be kept clean, tidy and in good repair. I wish more

sheds were built for the comfort of the pilgrims.

This stage presents a moderately difficult ascent. From Tsandanwari to the foot of the Pisu Hill (11081 ft.) is about 1.5 miles. There is a snow bed to pass over. The ascent up the hill is somewhat steep. It is better to make an early start, as with slow and steady steps, the ascent can be easily negotiated. When taking rest it is advisable to look below at the same time not missing the glorious panorama of densely forest-covered mountains and snowy peaks about which eagles and vultures hover in circles to find their food. Close at your feet, right and left, are nature's gems of various colours-flowers peeping from underneath trees and bushes till you reach the top. You are now above the tree-belt (in the alpine region). Take a little rest and have something to eat. The going from here to Sheshiram Nag is easy. In between about two miles from the top of the Pisu Hill is Zoj pal a nice camping ground. The path goes along the shore of Sheshiram Nag (11,730). The Nag lies in a depression surrounded on one side by mountains about 16,000 ft. high. There are two small glaciers on the flanks of these mountains and the water from these glaciers feeds the lake: The silvery streaks of water flowing over the worn rocky precipitous slopes move like the Shesh snake and disappear into the lake. The pilgrims bathe here and some of them prepare tea. The colour of the water is lovely to look at. The lake on one side is silted up. The stream from the lake has carved out a deep ravine covered with birch trees. One finds beautiful flowers peeping out of juniper bushes. Rhododendrons are not scarce. The account of the lake given in the first book of Rajatarangani and that occurring in the Amar Nath Mahatmya do not agree. At sun down the snow on mountains turns pink and its reflection in the lake makes the beholder mute.

It is said that once upon a time there was a man named Sodwani running a shop at Drugajen. To him children of the village would come for a pinch of sugar everyday. One day a boy asked him for a second pinch because he said that there was another boy riding on a bull coming to play with them. This statement excited the curiosity of the shopkeeper who told him to show him the boy. When the shop-keeper was taken there, the children did show him the boy but he could not see him. He entreated them to put in his hand the tail of the bull. So at evening when the boy went back, the shop-keeper caught hold of the tail and over bush, rock and rough path he was dragged. In the way, the boy told the shop-keeper that was not the proper way for him to go. He should come to Sheshiram Nag on Shivratri day and then he would take him along with himself. It was not easy for the shop-keeper to go such a distance and to a place at such a height in mid-winter when the snow lies very deep on the ground. However, he managed to sell all his belongings went of Pahalgam and collected a large party to peasants. He paid them lavishly and told them to guide him to Sheshi Nag. In those days the path was very and snow fairly deep. The winters in those days were very severe. Somehow the peasants were able to guide him and they reached Sheshiram Nag. There he saw Shiva and Parvati waiting for him in a well furnished *shikara* on the shore of the lake. They beckoned to Sodwani to get into the boat. No sooner he went in, than the boat disappeared.

An ascent of 500 ft. will take you to the camping site of Vavojen (12, 730 ft.). Due to its height above the sea-level and the exposed nature of the place the wind here is very strong. Hence the ropes of the tents should be tightened firmly and the body wrapt in clothes.

The Mahant of Chhari does not permit any pilgrim to go ahead of him. I remember that once we started at early dawn for the next

stage. The Mahant shouted, 'Who are you? Where are you going?' 'We are confectioners and are making for the next stage', said we; 'All right.'

So a lie, sorry to say, saved us from a papal bull. My friends and I went straight to the cave. There we saw some Public Works Department coolies and some cowboys. The pilgrims build here toy huts of stone, as a propitiation to the forces of Nature to save them from the wind.

Vavojen (12230 Ft.) to Pantsatarni -8.25 Miles

On the 14th day of the bright fortnight of Sawan (July-August), the procession starts under the leadership of Chhari Sahib. They ascend Ashad Daki the Mahagunas which is a plateau where the herb of the same name once used to grow. Physically exhausted and tired, making halts at short intervals, the pilgrims walk slowly when the gradual descent of the path takes place from Hokasar and Kalinar where the route from Pahalgam via Astanmarg which is four miles shorter meets the main route. From here two miles onward is Nagara Pal, a huge boulder, up which the pilgrims scramble with two pebbles in hand beating the rock as if beating a drum to proclaim their arrival. Walking one mile and a half they stand on the bank of the Pantsatani stream. They take off their clothes and bathe in all its six or seven tributaries, the last being the main and the largest one. The water of some streamlets is pure because they rise from springs, while others come from glacial sources and hence contain minute sandy particles. When all these streams unite they form a mighty river which it is impossible to imagine. If one had the time, it would be worth while to explore the main stream. I remember once camping here and suggesting to my friends to explore the source of the main Pantsatarni stream, but they were very anxious to see their friends at Pahalgam and so did not agree.

The whole region is rich in herbs. It is a pity that the sheep and cattle graze everywhere in it, hence the flowers cannot be much observed. The herbs can only be recognized by their leaves. Here and there one might find a flower which has escaped being nipped by an animal. Even then some people conversant with eastern medicines, get a lot.

On their arrival the pilgrims hasten to pitch their tents. Cooking fires are lighted; the smoke from the green juniper bushes rises higher and higher in streaks. There is hustle and bustle everywhere. The ponymen are shouting for their ponies, the masters are yelling at their coolies, the mothers are looking for their children, the clients are enquiring about their priests. Some people after having tea, have a look at the landscape round the valley. The sunset on the snowy peaks is marvellous.

Pantsatami to Cave (12,729 Ft.) 4 Miles

On Purnamasi Sawan (July-August) the visit to the cave takes place. The old route has been condemned by the Government. The pilgrims used to climb the Bairau Bal and going round the summit reached the cave after descending the precipitous slope through Garba Yatra. The cave is at a distance of two miles from Pantsatarni.

The Present Route being easier, known as Sant Singh's route has been adopted for years past by the pilgrims. It is plain going for 2 miles and then there are 2 miles of very gradual ascent, part of it over a small glacier. Turning round the corner and looking up the glen one discerns a large hole in the mountains. That is the cave.

A narrow path leads up to this cave which is nestled among mountains between 16,000 ft. and 17,000 ft. above sea-level. This small valley must have been scooped by glaciers which now have receded. A small torrent drains the valley, while a streamlet shimmers down from the top of the cave and joins the torrent below. This spot where Nature's basic material, rock and

water are abundant, gives bliss to millions of Hindus. Their eyes marvel at the skilful hand of Nature, and this handiwork of hers the mysterious cave, the destination of their long, long journey. Their souls find peace. Every particle of sand, every drop of water, every thing hereabouts to them are the emblem of Shiva a sign of peace. They direct their thoughts to things spiritual in this frame of mind they undress themselves. First they wash themselves in this torrent; then they bathe in the Amaravati and besmearing themselves with the chalky sediment of the stream. They put on new clothes and thus, so to say draped in white from head to foot enter the cave, in a way become for a moment one with the Supreme and having no consciousness of the physical world.

Returning to physical consciousness they look around the interior of the cave. Towards the north-eastern corner they see Sudha* Lingam (immortal emblem) of pure greenish-white ice in a recumbent position on a natural pedestal (peth). The water drops from the top of the cave fall on the pilgrims and in some places the images of Ganesh Ji, Kumar Ji, and Parvati are formed. by these drops. The Mahant of the Chhari Sahib sits close to the Pedestal with two silver staves placed on either side of the Amar Nath Lingam (immortal emblem). The pilgrims offer to the deity, camphor, candles of clarified butter, raisins, candy sugar, black pepper, clothes, silver and gold ornaments. The recitations from the Vedas and Tantras echo through the spacious cave and snow pigeons which nest in the mountains make their appearance at this juncture and fly forth. Seeing these birds the pilgrims clap their hands and shout: 'Ishwara Darshan Pa'ya re (we have seen the manifestation of the Lord'). Apart of the offering of raisins, crystalized sugar and black pepper they bring with themselves in order to distribute these among their relatives and friends. They also take silt

from the Amaravati or limy pebbles from the cave as Babuti for their relatives and friends.

From this highly spiritual atmosphere steps are now retraced towards the material world. The descent to the lower altitudes now begins. The pilgrims do not go to Sangam where in olden times Shradhas were performed in memory of dead ancestors. The pilgrims return to their camps for breakfast (they eat only one meal on this day) and precipitately begin the downward march. It is a pity that people do not stay here for some time. There is a sea of glaciers on the north and east of the Amar Nath Range. Some of the peaks are much higher than Kolahoi. Hence this area is worth exploration. It is true that weather conditions are uncertain in these altitudes. A cloud passing from one mountain peak to another may bring a shower of rain, may discharge a hail-storm or envelop the valley in a snowy shroud. But such conditions do not last long and when we are well-equipped, a short stay at the place is well worth the hardship of weather.

The return journey via Astanmarg is prohibited by the Government. The Sasokot is not safe in bad weather: it is all sand and shale. So the pilgrims hasten their downward journey to Tsandanwari and the next day make for Pahalgam. It is said that the pilgrimage to Amar Nath Ji is not complete until the pilgrim washes himself in the nine springs of Naudal (nine leaves), which is 22 miles from Pahalgam via Bugmor pass.

(*It is believed to wax and wane according to the phases of the moon.)

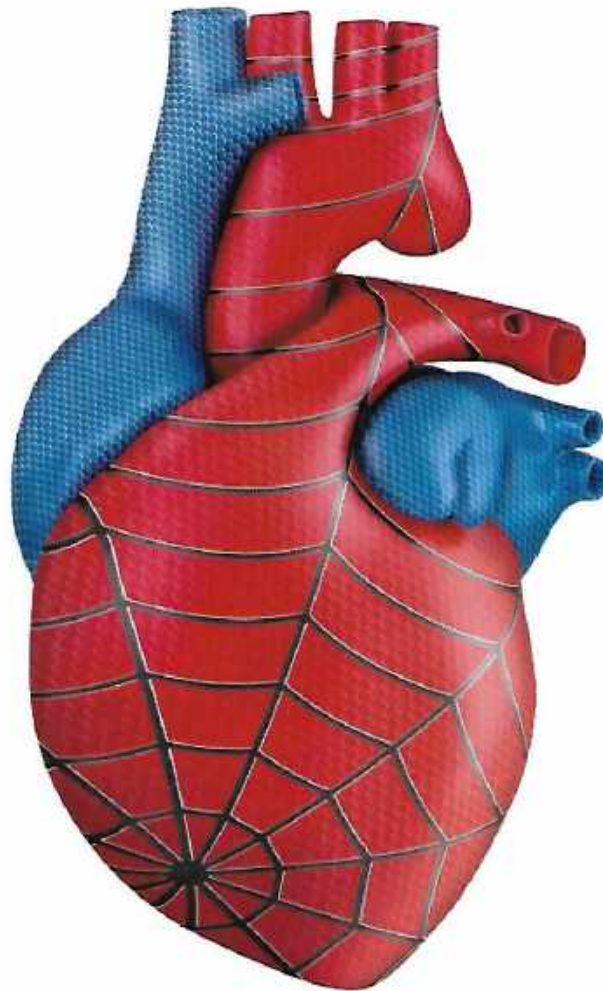
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Section V

**Possible Solutions to the
Jammu & Kashmir Problem in
view of Ground Realities.**

WHO WANTS SOLUTION OF KASHMIR PROBLEM?

A. K. Kaul

Curiosity took me to Kashmir after a gap of eighteen years. It was a rewarding experience. I availed of the opportunity and visited a number of places in Srinagar city and the towns of Anantnag and Pulwama. At all places I found life going on at the usual pace. The 'dry fish' sellers of Gaw Kadal were there, vegetable laden boats were anchored below Gaw Kadal, Habba Kadal was brimming with usual activity with fish sellers lined on the sides of the road, tongas and tempos whizzed past in great speed. Badshah and Lal Chowk reverberated with shouts from Mini buses soliciting passengers, the footpaths on the Residency road were, as usual, full of hawkers with varied items like readymade garments, sweaters, toiletries and electronic goods. The secretariat was heavily guarded, the DC's office was crowded with people. Tourist Center gave a busy look and personal vehicles zoomed to and fro. Occasionally, one could see beves of college and school girls giggling their way through the bazaars. Little children with fancy uniforms were being chaperoned through the streets and into school buses. All restaurants in Lal Chowk were seen doing brisk business. The lawyers in the court premises seemed to be a busy lot with groups of clients huddled around them. Average Kashmiris, men and women, moved about well dressed and well groomed with youth as the most gregarious lot. Nishat, Shalimar and Chasma-Shahi were crowded, with a fair sprinkling of Indian tourists. Shikara ride at Nehru Park seemed to be a rage with the tourists. The only jarring scene was existence of police pill boxes raised at regular distances with guntoting Policemen manning them. Another significant point was that general activities of the day would end rather early.

People were seen repairing to their homes before nightfall. This factor alone reminded that something was amiss.

All this made me suddenly conscious of the fact that Kashmir was a problem and many people were involved in solving it. The deeper and deeper I went into this I could not but conclude that none of the dramatis personae was actually interested in solving the problem. They had a vested interest in letting it linger, fester, if you like. Let us take each one of them separately.

PAKISTAN:

Pakistan was the initiator of the problem. At the time of partition it had hoped that Kashmir being a predominantly Muslim State it would automatically fall into their lap. Moreover, it was thought that since all the supply routes to Kashmir laid through West Pakistan, it could squeeze the Maharaja into accepting the accession to that country. Infact, Pakistan did try economic blockade of the State by refusing permission to goods transport to proceed to Kashmir. In the meanwhile, the Cyril Radcliffe Award on determining borders between India and Pakistan was announced. Surprisingly, the Radcliffe award gave the Tehsils of Gurdaspur, Pathankot and Batala to India thus opening a definite link between Kashmir and India. This, obviously frustrated Pakistan and they then resorted to the stratagem of tribal raids and local Muslim uprisings in Poonch and Mirpur districts. What happened next is recent history and need not be repeated. Pakistan then tried the armed infiltration in 1965 and later engaged into a regular war with India in 1971 in which they lost East Pakistan. The sponsoring of and support to Sikh extremists was ostensibly aimed at taking

out Punjab from India and thus strangulate the state of Jammu and Kashmir. This experiment too failed miserably. The latest attempt has been sponsoring of full scale terrorism in Kashmir which has been going on for the last eighteen years. Pakistan has so far failed to get Kashmir but it has provided it a grand excuse for not allowing democracy and economic upliftment of its own people.

The most significant outcome of the Kashmir problem has been that Pakistan Army has come to have full stranglehold on the country. Generals Iskander Mirza, Ayub Khan, Yahaya Khan and Parvez Musharaf engineered coups to capture power. The Army has come to have a vested interest in the Kashmir problem and in its perpetuation. Every time some thing goes wrong there the K issue is raised to silence the people. Talks about taking revenge on India for the defeat in East Pakistan and exploiting Kashmir problem as a symbol of India's enmity to Islam are frequently raised to consolidate power. It seems that the Pakistan Army will cease to have any *raison detre* if it either loses Kashmir or annexes it fully. It has, therefore, a vested interest in its perpetuation as that way alone they can maintain their say in local affairs. It is a well known fact that Pakistan Army officers have come to have a vested interest in the country's economy and they have emerged as yet another feudal class. How does one expect them to sincerely try for a solution of Kashmir problem. This problem has also helped them to garner Muslim world support on the Islamic net. Millions and billions of Arab petrodollars are flowing into Pakistan to "deal with the Kashmir problem". As a wag put it so succinctly: "India has Kashmir and Pakistan has the problem".

INDIA:

From day one when J&K acceded to India, India has had little idea what to do with this prize catch. It has no clue on how to deal with a Muslim majority State (the only one, infact). Thus it has been drifting from one *ad hoc* move to another. There is a strange feeling among observers that even at best of times India has considered Kashmir totally different from rest of India. At one time it adopts an unanimous resolution in the Parliament that J&K is an integral part of India and that Pakistan must withdraw from the areas of the state under its occupation, at another, it says that they are prepared to talk to Pakistan on all matters including the "problem of Kashmir". It announces that there will be no change of borders but at another time they say efforts will be made to make borders irrelevant. The entire strategy on Kashmir, if there is one, is based on reactions to what Pakistan says or does. It is too well known that Kashmiri Muslims of Kashmiri origin, the moot people in the Kashmir problem, have hardly any relations across the LOC yet lot of noise is being raised about "uniting divided families". Kashmir problem has become such a juicy subject that it has thrown up umpteen experts. Even people who have had no idea of the state's geography talk of a terrorist incident in Udhampur as that from the Kashmir valley. Recently an expert had visited Vaishnodevi and then wrote that all is well in Kashmir. The entire machinery of Government of India seems to be dealing with Kashmir as aside problem, not directly related to the affairs of the Indian State. The National Security Advisor, M.K. Narayanan, one day announced that "separatists do not have a veto on Srinagar RTC" and his PM, while in Srinagar, hopes that the separatists will join the RTC at some time. Throughout his career M.K. Narayanan has not dealt

with Kashmir and yet he has come to be the lynch pin. Obviously, he is acting on what is fed to him or what he is told to do. India has a vested interest in the territory of J&K. As far as its people are concerned it takes great delight in experimenting. Sometimes it believes grant of financial assistance will help and sometimes it says terrorism will be fought sternly. Kashmir may be festering but the rest of India is doing well. So, why bother? Let the problem perpetuate. If nothing else, it affords a "good field training" for its Security Forces.

INDIAN BUREAUCRATS

A large number of bureaucrats from India have been dealing with Kashmir either from Delhi or after being inducted into the local administration. Vishnu Sahai and Bhagwan Sahai, B.N. Mallick, Surinder Nath, P.A. Rosha, etc have been among many such people. All of them literally lived off their "Kashmir reputation". Observers have seen that bureaucrats inducted into J&K would, generally, come with a suitcase or two and at the end of their tenure leave with truck loads of goods. While in Kashmir they would get free furnished bungalows, free transport and an army of domestic help.

Those who had something to do with Kashmir, were, on retirement, provided supernumerary jobs as a sinecure. N.N. Vohra, A.S. Dulat and many more are on this list.

There are umpteen "experts" appointed to deal with subjects like public relations, TV/Radio propaganda etc etc. Then there is Kashmir wing in PMO, Kashmir Affairs Deptt in Home Ministry and a set up in the Information and Broadcasting Ministry. Kashmir problem has thus become a 'fruitful' vocation for many serving and ex-bureaucrats. How, in the name of heavens would anyone of them like the Kashmir problem to get solved. Their interests lie in letting it hang. Retired

officers and men of the IB and RAW have also been roped in for some 'secret missions'. Kashmir problem is a milking cow why let it go dry?

MAINSTREAM PARTIES IN J&K:

None of the persons belonging to mainstream parties in J&K would have ever become a Chief Minister if Kashmir problem had been solved. 1947 Sheikh Abdullah was showered with headship of administration. 1953 Bakshi Ghulam Mohd was put on the throne. In 1964 Shamsudin was shown the door and Sadiq was inducted. Sadiq's post, on his death in 1971, was awarded to Mir Qasim. In 1975 Sheikh Abdullah was once again enthroned. His death in 1982 led to the induction of his son Farooq Abdullah. Farooq made up with Rajiv Gandhi and was again made the Chief Minister. 2002 Mufti Syed was appointed as the Chief Minister although his party, PDP, had won only 12 seats. Now Ghulam Nabi Azad has been foisted since 2005. None of these honourable gentlemen would have become Chief Ministers if Kashmir problem had not been existing. All the manoeuvrings they have been indulging in, have been because of the Kashmir problem. They all thrive on it. It is their bread and butter. It enables them to milk India and the people of J&K at the same time. They would not like to kill the goose which lays the golden eggs for them.

SEPARATISTS:

The separatists exist because there is a Kashmir problem. They have refined the art of exploiting both India and Pakistan and befooling the Kashmiris. How else can you explain that Moulvi Umar Farooq's and Sajjad Lone's fathers were assassinated at the behest of Pakistan yet they want to separate from India and go to Pakistan, if possible. Lakhs and lakhs of hawala money is flowing to them in the name of Kashmir problem and who is foolish

among them to let Kashmir problem be solved. The Nelson Mandela of Kashmir, Shabir Shah, the great rable rouser, Syed Ali Shah Gilani or Mohd Yasin Malik, the great upholder of Kashmir's separate identity, are all its beneficiaries. Now has come the Indian generosity of permitting them to visit abroad including Pakistan and partaking of wonderful hospitality of the hosts. Invitations freely flow from foreign and local organizations to them to attend seminars, discussions and interactions on Kashmir. European Parliamentarians and diplomats meet them, US senators jostle with them and Indian and Pakistani parliamentarians honour them. And then the T.V. and other media highlight their views and activities. None of them is foolish enough to have the problem solved. Its perpetuation is their manna from the heavens. It is the nectar that sustains their life.

THE JAMMU HINDUS:

The Jammu Hindus have never had it so good. Following the mass migration of Kashmir Pandits the Jammuites have struck a gold mine. Rents have gone up, retail business is flourishing and land prices have sky rocketed. Fallow land, rocky areas and even drains have been sold to Kashmiri Pandits at premium rates. The lavish marriage parties of KPs have given a tremendous boost to banquet halls/barat ghars caterers, tent wallahs, photographers/video cameramen, decoration wallahs and even the flower venders. All retail business has boomed including that of medical shops. The city transport has greatly benefitted. Tailors are doing a gala job and ready made garments shops are minting money. All this because KPs are spending. To an average Jammu Hindu this is a windfall. The exigencies of politics do not bother him. His leaders do raise some noises here and there but that is only for form. Now that Doda Hindus are also migrating, the Jammu Hindu has his hands full. Can this Hindu be expected to urge

for a solution of the Kashmir problem? No, certainly not. Now his wellbeing and economic growth is interlinked with perpetuation of the Kashmir problem. Vaishnodevi rush and KP presence are doing a lot of good to the Jammu Hindus.

KASHMIRI PANDITS:

The only people who have had to bear the negative brunt of the Kashmir problem have been Kashmiri Pandits. They have been uprooted, lock, stock and barrel. After eighteen years of this continuing exodus one is not certain whether KPs too want a solution of the Kashmir problem. For them a solution of the problem would, necessarily, entail their return to their homes in Kashmir. Their being able to go back to their homes and live a normal life, free of fear and intimidation, alone would be the touch-tone of a real solution. Notwithstanding the recent package announced by the Prime Minister that each of Kashmiri migrants who choose to return would be provided upto Rs 7.5 lakhs for rebuilding and repairing of his homestead, there are serious practical problems in this scheme. Mere returning is not sufficient. Each migrant has to assess for himself how his and his family's return would help. Would he or his wards be able to get sufficient employment opportunities to sustain themselves. He is acutely aware of the economic squeeze he had suffered before 1990 and would that change? He has no hope for that. And then during the last 18 years the migrant has had to adapt to changed circumstances. A new generation of migrant youth have come up who have, due to concessions afforded by some state governments, acquired professional and technical education in many parts of India and got absorbed in the vast Indian market. They have no inclination to return to Kashmir and jeopardise their future. Many migrants have also worked hard by mobilising their limited resources to settle at their present locations. How can they and with what guarantee agree to yet another

displacement? Return to Kashmir where they can live with honour and dignity with free play of secularism and democracy and with their fundamental duly protected, is a pipe dream. The solution of Kashmir problem holds no interest for them. If it is not solved they are least bothered about it. The general refrain is let Kashmir go to hell. A separate homeland, return with honour and dignity, whole of Kashmir belongs to us, all seem to be hollow slogans at the moment. Some have asked for rehabilitation here and now. Return can be thought of later. Many small groups that have come up are satisfied with the letter-heads they have printed. Presently they are busy plotting against each other. No surprise that media has started ignoring them.

Based on my experience and vast interaction I had, I feel no concerned party is at all keen to solve the Kashmir problem. Their interest lies in its perpetuation. I, therefore, feel that a solution, if at all one emerges, will be very long in coming. However, before concluding on this rather pessimistic note I must say I found not one person in Srinagar who was genuinely interested in the solution of Kashmir.

Mr. A. K. Kaul, ex. IB and recipient of awards for commendable service. He was also editor of Kosh Samachar for a number of years. Email : kaulak@yahoo.com, Cell : 9810950306

RETURN OF PANDITS TO KASHMIR : A MYTH OR A DISTANT REALITY

Dr. P. L. Ganju

On the fateful, black night of Jan 19, 1990, the shameful announcement of the home grown Kashmiri Islamists, blared forth in unison from the loudspeakers of the Valley's mosques, asking their Pandit brethren, to quit Kashmir, sans their women folk, had indeed fulfilled their goal of cleansing this ethnic minority from the Valley. They made no bones about their intentions and left the Pandits dazed and dumb-founded. In their communal blitzkrieg, the minuscule KP community members were severely tested for their affiliation to their mother land and its sacred shrines but when they attacked the honour of their women folk, the community members put them in forefront and abandoned the Valley itself. The Pandits had no time to consult each other and fled the Valley in terrible haste, leaving behind their homes and hearths, while their Muslim neighbours looked on as mute spectators. This time, the exodus of the Pandits from the Valley was almost complete, as compared with all their earlier exoduses. It was indeed our national shame, in so far as an entire minuscule religious minority of the Valley had to abandon its homeland, in its own secular sovereign country, that is India.

It is difficult to imagine, what calamity would have visited the Pandit community and their women folk if they had not left the Valley immediately. In the unprecedented spell of barbarism that had gripped the Valley in the preceding year, they had already lost scores of their luminaries and seen unimaginable treachery against the fair sex of their community. The subsequent genocides of the Pandits, in the far flung villages of the Valley, in

Sangrampura (1997), Wandhama (1998), Nadigram (2003), etc., bears enough testimony to the fearful forebodings of the fleeing community in 1990. The terrorists ruled the roost in the Valley for many years after the last Pandit exodus and continued to target the Indian security forces, guarding the Valley. During those years, even the angels would have feared to tread the so-called Paradise on earth, that is, our Kashmir, not to speak of the tourists who would flock there in droves, in the earlier years.



While the Pandits were still cooling their heels in their exile, in Udhampur, Jammu, Delhi and farther away in other parts of the country, one of our own distinguished Kashmiri Muslim brethren and Congress MP, Mr. Saifuddin Soz, instead of sympathizing with the beleaguered community, wrote scathingly about them in *The Hindustan Times* (April 27, 1995), under the heading "No need to pity Pandits". The article was reproduced in the *Calcutta Vitasta Annual Number* (1996-97) of our community. To rub salt on their wounds of banishment, Soz Sahib disdainfully blamed the Pandits for their own plight. Mercifully, he wrote about the seditious role of the terrorists also, but interrogatively, posing the question : " Had not some selective killings left Pandits dazed to assess in anxious haste the *mood of the exuberant combatant youth, freshly trained from across the border*, who were to work without any impediments for an entirely different political dispensation that would in days to come mean a first-rate

militant movement for secession?" Unfortunately, the veteran politician cast his most damaging remark against the Pandits, associating them with the deemed secessionist dispensation, saying "Could Pandits be a party to that dispensation?" On the other hand, short of calling his Muslim brethren in the Valley angels, he sang paeans for their good deeds, for retaining a fraction of the fleeing KP community in the Valley. He wrote: "There are, of course, shining examples of how many a valiant people dissuaded the Pandits from leaving their homes and hearths and they proved themselves correct". Additionally, Soz Sahib repeated the well-rehearsed myth that Governor, Mr Jagmohan, had abetted, ('if not solely') in the migration of the Pandits.

In contrast to the mistaken perception of Mr Soz of the forced flight of the Pandits from the Valley in 1990, the National Conference President Omar Abdullah squarely blamed the Muslims for their exodus. He wrote in his blog in redif.com, on the official website of his party: "It is easy to say that we will lay down our lives to bring Kashmiri Pandits back to the Valley but that sentiment was missing when our mosques were being used to drive these people out" He added: 'None of us was willing to stand up and be counted when it mattered. None of us grabbed the mikes in the mosques and said 'this is wrong'. Omar added that people were forced to participate in the processions against "Indian occupation" and refuted the claims that the mass uprising in 1990 was spontaneous. Omar, however, did not miss to highlight the killings of the innocent civilians by the security personnel and added that the guilty must be brought to justice. In his blog, Omar did not talk about the murderers of the Pandits.

After the initiation of the bilateral political dialogue between India and Pakistan and the Hurriyat Conference (the last claiming to represent the people of the Valley), there was a change in the strategy of the jihadi violence. While they continued to target the Indian security forces, the remaining Pandits in the Valley were now mercifully spared, bringing a semblance of peace there. The Indian tourists once again began to flock to the valley in droves and the Pandits did not lag far behind.

Thereafter, it became a routine formality for the Muslim leaders in the Valley, both the 'nationalists' and the separatists occasionally to ask the Pandits to return to their homeland. In their glib talk, they did not, however, elaborate modus operandi of their *ghar-vapsi*. After their exodus from the Valley, most of their vacant abodes were torched or plundered by the miscreants in the valley. Those which had escaped the spoilage were acquired by the local Muslims in distress sales. Others started crumbling down.

In all probability, the last exodus of the Pandits from the Valley in 1990, may turn out to be a great water-shed in the communal politics of J&K. A brief news column dealing with the yearly ritual of the Pandits remembering their Holocaust day of Jan 19, 1990, when they were asked to quit Kashmir, appeared in HT, 20th Jan, 2010. The Chief Minister Omar Abdullah bemoaned on twitter that Kashmir without the Pandits continued to be incomplete. However, the big news from the Valley was that the number of the Pandit families in the Valley had in the meantime dwindled to a mere 800, and not a single Pandit family had returned there during the two decades after their exodus. Perhaps, many of the Pandit families (read couples) who have their houses in the safer, upper reaches of Srinagar, live there only during the summer months.

The Pandits who have lost hope of returning to their ancestral home in Kashmir and have now settled down outside in various parts of the country, may not yet risk to go back to their homeland under its continued political uncertainty and terrorist infiltration from across the border. For the same reason, others, may not like to invest yet in the restoration of their dilapidated houses, or erect new structures on their ground zero. The majority of the Pandit families, who may not have yet come to terms with their lives in exile, would like to go back but for the lack of job opportunities there to sustain themselves.

Some years back, PM Manmohan Singh had offered the State Govt a financial package of 1650 crore of rupees for the rehabilitation of the displaced Kashmiri Pandits, in the Valley. Some of the community members, including women, are reported to have taken advantage of the Government's employment scheme. Some of these employees were put up at Hawal, Pulwama, from where they were taken to various centres for their work. A small news item in the *Kashmir Samachar*, New Dehli, reported that the overall sentiment in that locality was not good enough for the Pandits to live in peace. It added that once a group of about 100 miscreants of the locality had stoned their residence, resulting in fear psychosis among the inhabitants. It posed a question: Is Kashmir ready to welcome the migrant Kashmiri Pandits?

In Jan, last year, in a surprise move, the J&K opposition leader Omar Abdullah tabled a resolution in the General Assembly pleading with all the political parties "for creating conducive atmosphere for the safe return of all the migrants, especially, Kashmiri Pandits, who had to migrate from Kashmir valley to other parts

of the country under difficult circumstances." The resolution was passed unanimously. Next day, it was ratified in the Upper House also. If Omar Abdullah had been more sincere in his concern for the return of the Pandits than what is apparent in his resolution, he should have included a word of regret on behalf of the people of Kashmir for the genocide of the Pandits in 1989-90 and destruction and assimilation of their properties they left behind. It would have helped to assuage the hurt feelings of this aggrieved community, so that they could return to the Valley, as the proud sons of their beloved *maej Kashmir*. The above resolution has not enthused the Pandits in exile. When National Conference and Congress alliance ruled in the State and the conditions at the ground level were not as dismal as they are now, why was not such a resolution passed then? The J&K Hindu Shrines Bill has been put on the shelf for long. It must be passed immediately as one of the 'conducive' measures for the return of the Pandits mentioned in the Omar Abdullah's resolution.

The Pandits are unanimous in returning to Kashmir and have since long put up their plan of Panun Kashmir for their settlement in the Valley for consideration of the State and the Central governments. They must study it. The demography of the Valley has changed significantly after the establishment of Awami Raj and Naya Kashmir of Sheikh Abdullah's dreams, the tallest ever leader of Kashmir. In Kashmir, if Mussalmans can live together everywhere in the Valley, why the minuscule Bhatta community members cannot live together in a specified area of their motherland. For too long in the past, they have lived in the Valley on sufferance, which has led to their destruction and finally to their exodus. The Pandits do not want to live like that anymore, in pigeon-

holes, separated from each other. If they return to the Valley they want to breathe freely.

Presently, all is not well in the Valley. This is not the right time for the Pandits to go back there. All the political parties of Jammu and Kashmir must co-operate with the Governor in creating 'conducive atmosphere' in the State for the safe return of the Pandits, as mentioned in the Omar Abdullah's resolution, unanimously endorsed by all the political parties in the General Assembly and the Upper House. When they go for the next election in the State, after the Governor's rule is lifted, let them go to the people with Return Of Pandits as their common agenda, alongside their own manifestos. Let the

National Conference take a leaf out of the political life of their revered leader, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, when as the President of the All J&K Muslim Conference, he called a special session of the Muslim Conference, open to the delegates from all the religious societies and put up a resolution to change the name the party from Muslim Conference to National Conference. 175 delegates voted in its favour and only 3 voted against it. Let Naya Kashmir and Kashmiriyat prevail in the Valley. Pandits will surely return.

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**KASHMIRI PANDITS - A DYING COMMUNITY
POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS
(TRENDS DURING THREE DECADES IN EXILE)**

Dr K L Chowdhury

Great civilizations like the Indus valley, Mayan, Parisian etc. perished due to natural calamities, environmental changes, violent conflicts and wars. In modern times too, smaller communities subjected to genocidal onslaughts and pushed into exodus and exile, find survival as a distinct entity difficult. They are forced to migrate and disperse in the fast streams of globalisation where their numbers dwindle and their identity gets dissolved and lost for ever. Alas, this is the story of Kashmiri Pandits.

Kashmiri Pandits have braved nearly three decades of brutal expulsion from their homeland. During these years there has been much talk about their return and rehabilitation but we don't see any light at the end of this long tunnel of exile. A whole generation has passed away, a generation has aged, and a generation has taken birth. We are on the move, like nomads, from one town to the next, one country to another, seeking new ground, striking new roots. Pain and anguish continue to haunt us in diverse forms and manifestations. Not surprisingly, health trauma and declining population have been our greatest bane. Where are we at this point of time? What are the major health and population demographics?

My tryst with the health of the exiled Kashmiri Pandits started on 21 January 1991, the moment I moved as a tenant in New Plots, Jammu, and found the lawn overflowing with patients waiting to be examined. I saw faces, known and unknown—relations, friends and strangers; city dwellers and villagers; men, women and children—and at once realised the enormity of human suffering. I appealed

to all the displaced Pandit doctors (colleagues and ex-students) to come forward in this hour of acute crisis. We hired two rooms, and started a multi-speciality polyclinic where we worked in shifts and provided free medical consultation and essential drugs.

Ten years later, we commissioned a charitable facility, the Shriya Bhatt Mission Hospital and Research Centre at Durga Nagar and reached out to the patients in the tents, one-room tenements and, later, in every Migrant Camp – Muthi, Mishriwalla, Purkhoo, Bhattal Ballian etc. — where we conducted Medical Camps on a mass scale, 105 camps till date. We organised vaccination drives, health awareness lectures, besides mid-day meal service for children of two migrant schools. We also conducted numerous disease detection drives and five population surveys on the refugees, covering different periods of time.

We documented all our work at the hospital and in the refugee camps. This helped us in our research in identifying the variety, extent and intensity, as also the causation of various diseases in the displaced population. That is how we reported new disease entities and presented our findings in national and international conferences, which helped create an awareness of the horrendous fallout of exodus on the health of our community.

Down the years, we have treated more than ninety thousand patients and the primary objectives of our mission to rescue the suffering masses from the clutches of diseases and death have been largely achieved. The general health and economic

condition of people has also improved, and we should have expected an arrest in the population decline that we reported from time to time. Alas, that is not so; the declining trend continues unabated. Yet, it didn't evoke any response from our social organisations in spite of my repeated reminders through write-ups and community lectures about this existential issue. It is time to renew my call to the community for attention and immediate action.

In order to seek the reasons for the population decline and to evolve a strategy to arrest it, let us examine the trends from five population surveys that we conducted over the years.

POPULATION SURVEYS

Year	Study Population	Deaths	Births
1993	4105 CAMP INMATES (from various camps)	108	42
1995	PURKHOO CAMP INHABITANTS	200	5
1997	3005 INTERVIEWS (NON- CAMP)	134	85
2014	4105 INTERVIEWS (NON- CAMP)	51	35
2017	2218 INTERVIEWS (RANDOM SAMPLE)	36	25

CHANGING TRENDS IN DISEASE

There was, what I call, the 'acute catastrophic phase' soon after exodus from the valley, when almost every refugee suffered from physical and mental afflictions. Depression was rampant; skin diseases erupted in everyone; allergic syndromes escalated due to environmental challenges; heat related diseases caught up with the advancing first summer of exile, and heat strokes killed more than a thousand in the first year alone. Infections and infestations like malaria and dengue and other tropical viral disease which were unknown in the valley struck with a vengeance.

This was followed by the 'the adaptive phase', one of transition and coping. During this period, while some of the acute problems like heat strokes, psychiatric afflictions, skin diseases, and infections started subsiding; other afflictions accentuated like asthma, allergies, diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, renal stones, hypothyroidism, ulcer dyspepsia and the 'migrant belly syndrome' etc.

Presently the exiled people are in the 'phase of dispersal'—the whole community is urbanised and globalized with the attendant stresses and strains that go with the fast tempo of life even as the economic conditions have improved for a significant chunk of the population. So we are confronted with life style diseases including a rising incidence of high-stress existence in nuclear families with scant social support to fall back upon; a higher life span with a growing elderly population left to fend for itself. As a result, lifestyle diseases have taken over—anxiety disorder, obesity, diabetes and its complications, hypertension and heart disease, cancer and end stage renal disease and, most importantly, the metabolic syndrome.

THE SPECTRE OF SHRINKING POPULATION

In spite of improving living conditions during the past decade a look at the population trends tells a grim story. In the earlier surveys it was hardly surprising because we had a very high death rate and a low birth rate. In the later surveys although the death rate dropped significantly the birth rate never caught up and continues to remain negative. As a result, our population is shrinking fast.

In the first decade and half of exile we had the problem of premature and unnatural deaths from diverse factors on the one hand, and low birth rate on the other because of reduced sexuality, early

menopause and infertility due to reasons of acute stress and overcrowding that led to an unenviable environment for cohabitation and procreation. Even now there is a large chunk of our population who live in cramped conditions at Jagti Township. And there are others posted in Kashmir under the Prime Minister's Employment Package, who face extremely hostile living and working conditions uncongenial for raising a family.

In the present decade; while death rate has gone down, a different set of causes has led to reduced birth rates. Education being the primary preoccupation with the community, children are being pushed into competition to perform and qualify for higher education and professional training. After graduating they land into high intensity work atmosphere of multinationals, frequent travel, long working hours, etc. that leaves them little time to think about marriage, or for procreation. Career gets preference over matrimony, allegiance to the multinational company scores over the commitment to family. With a liberal outlook, our community no longer adheres to the cultural and religious norms that generally bind a community. We enunciate our individual rules and rituals depending upon our personal convenience. We have the highest rate of out-of-community marriages. The problem is accentuated by matrimonial disputes from failed marriages and domestic discord that has prevailed in exile. The courts have been full of divorce cases; in fact they still are.

In fact, in our community marriage as an institution is gradually dying down akin to most western countries. By the time our youngsters decide to marry, if at all, most of them have already crossed the optimal fertile age range of 20-30 years. Once married, couples choose either to delay having children or not having any. A common explanation is "Who will look after the kid?" because both partners are in jobs.

As a result, no child or one child has become the norm. Statisticians tell us that you need 2.4 children per couple in a community to maintain the current population level. At the prevalent abysmal rate of child birth in our community I see a crisis looming. We are an inverted pyramid with the apex made of our miniscule young population and a wide base of the middle-aged and elderly.

The spectre of extinction is hounding us and we must wake up and take active remedial measures before it is too late. While we are concerned, and rightly so, about the erosion of our values and socio-cultural traditions, the alienation from our mother tongue, and the loss of our religious moorings, we should turn our attention first to the looming threat to our very survival as a distinct community. If there are no people, who will take care of the temples and worship in them, who will speak and preserve the mother tongue, and who will reclaim homeland?

Dr. Chowdhury has been tirelessly working to ease the medical problems of our displaced people in Jammu. Email : kundanleele@yahoo.com

KASHEER, THE KASHMIR FIRST INITIATIVE (a proposed initiative of the Silent Majority of all Kashmiris)

Ranjan Nehru

Racial, linguistic and cultural singularity amongst all Kashmiris is proposed to be the basis for launching a joint initiative of all ethnic and/or linguistic communities of Kashmir (Kashmiri Muslims, Kashmiri *Pandits* or *Bat'* and Kashmiri Sikhs, including other communities rooted in the Kashmir valley and herein generically referred to as *Kashmiris*) who, being the *Silent Majority* (described below), believe in asserting their case for a progressive, vibrant and a modern Kashmir (under the banner of ***Kasheer, the Kashmir First Initiative***). This initiative is based on the idea of empowering the voice of the silent populace, across all religious or ethnic groups within Kashmir (*Silent Majority*).

Unique identities of Kashmir

While taking into account the composition of Kashmiris, it will be important to understand that among the unique identities of Kashmir, the gestalt of the *Kashmiri Muslims*, as that of the *Pandits* or *But'* [the apostrophe (') pronounced like "e" as in "ea" of the word *earnest*], was nurtured in the backdrop of the *Reeshi Order* (discussed below). These identities got crystallized during the over-lordship of the Iranians, Pathans, Mughals, Sikhs and the Dogras. During this period, the *But'*, who's antecedents were the legacy of a pre-Islamic society, were gradually left to fend for themselves after most of their social compatriots sought to come under the canopy of *Kashmiri Sufi Islam* (a term meant to refer to a version of Islam which developed in Kashmir in the backdrop of the indigenous *Reeshi Order* discussed below). While the *Pandits* were at the receiving end during the seven centuries after the onset of Islam in the Valley, it

does not undermine the fact that even Muslim communities of the Valley, such as Kashmiri Sunnis, Shias and others (*Islamic Communities of the Kashmir*, hereafter referred to as ICK) along with *Kashmiri Pandits* or *Pandits* or *But'* have, in many ways, together suffered at the hands of foreign oppressors during the saga of these seven centuries. The *Pandits*, as a result, had to migrate out of the Valley, nine times till now (their exodus of 1990, being the last till now).

Singularity among all Kashmiris

The approach of this write-up, irrespective of how the composite Kashmiri identity is perceived within or outside the valley of Kashmir (Valley), is based on the existence of a racial, linguistic, cultural and geographical singularity *inter se* the *Kashmiris*. This equation emerged and developed in the Valley, in spite of the severe onslaughts and depredations suffered by its people due to repeated incursions and invasions that besieged it during the last seven hundred years. This emergence was in fact, facilitated by the extant *Reeshi Order* (discussed below) in the Valley. Such an order was embedded in the Kashmiri society due to factors discussed below.

Heterogeneous Enhancement under the *Reeshi Order* and the need to identify and develop the Kashmir First Initiative

The antecedent Kashmiri society, while having been traditionally wedded to Shaivism, Brahmanism and Buddhism during different eras, was significantly influenced by the extant tradition of the hermits, seers and sages of the Valley (called *Reeshis*) who continued to flourish and develop their unique identity and

idiom even after accepting Islam. They were the forerunners of the lake (just like the *Dal*) into which the waters of various springs are assimilated and absorbed from time to time (*Reeshi Order*). Thus, the *Reeshi Order* was edifying and all-embracing in nature in that it could not possibly be restricted by any narrow confines. This essentially made the *Kashmiris* progressive and modern in every transition of the Valley's history. In the background of an absorbing and integrating ethos, the underlying qualities and features of Islam, such as inculcating metaphors for common masses in simple and straightforward social and religious directives, were absorbed with great appreciation. While maintaining the ascetic and mystic traditions inherited by them from Shaivism, Brahmanism and Buddhism, the *Kashmiris*, under the guidance of the *Reeshis*, adopted the above mentioned attributes of Islam into their existing way of life. These were poised to help the *Kashmiri Society* to mature under the banner of *Kashmiri Sufi Islam* without compromising with the inherent spirit of *Reeshi Order* which had become the edifice of the *Kashmiri Society*. In this assimilative milieu, the people who entered the Valley settled there to make it their home with the tacit condition that they would imbibe the spirit of what Kashmir stood for. Thus, the *Kashmiri society* learnt and adopted the spirit of symbiotic and non-discriminative assimilation that was inculcated through various invaluable embellishments received and absorbed by it in this great spiritual laboratory. As result of this, the Valley came to be known as the *Central Asian Cultural Crucible*.

Kashmir's transition to Islam and the Holy Covenant:

Kashmir's transition to Islam, as such, was based on a solemn unwritten covenant between those who came from the planes of Persia and Central Asia into the Valley

to preach Islam, of one part, and leaders among the *Reeshis* who accepted with rider that it would not in any way negate the *Reeshi Order* but in fact add to it in every sense of the term. This covenant is here referred to as the **Holy Covenant** (upholding this, to my mind is the true meaning of **Azadi**), which their ancestors though the *Reeshis*. In the same spirit the *Kashmiris* in and just after 1947 decided to maintain their unique tradition and identity under the leadership of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. First, comes the spiritual freedom and later the political. If the first is wrong and in breach, the second can never be right. This is what the order, spirit and letter of the movement for **Kasheer, The Kashmir First Initiative** is proposed to be.

Transcending Principle and the Reeshi Order

The *Kashmiris*, imbued with the spirit of the *Reeshi Order* and in the idiom of their concept of *Azadi*, as discussed and described above, without succumbing to the diktats of religious zealots and in spite of apparent dissonance within their fold, created an ambience in which the ICK and the *But'* could abide by each other. The *Reeshis*, while operating under the umbrella of Shaivism, Buddhism and Islam, were all-along guided by a realm, which is beyond religious classifications and denominations (*Transcending Principle*). This comes from the domain of the mystic order to which the *Reeshis* and the common *Kashmiris* at their core actually identify with. This order initially received its seeds from the Shiv-Shakti, Buddhist and Sufi Islamic ascetic traditions of Kashmir and thereafter it became the guiding principle of the ICK and the *But'*, as voiced in the popular *vaakhs* or sayings of *Lal Ded*, *Nund Resh* and other sages, seers and realized souls of Kashmir. This, I believe is the karmic key to the spiritual evolution of *Kashmiris*.

as was exemplified by the *Reeshi Order*. This, irrespective of the number game, is the converging factor for all *Kashmiris* and any deviation from that would be at their peril. Thus the *Kashmiris* cannot afford to align with *Salafi Islam's* puritanical or fundamental religious outlook and outreach.

Adaptation to divergent roles

While succumbing to the pressures of non-Kashmiri rulers and the fiefdoms set-up by them for sucking unto the economy of the *Kashmiris*, the commons among them tried to sustain and survive in most challenging circumstances by adopting to divergent livelihoods and roles. While, on one hand, they provided a modicum of inter-dependence at the operational level, on the other, they lead to diverse challenges. Excluding the brief intervals of peace, the *Kashmiris* encountered poverty and deprivation in their perilous journey of seven centuries.

Exclusionary and reactionary practices and the hidden grouse

However, in the process, while each community tried to preserve its identity, some strange exclusionary and reactionary social practices in their co-existence (*intra* and *inter se* the *Kashmiri Sunnis, Shias, Pandits and Sikhs*) relating to the foods that they could eat from each other's hands or about casts or classes that could marry *inter se* the *ICKs* or the *But'* or the ghastly stories circulated about *Shias* among the *Sunnis*. These and other religious or sectarian differentiations surfaced largely as a consequence of insecurities suffered by them under the domination of foreign rulers. These gradually created a hidden grouse which each community or some classes within them had against others.

***But'*, the first victim of the Jihadis, post 1947 and the deep-freeze of the Silent Majority and Leadership Pirates**

In year 1990, by which time the *Naya Kashmir* movement had almost been annihilated by radical and insidious forces (which gradually penetrated the Valley after 1947), the *But'* became the first victims of the violent force under the banner of various so called Islamic militant outfits. These forces, taking advantage of the social, economic and religious differentiation *inter se* various communities of the Valley, gradually took roots in the soil of Kashmir (post 1947) and, just as what had happened previously in the history of the Valley, the vast silent majority of its peoples (*Silent Majority*) became helpless spectators in the run-up to violence and disaster perpetrated by them. These were the forces, which nurtured people who, in the modern idiom of *intolerance*, became the votaries of *Salafi Islam*. They pretended and, in fact, forced their entry to occupy the leadership space among the *ICK* (who here are referred to as *Leadership Pirates*). As is true of other societies, the leadership space of the silent masses is, more often than not, usurped by a few among them who thrive by portraying themselves as heroic messiahs of the people they claim to represent. Thereafter, they create stories of their pain and suffering and sell them to their respective fringe audiences who in return came to look upon them as their liberators. They did and continue to do this by employing stratagems of creating visibility through various subterfuges in addition to creating a huge volume of din and noise through various means and methodologies. Those who do not subscribe to the fears, notions or stories created by them, fall in the lot of the silent mass and, in fact, slip into a deep-freeze. These silent masses comprise a significant majority among the *Kashmiris*. As such the *Silent Majority* could and can do precious little but allow the invading leadership to

highjack and usurp all available platforms of public expression. While this was happening, the *Silent Majority*, as expected, thanks to the unholy game played by the *Leadership Pirates* and the *Orchestrators* (described below), helplessly watched till they (the *Silent Majority*), in accordance with the plot designed by the said Instigators, gradually slipped into the trap of the *Politics of Grief & Blame*.

Outrages of the forces, their dilemma of dealing with enemy hiding behind common folks and the broken promises of the central leadership stories and narratives were planted by trained orchestrators employed and operating from both the sides of the LOC to poison the minds of the vulnerable sections of the *Kashmiris* against the Indian State and its forces (*Orchestrators*). Further, it is also necessary to acknowledge that the forces of the Indian State, finding themselves in a hostile territory and finding bullets and bombs being aimed at them from behind the barricade of bystanders and common crowds, more often than not, were provoked to respond in ways that would invariably create casualties among the bystanders. This was the prime motive of the covert operators referred to here as the *Orchestrators*. The *Orchestrators*, operating covertly, know well enough that their plan is organically designed in a manner that it would inevitably snowball into something more viciously. They obviously have been having the upper-hand and the State and the Central Government have been and continue to be actually groping in the dark.

The farce of the so-called Resistance Movement and their disdain for the Reeshi Order

However, the proponents of this initiative, considering the intrinsic power of peace, homogeneity and development and the right of the *Silent Majority* to assert their rights as constituents of a progressive

society, need to rise and regain their space under the umbrella of the *Reeshi Order*. They are neither affected by the disdain being expressed by the proponents of the so called *Resistance Movement*, whose sole objective has been to resist association of the State of Jammu & Kashmir with the Union of India, nor by their aversion to the *Reeshi Order*, which was in fact poised to become the beacon and spirit of *Naya Kashmir* after 1947 and the guiding norm of its internal constitution. The contempt for the *Reeshi Order* is symbolized by those who burnt down the *Chrari-e-sharief*, the greatest motif of the *Reeshi Order* in the year 1995. It is interesting to note that the proponents of the *Resistance Movement*, while sparing no time to denounce the State for its acts against its citizens and how the Government of India broke the promises it made to the people of the Valley, have not even done lip service to condemn this great act of violence committed against this citadel of peace in Kashmir. This is illustrative of their implied support to the *Orchestrators*, if not the *Jehadis*. Their *bonafides* become even more questionable when they neither speak out against the forcible occupation of the territories of the erstwhile State of Jammu & Kashmir by the Government of Pakistan in 1947 nor against the atrocities being committed by such an occupational government against the people of such occupied areas. The said *Resistance Movement*, ipso facto, is the umbrella under which the *Jehadis* take intellectual shelter.

Provoking the Indian state and the tirade of the Jehadis and the Orchestrators against the will of the Silent Majority

The *Jehadis* and/or the *Orchestrators* provoked and pre-empted the Indian State and its forces to react (by hitting it's underbelly) in ways that would collaterally hurt the common masses. They created an aura under which the acts of violence and terror perpetrated by many terror-organizations

(heralded as *Freedom Fighters*) have been glorified. They have been the ones who have been in the forefront of sponsoring and unleashing doctrines that are downright retrograde and medieval in nature (such as banning of all cinema, closure of liquor shops and bars, putting women under *hijab* and generally following the agenda of *Salafi Islam*). The proponents of the *Resistance Movement* have been projecting a picture of victimization of *Kashmiris* under intellectually attractive labels that they wrap them in (which are then nicely debated in universities, non-governmental local and overseas platforms) under the covert hand and support of the *Orchestrators*. They cleverly ignore that provocative acts and situations in response to which the Indian forces react. While all this has been happening the proponents of the so-called *Resistance Movements*, not surprisingly, have been lending a blind eye to the depredations directly or indirectly, committed against the *Silent Majority*.

Imperatives for a positive movement towards 'Kasheer, the Kashmir First Initiative'

Without adopting the mindset of a defeatist in Kashmir, as it stands today, and, notwithstanding those who dislike or are wary of any associations with the past of the Valley and its earlier accomplishments (including the brand of *Reeshi Order*), it would be imperatives for all those among the *Kashmiris* who are a part of the *Silent Majority*, to re-assert that very order and the unique brand of *Kashmiri Sufi Islam* so that the disservice to Kashmir and its progress by retrograde and medieval forces can be arrested, if not undone. This is essential, not only because of the polarized situation that the Valley has been grappling with, but also because both such brands (*Reeshi Order* and *Kashmiri Sufi Islam*) can positively be used to transform Kashmir into a plural, modern, progressive and democratic polity which is totally alive

to the global dimensions and imperatives of today's age. None can deny that this, apart from social aspect, also has a huge potential for the growth of peace in the Valley and the sub-continent. Peace is the *sine qua non* of economic development. This aspiration and demand of the *Silent Majority* needs to come to the forefront by they heralding a movement towards regaining *Kasheer* under the *Kashmir First Initiative* hereby presented.

Considering the great territorial appetites of the immediate neighbours of Jammu & Kashmir, who are epitomes of totalitarian, dictatorial or hegemonic outlooks, the *Kashmiris*, unless they, in ostrich fashion, want to proverbially intend to bury their heads in sands at the sight of imminent danger, cannot afford to slip into a situation which could bring them back into an *era* reminiscent of the tragic saga of the last seven centuries. Further, the cultural identity of *Kasheer*, while upholding the *Reeshi Order* and *Kashmiri Sufi Islam*, at the same time, ought to recognize and highlight the pre-Islamic, philosophy, art, culture, literature, architecture, history.

Return of the Pandits and implications

The issue of the return of the *Pandits* to the Valley means the freedom of they being able to come into and go out of the Valley at their free will and choice. This would include developing business connects and acquiring spaces of their own for their residential, industrial, commercial or professional purposes. They could also visit the Valley for tourism, pilgrimage and holding of weddings and other social occasions. The most important gain from this would be that it would signal the arrival of peace in the Valley. All this would automatically trigger and attract an unimaginable economic growth for all

Kashmiris. Thus *Peace Industry* in the Valley would thus grow far more rapidly in contrast to the *Blame & Grief Industry*. The former is a precursor to the establishment of *Kasheer*; symbolizing the cultural and economic transformation and revolution of the people of Kashmir. The *Blame & Grief Industry* is subservient to a limited set of interest groups or beneficiaries who would like to continue to bleed Kashmir and Kashmiris for their personal gains. No grand announcements for the return of the *Pandits* need to be made. Just a positive environment would do. If at all, any thing formal needs to be announced, it would be to call upon the Kashmiris to rededicate themselves to the cause of launching of the movement called *Kasheer*, the *Kashmir First Initiative* on a world-wide platform.

Future of Kashmiris only through Kasheer:

Posturing a separate existence for the *Pandits* in a separate territory would not be germane to the *milieu* in which Kashmiris were exposed to before 1947 and immediately thereafter. Perhaps, had the *Pandits* instead focussed on the need to recreate the spirit of a progressive *era*, which was demolished by the *Jehadis*, they would have had a better ground to stand upon. They ought to have persuasively brought attention to their orchestrated displacement by first engaging with all Kashmiris and, in effect, with the *Silent Majority* on the issues discussed above. On these lines they could have brought home the truth, which ultimately could find favour, first with this internal constituency and then perhaps with the world around.

Kasheer is contemplated to mean a free society; a democratic and a secular Kashmir where all are free to practice their religion, faith, social and cultural life, whatever, without intruding into or challenging the free domain of the others

as long as it remains within the folds of progress, secularism, harmony and co-existence. The name *Kasheer* pertains to the times when, under the banner of *Naya Kashmir*, progressive ideologies took shape in the aftermath of 1947.

Nostalgia and the breeze of Naya Kashmir that blew after 1947

While not wanting to dwell on the heinous crimes committed by the Pakistan based raiders in October, 1947 against the Kashmiris and, in particular, against the *Pandits* and Sikhs in Baramulla and elsewhere, including instances where some Kashmiris betrayed each other, it would be in the fitness of things to dwell on the general outlook of things rather than base our opinions on instances which though tragic were isolated.

Therefore, remembering the good times, such as when you could exercise the option of visiting a discotheque (Capri's Gold Dust Inn at Polo View) or see a matinee show of a Hollywood film at the Broadway Theatre at Sonwar or that of the film "Saturday Night Fever" of John Travolta at the Khyaam Cinema at Kohankhen. At 1 PM, Radio Kashmir would air the Western Music program based on listeners requests with all kinds of accompanying messages for those for whom the musical number might have been requested for. Tagore Hall was abuzz with theatre activity. Old art forms like *Baand Paether* and *Ladisha* (which was brilliantly used as a people's satirical tool to counter political and social depredations) were reinvented in the idiom of the cultural Renaissance of Kashmir, which in fact, was the hall mark of *Kashmir*. I particularly remember the *Ladisha* made by Radio Kashmir in response to the Chinese invasion of Ladakh in 1962 by Pushkar Bhan. He, in association with a galaxy of artists, came up with his humour laced Radio serial *Machama*. Without hearing the serial *Zoon Dab*, produced by Som Nath Sadhu, with characters like *Aag'*

Saeb (played by Som Nath Sadhu), his wife (Maryam Begum) and his servant *Mamae* (played by Pushkar Bhan), insightful civic, administrative and social and other issues were brought into reckoning with great poise and humor. Without listening to this program, the daily morning rigmarole of a householder was incomplete. At 9:30 PM the famously known Pran Kishore came up with Radio dramas that left indelible impressions on the listeners. Apart from this, his famous programs like *Wadi Ki Aawaz*, through character like *Allah Rakha* (played by Manohar Prothi) and *Nikki Appa*, managed to fire salvos to counter Pakistan's propaganda made through their broadcasting apparatus, *Radio Azad Kashmir*. Ali Mohammad Lone came to be associated with best of contemporary short stories. Tibet Bakal sung the famous Shiv Bhajan of the *Pandits*, "*Bel tai madhav venn gulaab poshan dastai, poozai perma shivas shavnathas tai*". Mohan Lal Aima rendered the naat "*Ya Nabi gosh faryadan thav*". Both of these songs epitomized the spirit of upholding the mystic tradition and amity between the Kashmiri Muslims and *Pandits* under the *Reeshi Order*. Dina Nath Nadim brought Kashmiri poetry, which had long been restricted to themes of love and longing, face-to-face with contemporary realities which he presented with a new sensibility. All this came about in the grand ambience of popular songs of Gulam Hassan Sofi, Raj Begum, Naseem Akther and others followed by amazing contemporary compositions of Bhajan Sopori and to top it all with the voice of Vijay Malla, Shameema Dev, Kailash Mehira among others. Play writers like Sajood Sailani, Avtar Krishen Rahbar and Moti Lal Kemu brought and new dimension in Kashmiri Theatre. The art and painting scene was dominated by greats like Dina Nath Walli, Masood Husain, Gulam Rasool Santosh, Bansi Kaul, Bansi Parimu, Shafi

Chaman, Veer Munshi, Inder Salim, Ratan Parimoo, Manohar Kaul, Arshad Sualeh and many others.

It was no big deal for someone to spend an evening at the Marina bar on the Residency Road without having to be victimized or speak for Karl Marx and his doctrines amidst audiences in the Coffee House on the Residency Road. They could do this for hours together over, just over one cup of coffee or thrive in the annals of Kashmir Shaivism at the ashram of Swami Lakshman joo at Ishber Nishat or revel in the splendor of the mystic poetry of Ahad Zargar, Soche Kral or listen to the electrifying verses of Dina Nath Nadim.

The above are instances which would go to show the ambience in which *Kasheer* of the modern era was being conceived. *Pandits* need to work in or outside of Kashmir in a unique way; neither by sharing the dias with those whose political voices who are not germane to the ethos of the *Kashmiris* (as discussed above) nor by clamoring for the rights of the exiled *Pandits* but by actually echoing through the spirit of the *Reeshi Order* in consortium with the *Silent Majority*.

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A TASK AT HAND

Surendra Munshi

Many years ago I had proposed to Kashmir Sabha, Calcutta, that a workshop should be organised on dealing with our problems. This could not be done at that time due to the reasons which need not be discussed here. Since the need for a workshop is as pressing today as it was when I made the proposal, I give below the basic idea of the proposal in the hope that the Sabha will find it possible to act on it this time.

In making the proposal, I had drawn inspiration from the Buddha or rather his method. It is said, I had argued, that the Buddha adopted a classical ancient Hindu medical practice for his understanding of the problem of human condition. He diagnosed it as *dukkha*, showed its cause to be craving, determined its cure in cessation of craving, and prescribed the remedy in the eightfold path shown by him. These are his four noble truths. We may learn from the Buddha and the masters of Hindu thought who preceded him in our situation of *dukkha*. We need to ask four questions in a clear manner: How do we diagnose the problem? What is its cause? How can the problem be cured? What path should we take for its remedy?

These questions need to be asked in a rational manner without getting swayed by emotions. When a patient is severely ill we go for prescription not to his agitated relatives and friends but to a doctor who exercises his trained mind rationally. The greater the illness of a patient, the more is the need to handle the disease rationally. I understand it is difficult for us to be rational. We are refugees in our own country. We had to leave behind in the valley everything that we possessed. We are unable to go back even now and are unable to call effectively the land of our

birth and of our ancestors as our own. Much pain has been caused by this upheaval. But yet we have to exercise control on our emotions. There is no doctor to whom we can go for prescription. We have to be our own doctors. We have to look at our condition with the clinical eye of a trained doctor and go by the ancient formula. We have to diagnose the problem, find its cause, determine its cure, and arrive at a path that we should take for the remedy.

We constitute a small community but we have our strengths. We have much talent among us. Kashmiri Hindus have proved themselves in different walks of life. This enormous talent needs to be mobilised. This needs to be done with a clear idea that we have to be united, overcoming the problems posed by egoism, pettiness and lack of vision. We need to think not for ourselves but for the entire community, for the entire state of Jammu & Kashmir that has been ravaged, and for our country that is passing through a critical period.

For the workshop, I had proposed that we should hold it here in Calcutta for about three days, putting together about twenty persons drawn from the entire country or even from abroad. Let the purpose of the workshop be to have a sustained discussion in the form of brainstorming to answer the questions posed above. It will be wrong to jump to easy answers. We may believe that we have the answers to these questions, but they may turn out to be false answers. I have often heard that the problem is not in knowing what needs to be done but in carrying it out. 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.

The persons drawn for the purpose of this workshop must represent our most accomplished minds. We have to carry out the selection process in an impartial and careful manner, keeping the objective in mind. Let the selected persons constitute our think tank for the purpose. They must come together and think the problem through in an open manner. Let them review the situation, learning from our past achievements and failures. Let them examine different alternatives before the community and draw out their implications. We need to rethink the entire problem with an open mind. When a problem refuses to go away, a change in the basic mode of thinking on the issue may bring results as compared with the thought that habitually moves in a fixed groove.

I had suggested that we bring persons representing different professions and practices. We should put together academics, journalists, other media persons, diplomats, administrators, lawyers, judges, doctors, engineers, executives, literary figures, and also industrialists, businessmen, students, and public figures. Care should be taken to ensure that men and women, young and old, and old and new Kashmiris find proper representation. We should include persons of different lines of thinking.

To ensure that the workshop retains its focus, I had further suggested that a background paper is to be prepared and sent to all invited persons much in advance of the holding of the workshop. This background paper should highlight issues that need to be formulated. At the conclusion of the workshop, an integrated report will have to be prepared that not only records the discussions that took place during the workshop but also highlights the path that the community should take for the remedy of its problems. This report and its executive summary must receive widest circulation here in India and abroad. This will serve the purpose of creating awareness and of highlighting the options that are open to the community.

This proposal to Kashmir Sabha, Calcutta, was not meant to be exclusive. Indeed, many such workshops could be organised at different places through the initiative of different sabhas to generate ideas. A different format could be developed here or elsewhere. The main idea is to recognise that we need to generate ideas in a systematic manner for taking care of the concerns of our community.

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ROBUST ROOTS, BOUNTIFUL FRUITS - RECONNECTING TO OUR SACRED GEOGRAPHY

Bharat Wakhlu

Introduction

For many decades, albeit more acutely since the late 1980s, our community has been grappling with the existential problems associated with our tragic uprooting from Kashmir, and the concomitant erosion of our spiritual, cultural, linguistic and literary heritage. This loss is real, and makes us all poorer as a community. Its continuation is a matter of concern therefore, and needs to be obviated without further delay.

The fact that our community has moved away from Kashmir to other parts of the world, aggravates the loss of heritage, since community-cohesion, which is so essential for the continued development of our culture, and which comes from living in close proximity with one another, is missing. The distances and the forces of globalization also accelerate the rate at which our community's efforts to bring alignment are dissipated, and such basic concerns as the preservation of our identity as Kashmiri Pandits (KPs) therefore emerge at every important meeting of our community.

It is creditable that despite the decades of travail and turmoil the Kashmiri Pandit (KP) community has organized itself, and has been working tirelessly around the world to create effective associations, platforms and online resources to create a semblance of cohesion and union, that is so essential to preserve the values and the traditions that make us who we are.

I am of the view that whatever good work that we are all doing currently - in regions as diversely separate as New Zealand and North America, and from Chile to China - will however, be inadequate and insufficient, unless we make a quantum leap, and re-connect - willfully, creatively and energetically - with our roots and our

Sacred Geography. This does not imply re-locating to Kashmir: far from it. We can continue to live and work wherever we need to. Instead, what this implies is that our community plays an active role in the development of a modern, and vibrant Kashmir, and all the people - whether Hindu, Muslim, Sikh or Christian - who live there. That alone will connect us to our roots, provide us meaning as a community, help us understand more deeply and empathetically the human tragedy of the Kashmir crisis, and enrich our own spiritual, and cultural traditions; even as we contribute to the place that is our homeland, and which has been known as a *rès-vār* (land of *Rishis* and mystics) for eons.

The Proposition

I'd like to start with an assertion: we need to re-connect with our "home" in Kashmir, to strengthen our roots, to contribute to the world, and to develop further, our language, literature and our spiritual refinement. That alone will ensure that we remain and thrive as a vibrant, modern and effective ethnic community - irrespective of where we might choose to live and work, in the world.

Only when we retain and further develop our traditionally strong, healthy, and vibrant ties with the region - that has been called Kashmir for over six millennia - would we be honored and referred to as Kashmiris. Besides, only then would we also have the *legitimacy* to contribute to the development of our language, our literature and our cultural traditions; especially as the world undergoes rapid and disruptive changes in the manner of creation, storage, and transmission of rich bodies of knowledge, including current information, music, language, literature and customs.

If we impulsively sunder the emotional and physical connect that we have with Kashmir – because of current developments – and off handedly deny, denigrate and undervalue what Kashmir means to us all, future generations will be deprived of the invaluable legacy and inheritance that is rightfully theirs for all time to come.

What Makes Us 'Kashmiri'?

We are what we are because we derive from the remarkable history, the unique ethos, the values and the linguistic and spiritual traditions of the valley, and the extraordinary interactions that we've always had with *all the people* of Kashmir. We are known for being the descendents and the inheritors of those noble, courageous and heroic people, who sought, experienced and then spread spiritual, military and administrative knowledge far and wide – across the mighty Himalayas, into the heartland of China, across Tibet, into the far reaches of the Ahom Kingdoms, and further south to the maritime kingdoms of Vanga and beyond.

Today, we are a successful and well-respected community – not only in the subcontinent of India – but in almost every geography and culture across the world. This is no accident. But lately, we have been forced to develop our capabilities without the benefit of relying on either strong roots, or even the full body of inner and outer capabilities that would emerge from being an inter-connected Kashmiri-speaking community – like we have always been in Kashmir.

The achievements that are ours today, and the wholesome experiences that we collectively appreciate, come from our ethos, our work ethic and our values. They also arise from a deep and abiding commitment to serve the greater good of all people, irrespective of where we might have chosen to work or live. This value is quintessentially a Kashmiri Pandit one, and emerges from a long and abiding spiritual tradition that views everything

as *Param-Shiva* and all of Existence as a miraculous manifestation of His *lilā* (playfulness). We cannot reject this notion and cling on to our recent stereotypes or prejudices about others: because that would fly in the face of the *fundamental values* that have made us all, what we are today.

When we speak about preserving our cultural and linguistic identity, therefore, we need to appreciate that it is inexorably linked to the geographical region that is Kashmir; and the profound, yet inexplicable interplay of the land, its people, the language, the spiritual and temporal traditions, as also with the places of worship and the many joyful, community interactions. We will be able to preserve who we are, and flourish, only if we endeavour to preserve and also actively work for – and contribute to – the development and modernization of Kashmir *in our vision and with our values*, and ensure that the benefits of our efforts accrue to all those who live and work there today.

This is an important idea, but it might be challenged by the grim and violent reality that has been a part of Kashmir for – if not the last seven decades – definitely for the past thirty years. At any point the news that trickles-in from the valley is not altogether pleasant, aggravated partly by the fact that the electronic media in India revels in focusing on all that is negative and gory anywhere in the world.

That is the reason why there's a need to explain what underpins this idea of reconnecting with our Sacred Geography. I re-affirm that a strong connect with Kashmir is essential for *our own well-being*, our influence, as well as for our own growth and prosperity, including of those who form the widespread Kashmiri diaspora across the globe.

Kashmiri Pandit Peregrinations Have Occurred Since Antiquity

Kashmiri Pandits have been conscious travelers for over two millennia, if not more. Our forefathers would willfully travel to

other regions, beyond Kashmir, seeking the patronage and backing of wise kings, whose kingdoms would benefit from the scholarship, the learning and the administrative acumen of the Pandits. Peregrinations were done in small groups, but mostly solo.

Before the advent of Islam, when Kashmir was populated by Buddhists and Hindus, and when the population was akin to any Hindu *samaj* across the sub-continent, the motivations to travel were many: some would leave the confines and security of their homes to seek better fortunes outside, some would go to spread their knowledge, others would be invited by learned people elsewhere (to Kasi, Ujjain, Leh, Puri or Lhasa, for instance) to provide guidance, for the writing of books, and even for translating Sanskrit or *Shârdâ* texts into the local languages of the regions.

Our forefathers were intrepid in their commitment to the *Dharma*, and would go forth boldly to different lands. History is full of the tales of brave, learned and determined Kashmiris, facing the utmost of risks to pursue their goals – not only for themselves or their loved ones, but especially for the well-being and betterment of humanity.

The movement of Kashmiri Pandits outside of the valley became a flood of migrations during times of misfortune. The conversion of Kashmiris to Islam, which happened through waves of brutality, spanning about two to three hundred years, and starting from the 12th century CE onwards, saw many Pandits moving lock stock and barrel from the valley. All were driven by a desire to flee persecution and the extreme penury that had befallen the Pandits, especially as the temples, the gifts to the deities, and the temple-lands that they looked after and depended upon, got destroyed and usurped. Besides, with no patron kings to use their services, and with the Hindu *samaj*, the people – that venerated and supported the priests and the learned Pandits – having all become Muslims, the dangers of survival were genuine and dire.

It is said that during the darkest period of the persecution of the people of Kashmir, so great was the migration from the valley that only eleven Pandit families (*kahey garē*) were left across the length and breadth of Kashmir.

Two Anchors that Upheld Our Ethos

Even as Kashmiri Pandits went to different parts of the subcontinent – and beyond, to use their skills to serve their patrons and prosper, there were two conditions that always guided them and served as a reminder of their home and their roots in the beautiful valley of Kashmir. These anchors also served as an agonizing reminder that Kashmir is where they would prefer to be.

The first condition was the unbearable, hot weather of the plains of the Indian subcontinent. However fulfilling and rewarding the work that our forefathers would have been doing, the summer heat of the plains, followed by the humid weather during the monsoons, were always difficult to bear. Kashmir remained the ultimate place to which everyone had to and wanted to return – irrespective of how prosperous and well-to do they may have become elsewhere. Obviously, conditions in Kashmir had to be right too.

The second, and probably the more important of the two factors, was the fact that Kashmir was viewed as the abode of *Shârdâ Devi* – the patron Goddess of Kashmiri Pandits and all those whose work involved ideas, literary works, treatises and languages. No Kashmiri Pandit would ever wish for this deep, soul-level connection with the Sacred Geography of Kashmir to be wedged apart. Every effort therefore was made to return to Kashmir once the “working phases” of one’s life in the distant lands were completed, and when conditions in the valley were right. That is how the *kah-garey* that had once remained in the whole of Kashmir, gradually increased to relatively better numbers.

Despite the two factors that have been mentioned, many KP families never returned to the valley. Either conditions were not right to return, or the new place offered benefits that could not be replicated in the valley. That is perfectly understandable and normal. But the pull from our Sacred Geography was a powerful one, and ensured that the connections with the families in the valley, were retained. Families that chose to live outside would often forge matrimonial alliances with families from the valley, precisely since the "pull" of the valley was a spiritual one.

In today's day and age, with advances in technology and easier global travel, Kashmiris are able to create cool, pleasant havens across the globe. Even in places that have scorching weather such as the United Arab Emirates or Australia - Kashmiris can be found living happily, thanks to the marvel of controlling the climate through air-conditioning.

However, largely because of the turmoil and the violence perpetrated by ISI backed Islamic-mercenaries, Kashmiri Pandits today have lost touch with the Sacred Geography that defines us all. This is something that is contributing to our lack of community-connections and the rapid decline in the numbers of people who speak Kashmiri, and are familiar with the values, the literature and the traditions that make us who we are.

Connecting with Our Sacred Geography

As a community, Kashmiris - those who speak the language Kashmiri - can be found all across the globe. Kashmiri Pandits too live and work in some of the remotest parts of the world. There cannot be greater evidence of the resilience and the capabilities of Kashmiris, since wherever they are, they are adding considerable value and serving people of diverse societies.

Wherever we live, we as Kashmiri Pandits do create spaces and temples that enable us to interact with other community members, celebrate auspicious events and

re-create the "domain" that best replicates what exists in Kashmir. Such spaces and temples-demesne, which provide a place for interactions, engagement and creative discourse, are essential for preserving our values, our culinary habits, our language and traditions. However, in many parts of the world, where KPs reside, their numbers may not be sufficient to create a formal meeting place; in which case the homes of Kashmiri families, become the locus of connection. Alternatively, the temples or Centers of other Hindu communities serve the purpose as well.

Connecting with our Sacred Geography however, calls for a different approach. It requires all of us as Kashmiri Pandits to consciously connect with Kashmir through a direct link with a temple, a gurudwara, a shrine that we revere, a farm or an orchard, a centre where members of the community congregate, a social enterprise, an NGO that works with orphans, destitute women, or one that is engaged in promoting sports; a Think Tank researching some aspect of our heritage, a school, a college or a place that is associated with one or more of the *Rishis* and enlightened mystics that Kashmir is known for. Any legitimate and appropriate enterprise would qualify.

However, it needs to be mentioned - and this is a critical point that the connection is not just with organizations that are run by KPs alone. There could be many organizations that might be run by members of other faiths, and that would be perfectly fine too, as long as the aims and objectives of the entity were aligned with what appeals to those who might opt to contribute through them. Besides, the connection is not just about contributing through monetary resources - the connect is essentially going to be in terms of physical volunteering, sharing ideas, lending a hand in furthering the goals of the entity, and thereby contributing to restore the glory and the effulgence of *Mâ Shâradâ Devi*, all the people who live in her land and the thus for the whole of Kashmir.

Such a network of physical connections and links with Kashmir would also form a powerful way to nurture our roots as a community, and ensure that we are intimately linked to the web of contacts and acquaintances in Kashmir. This real, physical web of contacts and fraternizations will pave the way for not just the preservation of what's valuable to us - as a community - in Kashmir, but would provide us many places that would serve as havens for the spiritual, cultural, linguistic, economic and social development of our community. Many more events, games and tournaments could also be arranged at these places, involving not just the local Kashmiri community, but even Kashmiris living in different parts of the world. Young members of the Kashmiri community would find this especially enriching and worthwhile in strengthening their bonds with the land where the Grace of *Shâradâ Devi* abounds. Not only that, they would get opportunities to learn more about the "Totality of Kashmir", and become prime stakeholders in conversations and efforts, aimed at co-creating a peaceful, beautiful and well-developed Kashmir that benefits all.

Interestingly, as we reconnect with our Sacred Geography through these multiple and consistent linkages, not only would we be giving a fillip to our own contributions to our land and home, we would simultaneously raise the interest levels - of current and future generations of our community - in the possibilities and opportunities that abound in Kashmir.

Enabling Kashmiri Pandits - across the globe - to link up with such legitimate and physical organizations and entities in Kashmir, will be the responsibility of our Community Associations, working collaboratively together, and putting in place a system that is both easy to follow and which relies on the power of the internet to forge connections and linkages.

Where and How to Start

A start needs to be made right now - starting with our own individual and collective attitudes towards Kashmir. Just because we've had a long, terrible and painful history as Kashmiris, we need not blame Kashmir - our Sacred Geography - for that. The aversion that many of us feel for the place is understandable, but if Kashmir is the abode of *Shâradâ Devi* and of *Shiva* and *Pârvatî*, then to forsake the place will be akin to going further away from that which will ultimately sustain us all.

So the starting point is to create a small positive spark of appreciation for Kashmir, and all that it stands for - both good and bad. If we truly think of ourselves as learned and wise, then the first thing that we need to do is to embrace the Totality of Kashmir, and all that it stands for. We need to embrace the people of that place (who like us, have also suffered during the years of violent conversions over the past couple of hundred years), empathize with their problems and aspirations, and use our enormous talent to be of help and service - just as we do in such far-away places as Auckland, Amsterdam, Zanzibar City and Zhengzhou.

Once the right space is created in our hearts, the connections with entities in Kashmir would follow. Our efforts there would then be both enriching for us and uplifting for all those living there. The conversations that would follow would create many opportunities for collaboration and co-creating a Kashmir that can truly be a shining example - for the entire globe - of the best that *Shâradâ Devi* stands for, and which will be manifest through us - the Pandits of Kashmir.

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KASHMIRI PANDIT COMMUNITY: INITIATIVES OF A STRONG LEADERSHIP WILL FORGE THE PATH OF RETURN AND REVIVAL

Vivek Kaul

Introduction:

The future of the entire Kashmiri Pandit community (hereafter referred to as the KP), having its own distinct ethno-religious-cultural identity, in the year 2019 is extremely bleak and far from certain - and each year, 19th January is that pain-filled date, of the realisation that, Kashmir which for most of our entire community was once our home under the sun may now remain a distant dream for us to return to. That very date in 2019 marks yet another anniversary, of that fateful day, when conditions were facilitated for the ethnic cleansing that took place in Kashmir, provoking the trickling migration of the KP in 1989 in a deteriorating law and order environment to worsen - without any prior warning or indication - into a spontaneous flood of humanity in mid-January 1990. Rabid fundamentalism combined with an orgy of terror - advertisements in prominent local newspapers giving extremely short notice to specific individuals to leave or face death, loud sloganeering of protestors coming out with flaming torches in processions at the dead of night asking Pandit men to leave Kashmir leaving their women behind, simultaneous calls from mosques across the Valley asking Pandits to leave Kashmir immediately, and the like.

The atrocities were scaled upwards initially in Anantnag where it rose to unprecedented levels in 1986. A paradigm shift in their violence and savagery took place after the slaughter of a cow in public, targeting of a few members of the KP who were then killed, while women belonging to the KP were paraded nude and raped in a bestial display of orchestrated hate of the people,

symbols and religious places of the KP took place in Anantnag. These were without precedent in the 20th century in targeting the KP, who assumed that Kashmir, was not just a *de facto* integral part of India, but



a *de jure* part of India as well, where the writ of the Indian Government would run. Not for the first time in our history stretching back 5094 years, but certainly for the first time in recent times, there was no spontaneous response by way of a protest or agitation as happened in the case of the Parmeshwari agitation of 1967, perhaps because there seemed if not a complete lack of will, bordering on administrative impotence of the Government of the day, to maintain law and order effectively. There was a sense of fatalism of the KP due to the fundamentally flawed assumption most individual members of the KP made, which may be summarised as follows: "Me Kya Chhu?" Explained in detail with reference to the context at that time, this suggested adoption of the following world view:

"It is very unlikely that the travails affecting members of my community far away will impact me. Let my family and me stay out of any involvement. It is not my affair, hence not my problem to be involved with."

The truth of the grim reality they were really faced, with came home to roost as just a few years rolled by. The community most severely impacted by the growing fundamentalism and the target of the disgruntled and the rabble-rousers before and during 1990 in Kashmir were the KP.

There have been those from other communities, such as the Sikhs and Buddhists, and even some minority sects of Muslims. However, the only community which was forced to flee immediately, almost entirely, were members of the KP, bearing the brunt of the anger of disgruntled members of the Muslim majority community. There were several others who fled the Valley, notably political workers of some parties which were in power. Members across all communities, including the majority community, were clearly overcome by the brazenness, ferocity and targeted nature of the process of hounding out of the entire community. But the operative aspect of their world view was exactly what the KP in other parts of the Kashmir Valley had in 1986: "Me Kya Chhu?" And perhaps it will take much longer in their case, but the outcome will be the same. Since the reality is that you can't negotiate your survival in the long term with a predatory ideology which is preying on what is fundamental to your way of life - you simply delay your inevitable escape or your end, and strengthen and embolden the sub-animal species which moves among us like another ordinary human but totally bereft of any trace of humanity.

2019 - A Watershed Election Year In India:

The first half of 2019 will mark the time when the largest exercise in the exercise of adult franchise in the history of mankind will be held as the citizens of India. The stakes in this election are obviously very high, not just on the national but also on the world stage, given the growing importance of India in the world. These will be fought by political parties both at the national and state level trying to secure the popular mandate on the basis of their policies, programs and projects and will be shaped on the basis of the leadership of these parties meeting and engaging with those community leaders and opinion

makers whose views they consider significant. Political manifestos will be prepared based on these meetings and discussions.

Among the many issues impacting the future of India is the resolution of the Kashmir problem, we can reasonably anticipate that the resolution of the Kashmir problem will find mention in the political manifestos with the respective political parties describing their policies and programs as the magic mantra in their party manifestos which will solve this vexed problem. There will undoubtedly raise our fond hope of the return and resettlement with dignity and honour of those of the KP in Kashmir whose were resident in 1990. A cursory reading of the noble intentions expressed in rehabilitating the KP may warm the hearts of the KP whose naivete exceeds their rugged common sense.

Implications For The KP: Building Leadership That Lights The Path Ahead

Sherlock Holmes, the fictional detective created by the world famous author, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle once remarked: "You see, but you do not observe". That has yet again been the tragedy of the KP. We have been continuing to see through all the facts that are hiding in plain sight, pretending they did not exist at all. Most of these steps involve the process of looking within rather than to the challenges outside the community. The burning issue for the KP was not the challenges outside the community but the absence of strong leadership that impacts our community to deliver results and solutions in the long term. The challenges outside the community were simply a manifestation of a lack of leadership of our community. This was also the manifestation of the declining standards of humanity across our country and the world as mankind continues to blaze new trails in a paradigm shift of technological progress.

The word leadership when mentioned in the context of the KP sounds like an oxymoron. "Many leaders, fewer followers" "Leaders are all the same - grabbing power and not leaving the chair" etc. You hear these negative sound bytes coming from within our community, from time to time. Sadly some of it may even be true. But the reality we must grapple and come to terms with is that only the leadership of a community will guide it to a better future, and we have to build a strong effective leadership irrespective of whatever failings may have occurred in the past. This is our community and strengthening our leadership, is our only option going forward. To seek solutions from outside our community in the absence of solutions within, is a fundamental contradiction by itself, and it is the community leadership which will guide its path in the future. One well-known Kashmiri Pandit did that earlier and we still suffer the consequences. Jawaharlal Nehru approached the United Nations Security Council as India's first Prime Minister on 1st January 1949, even as The Indian Army was well poised to drive back the Kabali invaders and reclaim the territory stolen from us. Instead, they proceeded to occupy and convert a large part of Kashmir in what is now called Pakistan occupied Kashmir. India's strategic advantage in the North and its boundaries with Afghanistan was overrun probably forever.

AIKS was mandated as a federation of community organisations of the KP, and has been designated as, but so far it simply did not adequately live up to becoming the premier frontal organisation of the KP. This is reflected in the fact that several other organisations have sprung up as a response to the several crises that have dealt a body blow to our community, during and especially after the seventh mass migration of 1990. These organisations have found significant traction within the community and have

also managed to secure wide publicity and access to decision-makers outside it, revealing that there is a leadership vacuum that needs to be filled. There is also no meaning in filling this vacuum of leadership through any other organisation, and this underscores the need for AIKS to lead the community as the premier front organisation - indeed it probably needs to be renamed to reflect its premier status as a front organisation of Kashmiri Pandits across the world not just in India. This is merely the beginning as it also needs to develop institution building mechanisms to prepare the community for the challenges faced by it in the long run. If necessary, it needs to invite resources and thought leaders outside the community, and of course much more so within the community, not necessarily limited to its various subsidiaries but even outside it, so that through building and sharing of its strengths with competencies outside it, a clear road-map is created to meet the challenges to the community as a part of the entirety of Kashmir where pluralism as an abiding overarching value, is respected.

This however is very easily said, not so easily done. Some of the factors that we need to consider in forming an alternative approach must begin with a zero-assumption approach, since we are tethering on the brink of the process of extinction unless something is done quickly. It may make sense to examine suggestions made in the past. For example, Kashmir Sabha, Calcutta had proposed an initiative over a decade earlier but this was not taken up by AIKS. No process was proposed as a better alternative by those declining the proposal on its basic merit or approach. It is almost certain that similar initiatives may have been developed and/ or offered across the world, but for perhaps similar or entirely different reasons, has not been taken beyond the drawing board.

In the meantime, till such time as solutions emerge, and are debated, discussed and analysed till any solutions emerge, several members of the KP have been taking their own initiatives. I was pleasantly surprised to find a couple from Texas who had funded the renovation of a Shiv Temple located perhaps 1 km above the Ishber Ashram, where Swami Lakshman Joo's Ishwar Ashram Trust is located. This temple had been severely damaged during the early years of militancy. Whatever the laudable steps taken by individual members of our community, there is no doubt that any protection of our identity as KP can only take place with our return with dignity and honour. 2019 is the year which will be consumed by elections, and the match-making that will follow among political parties thereafter! It will also take at least a year for our community to plan and prepare for our return. To expect that we will be allowed land and secure funding for our rehabilitation in any other part of India, much less outside it, where we will be able to protect our identity is in my view, perhaps far-fetched. If we are able to establish the basis for our return, I do not think it will happen in a separate homeland exclusively for KP alone. In my view, if we wait much longer beyond a year, we may have waited too long to plan and prepare for our return. On the other hand, if we take longer than a year or two, till 2021, perhaps too much water would have flowed down the Ganga for a return to be possible ever again. I am taking the liberty of offering my point of view that may facilitate our return. While it is correct to agitate and seek justice for atrocities committed on KPs, we will be well advised to treat these two agendas as separate - in the case of one, we are seeking justice for the past, while in the other we are finding ways to survive in the future.

These suggestions for our leadership are offered with a proviso that other individuals or organisations do not merely criticize

these but make suggestions of their own, unless the ultimate reality of lying down to be buried is to be embraced like the heroes of the French Revolution who smilingly lay down their heads on the guillotine. It will therefore be appropriate for others to offer their perspective and solutions in terms of the way forward, rather to demonstrate their willingness to ensure the survival of not only the entire KP, which in turn will survive only when pluralism returns to the Valley, a philosophy enshrined in and respected by several faiths that are followed in Kashmir.

Apart from suggesting that a fundamental rethink of strategy of the frontal organisation of our community be undertaken in right earnest, I wish that the following projects be undertaken as well:-

1) Define The KP:

A) Physical Number:

The population of the community defines the physical number of the membership of the KP that needs to be defined, both in terms of the numbers of individuals and families who belong to the community of Kashmiri Pandits. A need to have a global census before the mass migration took place was important, which I had mentioned as part of a three-member exchange of views and discussion with Prof Surendra Munshi, Ashok Dhar and myself (featured in an article in the Vitasta Annual Number 1988).

There is an extremely urgent need for a census today. The experience of each individual member of the KP is the fundamental metric by which the community experience can be measured and documented from time to time. It can also be updated through the births, deaths, marriages, and physical location now in a *post facto* phase of mass migration across the world. Had we had such a census earlier, the atrocities committed on

members of the KP would have been documented quickly, authentically and much more effectively, and we would not have any ambivalence in voicing our concerns with specific data to highlight our minimal demands as part of free society, be it in India or in various fora abroad.

The presence of members of the KP in various locations across the world, will give access to communicate better with achievers and leaders belonging to our community across the globe, much like the outreach of the present Indian government to the diaspora across the world. Notwithstanding the creation of a census, it is entirely the prerogative of an individual to offer his support for the community's identity and activities. A well organised infrastructure and information data bank helps. In spite of a prevailing atmosphere of gloom and doom, having met members of the KP across the world, I can think of very few among them who are doing well but so self-obsessed that they will decline to help their own community, to a minimal extent. Besides that, if it is partly true that our own Biradari will flatly decline to help, how do we expect those outside our community to help us if we are not prepared to do so ourselves? It is the responsibility of the leadership to initiate action to protect those among the community who need help in crises. On the other hand we must also recognise that in a world where individual freedoms prevail above all else, and is enshrined in the Indian Constitution, any individual much less any community organisation cannot take an overbearing attitude towards the individual freedom of community members. The long term implications for weakening of the entire community may be demonstrated through two examples. One was how the community objected to the decision of Dr Girija Dhar to marry a life partner of her choice Dr Naseer A Shah in the UK in February 1965. Two years later the

daughter of a widow belonging to the KP, Parmeshwari, converted to Islam and was renamed Parveen Akhtar before marrying a life partner of her choice, to the bitter opposition of the entire community both within Kashmir and outside it. The community raised the ire of the entire majority community and administration at the State and the Central Government. Journalist, author, and a close confidant of Sheikh Abdullah, who was also widely reputed for his opportunism in political circles, Prem Nath Bazaz made a prophetic assertion to his protege, N L Wattal, Editor of Daily Khidmat "There has never been a massive agitation from our community like this nor will there be in future. All this massive energy will end in a smoke. The leaders lack vision, they are incapable, they have their own vested interests" Whatever fault one may find in his hobnobbing with leaders like Sheikh Abdullah who betrayed our community in many ways, no one can doubt the correctness of his prophecy.

B) Non-Physical Boundaries:

The values, principles and routine practices be they of any individual or community, defines the self-imposed boundaries to our action and the guiding vision of thought, expression and action. These values need to be defined well, while carefully excluding those that may be termed strategies, to be adopted when expediency or circumstances prevail that render them suitable for being considered. To share a simple example of non-negotiable values, it is relevant to assert that a member of the KP will never resort to any acts of terror which target any innocent person in response to the challenges thrown at it, even though its survival is at stake today. This has not happened in the past several mass migrations in earlier centuries, and is unlikely to be any different today. This sets the template for the definition of core values of the entire community - what are the principles it will adhere to, irrespective

of whether its survival and very existence is imperilled? Similarly, the KP have always been respectful of the rights of those following other faiths, as clearly enunciated in several sayings called "*Lal-Vakhs*" of the saint poetess Lalleshwari. This is an important set of values to have when some other communities believe that it shows the only path to God and does so in rigidly defined ways, that are characteristic of cults rather than religions. This is a strength for our community and will help us establish linkages with other communities. It will also be demonstrated through the actions taken by our community icons, so that it does not merely sound like a charter of good intentions but intentions that have been expressed through action.

C) Community Organisation Core Purposes:

Having defined the boundaries of our thought, expression and action, it is important for the institution building process to define the core purpose of its existence:

Why does it exist as an institution and what is the purpose or sets of purposes it has been created for?

Having engaged in these three primary projects that will define the frontal organisation as an institution that the community can anchor its hopes and aspirations to, it is important for the following to be done at the earliest:-

1) Define The Community's Icons And Their Contribution Over Millennia:

There is an urgent need for the community to research, document and define its contributions across millennia before it can be recognized as a unique and very valued member of the community of communities. "Why should the community survive?" is not a matter for the members of the KP alone to answer, in a world that is searching for answers as it is being torn apart by three forces of globalization -

global terror, global financial meltdown, and global warming. The world does provide space across national and continental boundaries to recognize communities that have made signal contributions to thought leadership in different fields across the world. Any claims we make to be among the communities that have provided thought leadership across different fields cannot lie in the domain of tall claims made in YouTube videos by those we acclaim as our thinkers. These must stand up to independent peer-review and similar processes of scrutiny that form the basis of accepted best practices among leading academic institutions engaged in research the world over. We must go beyond feeling a sense of pride in several thought-leaders of our community being recognized and named by our Government e.g. Aryabhat (after whom India's space vehicle was named). The achievements of Vagbhatta, Abhinavgupta, and several others deserves to be made part of the recorded history of the world.

There is clear and present danger in not doing so. To quote one example, a book was published by a leading international publishing house, SAGE, as academic work though written by a former civil servant of the Kashmir Administrative Service (KAS), well-known for his pro-Pakistan views, Khalid Bashir Ahmad "*Kashmir: Exposing The Myth Behind The Narrative*". In this book, Kalhana's scholarly treatise on history, *Rajtarangini* has been described as "somewhat strikingly precise but generally incredibly fictional". The author further claimed that the destruction of religious places, symbols and icons over 600 years in Kashmir is "a fairy-tale" based entirely on the observations of a chronicler of the time, Jonaraja. Clearly such a well-orchestrated propaganda needs to be countered, and the publication of such a book trashed, since it will be unable to stand up to scrutiny as a document of historical research.

2) Decline Being Pawns In The Political Game Of Thrones:

This suggestion falls in the category of what NOT to do! We have made the same entreaties, repeated *ad nauseum* to all political dispensations in the past, including both the BJP and the Congress, let alone the NC and PDP. None of the political parties that enjoyed significant political power in Kashmir are unaware of the travails afflicting our community. The question inevitably arises: Can we expect them to do things any differently this time around? Instead of making any overtures at all, these political parties and their cobbled alliances need to be instead challenged to state their specific solutions they offer to ameliorate the tragedy faced by the entire KP over the past three decades or more. We would do well to remind ourselves of a quotation attributed to Albert Einstein goes as follows: "The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result."

3) Establish Bridges Across Communities:

The Kashmiri Muslim has generally been widely reputed as a relatively secular-minded member of the community whose roots lie more in the sayings of moderate Sufi Islam, rather than the extreme strain of Wahabi Islam that has gripped some sections of the population in the Valley. We must remember that our identity will be secure in future only when we return back to where we came from - our roots in Kashmir. In case we do cross the Rubicon to return anytime in the future, it can only take place during the fourth decade of our migration in 2020 or beyond. To do this, we will need to re-engage with this secular-minded Muslim, to ensure that our community assets are restored to us, and there is progress to calm across the Valley. The rabble-rousers who are currently on the prowl need to be on the run, but this will happen only when there is grassroots

development initiated on the ground. Needless to add, presently the polarized atmosphere prevailing in the Kashmir Valley, needs to revert to a genuine spirit of the secular ethos that once prevailed. This can only happen when intensive initiatives are taken in specific pockets across the Valley. A clear bottom-line to this entire process is that properties, temples and symbols of our community will be restored back to our community. Engaging with the present population will help us more in our resettlement than any initiative from the government either at the State or the Centre. The large population which is already living in uncertainty in the Valley will not be walking away into the sunset to facilitate our return, and in many ways several aspects of breakdown in the field of education, medicine and the general breakdown of the law and order machinery, the community has been impacted negatively. We will need to engage with them, as there is no harm in becoming a symbiotic resource for this segment of the population if this helps in combating the more rabid elements who occupy centre-stage today.

Let us also be clear that it is well known that the effect of the seventh mass migration of the KP had the same effect that the Partition of India had in 1947 - its wounds have been deep, the entire population including those who did not migrate have been impacted albeit to a lesser extent, and the wounds continue to fester. Ironically those who are most likely to be our allies and support our return are the ordinary Kashmiri on the street, be they Muslims mainly Sunni, or the Shia, or the few other communities whom we may need to communicate with directly in our own Track-II dialogue

4) Pilot Project In A Specific District:

It will be foolhardy to try to march as an entire community or even a significant part

thereof, drums beating and wailing over the past across the Valley to where we stayed. Instead it will make sense to engage in small pilot projects without fanfare in a specific part of Kashmir, perhaps a part of a district where our temples and residence stood in significant number, to make it as a model of development but which must include the entire population of that specific area, so that we jointly become part of the local community there, and genuinely contribute to making the area an oasis of hope for all. The thought of either taking either political sides or adopting an exclusively pro-KP stance will be like raising the red rag to a charging bull. The goal must be that of a short term pilot project or projects and work to create an atmosphere of pluralism in which we co-exist rather than an enclave where we claim exclusive privileges. That should never be our objective, overt or otherwise. There are still pockets of goodwill in Kashmir where for example a temple is being maintained, or a Hindu's marriage is funded by the local community there. It is best not to elaborate further at this stage on the contours of this proposal, but for leadership of the community to consider this as well as other alternative initiatives as the first baby steps of our return.

Conclusion:

One thing is certain. If we do not forge a return to Kashmir, the chances of our survival as a community which are dim

will proceed irrevocably towards dying. It is time for us to learn from history - both ours and other communities tethering on the brink of survival since we all exist in a shrinking global village and ours is not the only community living under the threat of getting wiped out today. One can look at the example of two communities that are tethering on the edge of extinction. The ancient Kalasha Tribe in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunwa numbering below 4,100 is almost certain to become extinct within the next few years due to their liberal and freedom loving approach to life (look up Google for the Washington Post article: [An ancient community in Pakistan fades as conversions to Islam rise](#)) and the country in which it is located. The situation faced by the Yazidis who presently number around 700,000 are facing far greater challenges in Iraq (look up Google to hear the speech of Vian Dakhil, a Yazidi MP in Iraq's Parliament). Clearly we may have more time to survive than the last two mentioned because of the extremely adverse environment in those countries.

But to do that we must change tracks and take action well before Father Time runs our community down and out in the race for survival.

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BJP'S MIRED KASHMIR POLICY

Yoginder Kandhari

For its political greed, BJP abandoned its core ideology in Jammu & Kashmir and, in the bargain, revealed that it too practices same real politik as its political opponents do. Riding on Modi's popularity wave, state BJP coined slogan 'Mission 44*' that aimed at winning a majority in the assembly elections in 2014. Winning 25 seats was no mean an achievement. Unfortunately, BJP squandered this advantage by aligning with soft-separatist PDP whose voter base comprises of hardliners who also resented their party's alliance with what they considered a "Hindu nationalist party. Gross ineptitude and corrupt practices of local BJP leadership made matters worse. Notwithstanding the tall claims that it had widened its base in Kashmir region, BJP is either naïve or in self-denial to think that loyal cadres are created by inducements alone. It is a known fact that in the past also many such 'loyal cadres', like Deen Mohd Cheetah, Abdul Rashid Kabli, Bashir Dada and even Rafiq Sadiq (son of former CM G. M. Sadiq), joined BJP only to ditch the party later. Using their new found political clout, most among them amassed huge wealth. After such a bitter experience, one does not understand where this newfound hope in BJP-RSS duo has sprung from?

On its part, BJP set aside its national manifesto in J&K – one that calls for abrogation of Art 370- to endorse Agenda of Alliance with PDP in 2015. As with previous dispensations, Modi government too carries forward a muddle-headed response to Pakistan's longstanding cross-border venality. It is now more than four years since Modi and BJP took charge of J&K affairs, they have little to show for it. All we have seen is increased reliance on Security Forces (SF) to keep a lid on

the volatile situation there. While Security Forces, especially the Army, have achieved huge successes against insurgents, politicians have not only abdicated their role but, where ever they could, even add to the fire. It needs no reiteration that Security Forces can at best provide a congenial security environment for the political executive to step-in. Unfortunately, BJP has nothing new on their menu. Lt. Gen. Syed Ata Husnain (Retd.) aptly sums up the situation when he says '23 terrorists killed in 13 days in Kashmir Valley, but final success is still illusive. If the shadow of a gun or the overhang of violence in Kashmir is to be done away with, the Army needs the state to step-in and run more effective information campaigns to counter radical ideology'.

Stitching an Opportunistic Political Alliance.

By the time BJP government came to power in New Delhi in 2014, insurgency in the Valley was on the wane. Some political observers felt Modi, by over-ruling the hardliners within his own party and in the larger Sangh Parivar, had exhibited astute political acumen by agreeing to form a coalition government with Mufti Sayeed. These analysts thought he had rightly assessed his task to finesse a political settlement in the state. That they were completely off the mark was proven by the events that subsequently unfolded in J&K. By coming out of the coalition government it ran for three years, BJP appears to have abandoned the state for its electoral compulsion, leaving the dirty job for the security forces. To retain deniability, political executive has cunningly prompted Army Chief to almost parrot a statement a day while itself choosing to stay away from the messy Kashmir situation it created. Certainly, this is nervousness occasioned

by the coming general elections. Collapse of the PDP-BJP government in J&K is a personal blow for the political persona of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Ramazan Ceasefire - An Unqualified Failure.

Ramazan ceasefire was a retrograde step. Modi government refuses to learn from history. Earlier too, Vajpayee had failed in his attempt to broker peace with insurgents through a similar concession. Modi government's offer of an olive branch, through Ramazan ceasefire, to those carrying guns was an unqualified failure. During the period of ceasefire, May 17 to June 17, 2018, Pakistani Rangers and Pak-sponsored insurgents killed over 40 Indian soldiers and civilians and injuring many more. Besides, Pakistan violated ceasefire at will during Ramazan to displace over 1,00,000 civilians from border districts of Jammu region. Abduction and murder of rifleman Aurangzeb and assassination of journalist Shujat Bukhari point to critical gaps in the security in the Valley. Outfits like JeT, JeM and HM used Ramzan break to regroup and re-strategize just when security forces had them on run. Increase in violence and in local recruitment are direct consequences of this unwise decision. By withdrawing the ceasefire Modi government had to eat a proverbial crow.

A Pleading Interlocutor.

Post withdrawal of ceasefire, other than resumption of counter-insurgency operations New Delhi has nothing new to offer. Dineshwar Sharma, New Delhi's Interlocutor, represents government's dovish line. Sharma has spent the better part of the year pleading to be heard by anyone who listens. The Hurriyat leaders treat him with disdain while Pakistan looks upon him as one more sign that India is a soft-state.

International Focus Back on Kashmir.

By pulling out the support from a democratically elected government in Srinagar, the Modi government has pushed itself to the front line of international pressure. Internationally, Governor's rule in the state leads to a perception that security forces virtually control governance levers. While dividends of this approach are difficult to foresee at this stage, New Delhi is heading for tougher times to handle international pressure in this regard. Some red flags over Kashmir situation have already been raised in recent months.

Recent UN Report. Even during 1990s, when militancy was at its peak in the Valley and when India was under intense international pressure, no UN agency called for an official enquiry into alleged Human Rights violations in Kashmir. Recently, Zeid Al Ra'ad Hussein, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, has announced that he would urge the UN Council for Human Rights to conduct a "comprehensive independent international investigation into allegations of human rights violations" He also released the UN's first-ever official report on such violations. It indeed is a failure of India's diplomacy.

China Factor. Just when US administration under Donald Trump is evincing little interest in Kashmir, China is subtly turning up the heat on India. Luo Zhaohui, China's envoy to New Delhi, has already mooted a proposal for trilateral talks between China, India and Pakistan. Though the suggestion was made in context of increasing economic cooperation between the three countries under the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) umbrella, ostensibly trade and economic activity would require peace in Kashmir. The sub-text of the envoy's suggestion is for China to play a leading role in getting India and Pakistan to the dialogue table to resolve outstanding differences, including the

dispute over Kashmir. Zhaohui's suggestion is more a statement of China's intent than his private opinion as New Delhi would like us to believe.

Appeasement Policy.

BJP government at the Centre has continued the very appeasement policy it accuses Congress or Congress lead coalitions of. During the present dispensation too, Valley is flush with liberal central funding as to drive the present Governor to compunction over the loot prevalent in Kashmir. State BJP leaders, either complicit or indifferent, overlooked the recent recruitment scam in J&K Bank or of some blue eyed making it to KAS without even appearing for the competitive examination. At organisational level too, BJP is trying to woo renegades to bolster their ranks in the Valley. All this happening for a price and whose money is BJP, as an organisation, spending in the Valley? The party has already ceded considerable support base to its political opponents in Jammu and Leh.

KPs Abandoned.

After promising moon to the displaced community, BJP ditched KPs lock, stock and barrel. By patronising a few known faces from the community, BJP has imposed a gag on the community's demand for economic and political empowerment. Anointing a few from the community as legislators with an explicit caveat not to raise any genuine concerns of the community or using a few as pawns in political chicanery during local bodies' elections in the Valley is no empowerment or a solace to the community. Not only abandoning the plans to resettle the displaced community in the Valley, announced with much fanfare, even filling-up posts set aside in 2009 for the displaced youth have not been fully subscribed so far. On the other hand, just to retain political goodwill of the Valley Sikhs, it is

widely believed that job package for KP youth, who are still putting up in the Valley, is being torpedoed by BJP through the community Blacksheep in their cadres. No one grudges employment for the Valley Sikhs but why at the cost of KP youth's right? Not to speak of booking murderers who massacred KPs during early 1990s, BJP had the audacity to field one such tormentor as their party candidate from Tankipora during recently concluded Municipal elections in Srinagar. The list of betrayals is endless.

Looking Ahead.

By falling back to counter-insurgency operations or imposing Governors rule, BJP appears to have run out of ideas to handle Kashmir. Modi's muscular policy has, in fact, turned out to be one of compromises with the very forces and the ideology it set out to fight in first place. The third front, under the likes of Sajjad Lone—author of 'Achievable Nationhood' that BJP was openly patronising, may well turn out to be just another player fighting for the same political space in the Valley that is defined by competitive communalism and secessionism. Let us not forget that the by-polls to Anantnag parliamentary constituency have not been held ever since Mehbooba vacated her seat in 2016. Assembly and general elections are due soon. While agencies may gloat over successful conduct of local bodies' polls, assembly and national elections invite a worldwide attention and their successful conduct would be a massive challenge to the establishment. With ISIS already a reality in Kashmir, with or without BJP in the saddle in New Delhi, India seems in for a long haul in the Valley.

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आलोकित पथ

नीमा रानी कौल

आह! यह विशाल भवन आज श्मशान जैसा सूना लग रहा है। न जाने क्यों मुझे आज यह शान्त वातावरण अशान्त बनाये हुये हैं। यह शीतल चाँदनी भी क्यों मुझ पर ही अंगारे बरसा रही है। वाह यह कौन सा दारुण दाह मेरे हृदय को दग्ध कर रहा है। भाँति-भाँति के छल-प्रपञ्च, सुकर्म तथा कुकर्म कर जिस भवन की एक-एक ईंट जोड़ो थी क्या वह इसीलिये कि मैं प्रेत बनकर इस पर छा जाऊँ।... श्रद्धा चली गई तो जाने दो। उसने देश सेवा का व्रत लिया है। वह युद्ध में काम आये सोनिकों के परिवार वालों के लिये अन्न-धन जूटायेंगी। वह चाहे जो करे मुझे उससे कोई सरोकार नहीं है। यह क्या? इन पाषाण की दीवारों से भी क्यों उसी की ध्वनि प्रतिध्वनित होती है। ... नहीं, नहीं ... यह मेरा भ्रम है। मुझे देश की पुकार न सुननी ही है न सुनाई ही देता है। यह श्रद्धा का वशीकरण आलोक पर ही प्रभाव डाल सकता है, मुझ पर नहीं। ... हा ... आलोक तुम भी मेरे न रहे। मेरे एकमात्र आधार, तुम माँ की बातों में आकर सेना में भरती हो गये। तुम्हें माँ के कथन में ही सार जान पड़ा ... हाय! कैसी निष्ठुर माँ हो तुम ... सदा से प्रेम और विनय की मूर्ति श्रद्धा ... तुम्हारा वास्तविक रूप अब प्रकट हुआ है। पुत्र को रण में भेजकर मूझसे भी देश के नाम तन-मन और धन का दान चाहती हो। मैंने देशसेवा के नाम पर अपने ही स्वार्थ की पूर्ति आज तक की है। इस कलङ्क को धोने के लिये तुम सर्वस्य बलिदान चाहती हो? तुम मुझे देश तथा समय की पुकार सुनाना चाहती हो? मुझे उपदेश न दो, मैं स्वयं ही उपदेशक हूँ। इतना तो तुम जानती ही हो। ...

कौन? यह किसने स्वयं आन किया? कौन प्रकाश में मेरे अन्तर की पीड़ा निहार कर जले पर नमक छिड़कना चाहता है? 'हाँ भोला, तुम क्यों यहाँ आया? किसने तुम्हें बत्ती जलाने को कहा? तुम यहाँ किस लिये रहते हो? जाओ अपना ठिकाना कहीं और ढूँढ लो। मुझे अब तुम्हारी आवश्यकता नहीं है।'

'कसूर माफ हो सरकार - अंधेरा देख कर बिजली जला दी। खाना-परोस दूँ क्या?'

निकल पाजी कहीं का। बातें न बना। बिजली बन्द कर अभी यहाँ से चला जा। कह तो दिया मुझे तुम्हारी आवश्यकता नहीं है। यूँ आँखें फाड़ क्या देखते है? जाओ, तुम सेना में भर्ती होकर अपनी जन्मभूमि की सेवा क्यों नहीं करते, तुम्हें समय की पुकार नहीं सुनाई देती? जाओ मेरे घर से। इसी समय फिर कभी आकर अपना हिसाब कर लेना। अरे ... बिजली तो बन्द करता जा।' चला गया पाजी। अब मैं निर्विग्न विश्राम करूँगा।

आह! यह विचार श्रृङ्खला क्यों मेरे मस्तिष्क को घेरे हुए है? किस घुटन से मेरा दम धुट रहा है? तीन वर्षों से लगातार मैट्रिक में असफलता पाने के कारण मैं गाँव भर में उपहास का पात्र बना हुआ था। अन्त में सफलता से निराश होकर पूजा-पाठ में मन लगाया। प्रातः जो पूजा में आसन लगाकर बैठ जाता तो दोपहर तक उठने का नाम न लेता। इसका प्रभाव भी भावुक ग्रामवासियों पर कम न पड़ा। तिरस्कार तथा उपेक्षा के बदले मैं आदरणीय बन गया था। इस परिस्थिति का लाभ मैंने पूर्ण रूप से उठाया। अपनी मण्डली में मैं ज्ञान और भक्ति के उपदेश देने लगा। घर में केवल माँ थी और थी मामूलीसी खेती। माँ का अगाध स्नेह मुझे प्राप्त था। मैं पूर्ण युवा हो चुका था, साथ ही गाँव भर का सम्मान पात्र भी। इस बीच श्रद्धा के साथ मैं विवाह सूत्र में बँध गया। धीरे-धीरे मैं धार्मिक क्षेत्र से राजनीति में भी उतर पड़ा था। पाकिस्तान बनने तथा भारत के बँटकर के विरुद्ध कई भाषण भी दे चुका था। भाषण क्षेत्र मेरा गरँव तक ही सीमित था। इस बीच भारत स्वतन्त्र हो गया, पर दो भागों में बँटकर। मेरे परिवार में भी एक और प्राणी का अगमन हो चुका था। माठ को लेकर हम चार प्राणी थे। निर्वाह कठिनता से ही होता था। खेती करने को मैं अपनी पायी हुई प्रतिष्ठा को नदी में बहाने के समान समझता। नौकरी के लिये कई प्रयत्न किये पर न मिली। अतः मैं अपने शासनाधिकारियों के प्रति विद्रोह कर उठा। मेरी धार्मिकता का वहाँ पर बोलबाला था ही, मैंने इसी शस्त्र को काम में लिया। साम्प्रदायिकता की अग्नि में आहुति देने लगा। इससे देश को चाहे जो कुछ हुआ हो मेरी स्थिति सुधर गई। मिट्टि के कच्चे घर के स्थान पर ईंट तथा सीमेन्ट का सुन्दर भवन खड़ा किया। परन्तु इससे मेरी प्रतिष्ठा को भी आघात सहना पड़ा। मेरे भाषणों को अब गाँव की जनता कड़ुवी औषधि की तरह पीने लगी। भाँति-भाँति की संस्थाओं के लिये चन्दा में भी लोग आनाकानी करने लगे। मेरी स्थिति गम्भीर हुई ही कि इस बीच वहाँ नये तहसीलदार साहब आये। उन्होंने मुझे बुला भेजा। मन ही मन सहमते हुए उनके घर पहुँचा। उसने मेरी आवभगत में कोई कमी न आने दी, परन्तु साथ ही यह भी सूचित किया कि यदि कोई साम्प्रदायिक झगड़ा खड़ा हुआ तो उसका उत्तरदायित्व मुझ पर ही होगा। मैंने स्थिति को समझ कर कहा कि मैं स्वयं चाहता हूँ शान्ति बनी रहे और अब इस गाँव को छोड़ना ही चाहता हूँ। परन्तु दूसरी जगह जाकर कुछ कामकाज तो मिले।' बह प्रसन्न होकर बोला - यदि आप कलकत्ता जावेंगे तो वहाँ मेरे परिचितों से आपको बहुत कुछ सहायता मिलेगी। मैंने सहर्ष स्वीकार किया। श्रद्धा तथा माँ से यह कहकर विदा ली कि एक देशसेवक को

जिस ओर से देश की पुकार आयेगी वहाँ उसे जाना ही पड़ेगा। मेरी बातों सुन श्रद्धा की आँखों में विलक्षण ज्योति दिखायी पड़ी थी।

कलकत्ता आकर मुझे नौकरी तो मिला नहीं परन्तु तहसीलदार की विशेष कृपा से कुछ सजनों के साथ मेरा परिचय हुआ। अब मैं महासभाई के स्थान पर कांग्रेसी बन बैठा था। हिन्दू-मुस्लिम ऐक्य तथा पञ्चवर्षीय योजनाओं से देश की समृद्धि तथा बेकारी का उन्मूलन आदि अनेक विषयों पर मैं ओजपूर्ण भाषण दे चुका था। कलकत्ता के मारवाड़ी आदि हिन्दीभाषियों का मैं प्रिय बन चुका था। यहाँ मेरी स्थिति सुदृढ़ हो गई। पाठशालाओं आदि के नाम पर चन्दा एकत्र किया। कई स्थानों से भेंट में मिली थैलियों आदि से मैंने अपने लिये भी भवन खड़ा किया। जनता के साथ ही मैंने अपना भी उद्धार किया तो इसमें कौनसा पाप किया?

आह! कोई पानी के दो घूँट देता ... गाँव से मां के स्वर्ग सिंघारने की सूचना पा मैं सीधे घर पहुँचा। गाँव के लोग मेरा परिवर्तित खहर-धारी रूप देख दंग रह गये थे। उन्होंने मेरे बारे में बहुत कुछ सुना था। मैंने उनकी शंका का यह कह कर समाधान किया था कि 'मानव के प्रति मानव की कैसी घृणा। धर्म मानव को आत्मज्ञान कराने के लिये है न कि ईर्ष्या, हिंसा तथा द्रोह फैलाने के लिए। धर्म के नाम पर जो अनाचार हो रहा है वह हमारे पतन होता है। ईश्वर एक है, उसे ही भिन्न-भिन्न नामों तथा रूपों से मानव पुकारता है। मुझे एकान्त में रहकर आत्मज्ञान की अनुभूति हुई है। अब समस्त भेद-भाव का अन्धकार दूर हो गया है। मैं आप लोगों से भी अनुरोध करता हूँ कि आप लोग धर्म के भेदभाव में न पड़कर मानव की दृष्टि से देखें और सत्कर्मों से ईश्वर लाभ करें। गीता में भगवान ने कर्म करने की ही शिक्षा दी है।' न जाने उपस्थित जन समुदाय को मेरे प्रति कैसी धारणा बनी, पर श्रद्धा जो कि द्वार की आड़ में सुनती थी उसके मुरझाये हुए मुख पर सहसा रवितम आभा लौट पड़ी थी। इसके नेत्रों में श्रद्धा भरी ज्योति देख, मैं आश्चर्यचकित रह गया। ओह! हृदय फटा जा रहा है। किससे मन की बात कहूँ? न जाने क्यों यही विचार शृङ्खला मेरे मस्तिष्क में चक्कर काट रही है। मैं सब कुछ भूलना चाहता हूँ, सब कुछ नहीं, तो मैं पागल हो जाऊँगा। ... आह! जब श्रद्धा मेरे साथ आयी थी तो कितनी प्रफुल्लित थी, कितनी हर्षविभोर परन्तु कलकत्ता पहुँचते ही जब इसने मेरी धन-सम्पदा देखी तो न जाने किस संशय के भूत ने उसे घेर दबाया। कई बार पूछ भी बैठती कि 'इस अल्पकाल में ही अपने कैसे इतना धन उपार्जन किया है।' मेरे सिर से पाँव तक आग लग जाती परन्तु तिसपर भी मैं ऊपर से शांत रहकर कहता कि 'ईश्वर के भक्त तथा देशसेवक के पास ऋद्धि-सिद्धि स्वयं ही आती है। उसे इसके लिये भटकना नहीं पड़ता।' परन्तु उसके हृदय से वह संशय का शूल कभी न निकला।

इन्हीं दिनों चुनाव के समय पर मैं भी उठा था, परन्तु मेरे प्रतिद्वन्द्वी साम्यवादी ने मुझे बुरी तरह पछाड़ा। अपमान की वेदना और श्रम की अधिकता से मैं क्लान्त हो चुका था। धन की क्षति हुई सो अलग, तिस पर श्रद्धा का तटस्थ भाव मुझे अखर जाता। जिसके लिए मैं दिन-रात एक करता हूँ वही मुझसे खिची रहे। निराशा तथा दुःख से मैं व्यथित हो उठा था। ऐसे में यदि कोई मेरे हृदय में आशा का दीपक था तो वह था आलोक, परन्तु हाय! उस मायाविनी ने उसको भी मुझसे छीन लिया। मुझे भी वह उन दिनों सहृदय बन कर यही सान्त्वना देती कि मुझे दुखी न होना चाहिये। यह धन जिस प्रकार आया था उसी प्रकार गया भी। इसके लिये शाके क्यों किया जाय? यह तो हमारे लिये वरदान ही हुआ। निरन्तर अश्रुधारा बहाती हुई कहती - 'मैं आपसे विनती करती हूँ कि चिंता, शोक त्याग आप निरनार्थ देशसेवा का व्रत लीजिये। आपकी वाणी में ओज है। देश सेवा में उसे लगाकर सफल कीजिये। आप मेरे स्वामी हैं। सर्वस्व हैं। मैं आपका अहित नहीं चाहूँगी। चुनाव में हारने के कारण हमारा यहाँ रहना कठिन हो गया है। कुछ मनचले तो टीन बजा-बजा कर हम पर व्यंगों की बौछार करते हैं। आलोक को पाठशालामें भी व्यंगों की बौछार सुनते-सुनते जी ऊन गया है। यदि मेरी मानें तो हम अपने गाँव को ही चले चलें। वहीं अपने दीन-दुखी भाइयों की सेवा कीजिये। सेवा का क्षेत्र तो सभी समान है।' उसके वचन यद्यपि मधुर होते परन्तु मुझे विषभरे लगते। मैं कुछ कहने को आतुर हो उठता, परन्तु भावावेश मैं उसकी बहती हुई आँखों को देखकर विष का घूँट पीकर रह जाता। आह ... मेरा मस्तिष्क विकृत तो नहीं हुआ। क्यों बार-बार उसी के विचार आ रहे हैं। सारी रात बीत गयी पर इन विचारों का क्रम नहीं टूटता। मैं अपने जीवन के पन्ने उलटता हूँ तथा उसकी जीवन झाँकी देखता हूँ। जिसने मुझसे मेरा लाल छीन लिया है। ... आह! आलोक तुम तो अब शिशु न थे। तुमने अपने पिता के हृदय को तो टटोला होता। तुम पर ही मेरा आशारूपी वसन्त लहरा रहा था। तुमने क्यों उस पर वज्रपात कर दिया। मैंने उच्च शिक्षा तुम्हें सेना में भर्ती होने के लिये तो नहीं दी थी। तुम्हारे युद्ध में न जाने से भी सेना लड़ सकती थी। हाय! मेरे घर का छोटा-सा दीपक न जाने किस झंझावात में टिमटिमाता होगा। है ईश्वर! मुझ पर दया कर। मैं प्रथम बार आज तुम्हें सच्चे हृदय से प्रार्थना कर रहा हूँ। तू मेरे दीपक की ज्योति बनाये रखना। तुम्हारे बिना मेरे हृदय की दशा कौन जानता है। मेरा सहारा केवल तुम ही हो। तुम मेरी लाज रखना। आह! मैंने क्या कुछ नहीं किया। कांग्रेसी से मैं साम्यवादी बन गया। सोचा था कि श्रद्धा के नेत्रों में मैं इस प्रकार पुनः श्रद्धा का पात्र बन जाऊँगा। विचारा था यहाँ साम्यवादियों का ही बोलबाला है। अतः मैं भी वही चोला धारण कर अगले चुनाव में विजयी बनूँगा। बड़ाबाजार का मकान विक्रय कर मैंने इस विशाल भवन को खड़ा किया, पर

आज यह भवन मुझे भयंकर दिखाई दे रहा है। हाय मैंने क्या नहीं किया। किसानों को उकसा कर अन्न को उच्च दामों में बेचने की सम्मति देकर उनका हितोषी बना। मजदूरों का प्रेम पाने के लिए उनसे हड़ताले करवाई। पूंजीपतियों को सरकार से विद्रोह करने के लिये प्रेरित किया तो बोकारों को पूंजीपतियों के विरुद्ध उभाड़ा। चारों ओर मेरी जयजयकार होने लगी। हवा का रूख देखकर ही मैं नोका की पतवार चलाता। पर श्रद्धा मेरी करनी की ओर न देख मेरे भाषणों को साकार रूप देने लगी। सेवकों की भी सेवा करता। भिखारियों को भर पेट भोजन खिलाया, मजदूरों की बस्तियों में जाकर सफाई करवाना, रोगियों की सेवा तथा औषधियों का प्रबन्ध करवाना ही उसका कार्यक्रम बन गया। आलोक ने भी माँ के कामों में तभी रूचि लेनी आरम्भ की थी। यदि मैं जानता कि वह रूचि यहाँ तक पहुँच जायेगी तो पहले से ही सावधान रहता। परन्तु हाय! उस समय मैं यद्यपि विरोध करता, परन्तु मन ही मन इसे भी अपने यश का साधन ही समझता।

यदि मैं कहता क्यों व्यर्थ के कामों में समय नष्ट करता है तो वह प्रतिरोध मैं कहता "दलितों, पीड़ित तथा दुखियों की सेवा करने में समय का सदुपयोग ही होता है पिताजी। आप भी तो भाषणों में यही कहते हैं। कहते और करने में एकता न हो तो वह कहना ही व्यर्थ है।" मैं जल भुन कर रह जाता, परन्तु उसे कैसे कहता कि मैं यह सब तुम्हारे लिये नहीं कहता हूँ। हाँ करता अवश्य तुम्हारे लिये ही हूँ।

कौन है ... कौन हो भाई, भीतर आओ। हूँ-टेलीग्राम है। देखूँ तो किसका टेलीग्राम है? या ... आलोक को वीरगति मिली है, उसे परम वीर चक्र दिया जायेगा। हाय ... आलोक क्या तुम सत्य ही चले गये? ... नहीं, ऐसा नहीं हो सकता। मेरे रहते तुम नहीं जा सकते। मेरे बुढ़ापे के एकमात्र आधार ... मुझे निराधार में छोड़े तुम कहाँ गये, अलोक? तेरे बिना तो मुझे सर्वत्र ही अन्धकार का भान होता है।

"आह श्रद्धा तुम ... तुमने सुन लिया आलोक कहाँ गया है। आह! देश प्रेम का फल भी मिलेगा, परमवीर चक्र। उसे लेकर मैं क्या करूँगा जब कि उसको पाने वाला ही न रहा ... कैसी विडम्बने है यह ...!"

"मैं सब सुन चुकी हूँ। रेडियो पर समाचार सुनकर ही तो हृदय पर पत्थर रख कर आयी हूँ।"

"ओह निर्ममता की साकार प्रतिमा भी तुम्हें देख विचलित होगी। इस महान पुत्र शोक से भी तेरा हृदय द्रवित नहीं हुआ। तुम्हारी आँखों में दो बूंद आँसू भी नहीं हैं।"

"नहीं-नहीं ऐसा न कहिये। मेरे रोम-रोम में दारुण-दाह हो रहा है। इस ज्वाला से मैं भस्मीभूत हुई जाती हूँ। इतने ही दिनों में मैंने कई माताओं का करुण क्रन्दन सुना। मैंने अपने ममता भरे हृदय को

पत्थर का बना लिया था। उनके दुःखों का बोझ हल्का करने में ही अपने को धन्य समझती रही। परन्तु आज मेरा पाषाण हृदय भी दहल गया है। हाय! मैंने अपने कलेजे के टुकड़े को युद्ध में जाने से क्यों नहीं रोका? आह! यह धर्मान्ध और शक्ति के मद में चूर राष्ट्र हमारे हृदय की पीड़ा को क्यों नहीं समझते? क्यों शांतिप्रिय देश को भी युद्ध की आग में धकेल कर माताओं की गोद सूनी कर देते हैं? कब उनकी आँखें खुलेंगी? मेरे लाल तुमने अपने कर्तव्य की बलिवेदी पर अपने प्राण न्यौछावर किये पर मुझे अपने पथ से विचलित कर गये। मैं जीते जी ही मारी गयी हूँ।"

श्रद्धा! यह तुम क्या कह रही हो, तुम्हें क्या हो गया है। तुम यह कलंक की कालिमा उस प्रकाश पुञ्ज पर लगाना चाहती हो जिसने अपने पिता का कलंक अपने प्राणों से धो लिया है। नहीं-नहीं, ऐसा कभी नहीं हो सकता! उस पर मैं किसी प्रकार की आँच नहीं आने दूँगा। आज सारे राष्ट्र को उस पर गर्व है। सारा राष्ट्र उसके लिये रो रहा है। जिन्होंने उसके और उसके जैसे कई वीरों के प्राण लिये उनका सिर कुचलने में हमें अपना सर्वस्व लगाना होगा। यह सब धन, यहाँ तक मेरा तन और मन भी अब इसी देश के अर्पण करूँगा, जिससे यह मुझे प्राप्त हुआ है उठो, धैर्य धारण कर अपने पथ पर चलो, मैं तुम्हारे साथ हूँ। सोचो तो भला यदि तुमने इस प्रकार धीरज खो दिया तो उन ललनाओं का क्या होगा, जिनकी मांग में सिन्दुर पड़ते ही निट गया है। वह साधारण माताएँ जिन्हें अपने परिवार के अतिरिक्त और किसी विषय का ज्ञान नहीं है, कैसे यह दुस्सह यातना सह सकेगी? यह धीरज खोने का समय नहीं। देश पर अथवा हम सब पर विपत्ति के बादल मंडरा रहे हैं। अतः हमें इसमें संघर्ष में प्राणपन से जूझना ही होगा।"

"यह आप कह रहे हैं क्या वास्तव में ..." "हाँ श्रद्धा हाँ, यदि अब भी संशय हो तो परीक्षा करके देख लो, आलोक ने अपने प्राणों से मेरे स्वार्थ रूपी अन्धकार को हर लिया। मैं उसके नाम पर कलंक न लगने दूँगा। उठो समय नष्ट न करो! देखो, मुझे राष्ट्र की पुकार सुनाई देने लगी है। मैं इसे अब अनसुनी नहीं कर सकता। आज से हमारा एक क्षण भी नष्ट न होना चाहिये। जिस पथ को आलोक आलोकित कर गया है उस पा हमें चलना ही होगा।"

जब अटलजी ने कहा - कश्मीर में कश्मीरी पंडितों की दशा रावण की लंका में सीता के समान है

प्रो० चमनलाल सप्रू



अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी

वर्ष १९६२ में पहली बार अटलजी कश्मीर घाटी में पधारे। उनके साथ प्रो० बलराजू मधोक थे। संघ ने कुछ वरिष्ठ स्वयं सेवकों; बुद्धि जीवियों आदि की एक बैठक का आयोजन किया। सर्व प्रथम अटलजी ने उपस्थित जनों की व्यथा-कथा सुनी! कश्मीरी मुस्लिम नेताओं एवं अधिकारियों द्वारा कश्मीरी पंडित समाज के साथ भेद-

भाव तथा उपेक्षा की दारुण कहानियां सुनकर अटल जी ने अपने सम्बोधन में कहा - "कश्मीरी पंडितों की दशा रावण की लंका में सीता के समान है।"

मैं उठकर बोला - "माननीय अटलजी! आप हनुमान बनकर आये हैं। अब दिल्ली जाकर - श्रीराम रूपी केंद्रीय शासन से कहें कि दो महीनों के भीतर (अर्थात् यथा शीघ्र) हमारा उद्धार करें इस दारुण अवस्था से मुक्ति दिलायें; वरना रावण दो मास के परचात हमें प्रातः कालीन 'नाशता' बनाएगा।

युह सुनकर अटल जी ने कहा - "चमनलाल जी यह कहा पर लिखा है?" मैंने उत्तर दिया - श्रीमान आपने तुलसी की राम चरित मानस पढ़ी है। मैंने मानस के अतिरिक्त वाल्मीकि रचित संस्कृत रामायण भी पढ़ी है। उसमें इस बात का उल्लेख है। रावण सीता को दो महीने तक छूट देता है कि यदि तब तक तुम मेरे अन्तःपुर में नहीं आओगी तो मैं तुझे खाँ जाऊंगा।

अगले दिन कश्मीर के वरिष्ठ स्वयंसेवक पंडित अमरनाथ वैष्णवी जी के निवासस्थान पर वे भोजन करने के लिए आमंत्रित थे। मुझे भी निमंत्रण मिला था। किन्तु विश्वविद्यालय की परीक्षा का संचालन करने के कारण मैं नहीं जा सका किन्तु मैं ने अपने छोटे भाई के साथ-अपनी सचित्र पुस्तिका "अमरनाथ दर्शन" उन्हें भेंट करने हेतु भेजी। उसे स्वीकारते हुए पेन हाथ में लेकर अपने नाम में संशोधन किया और कहा-"मैं वाजपेयी हूँ; वाजपेय नहीं। और हाँ अपने विद्वान भाई से कहें; मैंने कल रात को वाल्मीकि रामायण मंगवाई उसमें उपर्युक्त बात लिखी है। मैं क्षमा मांगता हूँ।"

मैंने कश्मीर से निष्कासित कश्मीरी पंडितों की व्यथा-कथा पर आधारित कश्मीरी कविताओं के हिन्दी अनुवाद मौलिक हिन्दी कवितायें; डोगरी तथा कन्नड़ में लिखी ६१ कवियों की कविताओं के संकलन व्यथा - वितस्ता की हेतु आशीर्वाद स्वरूप कुछ लिखने को अनुरोध किया। उन्होंने ने अपनी कविता देदी। जो इस प्रकार है-



कश्मीर के नन्दन कानन को किसने है सुलगाया किसने छाती पर अन्यायों का अम्बार सजाया? आँख खोलकर देखो घर मे भीषण आग लगी है। धर्म; सभ्यता; संस्कृति खाने; दानव क्षुधा जगी है। हिन्दू कहने में शरमाते; दूध लजाते; लाज न आती घोर पतन है; अपनी मां को मां कहने में फटते छाती। जिसने रक्त पिला। कर पाला क्षीण भर उसकावेष निहारो उसका सूनी मांग निहारा; बिखरे बिखेर केश निहारो।

जब तक दुःशासन है वेणी कैसे बंध पायेगी कोटि-कोटि संतति है मांकी लाल न लुट पायेगी।

अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी

एक दिन कश्मीर के संदर्भ में एक संगोष्ठी का दिल्ली के कांस्टीब्यूशन क्लब में आयोजन किया गया। अटल मुख्य अतिथि थे। संचालक महोदय ने मुझे मंच वर आकर बोलने हेतु आमंत्रित करते हुए कहा- मैं प्रो० चमनलाल सप्रू "स्वदेशी शरणार्थी" को सविनय निवेदन करता हूँ।

अटल जी ने कहा - "स्वदेशी शरणार्थी" क्या होता है। शरणार्थी तो शरणार्थी ही है। मैं ने कहा- श्रीमान अटल जी - 'लालकृष्ण; इन्द्रकुमार गुजराल; मनमोहन सिंह; मदन लाल खुराना-विदेश (पाकिस्तानी) शरणार्थी हैं किन्तु मैं स्वदेशी शरणार्थी हूँ। मेरे खण्डहर नुमा श्रीनगर के मकान पर तिरंगा लहराता है। वहाँ केन्द्रीय सुरक्षा बल का कैम्प है। अटल जी ने सिर हिल कर हामी भर दी। अपने विचार व्यक्त करने के उपरान्त मैं ने बताया मैं अपने नाम से पूर्व 'प्रो०' न लिखकर "स्वर्गवासी" लिखना चाहता हूँ। जिस प्रकार

ब्रज के साहित्यकार "ब्रजवासी" हैं उसी प्रकार धरती के स्वर्ग का वासी मैं 'स्वर्ग वासी' हूँ। और सच्चाई यह भी है जनवारी १९९० में आतंकवादियों की 'हिटलिस्ट' पर होने के कारण भरा पूरा घर छोड़ कर मैं 'स्वर्गवासी' ही गया हूँ। इस विनोद प्रियता को मुस्कराते हुए उन्होंने सिर हिलाकर हामी भरदी।

अपने प्रिय छात्र डॉ० महाराज कृष्णा भरत ने अपन काव्य संग्रह "फिरन में छिपाये तिरंगा" लिखकर मुझे दिखाया और इस पर शब्द लिखने हेतु किसी प्रतिष्ठित साहित्य कार का नाम बताने के लिए कहा। मैंने झट से उत्तर दिया "अटल जी से बढ़कर कौन हो सकता है? और ऐसा ही हुआ। अटलजी ने कहा-"अब फिरन में छिपा कर तिरंगा लेकर भागने की नौबत नहीं आएगी। और सहर्ष भरत को काव्य संग्रह हेतु दो शब्द लिखे।

मेरी अन्तिम भेट अटलजी में "विश्व हिन्दी संगोष्ठी" के अवसर पर गान्धी शान्ति प्रतिष्ठान दिल्ली में हुई। राष्ट्रभाषा प्रचार समिति वर्धा

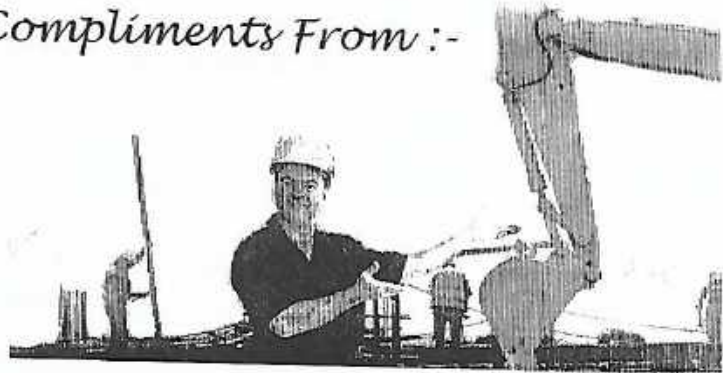
के तत्वावधान में आयोजित उक्त संगोष्ठी में विपक्ष के नेता के रूप में अटलजी मुख्य अतिथि थे। पोलैंडके राजदूत मारिया क्रिस्टोफ बिस्की तथा चेक गणराज्य के राजदूत ओदोनेल स्माइकल भी मंचासीन थे। मैं संगोष्ठी का संचालक था। मैं ने संयुक्त राष्ट्रसंघ में अंग्रेजी; रूसी; फ्रेंच; जर्मन एवं चीनी भाषा के समान हिन्दी को भी आधिकारिक भाषा के रूप में मान्यता दिलाने की बात प्रारम्भ में अपने उद्बोधन में उठाई। दो हिन्दी बोलने वाले राजदूतों ने भी समर्थन किया और अध्यक्षीय भाषण में अटल जी ने भारत सरकार को इस दिशा में आवश्यक कदम उठाने पर बलदिया।

विश्व हिन्दी सम्मेलन, पोर्टलूई मारीशस, दिनांक : २०-८-२०१८ कई सम्मानों से सुसज्जित प्रोफ: जमनलाल सप्रू अनेक किताबों के लेखक भी हैं।







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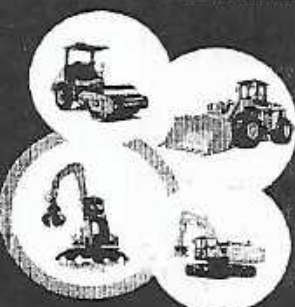
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पृथ्वीनाथ मधुव

अपने देश की अधिसंख्य महिलाएँ जिन-जिन आभूषणों से अपने को सजाती-सँवारती हैं प्रायः उन सभी आभूषणों का उपयोग कश्मीरी पण्डित महिलाएँ भी करती हैं। पर इन आभूषणों के अतिरिक्त कश्मीरी पण्डित महिलाएँ एक अतिविशिष्ट आभूषण का प्रयोग भी करती हैं जिसे पहनने के लिए उसे बचपन से ही तैयारी करनी पड़ती है यह तैयारी है कनछेदन। पुराने कश्मीरी पण्डित घरानों में बच्ची के पाँच-छह वर्ष की आयु की होने पर ही शुभमुहूर्त में कान छिदवाने का रिवाज था। वैसे प्रायः लड़कियों के कान का निचले लटकते-से नर्म भाग को ही छिदवाया जाता है; पर कश्मीरी पण्डित परिवारों में बच्ची के कर्णविवर-मुख के ठीक सामने के नर्म हड्डी वाले हिस्से को भी छिदवाया जाता है इसी छेद में कन्या के विवाह के एक-दो दिन पहले 'दिवुगोन' नामक अनुष्ठान पर लाल डोरी या मौलि में पिरो कर 'ड्यजिहोर' पहनाया जाता है। कहा जाता है कि यह महिला की गृहस्थाश्रम में प्रविष्ट होने तथा इस आश्रम की जिम्मेदारियाँ उठाने की निशानी है।

'ड्यजिहोर' एक स्वर्णभूषण है जिसकी आकृति गोलाई लिये षट्कोण की होती है और जो अन्दर से पोला होता है इसके दो समानान्तर छोरों के बीच दो छेद होते हैं। इन छेदों से डोरी गुजार कर कानों के छेदों में से गुजारी जाती है और डोरी के दो छोरों को मिलाकर गाँठ मार दी जाता है। 'ड्यजिहोर' के निचे डोर के मध्य भाग में धागों, धागों में पिरोये मोतियों या कलाबत्तू आदि के लम्बे फुंदने लटकाये जाते हैं। इन फुंदनों को 'अट्टुहोर' कहते हैं। डोरी की लम्बाई इतनी होती है कि 'ड्यजिहोर' तथा 'अट्टुहोर' अंगना के अरोजों तक लटकता रहे। इस डोर को कश्मीरी में 'अठ' कहते हैं। समय गुजरने के साथ सूती 'अठ' का रिवाज समाप्त हो गया और इसकी जगह ले ली सोने की चेन यानि सोने की 'अठ' ने।

'अट्टुहोर' के विषय में इस बात का उल्लेख करना भी जरूरी है कि जब घर में कोई उत्सव रचाया जा रहा हो महिला के पति का जन्मदिन हो या स्वयं महिला का जन्मदिन हो बेटे-बेटी का विवाह हो बेटे का यज्ञोपवीत-संस्कार हो या बेटे का जन्मदिन आदि हो तो महिला इस दिन नया अट्टुहोर पहनती है, बल्कि यह कया जाना चाहिए कि इस दिन महिला का नया अट्टुहोर पहनना अनिवार्य है। हालाँकि आधुनिकता के रंग में पूरी तरह से रँग गई अब इसकी ओर ध्यान नहीं देती। आज से कुछ दशक पहले 'ड्यजिहोर' के

साथ एक और आभूषण हुआ करता था जिसे 'तालुरज' कहा करते थे। 'तालुरज' सोने की निम्नलिखित वस्तुओं को एक मजबूत डोरी में पिरोने से बनती थी। ये चीजें थीं- 'टगुँल्वोट': यह लगभग शहनाई के आकार का एक ट्यूब - सा होता था। इसे 'ड्यजिहोर' के छेदों में डोर के दोनों सिरों को गुजारने के बाद 'ट्यजिहोर' के ऊपर डोर में पिरोया जाता। इसके ऊपर सोने का मनका जिसे 'त्वत्तुमुं पवोल' कहते पिरोया जाता। इसके ऊपर 'ब्रेंट' लगाई जाती। 'ब्रेंट' आज की अठन्नी जितना सोने का सिक्का-सा होता जिसकी खड़ी अवस्था में ऊपर-नीचे सोने के जरा-जरा से वृत्त टाँके होते। 'ब्रेंट' के ऊपर 'नदुँर्य' पिरोये जाते। 'नदुँर्य' आधा सेंटीमीटर चौड़े तथा लगभग तीन सेंटीमीटर लम्बे सोने के समोण चतुर्भुज होते। इनकी संख्या चीदह या सोलह रहती। इनके लम्बाई के समानान्तर छोरों में छेद होते इन्हीं छेदों से डोरी गुजारी जाती। ये आकार ने चूँकि कमल-ककड़ी से काफी मिलते, इसीलिए इनका नाम कमल-ककड़ी का कश्मीरी पर्याय 'नदुँर्य' रखा गया था 'तालुरज' की लम्बाई महिला के कपाल से लेकर 'ड्यजिहोर' के छेदों तक की होती है। 'तालुरज' की उक्त चीजें इसमें पिरोने के बाद दोनों ओर की डोर के चारों छोरों को बाँध कर 'तरुँन्गुम' के ऊपर कपाल पर टिकाया जाता था। इससे महिलाओं को दुहरा लाभ होता था - एक 'ड्यजिहोर' के पूरे भार का प्रभाव कानों के छेदों पर न पड़ता दूसरे चेहरे के दाँप-बाँपें समानान्तर स्वर्ण - टुकड़ों के लटकने से उनकी छवि में चार चाँद लग जाते। जैसे आज की वैज्ञानिक दृष्टि से भी सोना पहनना मानव-शरीर के लिए अच्छा है।



'ड्यजिहोर' कश्मीरी पण्डित महिलाओं का अति प्राचीन एवं विशिष्ट आभूषण है। इसे टेट कश्मीरीयत की पहचान के रूप में भी विविशष्टता प्राप्त है। कश्मीरी चूँकि पुरातन काल से ही शिव एवं शक्ति का सुप्रसिद्ध साधना-स्थल रहा है, अतः यहाँ नारी या भवानी के प्रतीक-रूप समादत् रही है। अनेक कश्मीरी विद्वान इस मत के हैं कि 'ड्यजिहोर' को षट्कोणाकार इसीलिए बनाया गया है क्योंकि भवानी या जगन्माता-सर्वज्ञाता, तृप्ति, अनाधिबोध, स्वतन्त्रता, अलुप्तशक्ति तथा

अनन्तता- इस छह गुणों से युक्त है। षट्कोणवरुपा जगज्जननी सदा महिला के हृदय में वास करें, उसे गृहस्थाश्रम एवं जीवन का भार वाहन करने की शक्ति निरन्तर प्रदान करती रहे। वह हर क्षण अपने को उसी महाशक्ति का अंश समझती रहे। 'ड्यजिहोरें' को कानों से वक्ष तक लटकाने का विधान इसीलिए रखा गया था कि क्षण-प्रतिक्षण देवी का प्रतीक यह षट्कोणाकार 'ड्यजिहोरें' उसकी दृष्टि में निरन्तर रहे, ताकि वह भौतिक तथा आध्यात्मिक दोनों दृष्टियों से अपने कर्तव्य को निभाती रहे तथा जननी के रूप में अपनी सन्तान को सही संस्कार देती रहे। इसीलिए विवाह-लाकगीतों द्वारा महिलाएँ कन्या को बार-बार अससिती हैं-

**मॉल्यसुन्द ड्यजिहोरें नीर्यनय रुतुंये।
सुय कूर्य पूशनय आदि अन्त ताम॥**

हे पुत्री पिता का दिया 'ड्यजिहोरें' तुम्हारे लिए मंगलमय सिद्ध हो तथा यही आजीवन तुम्हारे साथ रहे। 'मंगलमय सिद्ध होने' तथा 'आजीवन साथ रहने' का अर्थ यही है कि महिला आध्यात्मिक तथा भौतिक दोनों दृष्टियों से अपने कर्तव्य निभाती रहे और उत्तरदायित्वपूर्ण तरीके से निभाती रहे।

कई लोगों की मान्यता है कि मंगलसूत्र की तरह ही ड्यजिहोर कश्मीरी पण्डित सधवा महिला की सुहाग की निशानी है, पर यह धारणा सही नहीं लगती, क्योंकि एक तो ड्यजिहोर कन्या को सप्तपदी से दो-तीन दिन पहले ही पहनाया जाता है, दूसरे विधवाएँ पति के न रहने पर भी इसे नहीं उतारती, बल्कि पहने ही रहती है।

कश्मीरी पण्डितानों द्वारा ड्यजिहोर कब से पहना जाने लगा, इस विषय में सप्रमाण कुछ भी नहीं कहा जा सकता, क्योंकि इस दिशा में अभी लम्बे शोध की आवश्यकता है। कश्मीरी सभ्यता एवं संस्कृति से लगाव रखने वाले एक साहित्यकार श्री मोतीलाल साकी 'शीराजा (कश्मीरी)' के कॉशिरिय आर्जोयबाथ अंक में संकलित अपने लेख 'कॉशिरिल्वयि मुरेंचक' (कश्मीर का कांस्य मूर्तियाँ) में लिखते हैं कि 'ड्यजिहोर बुद्ध धर्म की देन है।' आगे चल कर वे लिखते हैं 'कश्मीरी पण्डितों ने जिस प्रकार बुद्ध धर्म का काफी प्रभाव ग्रहण किया, उसी प्रकार इन्होंने ड्यजिहोर भी इनसे ग्रहण किया। ड्यजिहोर का महिला से जुड़ने कोई अचरज की बात नहीं। हिन्दु विश्वास के अनुसार नारी शक्ति, सरस्वती, लक्ष्मी तथा दुर्गा का रूप मानी जाती है चातुर्य एवं बुद्धि का प्रतीक होने के कारण हिन्दुओं, विशेषकर कश्मीरी पण्डितों, ने ड्यजिहोर को महिलाओं से जोड़ दिया।' कश्मीरी संस्कृति से लगाव रखने वाले दूसरे विद्वान श्री मोतीलाल पुष्कर 'चिनार के पत्ते' नामक पुस्तक में संकलित अपने लेख 'चिरंतन कश्मीर' में ड्यजिहोर का सम्बन्ध पिशाचों से जोड़ता है। इन दोनों महानुभावों की मान्यताओं से सहमत नहीं हुआ जा सकता, क्योंकि अपनी मान्यताओं को प्रस्तुत करते समय ये गहराई से कश्मीरी

पण्डितों की आत्मा में झाँक नहीं सके हैं। कश्मीरी पण्डित शाक्त एवं तन्त्रोपासक रहे हैं, इस बात को नजरअन्दाज नहीं किया जा सकता है। ड्यजिहोर एक स्वर्णाभूषण होने के साथ एक अमोघ यन्त्र भी है इस स्वर्ण-यन्त्र के स्वभाव और प्रभाव को दृष्टिगत रखते हुए ही इसे महिला से सम्बन्धित किया गया है तथा यह कश्मीर-आस्था की ही देन है।

कश्मीरी संस्कृति के संदर्भ में ड्यजिहोर कितना महत्त्वपूर्ण स्थान रखता है, इस बात का अनुमान कश्मीरी शिल्पियों द्वारा विनिर्मित मूर्तियों से भी लगाया जा सकता है एक कश्मीरी शिल्पी द्वारा निर्मित ५२ सेंटीमीटर लम्बी बुद्ध-मूर्ति न्यूयार्क के मेट्रोपालिटन म्यूजियम में रखी है। इस मूर्ति के कानों से ड्यजिहोर लटका दिखाया गया है। यह मूर्ति आठवीं-नौवीं शताब्दी की है। इसी प्रकार श्री प्रताप म्यूजियम, श्रीनगर (कश्मीर) में पाषाणनिर्मित एक देवी-मूर्ति है जिसके कानों से ड्यजिहोर लटका दिखाया गया है। इससे सहज ही अनुमान लगाया जा सकता है कि ड्यजिहोर आठवीं शताब्दी से कोई शताब्दियाँ पहले पहना जाता रहा होगा।

बुद्ध-मूर्ति को ड्यजिहोर पहने दिखाना इस बात का संकेत कदापि नहीं माना जा सकता कि ड्यजिहोर बुद्धधर्म की देन है अगर यह बुद्धधर्म की देन है तो क्या गैरकश्मीरी शिल्पियों द्वारा निर्मित बुद्ध मूर्तियों को भी ड्यजिहोर पहने दिखाया गया है? यदि नहीं तो यह स्पष्ट रूप से कहा जा सकता है ड्यजिहोर कश्मीरियों की अपनी चीज है किसी ओर के प्रभाव का परिणाम नहीं। प्रश्न उठता है कि कश्मीरी शिल्पी ने बुद्धमूर्ति को ड्यजिहोर क्यों पहनाया? इसके दो कारण हो सकते हैं- एक मूर्ति का कश्मीरीकरण दूसरा ड्यजिहोर का शुद्धता, आध्यात्मिकता एवं सृजन-शक्ति का प्रतीक होना। बुद्ध को बुद्धत्व प्राप्त करने के बाद तथा देवी की मूर्ति को कश्मीरी शिल्पियों द्वारा -ड्यजिहोर पहनाना इसी बात का द्योतक है।

आजकल ड्यजिहोर का तोल तथा आकार क्रमशः कम और छोटा हो गया है इसी प्रकार 'अठ' की लम्बाई घट गई है। कहीं-कहीं तो 'अठ' बिल्कुल ही विलुप्त हो गई है। आजकल ऐसे ड्यजिहोर का रिवाज चल पड़ा है जिसकी 'अठ' यानि ड्यजिहोर और कानों के छेदों से गुजरने वाली चेन इतनी छोटी हो गई है कि ड्यजिहोर कई आधुनिकाओं के कन्धों पर झूलता हुआ नजर आने लगा है। कई अति आधुनिकाओं ने 'अठ' का झंझट खत्म कर ड्यजिहोर को अतिलघु रूप दिलवा कर इसे कान के अन्दर टॉप्स की तरह पहन लिया है। इस सबका कारण आधुनिक फैशन के साथ चलना भी हो सकता है पर सबसे बड़ा कारण अपने देश में कानून ओर व्यवस्था का उत्तरोत्तर घोर पतन है। हालत ऐसी है कि महिला सोने के जेवर पहन कर घर से निकली नहीं कि ये उससे दिन-दहाड़े देखते ही देखते छिन लिये गये। इतना ही नहीं, आये गये ऐसी खबरें भी आ

रही हैं कि आभूषण के साथ महिला का वह अंग भय काटा गया जिसमें उसने आभूषण पहन रखा था। इसी भय से बहुत-सी कश्मीरी महिलाओं ने ड्यजिहोर पहनना ही छोड़ दिया है।

ड्यजिहोर कन्या को मैके की ओर से ही मिलता है, मिलता आया है इस बात की साक्षी ब्याह-शादी पर गाये जाने वाले लोक-गीतों (वनवुन) के अनेक छन्द हैं, एक-दो का अवलोकन करें-माल्यसुन्द ड्यजिहोर नीर्यनय रूंतुये सुय कूर्य पूशनय आदि अन्त ताम।

**तथतलुं शूबी म्बोखतय फ्योटुंये
नारान ह्योतये आसीकय॥**

अर्थत, हे पुत्री, पिता का दिया ड्यजिहोर तुम्हारे लिए मंगलकारी सिद्ध होय तथा यह आजीवन तुम्हारे साथ रहे। इसके नीचे मोती की लड़ियों वाला फुंदना (अटुंहोर) ही सजेगा। प्रिय तनया, श्रीमन्नारायण तुम्हें सदा सुखी रखें!

**और-कननन्द च्यजिहोर द्युतमय योरय सुय कूर्य पूशन तुं
वात्यनय कननयलि त्रोवुथ दिवुंथम शोलय हॉर छय तोतस
बोलुंनावान॥**

यानि-कानों में पहनने का ड्यजिहोर तुम्हें मैके वालों ने दिया। बिटिया, यह आजीवन तुम्हारा साथ दे! यह (ड्यजिहोर) जब तुमने पहना, तुम आभामय हो उठी! तुम मैना ने अपने रूप-लावण्य (के जादू से) से अपने शुक (पिता) को मीठी बोली बोलने के लिए विवश किया।

**तथा-डाय मोहरुं ड्यजिहोर ग्वोरुंय बवुंग्वन्दरी चावुहम तुं
स्वन्दुंरी करय हो हो।**

ढाई स्वर्ण-मुद्राओं से तुम्हारे पिता ने तुम्हारे लिए ड्यजिहोर बनवाया। तुम इसे पहनोगी। आ, मैं (सोहाकुल हो) तुम्हारी पीठ थपथपाऊँ।

लगता है किसी जमाने में विजयेश्वर आज का बिजबिहाड़ा, नामक जनपद ड्यजिहोर 'नाना की कला में पूरे कश्मीर में शीर्षस्थ स्थान पर रहा होगा। यहीं के सुनार ड्यजिहोर को सही आकार-प्रकार देने में सिद्धहस्त रहे होंगे। 'वनवुन' का निम्नलिखित टुकड़ा यही इंगित करता है-

**सामानुं क्वोरमय गोजेवारे
ड्यजिहोर ग्वोरमयव्यजिबारे।**

-प्रिय बिटिया, तुम्हारी शादी का सामान श्रीनगर के गोजवारा नामक स्थान से मँगवाया और तुम्हारा ड्यजिहोर बिजबिहाड़ा नामक जनपद से।

ड्यजिहोर का तौल कितना हो, यह निश्चित नहीं। हर पिता अपनी हैसियत के अनुसार अलग-अलग वजन का ड्यजिहोर अपनी पुत्री को देता रहा है। पहले उद्धृत 'वनवुन' के टुकड़े में ढाई स्वर्ण मुद्राओं से निर्मित ड्यजिहोर की बात कही गई है। निम्नलिखित टुकड़े में सात स्वर्ण मुद्राओं से बने ड्यजिहोर का जिक्र है, देखिए-

**सतन मोहरन ड्यजिहोर कस क्युतये
ड्यकय चोनुरय ह्योतये छुम।**

-सात स्वर्ण मुद्राओं से बन ड्यजिहोर किसके लिए है? बिटिया तुम्हारे लिए ही तो है तुम बहुत ही भाग्यशालिनी हो, तुम्हें बहुत ही हितचिन्तक जीवनसाथी मिला है।

कमला

नीमा रानी कौल

आज कमला का हृदय प्रफुल्लित था। इन तीन वर्षों में उसने जो पूजा अराधना की थी उसके सफल होने का दिन आज ही था। दिन आज ही था। वह आज असीम आनन्द का अनुभव न करती, तो फिर कब। नाना भाँति के विचार सागर के लहरों की भाँति उसके हृदय में उथल-पुथल मचा रहे थे। परन्तु ऊपर से वही शान्त और सोम्यमूर्ति। हों आज उसके चेहरे का रंग कुछ अधिक ही आरक्त हो उठा था। उसके कमल पत्त जैसे नेत्रों की पलकें आज झुकी हुई थीं मानो निद्रा मग्न हों। सिर झुकाये वह घर के कामों में व्यस्त थी।

आज प्रातःकाल छः बजे से ही उसने समावार (एक प्रकार का चाय बनाने का बर्तन) को धोकर चाय बनानी प्रारम्भ की थी। इस समय दिन के दो बजे होंगे। परन्तु उसकी चाय बनाने से अवकाश न मिला। भला मिलता भी कैसे। प्रतःकाल से ही सगे-सम्बन्धियों का आना आरम्भ हुआ था। उन्हें भी आज अपने घरों में मन न लगता था। भला लगता भी कैसे जबकि उनका लाल आज तीन वर्षों के पश्चात् यूरोप से आने वाला था। इतने में ही बारह वर्ष का राजेश दोड़ता हॉफता हुआ भीतर आया; और बोला 'कमल मामा तौंगे से उतर रहे हैं।' यह सुनते ही घर में हलचल मच गई। सभी बाहर निकलने को आतुर जैसे नदी में बाढ़ आने पर पानी किनारों की परवाह न कर सभी ओर बहता है। इसी प्रकार बच्चों ने, खिड़कियों से कूद कर गली की ओर प्रस्थान लिया। बड़े तो द्वार से ही आपस में एक दूसरे की घकेल कर सर्व प्रथम निकलने को चेष्टा करते। परन्तु द्वार ने ऐसे समय भी उदारता न दिखाई कि सबों को सर्व प्रथम निकलने की चेष्टा सफल होती।

कमला समावार के पास ही निश्चेष्ट बैठी हुई थी। उसने अपने नेत्र भी मूँद लिये थे। उसे यह क्षण युगों के समान प्रतीत हुए। नेत्र बन्द होने पर भी वह प्रत्यक्ष अपने कमल के दर्शन कर रही थी। इतने में ही कमल ने अपने माता-पिता और अन्य सम्बन्धियों के साथ घर के भीतर प्रवेश किया।

'मामीजी, चाय तो उबल रही है' सरला ने पुकारा। कमला ने आँखें खोली तो देखा सबमुच ही चाय उबलती थी। उसने शीघ्रता से चाय में चीनी डाल दी और खासू (फूल की कवलियाँ जिनसे कश्मीर में चाय पीते हैं) लेकर सबको देने लगी। उसकी चेतना भाव जगत से वाह्य जगत में लौट आयी थी। कमल ने उड़ती ई दृष्टि से उसकी ओर देखा तो उसका मन विरक्त हो उठा। कहीं तो पश्चिमी देशों की सुन्दरियों, और कहीं यह। वह बोलती है तो उनके मुँह से फूल झड़ते प्रतीत होते हैं। उनके अंग संचालन और भाव प्रदर्शन से ही कामना उदीप्त हो उठती है। उनका बनाव सिंगार बरबस अपनी ओर खींचता है। और कहीं यह सुन्दरता के रहते भी निरा मिट्टी का पिण्ड मानो

मुख में जीभ ही नहीं है। आधुनिकता के इस युग में यह पढ़-लिख कर भी सम्य न हो पाई है। इन्हीं विचारों में न जाने वह कितनी देर तक निमग्न रहा। अन्त में इन विचारों को भुलाने के लिए वह ऊपर अपने कमरे में कपड़े बदलने के लिए गया। उसका अनुमान था कि मेरे पीछे ही कमला भी ओयेगी। परन्तु उसकी इतनी सामर्थ्य कहीं। इतने सम्बन्धियोंके सामने वह भला उसके पीछे कैसे जाय, यद्यपि उसका हृदय उसी की ओर लगा था। परन्तु उसको भारतीय नारी की लज्जा का गुण जन्मजात ही मिला था। अपने पोंवों में पड़ी हुई लज्जा की बेड़ी काटने का उसे साहस न था।

कमल ने कपड़े बदले। कुछ समय तक प्रतीक्षा भी की कि शायद कमला आ जाए। अन्त में ऊबकर नीचे चला आया और अपने सगे सम्बन्धियों से यूरोप की सम्यता और संस्कृति की प्रशंसा करने लगा।

आज भोजन करने में भी विलम्ब ही हुआ। कमल की बहन शान्ता अपने बच्चों के साथ यहीं रही। और भी दो-चार सम्बन्धी रहे। शेष सभी अपने-अपने घरों को गये। रात को १२ बजने पर कमला अपने कामों से निवृत्त होकर ऊपर अपने कमरे में गई। वहाँ कमल को निद्रामग्न देखा, वह एकटक उसका मुख निहारने लगी जो कि पहले से अधिक सुन्दर और स्वस्थ दीखता था। अतीत के चित्र उसके मानस पटल पर उभर आये। उसे ब्याह के पश्चात् उन तीन मासों का प्रत्येक दिन स्मरण हो आया जब कि कमल यहाँ था। उसके पश्चात् ही कमल के यूरोप जाने का दिन, जब कि दोनों के के नेत्रों में आँसुओं की झड़ी लगी थी, परन्तु दोनों एक दूसरे को सान्त्वना देते थे। उसके पश्चात् यह तीन वर्ष कठिन विरह के कैसे बीते, एक-एक क्षण उसे स्मरण हो आया। और इस समय भी अश्रु की बूँदें टप टप करके उसके मुख को धो रही थीं, यद्यपि यह तो आनन्दाश्रु थे। कुछ समय वह इन्हीं विचारों में डूबी रही। अन्त में उठकर शिव-पार्वती की तस्वीर के सामने मस्तक झुका दिया। इनकी अपार कृपा से ही आज उसकी विरह ज्वाला शान्त होकर मनोकामना पूर्ण हुई थी। अतः वह आज इनके सामने नतमस्तक न होती तो कब।

आज उसके नेत्रों में नींद कहीं। रह-रह कर पति का मुख देखती है, और इस आशा से कि शायद उठ जायें वहीं पर बैठ गयी। तीन बजने तक तो वह इसी प्रतीक्षा में रही। अन्त में उसे बैठे-बैठे ही झपकियाँ आने लगीं। पाँच बजते ही जब कमल की आँखें खुलीं तो कमला को वहीं बैठे-बैठे झपकियाँ लेते देखा। घृणा से उसने मुख फोर लिया। कुछ क्षण इसी प्रकार बीते। अब उससे न रहा गया। पाँव से ठोकर लगाकर उसे जगाया। कमला ने झट आँखें खोलीं, और वहीं पोंवों पर मस्तक झुका दिया। मुँह से एक शब्द भी न बोल पायी। यह देख

कमल के क्रोध की अग्नि में आहुति पड़ी। पाँच पीछे की ओर खींच लिये, और बोले-मुझे यह सब ढकोसले अच्छे नहीं लगते। यदि यहाँ पर सोना नहीं चाहती थी तो दूसरे कमरे में जाना था। तुम्हें यहाँ आने के लिये किसी ने विवश तो नहीं किया था। यह कहते-कहते ही वह नीचे के कमरे में गया। कमला स्तब्ध रह गई। मन में अपने आपको कोसने लगी। न मालूम मुझसे क्या भूल हुई जो यह इस प्रकार बौखला उठे। अन्त में वह भी शीघ्रता में नीचे चली गई। मन ही मन आशंकित थी कि कहीं उठने में मुझे आज विलम्ब न हुआ हो।

इस प्रकार एक मास से अधिक ही व्यतीत हुआ होगा। कमल ने उसे दूर रहना ही उचित समझा। उसने कमला से कभी खुलकर बातचीत न की। कमला दिन भर सोचती कि यदि यह नहीं बोलते तो क्या मैं भी न बोलूँ। आज मैं इनसे साफ-साफ कह दूँगी तीन वर्षों के बिछुड़े प्राणी क्या इसी प्रकार मिलते हैं। मुझसे यदि कुछ अपराध भी हुआ हो तो वह मुझे बताना चाहिए था, न कि यूँ मौन धारण कर मुझे भीतर ही भीतर तड़पाना चाहिए। दिन में वह इसी प्रकार कल्पना जगत में विचरण करती। परन्तु कमल के सम्मुख जाते ही उसकी चेतना मानो लुप्त हो जाती। उसे यह भी न स्मरण रहता, कि वह उससे क्या कहना चाहती थी।

इतने में बम्बई से कमल के नाम इन्टरम्बू का पत्र आया। आज से ठीक सातवें दिन उसे इन्टरम्बू देना था। कमल ने दूसरे दिन ही वहाँ जाना निश्चित किया। कमला यह सुनते ही विह्वल हो उठी। उसने निश्चय किया कि आज वह अवश्य अपने दिल का बुखार निकालेगी। यद्यपि उसे यह समझने में विलम्ब न हुआ कि उसका पति उसकी अवहेलता करता है, परन्तु वह मन को ढाढस देती कि उसको इसका अधिकार है, क्योंकि वह मेरा पति है। मुझसे अवश्य कुछ भूल हुई है, नहीं तो सद्दयि कमल इतना निष्पूर न हो सकता।

कमल को आज अपनी बहन के घर निमंत्रण था। वह रात को भी वहीं रहा। दूसरे दिन घर पर आते ही उसने अपना सामान बाँधना आरम्भ किया। शम्भूनाथ दूरदर्शी थे। उसने कहा - "बेटा दूरिस्ट बस तो पाँच बजे प्रातःकाल में निकलती है। हम तौंगे वाले को एडवान्स देकर रखेंगे। वह प्रातःकाल चार बजे ही आ जायेगा। शाम को ही वहाँ जाने से क्या लाभ। रात को कम से कम घर में आराम तो करेंगे। परन्तु कमल ने यह कह कर टाल दिया कि तौंगे वाले का क्या विश्वास! यदि उसने प्रातः आने में तनिक भी विलम्ब किया तो बस से हाथ धोना पड़ेगा। आराम की क्या बात है। रात किसी प्रकार बितानी है चाहे यहाँ रहें या वहाँ।

इस प्रकार कमल भोजन से निवृत्त होकर शीघ्रता से कपड़ा पहन कर अपने पिता के साथ चल दिया। शोभावती भी तौंगे तक पहुँचाने गयी। सरला शीघ्रता से मामी का हाथ पकड़ खींचने लगी। "मामी

जल्दी चलो, तौंगा तो बाहर खड़ा है और आप यहाँ खड़े-खड़े देखती है।" कमला घर के बाहर द्वार तक उसका हाथ पकड़ चली गयी। फिर उससे कहा- अब दौड़कर तुम जाओ। सरला ने भी अब कमला की प्रतीक्षा न की। दौड़ती हुई तौंगे के पास पहुँची। उसे आशा थी तौंगा रूक जाने से मामा उसे अवश्य ही रूपया देंगे, और यह आशा उसकी तुरन्त ही पूर्ण हुई।

दस दिनों के पश्चात् कमल कमा तार मिला। उसको पाँच सौ रूपये वेतन की नौकरी मिली थी, और मँहगाई भत्ता आदि। माता-पिता को बाछें खिल गयीं। कमला भी मन ही मन ईश्वर को धन्यवाद देती जिसने उसके पति को सदा सफलता प्रदान की। कमला का हृदय असीम वेदन, से दुःखित था, परन्तु आशा की किरण ही उसके जीवन का सहारा थी। उसने कमल को कई पत्र लिखे। जो कुछ उसे सामने कहने की कभी सामर्थ्य न हुई वह उसने पत्रों में लिखा। परन्तु उसे एक पत्र का भी उत्तर न मिला।

आज पूरे एक वर्ष पश्चात् कमला के नाम पत्र आया। वह अपना नाम सुनते ही सहम सी गई। शीघ्रता से उठकर डाकिया से चुपके से पत्र ले लिया, और अपने कमरे में द्वार बन्ध कर पत्र को खोलने लगी। हृदय धक्-धक् कर रहा था। तरह-तरह की शंकाएँ सागर के लहरों की भाँति उठ रही थीं। पत्र पर कमल की ही लिखावट देखकर पुलकित हो गई और एक ही दृष्टि में पूरा पत्र पढ़ा डाला। उसमें लिखा था।

कमला

तुम्हारे बहुत से पत्र मुझे मिले। मुझे व्यर्थ समय नष्ट करने का अवकाश कहाँ। तुम्हारे और मेरे विचारों में आकाश पाताल का अन्तर है। इस नवीनता के युग में पढ़ लिख कर भी तुम लकीर की फकीर ही रही। मैं यूरोप से बहुत सी आशाएँ लेकर लौटा था। तुम्हें देखकर मेरी आशाओं पर पानी फिर गया। तुम्हारे साथ रहने पर मुझे अपने ठहकारियों तथा मित्रों में भी लज्जित होना पड़ेगा। तुम जानती ही होगी कि मैं आत्माभिमानी प्राणी हूँ। इस प्रकार सब की नजरों में गिरना मुझे नरक की यन्त्रणा से भी अधिक दुःखदायी लगती है। मुझे आशा है, तुम इन थोड़े से शब्दों से ही समझ जाओगी और बार-बार पत्र भेजकर मुझे अशान्त न करोगी।

पत्र पढ़ते पढ़ते कमला को आसुओं की धारा धारा बहने लगी। उसे पत्र के अक्षर भी स्पष्ट न दीखते। मन में बार बार यही विचार उठता कि मुझ से तो कभी खुलकर बात न की, फिर मेरे विचारों का पता उन्हें कैसे लगा। मुझे सेवा का अवकाश उन्होंने दिया ही कहाँ। इन शंकाओं के उठते ही उसने अपने मन को सान्त्वना दी। साथ ही यह भी निश्चय कर लिया कि मेरे कारण यदि वह अपने आपको समाज में गिरा हुआ पाते हैं तो मेरे लिए उचित यही है कि उन्हें कभी-ऐसा

अवसर ही न दूँ जिस कारण उन्हें दुखी होना पड़े। कमला अब खोयी खोयी सी रहने लगी उसका गुलाब की पंखुड़ी जैसा मुख मुरझा कर पीला हो गया मानो हरे भरे पौधे पर वज्रापात हो गया हो। उसकी माँ भी अपनी इकलौती पुत्री की ऐसी दशा देखकर सहम गई। कई बार कमला से पूछा। परन्तु कमला ने सदा मुस्करा कर टाल दिया। यद्यपि इस मुस्कराने में भी कमला को बहुत प्रयत्न करना पड़ता। उसकी सास भी मन ही मन कमला की उदासी देखकर घबरा गई। उसने शम्भूनाथ से कहा-“क्यों न कमला को बम्बई भेज दें। वह आजकल बहुत उदास रहती है। कमल को भी बम्बई में खाने पीने का कष्ट होता होगा। वह लज्जा के मारे लिखता नहीं है। ब्यां के पश्चात् कभी एक साथ रहने भी न पाये। यदि वह नहीं लिखता तो क्या, हमें तो अपना कर्तव्य निभाना है। शम्भूनाथने उत्तर दिया-“मैं उसे आज ही इस बारे में लिखूँगा। मुझे भी पेंशन मिलने वाली है। सार्दियों में हम भी वहीं जायेंगे।” दस दिन के पश्चात् ही कमल का उत्तर मिला। उसने शोभावती को बुलाकर पत्र पढ़कर सुनाया। उसमें लिखा था कि मुझे यहाँ खाने पीने का कोई कष्ट नहीं है। दीवाली पर मैं श्रीनगर आऊँगा और आपको भी अपने साथ लेता आऊँगा। माताजी को भी कहना चाहिए। इधर कमला को ज्वर आने लगा। उसकी माँ ने जब सुना तो कमला की सास से कहा “कि कुछ दिनों के लिए मैं उसका अपने यहाँ ले आऊँगी।” पहले तो उसकी सास ने न माना। अन्त में यह विचार कर कि सम्भव है वहाँ इसका मन स्वस्थ हो जाये उसको ले जाने की अनुमति दे दि। कमला की माँ तौंगे पर बिठाकर उसकी अपने यहाँ ले गयी। कई डाक्टरों ने कमला का उपचार किया - परन्तु कमला को कुछ लाभ न हुआ। यदि डाक्टर मानसिक रोगों का उपचार कर पाते तो सम्भव है कि संसार में इतना रोगी न होती। उसके माता-पिता को यही चिंता थी कि यह शीघ्र ही स्वस्थ हो, जिससे कि पति के साथ बम्बई जा सके। दीवाली आने के दो दिन पहले ही कमल घर पहुँचा। जब कमला को घर में न देखा तो अत्यन्त ही प्रसन्न हुआ। सोचा कि मेरे माता-पिता समझ गये होंगे। इसी कारण उसको पिता के घर भेज दिया। परन्तु उसकी यह सुनकर अति निराशा हुई कि उसके माता-पिता बार-बार ही कमला के पास जाने का आग्रह कर रहे हैं। शामलाल ने जब सुना कि जमाई आ पहुँचा है तो वह तुरन्त ही उसके घर गया। कमल ने नमस्कार के अतिरिक्त उससे कोई बात न की। शामलाल मन ही फूला न समाता था। जमाई हो तो ऐसा हो, कितना शरमाता है। पिता के सामने मेरी ओर आँख भी नहीं उठाया। विलायत जाने पर भी इसमें कोई परिवर्तन न आया। उसने शम्भूनाथ से कमल को उसके घर निमन्त्रण पर भेजने के लिये कहा। कमल ने सुनते ही अस्वीकार कर लिया। “क्षमा कीजिए, मेरा लिवर खराब है, इसलिये कोई भी चीज़ नहीं खा सकता।” शामलाल ने कहा जो आप खाते हैं वही हम बनायांगे। परन्तु कमल ने कहा- कुछ स्वास्थ्य सुधर जाने पर मैं आ जाऊँगा। उसी रात को उसने अपने माता-पिता से बम्बई जाने का अनुरोध किया। परन्तु उन्होंने बहू का स्वास्थ्य सुधर जाने पर ही वहाँ

जाना उचित समझ ताकि उसको भी अपने साथ ले जा सके। कमल को यह बात असह्य सी जान पड़ी और मन के भावों को दबा न सकने के कारण तुरन्त बोल उठा-“पिताजी, मैं उसका अपने साथ न ले जा सकूँगा। यदि आप जीवित ही मृतक के समान देखना चाहते हैं तो जैसी आपको इच्छा। यह मैं कह देता हूँ कि उसके साथ मेरा जीवन नरक तुल्य हो जायेगा।” शम्भूनाथ यह सुनते ही दंग रह गये। मानो उनपर वज्रापात हो, कुछ क्षण पश्चात् प्रकृतिस्थ होकर बोले-“यह क्या कहते हो। कमला जैसी गुणवती, सुशील और सुन्दर नारी पाकर तुम अपने को धन्य न मानकर उसके विपरीत ही समझते हो। उसकी जैसी गम्भीर और व्यवहार कुशल नारियों संसार में कम ही मिलती है।” जब वह यह सुनेगी तो उसपर क्या बीतेगी, इसपर भी तुमने कभी विचार किया है।” कमल यह बातें सुनकर क्षुब्ध हो उठा और कुछ रुष्ट होकर बोला-पिताजी, यह हो सकता है कि वह सर्वगुण सम्पन्न हो, परन्तु मेरे योग्य यह नहीं है, जमाना बदल गया है। मेरा पोजीशन भी अब कुछ और ही है। वहाँ मुझे सभा-सोसाइटियों में जाना पड़ता है और वह पुराने ढंग पर चलनेवाली है। मुझे अपने सहकारियों, मित्रों तथा अधीनस्थ कर्मचारियों के बीच लज्जित होना पड़ेगा जो कि मैं मृत्यु से भी बुरा समझता हूँ। शम्भूनाथ ने बहुत समझाया परन्तु वह टस से मस न हुआ। अन्त में हार कर उसने चुप्पी साध ली। जब उसकी माँ ने यह बात सुनी तो वह भी एकान्त में कमल को समझाने लगी और कमला के गुणों का बखान करने लगी। परन्तु जब कमल ने किसी प्रकार भी स्वीकार न किया तब वह अपने कमाउ और योग्य पुत्र की अवहेलना न कर पाई और यह विचार कर कि कमल ही जब उसे नहीं चाहता, तो मेरा उससे क्या सम्बन्ध रहा। दो चार दिन में ही उन्होंने बिना कमला के माताध पिता को सूचना दिये, बम्बई की ओर प्रस्थान किया।

आज घर लौटते समय शामलाल ने फिर से अपने जमाई को निमन्त्रण देने का विचार किया। उनके घर ताला लगा देख कर पड़ोसियों से पूछा। पड़ोसियों के आश्चर्य की सीमा न रही। जब उसे इस प्रकार पूछने देखा अन्त में एक ने कहा - भाईसाहब, उन्हें तो चार दिन बम्बई गये को हुए। क्या आपको मालूम नहीं है? शामलाल को अपने कानों पर विश्वास न हुआ। पूछा कि क्या आप अच्छी तरह जानते हैं। इस पर पड़ोसी ने कहा - भला इसमें भी कोई सन्देह की बात है। आप किसी से भी पूछ लीजिए। शामलाल की आँखों में अंधेरा छा गया। अब किसी से पूछताछ करनी उचित न जान वह सीधे घर की ओर लौटा। उसके पाँव मन-मन भर के हो गये। वह अपने पाँवों को किसी प्रकार धसीटते-धसीटते घर तक पहुँच गया। शामरानी ने जब सुना तो उसका दुःख क्रोध में बदल गया। अपने दाँतों से ओठों को काटते हुए बोला-हमने अपनी जीवन की समस्त पूँजी लगाकर उसे विलायत भेजा। और उसका यह सामर्थ्य, कि वह यहाँ तक आना तो दूर, हमें बिना बताये ही चल दिया। परन्तु उन्होंने अपने क्रोध को मन ही मन दबा लिया। उन्हें भय था कि कमला के कानों

में यदि इन बातों की भनक भी पड़ गयी तो न मालूम उसकी क्या दशा होगी। कमला अब कुछ स्वस्थ होने लगी थी। उसकी सारी घटना का पता चल गया। उसकी माँ को आश्चर्य की सीमा न रही, जब कि कमला पर इन बातों का विशेष कुछ प्रभाव न हुआ। धीरे-धीरे वह स्वस्थ होने लगी। एक दिन उसने पिता से कहा कि मैं किसी पाठशाला में नौकरी करना चाहती हूँ। घर में विशेष कुछ काम तो मुझे नहीं करना पड़ता है। माँ तो मुझे कोई काम करने नहीं देती। दिनभर व्यर्थ बैठे कहने की अपेक्षा यदि किसी स्थान पर काम करूँ तो मेरा समय व्यर्थ नष्ट न होगा। शामलाल को पुत्री की इन बातों से हृदय विदीर्ण हुआ। वह तो अपनी इकलौती पुत्री को रानी के रूप में ही देखना चाहता था और इसके लिए उसने जो तोंडकर परिश्रम भी किया था, परन्तु भाग्य ने उसका साथ न दिया। जिस पुत्री के लिए उसने जीवन की संचित पूँजी लगाई थी, वही पुत्री आज कहीं पर काम करने की चेष्टा कर रही है। अपने अश्रुओं को उसने नेत्रों में ही कपण के धन की भाँति छुपा दिया और यह विचार कर काम में व्यस्त रहने पर इसे दुःख की विस्मृति होगी, अपनी अनुमति दे दी। कमला को शीघ्र ही बसन्ता हाई स्कूल में शिक्षिका का काम मिल गया और वह नियमित रूप से पाठशाला जाने लगी। इस बीच शामलाल ने सुना कि कमल ने बम्बई में लिल्ली नाम की एक एंग्लो इण्डियन लड़की से विवाह कर लिया है। शामलाल का रक्त खौल उठा। वह कमल पर मुकदमा करना चाहता था। इसलिए पत्नी से विचार-विमर्श करने लगा। कमला ने यह सुनते ही अपने माता-पिता से कहा-पिताजी, क्रोध के आवेश में आप ऐसी बातें क्यों करते हैं। जब मैं अपने लिये कमा सकती हूँ, फिर किसी के सामने हाथ क्यों फैलाया जाय। इससे बढ़कर हमारे लिये-कौन-सी लज्जा की बात होगी। मैं तो इस अपमान से मृत्यु को ही श्रेष्ठ समझती हूँ। अन्त में शामलाल को हार माननी पड़ी।

आज कमला पाठशाला में हाजिरी ले रही थी। सरला का नाम लेने पर जब उत्तर न मिला तो उस ओर देखने लगी। सरला की पड़ोसी लड़की शीघ्रते से कहने लगी-उसकी मामी से उसके नाना और नानी की कुछ अनबन रहती थी। इसलिए उसका मामा अपने माता-पिता को बम्बई से यहाँ छोड़ने के लिए आ रहा था। साथ में उसकी मामी भी थी, जो कि कश्मीर घूमने के लिए आ रही थी। परन्तु बनिहाल पहाड़ में उनकी लारी को ट्रक के साथ टक्कर लग गयी जिससे कि बहुत से तो मर गये हैं और कइयों को तो इतनी अधिक चोटें आई हैं कि न मालूम उनमें कोई बचेगा भी कि नहीं। सरला की मामी और नानी तो उसी घटनास्थल पर ही मर गये हैं। परन्तु उसका मामा और नाना को अस्पताल में भर्ति किया है। भगवान जाने वह अब तक जीवित भी होंगे कि नहीं। कमला के हाथ से कमल छूटकर नीचे गिर गई। इससे वह किकर्त्तव्य विमूढ़ सी हो गई। कुछ क्षणों के पश्चात् वह उठी और बिना किसी से कुछ कहे-सुने अस्पताल की ओर चल दी। अस्पताल के द्वार पर दरवान ने उसे रोक लिया और पूछा कि आप किससे मिलना चाहती हैं। कमला उनकी बात सुनते ही कुछ सचेत हुई और उसे ज्ञान हुआ कि वह अस्पताल के द्वार तक पहुँच

चुकी थी। न जाने कौन सी शक्ति उसे यहाँ तक ले आई थी।

वह दरवान से पूछने लगी कि कल की दुर्घटना में घायलों को कहीं रखा है। यह कहते कहते उसका कण्ठ अवरुद्ध हो गया और अश्रु धारा प्रवाहित होने लगी। दरवान भी उसकी हार्दिक व्याथा देख कर द्रवित हुआ। उसने कहा, "उन्हें इसी वार्ड में रखा गया है। परन्तु शीघ्र ही वापिस निकलियेगा, क्योंकि डाक्टरों के आने का समय हो गया है। यदि आपको देख लिया तो मेरा नौकरी छूट जायेगी।"

कमला कॉपते हुए पावों से भीतर गई। वहाँ घायलों को इस हृदय विदारक स्थिति में देखा, तो उसको चक्कर आने लगा। वह उसी क्षण बाहर निकल आयी और डाक्टर की प्रतीक्षा करने लगी। बारह बजने वाले थे। डाक्टर घायलों का निरीक्षण कर बाहर निकल रहे थे। कमला शीघ्रता से डाक्टर के निकट जाकर कमल के बारे में पूछने लगी। डाक्टर ने कहा- कमल नाम का एक युवक घायल अवश्य है। वह अभी-अभी होश में आया है और अपनी पत्नी, माता, पिता के बारे में पूछ रहा था। हमने उसको फिर से बेहोशी की दवा दी है। चोट अधिक लगी है। इस कारण रक्त ह्रास हुआ है। उसके बचने के बारे में हम अभी कुछ नहीं कह सकते। उसे रक्त की अत्यन्त आवश्यकता है। यह सुनते ही कमला का हृदय चीत्कार कर उठा। उसने कहा- "डाक्टर शीघ्रता से मेरा रक्त उन्हें दें जिससे उनके जीवन की रक्षा हो सके।" डाक्टर ने उसकी ओर देख कर कहा कि तुम में तो इतना अधिक रक्त नहीं है। अपना रक्त उसे देकर अपनी जीवन क्यों संकट में डालती हो। वह तुम्हारे कौन होते हैं? "डाक्टर वही मेरे सर्वस्व हैं। जल्दी करिये। कहीं विलम्ब के कारण उन्हें जीवन से हाथ न धोना पड़े। यदि मैं प्राण देकर भी उनकी रक्षा कर सकूँ तो मेरा मरना सफल हो जायेगा।" डाक्टर ने उसके रक्त की कुछ बूँदे लेकर परीक्षा की। ईश्वरीय प्रेरणा से उसका रक्त कमल के रक्त से मिल गया और डाक्टर ने उससे रक्त लेकर कमल को दिया।

शामलाल ने दफ्तर में इस दुर्घटना के बारे में सुना था। परन्तु उसे यह न मालूम था कि घायलों में कमल भी था। वह दफ्तर से घर की ओर लौट रहा था कि उसे कमला का नन्दोई मिला। शामलाल ने मुँह दूसरी ओर फेर लिया क्योंकि वह उनसे सम्पर्क न रखना चाहता था। परन्तु बन्सी लाल ने स्वयं ही उसके निकट जाकर उससे पूरी घटना सुना दी। शामलाल घर की ओर न जाकर शीघ्र अस्पताल की ओर गया। वहाँ कमल को देखकर उसे अति दुःख हुआ। डाक्टर के यह कहने पर कि वह खतरे से बाहर है शामलाल बड़ा प्रसन्न हुआ। जिसने इसके प्राण बचाये वह महिला, महिला वार्ड में है। शामलाल जब उस महिला की धन्यावाद देने पहुँचा तो वहाँ अपनी पुत्री को मूर्च्छित अवस्था में पाया। उसके नेत्रों से अश्रु की बूँदें टप टप गिरने लगीं। न जाने यह आँसू दुःख के थे या सुख के।

आधुनिक संदर्भ में कश्मीरी की लीला-कविता

रतनलाल शांत

अठारहवीं सदी में कश्मीरी "लीला" कविता की नींव पड़ी, जब साहिब कौल ने "जन्मुं चर्यथ" (जन्म चरित) लिखा। उसके साठ-सत्तर वर्ष बाद "लीला" शाखा का पूरा विकास हुआ। "भक्ति" तथा "लीला" समानार्थक शब्द नहीं। इन में अंतर समझना जरूरी है। कश्मीरी के अधिकांश समालोचक इस अंतर की उपेक्षा कर देते हैं। "भक्ति" एक सामान्य पारिभाषिक शब्द है जिसमें "निर्गुण" तथा "सगुण" दोनों प्रकार की साधना अर्चना और रचना आती है। यह भक्ति के अखिल भारतीय सन्दर्भ में भी सच है और कश्मीरी साहित्य के सन्दर्भ में थी। कश्मीरी की "लीला" शायरी एकदम सगुण भक्ति की कविता भी नहीं, यद्यपि ऐसी अधिकांश कविता को "सगुण" के अन्तर्गत ही रखा जा सकता है। कश्मीरी में हम महागणपति की "लीला", राम "लीला", भगवत "लीला", देवी की "लीला" जैस नामों का प्रयोग करते हैं। इनमें, जैसा कि स्पष्ट है क्रमशः गणपति, राम, भगवान या देवी के गुणों का गायन होता है। "भगवान" या "देवी" की "लीलाओं" में सामान्यतः ईश्वर (बीच-बीच में उसके त्रिमूर्ति या अवतारी रूप का भी संकेत होता है) या देवी के (उसके राजा, शारिका, दुर्गा काली या किसी स्थानीय अवतार या प्रतिरूप के भी) गुणों की स्तुति होती है। पर कई बार किसी नामधारी देवी या देवता के नाम से कविता रची जाती है यद्यपि उसमें फिर नाम के अनुरूप गुणों का ही बखान नहीं होता, निर्गुण किस्म के भाव भी आते हैं। कई बार देवी या देवता को "हे निर्गुण! है निर्लेप!" कहकर संबोधित किया जाता है। यह एक अलग विषय हो सकता है और इस पर गहराई से सोचने की जरूरत है।

आज के लगभग ढाई सौ साल पहले जब कश्मीरी में भक्ति की "लीला" प्रवृत्ति शुरू हुई तो उसके स्पष्ट साहित्यिक तथा सामाजिक कारण थे। आगे चलकर यह प्रवृत्ति उन्नीसवीं सदी में परमानन्द, प्रकाशराम तथा कृष्ण राजदान की कविता में पराकाष्ठा पर पहुंची। फिर बीसवीं शती में कुछ रामायण-कवियों तथा मास्टर जिंदा कौल ने इसे आगे बढ़ाया। इस दौरान बीसियों छोटे-बड़े कवियों ने अपनी (प्रकाशित या अप्रकाशित) रचनाओं में इसे जीवित रखा। हर साहित्यिक प्रवृत्ति का विकास काल, चरमावस्था काल तथा अवसान काल होता है। पर "लीला" के साथ ऐसा नहीं हुआ। भले ही लीला-काव्य की चरमावस्था उन्नीसवीं सदी के अंत तथा बीसवीं सदी के आरम्भ में थी, पर फिर इसका अवसान नहीं हुआ। और तो और यह अभी तक जीवित है। अभी भी कई कश्मीरी कवि गर्व से "लीलाएं" लिख रहे हैं।

"लीला" कश्मीरी में कोई काव्य-विधा नहीं है। वर्ण्य-विषय की दृष्टि से यह अन्य कविताओं से भिन्न जरूर होती है, पर विधा के अन्तर्गत केवल वर्ण्य विषय नहीं आता, विषय से ज्यादा रीति या शैली आती है। लीला की कोई अपनी शैली नहीं। इस वर्ग में आने वाली कविताओं में मूलतः किसी देवी या देवता या अवतार के जन्म, उसके जन्म लेने के फलस्वरूप धरती पर पाप का भार हल्का हो जाने और उसके जीवन चरित्र को बखानते हुए कवि की नम्रता और विनय का वर्णन होता है। इस दृष्टि से इसे हम मोटे तौर पर "सगुण" कविता के अन्तर्गत रख सकते हैं।

प्रश्न यह है कि आज इक्कीसवीं सदी तक आते-आते जब विज्ञान और भौतिक शास्त्र ने मानव की अभिवृत्ति ही बदल दी, सोच में भौतिकता लाई तथा वस्तुगत रुचियों में तर्कशीलता बढ़ा दी, दैनिक जीवन में बौद्धिक द्वंद्ववात्मकता की वृद्धि की; चिंतन में तथा विश्वास में सूक्ष्मता और अरूपता को ज्यादा प्रश्रय दिया, तो हमारे (बुद्धिजीवी) कवियों के लिए भगवान और भगवती, राम और कृष्णा, गणपति और शारिका आस्था और काव्यभिव्यक्ति की प्रेरणा बने रहने के पीछे क्या कारण थे? बाहर से जब हम बौद्धिक अभिवृत्ति अपनाते हुए जिन्दगी की समकालीन गति से कदम से कदम मिलाते हैं तो क्या भक्ति या आस्था का एक मुखौटाभर होता है जो हमारी तर्क-विरोधी सोच को ढकता है। इस प्रश्न का सम्बन्ध सामान्य मानवीय सूच से है और उत्तर भी वहीं मौजूद है। सामान्य जीवन में आस्था और विश्वास उसी अनुपात में कम नहीं हुए हैं जिस अनुपात में ज्ञान विज्ञान और बौद्धिकता बढ़ी है। इस संदर्भ में विचारक और चिन्तक, आदमी की तथाकथित नियामक नियति की अतार्किकता का हवाला देते हैं। मानव नियति प्राकृतिक नियमों के समानान्तर चलती है। प्रकृति में नियमितता या नियमानुकूलता से ज्यादा नियमहीनता और यदृच्छा है। नियम हमारी समझ में आ जाते हैं या यों कहें कि नियम समझाने से हमारी प्रकृति की आंशिक समझ शुरू हो जाती है। पर प्रकृति अंश नहीं समग्र है और ऐसे बिन्दु पर आकर आस्था या विश्वास के प्रमेय गढ़ना शुरू हो जाते हैं। कवि एक सामान्य मनुष्य है और वह भी विश्वास तथा आस्था के प्रमेयों पर धूमने लगता है। कवि की आस्था किसी अरूप पर हो सकती है। बौद्धिकता इस बात में है कि वह अनुभव की सत्यता (न केवल तथ्यता) को स्वीकार करता है। हमारे कवि का सत्य यह है कि आस्था के बिना उसकी गति नहीं-आस्था अदृष्ट परन्तु सर्वव्यापक पर। दूसरे शब्दों में अरूप परन्तु सर्वरूप पर।

आज के कवियों की "लीलाएं" पढ़कर लगता है कि ये निरे भाग्यवादी नहीं और विद्या, ज्ञान और विज्ञान को उस समय तिरस्कृत नहीं करते जब अपने प्रिय देव का बड़प्पन बता रहे हों। इनकी मान्यता है कि जीव जगत जीवन, मरण के बारे में अनुभव-निसृत विश्वास अटल सत्य है। पर पढ़े-लिखे, नए आविष्कारों, ज्ञान की नई सरणियों के पथिक भी हैं। इसलिए उन की "लीला" कविता, उन्नीसवीं शती की लीला कविता से अंशतः भिन्न है। गत शती की "लीला" देवता के गुणगान करते हुए उसका वह सारा रूप कुबूल करती थी, जो पुराणों में रेखांकित किया गया है। उदाहरणतः महागणपति की उन्नीसवीं शती की "लीला" में गणपति के वक्रतुण्ड, हरितकर, महोदर, मोदकप्रिय, मूषकवाहन आदि होने का बखान करके कवि उसकी विलक्षणता की उपासना करता था। शंकर की जटाओं में गंगा के समा जाने की घटने के वह कवि आश्चर्य और अपूर्वता की घटना मानकर उसकी पुनरावृत्ति के लिए प्रभु से विनती करता था। इसलिए देवता केवल ईश्वरत्व या असीम शक्ति के स्रोत के कारण उसके लिए उपास्य नहीं थे बल्कि जैसे चमत्कार उन्होंने किए बताए गए थे, उनसे वैसे ही दोबारा करने की एक प्रच्छन्न उम्मीद कवि के मन में हमेशा रहती थी। किसी हद तक कहा जा सकता है कि देवों का परामानवीय, मानवेतर, मानवोपरि, अमानुषेय रूप उनको ज्यादा आकर्षित करता था।

आज के कवि भी देवी-देवताओं का नाम लेते हैं। उनके सर्वशक्तिमान रूप का जिक्र भी करते हैं परन्तु उनके परामानवीय बाह्य रूपाकार को इनका कोई बड़ा वरणीय या अनुकरणीय गुण नहीं बताते। ये गणपति, शिव, शारिका, राजा, लक्ष्मी का नाम तो लेते हैं, उनकी स्तुति भी करते हैं पर वस्तुतः ये सब केवल नाम हैं। प्रभु के नाम। "आदि शक्ति" के नाम। संसार के "नियामक" के नाम। नामों के अलावा ये कुछ भी हो जैसे देवों के रंजक या राक्षसों के भंजक के रूप में-वे सब आज के कवि के लिए केवल कहानियां हैं। आज का लीला-कवि ऐसी कहानियों का बहुत कम जिक्र करता है। जब करता है तो काव्य-प्रथा पालन के लिए या परम्परा निर्वाह के लिए। वह मानता है कि इन कहानियों को रूपक के रूप में लिया जा सकता है, तब शायद इनका कुछ अर्थ हो।

गणेश, शंकर, दुर्गा आदि देवो देवताओं का पूरा संदर्भ पुराणाधारित है, जबकि राम और कृष्ण केवल पुराण के सन्दर्भों तक सीमित नहीं। ये सबके काव्य का विषय बनें और मानवीकृत हो गए। राम और कृष्ण के जीवन चरित ज्यादा विश्वसनीय हो सकते थे, क्योंकि उनके ऐतिहासिकता की बड़ी गुंजाइश है। आज का कवि उन को अवतारी पुरुष मानता है, और उनको परमईश्वरत्व-सम्पन्न रूप में देखता है। उनके जीवन चरित के विवरण कवि को ज्यादा आकृष्ट नहीं करते।

एक प्रश्न हमन आरम्भ में उठाया था कि ज्ञान विज्ञान के आधुनिक प्रसार-पकरभाव-काल में कश्मीरी लीला कवियों को क्योंकर ईश्वरत्व का बखान आकृष्ट करता है और यह कि क्या उन्हें हम उसी तरह "सगुण" कवि कहें जिस तरह मध्यकाल के रामभक्त या कृष्णभक्त कवियों को कहा जाता है। इस प्रश्न का किंचित उत्तर अब हम देने की स्थिति में हैं। आज का कवि आधुनिक बौद्धिक उन्नति को भी स्वीकारता है, और मनुष्य की वर्तमान निरीहता के लिए आव्याख्येय मानव जन्म की त्रासदी को भी जिम्मेवार समझता है। अतएव वह किसी अनाम असीम सर्वव्यापक सत्ता की उपस्थिति के आगे ससंभ्रम भी खड़ा हो जाता है। परम्परा से जो नाम उसको मिले हैं, वे पुराण द्वारा समर्थित हों या काव्य द्वारा, कथा द्वारा या कल्पना द्वारा, वे सब उसके लिए उसी सर्वव्यापक सत्ता का प्रतिरूप हैं। वे अनाम हैं और निर्गुण। इसलिए आज की सगुण दिखने वाली कश्मीरी लीला कविता मूलतः ज्यादा निर्गुण है। "निर्गुण" और "सगुण" पारम्परिक पारिभाषिक शब्द हैं। समकालीन लीला कविता को केवल "निर्गुण" कविता कहना भी शायद पर्याप्त नहीं इसके लिए शायद कम से कोई नया नाम गढ़ना पड़े।

कश्मीरी में पारम्परिक और ठेठ, निर्गुण भक्ति कविता ललेश्वरी (१४ वीं शती) और रूपामावानी (१७वीं शती) को छोड़कर किसी ने नहीं की। लगता है कि निर्गुण अरूप ईश्वर को अलभ्य पाकर प्राचीन कश्मीरी कवितायों ने उसे अपनी सामूहिक और व्यक्तिगत दुखद जिन्दगी के मसले हल करने योग्य नहीं समझा और इसलिए उसके सगुण रूप को आराधा। सगुण प्रभु के कारनामे पुराणों में दर्ज थे। वे इन्हें निर्मम लुटेरों-शासकों, या पटान जालिमों से बचाने का वचन देते नजर आए। चौदहवीं से बीसवीं सदी के आरम्भ तक कश्मीर का राजनीतिक इतिहास कुछ अपवादों को छोड़कर अधिकतर धर्मांध - अतिचार का इतिहास है जिसके फलस्वरूप व्यापक धर्म - परिवर्तन हुआ। उधर तुलसी और सूर की कविता की लोकप्रियता कश्मीर आने वाले तीर्थयात्रियों तथा व्यापारियों द्वारा यहां भी पहुंच चुकी थी। लल ने एक दो स्थानों पर अपने प्रिय प्रभु को 'श्यामगला' कहा था। एक स्थान पर "केशव", "जिन" या "कमलजनाथ" भी (यद्यपि शिव उसका आराध्य है और शिव, पार्वती-प्रिय या गणेश-पिता या कैलाशवासी या रुद्रसेनानी आदि कुछ नहीं है। लल का शिव कबीर के राम जैसा ही सर्वगुणातीत नाम मात्र है)। हम यह अनुमान भी कर सकते हैं कि लल का ही "केशव" और "कमलजनाथ" अठारहवीं शती की लीला कविता का उत्स बना और यों भक्ति ने ज्यादा पार्थिव, सांसारिक तथा व्यवहारी सगुण रूप धारण किया। परंतु आज के लीला कवियों ने भक्ति की धारणा को अर्धदार्शनिक या रूपहीन रूप में स्वीकार किया है, क्योंकि यही समय के अनुकूल है। हम यह मान सकते हैं कि आज का भक्त कवि अपने तमाम समकालीन प्रभावों को स्वीकार करते हुते मूल भक्ति के समर्पण भाव, सर्वसमभाव, मानव नियति के व्याख्याताभाव आदि का संरक्षण

करता है। फिर यह भी सच है कि किसी भी भाषा की किसी भी प्रवृत्ति का कवि अपनी भाषा, संस्कृति तथा काल्य प्रवृत्ति की विरासत को ही अपनाता है और उसे संवर्धित करता है। कश्मीरी लीला कवि ने भी यही किया है। वह लल, रूपा, प्रकाशराम, परमानन्द, कृष्ण जू, जिन्दा कौल को साथ लिए चलता है। उसका अपना गलियारा कितना भी भिन्न हो, पर राजमार्ग वही है जो छः सौ वर्ष से चला आ रहा है।

आज कश्मीर-भूमि से उखड़ा कवि, कश्मीरी संस्कृति को तार-तार होते देख रहा है। वह इस्लामी कट्टरवादिता की लहर में दहते हुए अपने भावनात्मक अस्तित्व को बचाना भी चाहता है। एक सहारा उसके पास है - "लीला" कविता का। यह सहारा एकांतिक है, और सांझी साहित्यिक प्रवृत्तियों से अलग है, अनन्य है। भारतीय धर्म के

सर्वव्यापक समुद्र में उसके अपने स्थानीय संस्करण की तरह - अपने विशिष्ट द्वीप की तरह। इस द्वीप पर उसे अपनी अस्मिता की रक्षा संभावना दिखती है। उसका आपा सतीसर के किनारों के वासी ऋषियों की संतान से जुड़ता है क्योंकि वे महानुभाव उसके पूर्वज थे। वह कश्मीर से अक्षुण्ण सम्बन्ध बनाए रखने के सपने देखता है, उस कश्मीर से, जो उससे छिन गया पर जो उसका आद्यबिम्ब है, आद्यरूप है।

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डा० अग्निशेखर

देश में सांप्रदायिक सद्भाव और शांति की बहाली के लिए यदि वर्तमान सरकार ने नेकनीयति से पूजास्थल विधेयक संसद में पेश किया है तो इस का स्वागत किया जाना चाहिए। आज ऐसा हर कदम उठाया जाना अपेक्षित है जिस से विभिन्न समुदायों के बीच तनाव कम हो। किसी एक समुदाय या पार्टी विशेष को संप्रदायवादी कह हम अपने कर्तव्य की इतिश्री समझते हैं।

संसद में सरकार ने इस विधेयक को जिस गोपनीयता और जल्दबाजी में पेश किया और जिस तरह इस को लेकर सांसदों ने समर्थन और विरोध में शोर-शराबा किया, उससे इस बिल की गंभीरता का ही पता चलता है। गौरतलब है कि इस बिल से सद्भाव आया या संप्रदायवाद की आग में ईंधन जुटेगा।

सरकार ने पूजास्थल विधेयक से जम्मू-कश्मीर राज्य को संवैधानिक कारणों से ज्यादा कुछ दूसरे अप्रकट कारणों से बाहर रखा लगता है। राज्य में विधानसभा के अभाव में राज्यपाल भी तो संसद में पारित विधेयक को पुष्ट कर सकते थे। राज्यपाल के पास सभी वैधानिक अधिकार हैं और परंपरा है कि उनका उपयोग भी किया जाता रहा है। पर सरकार यह इंप्रेशन देना चाहती है कि राज्य में, विशेष कर कश्मीर घाटी में ऐसे विवादित पूजास्थल हैं ही नहीं जिन के लिए स्वतंत्रता दिवस वाली स्थिति दरकार हो। एक आभास यह भी मिलता है कि गोया कश्मीर के साथ भारत का कोई लेना-देना ही नहीं है। इसीलिए, वहां के विवादित उपासना स्थलों के मामले में वह क्यों दखल दे।

कश्मीर के देवस्थानों के साथ लाखों कश्मीरी हिन्दुओं की धार्मिक संवेदनाएं जुड़ी हैं। वर्तमान संदर्भ में विस्थापितों के रूप में उनकी ये संवेदनाएं उनके जातीय अस्तित्व की लुप्तप्राय पहचान के संकट के साथ भी जुड़ जाती हैं। राष्ट्रीय एकता और अखंडता की दृष्टि से तो पूरे देश कि बहुसंख्यक समुदाय का सांस्कृतिक संवेदन भी इस से अलगाया नहीं जा सकता।

सरकार से पूछा जाना चाहिए कि क्या उस के ऐसा करने से कश्मीर घाटी में विस्फोटक स्थिति के सामान्य होने में उसे सहायता मिलेगी या वह देश को अंधेरे में रखना चाहती है कि कश्मीर में आज भी सांप्रदायिक सद्भाव और शांति पारंपरिक रूप से बनी हुई है। कुछ समय पहले पूर्व सरकार को कुछ शांति कश्मीरी नेताओं ने एक फार्मुला दिया था। उसमें कश्मीरियों को सन १९५३ की स्थिति बहाल करने का सुझाव है। इस स्थिति को बहाल करने से और बातों के अलावा कश्मीर उच्चतम न्यायालय के अधिकार क्षेत्र से तो बाहर

आएगा ही, संसद के राज्य पर अधिकार भी सीमित हो जाएंगे। इसलिए संसद कश्मीर के विषय में फूक-फूक कर चलेगी। प्रस्तुत विधेयक में राज्य को बाहर रखना इस दिशा में पहली हरी झंडी दिखाना भी हो सकता है।

पिछले कुछ समय से लगता है कि सरकार कश्मीर में अपनी इज्जत बचाने में लगी हुई है। उसके दावे खोखले और अंतरविरोधी हैं। आज भी दर्जनों पाक समर्थित आतंकवादी संगठनों का जनाधार व्यापक और सुदृढ़ है। पिछले डेढ़ वर्ष में जितने हथियार पकड़े गए हैं उनसे सेना की कई कंपनियाँ लड़ाई लड़ सकती हैं। इस बीच जितने अर्धसैनिक बलों के जवान, आतंकवादी, मासूम नागरिक मारे गए हैं और जितने मकान, सरकारी वाहन और इमारतें, जलाई जा चुकी हैं और जितने लाख कश्मीरी अपना घरबार छोड़ कर घाटी से भाग खड़े हुए हैं उससे स्थिति की भयावहता समझ में आ सकती है। कुछ लोगों के मुताबिक घाटी में कोई चालीस हजार प्रशिक्षित आतंकवादी हैं लेकिन सरकार खुद मानती है कि गत एक वर्ष में पाकिस्तान से दस हजार कश्मीरी युवक घाटी में घुसे हैं।

जहां तक कश्मीर घाटी के विवादित पूजास्थलों का संबंध है उनकी संख्या कम नहीं है। दूधगंगा और वितस्ता के संगम पर छताबल (श्रीनगर) का प्रसिद्ध बहुखाटकेश्वर भैरव मंदिर आज बीस वर्ष से बंद है। स्थानीय बहुसंख्यक समुदाय के लोगों ने इस मंदिर के परिसर को जबरन हथियाने के लिए बहाने ढुंढे। स्वामी अमरनाथ यात्रा के रास्ते में पड़ने वाले सूर्य तीर्थ मार्तंड (मट्टन) का 'अमरनाथ' यात्रा कैम्पिंग पार्क बरसों से विवादित है। इस स्थान को लेकर दो समुदायों के बीच काफी संघर्ष भी हुआ है। एक वार अमरनाथ यात्रा भी विरोध में स्थगित होते-होते रह गई थी।

अनंतनाग के गौतमनाग तीर्थ की समाधि व २४ मरले जमीन पर मीरवाइज काजी निसार के निराधार दावे और तोड़-फोड़ से यह तीर्थ भी जो स्वामी अमरनाथ यात्रा का एक पड़ाव माना जाता है, आज विवादित है। शंकराचार्य पर्वत के दामन में दुर्गानाग मंदिर (इलगेट श्रीनगर) की जमीन पर मुसलिम औकाफ ट्रस्ट में सुलेमान काप्लक्स नामक दो इमारतें खड़ी की हैं। देवस्थान सुरक्षा समिति ने इस के खिलाफ मुकदमा भी दायर कर रखा है। कावपोरा (इंदवारा) का मंगलदेवी देवस्थान हाल के वर्षों में ही मुसलिम 'अस्तान' में परिवर्तित हुआ है। कुछ साल पहले तक सारे गांव में यहां से जन्माष्टमी के अवसर पर झांकिया निकाली जाती थी।

प्रख्यात कश्मीरी शैवाचार्य और संस्मृत काव्यशास्त्री अभिनव गुप्त की निर्वाण स्थली बहुरूप गुहा (बोरुवा) भी आज ग्यारह वर्षों से कश्मीरी

हिंदुओं के लिए बंद है। जनश्रुति है कि आचार्य अभिनवगुप्त अपने बारह सौ शिष्यों के साथ अपनी एक प्रसिद्ध संस्तुति 'व्याप्त चराश्वर' पढ़ते हुए इस गुफा के रास्ते निर्वाण को प्राप्त हुए थे। इस गुफा में देवी-देवताओं की मूर्तियां हैं। इसी तरह प्रद्युम्न पीठ (हारी पर्वत, जिसका नाम 'हरा पर्वत' कर दिया गया है, कश्मीरी में 'हारी' शारिका को कहते हैं) की परिक्रमा में मलखाइ का हाटकेश्वर भैरव मंदिर, ऋषिपीर मंदिर (सोपोर) का वजीरबाग, खिब का अनीकनाग, त्रिहगांव (कुपवारा) के मंदिर का पवित्र सर, बुमई (सोपोर) का जिनपोरा आश्रम, गोफबल (छंदवारा) का सप्तऋषि तीर्थ (यहां कुछ वर्ष वर्षोवृन्द साधु की नृशंस हत्या भी की गई), डलगेत श्रीनगर का कोहनखन मंदिर, तुजर का हरनाग तीर्थ, मट्टन का बुमजुव मंदिर जैसे अनेक उपासना स्थानों के साथ विवाद जोड़ दिए गए हैं। पूजास्थल बिल के दायरे में यदि इन देवस्थानों को लाया जाए तो इसका सीधा अर्थ इनके विवाद की समाप्ति होगी। इन पूजास्थलों और उनके जुड़ी भूमियों के विवाद पंद्रह अगस्त १९४७ के परवर्ती हैं।

इस के अतिरिक्त पूरी घाटी में सत्ताईस शमशान-भूमियां भी आंशिक रूप से बहुसंख्यक समुदाय के गैर कानूनी कब्जे में हैं। जहां तक विगत दार्द-तीन साल में कश्मीर के अनेक मंदिरों पर हुए हमलों की बात है उनी संख्या भी खासी है। हालांकि कुछ लोगों ने इस का जोरदार खंडन भी किया है। वरिष्ठ पत्रकार वीजी वर्गीस (इंडियन एक्सप्रेस, दिल्ली ८.५.११ और ११.५.११) कहते हैं कि आतंकवादियों ने दरअसल हमले मंदिरों में ठहराई गई सीआरपी की टुकड़ियों पर किए हैं और इसी के चलते क्षीर भवानी तीर्थ (तुलमुला) और दशनामी अखाड़ा (बड़शाह चौक) के अमरेश्वर महादेव मंदिरों की बाहरी ड्योदियां क्षतिग्रस्त हुई हैं। तर्क तो सही भी है।

पर अपना घरबार छोड़ कर देश में मारे-मारे फिरते कश्मीरी विस्थापितों की भावनाएं इन तीर्थों के साथ जुड़ी हैं। वर्गीस महादेव का ही तर्क मान लिया जाए तो पूजास्थलों का किसी भी बहाने क्षतिग्रस्त हो जाना धार्मिक स्थलों का अपमान नहीं है? यदि अर्धसैनिक बलों की किसी ऐसी कारवाई से कश्मीर में दूसरे वर्गों की इबादतगाहों का आंशिक भी नुकसान होता तो क्या तब भी ऐसा ही कहा जाता? और फिर न जाने किस भाजपा नेता की सूचना पर पत्रकार महोदय श्रीनगर के उन दो-तीन मंदिरों को देखने गए गहां अबकी बार अमी तक कुछ नहीं हुआ है। हालांकि इनकी मंदिरों (गणपतयार, पुरुषयार, गीता मंदिर कर्णनगर, रामेश्वरम मंदिर, लालमंडी, भैरवनाथ, आदि) को देखने वर्गीस महोदय को पाकिस्तान के राष्ट्रपति जुल्फिकार अली भुट्टो की फांसी, मसजिद अल अक्सा में इजराइलियों के प्रवेश, जिया-उल-हक की मृत्यु या सलमान रशदी की किताव पर झगड़े के मौकों पर आना चाहिए था।

बहरहाल क्षीरभवानी तीर्थ (तुलमुला) को चार अप्रैल १९९१ को रोकट हमले और चार मई १९९१ को गोलाबारी का शिकार होना पड़ा। तीर्थ की विशाल और भव्य इयौड़ी क्षतिग्रस्त हुई है। सत्थु बरबरशाह के दो मंदिर रामेश्वर महादेव (पुल के पास) और गौरीशंकर मंदिर (घाट पर) जला डाले गए। यह सन् १९८८ के जाड़ों की बात है। इसके बाद हब्बाकदल के सोमयार मंदिर की इमारत जिसमें धर्मशाला और दूसरी तरफ दुकाने थी, जला डाली गई। इसके विरोध में आज के विस्थापितों ने हब्बाकदल पर घरना भी दिया था। शिव मंदिर (फतेहकदल) में छब्बीस जनवरी ७९ को शाम साढ़े चार बजे दंगाइयों ने तोड़-फोड़ की और इसकी धर्मशाला को जला डालने की कोशिश की। दशनामी अखाड़ा (बड़शाह) के श्री अमरेश्वर महादेव मंदिर के परिसर में उन्नीस मई १९९० को बम फेंका गया। इस अखाड़े की बहारी ड्योदी पर गोलियों के निशान आज भी देखे जा सकते हैं। इसी तरह नेहाका (छंदवारा), सुंबल (सोनावारी), मीर (सोपोर), नागवल (अनंतनाग), चीनीगुंड (अनंतनाग), लोकपुण्य, (लोकभवन), गोसाईगुंड आश्रम (लोकभवन के पास), महादेव मंदिर (शुपयन) आदि अनेक उपासना स्थल क्षतिग्रस्त हुए हैं जिन लोगों को इन आरोपों से एतराज हो उन्हें कश्मीरी विस्थापितों के किसी नेता के साथ ले जाकर इन देवस्थानों का प्रत्येक निरीक्षण करना चाहिए। यह भी पता करना चाहिये कि पिछले दस वर्षों में अमीराकदल के हनुमान मंदिर पर कितने बड़े हमले हुए हैं और कारकुट नाग (अनंतनाग) की क्या दास्तान है?

सन १९८६ में अनंतनाग में दंगों के दौरान कितने मंदिर, गौशालाएं, धर्मशालाएं जला डाले गए, सब जानते हैं। यहां दोहराने की आवश्यकता नहीं। साधुगंगा तीर्थ को जबरन हथियाने के लिए कुछ वर्ष पूर्व एक बड़े हुजूम ने धावा बोल दिया। इस तीर्थ के उस समय के महंत ब्रजनाथ शाह को आतंकवादियों ने सत्ताईस अप्रैल ९० को पेड़ से फांसी लगा कर मार डाला।

यही हाल श्रीनगर के विद्यारनाग तीर्थ के स्वामी केशवनाथ के साथ भी हुआ। उसे जनवरी १९९१ में मार डाला गया। इसके बाद मां राजा के मंजगांव तीर्थ के साधु की भी हत्या कर डाली गई। श्रीनगर के प्रसिद्ध शीतलनाग मंदिर के परिसर को बिना किसी आधार या विवाद के दीवारबंदी करने से रोका जाता रहा है। इसके एक हिस्से पर पिछले कुछ बरसों से ही पुलिस स्टेशन के ठीक सामने बोर्ड टंगा है 'अहाता अहले इसलाम।'

ऐसा लगते हैं कि सरकार ने पूजास्थल बिल से कश्मीर के मंदिरों के विवाद को बाहर रख कर वस्तुस्थिति पर पर्दा डालने की भी कोशिश की है।

लेखक का पता - ९० लेन १२ भवानी नगर, जानीपोर, जम्मू - १८०००१

नाकामियों को दिल से लगाया ही नहीं

सुनयना काचरु भीड़े

नाकामियों को दिल से लगाया ही नहीं
ऐसा जीना कभी रास आया ही नहीं
मेरी कमजोरियों को अपने हुनर से मत तोलो
खुदा ने इंसानों को एक जैसा बनाया ही नहीं

हाथ जुड़ें तो दिल जोड़ने की खाहिश भी रखो
पर हर रिश्ते में गलतियों की गुंजाईश भी रखो
इतनी बारीकियों से परखो न सारे तुम लोगों को
नुकाचीनो ने कभी दोस्त बनाया ही नहीं
-खुदा ने इंसानों को एक जैसा बनाया ही नहीं

किसी पीपल ने किसी बरगद के पत्ते नहीं गिने
फूल ने खाती हुई मधुमक्खों के छत्ते नहीं गिने
सबकी अपनी यहाँ रफ्तार सबका अपना चलन
-परिंदों ने कभी चींटी को हराया ही नहीं

खुद पर हँसो और खुल के प्यार करो
इतना मुश्किल नहीं, यह रवैया जो इख्तियार करो
धुंध और धूप मिले तो ही तो धनुक बनता है
--तेरी नज़रों को लेकिन नज़र आया ही नहीं

मानसून

सुनयना काचरु भीड़े

काश तुम्हें भेज पाती मानसून का एक टुकड़ा
तो शायद याद आ जाती तुम्हें वह बारिश
जिसमें भीगने से मैंने तुम्हें रोका था
"जुकाम हो जाएगा"
और तुमने हाथ खींच कर कहा था
"बदन पर तेज़ बारिश की मार खाकर तो देखो!!!!
सुना है अब जिस मुल्क में हो वहाँ मानसून नहीं होता
मौसम बड़े सलीके से आकर धुंधले हो जाते हैं
कुछ भी शिद्दत से बरसता नहीं
तुम कहो तो
तुम्हारे हिस्से का मैं भीग जाऊँ?
या फिर आ जाओ
बदन पर तेज़ बारिश की मार खाकर तो देखो!!!!

तीखी धूप है

सुनयना काचरु भीड़े

तीखी धूप है
तीखी धूप है
और धीमी आंच पर
भूली हुई गर्म हवा
भेज दूँ ?
छत पर रखे हुए आम पापड़
की तरह
तुम्हारा कोई भीगा हुआ लम्हा
सूख जाए शायद
मुझे कुछ करार आए
--तो बोलो ! भेज दूँ ?
तीखी धूप है

किसी खंडहर के
तहखाने के एक
बंद कमरे में
मुद्दत से तुम्हारी कोई शाम कैद हो
पीठ ही सेक ले शायद
मुझे भी कुछ करार आए
--तो बोलो ! भेज दूँ ?
तीखी धूप है

होता है.... कभी यूँ भी होता है
अचानक कोई काट कर ले जाता है
हमारे हिस्से की सारी की सारी धूप
जैसे कि किसी ने आकर
रात से चाँद और तारे
पोंछ डाले हो
फिर कितने मौसम भी बदले
लम्हों की नमी नहीं जाती
माज़ी के बंद कमरों में
रौशनदार नहीं बनते

Based in Boston Ms. Sunayna Kachru Bhide with a background in Computers is a poet as well as a dialogue and short story writer for films. She was recognized for her contribution in promoting Poetry and Literature in the New England area of U.S. She is the producer and writer for 'Pashmeena', feature film currently in pre-production stage.

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अभिषप्त वरदान

नीमा रानी कौल

ईश्वर की अनुपम कृति, प्रकृति की विहार स्थली कश्मीर की घाटी में यह कैसा आतंक छाया हुआ था? मोतियों से झड़ी हरित मणि सदृश, चौरों ओर हिमाच्छादित पर्वतों से घिरी इस श्यामला घाटी की अतुलनीय तथा अलौकिक शोभा किस कारण आज मन्द पड़ गई थी? मृतकों में भी प्राणों का संघार करने वाली शीतल मन्द-मन्द पवन के झोंके किस वेदना से रह-रह कर कराह रहे थे। शोभाशालिनी, आरोग्यदायिनी चिनार की कोमल पत्तियाँ क्यों सिर धुन धुन कर पश्चाताप कर रही थीं? प्रभात का कोहरा दुःखी हृदयों का संताप बन किस कारण सर्वत्र छा गया था? ऊषा काल की अरुणिमा कहीं निरीह प्राणियों के रक्त से हो रंजित तो न थी? मखमल सी हरी दूब पर ओस के कण क्या कश्मीरी जन के अश्रु ही थे। विकसित हुए गुलाब रूपी मुख किस व्यथा के ताप से असभय ही मुरझा उठे थे। देवदार, चीड़, सरु और चिनार किस व्यथा से उच्छ्वास ले रहे थे। मीठे जल भरी अमृत-सी झील में खारापन क्यों कर आ गया था? वितस्ता नदी की शांत स्वच्छ जल धार में से यह कैसा करुण क्रन्दन सुनाई दे रहा था? निर्मल नील गगन में चहकते फुदकते पक्षी क्यों आज पंख कंठे से फड़फड़ा रहे थे। स्थान-स्थान पर कैसी वीभत्सता छायी थी कि देखने वाले का दिल दहल उठता। किसके कुकृत्यों से भूस्वर्ग का नरक में परिवर्तन हो गया था।

कश्मीर का सुल्तान 'जैनुलाब्दीन' अपने शयन कक्ष में कोमल, हिम से श्वेत तथा सुगन्धित रेशमी बिछौने पर भी छटपटा रहा था। उसके शरीर पर बिषेला फोड़ा निकला हुआ था। अतः इस घातक पीड़ा से वह कराह रहा था। इस शारीरिक असाध्य व्याधि से भी बढ़कर उसकी मानसिक व्याधि थी, जिसके कारण उसका मन अशांत था। यह कोमल और सुन्दर शैया उससे सर्पों के फणों की शैया भासती थी जो कि उसके शरीर में बार-बार काट कर विष भर रहे थे। अति व्यथित और अशांत वह छत को ओर टकटकी लगाये देख रहा था, परन्तु देखता वह कुछ और ही था।

“ओफ! तमाम ऐशोपशरत के सामान महिया होकर भी मुझ-सा दुःखी कौन है? आह! जिस रियाया के खातिर मैं जान तक देने को तैयार हूँ, वही रियाया मुझसे नफरत करती है। जबान से चाहे वह कुछ न बोले, पर नफरत की नजर भी कहीं छिपी रह सकती है? मेरा कसूर बस इतना ही है कि मैं एक जालिम बाप का बेटा हूँ। हाय! अब्बाजन को यह क्या सूझी थी कि उन्होंने इस जन्मत बे नजीर मुल्क को जहन्नुम बना दिया। इस्लाम के नाम पर उन्होंने क्या नहीं किया। बेकसूर आदमियों के खून से इस्लाम के पाक दामन को नापाक करके भी यही समझते रहे कि इस्लाम का प्रचार किया। ओफ! जुल्म को भी हद होती है। हिन्दुओं के मंदिर वतन में ही

हिन्दुओं के खून की नदियाँ बहा दी। हिन्दु धर्म का खातिमा करने के लिये क्या कुछ नहीं किया? उनके धर्म शास्त्र जला दिये गये। मन्दिर और मूर्तियाँ तोड़ दी गईं। पूजा-पाठ या हिन्दु धर्म-कर्म करने वाले को झील 'डल' अथवा बुलर में फेंकवा दिया, फांसी की सजा दी, और न जाने किस-किस तरह उन्हें मौत के मुँह में धकेला गया। पर इसमें भी अब्बाजन को सबसे बढ़कर शिकरत मिली। जिस हिन्दु धर्म का खातिमा करने के लिये उन्होंने इतना खून खराबी की वह अब भी बदस्तुर लुके-छिपे चल रहा है। आह! अपने धर्म और ईमान के खातिर जी दिल पर पत्थर रख, अपने मादिरे-वतन से भाग निकला। उसे भी सरहद पर अपने दाबेदार गुलामों से पकड़वाकर मौत के घाट उतार दिया। ओफ! खुदाया, अगर अब्बा जिन्दा होते तो मैं आज उन्हें पूछता कि इतने कत्ले आम करने पर आपको क्या मिला? मिली सिर्फ यतीमों और बेवाओं की बददुआएँ, मिली सारी रियाया की नफरत, जो कि अब विरासत में मुझे भी मिल रही है, मिला 'बुत्त शिकन का खताबा। यह न सोचना अब्बा! कि इन खून की नदियों से आपने इस्लाम का ढंका बजाया! नहीं! नहीं! इन काली करतूतों से अपने पाक इस्लाम को भी नफरत का शिकार बवाया। जुल्म अगर हिन्दुओं पर हुये, पर यहाँ के मुसलमानों को देख ऐसा लगता है कि उनका ही आधा जिस्म चीर कर अलग रख दिया गया हो। अहा! यहाँ के हिन्दू मुसलमानों का इतिहास बेमिसाल है। इसे दुनिया की कोई भी ताकत अलग नहीं कर सकती। दुनिया वाले आकर देख लें हिन्दू-मुसलमान के इस इतिहास को। हिन्दू भाइयों पर जुल्म होते देख यहाँ के मुसलमान किस कदर गम से जीते जी मुर्दा बन गये हैं। इन्हें यह सदमा बरदास्त करना मुश्किल हो गयी है। ओफ! क्या करूँ? मुल्क की यह हालत अब मुझमें देखी नहीं जा सकती। दिल फटा जा रहा है, जिस पर यह जहराला फोड़ा! ओफ अब यह पीड़ा बरदास्त नहीं होती। लगता है अब्बाजन को मजहबी कट्टरता का जहर सब सिमट कर मेरे जिस्म पर फोड़ की शकल में निकल आया है। इससे छुटकारा पाने की उमीद रखना बेवकूफी है। निजात इससे मिले भी कैसे - कोई काबिल तरीन हकीम भी तो यहाँ नहीं रहा। हकीम ही क्यों - सभी काबिल तरीन शारब्जयतें यहाँ से या तो भाग गई हैं या मौत के मुँह धकेल दी गई हैं। हाय अब्बा! क्या कभी आपने इतना भी न सोचा कि इस तरह रियाया को जड़ से उखाड़ कर हम किस पर अपनी हकूमत चलायेंगे। नहीं! कसूर सिर्फ आपका ही नहीं है। आपने भी पहले-पहल मेरे दादा-परदादा की तरह मजहबी फेरफार में न पड़ कर सबको एक ही नजर से देखा था। बुरा हो उन गैर मुल्कीय उल्माओं का, जिन्होंने आपके दरबार में पनाह पाकर आपके ही कान भरने लगे। आह! डह इन्सान को हैवान

बना देता है। तब उनकी क्या गलती। वे जब यहाँ आये हिन्दु-मुसलमान की आपसी पाक मुहब्बत देखी तो उनके कलेजे पर सांप लोटने लगे। उन्होंने इस्लाम के नाम पर आपको बहका कर खून की नदियों से कलेजे की जलन मिटानी चाही। पर वह बढ़ती ही गई जैसेआग में घी पड़ रहा हो। किससे अपने दिल का दर्द कहें? दरबार चाप-लूसों से भरा पड़ा है, फिर जब यह बाहरी फोड़े को नायाब न कर सके तो दिल के नासूरों की बात कौन कहे।”

सुल्तान जैनुलाब्दीन का सनतप्त हृदय ग्लानि, कठिन व्याधि तथा परिताप की ज्वाला में झुलस रहा था। पिता के कुवृत्त्यों का स्मरणकर वह कांप उठता था। शरीर पर निकले हुये विषैले फोड़े से भी किसी प्रकार छुटकारा न मिलता था। जीवन और मृत्यु के संघर्ष से वह ऊबता गया था दिन-दिन घातक पीड़ा बढ़ती ही जाती थी। राज कर्मचारी वैद्यों तथा हकीमों को नित्य-प्रति ले आते। परन्तु वे अनुभव हीन नाम मात्र के हो वैद्य होते। योग्य और अनुभवी वैद्यों का सफाया सिकन्दर बुत शिकन के समय में हो चुका था। अब यदि कहीं कोई था भी वह राजकर्मचारियों से लुक-छिप कर जीवन यापन करते थे। सुल्तान से उन्हें नाम मात्रकी सहानुभुति न थी क्योंकि यह उसी सुल्तान का पुत्र तथा उत्तराधिकारी था जिसने इनका समूल नष्ट करने में कोई कसर न रखी थी। सारी प्रजा, सुल्तान से उदासीन थी। यह असह्य वेदना सुल्तान को दग्ध कर रही थी! कोई उसके हृदय को नहीं टटोलता था। पिता के दुष्कृतों का फल पुत्र पर लाद सभी उससे मन ही मन घृणा करते थे। यह असह्य तिरस्कार सुल्तान को कचोट रहा था परन्तु वह विवश था। हाँ, राजकर्मचारी उससे वफादारी अवश्य दिखाते, परन्तु सुल्तान को उनके सवालियों से जनता के हाहाकार सुनाई पढ़ते उनकी स्वार्थन्धता, निष्ठुरता सुल्तान से छिपी न थी। अतः अपने उन चाहने वालों को वह भी उसी प्रकार घृणा करता था जिस प्रकार उसे जनता।

‘सिकन्दर बुत शिकन’ ने इस्लाम के प्रचारार्थ जो नर संहार किया था उससे कश्मीर का बच्चा-बच्चा परिचित था। धर्मान्धता के दमन चक्र तथा उत्पीड़न से निरापराध जनता को मसल डाला था। यह वह युग था जब कश्मीर में ब्राह्मणों तथा बौद्धों का बोलबाला था। इस्लाम का अभी यहाँ प्रादुर्भाव ही हुआ था। कश्मीर के कुछ नागरिकों ने ब्राह्मणों की कटरता से तंग आकर तथा कइयों ने इस्लाम की उदार नीति से प्रभावित होकर इसकी शरण ली थी। परन्तु उनमें साम्प्रदायिकता नाम मात्र को न थी। उनकी धार्मिक सहिष्णुता तथा भ्रातृ भावना अतुलनीय थी। शैव, बौद्ध तथा मुसलमान अपने-अपने धार्मिक नियमों का पालन करते हुए भी आपस में एक परिवार के सदस्यों की भाँति रहते थे। एक दूसरे के सुख-दुख में काम आते उनका आपसी प्रेम संसार में अद्वितीय था। सुख-शान्ति के इन दिनों में अद्यानक भूकम्प के एक झटके से पृथ्वी हिल गई। पृथ्वी घंस गई परन्तु फिर भी उसमें दरार न पड़ी। यह भूकम्प ‘सिकन्दर बुत

शिकन’ का शासन काल था। चौदहवीं शताब्दी के अन्तिम दिनों में जब सिकन्दर कश्मीर के राजसिंहेसन पर बढ़ता था तो अपने पिता और पितामह की भाँति ही धार्मिक मामलों में निशपक्ष, उदार तथा सहिष्णु रहा। परन्तु होनी होकर ही रही। सुल्तान विद्या प्रेमी था। उसके दरबार में अनेक विदेशी साहित्य मर्मज्ञ तथा विद्वान प्रवासी हुए थे। वे कश्मीर में हिन्दु-मुसलमानों का अगाध प्रेम देख अवाक रह गये।

इर्ष्या की ज्वाला उनकी नस-नस में भभक उठी। उन्हें यह कैसे सह्य होता कि एक मुसलमान एक हिन्दु से भ्रातीय भावना रखे। उन्हें इसमें अपना अपमान दीख पड़ता था। कश्मीर के निवासी भी उनसे सशंकित रहते। वे उन्हें पूँछलतारा के समान अशुभ फलदायक समझते थे। उनके प्रति आदर तो दूर अपमान करने से वे कभी न चूकते थे। अतः इन्होंने भोली-भाली जनता को कुचलने के लिये सुल्तान के दरबार में इस्लाम के नाम का जाल फैलाया। इस्लाम की आड़ लेकर सुल्तान को भाँति-भाँति के प्रलोभन दिये। तिस पर भी सुल्तान धार्मिक दमन क्रूर चक्की चलाने से स्वयं को रोकता रहा। यहा ज्वाला दरबार में धधकने लगी थी, परन्तु अभी भीषण लपटें न उठी थी, ये लपटें उठी सुल्तान के मंत्री ‘सुहभट्ट’ का सहयोग पाकर। उसने भाँति-भाँति से सुल्तान के कानभरने आरम्भ किये और शीघ्र ही सुल्तान को अपने पक्ष में कर लिया। सुल्तान ने धर्मान्धता का पहनावा धारण किया। बस फिर क्या था, राजा, मंत्री तथा सभासद जब किसी कार्य के लिये कटिबद्ध हो जाय तो फिर जो कुछ भी हो कम है। धार्मिक दमन की ज्वाला ने प्रचण्ड लपटों का रूप धारण किया और उस स्वर्गीय घाटी को जलाकर राख करने लगी।

‘सुहभट्ट’ स्वयं ब्राह्मण था और किसी कारण वश उसे इस्लाम ग्रहण करना पड़ा था। उसने पुनः हिन्दु धर्म को अपनाना चाहा था परन्तु धर्म के ठेकेदार ब्राह्मणों ने उसे अनुमति नहीं दी। बस फिर क्या था-प्रतिशोध की भावना से वह धधक उठा और सुल्तान को धर्मान्धता का विष भरने में प्रवासी विद्वानों की सहायता की। इस प्रकार इस देश द्रोही ने मानवता का अभिशाप तथा निष्ठुरता का परिहास के रूप में सुल्तान को तैयार किया। सर्व प्रथम इन्होंने हिन्दु धर्मका नामोनिशान मिटाने का असफल प्रयास किया। धर्म शास्त्रों को जला दिया गया। कला के उत्कृष्ट नमुने, यहाँ तक कि मार्तण्ड तथा अवन्ती पुर जैसे मन्दिरों को भी धराशायी कर दिया गया। शिखा रखना, दाह क्रिया करना, जनेउ पहनाना तथा पूजा पाठ करना वर्जित किया गया। जो इस्लाम ग्रहण करने में आनाकानी करता उसे भाँति-भाँति की यंत्रणाएँ देकर मृत्यु के घाट उतारा जाता। चारों ओर आतंक छा गया। यहाँ तक कि धर्म और प्राणों की रक्षा के लिए यदि कोई देश त्याग कर भाग निकलता तो उसे सीमान्त प्रदेश पर पकड़वा कर मृत्यु के मुख में डाल दिया जाता। इस नृशंस हत्याकाण्ड तथा निरीह जनता पर ये अत्याचारों को देख पाषाण भी

पिघल उठते। हिन्दु तो काफिर थे ही परन्तु मुसलमान जनता भी उनके कोप से न बच सकी। उनका दोष यही था कि वह अपने भाईयों से जो कि एक ही भूमि पर पालित हुये थे प्रेम सूत्र से बंधे थे। उनके प्रति सहृदयता तथा सहानुभूति कूट-कूट कर भरी थी। उन्होंने नाना भाँति के अत्याचार सहे और अपने हिन्दु भाईयों की रक्षा प्राण-पण से की थी, अपने घरों में छिपा रखा। यहाँ तक कि भागने वालों के साथ जंगल-जंगल की खाक छानते उन्हें सीमान्त पर विदा किया था। उस हृदय विदारक दृश्य का वर्णन कोई भला क्या कर सकता है। उनका दुख पीड़ितों तथा शोषितों से भी अधिक था। उन्हें भास होता था कि ऊनके अंग-भंग कर दिये जाते हैं नेत्रों की ज्योति छीन गयी है। उनके होठों की मुस्कान, जीवन को उमंग लुप्त हो गई। वे जीते जागते मृतक बन गये थे। 'सिकन्दर बुत शिकन' हरी-भरी धरती को रेगिस्तान कर चल बसे थे। अब उनके पुत्र 'जैनुलाब्दीन' काश्मीर को गद्दी पर बैठ गये थे परन्तु काश्मीरी जनता के हृदयों पर वह आसीन न हो सके। क्योंकि उनके भोले-भाले हृदयों पर 'सिकन्दर बुत शिकन' के दुश्कृत्यों से जो घाव हुए थे। वे अभी तक ज्यों के त्यो थे।

इन्हीं दिनों 'श्री भट्ट' नामक एक विद्वान तथा निष्ठवान ब्राह्मण घाटी में रहते थे। इन्हें अपने प्राणों से भी अधिक मोह अपनी जन्मभूमि का था। ये आयुर्वेद तथा अन्य कई विद्याओं में पारंगत थे। स्वयं शैव होते हुये भी ये अन्य धर्मों का आदर करते थे। धार्मिक-संकीर्णता से कोसों दूर-सीदा-सादा जीवन और सरलता को प्रतिमूर्ति। सेवा तथा परोपकार ही इनके जीवन का लक्ष्य था। इसी मानवचरन ने पुनः काश्मीर के इतिहास में स्वर्णिम युग की स्थापना की थी।

ऊषाकाल की अरुणिमा के पहले ही श्री भट्ट वितस्ता नदी के घाट पर स्नान ध्यान से निवृत्त होकर धर की निचली कोठरी में कपाट लगा कर देवाराधना में लग गये। आडम्बर रहित पूजा-पाठ से निवृत्त हो ज्यों ही उन्होंने कोठरी के बाहर पांव रखे, कि अपने सन्मुख दो राज-सैनिकों को देखा। वे अवाक रह गये। मन ही मन सोचने लगे- कि "आज इन्होंने मेरा पता लगा ही लिया" वह घबराये नहीं परन्तु उन्होंने मन ही मन यह दृढ़ निश्चय किया, "चाहे जो हो मुझे कितनी ही यातनायें क्यों न मिले पर मैं न तो अपने धर्म से, न अपनी मातृभूमि से ही विलग होऊँगा।" वे उनके निकट निर्भय होकर गये। यद्यपि उनका अनुमान था कि अभी कोड़े बरसाते हुये उन्हें न जाने कहाँ-कहाँ लिया जायेगा। पर ऐसा कुछ न हुआ। उन्हें नम्रता पूर्वक अभिवादन करते देख वे स्तब्ध रह गये। अग्नि में यह शीतलता कैसी। जब उन्हें ज्ञात हुआ कि वे उन्हें सुल्तान के पास सादर ले जाने आये है तो उन्होंने स्पष्ट अस्वीकार करते हुये कहा- "मुझ निर्धन प्राणी को भला सुल्तान से क्या काम? अपने लिये दो मुट्ठी अन्न परिश्रम से उपार्जन करता हूँ इसके अतिरिक्त न उधौ का लेना न माधो का देना। न किसी का सेवक हूँ न स्वामी। हाँ यदि

उनकी आँखों में चुभ गया हूँ तो जो चाहे करे। मैं उस अत्याचारी के दरबार में नहीं जा सकता।" इस उत्तर को सुनकर भी वे खून का धूँट पीकर रह गये वे राजाज्ञा के कारण विवश थे। बर किसकी मजाल थी कि उनकी आज्ञा का उल्लंघन करें। उन्होंने आज तक प्रत्युत्तर न सुना था। जो कहा करके दिखा दिया था। आज्ञा का उल्लंघन करने के पहले ही वे उसे यमपुरी पहुँचाते पर आज सुल्तान जैनुलाब्दीन के कारण उन्हें खरी खोटी सूननी पड़ी। उन्होंने चूँ तक न की उन्हें बारबार कहा गया था कि उन्हें दरबार में सादर लाया जाय। अतः वे मन मसोस कर लौट पड़े। श्री भट्ट भी कम चकित न थे, कि इतना सुन लेने पर भी उन्होंने उनका सिर धड़ से विलग नहीं किया।

जब श्री भट्ट ने सुना कि वास्तव में सुल्तान जैनुलाब्दीन पिता की भाँति क्रूर तथा धर्मन्ध नहीं है और भयंकर व्याधि से पीड़ित है तो वे स्वयं को वहाँ के जाने से रोक न सके। उनका निश्चय बालू की भीत की भाँति ढह गया। वे सुल्तान के पास पहुँच ही तो गये। उनके रोग का निरीक्षण किया तथा चिकित्सा में दत्तचित्त लग गये। उनकी अथक लगन से सुल्तान ने देखा, पीड़ा तो क्या फोड़े का भी नामो निशान नहीं रहा है। उनके आन्तरिक हर्ष का पार न रहा, असीम कृतज्ञता से हृदय भर गया। इस फटे हाल ब्राह्मण ने जो असाध्य को साध्य कर दिखाया था, उन्हें इसकी समकभावना स्वप्न में भी न थी। उनका मस्तक श्रद्धा से झुक गया। रोम-रोम में अपूर्व हर्ष छा गया। उनके राज्य में अब तक ऐसी महान आत्मायें है यह देखकर अन्तर की दारुण ज्वाला में शीतलता का संचार हुआ। अनिर्वर्नीय आनन्द से वे पुलकित हो उठे। उन्होंने श्री भट्ट को हीरे-जवाहरातों तथा जमीन जागीर से मालामाल कर देना चाहा। परन्तु उस महान त्यागी ने कुछ भी लेना अस्वीकार का दिया। उसे अपने तथा अपनी जाति का विकल क्रन्दन सुनायी देता था। अपनी मातृभूमि की विकराल विभीषिका से वह रह कर काँप उठता था। अपनी सम्यता तथा संस्कृति के लिये मर मिटने वाले उस महान त्यागी को हीरे-जवाहरात कांच से भी तुच्छ जान पड़े। सुल्तान के बारबार आग्रह करने पर उसने विनम्रता से कहा - "आलीशाह! मैं इसे लेकर क्या करूँ। यदि आप मुझे इस धन से समृद्ध करना चाहते हैं तो मेरी इतना प्रार्थना सुन लीजिये यह धन पीड़ित तथा शोषित वर्ग में बाँट दीजिये। आप दयालु स्वामी है मेरी केवल इतनी ही विनती है कि देश की स्थिति अति करुणाजनक है। उसका स्वयं निरीक्षण कीजिए।" ये शब्द सुनते ही सुल्तान के नेत्रों से अश्रुधारा बह चली। बेदना तथा आनन्द की लहरों में डूबता उतराता वह सोच रहा था कि आज प्रथम बार उसे ऐसा मानव मिला जो उसे बिना छल-कपट तथा चापलूमी के पथ दिखा रहा है वह इसके महान त्याग, निष्कपट व्यवहार तथा अलौकिक व्यक्तित्व से प्रभावित हुए बिना न रह सका। उसने श्री भट्ट से प्रार्थना की कि वह यदि सचमुच ही देश को खुशहाल बनाना

चाहता है तो वह भी उसकी सहायता करे। जिससे वह इस दायित्व को निभा सके। देश की दुर्दशा को देख श्री भट्ट ने बचन दिया कि वह इस कार्य में सदा सहयोग देगा। अन्त में सुल्तान ने उसको प्रधान न्यायाधीश तथा कोषाध्यक्ष का उत्तरदायित्व पूर्ण पद दिया। साथ ही अपने सम्प्रदाय की दुर्दशा दूर करने का पूरा अधिकार दे दिया। भागे हुये लोगों को पुनः बसाया गया धार्मिक कृत्यों पर लगी रोक उठा दी गई। यहाँ तक कि सुल्तान स्वयं मुसलमान होते हुए भी अपने अतिरिक्त समय में योगवशिष्ट का अध्ययन करता। प्रजा ने अपने दयालु सुल्तान को पहचाना। उसकी वेदना आनन्द में तथा घृणा प्रेम में परिणित हो गई। कश्मीर की पावन मयी भूमि पर स्वर्णिम युग का प्रादुर्भाव हुआ। श्री भट्ट के देश प्रेम की भावना तथा निस्वार्थ प्रवृत्ति तथा सुल्तान की मानवता का शुभेच्छा तथा धार्मिक सहिष्णुता ने मिलकर एक नये संसार की सृष्टि कर डाली उस समय दूसरी शताब्दी में जिसकी कल्पना भी अन्य देश न कर पाये थे। बिना किसी भेद-भाव के दरबार में विद्वानों को सम्मान मिलता रहा उस बौद्ध 'तिलकाचार्य' प्रधान मन्त्री 'जीन राज' तथा श्रीधर जैसे विद्वान इतिहासज्ञ 'कर्पूर भट्ट वैद्याचार्य' 'रूप भट्ट' ज्योतिषाचार्य तथा अनेकों विद्वान दरबार के रत्न थे। जिससे कि संस्कृत, फारसी, काश्मीरी साहित्य की अपूर्व उन्नति हुई। मस्जिदों के साथ ही साथ मन्दिरों का निर्माण हुआ दलित-गलित पीड़ित तथा शोषित जनों का उद्धार हुआ भूमि कर की उचित व्यवस्था कर कृषकों का उद्धार हुआ आयात तथा निर्यात वस्तुओं का मुल्य नियन्त्रित हुआ। यहाँ तक कि मृत्यु दण्ड के स्थान पर उनसे मजदूरी का काम लेकर उन्हें भी उपयोगी नागरिक बनाना की चेष्टा कर सुल्तान जैनुलाब्दीन ने अपनी दूरदर्शिता तथा योग्यता का परिचय दिया। पिता की कलंक कालिमा पर धार्मिक सहिष्णुता तथा मानवता की रजत शुभ्र आभा डाल कर उसको लुप्त किया। हिन्दु मुसलमान को समान दृष्टि से देख कर माला के बिखरे मोतियों को पिरो कर ही सुल्तान तथा श्री भट्ट ने दम लिया। धार्मिकता के ढोंग से कोसों दूर सच्चे धर्म का

अनुसरण कर वह जनता के हृदयों पर आसीन हुआ। आज सामाजिक धार्मिक तथा राजनैतिक उद्धार कर उसे 'बड़शाह' की उपाधि मिली। 'बड़शाह' अर्थात् महान शासक निसन्देह वह महाल शासक था जो कि आज तक कश्मीरी जनता के हृदयों पर आसीन है। आज भी लोगों के मन में उसके प्रति असीम श्रद्धा है। धन्य है वे लोग जिन्होंने खोयी हुई शान्ति पुनः ला दी, धन्य है वह देश प्रेमी जिसने अथाह सम्पत्ति के देशप्रेम के समझ तुच्छ समझा, शमशान जैसी नीरवता छायी कश्मीर के भूमि खण्ड पर अपने त्याग और लगन के प्रखर आलोक से आनन्दोल्लास से परिपूर्ण कर दिया।

भीनी-भीनी सुगन्धित हवा चल रही थी जिसके स्पर्श से जन-जन के मुख रूपी गुलाब खिल उठे थे। सुल्तान जैनुलाब्दीन अपने महल के दालान पर बैठे प्रसन्न चित्त से इस आलौकिक शोभा को निहार रहे थे।

उन्हें रोमांच हो रहा था अपने प्रजा को सुखी और प्रफुल्लित देख कर वितस्ता नदी की शांत स्वच्छ प्रवाह में सुल्तान जैनुलाब्दीन की यशोगाथा कल-कल ध्वनि में गूँज रही थी सरु और चिनार के वश भी प्रफुल्ल चित्त से सिर हिला-हिला कर उस स्वर के साथ लय दे रहे थे। केसर की सुगन्धित क्यारियों से भी वही यशगाथा सुगन्धि के रूप में महक रही थी। चारों ओर सुख और शांति का साम्राज्य छाया था। भूतल पर पुनः स्वर्ग की स्थापना ही चूका थी। जाति-पाति, द्वेष, घृणा, हिंसा को परित्यक्त कर सभी पवित्र प्रेम के सूत्र में गूँथ गये थे। और सदैव वैसे ही रहेंगे। फूट डालने वालों की वहाँ न कभी चलेगी। पक्षियों का कलरव एकत्मकता की गीत सदैव गाता रहेगा। विश्व के सम्मुख कश्मीर सदैव अपनी एकता का उदाहरण रहा है और रहेगा भी। आज तक कोई भी शक्ति उससे इस पथ से विचलित न कर सकी है इतिहास इसका साक्षी है।

लेखिका वितस्ता के हिन्दी अंश की नींव है। फोन 40038887

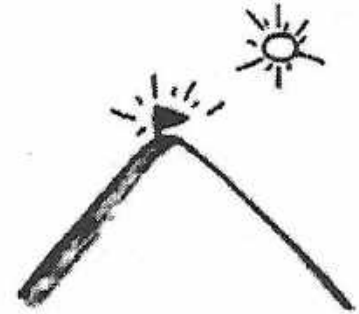
हार या जीत

अंशुल ऐमा कौल

रेत के टीले पर, गाड़ोगे झंडे,
कब तक टिक पाएंगे,
आने दो आंधी को,
झंडा क्या है,
टीले ही उखड़ जाएँगे,
बेहाल होंगे तुम,
सब खो दिया होगा,
अब ढूँडो फिर से,
नया टीला, नया झंडा, नया डंडा,
पर अगर सत्य में,
विजय होना चाहते हो, तो ध्यान रहे,
टीला ना हो रेत का,
जो खुद नहीं रहता,
तुम्हारे झंडे को क्या संभालेगा।

मिट्टी के टीले पर, गाड़ोगे झंडा,
हार फिर जाओगे,
बरसात का पानी आने दो, टीले के साथ,
नदी बनकर बहने लगोगे,
जब सूरज फिर से चमकेगा,
तो न होगा टीला, न झंडा,
हार जाओगे।

जीतना है?
तो वहाँ गाड़ो झंडे,
जहाँ वह अमर रहे,
तूफान से लड़े,
आँधी को शांत करे,
झंडे गाड़ लोगे तुम,
पर पहले टीला नही,
अमर चोटी ढूँडो।



विस्थापन से उत्पन्न समस्याओं से जूझते कश्मीरी विस्थापित

बीना बुदकी



मानव अधिकारों की विश्व घोषणा २०-१२-१९४८ को संयुक्त राष्ट्र संघ द्वारा की गयी थी। २६ जनवरी १९५० को भारत एक पूर्ण स्वतन्त्र और प्रभुत्व सम्पन्न गणतन्त्रीय राज्य बना। इसी दिन भारत का 'अपना' संविधान लागू हुआ। इन दोनों घोषणाओं के बावजूद कश्मीर घाटी के विस्थापितों को अनेक समस्याओं से जूझना पड़ा। ये समस्याएँ नासूर बनकर कई परिवारों पर दीमक की तरह बिखर गयी। कश्मीरियों की 'कश्मीरियत' धीरे-धीरे लगभग समाप्त होती जा रही है। अपने व्यक्तित्व की तलाश में यह कौम भटक रही है। विस्थापितों को केवल विस्थापन का दर्द ही नहीं सहना पड़ा बल्कि सामाजिक, आर्थिक, धार्मिक तथा नैतिक कई रूपों में क्षतिग्रस्त होना पड़ा जैसे—

1. सामाजिक हास

(१) बच्चों के जन्म पर अंकुश—कश्मीर घाटी से विस्थापित होने के पश्चात् ज्यादातर कश्मीरी परिवार दिल्ली, जम्मू के टैण्टों में रहे, सरकार की ओर से हर एक परिवार को एक टैण्ट मुहैया कराया गया। इस छोटे से टैण्ट में खाना बनाना, बच्चों को पढ़ाना लिखाना सभी कार्य करने होते थे। खासकर जिन परिवारों में बुजुर्ग सास-ससुर साथ थे। वह भी इसी में रहते थे। अतः जगह की कमी के कारण पति-पत्नी के यौन सम्बन्ध लगभग समाप्त से हो गये; क्योंकि आँखों में शर्मोहवा का पर्दा था। यहाँ तक कि जिन लोगों को टैण्ट नहीं मिले उन्होंने भी एक कमरा किराये का लेकर अपने परिवार को पाला-पोसा; लेकिन आपसी सम्बन्धों का मिलन बहुत ही मुश्किल हो गया था; ऐसे हालातों ने बच्चों के जन्म पर अंकुश लगा दिया।

१९६० से २००७ तक बच्चों की पैदाइश बहुत ही कम हुई, क्योंकि बच्चा होना उसकी परवरिश उसको चलाना, खेलना इन सबके लिए भी न तो जगह थी ना ही आर्थिक स्वतन्त्रता। इन प्रतिबन्धों के कारण कई परिवार बाद में बच्चों की किलकारियों से वंचित ही हो गये; क्योंकि दवाइयों का दुष्प्रभाव गर्भपात आदि अनेक कारणों से कई महिलाएँ रोगग्रस्त हो गयीं, कई महिलाएँ उम्र बढ़ जाने के कारण तथा मानसिक परेशानियों के कारण उनका मासिक धर्म बन्द हो जाने के कारण भी माँ न बन सकी।

इसके अतिरिक्त कश्मीर में बच्चा संयुक्त परिवार में सबकी गोद में खेलकर पल-बढ़ जाता था; लेकिन विस्थापन के बाद ज्यादातर हर व्यक्ति ने नौकरी करने का प्रयास किया। कार्यरत महिलाओं के लिए छुट्टी लेना बच्चे को क्रेच में रखना या घर में कहीं रखना आदि अनेक समस्याएँ थीं जिसके फलस्वरूप महिलाएँ बच्चों का ख्याब देखना ही नहीं चाहती थीं; क्योंकि प्राइवेट नौकरी में हजार, दो हजार वेतन से घर की जरूरतों को ही पूरा करने की कोशिश की जाती थी। अतः बच्चों के जन्म के लिए विस्थापन शाप बन गया।

(२) विघटन के दौरान जन्मे बच्चों का रूप— १९६०-१९६५ के दौरान जिन बच्चों का जन्म हुआ वे ज्यादातर मानसिक रोगों से ग्रस्त अपंग या किसी न किसी बीमारी से ग्रस्त हैं। वे साधारण आम बच्चे नहीं हैं, क्योंकि कश्मीर में आतंक के कारण रोज गोलियों और बम धमाकों की आवाजों से वादी गुँजती, थरथराती रहती थी। इन खौफनाक आवाजों तथा वातावरण का प्रभाव कोख में पल रहे गर्भ पर तथा कई महिलाओं के मस्तिष्क पर पड़ा।

कश्मीर से निकलने के पश्चात् भी कई महिलाएँ मानसिक तौर पर क्षतिग्रस्त हो गयी थीं, जम्मू तथा दिल्ली में दिवाली के पटाखों को सुनकर कई महिलाएँ चीख उठती थी।”

“हय ऑय आतंक बेय, वन्य कोत गखव”

‘अरे आतंकवादी आ गये

अब कहाँ जायें।

या कई महिलाएँ किसी भी तेज आवाज तथा पटाखों की आवाज सुनते ही चीखने लगती थीं। कई महिलाएँ नींद में रोती रहती थीं।

इन सबका प्रभाव बच्चों के जन्म पर पड़ा। कई बच्चों का मानसिक स्तर बहुत ही निम्न होने के कारण वह आम जिन्दगी नहीं जी पाते। उनकी देखभाल और सुरक्षा के लिए चौबीस घण्टे किसी ने किसी को रहना पड़ता था। कई सिपैस्टीक बच्चे पैदा हुए जिनमें कई न तो दीमागी तौर पर ठीक थे कुछ जन्म से ही बहरे थे। ऐसे अनगिनत बच्चे १९९० से १९९५ तक पैदा हुए हैं जिन्हें देखकर माता-पिता हर रोज जाने कितनी बार मरते थे। मन्दिर, मस्जिद, डाक्टर हर चौखट पर ऐसे बच्चों को ठीक करने की कोशिश करते।

(३) वर-बधू की समस्या—हर परिवार को वर-बधू ढूँढने की समस्या से गुजरना पड़ा। कश्मीर में कई ऐसी बैठकें थीं। जहाँ पर पण्डित आदि बैठते थे। वे लड़की/लड़के की कुण्डली का मिलान करने के साथ रिश्तों की कई कुण्डलियाँ भी देते थे। अपने रहन-सहन और मान-सम्मान अनुसार हर परिवार अपनी बहू बेटी तय करता था।

विघटन ने कश्मीरियों को चावल के दानों की तरह पूरे विश्व में बिखेर दिया। जिसे जहाँ रहने और रोजी-रोटी की सुविधा मिली वह वहाँ चला गया। दिल्ली/मुम्बई/कलकत्ता या अन्य जगहों पर लड़के/लड़की के बारे में या परिवार वालों के बारे में पता करना बहुत ही मुश्किल हो गया।

अब तो रिश्ता ढूँढना ही मुश्किल हो गया।

कई विवाह कश्मीरियों ने दूसरी जाति के लड़के-लड़कियों में किये; लेकिन कुछ समय पश्चात् कई रिश्ते टूट गये। खूबसूरती के कारण जितनी जल्दी रिश्ते जुड़ते थे; लेकिन दहेज की माँग पूरी न होने पर रिश्ते उतनी ही जल्दी टूट भी जाते थे। कश्मीरियों की संस्कृति तथा खान-पान कुछ अलग सा है। कश्मीर में अतिथि सेवा तथा

विशेषकर समधीयों की सेवा सत्कार तथा मान जिस प्रकार किया जाता है वह अन्यत्र कहीं भी देखने को नहीं मिलता। भले ही कुछ लड़कियों का विवाह अच्छे घरों में और कुछ अच्छे घरों से बहुएँ भी आयीं; लेकिन कुछ ही घरों में लड़कियाँ सुख शान्ति से रहीं। ज्यादातर ऐसे विवाह टूट गये। मांसल शरीर का आकर्षण कम होते ही पत्नी से विमुखता तथा दूरियाँ आयीं, कारण अनेक रहे पर कश्मीर की कश्मीरियत शनै-शनै खत्म होती जा रही थी।

(४) किस्तों में बँटे बिखरे परिवार—कश्मीर में ज्यादातर संयुक्त परिवार थे। विघटन ने एक ही परिवार को कई परिवारों में बाँट दिया। हर परिवार में बेटा बहू अलग टेण्ट तथा ‘रिलीफ’ के पैसे लेकर अपने परिवार के साथ अलग रहने लगा रोजी-रोटी की जरूरत ने खून के रिश्तों में ही दूरियाँ ला दीं। विघटन की शुरुआत में ही हर परिवार अपने बाल बच्चों को लेकर भागने की कोशिश करने लगा। अपने भाई-बहन खून के रिश्तों को भी वह कानों-कान खबर न करता कि कहीं किसी को पता न चल जाये और गोलियों का शिकार हो जाये। अतः सिर्फ अपने परिवार के अतिरिक्त कोई किसी को नहीं पूछ रहा था। कई बेटे अपने परिवार को लेकर घाटी से भाग निकले। अपने बूढ़े माँ-बाप को भी वह साथ न लेजा पाये। जबकि कश्मीर में बहन, भाई, नन्द, चाचा, मामा सभी रिश्तेदार आसपास रहते थे; क्योंकि कश्मीर घाटी का फैलाव बहुत दूर-दूर तक नहीं था। अतः दुख-सुख में सभी एक-दूसरे की खुशी-गम में शरीक होकर उनका हाथ बाँटाते थे; लेकिन विघटन ने कश्मीरियों को भारत के कोने-कोने में बिखेर दिया। जिसे जहाँ कोई सुनहारा मौका मिला वह वहाँ चल पड़ा। कुछ नौकरी की तलाश में गये। कुछ बच्चों के उज्ज्वल भविष्य के लिए महानगरों में गये। कुछ जम्मू तथा दिल्ली में सरकार द्वारा दिये गये कैम्पों में रहे। विघटन ने रिश्तों को संकुचित कर दिया; क्योंकि अब गम-खुशी में रिश्तेदार आकर केवल खानापूति करके चले जाते हैं; क्योंकि कार्यरत वालों को प्राइवेट सेक्टर में इतनी छुट्टी कहीं कि वह आकर अपनों का हाथ बाँटा सके।

इसलिए ज्यादातर परिवार ‘अकेलेपन’ के बोझ तले दब रहे हैं। जम्मू से बाहर दिल्ली, मुम्बई, पूना जैसे शहरों में किसी को भी फुर्सत नहीं है। सब अपनी ही दुनिया

में मस्त हैं। जबकि कश्मीर में खिड़की से बाहर झाँकते ही चार लोगों से दुआ सलाम होती थी। गली-मोहल्ले में निकलते ही कई परिवार वालों से सुख-दुख के पलों को बाँटते थे। विघटन ने परिवार की पारिवारिक गरिमा तथा प्यार को समाप्त कर दिया है।

(५) वृद्धव्यक्तियों की समस्या—कश्मीर में खुली जगह बड़े घर होते थे। घर के वयोवृद्ध व्यक्ति अपने हिसाब से उठते-बैठते थे; लेकिन विघटन ने दादा-दादी, माता-पिता इन सबको बोझ बना दिया। वयोवृद्ध नयी पीढ़ी के साथ सामञ्जस्य नहीं कर पाते। ऐसे वयोवृद्ध घुटन महसूस करते हैं।

कश्मीरी पण्डित ज्यादातर पढ़े-लिखे बुद्धिजीवी हैं। अतः पढ़े-लिखे माता-पिता ने अपने बच्चों को अच्छी तालीम देकर अच्छे ओहदों पर पहुँचा दिया। पहले-पहल कश्मीर में इक्का-दुक्का बच्चा विदेश जाता था। पर आज मेहनत के बल पर हर परिवार के बच्चे विदेशों में अच्छे पदों पर हैं। ऐसे बच्चों के माँ-बाप भले ही दो चार महीनों के लिए बच्चों के पास विदेश घूम आये पर ज्यादातर तो वापस अपने घर आते हैं। स्थायी तौर पर माता-पिता, दादा-दादी को रखना बच्चों के लिए सम्भव नहीं हो पाता; क्योंकि वीजा तथा सामञ्जस्य की समस्या उन्हें वापस अपने देश लाती है। ऐसे वयोवृद्ध भले ही समय काटने के लिए आश्रम में भजन-कीर्तन करे या टी.वी. देखें पर आखिरकार वह अकेले बैठे फोन या इण्टरनेट पर बच्चों की तस्वीरें देखकर ही दिल बहलाते हैं। बीमार या किसी मुसीबत में उन्हें लोगों का मुँह ताकना पड़ता है। हस्पताल जाना-आना या घर के कामों के लिए भी उन्हें खुद या किसी और के आगे हाथ जोड़ना पड़ता है।

विदेशों में रहते बच्चे पैसे भले ही माँ-बाप को भेज देते हैं; लेकिन उनकी सुरक्षा की गारण्टी नहीं होती। कभी-कभी पैसों के लालच में घर में काम करते नौकर-नौकरानी ही उन्हें मौत के घाट उतार देते हैं। यहाँ तक कि माँ-बाप की मृत्यु होने पर लाश को भी कभी-कभी दो-तीन दिन तक श्मशान ले जाने के लिए बच्चों का इतजार करना पड़ता है।

चेरीटीएबल जम्मू के एक हास्पिटल में पिछले कई सालों से श्रीमती निर्मला रैना कमरे में अकेलेपन बीमार

बोझ भरी जिन्दगी जी रही हैं। विघटन के पश्चात् पति की मृत्यु हो जाने के कारण तत्पश्चात् पुत्र की भी मृत्यु हो गयी। इन आघातों के कारण निर्मला रैना मानसिक रूग्णता से ग्रस्त हो गयीं। व्यवहार में तीखापन दुर्बल शरीर तथा रोगों की अनगिनत गिनती ने उसे स्थायी तौर पर बी.एन. हास्पिटल का मरीज बना दिया है। एक पुत्री अमेरिका में है जो अपने पुत्र के साथ रोजी-रोटी के लिए कार्यरत है। माँ को कई बार ले जाने की कोशिश की पर उसकी अवस्था तथा दुर्बल शरीर ने साथ न दिया लाचार बेबस बेटी का मायका पिछले कुछ सालों से बी. एन. हास्पिटल का कमरा नं. १०२ बन के रह गया है। जम्मू में बनाया मकान बंद ताले से बंधा हुआ धूल, मिट्टी से भर रहा है।

हालाँकि जम्मू में कई अपने रिश्तेदार हैं जेकिन सबकी अपनी-अपनी मजबूरियाँ तथा दायरे हैं और सभी उम्र की ऐसी दहलीज पर हैं जहाँ उन्हें खुद किसी के सहारे की जरूरत है। ऐसे हालातों में निर्मला रैना को अपने घर में रखने की जुरत भी कोई नहीं करता। बीमारी अकेलेप तथा सदमों ने निर्मला को कुछ चिड़चिड़ा अजीब सा बना दिया है। क्योंकि उसे लगता कि यदि वह बाहर निकलेगी तो दिन में रहने वाली आया उसे मार देगी। रात में रहने वाली आया शाम को ७ बजे आती है। कई बार वह २ बजे से टॉयलेट में घुसकर ७ बजे तक वहीं बैठी रहती। रात की आया उसकी बेबेसी का खूब फायदा उठाती; लेकिन इस चक्रव्यूह में बेचारी बेटी पिस रही है। हर रोज फोन करना तथा माँ की लम्बी-लम्बी शिकायतें तथा फिजूल की बातें सुनकर एक और उसका हजारों का टेलीफोन बिल बनता दूसरी ओर मन परेशान हो जाता कि क्या करें क्या न करें, यदि अमेरिका छोड़कर माँ के पास आती है तो यहाँ उम्र की ढलान में नौकरी नहीं मिलेगी और वहाँ रहकर केवल परेशानियों से जूझती जिन्दगी जी रही है।

ऐसे कई परिवारों की अपनी ही अलग-अलग कहानियाँ हैं। विघटन ने हालात के मारे कई बच्चों की बुद्धि भ्रष्ट कर दी। विशेषकर गाँव के भोले-भाले अनपढ़ कई माता-पिता को दिल्ली ले जाने के बहाने उनके बेटों ने बस स्टैण्ड या रेलवे स्टेशन पर छोड़कर आगे बढ़ गये। ऐसे कई

माता-पिता जम्बू के आश्रमों में हैं जो वहीं आश्रम में मेहनत मजदूरी करते हैं और उसके बदले उन्हें रहने खाने को मिलता है। कुछ दानवीर आकर इनको जरूरतों की चीजों को दे जाते हैं।

(६) अंधाधुंध तलाक—कश्मीर में तलाक दूर-दूर तक नहीं सुनायी देता था। कई बरसों में यदि कोई तलाक होता तो पूरी घाटी के परिवार उसे जोड़ने की कोशिश करते।

लेकिन विघटन ने अंधाधुंध तलाक से जूझते कश्मीरियों को कोर्ट कचहरी की चौखट पर बिठा दिया है। कश्मीर की घाटी कम्पैक्ट समाज था, पूरे समाज में हर मोहल्ले रिश्तेदार की लड़की पर हर किसी की नजर होती थी। खुलेआम प्यार करते जोड़े नहीं घूमते थे। ना ही प्यार—मोहब्बत का इजहार डंके की चोट पर करते थे। शर्मो हया के आँचल में लिपटी लड़कियाँ कई बार अरमान दवाये किसी और की हो जाती थीं पर जुबा पर इश्क का नाम नहीं लाती थी।

विघटन ने लड़के-लड़कियों को फैशन तथा पैसों की चकाचौंध में अंधा कर दिया। प्यार—मोहब्बत के फरेब में कई लड़कियाँ फँस गयीं। विवाह भी हुए; लेकिन बहुत जल्द तलाक भी हुए। कश्मीरी युवतियों को एक रात की दुल्हन बनाकर अपने अरमान शान्त करके छोड़ दिया, शादी गुड्डा-गुड्डिया का खेल जैसी हो गयी। दहेज के लालच में भी कुछ कश्मीरी युवतियों का विवाह गैर जाति में होने पर तलाक का कारण बना। विस्थापन के पश्चात् हर माँ-बाप जल्द से जल्द अपनी बेटी के हाथ पीले करके अपनी जिम्मेदारी से मुक्त होना चाहता था। ऐसे में कभी स्वयं तो कभी उधर से ही यदि लड़की का हाथ कोई माँग लेता तो वह शादी कर देते; लेकिन दहेज के लालची कुछ समय पश्चात् दहेज न पाकर 'तलाक' पर उतर आते।

जम्बू के कोर्ट में हजारों की तादाद में ऐसे लोगों की भीड़ होती। कश्मीर में समाज का भय था। आपसी रिश्तेदारी एक-दूसरे से जुड़ी रहती थी कुछ रिश्तों की डोर और कुछ समाज में सिर उठाकर चलने के लिए सभी एक सीमित दायरे में रहते थे। लड़कियाँ, परिवार वाले सभी अपने दायित्वों का निर्वाह वफादारी से करते थे; लेकिन विस्थापन से आर्थिक स्वतन्त्रता मिलने के कारण हर कोई

अपनी मर्जी से जीना चाहता था। इन सब कारणों के कारण विस्थापन के पश्चात् कश्मीरियों को तलाक के भीषण रोग से जूझना पड़ा।

कश्मीर के अनन्तनाग में अजेय पण्डित का परिवार रहता था। अजेय ने विवाह आगरा में किया था; लेकिन कुछ महीनों के पश्चात् ही पत्नी से दूर-दूर भागता रहा। एक साल पश्चात् उसे बेटा हुआ; लेकिन साल के ६ महीने वह ससुराल में रही; लेकिन विस्थापन होने पर अजेय के परिवार वाले स्वयं रहने की छत ढूँढ़ने लगे। नाफलक अजेय अपनी ही मस्ती में मस्त नित्य नयी तितलियों में मस्त रहता। उसने अपने माता-पिता भाई-बहनों को न पूछा तो पत्नी की सुध की कौन उम्मीद कर सकता था।

आज १८ साल का वह पुत्र सेपेस्टिक बच्चा है इन १८ सालों में बच्चे के भविष्य के लिए माँ ने कोर्ट से कई गुहार किये; लेकिन अय्याश अजेय किसी न किसी तरह कभी कोर्ट के पत्र स्वीकार न करता। ना ही बच्चे की परवरिश की रकम बराबर देता, ऐसी स्थिति में अजेय की माँ भी क्या करे जब उसे ही पुत्र ने न तो पनाह दी न ही उनकी सुध ली तो वह माँ भी बहू को क्या आश्वासन दे; लेकिन जब तक कश्मीर में यही परिवार था कम से कम अजेय की पत्नी ससुराल में थी; क्योंकि समाज का भय तथा नैतिकता का दबाव था। बड़ा भाई भी आगरा जाकर उसे समझाने-बुझाने की कोशिश करता; लेकिन अब इस बच्चे की परवरिश के लिए अजेय की पत्नी दर-दर न्याय की माँग करती पर आज तक न तो उसे अजेय से बराबर पैसा मिला न ही बच्चे की देखभाल व दवाई के लिए बराबर पैसा मिला।

ऐसी कई युवतियाँ भविष्य की तलाश में भटक रही हैं।

(७) कश्मीर की कश्मीरियत का अन्त—कश्मीर के लोगों की कश्मीरियत का एक अपना अलग अन्दाज था। कश्मीरियों में बर्दाश्त की सीमा अनन्त थी। सीधा सरल जीवन जीने वाले कश्मीरी नम्र स्वभाव के थे। अतिथि सेवा को अपना अहोभाग्य मानते थे खान-पान रहन-सहन तथा बोलचाल और सम्बन्धों को सहेज कर चलना कश्मीरियों का खास गुण था।

लेकिन विस्थापन के कारण यह सब गुण विघटन

की आँधी में कपूर की तरह उड़ गये हैं, कश्मीरी मुस्लिम का मध्यमवर्गीय सम्प्रदाय भी प्रभावित वर्ग है। माँ की कोख में ही वह आतंक की आग में पलता है। पैदा होते ही वह बम धमाकों को सुनता है। थोड़ा समझदार होते ही वह पढ़ने-लिखने के बजाय हाथ में बन्दूक उठा लेता है। आज कश्मीर में बच्चों को पढ़ाई-लिखाई में कोई दिलचस्पी नहीं है। उन्हें बन्दूक और बन्दूक की गोलियों में रूचि है।

(८) रिश्तों में खोखलापन—कश्मीर में रिश्तों की डोर मजबूत थी; लेकिन विघटन ने रिश्तों में खोखलापन भर दिया कुछ दूरियाँ तो कुछ आर्थिक अभाव के कारण धीरे-धीरे सभी रिश्तों में दरार आ गयी।

बच्चों के आपसी प्यार में भी रूखापन है। आज बच्चे मासी, मामा, ताई के आने पर उनके द्वारा लाये समान को देखने के लिए ज्यादा उत्सुक रहते हैं, आने वाले मेहमान की उन्हें कोई परवाह नहीं। खाली हाथ आये मेहमानों की कोई कद्र नहीं है। दिल में प्यार की कोई कीमत नहीं है। आज सिर्फ पैसे का बोलबाला है, दुख-सुख रिश्तों में दिल की धड़कने नहीं धड़कती है बल्कि सब कुछ बोझिल सा लगता है।

तीज-त्योहारों में कश्मीरघाटी में 'मुबारक' एक-दूसरे को देने में सभी लालायित रहते थे; लेकिन अब सलाम दुआ भी नसीब न होती। रिश्तों में दूरियाँ तथा खोखलापन आ गया है।

2. आर्थिक क्षति

(१) पैतृक सम्पत्ति का हास—कश्मीर में हर परिवार का अपना मकान था। गरीब के पास छोटा-सा और अमीर का बड़ा आलीशान मकान होता था। इसके अतिरिक्त बाप-दादाओं की गाँव में जमीन जायदाद भी होती थी। कुछ के फलों के बाग भी होते थे तो कुछ केसर के खेतों के मालिक भी थे।

विघटन ने कश्मीरियों को विशाल पैतृक सम्पत्ति छोड़कर एक टेण्ट में लाकर पटक दिया है। विघटन के पश्चात् कई दलालों ने विशाल सम्पत्तियों के कश्मीरियों को ढूँढ़-ढूँढ़ का उनसे सम्पत्ति बेचने का अनुरोध किया। वे सारे कागज पत्र वहीं से बनवा कर लाते थे। कुछ

काश्तकारों ने ही पैतृक सम्पत्ति पर अपना अधिकार जमा लिया। यदि किसी कश्मीरी ने वहाँ जाकर अपना कब्जा लेने या बागों से होने वाली आमदनी में से हिस्सा माँगा तो उसे मौत के घाट उतार दिया गया। या कभी-कभी उस परिवार के लोगों को जान की धमकी देकर उनको चुप करा दिया।

(२) खेत खलिहानों तथा बागों की आमदनी का हास—कश्मीर से करोड़ों रुपये के सेब, नाशपाती आड़ू, खुबानी, चेरी, अखरोट, बादाम समस्त भारत में भेजे जाते हैं। कई व्यापारी दिल्ली, मुम्बई के कश्मीर जाकर पेड़ों पर फलों के फूल लगते ही बागों को खरीद लेते थे; लेकिन विघटन ने ऐसे व्यापारियों को भी वहाँ जाने से रोक लिया। इन बगीचों के मालिकों को करोड़ों रुपये के मुनाफे से भी वञ्चित कर दिया। सभी कश्मीरी उन खेतों खलिहानों तथा बागों को यूँ ही छोड़कर चले आये। इन बागों पर उन्हीं लोगों ने ज्यादातर कब्जा कर लिया है जो विस्थापन से पहले मालिकों के समय खेतों तथा बागों में काम करते थे। ज्यादातर ठेकेदार ही मालिक बन बैठे हैं। करोड़ों रुपये की सम्पत्ति से कश्मीरी हाथ धो बैठे हैं।

१९९०-१९९१ में आतंक के ताण्डव में कई बागों को जला दिया गया तथा कई विशाल अखरोट, सेब नाशपाती जैसे फलों के पेड़ों को ढूँढ़ बनाकर रख दिया गया था।

(३) लघु उद्योगों का हास—कश्मीर के गाँववासी लघु उद्योगों को करके अच्छे पैसों को कमाते थे। शाल बनाना तथा शाल पर धागे तथा तिले का काम करके कई महिलाएँ पैसे कमाती थीं। कुछ परिवार जिनके पास बहुत से बाग नहीं थे वे कालीन, गब्बों, नमदा, शाल आदि के लघु उद्योगों के कारखाने खोलकर पैसा कमाते थे। कई महिलाएँ पश्मीने के लिए सूत कातती थीं। वह भी विघटन ने बन्द कर दिया; क्योंकि कश्मीर से बाहर चन्द महीनों के लिए जाड़े का मौसम होता है जहाँ ऐसे कार्यों को करना सम्भव नहीं है। विघटन ने लघु उद्योगों को पूरी तरह से नष्ट कर दिया।

विघटन के पश्चात् पंजाब व्यापारी अपने शालों को कश्मीरी मोहर लगाकर लाखों रुपये कमा रहे हैं जबकि असली शाल कश्मीर के लघु उद्योग लगभग दम तोड़ चुके

हैं। कश्मीर से बाहर न तो कच्चे माल की व्यवस्था है न ही मौसम ही इतना अच्छा है कि इन शालों या नमदों का काम किया जा सके।

कश्मीर का 'पेपरमशी' विश्व में अपनी कारीगरी के लिए प्रसिद्ध है; लेकिन आतंक की आग में 'पेपरमशी' का काम भी लगभग समाप्त हो चुका है। 'कश्मीरी पश्मीने' के शाल तथा 'शहतूस' का आज भी जवाब नहीं; लेकिन आतंक की आँधी में ये सभी उद्योग जीते जी दम तोड़ चुके हैं।

(४) पालते पशुओं का हास—कश्मीर में लाखों रुपये के पालतू जानवरों को छोड़कर कश्मीरी भागे। खुद की जान बचाने तथा परिवार को बचाने में लगे कश्मीरी मजबूर होकर अपने कीमती पालतू जानवरों को छोड़ आये।

कश्मीरी जर्सी गाय अपने आप में एक अलग गाय होती है। कई जर्सी गायों को खुले आम कश्मीरी छोड़कर आ गये।

(५) सामान से भरी दुकानें, आफिस फैक्टरी तथा कारखानों का हास—कई दुकानें जो सामान से ठसाठस भरी हुई थीं। उन्हें यँ ही छोड़कर आना पड़ा। कई कारखानों लघु उद्योगों के तथा तांबे के सामान की फैक्टरी आदि सभी वहीं छोड़कर लोग भाग गये।

कई आफिस तथा दुकानों से सामान आस-पड़ोस के लोगों ने निकाला। कुछ पुलिस वालों ने और जब दुकान या आफिस सिर्फ ईंटों का ढेर रह गया। तो आग लगा दी। ऐसे कई आफिस तथा दुकानें आग के शोलों में स्वाहा हो गयीं। कुछ दुकानों तथा आफिस का इन्श्योरेन्स भी था; लेकिन आज तक इन मालिकों को मुआवजा न मिला।

(३) धार्मिक क्षति

(१) जन्म एवं मृत्यु संस्कारों से वञ्चित—कश्मीर 'शैव दर्शन' की भूमि है जहाँ किसी भी शिशु का जन्म होने पर विशेष संस्कार का प्रावधान है। लड़के का 'जनेऊ' भी जिसे यज्ञोपवीत कहा जाता है इस संस्कार की पूजा यहाँ कश्मीर में ३२ घण्टे यानि २ दिन में पूरी होती है; लेकिन कश्मीर से बाहर पण्डित के अभाव में यह रस्म भी सिकुड़ कर आर्या समाजी यज्ञोपवीत पर आ गयी है।

इसी प्रकार मृत्यु होने पर शव पूजा का अपना अलग

ही ढंग है। मृतक को श्मशान ले जाने तक उसकी विधिवत पूजा होती है। उसके बाद फूल चुनने (अस्थियाँ लेने) वाले दिन भी श्मशान घाट पर तथा विसर्जन स्थान पर विशेष पूजा की रस्म है इसके पश्चात् 10, 11वाँ 12वाँ दिन पूरे दिन पूजा यज्ञ जैसा होता है। १०वाँ दिन ज्यादातर नदी किनारे घाट पर मनाया जाता है। इसके साथ-साथ हर महीने का श्राद्ध भी किया जाता था। फिर अर्द्धवार्षिक तथा वार्षिक श्राद्ध भी। विघटन ने इन सभी संस्कारों से कश्मीरियों को वञ्चित कर दिया है।

कश्मीरी रीतिरिवाजों से अनभिज्ञ तथा वेदों के ज्ञाता पण्डित का अभाव होने के कारण इन संस्कारों से भी कश्मीरियों को वञ्चित रहना पड़ रहा है। कई बुजुर्ग इसलिए भी काफी समय तक कश्मीर से बाहर नहीं आये।

(२) पर्व, धर्म, संस्कार से अनभिज्ञ नयी पीढ़ी—विस्थापन से नयी पीढ़ी कश्मीरी पर्वों तथा संस्कारों से अनभिज्ञ है। कश्मीर में शिवरात्रि १५ दिनों तक मनायी जाती है। पहले दिन से अमावस तक हर रोज का अपना एक नियम है खाने में भी हर दिन के अलग-अलग व्यंजन हैं।

इन १५ दिनों में पूरे घर की सफाई आदि की जाती है। लड़कियाँ मैके आकर नहा-धोकर कांगड़ी पैसे, नमक, रोटीयाँ (विस्कुट) आदि लेकर ससुराल जातीं; लेकिन अब रोजी रोटी से जूझते नवयुवक व युवतियों को इतनी फुर्सत कहाँ कि वह १५ दिन तो क्या ५ दिन भी शिवरात्रि मना सकें।

शिवरात्रि के मूल उद्देश्यों तथा पद्धति से भी अनभिज्ञ हैं। कश्मीर में संयुक्त परिवार के कारण हर बच्चा सीखता देखता समझता था। पर यहाँ एकल परिवार और आपाधापी की जिन्दगी से जूझते हर संस्कार से बेखबर है।

इसी प्रकार 'गॉडबत' (मछली भात) घर के देवता का त्योहार भी दिसम्बर माह में मनाया जाता था। जन्माष्टमी काव पूनिम (गुरु पूर्णिमा) नवरेह 'शिशुर' रोठ जैसे सभी पर्वों की धार्मिक भावना तथा पद्धति से नयी पीढ़ी अंजान है।

कश्मीर में हर पर्व का अपना धार्मिक महत्त्व तथा सन्देश था। इन पर्वों पर विशेष भोजन बनाने का भी प्रावधान था; लेकिन आज की पीढ़ी बाजार के बने बनाये व्यंजनों पर निर्भर है।

कश्मीर में प्याज, लहसुन, टामाटर आदि का प्रयोग

हिन्दू अपनी सब्जियों में नहीं करते हैं विशेषकर कश्मीरी सब्जियाँ इनके बिना ही बनायी जाती हैं। विशेषकर पूजा यज्ञ में तो दूर-दूर तक प्याज टमाटर का नामोनिशान नहीं होता है; लेकिन विस्थापन ने धार्मिक मूल्यों को पूरी तरह से समाप्त कर दिया है।

(३) धार्मिक संस्थानों, मन्दिर, मस्जिदों की तोड़-फोड़ी-हजारों साल से मानव मन की शान्ति के लिए धार्मिक संस्थानों में जाकर कीर्तन भजन करता था। सुबह उठकर सभी मन्दिर, मस्जिदों में अपने भगवान् को याद कर दिन की शुरुआत करते हैं; लेकिन आतंकवाद ने कई मन्दिरों तथा धार्मिक वाद ने कई मन्दिरों तथा धार्मिक संस्थानों को बम धमाकों तथा राकेट लांचरों से स्वाहा कर दिया।

प्रतिवर्ष आस्था के पुजारी कश्मीरी तथा देश के हर कोने से हजारों लोग बाबा अमरनाथ के दर्शन करने जाते हैं; लेकिन पिछले कुछ सालों से उसमें भी अनेक रुकावटों का सिलसिला जारी है। बारूदी सुरंगें लगाकर कई बार यात्रियों को मारने की कोशिश की गयी। हर बार कई लोग लाश का ढेर बन जाते हैं; लेकिन वहाँ की आस्था से जुड़ा प्रेम लोगों को वहाँ जाने के लिए मजबूर कर देता है।

कुछ राजनीति के तहत भी अनेक आन्दोलन चलाये गये; लेकिन उन धार्मिक संस्थानों से जुड़े प्रेमी जान की परवाह किये बिना फिर भी चले जाते हैं। राजनेताओं की आपसी सियासत से धार्मिक संस्थाओं पर जाना दिन प्रतिदिन दूभर होता जा रहा है।

4. सांस्कृतिक क्षति

(१) नृत्य, कला संस्कृति से दूरा नाता-विस्थापन के कारण कश्मीरियों का संस्कृति तथा नृत्य कला से भी नाता टूट गया है। कश्मीर के बाहर न तो उन कलाओं को कोई जानने वाला है न ही यहाँ का वातावरण उन कलाओं को पनपने में सहयोग देता है।

कश्मीर में लड़की के विवाह में आटे के चोकर से 'व्यूग' बनाने की कला थी, लेकिन यहाँ इस कला का दूर-दूर तक नाम नहीं। विवाह या बच्चे के जन्म होने पर बचनगमा या बाण्ड जश्न आदि होता था। पर कश्मीर से बाहर 'हिजड़े' अवश्य अपने गीतों से हल्ला मचाते हैं,

लेकिन उनके अनुसार पैसा न देने पर सारा घर सिर पर उठा लेते हैं।

कश्मीर में मेंहदीरात पर पूरी रात गवैये शिव लीला, कृष्ण लीला या भक्ति के अन्य गीतों से रात को जगमगा देते थे। कुछ नृत्य भी लड़के लड़कियों के वस्त्र पहन कर करते थे।

लेकिन विस्थापन ने इन मेंहदीरातों को सूना बना दिया है। कश्मीर से बाहर आक्रेस्ट्रों की तेज धुनों तथा फिल्मी रिकार्ड का प्रचलन है। जो शोर की उच्चतम सीमा है।

कश्मीरी गीत दिमाग को सकून और मस्तिष्क को सराबोर कर देते थे, लेकिन यहाँ के गीत दिमाग की मांसपेशियों को ही हिला देते हैं।

कई कश्मीरी गीतों को ऐसे उत्सवों पर सुनकर आँखें खुद-ब-खुद छलक उठती थीं जबकि यहाँ कभी-कभी स्वयं ही कान बन्द करने पड़ते हैं।

(२) आग के शोलों में स्वाहा होता ज्ञान-आतंक की आग से कश्मीर के कई स्कूल, लाइब्रेरियाँ जल कर राख हो गयी। कई महान विभूतियों ने स्वयं घर में अपनी व्यक्तिगत लाइब्रेरी बनायी थी। ये सभी आग के शोलों में राख बन गये। आज कश्मीर से सम्बन्धित कश्मीर का इतिहास लगभग समाप्त ही हो चुका है कुछ कर्मठ व्यक्ति इस ज्ञान को फिर से किताबों में लिखकर जीवित रखने की कोशिश कर रहे हैं।

कश्मीर से भागते वक़्त सब अपनी जान बचाने में लगे थे। अतः जिन घरों में कश्मीरी इतिहास की अनमोल पुस्तकें थीं वह वहीं रह गयीं। अल्पबुद्धि वाले आतंकी उन पुस्तकों का मूल्य जाने बिना ही उनकी धज्जियाँ उड़ा कर चले गए।

आने वाली पीढ़ी को कश्मीरी साहित्य जानने के लिए बहुत ही मेहनत मशक्कत करनी पड़ेगी।

(३) खानपान, पहनावा तथा व्यवहारी व्यवहार का हास-कश्मीरी खाना विश्व में प्रसिद्ध है। कई लोग कश्मीर के इन व्यंजनों का लुत्फ उठाने के लिए कई दिनों तक हाऊसबोट में रहते थे; लेकिन इन सभी व्यंजनों तथा विशेषकर 'हरा साग कश्मीरी' इन सबसे कश्मीरी दूर हो गये हैं। यद्यपि दिल्ली मुम्बई में कुछ लोगों ने खेती लगाकर इन सागों को पैदा करने का प्रयत्न किया है, लेकिन कश्मीर

में उत्पन्न साग सब्जी का जो मजा था वह यहाँ नहीं मिलता।

कश्मीरी विवाह में लड़की के सिर पर विशेष पहनावा यानि जूज, तरंग, टोपी आदि पहनायी जाती थी, लेकिन विस्थापन के पश्चात् इन सबसे कश्मीरी बिछड़ते जा रहे हैं। कश्मीर से बाहर ये सब चीजें नहीं मिलती हैं। यदि कहीं मिल भी जातीं तो वह फैशन से बनी होती हैं असली रूप में नहीं मिल पातीं।

विवाह के समय तथा हर सुहागन स्त्री 'अटहरू' पहनती है। कश्मीर तथा जम्मू में यह उपलब्ध है। उसके बाद इनका कहीं नामें निशान भी नहीं है। साधारणतया ये १५, २० रुपये के होते हैं, लेकिन महानगरों में असली २५०, ३५० का मिलता है जो आम परिवारों की महिलाएँ खरीद कर नहीं पहन सकती हैं।

शादी के मौकों पर कांगड़ी में शगुन के लिए 'इसबंद' (खुशबूदार सामग्री) जलाया जाता है। माँ, मासी, चाची, मामी के सिर वार कर कांगड़ी में रखी आग पर डाल देते हैं। पूरा वातावरण खुशबू से सराबोर हो जाता था; लेकिन ये कांगड़ी कश्मीर के बाहर नहीं मिलती।

इसी प्रकार विवाह आदि में ढोलक की जगह कश्मीरी 'तुंबकनारी' बजाते हैं। ये यहाँ कहीं नहीं मिलती। जिसकी वजह से शादी में खुशियाँ आधी-अधूरी सी नजर आती है।

इसी प्रकार कई चीजों से कश्मीरी बिछड़ गये हैं। व्यवहार में जो बर्दाश्त संयम कश्मीरी महिलाओं में था। वह भी अब परिवर्तित होने लगा है।

संयम नम्रता की मिसाल कश्मीरी युवतियाँ थी, लेकिन अब शहरों की चकाचौंध ने व्यवहार में परिवर्तन आया है। कश्मीर की कश्मीरियत जिन मूल्यों पर टिकी थी वह सभी धूमिल धूल धूसरित होती जा रही है।

(४) सांस्कृतिक केन्द्रों का अन्त—कश्मीर में कश्मीरी संस्कृति के केन्द्र कला—केन्द्र, वसन्त थियेटर, कला निकेतन तथा नवरंग प्रमुख थे। जहाँ कलाकार और कला के पारखी मिलते थे। कला प्रदर्शन करते थे, लेकिन कश्मीर से निकलते ही कश्मीरियों को इन कला केन्द्रों से वञ्चित होना पड़ा।

हर शहर प्रान्त की अपनी कला है। सच तो यह

है कि कश्मीरियत का वट वृक्ष जमीन से उखड़ चुका है। उस उखड़े वटवृक्ष में हरियाली की कामना करना ऐसा सपना है जो शायद ही अब पूरा हो सके।

(5) सरकार तथा प्रशासनिक सहयोग का अभाव

(१) रिलीफ बनाम भ्रष्टाचार—जम्मू, दिल्ली में सरकार की ओर से उन शरणार्थियों को रिलीफ मुहैया करायी गयी जो कश्मीर में प्राइवेट कार्य करते थे। कृषक, मजदूर तथा वृद्ध सभी को रिलीफ मुहैया करायी गयी, केवल जो सरकारी नौकरियों में कार्यरत हैं। उन्हें यह राशि नहीं दी गयी।

यह रिलीफ भी भ्रष्टाचार का अड्डा बन गया है। कश्मीर में रहते कई सरदार, मुस्लिम भी जम्मू आकर रिलीफ लेते हैं। सच तो यह है कि 'रिलीफ' के वास्तविक हकदार अपने इस अधिकार के लिए पचास धक्के सहकर प्राप्त करते हैं जबकि कई अमीर व नकली लोग आसानी से हासिल करते हैं।

सरकार ने आरम्भ में एक हजार रुपये से रिलीफ एक परिवार के लिए तय किया था। आज यह प्रति परिवार तीन हजार हो गया है, लेकिन इस रिलीफ को पाने के लिए कई चालाक धूर्त तथा नकली लोगों ने कई-कई राशनकार्ड बनाकर तथा रिलीफ तहसीलदार से मिलकर लाखों रुपये ले रहे हैं। इन तहसीलदारों की जेब में ये नकली लोग रुपए डाल देते हैं जिससे दोनों पक्षों को लाखों रुपये की पिछले २० सालों से कमाई हो रही है।

जबकि हकीकत में असली लोगों को कई बार इन तहसीलदारों की मिन्नतें करनी पड़ती हैं। कई महिलाएँ मजदूरी के तहत तथा घर के तंग हालातों के कारण इन तहसीलदारों की हवस का निशाना बन जाती हैं।

सरकार तथा प्रशासन से सख्ती तौर पर कभी भी कोई जाँच पड़ताल नहीं होती है। यदि होती भी है तो तहसीलदार पैसे लेकर उन केसों को दबा देते हैं जो परिवार उनकी झोली नहीं भर पाते उन्हें ही उखाड़ने की कोशिश करते हैं।

१९९० से आज २०१८ तक २८ साल हो गये। तब से कई बच्चों ने जन्म लिया तथा कई युवतियाँ बहू बनकर परिवारों में आयीं। राशनकार्डों में इन लोगों का

नाम चढ़वाने के लिए भी कोई सीधा मार्ग नहीं है। कुछ पैसे देकर अपने बच्चों या नये मेहमान को चढ़ा लेते हैं। आम परिवार के आम लोग वञ्चित ही रहते हैं।

अतः रिलीफ-रिलीफ केन्द्र नहीं बल्कि भ्रष्टाचार के ऐसे अड्डे बन गये हैं जहाँ सट्टे की तरह पैसे लगाकर आदमियों की गिनती चढ़ाई या उतारी जाती है।

(२) टेण्ट तथा मकान की होड़ा-होड़ी-विस्थापित शरणार्थियों को पहले टेण्ट उपलब्ध कराये गये। १८ सालों के बाद एक कमरे का सेट दिया गया अब सुनने में आया है कि अब २ कमरों के सेट मुहैया कराये जायेंगे, लेकिन ये कमरे भी छोटे बिना खिड़की के हैं।

इन टेण्टों में रहनेवाले कुछ लोगों ने अपने मकान बनवा लिये हैं। कई परिवारों में माता-पिता का भी स्वर्गवास हो चुका है पर रिलीफ और टेण्ट का रजिस्ट्रेशन यथावत् चल रहा है।

जब से यह पक्के मकान देने का कार्य आरम्भ हुआ है। मकानों को देने में भी रिश्वत का बोलबाला है। जो जैसा इन तहसीलदारों का मुँह मीठा करा देता है उसे उतनी जल्दी मकान मिल जाता है। इस में ५ लोगों को लिस्ट के अनुसार तथा ५ लोगों को खर्चा पानी खिलाने वाले लोग होते हैं।

इन टेण्टों तथा मकानों की भी प्रशासन की ओर से कोई जाँच पड़ताल नहीं होती। कुछ समय पूर्व रिलीफ कमिश्नर विजय बकाया ने थोड़ी सख्ती से काम लिया। केवल उन दिनों सही पद्धति के अनुसार लोगों को मकान मिले।

(३) पुलिस, सी.आर.पी. आर्मी के आपसी मतभेदों के बीच मरते कश्मीरी-कश्मीर से निकलते वक्त सभी परिवारों के घर सामान से भरे सुसज्जित थे। हर परिवार ने घर के दरवाजे पर ताला लगाकर जम्मू की ओर प्रस्थान किया।

लेकिन इन मकानों पर लटकता ताला कोठे पर बैठी उस युवती की नथ की तरह था। हर कोई नथ उतारने ताले के टूटने का इंतजार करता था। ज्यूँ ही कोई आतंकवादी शरण लेने के लिए इन घरों में ताला तोड़कर घुसता। उसके बाद मोहल्ले वाले, पुलिस, सी.आर.पी. आर्मी के जवान सभी ऐसे मकानों में मौका पाकर घुसते,

अपने मनपसन्द अनुसार चीजें उठाते, लेकिन स्थानीय पुलिस सेना, सी.आर.पी. के जवानों से अन्दर ही अन्दर कुढ़ती, मौका पाते ही गोलियों की बौछार से लहुलुहान कारा देती, लेकिन इन गोलियों की बरसात में कई आम नागरिक भी हताहत हो जाते।

कश्मीर पुलिस सिर्फ मुस्लिम वर्ग की सहायता करती, बहरहाल जनता के रक्षक पुलिस, आर्मी तथा सी. आर.पी.एफ. जवानों की आपसी रंजिश में कश्मीरी मौत के घाट उतर जाते।

(४) नौकरियों का बलात्कार-अनेक कश्मीरी सरकारी नौकरियों में थे। कुछ राज्य सरकार के मुलाजिम थे। सरकारी तथा प्राइवेट नौकरी को करनेवाले अपनी जान बचाने के खातिर नौकरी छोड़कर भाग निकले। केन्द्र तथा राज्य सरकार के सभी दफ्तरों में वहीं रह रहे मुस्लिम लोगों को नौकरियाँ मिल गयीं। जबकि उस पद पर कार्यरत व्यक्ति जान बचाने के लिए जम्मू भागा था। नौकरी के असली हकदार की नौकरी का बलात्कार करके अन्य किसी नाफलक, अनपढ़ तक को सीट पर बिठा दिया गया। कानून व्यवस्था का कहीं नामोनिशान न था। बैंकों, पोस्टऑफिस ए.जी. ऑफिस तथा अन्य दफ्तरों में भी भाई भतीजे सभी पहले अस्थायी तौर पर काम करने लगे उसके बाद वह उसी पद पर जमें रहे। असली व्यक्ति अपनी नौकरी के लिए हाथ-पांव मारता रहा तो उसे वापस अपनी जगह मिली ना ही ट्रांसफर ही हुआ, ऐसे हालातों में कई कश्मीरियों ने वी.आर.एस. ले लिया। कई ने इस्तीफा दिया, लेकिन ये सब करके भी उन्हें पैसों का भुगतान कई सालों में किया गया। पेन्शन के कागजों को बनवाने के लिए भी रिश्वत देनी पड़ी।

जम्मू से दिल्ली में आये शरणार्थियों को दफ्तरों में जगह न मिली। बहुत कम लोग जम्मू के दिल्ली के दफ्तरों में लगे बाकी ज्यादातर घर बैठ गये। उस पर भी उन्हें वेतन का लगभग आधा ही मिलता। क्योंकि मकान का किराया तथा अन्य भत्ते उन्हें नहीं दिये गये।

४. चिकित्सा सम्बन्धी हास

कश्मीर में आबोहवा स्वच्छ तथा निर्मल पानी था, लगभग सभी कश्मीरी स्वस्थ तथा बीमारियों से रहित थे, लेकिन

विघटन के पश्चात् कश्मीरी ज्यादातर बीमारियों से जूझ रहे हैं। जैसे—

(१) एल्जीमर्स के मरीज—कश्मीरी शरणार्थी ज्यादातर एल्जीमर्स के शिकार हो गये हैं। विशेषकर ५० वर्ष की आयु के बाद कश्मीरियों के मस्तिष्क पर आतंक का इतना गहरा असर पड़ा है कि वे कई तरह की बीमारियों से जुझ रहे हैं, कई वृद्ध महिलाएँ, पुरुष कश्मीर की पुरानी बातों को ही दोहराते रहते हैं। कई वहाँ के पड़ोसियों को आवाजें देकर उसी दुनिया में जी रहे हैं।

हाल ही में एक सर्वेक्षण के अनुसार भारत में एल्जीमर्स के सबसे ज्यादा मरीज कश्मीरी शरणार्थी निकले। इसके अतिरिक्त शुगर डायबिटीज, ब्लड प्रेशर तथा हार्ट के रोगियों की भी लम्बी लिस्ट है। सभी ज्यादातर, 'सुबह' उठकर 'पर्वत' या 'शंकराचार्य' आदि मन्दिरों के दर्शन करने जाते थे। आम जिन्दगी में भी कार्यरत लोग पैदल ही चलते थे, क्योंकि कश्मीर की घाटी सिमटी हुई थी। हर चीज पास थी स्वच्छ वायु तथा निर्मल पानी था।

कश्मीर में 'चश्माशाही' का पानी दिल्ली तक भेजा जाता था। राजा महाराजों ने वहाँ के पानी का सेवन किया है, लेकिन कश्मीर से बाहर दूषित पर्यावरण, खाने की सभी चीजों में मिलावट तथा जीने की असमर्थता ने कश्मीरियों को एल्जीमर्स का शिकार बना दिया है।

(२) विकलांग बच्चों की अधिकता—१९९० से १९९१ में जिन बच्चों ने जन्म लिया है। वे ज्यादातर विकलांग हैं। कोई सुन नहीं सकता तो कोई बोल नहीं सकता है। कुछ में जन्म से ही अन्धापन है, किसी-किसी बच्चे का सिर इतना बड़ा है कि वह सामान्य बालक नहीं लगता।

ऐसे बच्चों का जीवन नर्क बन गया है, क्योंकि इनकी शिक्षा का भी समुचित प्रबन्ध नहीं हो पा रहा है। आर्थिक अभाव के कारण न तो ये अच्छे तकनीकी स्कूलों में पढ़ पा रहे हैं और न ही सही मायनों में इनके जीवन यापन का कोई रास्ता बन रहा है। माँ-बाप के कन्धों पर

बने बोझ ये बच्चे दम तोड़ देंगे, क्योंकि माँ-बाप स्वयं मुसीबतों के पहाड़ सहन करते-करते थक चुके हैं। ऐसे बच्चों को चिकित्सा के लिए ले जाना भी एक बहुत बड़ी समस्या है, बसों की तेज रफ्तार, गाड़ियों की तीव्रता में सामञ्जस्य स्थापित न होने पर ये एकसीडेण्ट के शिकार होकर नासूर भरी जिन्दगी जी रहे हैं।

(३) मानसिकता से जूझते बच्चे/पुरुष/ महिलाएँ—दिसम्बर १९९० से कश्मीरियों को जीने के लिए जो जद्दोजहद करनी पड़ी है। उन सबका प्रभाव कई पुरुष-महिलाओं तथा बच्चों पर पड़ा है।

बच्चों की परिपक्वता, बौद्धिकता या शारीरिक क्षमता पर आतंक तथा विस्थापन का गहरा असर पड़ा है। १९९०-९१ में १२ से १८ साल के बच्चों पर विशेषकर ये प्रभाव आज भी दिखायी देता है। सामान्य ऊर्जा एवं साहस की जगह इन बच्चों में डर, असन्तुलन तथा कम्पन भर गया है।

इसी प्रकार कई पुरुष महिलाओं के अन्दर भी निर्णय लेने की क्षमता नहीं रह गयी है। किसी बात का जोखिम उठाने का साहस उनमें नहीं है। जरा सी परेशानी आने पर डगमगाने लगते हैं। जिन्दगी जीने का उत्साह ही खत्म हो गया है।

दिन-प्रतिदिन की जिन्दगी बस वह दिन निकालने के लिए जीते हैं। उमंग भरी जिन्दगी से उनका नाता दूर-दूर तक टूट चुका है।

कई बच्चे जिनकी उम्र उस वक्त १० से १५ साल की थी अब वह अब हालांकि ३०, ३५ वर्ष की आयु में है, लेकिन उनकी बातें उसी १० और १५ वर्ष की आयु वाली हैं। आज भी वह उसी समय की बातें करते हैं। इलाज के लिए माँ-बाप किसी डॉक्टर को नहीं छोड़ते, लेकिन ३०, ३५ साल का ऐसा मानसिक बच्चा हर रोज माँ-बाप को मौत के दलदल से गुजारता है।

लेखिका शिक्षण के क्षेत्र में कार्यरत रही हैं। हिंदी कश्मीरी संगम की सम्पादक वे है सियत से अथक परिश्रम कर रही हैं।

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जीवन गाथा

विजय मुंशी

खिड़की के बाहर
नीम का पेड़
ऊब कर
आ जाता है अन्दर
कभी - कभी
बताता है
मौसम का हाल
बदलती राजनीति
समझ लेता हूँ
उसकी झिझक
उसकी व्यथा
पड़ोस में
निर्मम आँखें
करती हैं इशारे
उसको मिटाने की
किसी का कुछ
बिगाड़ता नहीं है वह
फिर भी
ऐसो क्यों?

उससे कहूँ क्या
अपनी कथा-
भिन्न नहीं है ज्यादा
इस असंगति में
रची है यह
जीवन गाथा।

विजय मुंशी

पहला प्यार

विजय मुंशी

अंत में-
पहला प्यार ही
होता है सच्चा
बनाता है हमें प्रबल
अपनी कोमलता में
छुपा रखता
हर स्पर्श से हमारे
कहीं दूर
जीवन के सभी रहस्य
तानाबाना
जिंदा रहने का
बलि बनाकर खुद
देता है साहस
आने वाले प्यार से
जूझने का।

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हिंदी को असली चुनौतियाँ

डॉ० शिवन कृष्ण रैणा

हिंदी-दिवस अथवा हिंदी-सप्ताह या फिर हिंदी पखवाडा आदि मनाने के दिन निकट आ रहे हैं। सरकारी कार्यालयों में, शिक्षण-संस्थाओं में, हिंदी-सेवी संस्थाओं आदि में हिंदी को लेकर भावपूर्ण भाषण व व्याख्यान, निबंध-प्रतियोगिताएं, कवि-गोष्ठियां पुरस्कार-वितरण आदि समारोह घडल्ले से होंगे। नई सरकार ने चूंकि हिंदी के रथ पर सवार होकर ही गढ़ जीता है, अतः उसका आशीर्वाद भी इस भाषा को मिलेगा। मगर प्रश्न यह है कि इस तरह के आयोजन पिछले साठ-पैंसठ सालों से होते आ रहे हैं, क्या हिंदी को हम वह सम्मानजनक स्थान दिला सके हैं, जिसका संविधान में उल्लेख है?

भाषण देने, बाज़ार से सौदा-सुलफ खरीदने या फिर फिल्म/सीरियल देखने के लिए हिंदी ठीक है, मगर कौन नहीं जानता कि वैश्वीकरण के इस दौर में अच्छी नौकरियों के लिए या फिर उच्च अध्ययन के लिए अब भी अंग्रेजी का दबदबा बना हुआ है। इस दबदबे से कैसे मुक्त हुआ जाय? निकट भविष्य में आयोजित होने वाले हिंदी-आयोजनों के दौरान इस पर भावुक हुए बिना वस्तुपरक तरीके से विचार-मंथन होना चाहिए। निम्नी क्षेत्र के संस्थानों अथवा प्रतिष्ठानों में हिंदी की स्थिति शोचनीय बनी हुई है और मात्र कमाने के लिए भाषा का वहां पर 'दोहन' किया जा रहा है? इस प्रश्न का उत्तर भी हमें निष्पक्ष होकर तलाशना होगा।

यों देखा जाय तो हिंदी-प्रेम का मतलब हिंदी विद्वानों, लेखकों, कवियों आदि की जमात तैयार करना नहीं है। हिंदी-प्रेम का मतलब है हिंदी के माध्यम से रोजगार के अच्छे अवसर तलाशना, उसे उच्च अध्ययन खास तौर पर विज्ञान और टेक्नालॉजी की पढाई के लिए एक कारगर माध्यम बनाना और उसे देश की अस्मिता व प्रतिष्ठता का सूचक बनाना। कितने दुःख की बात है कि हिंदी दिवस तो पसरते जाते हैं, मगर खुद हिंदी सिकुड़ती जा रही है। कहने को तो आज इस देश में हिंदी को राजभाषा का दर्जा प्राप्त है किन्तु स्थिति भिन्न है। चाहे विश्वविद्यालय या लोकसेवा आयोगों के प्रश्न-पत्र हों, या फिर सरकारी चिट्ठी-पत्री, मोटे तौर पर राज-काज की मूल प्रामाणिक भाषा अंग्रेजी ही है। रैपिड इंग्लिश स्पीकिंग कोर्स के सर्वव्यापी विज्ञापन और कुकरमुत्ते की तरह उगते इंग्लिश मीडियम के स्कूल अंग्रेजी के साम्राज्य का डंका बजाते देख रहे हैं। जहां-जहां अभिलाषा या जरूरत है वहां अंग्रेजी है। दरअसल, इन साठ-पैंसठ सालों में सत्ता का ब्याकरण हिंदी में नहीं अंग्रेजी में रचा जाता रहा है। सत्ता के केंद्र में बैठे लोग औपचरिकतावश या फिर वोट-अर्जन के लिए हिंदी का समर्थन करते रहे, अन्यथा भीतर से मन उनका अंग्रेजी की ओर ही झुका हुआ था। हिंदी की ओर होता तो शायद आज हिंदी को लेकर प्रहर्ष ही दूसरा होता।

किसी भी भाषा का विस्तार, उसकी लोकप्रियता या फिर उसका वर्चस्व तब तक नहीं बढ़ सकता जब तक कि उसे 'जरूरत' यानी 'आवश्यकता' से नहीं जोड़ा जाता। यह 'जरूरत' अपने आप उसे विस्तार देती है और लोकप्रिय बना देती है। हिंदी को इस 'जरूरत' से जोड़ने की बहुत आवश्यकता है। हिंदी की तुलना में 'अंग्रेजी' ने अपने को इस तरीके से जोड़ा है। जिस निष्ठा और गति से हिन्दी और गैर-हिन्दी प्रचार-प्रसार का कार्य हो रहा है, उससे दुगुनी रफ्तार से देश-विदेश में अंग्रेजी माध्यम से ज्ञान-विज्ञान के नये-नये क्षितिज उद्घाटित हो रहे हैं जिनसे परिचित हो जाना आज हर व्यक्ति के लिए लाजिमी हो गया है। इस कथन से यह अर्थ कदापि न निकाला जाए कि मैं अंग्रेजी की वकालत कर रहा हूँ। मैं सिर्फ यह रेखांकित करना चाहता हूँ कि अंग्रेजी ने अपने को उस जरूरत से जोड़ा है जो अच्छी नौकरी देती है, प्रतिष्ठा देती है या फिर ज्ञान-विज्ञान की नई खिड़कियाँ हमारे लिए खोलती हैं। इस बात को भी हमें स्वीकार करना होगा कि अंग्रेजी ने अपने को मौलिक-चिंतन, मौलिक-अनुसंधान व सोच तथा ज्ञान-विज्ञान के अथाह भण्डार की संवाहिका बनाया है जिसकी वजह से पूरे विश्व में आज उसका वर्चस्व अथवा दबदबा बना हुआ है। हिंदी अभी 'जरूरत' की भाषा नहीं बन पाई है। हमें इस बात का जवाब ढूंढना होगा कि क्या कारण है अब तक उच्च अध्ययन खास तौर पर विज्ञान और तकनालॉजी, चिकित्साशास्त्र, प्रबंधन आदि के अध्ययन के लिए हम हिंदी में स्तरीय/मौलिक पुस्तकें तैयार नहीं कर सके हैं? क्या कारण है कि एनडीए, बैंक प्रोवेशनरी ऑफिसर्स टेस्ट, कैट आदि परीक्षाओं और प्रतियोगिताओं के लिए हम हिंदी को एक विषय के रूप में सम्मिलित नहीं करा सके हैं? क्या कारण है कि आईआईटी, पीएनटी, आदि परीक्षाओं में अंग्रेजी एक विषय है, हिंदी नहीं है? एसी अनेक बातें हैं जिनका उल्लेख किया जा सकता है। यह सब क्यों हो रहा है? अनायास हो रहा है या जानबूझकर किया जा रहा है, इन बातों पर खुल कर चर्चा होनी चाहिए।

कहा जा चुका है कि हिंदी प्रचार-प्रसार या उसे अखिल भारतीय स्वरूप देने का मतलब हिंदी के विद्वानों, लेखकों, कवियों या अध्यापकों की मण्डली तैयार करना नहीं है। जो हिन्दी से सीधे-सीधे आजीविका द्वारा या अन्य तरीकों से जुड़े हुए हैं, वे तो हिन्दी के अनुयायी हैं ही। यह उनका धर्म है, उनका नैतिक कर्तव्य है कि वे हिंदी का पक्ष लें। मैं बता रहा हूँ ऐसे हिंदी वातावरण को तैयार करने की जिसमें भारत देश के किसी भी भाषा-क्षेत्र का किसान, मजदूर, रेल में सफर करने वाला हर यात्री, अलग अलग काम-धन्धों से जुड़ा

आम-जन हिन्दी समझे और बोलने का प्रयास करे। टूटे-फूटी हिंदी ही बोले, मगर बोले तो सही। यहां पर दूरदर्शन और सिनेमा के योगदान का उल्लेख करना चाहूंगा जिसने हिंदी को पूरे देश में लोकप्रिय बनाना में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका है। कुछ वर्ष पूर्व जब दूरदर्शन पर 'रामायण' और 'महाभारत' सीरियल प्रसारित हुए तो समाचार पत्रों के माध्यम से सुनने को मिला कि दक्षिणभारत के कतिपय अहिन्दी भाषा अंचलों में रहने वाले लोगों ने इन दो सीरियलों को बड़े चाव से देखा क्योंकि भारतीय संस्कृति के इन दो अद्भुत महाकाव्यों को देखना उनकी भावनागत जरूरत बन गई थी और इस तरह अनजाने में ही उन्होंने हिन्दी सीखने का उपक्रम भी किया। हम ऐसा सहज सुन्दर और सौमनस्यपूर्ण माहौल बनाना चाहते हैं जिसमें हिंदी एक जरूरत बने और उसे जन-जन की वाणी बनने का गौरव उसे प्राप्त हो।

एक बात और। हिंदी प्रचार-प्रसार सम्बन्धी कई राष्ट्रीय संगोष्ठियों में मुझे सम्मिलित होने का सुअवसर मिला है। इन संगोष्ठियों में अक्सर यह सवाल अहिन्दी-भाषा हिंदी विद्वान करते हैं कि हम तो हिन्दी सीखते हैं या फिर हिंदी सीखने की सलाह दी जाती है, मगर आप लोग यानी हिंदी भाषा क्षेत्रों कि लोग हमारे दक्षिण भारत की एक भी भाषा सीखने के लिए तैयार नहीं हैं। यह रटा-रटाया जुमला मैं कई बार सुन चुका हूँ। और आखिर एक सेमिनार मैंने कह ही दिया कि दक्षिण की कौनसी भाषा आप लोग हम को सीखने के लिए कह रहे

हैं? तमिल/मलयालम/कन्नड़/या तेलुगु? और फिर उससे होगा क्या? आपके अहम् की संतुष्टि? पंजाबी-भाषी डोगरी सीखे तो बात समझ में आती है। राजस्थानी-भाषी गुजराती सीख ले तो ठीक है। इन प्रदेशों की भौगोलिक सीमाएं आपस में मिलती हैं, अतः व्यापार या परस्पर व्यवहार आदि के स्तर पर इससे भाषा सीखने वालों को लाभ ही होगा। अब आप कश्मीरी-भाषी से कहें कि वह तमिल या उडिया सीख ले या फिर पंजाबी-भाषा से कहें कि वह बँगला या असमिया सीख ले (क्योंकि इस से भावात्मक एकता बढ़ेगी) तो आप ही बताएँ यह बेहूदा तर्क नहीं है तो क्या है? इस तर्क से अच्छा तर्क यह है कि अलग-अलग भाषाएँ सीखने के बजाय सभी लोग हिन्दी सीख लें ताकि सभी एक दूसरे से सीधे-सीधे जुड़ जाएँ। वह भी इसलिए क्योंकि हिन्दी देश की अधिकाँश जनता समझती-बोलती है।

पूर्व सदस्य, हिंदी सलाहकार समिति, विधि एवं न्याय मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार। पूर्व अध्यक्षता, भारतीय उच्च आह्वयन संस्थान, राष्ट्रपति निवास, शिमला तथा पूर्व वरिष्ठ अध्यक्षता (हिंदी) संस्कृति मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार।

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तलाक और तलाक! आखिर कितने तलाक?

बीना बुदकी

कश्मीर में कोकरनाग के छोटे गाँव में रोशन अपने परिवार के साथ रहता था। गाँव में रोशन शाह साहब की बेटी को ट्यूशन पढ़ाता था। शाह साहब ने ही उसकी दफ्तर में नौकरी लगवा दी। आगे चल कर उसकी प्रमोशन हुई मानो घरवालों के भाग ही जग गए। उसी गाँव में लाजो की बहन का रिस्ता भी तय हुआ था। लाजो अक्सर तीज त्यौहार पर बहन के ससुराल सामान लेकर जाती। बहन के ससुराल की खातिरदारी उसे बड़ी लुभाती थी।

कहीं भी आने जाने में रोशन नंबर कभी ना आता, बड़ी बहनें पहले निकल जाती। एक दिन रोशन किसी काम से लोजो की बहन के ससुराल आया, वहाँ लाजो को देख कर उसकी आँखों में विवाह की शहनाइयाँ बजने लगी। १५ दिन में ही लाजो का रिस्ता रोशन के साथ हो गया। शादी के साथ साथ लाजो भी ससुराल आ गई। तीन दिन घर में मेहमानों की भीड़ और आवन जावन रहा। मुँह दिखाई के किसी किसी ने पैसे भी दिए किसी ने शाल भी दिया। सब कुछ किनारे रखकर दस सपने सजाती कि इन पैसों से ये खरीदूँगी वो खरीदूँगी। शाम होते ही सारे सपने चूर हो गए। रोशन की बड़ी बहन ने सब सामान ले लिया, पैसे भी ले गई और बड़े प्यार से कहने लगी "हमे देखना है न कि किसने क्या दिया है"? जो वो ले गई फिर कभी वापस ना मिला। लाजो ने कभी कोई चीज किसी से भी नहीं माँगी। रोशन को भी जाते वक्त जो पैसे माँ के घर से मिले थे दे दिए।

तीसरे दिन रोशन को दफ्तर से एक पत्र मिला उसकी प्रमोशन हो गई है उसे कल ही उदमपुर के लिए निकलना था। कुछ समझ नहीं आ रहा था कि लाजो खुश होए या दुःखी? तीसरे दिन रोशन उदमपुर के लिए चल पड़ा। नया नया ससुराल कुछ समझ न आता क्या करे और क्या ना करे? पाँचवे दिन सासुमाँ ने रसोई घर का रास्ता दिखा दिया। यह कहकर आज मुहर्त है कुछ बनालो या अगर कुछ नहीं आता है तो कश्मीरी कहवा ही बनालो। कश्मीरी कहवा के साथ ही रसोई घर और घर के काम काज के साथ रिस्ता जुड़ गया। हालाँकि माँ के घर काम करती थी पर सुना था शादी के बाद बहू को कोई दिन तक एक जगह बिस्तर पर बिठाया जाता है, कोई लोग अपने घर दावत पर बुलाते है। पर लाजो को लगता कि किसी ब्रांच ऑफिस से हेड ऑफिस में ट्रांसफर हो गई है। यही सारे काम जो माँ के घर में भी करती थी पर प्यार करने वाली माँ का आँचल सर परथा। पर यहाँ हेड ऑफिस में सब अफसर ही है। रोशन की बहने सब एक बढ़कर एक थी। उनको लाजो कभी न भाई। बड़ी बहन जब

पर भी आती गालियों की बौछार ही करती। कभी किसी काम में मदद न करता। वह हमेशा लावे के ढेर बैठी होती। हमेशा उसे देखकर लगता जाने कब ज्वाला मुप्पी फट पड़ेगा। रोशन कभी कभार पत्र लिखता था। कई बार एक खत को पढ़ती। कभी कभी दिल बहुत उदास होता। लेकिन दिल हल्का किससे करे? रोशन ने खत लिखने कम कर दिए थे पर पापाजी के पास बराबर आते रहते। जब कभी लाजो को मौका मिलता पापा की अलमारी से खत निकाल कर पढ़ती अपना नाम ढूढ़ने की कोशिश करती। लेकिन एक दिन पापा जी की नजर पड गई और थोड़ी देर में उन्होंने कहा, "मेरा १०० रूपए का नोट तो नहीं देखा?" लाजो ने पापा को बताया कि नहीं मैंने कोई रूपए नहीं देखे। मैं तो रोशन के खत में अपना नाम ढूढ़ रही। पापा कहाँ माननेवाले। पीछे पीछे आये जरा अपना अलमारी दिखाओ। लाजो ने उन्हें दिखाया। यह मिली हुई तनखाह है। यह आपको ही देनेवाली थी। रोशन ने हिदायत दी थी कि तनखाह मिलने पर पापा जी को देना। पापा ने तनखाह तो लेली पर दो रूपए भी वापस जेब खर्च को न दिए। पूरा महीना यूँ ही गुजर गया।

रोशन ६ महीने बाद छुट्टी पर घर आया। लेकिन इन ६ महीने में रोशन की छोटी बहन ने कई बार बताया कि रोशन जॉली भाभी के साथ था, सामने रहती शिरीन के साथ भी था और श्री जाने, किन किन का नाम गिनाती। उन बातों को सुन कर कई राते रो रो कर काट जाती। कभी लाजो को लगता कि कहीं वहा एक रात की दुल्हन बनकर तो नहीं रह जाएगी? कभी माँ के गले लग कर खूब रोती। माँ हमेशा ढाँढस बढ़ाती कोई बात नहीं। देखना बाल गोपाल आ जायेगा तो सब ठीक हो जायेगा।

६ महीने के बाद रोशन लाजो को उधमपुर ले गया। पर रोशन कभी भी घर गृहस्थी में नहीं उलझत ना ही उसके परवाह होती कि लाजो ने खाना खाया या नहीं? कभी तो अगर कोई सब्जी उसे ठीक लगती तो वह सब चट कर जाता। यह भी नहीं पूछता कि लाजो क्या अंदर कुछ सब्जी है? हर वक्त अपने आप में व्यस्त रहता कोई "त्रिका पढता या अखबार पढता रहता। मन होता तो लाजो को बुलाकर किटफिट कर के सो जाता। वक्त बीतता रहा और कब १ साल हो गया पता ही न चला। उस दिन रोशन लाजो को घुमाने ले गया और फोटो भी उठाई। लाजो फूले न समें रही थी।

रोशन की ट्रांसफर वापस कश्मीर हो गई। घर में सब मिलकर रहने लगे। लेकिन रोशन की छोटी बहन ने कभी चैन से जीने न दिया।

कुछ न कुछ इंगामा खंडा कर के रखती। शादी से पहले ही उसने लाजो का फोटो अपने मित्रों को दे दिया था। क्या मंशा थी पता नहीं? लाजो को जब उसके मौसरे भाई ने बताया तो उसने रोशन से पूछा था। फोटो कहाँ है जो आप को दिया था। रोशन के पूछने पर लाजो ने सब बता दिया। शादी के बाद पता चला कि उस रात बड़ी लड़ाई हुई थी। अक्सर किचन में खाना बनाते हुए रोशन दान से कई टॉफियाँ को टोपियों फेंकता कभी कोई सामने बैठा होता तो बड़ा डर लगता। पर शांदा उनको सब पता था। कोई कुछ न कहता।

एक दिन सुबह सुबह लोजो को उल्टियाँ आ रही थी घर में पापा और रोशन के चेहरे पर खुशी थी। लाजो भी उस अनजान से नाता जोड़ने का प्रयत्न कर रही थी। खयालो में उसकी तरह तरह की तस्वीर बनाती। माँ शब्द सुनने के लिए कई बार कान साफ करती। जब उस नन्हे से बीज ने पहली बार अंगड़ाई ली तो अक्सर पेट पर हाथ फेर कर उसको छूने की कोशिश करती। लेकिन कभी कभी उसे डर भी लगता की पता नहीं रोशन उसके साथ खेलेगा कि नहीं।

रात दिन सिमट कर उस दिन पर आ गए जब अंश ने इस दुनिया में प्रवेश लिया। कितनी पीड़ा, दर्द सहा उस के आने के लिए। उस के कुँह की छवि देख कर सब भूल गई। तीसरे दिन रोशन खाना लेकर ५ बजे हस्पताल आया। लाजो भूख के मारे कब से रोशन का इंतज़ार कर रही थी। आते ही जू ही रोशन ने बताया कि सुबह से बेबो सफाई में लगी थी। अभी खाली हुई तो तुम्हारे लिए खाना बनाया। लाजो से सहा न गया वह भी बरस पड़ी। बीचवाली बेबो रोशन की बहन कम काम पर ज्ञान ज्यादा दिखाती थी। कर्म-कुर्म करती पर ऊपर से मदर टेरेसा की तस्वीर दिखाती। रोशन ने पलट के लाजो की खबर न ली ४ दिन के बाद उसने अंश को उठाया और माँ के घर आ गई। २१ दिन के बाद नन्दलाल पति के दफ्तर का चपरासी अंश को देखने आया। उसने बताया की रोशन का एक्सीडेंट हुआ है। पल भर में लोजो भूल गई की उन सबने उसे हस्पताल की चौखट पर छोड़ दिया। कोई खैर खबर न ली। दिसम्बर की भयानक सर्दी। और २१ दिन की जच्चा रोशन को देखने तेज तेज कदमों से घर की ओर जो रही थी। पहुँचते ही बहनो के चेहरे पर कोई खुशी नहीं अलबत्ता पापा के चेहरे पर लाजो को देखकर खुशी दौड़ गई। ५ दिन तक लाजो बराबर आती जाती रही। पाँचवे दिन वह शॉल लेने अपने कमरे गई तो रोशन ही चिल्लाने लगा। सारा सामान ले जावो।

दूसरे दिन लाजो अपने अंश को लेकर घर आ घमकी। सब के मुँह ३६ का आंखड़ा बन गए। २ दिन तक खाने को भी ठीक से न मिला। लाजो ने भी अपना ठिकाना रोशन की चारपाई के साथ लगा लिया था। तीसरे दिन माँ ने मौसरे भाई को लाजो का हाल देखने को भेजा। रोशन ने नियम शर्तों की लिस्ट सुना दी और कहा लाजो को मंजूर हो तो ठीक बर्ना तलाक लेले। मैंने फटा फट कह दिया है सब मंजूर है। उस रात रोशन ने अंश को पहली बार देखा। पिछले २ दिन

से कमरे के एक कोन में सोने को मिलता, रोशन की सब बहने अपने पतियों के साथ ऊपर सोती। रात भर अंश सर्दी के कारण चिकिर-मिकिर करता रहा पर किसी को कोई फिकिर नहीं।

रोशन लाजो समझौता होते ही रोशन ने चाय पानी के आर्डर दिए। बहने सब जलधुन गई। उनके चेहरे देखकर ऐसा लग रहा था मानो भारी बहुमत से चुनाव हार गई। धीरे धीरे लाजो ने अपनी घर गृहस्थी संभाली। अंश के होने के बाद ४१ दिन का नहाना भी लाजो ने ६० दिन में किया। सब से पूछकर खुद ही लाजो ने पानी अंगीठी पर रखा और सारा काम कर के खुद ही नहाया। शाम को रोशन आया तो चाय की आवाज़ लगाई। लाजो ने साथ आये श्यामलाल से कहा, 'साहब को चाय बना के देदो' मैं ने आज नहाया है। श्यामलाल ने पूछ ही लिया। मैडम कोई आया नहीं था? श्यामलाल तुम तो जानते ही हो, कौन आएगा?

जिंदगी में फूलो की बहार तो नहीं थी पर जिंदगी पहाड़ो पर लगे उस पेड़ की तरह थी जिसे कोई पानी देनेवाला नहीं, कोई गुड़ाई कटाई, करनेवाला नहीं, पर पेट भी सदाबहार सा खड़ा था। कुछ दिनों के बाद पिताजी का श्राद था, माँ ने खाने पर बुलाया था। अंश को देखने के लिए भी तड़प रही थी। लाजो ने ५ बजे तक घर का सारा काम करके रोशन के लिए खाना बना के सब ढक कर माँ के घर चल पड़ी। खाने के पास पर्वी रख दीया। मैं माँ के घर पहुँची तो माँ खुशी से फूल उठी अंश को गले लगाया। अभी पूरी साँस भी न ली थी रोशन को सामने देखकर लाजो ठिठक गई। मैं ने पर्वी लिखकर रख दिया था क्या नहीं देखा? बच्चे को उठाओ और घर चलो। आज पिताजी का श्राद है मैं ने अभी खाना भी नहीं खाया है। मैं सुबह ही आजाऊँगी। चटती हो कि यही जूते मार मार कर घसीटता हुआ लेकर चलू। माँ ने इज्जत के खातिर फौरन लाजो को जाने को कहा।

लाजो भी अंशको गोद में लेकर रोशन के पीछे पीछे ऐसे चल रही मानो कसाई गाय को हलाल करने ले जा रहा हो। पूरे रास्ते लाजो रोती हुई जिन्दा लाश सी चल रही थी। घर पहुँच कर रोशन अपने आप मैं व्यस्त हो गया। लाजो को मूख भी लगी थी श्राद का खाना बनाने की हिम्मत ही ना थी। रोशन को खाना देकर भूखे ही सो गई। यूँ भी रोशन कभी नहीं पूछता था।

जिंदगी भी मौत के साथ ही रुकने का नाम लेती है बर्ना तो पैसैंजर गाड़ी की तरह ठक-ठक करती हुई चलती है किस्मतवालों की बात अलग होती है शायद उन्होंने मोती दान दिए होते है। लाजो भी अंश को पाकर सब भूलने की कोशिश करती। लाजो का बड़ा दिल करता कि रोशन अंश के लिए खिलौने लाये अच्छे कपडे लाये, पर रोशन कभी ऐसा न किया। लाजो के लिए भी उसने कभी कोई साडी ना लायी। कभी माँ कपडे देती तो कभी राधादीदी अपने कपडे देती।

अंश स्कूल जाने लगा पर रोशन कभी पैरेंट टीचर मीटींग में नहीं जाता। हमेशा लाजो ही जाती। उन दिनों चारो और आंतकवाद की

आग सुलग रही थी। जब तक अंश घर आता तब तक लाजो भगवान के आगे दस बार हाथ जोड़ती। रोशन का ट्रांसफर सहारनपुर हो गया। अंश का स्कूल में नाम लिख दिया। वह भी रोज स्कूल वैन में चला जाता। तारीख बदलती रही साथ ही लाजो के तकदीर की रेखा भी बदलती गई। रोशन की जिंदगी में मधु आ गई और एक दिन रोशन ने लाजो से कहा, मेरी जिंदगी में मधु आ गई, चाहे तो साथ रह सकती हो या फिर तलाक लेले ३ लाख दूँगा। लाजो ने भी हिम्मत कर के कहा, "साथ मैं रहू तो रात किस के साथ गुजारोगे? तलाक उसे दे दो मैं ६ लाख दूँगी।"

रोशन के जूतों बेल्टों की मार खा कर जीने की यूँ तो चाह खत्म हो चुकी थी। रोशन का ट्रांसफर फिर से कश्मीर हो गया दफ्तर में रोशन और मधु के रिश्ते की सब को खबर थी। कश्मीर के सभी लोगो ने रोशन की खबर ली। नौकरी का डर और घाटी के लोगो का प्रेशर मड़ने से कुछ चुप रहा। लाजो ने भी अंश के खातिर एडी चोटी का जोर लगा दिया। क्योंकि अंश का कोई भी पापा नहीं बन सकता था। सब ने साथ भी दिया। बात आयी गई हो गई। लाजो भी समझती रही रोशन बदल गया।

लेकिन बढ़ते आंतकवाद ने पूरी कश्मीर घाटी को अपनी चपेट में ले लिया था। मजबूर होकर रोशन भी। विस्थापित हो गया कुछ साल सब साथ रहे, लेकिन धीरे धीरे रोशन के पैट में फिर से दर्द होने लगा। बात बात पर ताने कसना, गालियां देना, हर एक के आगे नीचा दिखाना उसका व्यवहार बन गया था। जयपुर आकर हर बात की स्वतंत्रता थी। फेसबुक पर चैट करो या शरीर मिलन करो कौन किससे रोकने वाला था? कश्मीर में पति-पत्नी में भी मतभेद होते थे। पर कान से कान को खबर नहीं होती थी। आखो मैं शर्महया का एहसास था। मैं बाप की इज्जत का पास होता था। ससुराल के नाम का डर था। तलाक दूरदूर तक सुनाई नहीं देता था। कभी कोई बात होती भी तो समाज वाले रिश्तेदार ही मिलके फैसला करते।

उस संस्कारो की छोटी सी घाटी से निकल कर सब अपने आप में मस्त थे। आंतकवाद एक भयानक नासूर तो था पर उससे भी ज्यादा टूटन की कसक तरह तरह से दिखाई देर ही थी। गाँव की भोली-भाली लड़कियां रोशनी की चकाचौंध में बहक गईं। लंबे चौड़े सुंदर सजीले लड़को की तो चल पड़ी, लड़कियां उन को थोक में मिलने लगीं। युवक तो युवक मर्दों की कानी आखो में भी रोशनी आ गई। उनकी भी चोरी छुपे आँख मिचोली ही नहीं बल्कि शरीरमिलन का प्रवाह खूब ज़ोरों पर चल रहा था। कई घर टूट रहे थे।

रोशन ने फिर से नया नाटक चालू कर लिया था। सभी को कहता फिरता कि उसने लाजो को तलाक दे दिया है। कोई पूछता - कब?

मैंने तो बहुत पहले दे दिया था। वह तो अंश की शादी के लिए रुका हूँ।

पहलेपहल लाजो से जब कोई कहता वह भी कह देती - छोड़ो वह मजाक करते है। पर आग का धुँआ भला लाजो कैसे रोक पाती? वह तो दूर दूर तक फैलता ही जा रहा था। शिवरात्रि थी लाजो ने सारा खाना बनाया। रात में पूजा भी अकेले की। दिन में अंश की होने वाली भी आयी थी, वह भी ससुर के साथ थिरक रही थी। पास न आयी। अंश जो मेरा अपना खून था वह भी रोशन के पैसों तले बिक चुका था

लाजो ने दूसरे दिन रोशन से पूछ लिया, - यह क्या तलाक-तलाक लगा रखा है। कब हुआ? कौन से कोर्ट में? खुद को हरीशचंद्र कहने वाले तुम खुद आवारा मसीह हो। रोशन ने १२ साल पहले मधु से आँख मिचोली के समय ५० हजार दे कर तलाकनामा बनवा लिया था।

शुक्र है कि इन १२ सालों में कोई बच्चा न हुआ वरना उस बच्चे का हाल भी वही होता जो हिंदुस्तान पाकिस्तान के बर्डर के बीच की जगह में जब औरत प्रसव के दर्द को झेलती है। कभी कभी उसे समय का ख्याल ही नहीं रहता और उसे रात वही गुजारनी पड़ती है। रात में कभी कभी आनेवाला भी आ जाता। सुबह वह माँ कभी निश्चय नहीं कर पाती इसको जन्मभूमि हिंदुस्तान है या पाकिस्तान क्योंकि वह तो दोनों सरहदों के बीच की जमीन पर जन्म लेता है उसे राष्ट्रियता किस की मिलेगी? यह एक ज्वलन्त प्रश्न बनजाता था। रोशन ने मोटी-मोटी गालियां दे कर कह दिया तलाक तो दिया है। जावो जन्म के कोर्ट में दूँदो। मुझे उसकी एक कॉपी तो दो? कह दिया न जावो दूँदो। लाजो ने दूसरे दिन ही अखरोटों का पानी फेंक दिया, अमावस्था का भी इंतजार न किया। और पहने कपड़ों में निकल आयी माँ की दी हुई जमीन पर बने कमरे में रहने लगी। पहले तो गुस्सा चढ़ा की रोशन को सबक सिखाऊ। रात भर सोवती रही क्या करों क्या न करू? रोशन जिसे सिर्फ तलाक देना आता था वह वही करता है? लाजो ने भी निश्चय किया की आज तक वह तलाक-तलाक कह कर गुर्वाता रहा।

रोशन आज मैं तुझे तलाक दाती हूँ? पैसों का अहंकार तेरी हड्डियों में समा गया है। पैसे न कभी मांगे न कोर्ट कचहरी जाऊँगी। किस के लिए न्याय की गूजारीश करू? उस अंश के लिए जिसने मरने के पहले ही मार दिया। वह खुद बड़ा हो गया था। लाजो ने कुछ भी न किया था। और अब वह कश्मीर और कश्मीर के लोग भी कहा से लावू जो इस सिर-फिरे को समझाते। आंतकवाद की गूँज तो पूरे विश्व में सबने सुनी, पर उससे भी भयानक नासूर किसी ने भी न देखे।

बोजनस छुस कुस

डा० ब्रिज कृष्ण मोजा

कश्मीर दूर पूर्वस मंज सागर बठिस प्यठ

बडिस गुंजान नगरस मंज 'छुस ब लेखान काणिर शार

कमन बालन नालन त यारयन दूर, अकिस गोर माहोलस मंज।

छुस ब लेखान काऽशिर शार, अमा क्याजे कमि त कमन खाऽतरया।

बोजनस छुम कुस त कुस छुम कन थावनस तु वथ हावनस।

यथ गुंजान नगरस मंज यति काऽत्य छि जानान म्यान्य काऽशिर ज्ञान।

कति यति महफिल त मजलिस छि कस बोजनस फुरसत त फुरकत।

यिम म्याऽन्य काऽशिर शार त दिलुक्य अंगार, मगर बोजनस छुम कुस।

लोकधारस छुस ब द्रामुत कमि काऽशिरे माहोल मंज

दूर लोगमुत स्यठा दूरय यति ज्ञानु छि बजि तु बेशुमार।

मुजराह छि कति म्यान्य काऽशिर ज्ञान त कस छि अमिच यति कांह ज्ञान

अथ्य गाऽर माहोलस मंज बुम्बर गयि डोचुर दिवान कथ मुकामस कुन।

डोचुर दिवान गयि बुम्बर कमि मुरादय माहोलस मंज।

मगर वोन्थ यथ हरदस महज छु' ब लेखान काऽशिर शार

कमि हयचरय, खतरय, दिलासय त वासयुत त बडु शोकय त वलुवल्लेय

कमि भावय अगर बेज्ञानय छुस बु लेखान काऽशिर शार मगर बोजनस छुम कुस।

बु लेखान क्याजि यिम काऽशिर शार यलि न्य परनस छि हवा गाऽमत्य तिम अलफाज।

यिमव साऽत्य छि काऽशिर ज्ञान बरजस्त बुरपूर तु साफ करान इजहार

दिलुक्य ख्याल सोखिक तु देखिक, खुशी तु गमक्य लहजात।

त्राप जार'क्य त शहजारक्य वन्दुक्य तु गर्मुक्य मुखतलिफ जज्ञात।

तिमन दिलचस्प बद्धारन मंज कत्यन अशकु पेचानन सत्य तिम लमहात

नोजुक अवकात लोलुक्य तिम फितरात यिम छि अशकाल दिलस मंज

तिमन टाछि सोनमालन तु हियमालन हंज, बोम्बरन तु यम्बरजलन हंज

कतिजन कुकिलन त बुलबुलन हंज टाऽठय गुफतुगू, मगर म्य बोजनस छुम कुस

तमि ग्रजनुच्य आबशारन तु शाहकोलन हंज तु कमि नगमुचनावन मंज

कमन टाऽत्य त मीट्य शब्दन शिकारन हंज सिर्यि लूसिथ डलस मंज

पानिच्यन लहरन काऽत्य मीट्य करान त हंज सनकदय घमु राहगीर करान।

कौसु लय खसान तु सु कमि हटि म्यवान यलि तस नाव वातान मुकामस कुन।

बोतन्य वुतरन सोर सोर गछान जन बजान सन्तूर त साज दिलस मंज

तिमनय विज्ञन हंज याद छि दिलस पतुपार करान टोप दिवान शाहमार सुंज।

यिमनुय अनमोल यादन छुस बु फेरान अकिस किताबि हजि दिलचस्य वर्कन जन

करान इजाहार छि तिमनय यादन यिम म्यान्य काऽशिर शार, मगर बोजनस छुम कुस।

पर्वत तैतल्यन प्यठ तीरवाल कम टाऽठय तरानु म्यवान तु तीरन वति तार दिवान

गुजिर बायि नगमु करान कनयाज्यन अलु अलु करान छु कथुथ दिलगीर यि मंजर बनान

खामेश गाठन दोब्य बायि पलवन ठसरायि करान त कम वचन वनान

एकान्त डलन ख्यलन मंज चक्रवारि जंभिश करान तु हाऽनज बायि नाज करान पंपोश ज्ञान।

आँगन ग्रजान सितर्य जूतिथ रोन्थि गंडिथ छोन्य छोन्य म्वसोऽन्य अलाप करान।

बर मन्धानन लडीशाह फेरान तु रातुचि दंदेरि मंज बिक्षा मंगान बराये खोदा।

क्याह सोज़ इवान दिलस मंज़ यिमौव दिल सोज़ ख्यालन हंज़ि
 यादव साऽत्य
 मुरादन छि, यिम, यिमनय, यादन अनान यिम म्याऽन्य काऽशिर
 शार, मगर बोज़नस छुम कुस
 रहबर बनान ललि हुन्दय वावव झोलान कृष्णु जुवन्य त
 परमाननकदनकय शार
 दीन धर्म न कांह मसलु बनान सूफी कलाम यलि नन्द ऋशय बनान
 दिल दाऽदय बलान छि यलि सुमरान हब्बु खोतूनन्य, महजूरन्य
 तु मास्टर जीयिन शार
 जनून इवान जवानी हुन्द यलि ग्यवान बाऽथ नाऽदिम, मजबूरन्य त
 साकी सन्दय
 न्यनद करान ग्राऽस बौयि ग्यवान, छकरि तुलान तु रोफ करान
 हयोन्द मुसलमान
 प्रथ कांह ग्यवान 'यिम ऋशय कलाम, ज्ञानान न कांह, कम्य
 कर त क्याज़ि ल्यूख

ग़ज़ि वथान मुजलिसन त मंडलीयन मंज़ अकि असलुच वथ यष छि
 वनान सथ
 सुय सथ छि करान इज़हार यिम म्याऽन्य काऽशिर शार, मगर
 बोज़नस छुम कुस
 सागर बठिस प्यठ कशीरि दूर छुस ब लेखान इम काऽशिर शार
 शाह यिम थवान खसुवुन तिमन यादन यिमन वनान छु म्योन
 लोकचार
 सुय लोकचार युस छु वोन्य दुंदलयोमुत त बुसुन्योमत
 जिंद थवान म्ययिमय प्राऽन्य यादगार त म्यान्य काऽशर शार, मगर
 बोज़नस छुम कुस।

डा० ब्रिज कृष्ण मोज़ा वितस्ता के कर्णधार है।
 उनका सेल - 983155139

माजि ज़ख्य छै इन्सान सन्ज प्रजनथ

एम. के. भट्ट निर्धन

इन्सानस छै पन्नुय्य माजि ज़ख्य तिथय किन प्रजनथ तु पहचान अता करान, विथ किन्थ ऐकिस इन्सानस रन्ग रॉप, बुधिकु तु नरित हुन्द आकार वुछित यि खयाल तु तस्सावुर छु करनु यिवान जि यि फरद कमि रियासतुक तु कतम अलाकुक गछि रोजन वौल आसुन। दुन्याहस अन्दर छै सासु बजुय तु लछि बजय ज़बानु तु बोलि वरतरवस मन्ज अनुनुह यिवान तु प्रथ वरियि छै हतु बजय ज़बान्य तु बोलि लुप्त स्पदान, यातु छै लुप्त सपदनुकिस गलिस प्यठ आसान।

मशहूर कलमकार गनेश देवी सन्जि सरबराही तहत कौर केन्ह वरी ब्रौठ भाषा सिसर्च तु पब्लिकेशन भारतस अन्दर बोलनु यिनु वाजन्य ज़बान्य तु बोल्य मुतालक अख सर्वे। तु तिभव करि ८६० भारतीय ज़बनु व्बोनि, यिम यति वरतावस मन्ज अननु यिवान छै।

गनेश देवी छि ऐकिस इन्टरवियूहस मन्ज वनान जि यलि भारतस अन्दर सनु १९६१ मन्ज मुरदमशुमारी करनु आयि, तमि सातु आव कुल १६५२ हन मजि जय्यन हुन्द जिकर करनु तु अमि पतु महज (१०) दहि वुयिर्य १९७१ मन्ज यलि हज़बि मामूल बयि मुरदम शुमारी करनु आयि, तमि सातु आव सिर्फ तु सिर्फ १०८ हन माजि ज़बन हुन्द जिकर करनु। मजि जय्यन इन्डिस तेदादस मन्ज आयि यीज़ा ज़ियादह कमी अमि किनु ति क्याजि सरकारन कौर फासलु जि योसु ज़बान १० सास खोतु कम लूख छि बोलान, तमियुक थियह नु जिकर करनु। यि छु तलख पज़र ति जि कम तेदादुक्य लूख बोल वाजनि केन्ह बोलि छै लुप्त सपजमयह।

सरकार कि ताज़तरीन ऐदाद शुमार मुताबिक छै ऑईन किस ऑठमिस शङ्खूलस मन्ज (२२) ज़बानि दरज। तु बाकी ज़बानि छै अमि शङ्खूल नेबर थावनु आमयह। मारुफ तु मशहूर कलमकार गनेश देवी छि पनुनिस रिपोर्टस मन्ज मज़ीद वनान जि सोन मुल्क भारत यलि अगस्त १९४७हस मन्ज आज़ाद सपुद, तनु प्यठु छै करीब ३०० ज़बानि गॉब गमयह, तिमन ज़बन्य मुतालक छु नु कान्ह अता पता।

१९८५ ता १९९० कि सतितमस पांच वुहर्यकिस मन्सूबस अन्द आयि ज़बान्य हन्ज सर्वे दरदस निनु मगर २० वरी गुज़रनु पतु ति आयि यि कॉम सिर्फ वोन रियासतन अन्दर पूरु करनु। वरी २००७ तस मन्ज कुर इनसॉनी वसीलन तरकी दिनुचि मरकज़ी वज़ारत अख कमीटी ति कॉयम, यष गॉर शङ्खूल ज़बान्य मुतालक ज़ानकॉरी हॉसिल ऑस कुरुन्य। अमि खॉतरह आयि २४० करुर रोपियि ग्रांट

रन्थ मन्जूर ति करनु मगर पतु आव नु यि मन्सूब अमलि मन्ज अनुनुह, कियाज़ाकि सरकारस छु नु मोलमुय ति जि कौंया ज़बानि छै।

२००७-२०१२ किस ११-हमिस पान्थ वोहिर्य किस मन्सूबस अन्दर कार मैसोरस मन्ज मुकीम भारती ज़बान्य मुतालक सैंतालक

सैंट्रल इन्स्टिट्यूटन अख सर्वे करनुक तजवीज़ पेश। तु सरकारस आयि गुज़ारिश करनु जि अमि कामि खॉतरह गछुन तिमन १० हन वरियन खातरह २००० माहरि ज़बान (लिंविस्ट) फराहम करनु यि। सरकारन कार यि मन्सूब मनज़ूर ति, तु ६०० हतन करोर रुपयन हुन्द आव बजट ति आयतन थावनु, मगर भगवान छु जानान जि यि मनसूब ति क्याजि आव २०१० हस मन्ज रद करनु।

भारती ज़बानुय्य मुतालक योसु ब्रौठ सर्वे ऑस करनु आमुच, सौ आस अज़ ब्रौठ अलु पलु १०० वरी १९२३ हस मन्ज ईयरलेन्डक्य मॉहरि ज़बान सर जार्ज अब्राहिम ग्रेरसन सन्जि सरबराही तहत मकमल करनु आमुच।

प्रथ रियासतस मन्ज छै अलग अलग ज़बानु लूख पनुनिस वरतावस मन्ज अनानु। भारत बाशा तहकीक मुताबिक छै सारवुय खातु ज़्यादह ज़बानि अरुणाचल प्रदेशस मन्ज बोलनु यिवान, अति छै करीब ६६ ज़बानि वरतावस मन्ज अनुनुह यिवान। आसाम, गुजरात तु महाराष्ट्रा हिव्यन रियासतन मन्ज छै ५० ज़बानि बोलनु यिवान। साचिस रियेसत जम्मू कश्मीरस मन्ज ति छै ६/७ ज़बान्य तु बोलि बोलन यिवान, मसलन काशुर, डोगरी, लद्दाखी, गोजरी, उर्दू, हिंदी, पंजाबी वगॉरह।

केन्चन ज़बान्य मसलन हैन्दी, अंग्रीजी तु भोजपुरी बोलन वाल्य लूकन हुंद तेदाद छु स्पठा तीज़ी सान बडान। मसलन १९७१स मन्ज ऑस अंग्रीजी ज़बान अख लख ८७ सास लूकन हन्ज माजि ज़ख्य। तु २०११ हस अन्दर वोट यिहुन्द तेदाद करीब १ करोड़। हिन्दी ऑस्य २००७ तस मन्ज ३७ करोर लूख बोलान, तु २०११ हस मन्ज वात यिहुन्द तेदाद ४० करोड़।

गनेश देवी छि वनान जि दुनियाहस मन्ज छै वुनिकेस ६००० सास ज़बानि, मगर यि सदी सोरनस ताम हैकन ३०० ज़बानि यात पूर पाठ्य जिन्दु रूजिथ। यानि यिम ज़बानि हैकन नाम पयाम, कनून सॉजी तु मूसीकी खॉतरह इस्तेमाल स्पदिथ।



सौन्य कौशिर ज़बान ति छै मुखतलिफ वजूहातव किन दाह खतु दाह लागर तु कमज़ोर सपदान। हालांकि काशिर ज़बान छै वेद जमान ब्रोठ मूजूद तु अमियुक आगुर छु हैन्द आर्यनस सत्य वाबस्तु। अकसर लूख छि काशिर ज़बान बूलिथ तु समजिथ हैकान, मगर लीखित तु परिख छि नु हैकान तु वारु छु वय्न नुवि पुयि तु खास करिथ काशिर्य बटु मैग्रंट शुर्यन अन्दर कोशुर वरतान स्यठा कम स्पुदमुत। मजि ज़खि हन्ज़ काज़ा अहमियत छै, सौ हैकव अस्य यमि कथि सुत्य समझिथ यलि अस्य कौशिरिस मन्ज़ "शीन" तु "यख" वनान छि। शीन लफज़ बूजिथय छै सानय्न अछन ब्रान्त कनि अख अलग अलग शबिह यिवान, तु यख बूजिथ छै बदलु शकल अछन ब्रान्तकुन यिवान। मगर हिन्दी या उर्दूहस मन्ज़ छि दोशवनी "बर्फ" वनान।

कौशिर ज़बान रछरिथ तु महफूज़ नु थावनु खौतरह यीज़ा सान्य सरकार ज़िमार छै, तीतयाह ज़ियादु छि अस्य पानु ति कसूरवार। छि नु पनुचनय बचन धरस मन्ज़ कोशुर बोलन होसलु अफ़ज़ाई करान। तु नु ओस कशीर मन्ज़ यि स्कूलन या कालजन मन्ज़ परनावान। पतु आयि अमि खौतरह ज़रूर केन्ह कदम तुलनु, मगर वकत ओस गोमुत। तु मगर काशरस्य बटु मैग्रंट शुर्यन छु नु घरि हैछिनुक माकु मलेन तु नु छु स्कूलस मन्ज़य परनावनु यिवान। २०११ यि मुरदम शुमारी मुताबि छि कौशिर ज़बान ५५५४४९६ लूख बोलान। काशुर छु नस्तालीकी तु देवनागरी मन्ज़ ति लेखनु यिवान। तु २००८ प्यठ आव तमाम सरकार्य स्कूलन मन्ज़ कौशुर परनावनु ज़रूरी बनवनु।

यादवय सरकार वय्न कोशुर परनावनस प्यठ ज़ार छि दिवान, मगर अमि सुत्य हैकि नु यि मसलु अन्जरिथ।

अवल गछि अमि सुत्य रोज़गार हासिल स्पदुन, ति छु स्यठ ज़रूरी। प्रथ जायि गछन होदिग तु बोर्ड काशिर ज़बान्य मन्ज़ लीखित आसुन्य, सरकार्य दपतरन मन्ज़ ति गछि काशिर ज़बान्य तरजिहि

दिनु यिन। ज़ियादह ज़ियादह किताब गछन देवनागरी तु नस्तालीकस मन्ज़ तरजमु करनु यनि। अज़िकस यथ मोबायल तु कम्प्यूटर किस जमानस मन्ज़ गछि मुखतलिफ काशुर मवाद तु इंटरनेटस प्यठ दस्तियाब थावनु युन। कुनि ति ज़बान्य खौतरह छु नु ज़रूरी ज़ि तमि खौतरह क्या गछि बाज़ाबतु रसमुल ति आसुन, मिसाले आलमस मन्ज़ सारवुय खातु ज़याद बोल वाजनि अंग्रीज्य ज़बान्य छु न पनुन रसमुल खत, बल्कि छै रोमनस मन्ज़ लेखनु यिवान। हालांकि वरयाह लूख छि कोशुर ति रोमन ज़बान्य मन्ज़ लेखनुच कूशिा करान। योसु अख होसलु अफ़ज़ा कथ छै। मगर केन्ह लूख छि अथ बरकस कोशुर बोलनस तु परनस लेखनस हकारत करान। अमि सत्य छि तिम काशिर ज़बान्य हुन्द कतल करान। ज़बान हैकि तोताम ज़िन्दु राज़िथ योताम अथ अखरी नफर ताम वरतावस रोज़ि अनान। यमिच मिसाल अंडमान निकोबारस अन्दर अखरी जनान "भो" बोलान रूज़ २०१० हस मन्ज़ सो फूत स्पदनु सत्यी गयि यि "भो" ज़बान ति दफन। सो ओस अमि जौबान सत्य जानावारन सत्य कथु करान।

ऑखर वनव मजि ज़ख्य तमि पनुवथ पॉठ्य असि काशिर्यन लूकन पानुवान्य गन्डिथ थावान यिथ कुन्य अलग अलग पाशन पन दाव यकवटु मालि मन्ज़ बन्द थावान छै। अमीन कामिल छि वनान:

"कौशतर सत्यी कौशिर सौरी।

नतु वौरानुक्य हौरान काव॥

लेखक हिन्दी और कश्मीरी दोनों ही भाषाओं में लिखते हैं।

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स्वनु बटनि पेयि दूरि प्यटु नज़र। सु मौज़ूर ओस कस ताम सवारि हुंद बिस्तरु तु ट्रंक गाडि हुंदिस पशस प्यठ खारान। दूरि प्यटु योदवय साफ ओस नु बोज़नु यिवान, मगर मौज़ूर छाय ऑस पूर जान सॉबस हिशिया। स्वनु बटनि तुल तेज़ तेज़ कदम। बुधि आसु गाडि यिवान तु गछान। लूख ति ऑस्य नु कम कँह। अकि तरफु ओस गाड्यन हुंद शोर तु न बेयि तरफु कंडक्टरन हुंज़ु क्रक। सारिनुय ऑस जन जलु लार। लूकव तु गाड्यव मँज्य वथ कडान कडान यीतिस कालस स्वनु बटन्यु तथ गाडि ब्रॉठकुन वॉच, मौज़ूर ओस द्रामुत। तमि दिन्न ओरु योर नज़र, मगर मौज़ूर सुंद नामु निशान ओस नु कुनि। स्वनु बटनि प्रुछ बेयिस अँकिस मौज़ूरस तस बापथ मगर कँह लौगुस नु पताह। तति ओसुय नु जान सॉबुनि नावुक कांह मौज़ूर। स्वनु बटन्यु बीठ अँकिस वानु पँजि प्यठ तु ओश गोस जॉरी। "म्यानि अँछ ख्यन नु दोखु । सु ओस जान सॉबुय", यी सॉचान सॉचान गँयि स्वनु बटन्यु न्वतन।

दँह वॅरी प्रॉन्यु कथ ऑस। जान सॉब ओस वँहरि बुहि। असली ओस सु कमि ताम गामुक रोज़न वोल मगर पँज शोछ ऑस नु कौंसि पताह। जान सॉब ओस हमेशु नीलि रंगुक फ्यरन लागान। येज़ार ओसुस ग्वडव ह्योर आसान तु ख्यरव ओस आसान ननु वोरुय। मस ओसुस ज्यूठ शानन तान्यु। जान सॉबस ऑस्यु अथ गामस मंज यिवान व्वन्यु शे र्यथ गॉमत्यु। ज्यादुतर ओस सु महद सॉबनि गरि रोज़ान तिक्वाजि अख ओसुस तति श्रान करनस वुशुन पोन्यु मेलान।

दपान जान सॉबुनि माजि ओस सु मँग्यु मँग्यु ज़ामुत। वारियाहस कालस घेलि नु तस बचय जाव, स्व गँयि कथ ताम जियारतस प्यठ तु गँडुन तति दँश। अमि पतय ओस जान सॉब ज़ामुत। जान सॉबस ओस नु परनस लेखनस सुत्यु दिल लगान तु दपान ल्वकचारु प्यठय ऑस तस मँत्यु गिलन। ऑठु वुहुर्य पानु प्यठय ओस सु गरि नेरान तु गामु गामु फेरान। जान सॉब ओ नु पानस मुतलिक कांह कथ करान मगर यिमु कथु कति आयि तु कँम्यु वनि, ति ऑस नु कौंसि पताह। गामु वॉल्यु ऑस्यु अँथ्यु मंज ख्वश जि सु ओस त्युहुंद गरु यिवान तु तिहिँद्य दॉद्य ऑस्यु वारियाहस हदस ताम कम गछान। वारु वारु बनेयि जान सॉबस स्यठाह मुरीद।

जान सॉब ओस नु ज्यादु कथु करान। आम तोर ओस सु कँलु सुतिय जवाब दिवान बटु गरि ओसुस गाड ख्यनुक सख शोख। अनिय बहानु ऑसिस बटु पनुन गरु साल करिथ निवान तु पनुन्यु तकलीफ बावान।

स्वनु बटन्यु ऑस स्यठाह द्यमागु दार। गॉम्य गामस ओस अँम्युसुंद नाव मशहूर। गामुचि ज़नानु आसु अक्सर अँमिस निशि यिवान तु मशवरु ह्यवान। गामुक्यु मर्द ति ऑसिस बडु यज़थ करान। येलि अमि ज़नानन निश जान सॉबुन्यु करामात बूज्य, स्व गँयि परेशान "अज़ कलुकिस दुनियाहस मंज छ। यिमन कथन कांह सूद। यिमन कथन प्यठ पछ करुन्यु गँयि फेरसूदु खयॉली। मकार लूख छि सैद्यन इनसानन अपुज्यु करामात हॉविथ फँसुरावान तु पनुन मतलब कडान। मोन जि कुनि सातु छि कांह करामात पँज नेरान। स्व छि बगवानु सुंजि मरज़ी सुत्यु सपदान न कि कौंसि मकारु सुदि वनुनु सुत्यु।"

गामुकयन ओस अथ नामलस मंज स्वनु बटनि सुत्यु सख यखतिलाफ। तिमन निश ओस जान सॉब थदि पायुक फँकीर, युस विजि विजि ननि करामाँच ओस करान। स्वनु बटनि ओस नु जान सॉब पानु वुछमुत केह मगर वुछनुच ज़ोरुत ति क्याह ऑस? तस ओस अकि लटि युथुय अख सॉद मकार समख्युमुत, यम्य तस यि दँप्युजि ति फान ओस थोवमुत कँरिथ। स्वनु बटनि ऑस अज़ ति स्व विज पूर पाट्य याद ...

अमि द्वह ऑस स्वनु बटन्यु गर-कॉम कँरिथ सुलिय न्वकलेमुञ्ज। तसुंद खावंद अर्जन दीव ओस साहबस सुत्यु दोरस प्यठ गोमुत तु बिलूजी ति ओसुन चकाराह करनु बापथ पानस सुत्यु न्युमुत। स्वनु बटनि ओस अज़ वररियाहि कौल्यु माल्युन गाछुन। कँह काल ओस गोमुत तसुंजि माजि सख ब्यमार तु तमि आसुनस कौंघाह शेछि सोज़मञ्च जि बुथाह बुछिहॉय। जिंदगी प्यठ क्याह बोरुसु छु?

ताज़ कुंच कौरमुत फ्यरन लॉगिथ कौड स्वनु बटनि सौदूकु मंजु सु दँह र्वपुयुन युस तिम पछ ब्रॉठ रुनिस मिनतु कँरिथ ह्योतुमुत ओस। दठह र्वपुयुन थोवुन फ्यरन चंदस तु गँडुन लूंग्यु। "टांगु किराय तु गाडि किराय गँयि ज़ोर र्वपयि तु बेयि निमु बॉय सुंद्यन शुर्यन क्युत कँछा ख्यनु खॉतरु।" वुनि ऑस स्व नेरनुच सखरुय करान जि नेबुर्य गव आलव "राज़ु बॉयी ह्यसु रोज़।" स्वनु बटनि दिन्न दारि किन्यु नज़र। अख फँकीर ओस ज़्यूठ सफेद फ्यरन लॉगिथ। कलस ओसुस बोड सब्ज दस्तार तु हँटिस कृहुन गुलेबंद। स्वनु बटन्यु वुछिथुय ह्योत फँकीरन बेयि वनुन "दुशमन हय छुय जागान। कांह छुय नु अथु शैहलावन वोल। कुतिस वाताख तु कोत गछुख। स्वरुफ हय छुय ब्रॉह कनि ऑर कँरिथ।" स्वनु बटनि प्यव ह्यस। तस ओस ब्रॉदुय दुरकाकनि हुंद शख। यनु अँम्युसुदिस रुनिस तरकी गँयि, तनु वोत तसुंजि दुरकाकनि म्यंगन नार दज़ान। अकि द्वयि लटि वॉत्यु हालात लायि लाय करनस प्यठ ति। स्वनु बटनि हुंज हालत वुछिथ

ज्ञोन फेंकीरन जि बटन्य गॅयि ग्वतन तु न्वसकु गव कारगर। दारि तल यिथ वोननस, "जोंघ फुटज हय छनय तयार थॉवमुन्न मगर च्य नय पोशिय नु केह। च्य हय छूप ख्वदा सॉब मदतस।" स्वनु बटनि पृछुस सरु करनु बापथ, "पीर सॉब, यि कुस छुन दुशमन? नाव वनतम।" मगर फेंकीरन वोन नु खूलिथ केह, "चु मय बर तमिच फिकिर। म्य छुय हेरिम होकुमा बु छुसय च्य रॉछ कॅरिथ।" स्वनु बटनि हुंद येकीन व्वन्य प्वख्तु। सूंचुन फेंकीर छु ख्वदा-दोस्ता। अॅमिस पजि नु कूर्य कूर्य कडून। यि अॅमिस वनुन ओस ति वोनुन। अमि खोतु क्याह वनि? दौपनस, "बु हज छसय हवाल। म्य न हज छुय नु च्य वरॉय काह अथु-नोट करन वोला।" फेंकीरन वोनस "चु रोजी बिला वसवास। च्य नय पोरिय नु काह। कडी नोठ। दस्तगीर सॉबस हय छु नियाज खारुन।" स्वनु बटन्य गॅयि रूजिथ। तस ओस अकोय दॅखुन, युस तमि माल्युन गछुनु खॉतरु थोवमुत ओस। दौपनस, "बब नोठ न हज छुन नु अज काह। ऑठ आनु छिम। अगर हज वनख तु ...।" फेंकीरन वॅट तसुज कथ, "नोठ छुय ना गंड कॅरिथ। अनी जल, बु नय यिमय नु पतु। म्य हय छु दस्तगीर सॉबुन आलवा।" स्वनु बटनि गव सरु जि फेंकीर छु पायि बौड तु सोरुय ज्ञानन वोला। यि सूंचिथ जि दुश्मन जि दुश्मन छु गालुन, कौड तमि दॅह र्वपयुन तु धुतुन बबस। बब द्राव क्रख दिवान "गछी करी ऑंश। सॉरिय दुश्मन हय बुडॉविमय। च्य नय पोशी नु व्वन्य काह।" स्वनु बटन्य गॅयि दिल मोलूल। सूंचुन, "अज कुत्प कॉल्प आयोव म्य मोकु माल्युन गछनस मगर व्वदरतस ऑंस नु मरज्जी। चलो यि ति गव ठीखुया। अगर नु अज यि फेंकीर यिथिहे दुश्मन थवहॅन म्य पुचु पार कॅरिथ। म्य छु व्वदरथ मदतस म्य क्याह करन? यि सूंचिथुय आयि तस बुथिस रीनक।

दोयिमि द्वहय पेयि स्वनु बटन्य असमानु। सु फेंकीर ओस तसुजि दुरकाकनि तु अॅमीना जी हुंद गरु ति गोमुत। तिमन ति ऑंस तॅम्य ऑन तु गॉन वॅहॅय कथ वॅन्यमुन्न तु नोठ हेत्यमुत्प। मगर युतुय योत गव नु केह। दपान स्वनु बटनि हुंज मॉज ऑंस कालु शामस ताम दरवरजस कुन मुदय गॅडिथ बुछान तु कोरि प्ररान। दौर्य राथव्युत धुत तमि अमानथ। यि शैछ बूजिथ गॅयि स्वनु बटन्य देवानु तु ह्योतुन वछ घेटुन। मगर तमि सुत्प क्याह अदिहे? सॉद मकार ओस गोमुत पनुन कार कॅरिथ।

"मगर जान सॉब छुनु तिमव मंजा। सु छु पॅज्य पॉट्य मलंग। यस पनुन अथु प्यठ थोवुन सु बोथ थोद। पौज हय बोजख तु अॅस्य छिय अॅम्यसुंदिय किन्य द्वह द्वह कडान। म्याॅनिस खानुदारस ति छि तस प्यठ बडु पछ", हॅनीफा जी वोन स्वनु बटनि। "न न, म्य रूज नु व्वन्य कौंसि प्यठ पछ", वोनस स्वनु बटनि वापस। शीला जी ऑंस वुनिस तान्य छवपु कॅरिथ। तस रूद नु पानस तान्य तु वोननस, "मगर च्य क्याह हरजु छुया। सु मा छु बिचोर पॉसु रटान। गाडु सेर छु अनुन। सु सॉच भानय जि बॉय सॉबस कूताह तकलीफ छु।" अख

र्यथ ओस गोमुत अरज्जन दीवस नोव साहाब आमुतिस तु तॅमिय ओस 'सु तालि किन्य ओनमुत। पॅत्यमिस ब्रूट्यमिस ओसुस हिसाब मंगान तु कथि कथि प्यठ ओसुस ससप्यंड करनुच दमकी दिवान। गर्युक स्कून ओस ग्वडय रोवमुत। व्वन्य ह्योतुन अरज्जन दीवस सैहतस प्यठ ति असर प्योन स्वनु बटन्य नरमेयि। सूंचुन हरजु ति छुनु केहं। आव तु डोन्युव, गव तु गासुवा। बलायि छुनुस, गाडु सेरस अॅकिस छु वदुन।

महद सॉबनि जारु पारु सुत्प गव जान साब स्वनु बटनि हुंद यिनस आमादु। महद सॉब आस पानु सुत्प तु पनुनिस मोहनियिस अथि अनुनॉवुन जेजीर ति। बतु ख्यनु पतु येलि अरज्जन दीव जेजीरि त्तयोगुल लोग करनि, जान सॉबन वोनस, "थव सॉं गोस त्तयोगुल। कर व्वन्य आराम। मॉलिक छु रुत करन वोला।" स्वनु बटनि ह्यवोव क्याहतान्य वनुन जि महद सॉबन वोनस कनस तल "मलंगस छि सॉरुय आसान खबर। तस छुनु व्यछनोविथ वनुनुच जौरुथ।" तमोक च्यथुय द्रायि जान सॉब तु महद सॉब वापस। अरज्जन दीव तु स्वनु बटन्य रूद्य यूत कॅरिथ ति रॉत्य रातस परेशान।

चोरि दोह्य पतय गॅयि अरज्जन दीवुनिस साहबस वापस तबदीली। दपान हेरि प्यठय ओस आर्डर वोटमुत तु द्वन द्वहन अंदर ओस तस प्राणि जायि प्यठ वापस यिनु खॉतरु होकुम दिनु आमुत। युथुय यि कथ ननेयि गामुक गाम आव स्वनु बटनि मुबारकस। मगर स्वनु बटन्य ऑंस नु गरि केह। स्व ऑंस महद सॉबनि गरि तस गुल्य गॅडिथ मॉफी मंगान जि बु क्याह ऑंसुस जान सॉबस मुतलिक सॉचान? जान सॉबस पेथिहे स्व परन मगर सु ओस कालय तति द्रामुत।

अमि पतु सपुद बेयि अख वाकाह। अकि द्वह ऑंस स्वनु बटन्य गरि बितहथ तोमुल ग्यारान। हंगु तु मंगु प्यव जान सॉब वॉतिथ तु मॅजिन चाया। स्वनु बटनि आयि नु पछ। अज ताम ऑंस स्व प्रथ सातु तस महद सॉबुन गॅडिथ समखान तु सलाम करान। अज आव सु पानय गरु। जान सॉबस पतु कनि तॅकियु थॅविथ तु जंगन प्यठ चादर त्रॉविथ गॅयि स्व चाय बनावुनि। येलि स्व चाय ह्याथ वापस आयि, जान सॉब ओस थेद वॅथिथ ज्ञन तॅस्य प्रारान। जान सॉबन कोर चाय च्यनस इनकार। स्वनु बटनि पेयि नजर तस ओस अथस मंज सु खिलोनु मोटर युस अरज्जन दीवन राथुय बिलूजीनि खॉतरु शहरु प्यठ ओस ओनमुत। स्वनु बटनि हुंदि पृछनु ब्रॉटुय वोनस जान सॉबन, "यि बलायि कॅमी अॅन्य योर?" बु छुनय यि ग्वडु दफाह कॅरिथ।" यि वॅनिथुय द्राव जान सॉब वापस। स्वनु बटन्य व्वशलेयि। "कुमती मोटर ओस। खबर अॅमिस क्याह रोव?" तस रूद दॅय द्वहस मोटरुक फेरान।

बेयि द्वह येलि हॅनीफा जी स्वनु बटनि निशि आयि, तस आसु अॅछ व्वज्जि। बासक ओस ज्ञन तु रॉत्य रातस ऑंस हुशारुय रूजमुन्न।

स्वनु बटनि पृछुनस, "केहे देंलील? यु क्याह छख परेशान ज़न। खौरुय छा? हेंनीफा जी वोनूस, "हतय अँस्य् अँस्य् ना रातस अँनीनुनि गरि। तस ओस बशु सख ब्यमार। दपान अँस राथ आव सु अख खिलोनु मोटर ह्यथ तु लोग तथ गिंदुनि। वुछान वुछान खातुस तफ तु गँयस लारनि। अज़ सुबहाँय छुन तिमव सु मोटर दौरिथ। दपान वुन्यक्यस छुस आरामुय। अँस्य् कति शॉग्य रातस।" यि बूजिथुय गँयि स्वनु बटनि दुनन। सूँचून, "हय है यि आसिहे सुय मोटर। खबर यिमान मा लेंज पताह जि सु ओस सोन? पृछुनस, "बशन कति ओस सु आनमुत?" हेंनीफा जी वोनूस, "खबर हय दपान कति ताम ओसुन छूबट प्यतु तुलमुता।" स्वनु बटनि खँच वॉलिंज बोठ तु लेंज जान सॉबस मनु मँज़ी बलायि लगनि। "अगर नु सु यि बलायि गरु मंज़ु कँडिथ छुनिहे खबर कहाह गुदरिहे कोठना।" अमि कसु पतु गँयि तस ज़्यादय पहन जान सॉबुन्य थफ। जान सॉब येलि ति अथ गामस मंज़ यियिहे स्व अँस तस निश तस खर छलान। यि रीथ रूज़ तीतिस कालस जॉरी यीतिस कालस जान सॉब ओर यिवान रुद।

अख वेंरी गव जान सॉबस गाम यिनुसुय। तसुंद लोग नु कांह पय पताह। गामु वॉल्य् अँस्य् सख परेशान जि तिहँघन दाघन कुस करि व्वन्य यलाज। अकि इह लेंज पताह जि कँन्यतान्य् ओस सु पंदाह मील दूर बेयिस अँकिस गामस मंज़ वुछमुत। महद सॉबन तुल्य् त्रे ज़ोर नफर बेयि सुत्प तु द्राव तस छंडनि। पताह लेंज जि अथ गामस मंज़ छु नु कांह जान सॉब रोज़ान। महद सॉबन येलि गामु वाल्यन जान सॉबुन्य शुक्ल सूरत वँन्य, तिम गँयि हॉरान। अमि शकिल हुंद ओस अख कफर नफर गामस मंज़ तु तस ओस नाव नबु। मगर नबस आस्य् गॉमुँत्य् लगबग ज़ु वेंरी गाम त्रॉविमुतिस। महद सॉबन येलि नबुन्य देंलील बूज, सु प्यव असमानु।

दपान नबस ओस त्वकचारय मोल गुजरयोमुत। मॉज अँसुस ज़्यादतर ब्यमारुय रोज़ान। नबस ओस नु बेनि बोय कांह। पांछ शे कनाल ज़मीन अँसिख वष प्यठ तिम गुजारु अँस्य् करान। दपान नबुन्य ज़मीन अँस यूसुफ सॉबुनिस ज़मीनस स्य मंजन। यूसुफ सॉब ओस नबुन ज़्यठ प्यँतुर तु सु ओस बोय मरनु पतु कुनि तेंरीकु नबुन्य ज़मीन यछान खेन्य। नबु रुद वारियाहस कालस सीनु दिथ, मगर यलि यूसुफ सॉबन अकि इह तस पनुन्यन मोहनियन अथि मार दिवनोव, तस रॉव ह्यमथ गामु वॉल्य रुद्य सिरिफ तमाशु वुछान, तिक्याजि यूसुफ सॉबस अँस्य् तिम ति खोछान। अमि पतु गँयि नबस गामु वाल्यन हुंज नफरत। अँथ्य आसनाहस मंज़ गँयि नबस मॉज मँरिथ तु अकि इह राथक्युत ज़ोल नबु गामु मंज़। अमि पतु आव सु गाम कुल इयि लटि मगर कौंसि सुत्प कँरुन नु कांह कथ। बस गामस अँघ अँघ द्युतुन चकर तु द्राव वापस। महद सॉबस निश यि बूजिथ जि नबु ओस मँलंग, त्रौव गामु वॉल्यव असुन। "मलंग आसिहे तु तेलि कति खेयिहे मार?"

स्वनु बटनि रुद ओश वसान। अज़ अँस स्व सख मुसीबतस मंज ह्यनु आमुच। अर्जन दीव ओस ब्यमार तु यलाजु बापथ ओसुख सु शहरुकिस बँडिस हस्पतालस मंज़ दौखुल कौरमुत। अज़ अँस्य् गॉमुत्य तस पंदाह इह यलाज चलान मगर ओस इह पतु इह पथुय गछान। डाक्टरव ओस स्वनु बटनि मशवरु द्युतमुत ब्यमार नीयुन दिलि, मगर तस अँस नु त्यूत खर्च तुलनुच सूस्था। पनुन्यकिन्य फीर सारिनुय अँशुनावन मगर खास अथुरोट सपदुस नु कँह। बिलूजी ओसुन त्रौवमुत हमसायि गरि तु पानु अँस हस्पतालस मंज़ रुनिस निश बिहिथ। हवु कँदलु अँसुस ज़ाम रोज़ान तु स्वय अँसुस बतु अनान। मगर ख्यनु क्याह ओसुस यिवान? अर्जन दीवस अँस्य् गॉमुत्य ज़ोर इह कँह ख्यनुसुय।

स्वनु बटनि पेयि वानु पेजि प्यदुय नैदुर। अज़ अँस स्व रॉत्य रातस हुशारुय। रनिस अँसुस नु हालत ठीख। वोनहँख ब्यमार छु ज़्यादु खौतु ज़्यादु पांघन अँठन इहन हुंद मेहमान। ज़ॉमियन वोनुनस, "म्य छु बासान, नु वस गरु। अख यिख तति नज़र दिथ, बेयि खारुहँन बिलूजी यूर्य। खबर छा क्याह आसि सपदन वोला। तोति वुछि मॉलिस बुथा।" फुट्यमुत्यव क्वट्यव अँस स्वनु बटन्य हस्पतालु मंज़ु द्रामुय तु वदान वदान बटु माल्युन अडस प्यठ वॉचमुच।

गाडि हुंदि हारनु सुत्प गँयि स्वनु बटन्य हुशार। अँकिस पृछुन वंखत। नव आसु बजेमचु। गाडि हुंज टिकठ कडनु खँतरु युथुय तमि टिकटि वॉलिस पॉसु दित्य, तस पेयि अँकिस चायि वानस कुन नज़र। अख नफर ओस पँथरिस प्यठ बिहिथ तमोक च्यवान। तमि दिच अँछन मूरन। आ सुय ओस। तसुंद ज़्यूठ मस तु न्यूल फ्यरन ओस साफ यिवान बोज़नु। स्वनु बटनि त्रॉव टिकठ अँतिया। पागलन हुं घ पॉट्य तुजिन दव तु वॉच चायि वानस निश। जान सॉब ओस तमोक च्यनस सुत्प मस्त। स्वनु बटनि थोव तसुंधन खरन प्यठ कल तु ह्योतुन वदुन। जान सॉबन पृछुनस, "हतुबी वदान क्याजि छख?" स्वनु बटनि गँयि वदान वदान गित्य तु कलु खरन प्यठ थँविथुय वानुनास, "बब कूत काल गोम छंडान। म्य हज छय चॉनिय आशा। नारस मंज़ छस। अज़ करतम च्वकलनपाय नतु मारय येतिय पान।" जान सॉब गव रॉबुदु ह्यु। लूकन आव नु कँह समुज। अँनिस बटनि क्याह तकलीफ छु? बेयि नुह वुहरिस जवानस क्याजि छि यि बब वनान? अँक्य वानुनस, "हतुबी यि छुनु बब यि छु गुलाम नँबी। अँनिस छु वुनि खांदर ति करनय।" मगर स्वनु बटन्य अँस नु कौंसि हुंज कथ बोज़ान। स्व अँस सिरिफ जान सॉबुन्य कथ बोज़नस प्ररान। जान सॉबन थोवुस कलस प्यठ अथु। स्वनु बटनि तुल कलु थोद। ओश ओसुस दिन्थुनि वसान। जान सॉबन वोनुनस, "बु छुस अख मोज़ूर। म्य क्याजि छख खरन अथु लॉगिथ गवनाहगार बनावान। तकलीफ क्याह छुय? स्वनु बटनि वोनुस, "रुन हज छुम ब्यमार। बचनुच छस नु कांह व्वमेद। चॉनिय सथ छम।" जान सॉबन द्युतुस कलस फश तु वोनुनस "फिकिर मु बर।

गछ कोत छुय गछुन। मॉलिक छू रूत करन बोला।" अमि पतु द्राव सु बाकयन नोजूरन सुत्य पनुनिस कारस। स्वनु बटन्य रूजस वुछान। जान सॉबस ओस अज ति ग्वडव ह्योर येजार तु ख्वर ऑसिस ननुवॉरिया।

स्वनु बटनि लॅग्य ज़ु द्वह गाम गॅछिथ वापस यिनस। नैचुव ओनुन सुत्य। हस्पताल वॉत्र तु रुनिस अँद्य पॅख्य वुछिन लूख जमाह। जंगन थरु थरु । "त्रठ छम पेमुच्च। पॅत्यमिय गरि मा रूजस बु न्वबर? नॅजदीख पहन वॉत्र तु कॅम्यतान्य दित्र क्रख "अँक्या आयि।" लूकव त्रॉव जाय तु स्वनु बटनि वुछ नोवुय आलम। अर्जन दीव ओस डोख दिथ डाक्टर सॉबस सुत्य कथ करान। कौंसि ओस नु समज यिवान जि अचानक किथ पॉत्स्य गॅथि ब्यमारस फर्र। अर्जन दीवस ओस अथस मंज द्रदु गिलासु तु सु ओस दामु दामु द्वद च्यवान। स्वनु बटनि वुछिथुय आव तस बुधिस रंग तु कॅरुन तस अथस थफ। तमि वौनुनस कनस तल, "म्य लाब राथ जान सॉब।"

बेयि द्वह गॅथि स्वनु बटन्य तु तसुद ज़ौमी अडस प्यठ जान सॉबस समखुनि। चायि वानस प्यठ वॉत्य तु पृछुख चायि वॉलिस "हे बाया, जान सॉब कति छु?" चायि वॉलिस तौर नु कॅह फिकिरिह। तॅम्य वौनुनख "कुस जान सॉब?" स्वनु बटनि वौनुस, "युस हसॉ म्य ऊतरु सुबहस येति समख्यव। यस तौह्य गुलाम नॅबी छिवु वनान।" चायि वॉत्य वौनुनस, "सु द्राव राथ शामसुय वापस। दपान ओस म्य छु बडु दूर वातुन।" स्वनु बटनि पृछुस, "योर कर ओस आमुत?"

चायि वॉत्य वानुस, "ओतरय ओस आमुत। राथ ओसुस दोयुम द्वह।"

अर्जन दीवस दिद्युख अकि हफ्तु पतय हस्पतालु मंजु छुटी। सु ओस व्वन्य बिलकुल ठीख गोमुत। दपान बॅड्यु डाक्टर सॉबन वोन जि तस ओस यलाज गलथ गोमुत। गामुकिस टांगु डस प्यठ ओस अरजन दीवस समखुनि गामुक गाम आमुत। येति सु टांगु प्यठु ब्वन वाथ, महद सॉबन रोट सु नालुमति। सॉरिय ऑस्य ख्वश। अख ओस अर्जन दीव वारु कारु ठीख गॅछिम गरु आमुत बेयि यि जि स्वनु ळटनि ओस जान सॉब पानु वुछमुत।

कैह काल गॅछिथ वोन अकि द्वह महद सॉबन स्वनु बटनि, "च्य क्याह छुय बासान, जान सॉब यियि ना व्वन्य योर जांह?" स्वनु बटनि चिन्न रुनिस कुन अख नजर। ज्यूठ व्वश त्रॉविथ वौनुन सॉबस कुन "यियि क्याजि नु? यियि ज़ोरुर, यलि पजि मनु कांह याद कर्यस।"

यह लघु कहानी श्री रैना के 'चौक मोदुर' संकलन से उद्धृत है। इन्होंने कश्मीरी भाषा के प्रचलन के लिए अथक परिश्रम किया है। ईमेल -rainamk@yahoo.co.in

TURUNN VUSHUN

Sunayna Kachru Bhide

Turunn vushun karith yakhllass
Zyatt dith jigraas kotsa draakh
Mye no pormay manthar paath
Shaay chani vuziom akoy vaakh
Rutt gari pott gari karnas khaak
Chatnam lol rag diyutnam chaakh
Yeli tami hovnam pazruk gaash
Vany kus panun ti kus chu byaakh

Section VII

**NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF PERMANENT
MEMBERS RESIDING IN KOLKATA**

Section VIII

**NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF PERMANENT
MEMBERS RESIDING OUTSIDE KOLKATA**

Section IX

**NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF PERMANENT
MEMBERS RESIDING ABROAD**

SECTION-VII

NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF PERMANENT MEMBERS RESIDING IN KOLKATA

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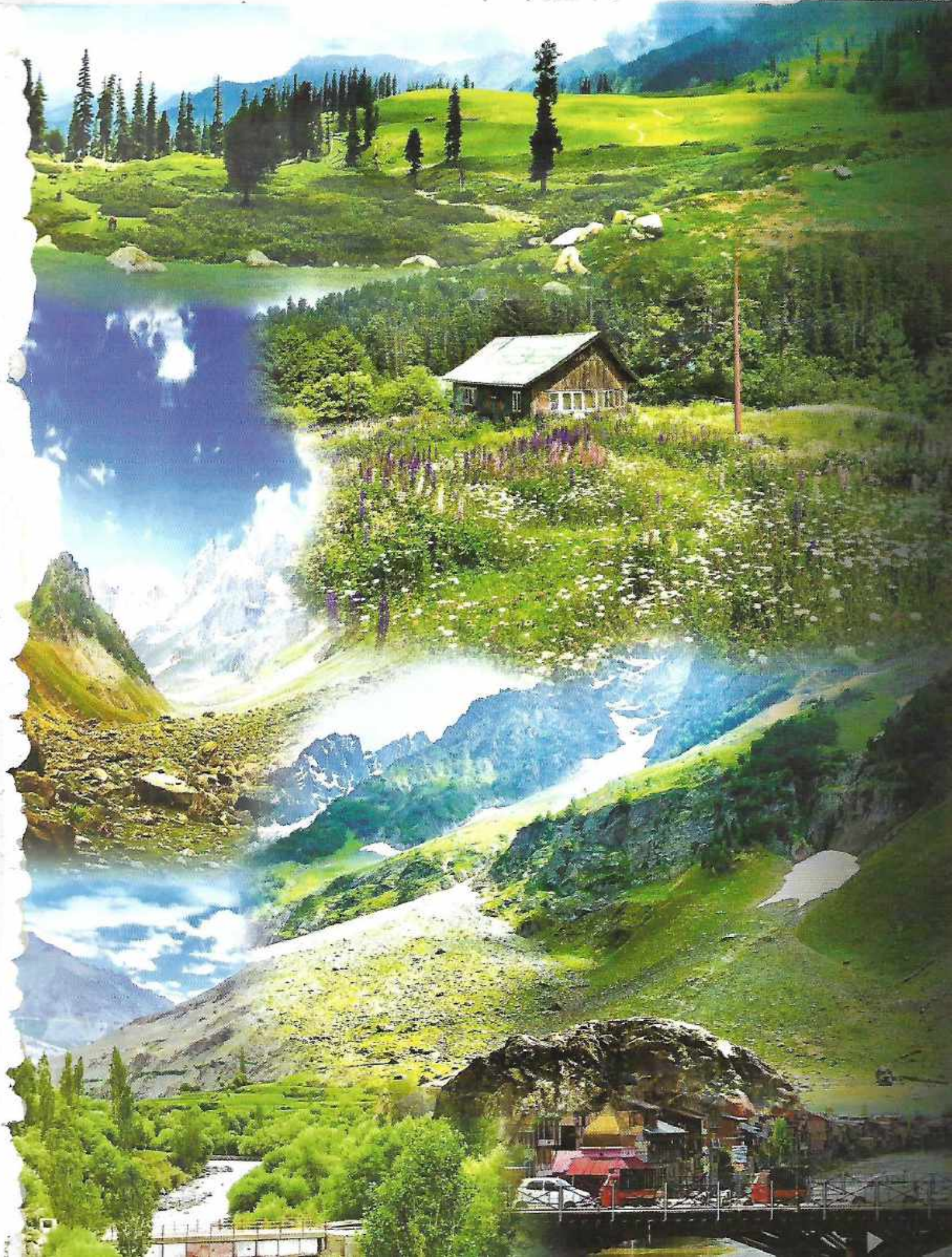
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